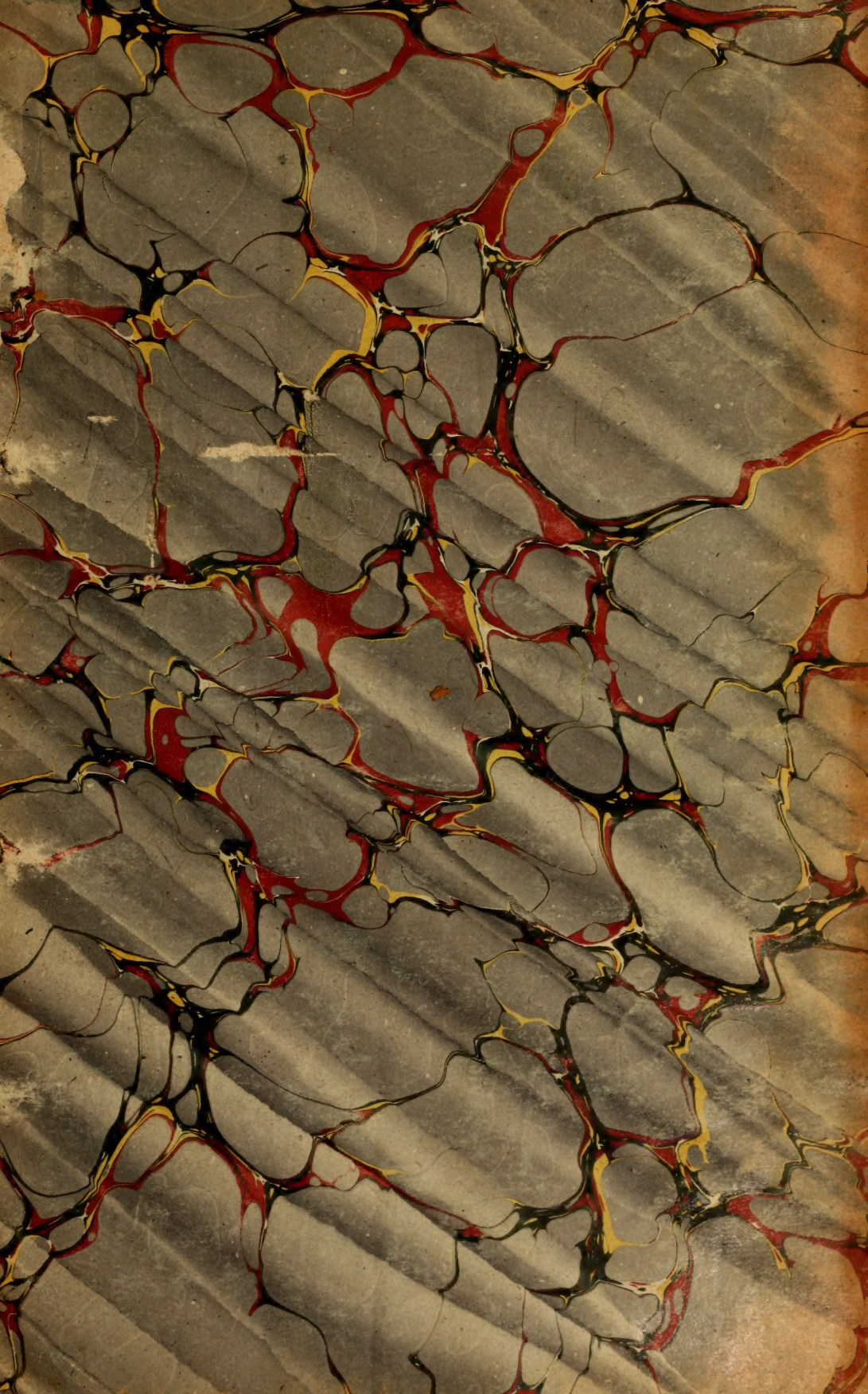


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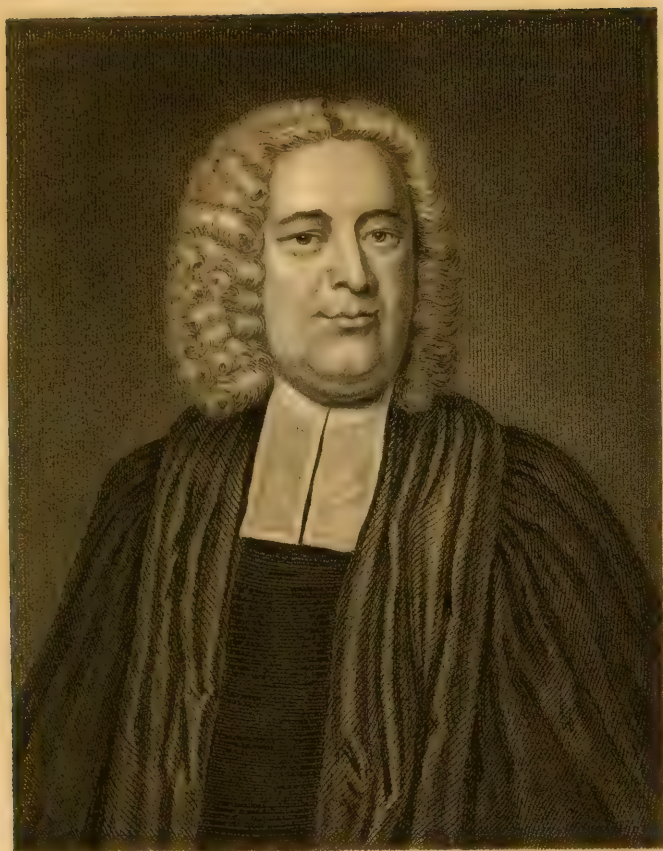
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STACKHOUSE'S
HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

32-2

STATIONER'S

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE



JOHN HENRY HENNINGSEN, A. M.

1711

Printed by J. H. Smith, New York.

A HISTORY
OF
THE HOLY BIBLE,

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD

TO THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY;

WITH
NUMEROUS NOTES
RECONCILING SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS, RECTIFYING MIS-TRANSLATIONS, &c.

✓
BY THE REV. THOMAS STACKHOUSE, M. A.
LATE VICAR OF BEENHAM IN BERKSHIRE.

TOGETHER WITH
AN INTRODUCTION, ADDITIONAL NOTES, DISSERTATIONS,
AND COMPLETE INDEXES.

BY DANIEL DEWAR, D. D.
PRINCIPAL OF MARISCHAL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY, ABERDEEN.

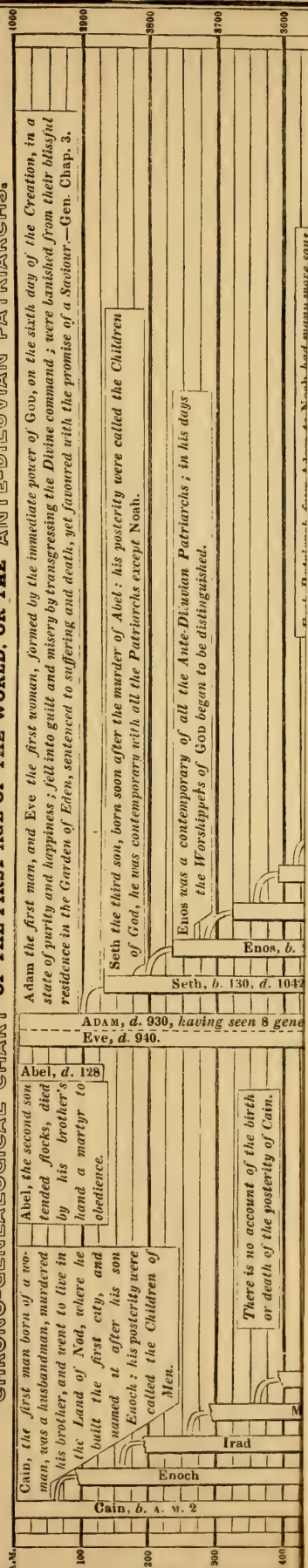
COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME, ILLUSTRATED WITH MAPS AND PLANS.

BLACKIE & SON, QUEEN STREET, GLASGOW;
SOUTH COLLEGE STREET, EDINBURGH;
AND WARWICK SQUARE, LONDON.

MDCCCXXXVIII.

GLASGOW:
PRINTED BY W. G. BLACKIE, & CO.,
VILLAFIELD.

CHRONO-GENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE FIRST AGE OF THE WORLD, OR THE ANTE-DILUVIAN PATRIARCHS.



CHRONO-GENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE FIRST AGE OF THE WORLD, OR THE ANTI-DILUVIAN PATRIARCHS.

Cain, the first man born of a woman, was a husbandman, married his wife, and went to live in the land of Nod, where he was the first tiller of the soil. He was the first who was named, and after him were called the children of men.

Seth, the third son, born nine years after the murder of Abel, his posterity were called the Children of God. In our contemporary age, all the Patriarchs lived 1000 years.

Adam, the first man, and Eve, the first woman, formed the human race, and lived in the Garden of Eden, where they were tempted by the serpent, and expelled from their blissful residence in the Garden of Eden, sentenced to suffering and death, with the promise of a Saviour—Gen. Chap. 3.

Cain, the second son, was a husbandman, married his wife, and went to live in the land of Nod, where he was the first tiller of the soil. He was the first who was named, and after him were called the children of men.

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CHRONO-GENEALOGICAL CHART

OF THE SECOND AGE OF THE WORLD, OR THE POST-DILUVIAN PATRIARCHS,

FROM THE DELUGE TO THE CALL OF ABRAHAM:

Including the Foundation of Nations, and the Origin of Languages.

Dr Hales in his new analysis of Chronology makes the era of the creation 4111, B. C., and gives the following dates for the principal events of the second age of the world.

	A.M.	B.C.
Deluge,	2256	3155
Arphaxad born,	2258	3153
Division of the Earth,	3797	2614
Nimrod's kingdom and confusion of tongues,	2837	2554
Song,	2919	2492
Nah,	3049	2362
Table Total	3074	2337

The original number of Languages and Nations appears to be sixty, several of these are probably extinct, and others incorporated or corrupted.

LIAM, b. 1560,

SHEM, b. 1538, p

In this table no names are introduced but those of the founders of families or nations.

JAPHET, b. 1556,

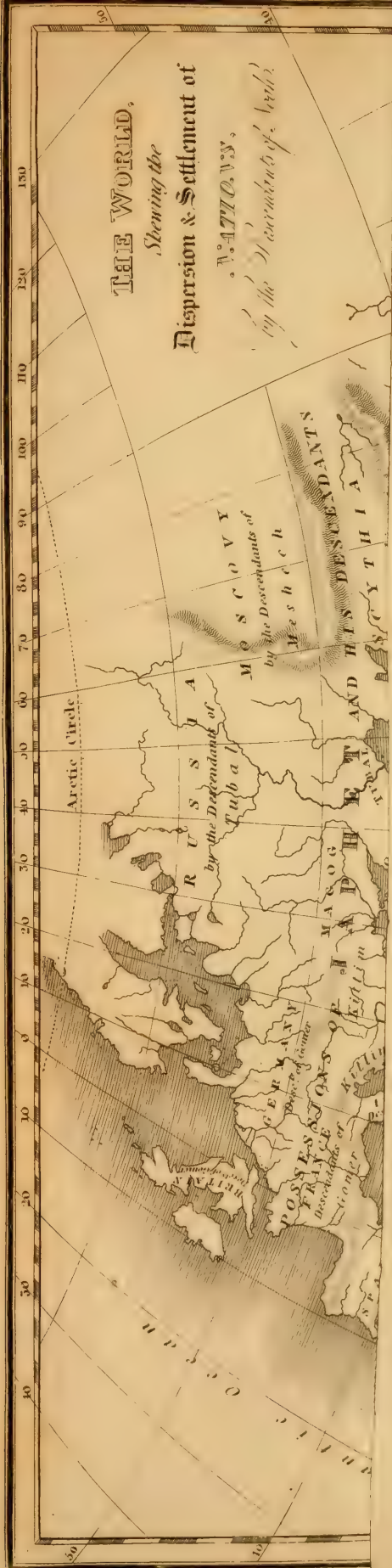
NOAH, b. 1026, aged 600 at the flood, and 754 at the confusion, c

B.C.

2100

2400

THE WORLD,
Shewing the
 Dispersion & Settlement of
 M. A. T. T. O. V. S. S.
by the Descendants of Noah.

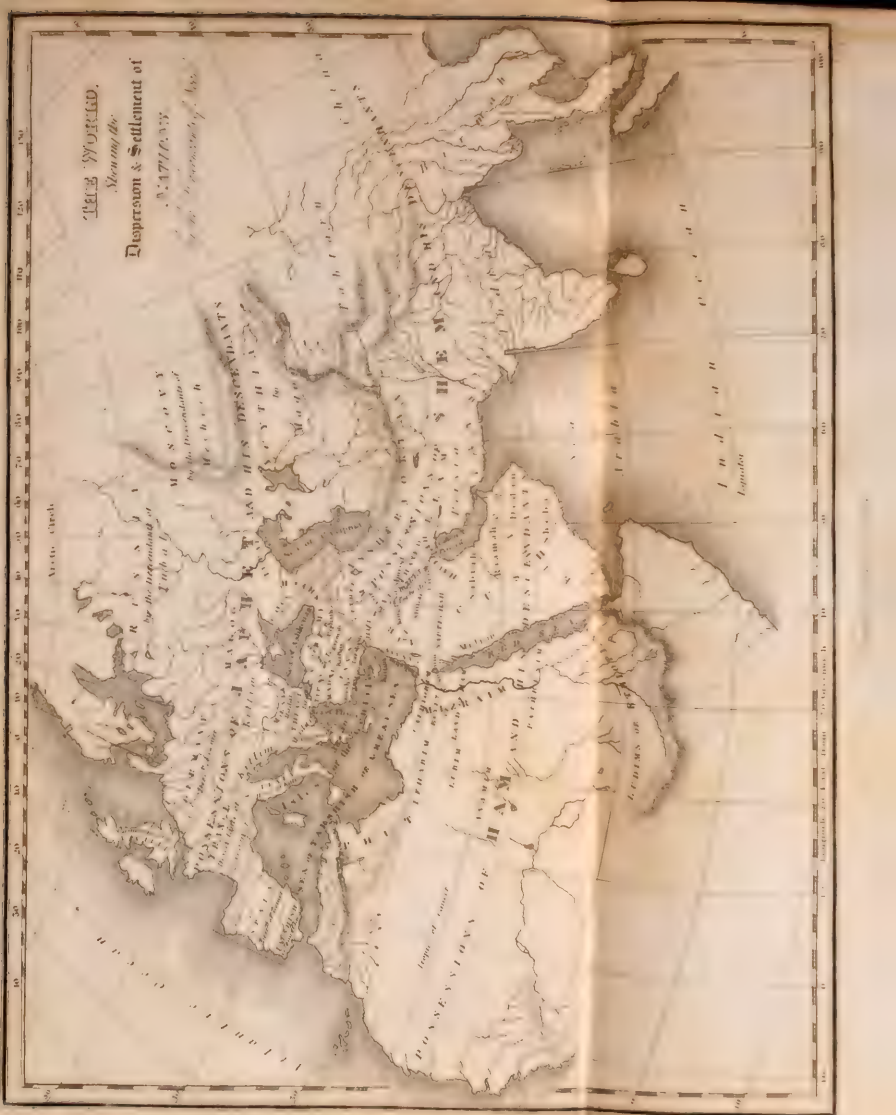


Shenmue the

Depression & Settlement of

7:1710.158

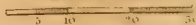
1882



CANAAN

Adapted
to the Book of
GENESIS.

British Miles.



33

32

31

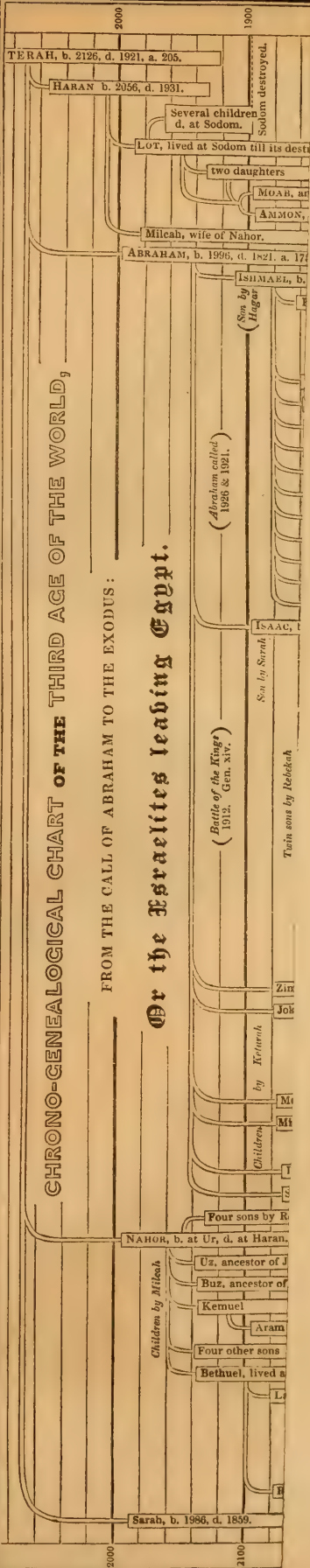
30



CHRONO-GENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE THIRD AGE OF THE WORLD,

FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE EXODUS :

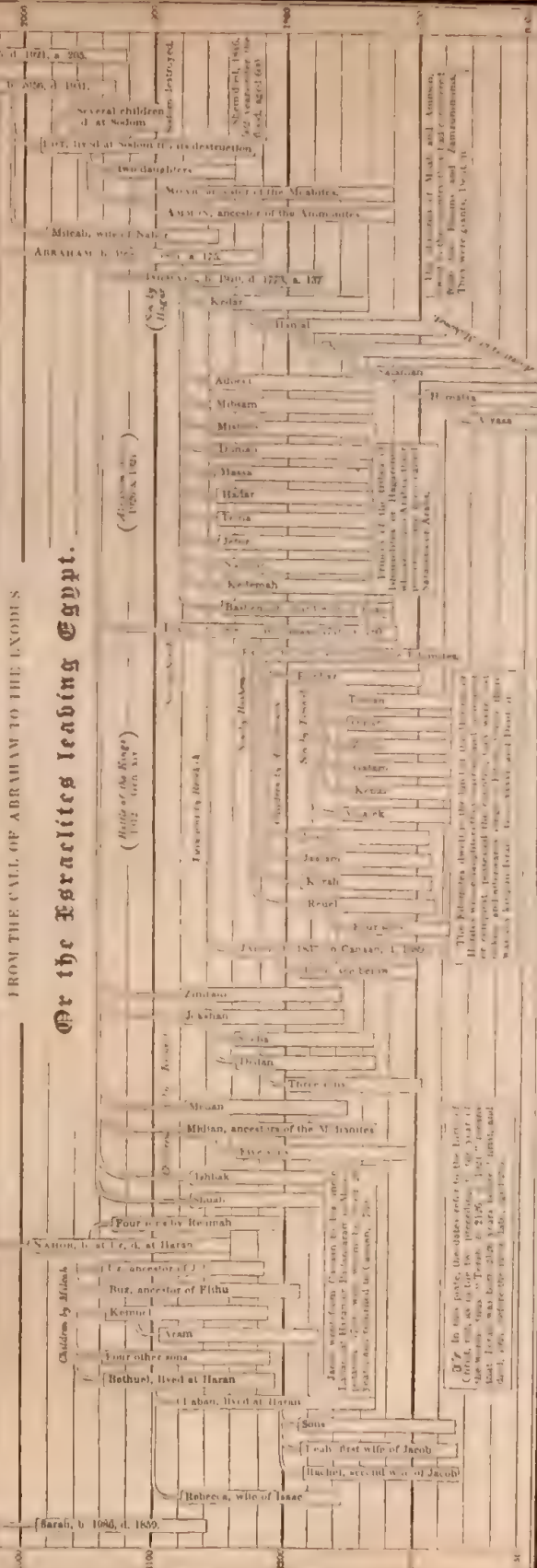
Or the Israelites leaving Egypt.



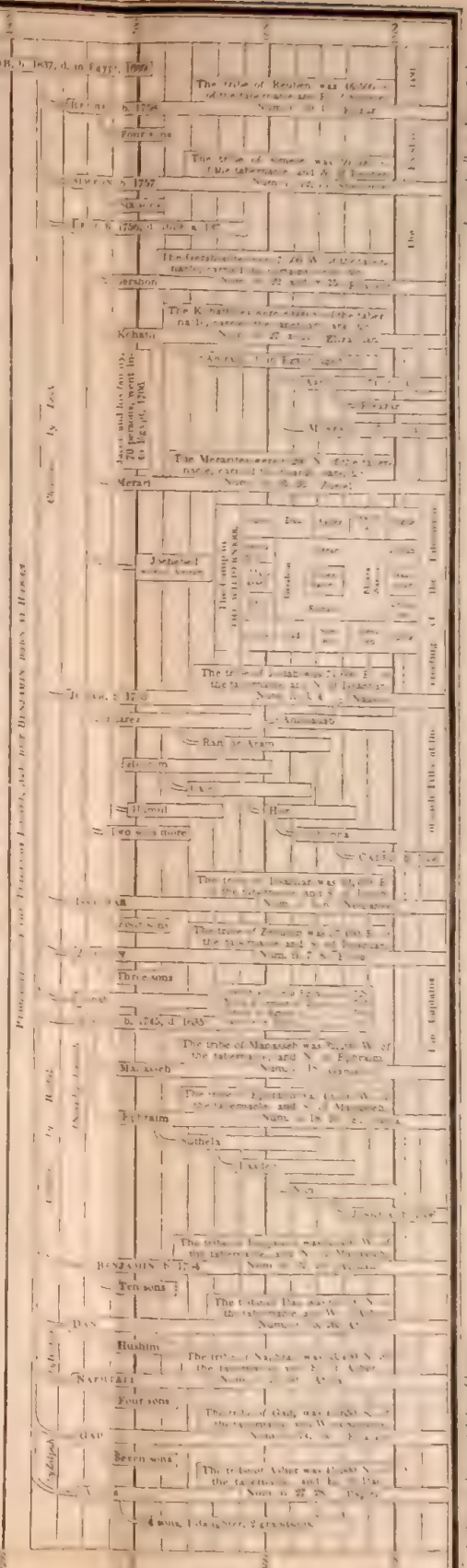
CHRONO-GENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE THIRD AGE OF THE WORLD,

FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE EXODUS

Of the Israelites leading Egypt.



CONSERVATION.





TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.
With the Court of the Tabernacle. Exod. XXV. XXVII.



ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERINGS.
Exod. XXVII. 1. 2.



THE LAVER OF BRASS BELONGING
 TO THE TABERNACLE
Exod. XXX. 18



TABERNACLE UNCOVERED. Exod. XXXVII.
A. The Holy Place B. The most Holy or Holy of Holies



GT 2

...



JUDAH & ISRAEL
 illustrating
 THE BOOKS OF KINGS &c

H. Scott Sc.

Shihon

British Miles



33

32



A M A L E K

JUDAH & ISRAEL

illustrating

THE BOOKS OF KINGS &c

Barthol. 1815

Scale of Miles

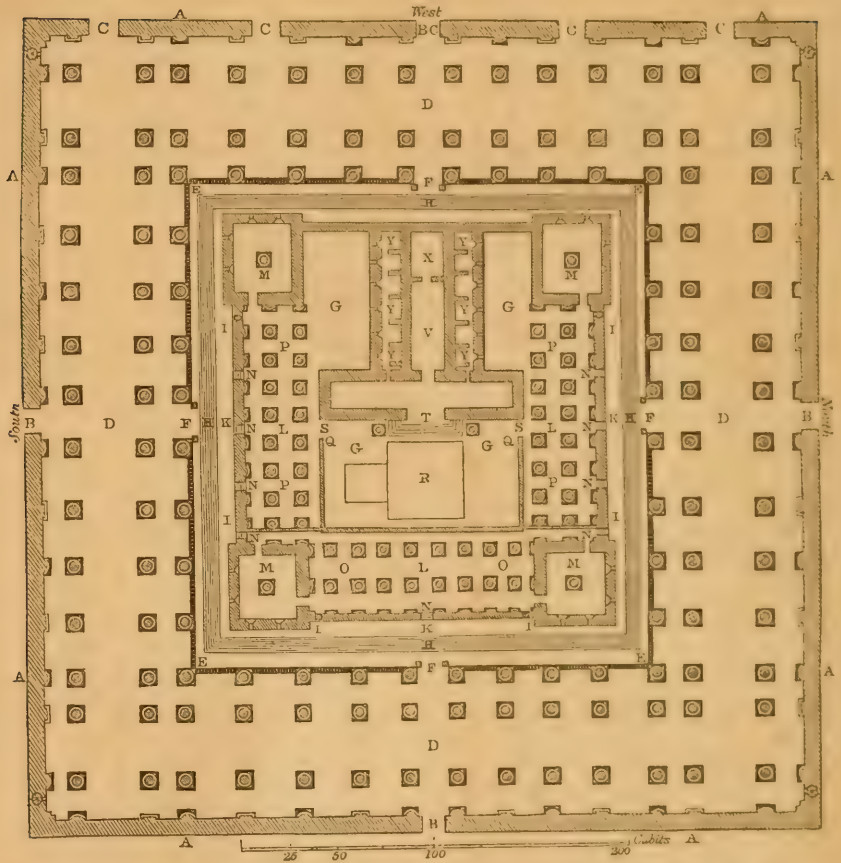


AMALEK

DO M

Longitude and Latitude

PLAN OF THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.



A A A A. The Wall, one stadium on each side, or 625 feet. *Jos. Antiq. b. 15. c. xi.*

B B B B. Great gates, 13 cubits wide, and 30 high.

C C C C. Gates of the west side.

D D D D. Outer Court, with galleries supported by pillars.

E E E E. Screen, beyond which strangers or Jews not purified did not advance.

F F F F. Passages in the screen or balustrade, through which all Jews or Jewesses that were purified might enter.

H H H L. Ascent of 13 steps to Inner Court.

I I. Terrace of 10 cubits wide.

K K. Five more steps at entrance of Inner Court.

L L L. Inner Court surrounded by double galleries 30 cubits wide.

M M M M. Chambers adjoining the Courts.

N N N. Doors to the Inner Court. That on the east, and the first north and south, to court of the women; the others to the courts of the men.

O O. Court of the women.

P P P P. Court of the men.

G G G G. Court of the priests, containing the Temple strictly so called, and the altar of burnt-offering.

Q Q. Low wall separating the court of the priests from the people.

R. Altar of burnt-offering.

S S. Front of the Temple to the east, 100 cubits wide.

T. Door to the porch of the Temple, 70 cubits high and 20 wide.

V. The holy place, 40 cubits long and 20 wide.

X. The most holy place, 20 cubits square.

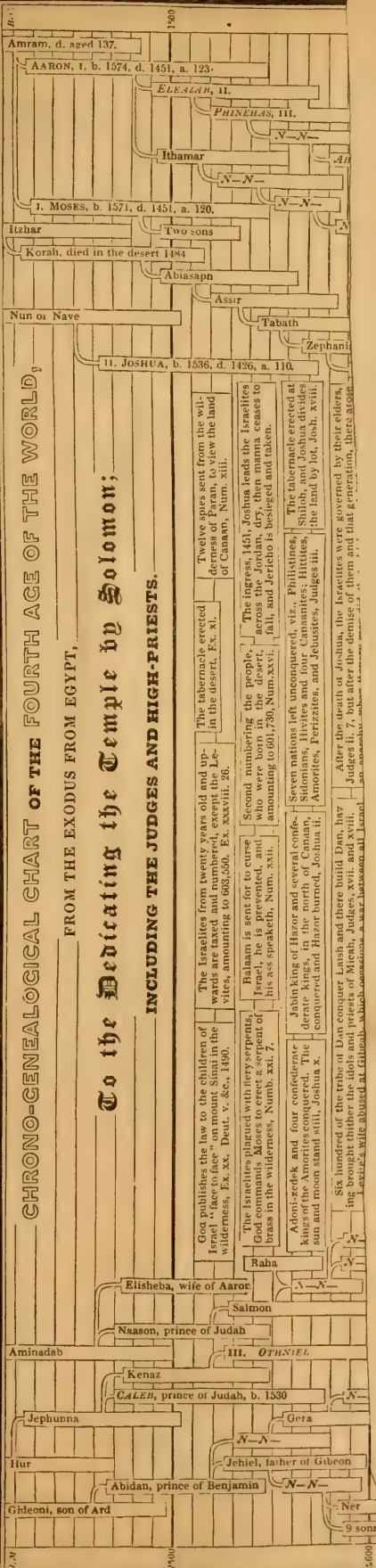
Y Y Y Y. Chambers.

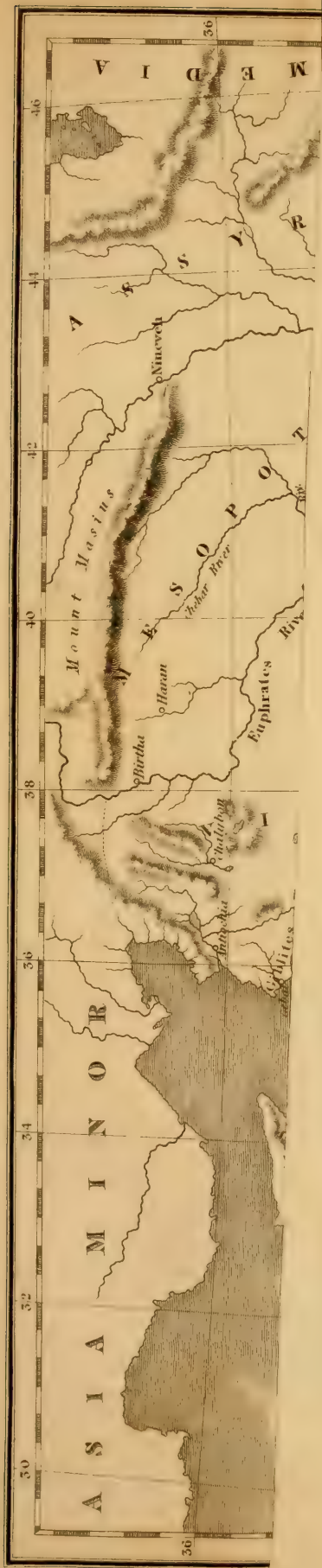
CHRONO-GENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE FOURTH AGE OF THE WORLD;

FROM THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT,

To the Dedicating the Temple by Solomon;

INCLUDING THE JUDGES AND HIGH-PRIESTS.



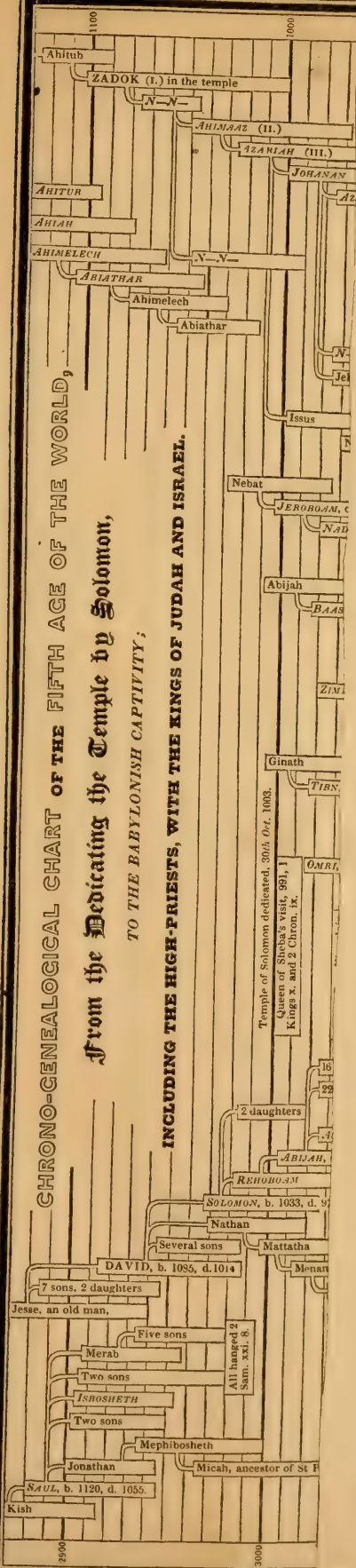




From the Dedicating the Temple by Solomon,

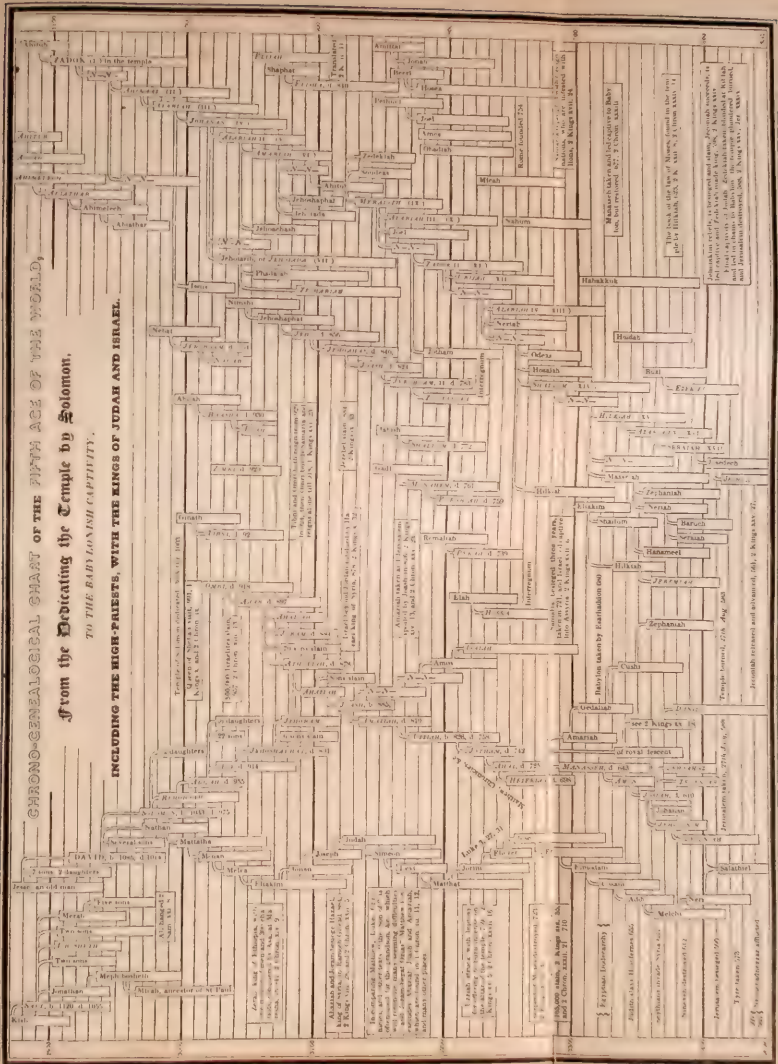
TO THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY;

INCLUDING THE HIGH-PRIESTS, WITH THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.



CHRONO-GENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE FIFTH AGE OF THE WORLD, From the Dedicating the Temple by Solomon, TO THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY.

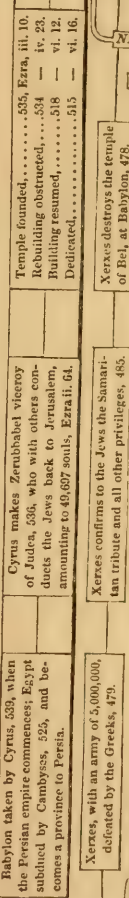
INCLUDING THE HIGH-PRIESTS, WITH THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.



FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY,

To the Incarnation of the Messiah, Including the

SOVEREIGNS OF THE MACCABEES.

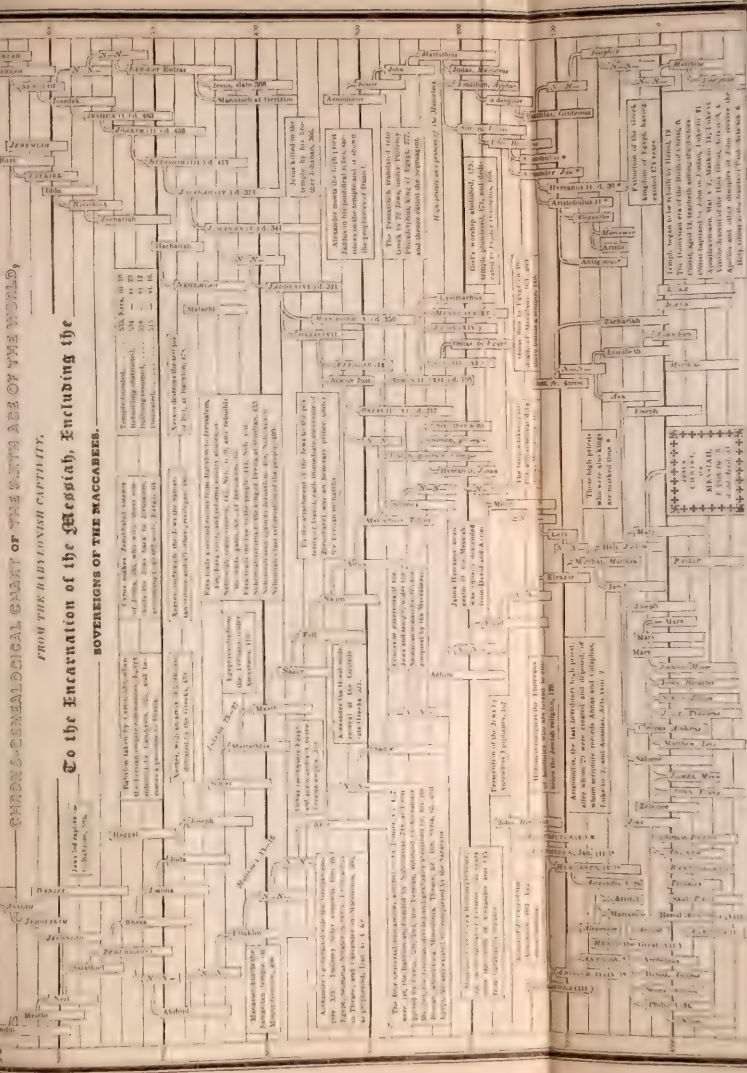


CHRONO-GENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE CIVIL AGE OF THE WORLD,

FROM THE RADYLOVISH CAPTIVITY.

To the Incarnation of the Messiah, Including the

SOVEREIGNS OF THE MACCABEES.


$$P_1, \dots, P_n \in \mathbb{R}^n, \quad P_i = (p_{i1}, \dots, p_{in})^T, \quad p_{ij} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^n x_{ik} x_{jk}.$$

$P_0, P_1, P_2, P_3, P_4, P_5, P_6, P_7, P_8, P_9, P_{10}, P_{11}, P_{12}, P_{13}, P_{14}, P_{15}, P_{16}, P_{17}, P_{18}, P_{19}, P_{20}, P_{21}, P_{22}, P_{23}, P_{24}, P_{25}, P_{26}, P_{27}, P_{28}, P_{29}, P_{30}, P_{31}, P_{32}, P_{33}, P_{34}, P_{35}, P_{36}, P_{37}, P_{38}, P_{39}, P_{40}, P_{41}, P_{42}, P_{43}, P_{44}, P_{45}, P_{46}, P_{47}, P_{48}, P_{49}, P_{50}, P_{51}, P_{52}, P_{53}, P_{54}, P_{55}, P_{56}, P_{57}, P_{58}, P_{59}, P_{60}, P_{61}, P_{62}, P_{63}, P_{64}, P_{65}, P_{66}, P_{67}, P_{68}, P_{69}, P_{70}, P_{71}, P_{72}, P_{73}, P_{74}, P_{75}, P_{76}, P_{77}, P_{78}, P_{79}, P_{80}, P_{81}, P_{82}, P_{83}, P_{84}, P_{85}, P_{86}, P_{87}, P_{88}, P_{89}, P_{90}, P_{91}, P_{92}, P_{93}, P_{94}, P_{95}, P_{96}, P_{97}, P_{98}, P_{99}$





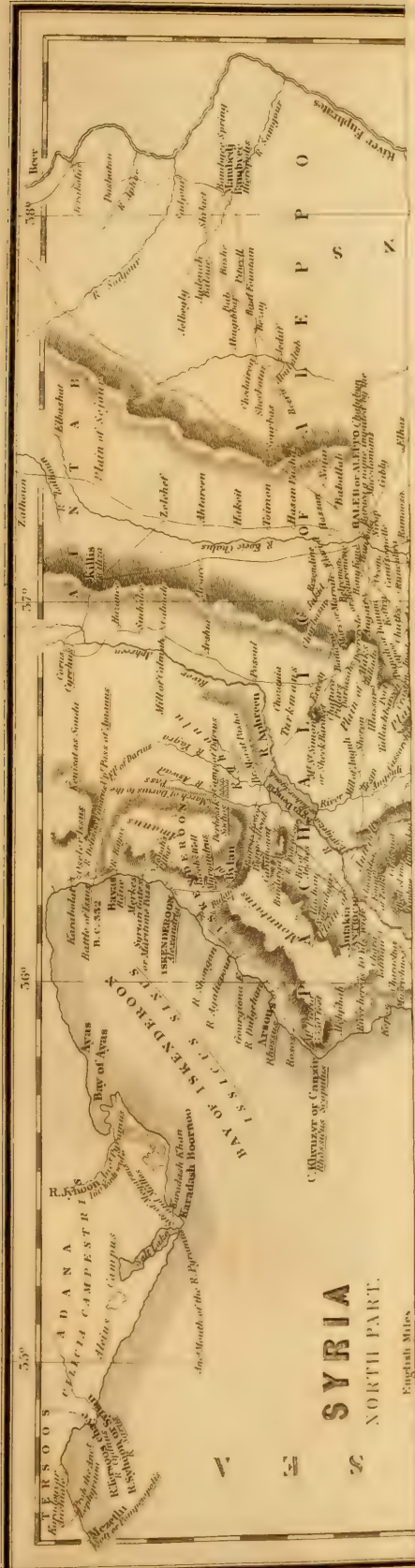
THE WORLD, as known to the ANCIENTS

The map, various, all the parts, of which it is thought the ancients had any knowledge

Roman Miles	British Miles	French Miles
0	0	0
100	60	100
200	120	200
300	180	300
400	240	400
500	300	500
600	360	600
700	420	700
800	480	800
900	540	900
1000	600	1000

THE LONGITUDE EAST OF LONDON

THE LONGITUDE WEST OF LONDON



SYRIA NORTH PART.

English Miles

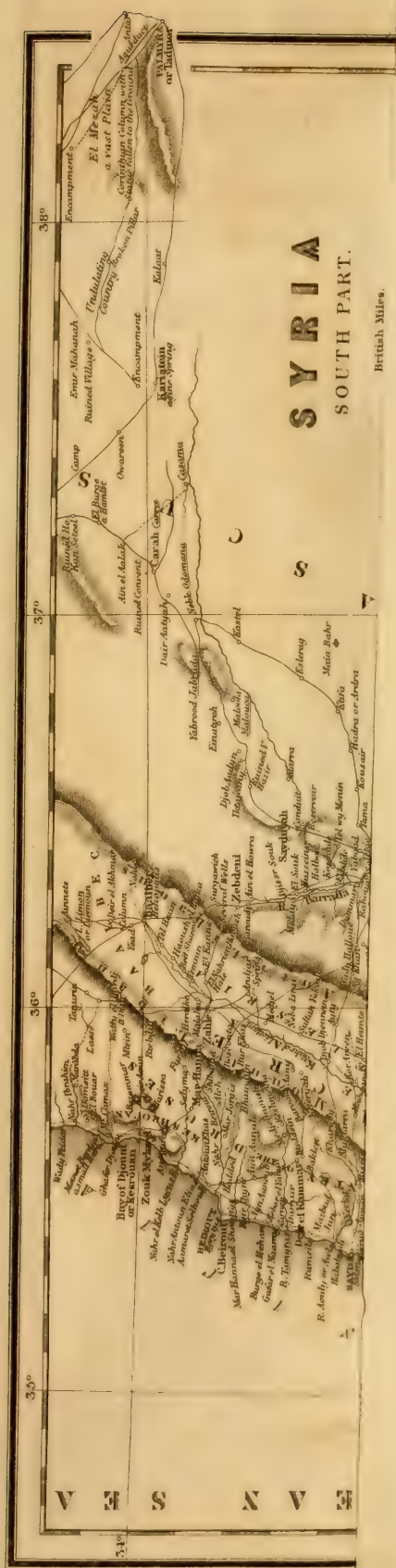


SYRIA

ASIA MINOR

M E D I T E R R A N E A N

Longitude East from Greenwich



SYRIA SOUTH PART.

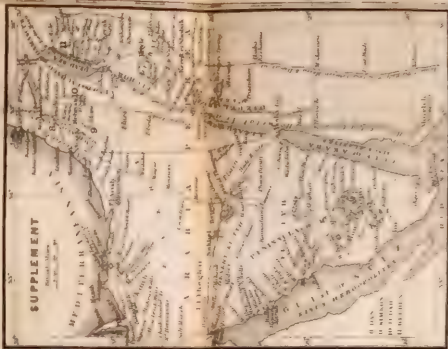
British Miles.

RED SEA

SYRIA SOUTH PART

Scale of Miles
0 10 20

Natural waters underlined



Note: The names of the Provinces
here are omitted for brevity

1. LEBEUS
2. DAMASCUS
3. ZABULON
4. DAMASCUS
5. DAMASCUS
6. DAMASCUS
7. DAMASCUS
8. DAMASCUS
9. DAMASCUS
10. DAMASCUS
11. DAMASCUS
12. DAMASCUS
13. DAMASCUS
14. DAMASCUS
15. DAMASCUS

Scale of Miles
0 10 20

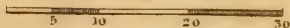
Natural waters underlined

PALESTINE

Illustrating the
New Testament

R. Scott Sc.

British Miles.



33

ACCUR

MCC

CAC

32

G R E A T S E A

IOPPA

Arund

Azotus

GAZA

PHILISTINES

Ziklag

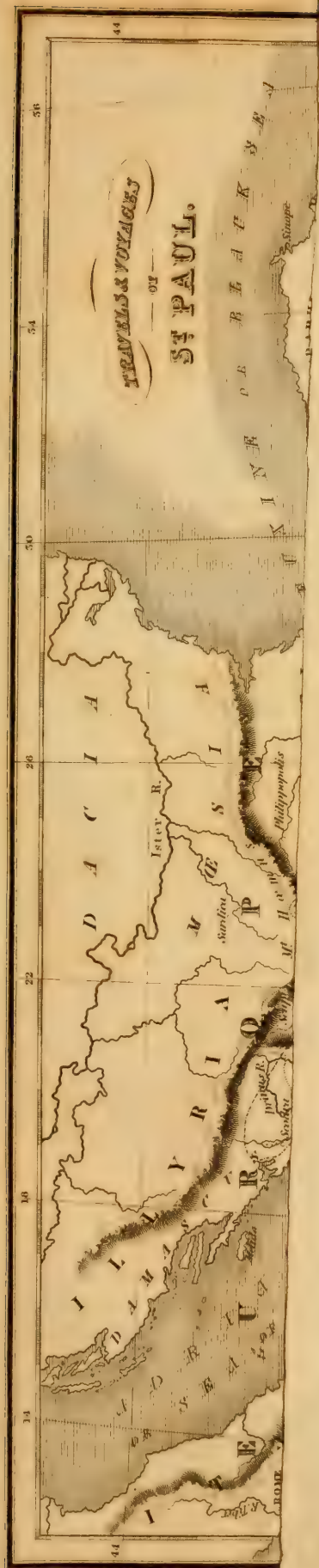
COUNTRY OF THE

31

PALESTINE, Illustrating the *New Testament*

British Miles





PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

THE character, intention, and usefulness, of STACKHOUSE'S HISTORY OF THE BIBLE, are so well known, and so universally acknowledged, that it would be waste of time to enlarge on them. The great object of the Work is to methodize, and bring down to the capacities of all readers, the important historical truths narrated in the Scriptures; to clear difficult passages from seeming inconsistencies; to aid the infirmities of the human understanding by explanation and illustration suited to the limited reasoning powers of man; and to enable the devout Christian to obtain the most satisfactory and comprehensive view of the benevolent purposes of God in Christ, which is the sum and substance of Divine Revelation from the first page to the last.

In proportion, however, as it is unnecessary to explain the design of the original Work, and to insist on its usefulness, it is incumbent on the Publishers to state fully the object they had in view, and the ends they have achieved, by the publication of a New Edition of this book.

A History of the Bible, while it comprises a systematic arrangement of the Scriptural Narrative, is, at the same time, a condensation of the accumulated stores of human intellect and research applied to the explanation of the Volume of Divine Revelation, and unveiling, as it were, the vast effulgence of the Sacred Mind as therein made known to man. It must be obvious, therefore, that a Work of this nature admits of improvement; that facts daily elicited, and inquiries continually pursued, will, in the course of time, furnish many new, important, and striking illustrations, which could not have presented themselves to the writer of the original book.

The attention of the good and learned has been directed in late years, no less than in former times, to the subject of Biblical criticism; and the results of their labours are seen in the elucidation of many passages in Holy Writ, which, though reverently received as truth, being from the Fountain of Truth, had previously been comprehended only to a limited extent. The facilities which are now afforded for visiting the countries—

“Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,
Which, eighteen hundred years ago, were nailed
For our advantage to the bitter cross;”

and the descriptions thence brought by travellers, both Christian and Sceptical, have tended materially to increase the satisfaction of the pious mind, by furnishing it with indisputable proofs of the truth of those things which ignorance and infidelity had chosen for their scoff and scorn; and demonstrating that the predictions of Sacred Writ, have been so literally fulfilled, as to compel the doubter to acknowledge that they could only have been uttered under the guidance of the Spirit of Him who ‘declareth the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done,’ and to whose *ken* all things, even the thoughts and the heart of man, are naked and bare.

It has been the aim of the Editor and Publishers of this Edition of Stackhouse, to avail themselves, to the fullest extent, of those sources of information adverted to in the preceding paragraph; and they trust it will be found to include new treasures of Biblical criticism, many additional illustrations of Eastern manners and customs, and geographical and topographical descriptions of "the land of the Gospel," more definite and satisfactory than had been previously given. As instances of the attention that has been paid to the last named department, they may refer to the supplemental chapter, on the journeyings of the Israelites, and to the copious descriptions of the mountains, lakes, and rivers of Palestine. But it would be far beyond the compass of this Preface to advert particularly to the great body of information that has been collected for the present Edition. They may only add, that, in the chronological department they have availed themselves of Dr Hales' admirable Analysis of Chronology,—certainly the most successful work in rectifying mistakes, and explaining difficulties, arising from the difference of dates, that has yet appeared: and while alluding to the additions that have been made, the Publishers take the opportunity of offering due acknowledgment to a Friend of high attainments in Biblical learning, to whom they are indebted for much valuable assistance in various departments of this Work, but whose name they are not at liberty to make known.

It remains only briefly to notice the Indexes and Table of Scriptural Passages. The former of these will be found abundantly copious for all purposes, and great care has been taken in the arrangement, to make them of easy and satisfactory reference. The Table of Scriptural passages forms a most important feature in the book. It includes nearly FIVE THOUSAND SACRED TEXTS, which are closely applied, illustrated and explained in the course of the Work.

The Editor and Publishers contemplate the close of their labours with much satisfaction: they feel that they have rendered good service to the Christian cause by the publication of this Enlarged and Improved Edition of Stackhouse, in which they have brought all the past stores, and recent advances of human learning and research, to the illustration of the Sacred Volume. Nor is it the least part of their gratification, that they have produced this valuable book at a price, and in a form, that places it within the reach of all classes of the community.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE Holy Bible itself, being principally historical, the history of an history may seem a solecism to those who do not sufficiently attend to the nature of these sacred writings, whose scope and method, and form of diction, are vastly different from any modern composition: wherein the idiom of the tongue in which it was penned, and the oriental customs to which it alludes, occasion much obscurity; the difference of time wherein it was wrote, and variety of authors concerned therein, a diversity of style, and frequent repetitions; the intermixture of other matters with what is properly historical, a seeming perplexity; the malice of foes, and negligence of scribes, frequent dislocations; and the defect of public records, in the times of persecution, a long interruption of about four hundred years; to say nothing that this history relates to one nation only, and concerns itself no farther with the rest of mankind, than as they had some dealings and intercourse with them. Whoever, I say, will give himself the liberty to consider a little the form and composition of the Holy Bible, and the weighty concerns which it contains, must needs be of opinion, that this, of all other books, requires to be explained where it is obscure; methodized where it seems confused; abridged where it seems prolix; supplied where it is defective; and analyzed when its historical matters lie blended and involved with other quite different subjects. This I call writing *an history of the Bible*: and hereupon I thought, with myself, that if I could but give the reader a plain and succinct narrative of what is purely historical in this sacred book, without the interposition of any other matter; if I could but settle the chronology, and restore the order of things, by reducing every passage and fact to its proper place and period of time; if I could but, by way of notes, and without breaking in upon the series of the narrative part, explain difficult texts, rectify mis-translations, and reconcile seeming contradictions, as they occurred in my way; if I could but supply the defect of the Jewish story, by continuing the account of their affairs under the rule and conduct of the Maccabees; if I could but introduce profane history as I went along, and, at proper distances of time, sum up to my reader what was transacting in other parts of the then known world, while he was perusing the records of the Hebrew worthies; and at the same time, if I could but answer such questions and objections as infidelity, in all ages, has been too ready to suggest against the truth and authority of the Scriptures; and with all, discuss such passages, and illustrate such facts and events as make the most considerable figure in Holy Writ: If I could

but do this, I say, I thought I had undertaken a work which might possibly be of public use and benefit; seasonable at all times, but more especially in the age wherein we live, and, if I may be permitted to apply to myself the apostle's words, such as might make me 'unto God a sweet savour in Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life.'

I am very well aware, that several have gone before me in works of the like denomination; but I may boldly venture to say, that none of them have taken in half that compass of view which I here promise to myself. Blome has given us a very pompous book; but besides that it is no more than a bare translation of *Sieur de Roy-amont's History of the Old and New Testament*, it omits many material facts, observes no exact series in its narration, but is frequently interrupted by insertions of the sentiments of the fathers, which prove not always very pertinent; and, in short, is remarkable for little or nothing else but the number of its sculptures, which are badly designed, and worse executed. Elwood, in some respects, has acquitted himself much better; he has made a pretty just collection of the Scripture account of things; but then, when any difficulty occurs, he usually gives us the sacred text itself, without any explanatory note or comment upon it; and so not only leaves his reader's understanding as ignorant as he found it, but his mind in some danger of being tainted by the unlawful parallels he makes between the acts of former and later times and by a certain levity which he discovers ^a upon several occasions, not so becoming the sacredness of his subject. Howel has certainly excelled all that went before him, both in his design and execution of it. He has given us a continued relation of Scripture-transactions; has filled up the chasm between Malachi and Christ; has annexed some notes, which help to explain the difficulties that are chiefly occasioned by the mistakes of our translators: but in my opinion, he has been a little too sparing in his notes, and, as some will have it, too pompous in his diction. He has omitted many things that might justly deserve his notice, and taken notice of others that seem not so considerable. Some very remarkable events he has thought fit to pass by without any comment; nor has he attempted to vindicate such passages as the lovers of infidelity are apt to lay hold on, in order to entrench themselves the safer.

^a 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

^a Vid. his account of the plague of lice; of Pharaoh and his people; the story of Samson's foxes, and that of Esther.

Whatever other men's sentiments might be, these things I thought in some measure essential, and at this time more especially, extremely necessary in an history of the Bible; and to encourage my pursuit of this method, I have several helps and assistances which those who went before me were not perhaps so well accommodated with.

The foundation of a lecture by the honourable Mr Boyle has given occasion for the principles of natural and revealed religion to be fairly stated and the objections and cavils of infidelity of all kinds to be fully answered. The institution of another by the Lady Moyer has furnished us with several tracts, wherein the great articles of our Christian faith are strenuously vindicated, and, as far as the nature of mysteries will allow, accurately explained,

The uncommon licence which of late years has been taken to decry all prophecies and miracles, and to expose several portions of scripture as absurd and ridiculous, has raised up some learned men, (God grant that the number of them may every day increase,) to contend earnestly for the faith, and, by the help of critical knowledge in ancient customs and sacred languages, to rescue from their hands such texts and passages as the wicked and unstable were endeavouring to wrest, to the perversion of other men's faith, as well as their own destruction. The commentaries and annotations we have upon the scriptures, both from our own countrymen, and from foreigners, have, of late years, been very solid and elaborate, the dissertations or particular treatises on the most remarkable facts and events, extremely learned and judicious; the harmonists, or writers, who endeavour to reconcile seeming contradictions, very accurate and inquisitive; such as have wrote in an analytical way, clear and perspicuous enough, and to pass by several others, sacred geography has been fully handled by the great Bochart, sacred chronology sufficiently ascertained by our renowned Usher; and the chasm in the sacred story abundantly supplied by our learned Prideaux; so that there are no materials wanting to furnish out a new and complete history of the Bible even according to the compass and extent of my scheme. That therefore the reader may be apprized of the method I propose to myself, and what he may reasonably expect from me, I must desire him to observe, that, according to several periods of time, from the creation of the world to the full establishment of Christianity, my design is to divide the whole work into eight books. Whereof

The I. Will extend from the creation to the deluge.

The II. From the deluge to the call of Abraham.

The III. From the call of Abraham to the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt.

The IV. From the departure of the Israelites to their entrance into the land of Canaan.

The V. From their entrance into Canaan to the building of Solomon's temple.

The VI. From the building of the temple to the Babylonish captivity.

The VII. From the captivity to the birth of Christ. And The VIII. From the birth of Christ to the completion of the canon of the New Testament.

Each of these books I purpose to divide into several chapters, and each chapter into three parts. The number of chapters will vary, according as the matter in each period arises, but the parts in each chapter will be constantly the same, namely.

1st, *A Narrative Part*, which, in plain and easy diction, will contain the substance of the Scripture-history for such a determinate time.

2dly, *An Argumentative Part*, which will contain an answer to such objections as may possibly be made against any passage in the history comprised in that time. And,

3dly, *A Philological Part*, which will contain the sentiments of the learned, both ancient and modern, concerning such remarkable events or transactions as shall happen in that time; or perhaps a summary account of what is most considerable in profane history, towards the conclusion of each period.

That the reader may perceive how I gradually advance in the sacred history, and by turning to his Bible, may compare the narrative with the text, and find a proper solution to any difficulty that shall occur in the course of his reading, I shall at the top of the page of each section, set down the book and chapter, or chapters, I have then under consideration, and the date of the year, both from the creation, and before and after the coming of Christ, wherein each remarkable event happened. And that all things may be made as easy as possible to the reader, I shall take care not to trouble him with any exotic words in the text; but where there is occasion to insert any Hebrew expressions, for his sake, I shall choose to do it in English characters, and to reduce every thing that I conceive may be above his capacity, to the notes and quotations at the bottom of the page.

The notes, besides the common references, will be only of four kinds.

1st, *Additional*, when a passage is borrowed from any other author, whether foreign or domestic, to confirm or illustrate the matter we are then upon.

2dly, *Explanatory*, when by producing the right signification of the original, or inquiring into some ancient custom, and the like, we make the passage under consideration more intelligible.

3dly, *Reconciliatory*; when, by the help of a parallel place, or some logical distinction, we show the consistency of two or more passages in Scripture, which, at first view, seem to be contradictory.

4thly, *What we call Emendatory*, when, by considering the various senses of the original word, and selecting what is most proper, or, by having a due attention to the design of our author and the context, the mistakes in our translations are set right.

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INTRODUCTION.

ON THE NECESSITY OF A DIVINE REVELATION, AND THE GENUINENESS, AUTHENTICITY, INSPIRATION, &c. OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

THE collection of writings which is regarded by Christians as the sole standard of their faith and practice, has been distinguished at different periods by different appellations. Thus it is frequently termed the *Scriptures*, the sacred or holy Scriptures, and sometimes the canonical Scriptures. It is called the *Scriptures*, as being the most important of all *writings*; the *holy* or *sacred Scriptures*, because the books composing it were written by persons divinely inspired; and the *canonical Scriptures*, either because it is a rule of faith and practice to those who receive it, or because, when the number and authenticity of its different books were ascertained, lists of these were inserted in the ecclesiastical canons or catalogue, in order to distinguish them from such books as were *apocryphal*, or of uncertain authority, and unquestionably not of divine origin. But the most common appellation is that of the *Bible*—a word derived from the Greek *βιβλος* (*biblos*)—which, in its primary import, simply denotes a book, but which is given to the writings of Moses and the prophets, of the evangelists and apostles, by way of eminence, as being the book of books, infinitely surpassing in excellence and importance every unassisted production of the human mind.—*Lardner's Works*, vol. vi.—*Jahn's Introduction ad Vet. Fæd.* and *Horne's Introduction*, vol. i. and ii.

That portion of Scripture which the Jewish church received as of divine authority, is usually called 'The Old Testament,' in order to distinguish it from those sacred books which contain the doctrines, precepts, and promises of the Christian religion, and which are designated 'The New Testament.' The appellation of Testament is derived from 2 Cor. iii. 6, 14. where the words ἡ Παλαια Διαθηκη, and ἡ Καινη Διαθηκη are, by the old Latin translators, rendered *antiquum testamentum*, and *novum testamentum*, instead of *antiquum fædus*, and *novum fædus*, the old and new covenant; for although the Greek word Διαθηκη signifies both testament and covenant, yet in the Septuagint version it uniformly corresponds with the Hebrew word בְּרִית (*berith*), which always signifies a covenant. The term 'old covenant,' used by St Paul in 2 Cor. iii. 14. is evidently applied to the dispensation of Moses, and the term 'new covenant,' in ver. 6 of the same chapter, is applied to the dispensation of Christ; and these distinguishing appellations were applied by the early ecclesiastical authors to the

writings which contained those dispensations, and from them it has been transmitted to modern times.—*Lardner's works*, vol. vi.—*Horne's Introduction*, vol. i.—*Bishop Tomline's El. of Theol.*

The volume which is made up of the Old and New Testament contains a great number of different narratives and compositions, written by several persons, at distant periods, in different languages, and on various subjects. Yet all of these collectively claim to be a divine revelation: that is, a discovery afforded by God to man, of himself, or of his will, over and above what he has made known by the light of nature or reason.

The objects of our knowledge are of three kinds:—Thus some things are discernible by the light of nature without revelation; of this kind is the knowledge of God from the traces of his wisdom and power exhibited in the works of creation, 'for his invisible things, even his eternal power and Godhead since the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,' (Rom. i. 20). Other things are of pure and simple revelation, which cannot be known by the light of nature; such is the doctrine of the salvation of the world by Jesus Christ. Others again are discoverable by the light of nature, but imperfectly, and therefore stand in need of revelation to give them further proof and evidence; of this sort are a future state, and eternal rewards and punishments. But of what degree soever the revelation may be, whether partial or entire; whether a total discovery of some unknown truth, or only a fuller and clearer manifestation of truths imperfectly known by unassisted reason; it must be supernatural and proceed from God.—*Bishop William's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.*

No one who believes that there is a God, and that he is a Being of infinite power, wisdom and knowledge, can reasonably deny, that he can, if he thinks fit, make a revelation of himself and of his will in an extraordinary way, different from the discoveries made by men themselves, in the more natural and ordinary use of their own rational faculties and powers. For if the power of God be almighty, it must extend to whatever does not imply a contradiction, which cannot be pretended in this case. Can it be supposed that the author of our being has it not in his power to communicate ideas to our minds, for informing and instructing us in those

things which we are deeply concerned to know; our inability clearly to explain the manner in which this is done, is no just objection against it. And as it cannot reasonably be denied that God can, if he sees fit, communicate his will to man, in a way of extraordinary revelation; so he can do it in such a manner, as to give those to whom this revelation is originally and immediately made, a full and certain assurance that it is a true and divine revelation. For if men can communicate their thoughts by speech or language, in such a way as that we may certainly know who it is that speaks to us, it would be a strange thing to affirm, that God, on supposition of his communicating his mind and will to any person or persons, in a way of extraordinary revelation, has no way of causing his rational creatures to know that it is he, and no other, who makes this discovery to them. To admit the existence of a God, and to deny him such a power, is a glaring contradiction.—*Leland's Advant. and Necess. of Revelation.*

Since no man can presume to say that it is inconsistent with any of the attributes of a Supreme Being, or unbecoming the wisdom of the Creator of all things, to reveal to his creatures more fully the way to happiness; to make a particular discovery of his will to them; to set before them, in a clear light, the rewards and punishments of a future state; to explain in what manner he will be pleased to be worshipped; and to declare what satisfaction he will accept for sin, and upon what conditions he will receive returning sinners: nay, since, on the contrary, it seems more suitable to our natural notions of the goodness and mercy of God, to suppose that he should do all this, than not, it follows undeniably, that it was most reasonable and agreeable to the dictates of nature, to expect or hope for such a divine revelation. Accordingly we find it to have been the general belief of mankind in every age, that some kind of commerce and communication subsisted between God and man. This was the foundation of all the religious rites and ceremonies which every heathen nation pretended to receive from their deities, and the generality of the heathen world were so fully persuaded, that the great rules for the conduct of human life must receive their authority from heaven, that their chief legislators, such as Minos, Pythagoras, Solon, Lycurgus, Numa, &c. &c. thought it not a sufficient recommendation of their laws that they were agreeable to the light of nature, unless they gave out also that they received them from God.

Besides, the wisest and best of the heathen philosophers, particularly Socrates and Plato, were not ashamed to confess openly their sense of the want of a divine revelation, and to declare their judgment that it was most natural and truly agreeable to right reason, to hope for something of that nature.—*Clarke's Evid. of Nat. and Rev. Relig. Prop. vi.*—*Boyle's Lectures*, vol. ii. fol. ed.

Further, a divine revelation was not only probable and desirable, but also absolutely necessary.

The history of past ages clearly shows, that mankind, by the mere light of nature, could never attain to any certain knowledge of the will of God, of their own true happiness and final destiny, or recover themselves from that state of moral corruption and depravity into which they had fallen.

If we examine the writings of the most celebrated

philosophers and sages of antiquity, we shall find, that they were not only ignorant of many important points in religion, but also that endless differences and inconsistencies prevailed among them with regard to points of the greatest moment; while some of them taught doctrines which directly tended to promote vice and wickedness in the world, and the influence of all in rectifying the notions and reforming the lives of mankind, was altogether ineffectual. But in order to illustrate, and confirm the point, we shall advance a few particulars.

1. The ancients were ignorant of the true origin of the world, and of mankind.

Some of them asserted that the world existed from eternity; others admitted that the formation of the world was owing to chance; others ascribed it to a plurality of causes or authors; while those who acknowledged that it had a beginning in time, knew not by what gradations, nor in what manner the universe was raised into its present beauty and order.

2. They were ignorant of the origin of evil, and of the cause of the depravity and misery which actually exist among mankind.

The wisest and most judicious of the heathen philosophers were not backward to complain, that they found the understandings of men so dark and cloudy, their wills so biassed and inclined to evil, their passions so outrageous and rebellious against reason, that they looked upon the rules and laws of right reason as scarcely practicable, and which they had very little hopes of ever being able to persuade the world to submit to. They saw that human nature was strangely corrupted, but at the same time they were compelled to confess, that they neither knew the origin of the disease, nor could discover a sufficient remedy. They could not assign any reason why mankind, who have the noblest faculties of any beings on earth, should yet generally pursue their own destruction with as much industry as the beasts avoid it.—*Clarke's Evid. of Nat. and Rev. Relig. Prop. vi.* and *Horne's Introd.* vol. i.

3. They were ignorant of the manner in which God might be acceptably worshipped, and of the means by which such as have erred from the paths of virtue, and have offended God, might again be restored to his favour; they were utterly unable to discover any method by which a reconciliation might be effected between an offended God and his guilty creatures, and his mercy exercised without the violation of his justice. The light of nature, indeed, taught them that some kind of worship or other was due to the Supreme Being, but in what particular manner, and with what kind of service he will be worshipped, unassisted reason could never discover. Accordingly, even the best of the heathen philosophers, such as Plato and Cicero, complied with the outward superstitious religion of their country, and advised others to do the same, and while they delivered sublime and noble sentiments concerning the nature and attributes of the supreme God, they fell lamentably into the practice of the most absurd idolatry.

The light of nature showed their guilt to the most reflecting of the ancient philosophers, but it could not show them a remedy. From the consideration of the goodness and mercifulness of God, they entertained a hope that he would show himself placable to sinners, and might in some way be reconciled; but what kind of

propitiation he would be pleased to accept, and in what manner this reconciliation must be made, the light of nature could not point out. Here nature fails, and expects with impatience the aid of some particular revelation. That God will receive returning sinners, and accept of repentance, instead of perfect obedience, they cannot certainly know to whom he has not made such a revelation; or whether God will not require something further, for the vindication of his justice, and of the honour and dignity of his laws and government, and for more effectually expressing his indignation against sin, before he will restore men to the privileges they had forfeited; they cannot be satisfactorily assured, without a special revelation: for it cannot be satisfactorily proved, from any of God's attributes, that he is absolutely obliged to pardon all the sins of all his creatures at all times, barely and immediately upon their repenting. There arises therefore from nature, no sufficient comfort to sinners, but anxious and endless solicitude about the means of appeasing the Deity. Hence those various ways of sacrificing and those numberless superstitions which overspread the heathen world, but which were so little satisfactory to the wiser part of mankind, even in those times of darkness, that they could not forbear frequently declaring, that they thought such rites and sacrifices could avail little or nothing towards appeasing the wrath of an offended God, or making their prayers acceptable in his sight, but that something seemed to them to be still wanting, though they knew not what.—*Plato's Alcibiades*, 2.—*Clarke's Evid. Prop. vi.*

4. They knew little or nothing respecting the necessity of divine grace, and assistance towards our attainment of virtue and perseverance in it.

It was, indeed, a general practice among the heathens to pray to their gods; but then the things they ordinarily prayed for were only outward advantages, or what are usually called the goods of fortune: as to wisdom and virtue, they thought every man was to depend upon himself alone for obtaining them. The Stoics, who were the most eminent teachers of morals among the heathens, endeavoured to raise man to a state of absolute independency, and some of them asserted that the will of man is unconquerable by God himself. (*Epictetus*, b. i. chap. 1.). Seneca represents it as needless to apply to the gods by prayer, since it is in every man's own power to make himself happy; and speaking of virtue, and a uniform course of life always consistent with itself, he says, 'This is the chief good which, if thou possessest, thou wilt begin to be a companion to the gods, not a suppliant to them.'—*Sen. Epist. 41.*—*Leland's Advant. and Necess. of Revelation.* vol. ii. chap. ix.

5. They had but dark and confused notions of the *summum bonum*, or supreme felicity of man.

On this topic, Cicero tells us, there was such a disagreement among the ancient philosophers, that it was almost impossible to enumerate their different sentiments, while he at the same time states the opinions of more than twenty philosophers, all of which are equally extravagant and absurd.

6. They had but weak and imperfect notions of the immortality of the soul.

The existence of the soul after death was denied by many of the Peripatetics, or followers of Aristotle, and this doctrine seems to have been disbelieved by

Aristotle himself. The Stoics had no settled or consistent scheme on this head, nor had the doctrine of the immortality of the soul any prominent place among the tenets of their sect. But even among those philosophers who expressly taught this doctrine, considerable doubt and uncertainty appear to have prevailed. Thus Socrates, a little before his death, tells his friends, 'I am now about to leave this world, and ye are still to continue in it: which of us shall have the better part allotted to us, God only knows;' from the scope of which passage, it appears, that he was doubtful whether he should have any existence after death or not. And again, at the end of his admirable discourse concerning the immortality of the soul, he said to his friends, who came to pay him their last visit, 'I would have you to know, that I have great hopes that I am now going into the company of good men; yet I would not be too presumptuous and confident concerning it.' In his apology to his judges, he comforts himself with the consideration 'that there is much ground to hope that death is good; for it must necessarily be one of these two; either the dead man is nothing, and has not a sense of anything; or it is only a change or migration of the soul hence to another place, according to what we are told. If there is no sense left, and death is like a profound sleep and quiet rest without dreams, it is wonderful to think what gain it is to die; but if the things which are told us are true, that death is a migration to another place, this is still a much greater good.'—*Plato in Phæd. Apolog. Socrat. in fin.*

The same doubts were entertained by Plato, the most eminent of the disciples of Socrates. Cicero, who ranks among the most eminent of the heathen philosophers, laboured under the same uncertainty. After having advanced a number of excellent arguments in behalf of this doctrine, and stated several opinions concerning the return and duration of the soul, he says, 'Which of these two opinions is true, (that the soul is mortal or immortal), God only knows, and which of these is most probable, is a very great question.'—*Cic. Tuscul. Quest. b. i.* In another place he says, 'I know not how, when I read the arguments in proof of the soul's immortality, methinks I am fully convinced, and yet after I have laid aside the book, and come to think and consider of the matter, alone by my myself, presently I find myself slip again insensibly into my old doubts.'—*Ibid.* While these great men and their followers were perplexed with doubts on this great point, others of the heathens entertained the most gloomy notions, some imagining that they should, after death, be removed from one body into another and be perpetual wanderers, and others contemplating the grave as an eternal habitation, and death as the complete termination of man's existence.—*Jortin's Discourses.*—*Horne's Introduction*, vol. i.—*Clarke's Evidences.*

7. The ancient philosophers attained to no certainty respecting the eternal rewards and punishments of a future state, and of the resurrection of the body.

The poets indeed celebrated, in sublime and beautiful verse, the joys of Elysium, or a state and place of future bliss, and painted in dismal colours the miseries of Tartarus, or hell, but these were only regarded as fabulous representations: and although the philosophers and legislators were sensible of the importance and necessity of the doctrine of future punishments as well

as rewards, to the well being of society, yet, strange as it may seem, they in general discarded this doctrine, and represented all fears of future punishment as vain and superstitious. Polybius complains that in his time the belief of a future state was rejected by the great men and by the bulk of the people, and to this disbelief he ascribes the great corruption of manners; but even while Polybius blames the great men among the Greeks for encouraging the people to disbelieve and despise future punishments, he himself represents them as only useful fictions. Cæsar also treated the notions respecting future punishments as fables, and Pliny, the naturalist, represents them as childish and senseless fictions of mortals who were ambitious of never-ending existence.

As to the resurrection of the body, neither the philosophers, nor the common people among the Greeks and Romans, seem to have had any notion of it. For although their poets made frequent mention of the ghosts of departed men appearing in a visible form, and retaining in the shades below their former shapes, yet by such representations, if they mean any thing, they mean no more than that the soul, after this life, passes into another state, and is there invested with a body made up of light aerial particles, quite different from those of which the former body had been composed. When St Paul at Athens spoke of the resurrection of the dead, we are told his hearers mocked or treated it with contempt as a strange doctrine. (Acts xvii. 18, 20, 32.) The Epicureans and Stoics are particularly mentioned in this passage, but the other sects of philosophers, even those who argued most for the immortality of the soul, held the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in contempt. They could not conceive that the gross matter which they saw laid in the grave, or reduced to ashes on the funeral pile, or blown away by the winds and scattered in the air, should ever be raised or collected again and revived: neither did those who argued for the immortality of the soul, believe that the resurrection of the body, if it were possible, was desirable; for they looked upon the body as the prison of the soul, and considered that the happiness of the soul consisted in its being loosed and disengaged from the body.

When therefore we consider the ignorance and uncertainty which prevailed among some of the greatest teachers of antiquity, respecting those great and fundamental truths which are the chief barriers of virtue and religion, it appears certain that the heathens had no perfect system of moral rules for the conduct of life, or for the promotion of piety. Thus most of the philosophers accounted revenge to be not only lawful but commendable. Pride and the love of popular applause were esteemed the best and greatest incentives to virtue and noble actions; suicide was regarded as the strongest mark of heroism, and the perpetrators of it celebrated as men of noble minds. Theft, as is well known, was permitted in Egypt and in Sparta. Plato taught the expedience and lawfulness of exposing children in particular cases. The exposure of infants, and the putting to death of children who were weak or imperfect in form, was permitted at Sparta by Lycurgus. At Athens the women were treated and disposed of as slaves; and it was enacted that infants which appeared to be maimed, should either be killed or exposed. Nothing could exceed the cruelties which were exercised against slaves

both among the Greeks and Romans. Among the Spartans they were not only generally treated with great harshness and insolence, but it was part of their policy to massacre them on several occasions, in cold blood, and without provocation; the gratification of the sensual appetites, and of the most unnatural lusts was openly taught and allowed.

And not only did these sentiments and principles, which were entertained and inculcated by the philosophers and legislators of antiquity, lead to all kinds of immorality and wickedness, but the very religious systems and established forms of worship of the heathens, instead of being calculated to preserve men in the practice of morality and virtue, only served to plunge them deeper in vice and degrading superstition. They paid divine worship to oxen, crocodiles, birds and reptiles. They metamorphosed beasts into gods, and conversely transformed their gods into beasts, ascribing to them drunkenness, unnatural lusts and the most loathsome vices. Drunkenness they worshipped under the name of Bacchus, lasciviousness under that of Venus. Momus was with them the god of calumny, and Mercury the god of thieves. Even Jupiter, the greatest of their gods, they considered to be an adulterer and a rebellious son. The worship of avowedly evil beings at length became prevalent among them, and hence many of their rites were cruel and contrary to humanity, and hence also the licentiousness and impurity of their whole religious system became notorious. Thus, to select one or two instances out of many, the rites of the goddess Cybele were no less infamous for lewdness than for cruelty, and the practice of these rites spread far and wide, and formed part of the public worship at Rome. The aphrodisia, or festivals in honour of Venus, were observed with lascivious ceremonies in divers parts of Greece; and Strabo relates that there was a temple at Corinth so rich that it maintained above a thousand harlots sacred to her service. These abominable customs were not confined to Greece, for Herodotus informs us that they were observed at Babylon, and other authors relate that they existed in Syria and Africa. The feasts of Bacchus were equally impure and licentious, and according to Herodotus, many of the Egyptian rites were cruel and shockingly obscene. The offering up of human sacrifices was, for many ages, very general in the heathen world. It obtained among the Phenicians, Syrians, Arabians, Carthaginians and other people of Africa, and among the Egyptians till the time of Amasis. The same thing we are told concerning the Thracians, the ancient Scythians, the Gauls, Gerinans and Britons. And though this horrible rite was never so common among the Greeks and Romans, as among some other nations, yet it continued for a long time to be in use among them upon extraordinary occasions.

In short, when we examine the history of the Pagan nations of antiquity, we cannot but be struck with the accuracy of the description which the apostle Paul, in the first chapter of the Romans, gives of these nations generally, when he tells us that they were 'given up to uncleanness and vile affections; that they were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; that they were full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inven-

tors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.'—*Leland's Necess. and Advant. of Revelation.*—*Clarke's Evid. of Nat. and Rev. Relig.*—*Gregory's Letters on Christ. Relig.*—*Horne's Introd. vol. i.*—*Hartly on Man*, vol. ii.

There were, indeed, among the heathens some few philosophers who cherished better principles and inculcated comparatively purer tenets than those already alluded to; and no doubt these men were raised up and designed by God, who never left himself wholly without witness, as instruments to reprove, in some measure, and put some kind of check to the extreme superstition and wickedness of the nations in which they lived, or at least to bear witness against, and condemn these nations. But still the instructions of these individuals were very defective and inefficient. They never were able to reform the world, or to keep together any considerable number of men in the knowledge and practice of virtue. Their precepts were delivered to their own immediate pupils and not to the lower orders of people, who constitute the great mass of society. Besides, the ethical systems of the philosophers were too refined for the common people, most of their discourses upon morals being rather speculative and learned, nice and subtle disputes, than practical and universally useful instructions; and even those things of which they were not only certain themselves, but which they were also able to prove and explain to others with sufficient plainness and clearness, such as are the most obvious and necessary duties of life, they had not sufficient authority to enforce and inculcate upon men's minds so as to influence and govern the general practice of the world. The truths which they proved by speculative reasoning wanted still more sensible authority to back them, and make them of more force and efficacy in practice; and the precepts which they laid down, however reasonable and fit to be obeyed, were still destitute of weight, and were but the precepts of men. They could present no motives sufficiently powerful to animate men's minds and stimulate them to the practice of true virtue, and support them under the trials and calamities of life. In fact, the philosophers never did nor could effect any remarkable change in the minds and lives of men such as was undeniably produced by the preaching of Christ and his apostles. In the original uncorrupted state of human nature, before the mind of man was depraved with false and erroneous opinions, corrupt affections, and vicious inclinations, customs and habits, right reason may be supposed to have been a sufficient guide and a principle powerful enough to preserve men in the constant practice of their duty. But in the present circumstances and condition of mankind, unassisted reason is altogether insufficient to accomplish this end.*

* The four great propositions which the moderns almost universally concede to natural religion, as integral parts of it, are, 1st, That there is but one God. 2d, That God is nothing of those things which we see. 3d, That God takes care of all things below, and governs all the world. 4th, That he alone is the great Creator of all things out of himself. Now they are uncontroversial facts, which cannot be too deeply engraven upon the mind that none of the greatest and wisest men among the Greeks and Romans held *all* these propositions, and that very few held *any* of them firmly; that before the Christian era no people in the world believed these propositions but the Jews; and that they

In short, the heathen philosophy was every way defective and erroneous, and if there was any thing excellent or commendable in it, there is great reason to believe that it was not the genuine result of the mental efforts of the philosophers, but derived from a higher source, even from very ancient traditions, to which they themselves usually assigned a divine original, or from scattered portions of the revelations contained in the scriptures, with which they had become acquainted through various channels.

If we direct our attention to the heathen nations of the present age, such as Tartary, the Philippine islands, many parts of Africa, China, and Hindostan, we learn, from the unanimous testimony of navigators and travellers, that they are enveloped in the grossest ignorance and idolatry, and that their religious worship, doctrines, and practices are equally corrupt with those of the Pagan nations of antiquity; yet they also possess the same light of reason which the ancient heathens enjoyed. With regard to Hindostan in particular, the polytheism is of the grossest and most debasing kind. There are not fewer than *three hundred and thirty millions of deities* claiming the adoration of their votaries! The rites are the most impure, the penances the most toilsome, the modes of self-torture almost innumerable, and as extraordinary and as exquisite in degree as human nature can sustain. The burning or burying of widows, infanticide, the immersion of the sick or dying in the Ganges, and self-devotement to destruction by the idol Juggernaut, are among the horrid practices which flow from the system of idolatry established among them, and which are exceeded in folly and ferocity by none to which paganism has given birth. The manifest effects of this system are an immersion into the grossest moral darkness, and an universal corruption of manners.—*Asiatic Researches*, vol. viii. And yet the inhabitants of Hindostan are highly celebrated for their progress in the useful arts, and for intellectual acuteness.

But notwithstanding all this mass of evidences in favour of the necessity of a divine revelation, it has been asserted by modern deists, that the book of nature is the only book to be studied, and that philosophy and right reason are sufficient to instruct and to preserve men in their duty. They cannot deny that great ignorance and corruption prevailed in the whole heathen world, but they contend that the ignorance and corruption of former ages have always been owing, not to any absolute insufficiency of the light of nature itself, but to the fault of the several particular persons in not sufficiently improving that light; and that deists now, in places where learning and right reason are cultivated, are well able to discover and explain all the obligations and motives of morality, without the aid of a revelation.

But granting it to be true that all the obligations and notions of morality could possibly be discovered and explained clearly by the mere light of nature alone, yet even this would not at all prove that there is no need of revelation. For whatever the bare natural possibility was, it is certain that the wisest philosophers of old never were able to discover and explain those obligations and duties to any effectual purpose, but always

did not *discover* them, but received them by divine revelation in the basis of the first four precepts of the decalogue.—*Dr Gregory's Letters on the Christian Religion.*—Ed.

willingly acknowledged that they still wanted some higher assistance. And as to the great pretences of modern deists, it is to be observed that the clearness of moral reasonings was much improved, and the regard to a future state very much increased even among heathen writers after the coming of Christ, and almost all the things that have been said wisely and truly by modern deists, are plainly borrowed from that revelation which they refuse to embrace, and without which they could never have been able to say the same things. They have thus been guided by a torch snatched from the temple of God, while both they and their followers idly imagine their path is illuminated by light of their own creating. Even the possibility of discovering and explaining all the necessary obligations and motives of morality, by the mere light of reason, we deny; for there are several truths of the highest importance to the happiness of men, such as the method in which God might be acceptably worshipped, the way in which he would be reconciled to returning sinners, and a future state of rewards and punishments, which could never have been discovered with any certainty by unassisted reason. Now, indeed, when our whole duty with its true motives is clearly revealed to us, its precepts appear plainly agreeable to reason, and conscience readily approves what is good, as it condemns what is evil. Nay, after our duty is thus made known to us, it is easy, not only to see its agreement with reason, but also to begin and deduce its obligations from reason; but if we had been destitute of all revealed light, the discovery of our duty in all points by the mere light of nature, would have been a work of extreme difficulty; it would have been like groping for an unknown path in the obscure twilight. And what ground have these modern worshippers of reason to imagine, that if they themselves had lived without the light of revelation, they should have been wiser than Socrates, and Plato, and Cicero? How are they certain they should have made such a proper use of their reason, as to have discovered the truth exactly, without being in any degree led aside by prejudice or neglect? If their lot had been among the vulgar, how are they sure they would not have been involved in idolatry and superstition? If they had joined themselves to the philosophers, which sect would they have chosen to follow? Or if they should have set up for themselves, how are they certain that they would have been skilful enough to have deduced the several branches of their duty, or to have applied them to the several cases of life by argumentation and force of reasoning? It is one thing to perceive that those rules of life, which are beforehand plainly laid before us, are perfectly agreeable to reason, and another thing to discover such rules merely by the light of nature. But suppose that these idolizers of reason could by strength of reason alone demonstrate to themselves all the necessary truths of religion, with the utmost clearness and distinctness, yet all men are not equally capable of being philosophers, though all men are equally obliged to be religious. At least this much is certain, that the rewards and punishments of another world cannot be so powerfully enforced, in order to influence the lives and practices of all sorts of men, by one who shall undertake to demonstrate the reality of them from abstract reasoning, as by one who shall assure mankind of the

truth and certainty of these things, by showing sufficient credentials of his having been commissioned by God for that purpose.—*Clarke's Evid. of Nat. and Rev. Relig.*—*Gregory's Letters on the Christ, Relig.*—*Horne's Introd.* vol. i.

Besides, the contradictory and discordant speculations of the modern opposers of revelation, who boast that reason is their God, are so great, and so glaring, and the precepts delivered by them for a rule of life are so utterly subversive of every principle of morality, as to demonstrate the absolute necessity of a divine revelation, *now* (supposing one never had been given), in order to lead men to the knowledge and worship of the true God, and also to impart to them the knowledge of their duties to him and towards one another. If we consult the writings of those who, in the last century, claimed to be received as the masters of reason, and the opposers of revelation, we shall find ample confirmation of the truth of this remark.*

Since, then, the history and actual condition of mankind in all ages concur to show, that a divine revelation was absolutely necessary to recover them out of this universal corruption and degeneracy, and to make known to them the proper object of their belief and worship, as well as their present duties and future expectations; it remains, that we consider the possible means of communicating such revelation to the world.

There appear to be only two methods by which an extraordinary discovery of the will of God may be made to man: namely, 1. An immediate revelation, by inspiration, or otherwise, to every individual of the human race; or else, 2. A commission accompanied with indisputable credentials, bestowed on some to convince others, that they were actually delegated by God, in order to instruct them in those things which he is pleased to reveal. But it cannot seem requisite, that the Almighty should immediately inspire, or make a direct revelation to every particular person in the world; for either he must so powerfully influence the minds and affections of men, as to take away their freedom and choice of acting, which would be to offer violence to human nature; or else, if we may judge, from the known infirmity and depravity of our nature, men would, for the most part, have continued in their evil courses and practices, and have denied God in their lives, though their understandings were so clearly and fully convinced of his will and commandments, as well as of his eternal power and Godhead. Such revelations, therefore, so far as we can judge, would have been needless and superfluous; they would have been unsuitable to the majesty and honour of God; they would have been ineffectual to the ends for which they were designed, and would have afforded occasion for many more pretences to impostures than there are now in the world; for if every one had a revelation to himself, every one might pretend to others what he pleased; and one man might be deluded by the pretence of a revelation made to another, against an express revelation made to himself.

* See Leland's view of the deistical writers, where the conflicting opinions of the modern opposers of revelation are stated at great length, and the pernicious effects which these opinions are calculated to have on morals, clearly demonstrated. See also Rankin's *Institutes of Theology*, ch. iii. sect. i. and *Horne's Introduction* vol. i. pp. 21—31.

The only other way by which we can suppose the divine will to be revealed to man, is that which the Scriptures affirm to have been actually employed; namely, the qualifying of certain individuals to declare that will to others, by infallible signs and evidences that they are authorised and commissioned by God.

But it was not only necessary that a divine revelation should be communicated to mankind, in a way best calculated to accomplish the end proposed, but also that effectual means should be employed, in order to preserve such revelation for the benefit of mankind, and to deliver it down genuine and uncorrupted to posterity. Now we know of no method better calculated for preserving and transmitting a divine revelation, than that of writing; for oral tradition is in its own nature so uncertain and insecure, that a revelation could not really be preserved by such means, without a miracle, without the occasional interposition of Almighty God to renew the memory of it at particular intervals, or his continual assistance and inspiration to keep it always alive and vigorous.

Writing is a much more secure method of conveyance than tradition, inasmuch as it is neither so liable to involuntary mistakes, through weakness of memory or understanding, nor so subject to voluntary falsifications, suppressions or additions, either out of malice or design. It is likewise a mode of conveyance more complete and uniform, more general and diffusive. Farther, experience shows that writing is a method of conveyance more lasting than tradition. Every event or matter of any consequence, we desire to commit to writing. By this, laws are promulgated; by this, arts and sciences are propagated; by this, titles and estates are secured. And what do we know of ancient history, but those memorials which have been transmitted to us by books and writings? The early accounts of nations which tradition has handed down, are so full of fables and prodigies, that it is impossible to separate truth from mere fiction. Tradition passes away like the morning cloud, but books may live as long as the sun and moon endure.

Besides, it is certainly more fair and open, more free from suspicion of any fraud or contrivance, to have a religion preserved in writing, there to be read and examined by all, than to have it committed only to a few, to be by them communicated in discourses to others, and so on, from age to age, as we find that no two persons express the same thing exactly in the same manner, nor even the same person at different times.

Hence we conclude that a divine revelation must necessarily be committed to writing, otherwise it cannot be preserved in its purity, or serve mankind as a certain rule of faith, and of life: and we may add, that the importance of the matter, the variety of the subjects, and the design of the institutions, contained in those books which Jews and Christians account to be sacred, are additional reasons why they should be committed to writing.

The necessity of a divine revelation having been shown, as well as the probability, that such a revelation would be given to mankind, and the most effectual mode of communicating and transmitting it, the next point of inquiry which naturally arises is, whether that collection of writings which professes to be a revelation coming from

God, and which Christians have received as such, furnishes sufficient evidence in support of its claims.—*Horne's Introd.* vol. i.—*Bishop Newton's Works*, vol. iv.

Now any candid and reflecting person, when he first directs his attention to this wonderful volume, and notices the awful and authoritative language which it often assumes, the sublimity and importance of the subjects of which it treats, the wonderful events and transactions which it records, and the promises and threatenings which it holds forth, will be naturally impelled to inquire, Is this book what it professes to be, the word of God? Were its various authors instructed and commissioned by God to relate the histories, announce the doctrines, enforce the precepts, predict the events, which are the subjects of their respective books? Were these holy men of God who spake as they were moved by his Spirit, or were they impostors? Or to reduce these inquiries into a methodical form, it will be asked generally, Are the books of the Old and New Testaments (excluding those which are avowedly apocryphal) genuine; that is, actually written by the persons to whom they are ascribed? Are they authentic; that is, do they relate matters of fact as they really happened? Are they inspired; that is, were they written under divine influence and guidance, so as to contain the words of God and not of man?

In discussing these momentous topics, writers on the evidences of religion generally prove, first, the genuineness, authenticity and inspiration of the New Testament; and having established its divine authority, they thence infer that of the Old Testament, for if the claims of the New Testament to be received as a divinely inspired book, be once admitted, no reasonable doubt can be entertained of the divine inspiration of the Old Testament; because the writers of the New Testament incessantly appeal to it as the word of God, and make ample quotations from it. This is perhaps the simplest and shortest method, and will be adopted in the introduction to the New Testament part of the present work. (See ch. iii. p. 831). But as it has been the practice of modern sceptics, to endeavour to shake the foundations of Christianity, by undermining the authority of the Old Testament; and as their attacks have been particularly directed against the genuineness and credit of the books of Moses, upon which the other ancient Scriptures greatly depend, it is of importance to prove, that the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, were really written by him, and are of divine authority. And if we can establish the genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration of these books, the genuineness, &c. of the remaining books of the Old Testament will follow as a matter of course, on account of their mutual and immediate dependance; and in this way also, we might prove the truth of the New Testament, because, if the Jewish Scriptures be true, the dispensation which they contain being introductory to that contained in the New Testament, the latter, as it is founded on, and the perfection of the former, must of necessity be true also.

Let it not be supposed that the question, Whether the books of the Old Testament are genuine or spurious, is one of small importance; for if these books were not written by the authors to whom they are ascribed, or nearly in ages to which they are supposed to belong, but on the contrary, were written by authors who lived at a much later period, that is, if they were *supposititious* or *spurious*, the history which is related in them would

by no means be worthy of the great credit that is given to it; the design which pervades these books would have been an imposition upon a later age, and the accomplishment of that design in the New Testament would be altogether an extraordinary and singular occurrence; the miracles therein recorded to have been anciently performed, would have been the invention of a later age, or natural events would have been metamorphosed into miracles; the prophecies asserted to be contained in those books would have been invented after the historical facts which are narrated in them; and lastly, Jesus Christ and his apostles would have approved and recommended the works of impostors. Hence it is evident of what great importance the question is, Whether these books are genuine. It is also of equal importance, to determine whether they are authentic, or relate matters of fact as they really happened, and in consequence possess authority. For a book may be genuine that is not authentic; a book may be authentic that is not genuine, and many books are both genuine and authentic, which are not inspired. These three characteristics of genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration, can meet no where but in a divine revelation.

The books of the Old Testament are written in Hebrew, and they are the only writings now extant in that language. The Old Testament, according to our Bibles, consists of thirty-nine books, but among the Jews they formed only twenty-two, which was also the number of letters in their alphabet. They divided these twenty-two books into three classes: the first class consisted of five books, namely, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which they called 'the Law;' the second class consisted of thirteen books, namely, Joshua, Judges and Ruth, in one book; the two books of Samuel, of Kings, and of Chronicles, respectively, in single books; Ezra and Nehemiah in one book; Esther, Job, Isaiah, the two books of Jeremiah, in one; Ezekiel, Daniel, and the twelve minor prophets, in one book; these thirteen books they called 'The Prophets;' the third class consisted of the four remaining books, namely, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, which four books the Jews called Chetubim, and the Greeks Hagiographa, or holy writings; this class was also called the Psalms, from the name of the first book in it. This threefold division was naturally suggested by the books themselves; it was used merely for convenience, and did not proceed from any opinion of difference in the authority of the books of the several classes. In like manner, the minor prophets were so called from the brevity of their works, and not from any supposed inferiority to the other prophets. The books are not in all instances arranged in our Bibles, according to the order of time in which they were written; but the book of Genesis was the earliest composition contained in the sacred volume, except, as some think, the book of Job; and the book of Malachi was certainly the latest. The five books of Moses, namely, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, usually distinguished by the name of 'The Pentateuch,' from two Greek words *pente*, five, and *teuchos*, volume, were originally written in one continued work, and still remain in that form in the public copies read in the Jewish synagogues. It is uncertain when this portion of

Scripture was first adopted in the Septuagint version, as the titles prefixed are of Greek derivation; the Pentateuch was, however, distinguished as five books in the private copies used by the Jews in the time of Josephus.

The book of Genesis, which may be considered as an introduction to the rest of the Pentateuch, contains the history of 2369 years, according to the common chronology. It commences from the beginning of the world itself, and concludes with the death of the patriarch Joseph. It has received the name of Genesis, because it describes the creation of the world, the generation of man, and of all other creatures. The book of Exodus relates the tyranny of Pharaoh, the bondage of the Israelites under him in Egypt, and their miraculous deliverance from this bondage, under Moses, from which circumstance it derives its name. It describes also the entrance of the Israelites into the wilderness of Sinai, the promulgation of the law, and the building of the tabernacle. It comprehends a period of about 145 years. The book of Leviticus has its name from its giving an account of the Jewish service and worship, the offices of the Levites, and the whole Levitical order. It embraces only about the space of a month. The book of Numbers relates several remarkable incidents in the passage of the Israelites through the wilderness. It has its denomination from the numbering of the tribes by Moses, according to the command of God. It records the events of about thirty-eight years. The book of Deuteronomy, which signifies a *second law*, contains a summary repetition of the moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws, which had before been delivered by Moses, accompanied by certain additions and explanations. It contains also many exhortations, admonitions, and warnings, addressed to the Israelites, with the view of inciting them to obedience. The period of time comprised in this book is, according to some, five *lunar* weeks, and according to others, about two months. The first argument to be adduced in favour of the genuineness of the Pentateuch, is the universal concurrence of all antiquity. The rival kingdoms of Judah and Israel, the hostile sects of Jews and Samaritans, and every denomination of early Christians, received the Pentateuch, as unquestionably written by Moses; and we find it mentioned and referred to by many heathen authors, in a manner which plainly shows it to have been the general and undisputed opinion in the pagan world that this book was the work of the Jewish legislator. Nicholas of Damascus mentions the deluge, and the resting of the ark upon a high mountain of Armenia, and the preservation of Noah by means of the ark, and adds, this might be the man about whom Moses the legislator of the Jews wrote, (Joseph. Antiq. b. i. c. 3.). We are told that Alexander Polyhistor mentioned a history of the Jews written by Cleodamus, which was agreeable to the history of Moses the legislator (Ibid. b. i. c. 15). Diodorus Siculus mentions Moses as the legislator of the Jews in three different places of his remaining works, and plainly ascribes to him the laws delivered in the Pentateuch, stating also that they were prescribed by divine authority. Strabo speaks of the description which Moses gave of the deity, and says that he condemned the religious worship of the Egyptians. This statement, though not very accurate, is sufficient to show that he considered the Pentateuch as written by Moses. Both Justin and Tacitus

admitted the Pentateuch to have been written by Moses. Pliny the elder mentions 'a system of magic,' as he calls it, which was derived from Moses. Juvenal the satirist speaks of the volume of the law written by Moses. Galen makes a reference to the book of Genesis. Numenius, a Pythagorean philosopher of the second century, says that Plato borrowed from the writings of Moses his doctrines concerning the existence of a God, and the creation of the world. Longinus, in his treatise on the sublime, says "so likewise the Jewish legislator, who was no ordinary person, having conceived a just idea of the power of God, has nobly expressed it in the beginning of his laws, 'And God said,'—What? 'Let there be light, and light was. Let the earth be, and the earth was.'" Porphyry, one of the most acute and learned enemies of Christianity, admitted the genuineness of the Pentateuch, and acknowledged that Moses was prior to the Phœnician Sanchoniathon, who lived before the Trojan war; he even contended for the truth of Sanchoniathon's account of the Jews from its coincidence with the Mosaic history. Nor was the genuineness of the Pentateuch denied by any of the numerous writers against the gospel in the first four centuries, although the Christian fathers constantly appealed to the history and prophecies of the Old Testament, in support of the divine origin of the doctrines which they taught.

To this testimony from profane authors may be added the positive assertions of the sacred writers both of the Old and New Testament. Moses frequently speaks of himself as directed by God to write the commands which he received from him, and to record the events which occurred during his ministry. (See Exod. xvii. 14. xxiv. 4. Num. xxxiii. 2.) And in Deut. xxxi. 9, 24. he speaks of himself as the writer of the book of the law, in the most express terms; and it may safely be asserted, that no person who had forged the Pentateuch, or even written it in a subsequent age from existing materials, would have inserted such passages, as they must have excited inquiry, and have caused the fraud to be detected. In many subsequent books of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch is repeatedly quoted and referred to under the names of 'The Law,' and 'The book of Moses;' and in particular we are told that 'Joshua read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law; there was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel.' (Josh. viii. 34, 35.) From which passage it is evident that the book of the Law, or Pentateuch, existed in the time of Joshua, the successor of Moses, and was acknowledged by him. In the New Testament also the writing of the Law, or Pentateuch, is expressly ascribed to Moses. In a variety of passages in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, Moses is evidently considered as the author of the Pentateuch, and every one of the five books is quoted as written by him.

Thus the books of Moses have constantly been received as his, and have been delivered down to us as his by the consent of all ages, by Jews, Heathens, and Christians; nor was their genuineness ever denied or questioned by those whose interest it was to deny it; by any of the Jews in their frequent apostasies, or by the greatest enemies of the Jews, the Samaritans, and they both certainly would have done so, if there had been

the least ground or pretence for it.—*Bp. Tomline's Christ. Theol.* part i. ch. 1.—*Bp. Newton's Works*, vol. i. dissert. 1.—*Grave's Lect. on the Pent.*

It may be observed that we have the strongest possible negative testimony to the authenticity of the Mosaic history. The laborious Whiston asserts, and in support of his assertion appeals to a similar declaration of the learned Grotius, 'That there does not appear in the genuine records of mankind belonging to ancient times, any testimonies that contradict those produced from the Old Testament; and that it may be confidently affirmed there are no such to be found.'—*Grot. b. iii. sect. 13, 14, 16.*—*Whist. Joseph.* We are not however confined to negative testimony; for it would be easy to bring forward evidence almost amounting to demonstration, to prove the positive agreement of antiquity with the narrative of the sacred historian; but we can only mention briefly some of the leading facts, concerning which the most ancient historians and earliest traditions very remarkably coincide with the Pentateuch. Thus Manetho, Cheremon, Apollonius, Lysimachus, and many others testify that Moses was the leader of the Jews, as well as the writer of their law, and conducted them from Egypt where they served as slaves. Eupolemus, Artapanus, Strabo, Trogius Pompeius, Chalcidius, and Juvenal speak of Moses as the author of a volume which was preserved with great care among the Jews, by which the worship of images, and eating of swine's flesh, were forbidden, circumcision and the observance of the sabbath strictly enjoined. Longinus, who has been already quoted, expressly mentions the account of the creation of the world, as having been written by Moses the Jewish lawgiver. Diodorus Siculus in his catalogue of those lawgivers who affected to have received the plan of their laws from some deity, mentions Moses as ascribing his to that God whom he calls Jaoh or Jah. And further he speaks of Moses as a man illustrious for his courage and prudence, who instituted the Jewish religion and law, divided the Jews into twelve tribes, established the priesthood among them with a judicial power, &c. Numenius, a Pythagorean, held the Jewish scriptures, and especially the books of Moses, in such great esteem, that his books are full of passages quoted from Moses and some of the prophets with great reverence. He says, 'Plato was only Moses speaking Greek,' and affirms that Moses by his prayers brought dreadful calamities upon Egypt. Justin Martyr enumerates many poets, historians, and lawgivers, and philosophers of Greece, who mention Moses as the leader and prince of the Jewish nation. Berosus and Abydenus mention the deluge; Artapanus, Eupolemus, and Abydenus, speak of the tower of Babel; and the latter of the failure of the attempt to build the tower. Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Tacitus, Pliny, and Solinus, give an account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the main, agreeable to that of Moses. Berosus, Alexander Polyhistor, and others make express and honourable mention of Abraham and some of his family; and even speak of his interview with Melchisedec.—*Gregory's Letters on Christ. Rel.* let. v. To this enumeration of testimonies from the remains of early writers in favour of the truth of the Mosaic writings, many others might be added. And whether we consider the information to be found in the later works of

learned men, as derived from the Jewish scriptures, or from other sources, the credit of the Mosaic history will perhaps be equally established, since they quoted from earlier authors.

For, let it be remembered that Josephus appeals to the public records of different nations, and to a great number of books extant in his time, but now lost, as indisputable evidence, in the opinion of the heathen world, for the truth of the most remarkable events related in his history, the earlier periods of which he professes to have taken principally from the Pentateuch. For a more particular account of heathen testimonies in favour of the truth of the Mosaic writings, see *Bishop Newton's Works*, vol. i.—*Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac.*—*Marsh on the Divine Authority of the Pentateuch.*—*Faber's Hor. Mos.*—*Bishop Tomline's El. of Christ. Theol.*

Of the many traditions which accord with the Mosaic history and which prevailed among the ancient nations, and still exist in several parts of the world, the following must be considered as singularly striking: that the world was formed from rude and shapeless matter by the Spirit of God; that the seventh day was a holy day; that man was created perfect, and had the dominion given him over all the inferior animals; that there had been a golden age, when man in a state of innocence had open intercourse with heaven; that when his nature became corrupt, the earth itself underwent a change, that sacrifice was necessary to appease the offended gods; that there was an evil spirit continually endeavouring to injure man and thwart the designs of the good spirit, but that he should at last be finally subdued, and universal happiness restored through the intercession of a Mediator; that the life of man, during the first ages of the world, was of great length; that there were ten generations previous to the general deluge; that only eight persons were saved out of the flood, in an ark, by the interposition of the Deity: these, and many other similar traditions, are related to have been prevalent in the ancient world, by Egyptian, Phenician, Greek and Roman authors.—See *Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac.*—*Maurice's Hist. of India*, and *Horne's Introd.* vol. i.

It is no small satisfaction to the friends of revealed religion, that this argument has of late years received great additional strength, from the discovery of an almost corresponding tradition, traced up among the nations whose records have been the best preserved, to times even prior to the age of Moses. The treasures of oriental learning which Maurice collected with so much industry, and explained with so much judgment, in his *History and Antiquities of India*, supply abundance of incontrovertible evidence for the existence of opinions in the early ages of the world, which perfectly agree with the leading articles of our faith, as well as with the principal events related in the Pentateuch. In one passage he says, 'Whether the reader will allow or not the inspiration of the sacred writer, his mind, on the perusal, must be struck with one very remarkable fact, namely, that the names which are assigned by Moses to eastern countries and cities, derived to them immediately from the patriarchs, their original founders, are for the most part the very names by which they were anciently known over all the east; many of them were afterwards translated, with little variation, by the Greeks, in their systems of Geography. Moses has traced, in one short chapter, (Gen. x.) all the inhabitants of the earth, from the Caspian and Persian

seas to the extreme Gades, to their original, and recorded at once the period and occasion of their dispersion.'—*History of Hindostan*, vol. i.

This fact, and the conclusions from it, which are thus incontrovertibly established by the lately acquired knowledge of the Sanscrit language, were contended for and strongly enforced by Bochart and Stillingfleet, who could only refer to oriental opinion and traditions, as they came to them through the medium of Grecian interpretation. To the late excellent and learned Sir W. Jones, we are chiefly indebted for the light recently thrown from the east upon this important subject. The result of his laborious inquiries into the chronology, history, mythology, and languages of the nations, whence infidels have long derived their most formidable objections, was a full conviction that neither accident nor ingenuity could account for the very numerous instances of similar traditions and near coincidences, in the names of persons and places which are to be found in the Bible, and in ancient monuments of eastern literature.—*Asiatic Researches*, and *Maurice's History*, vol. i. Whoever, indeed, is acquainted with the writings of Bryant and Maurice, and with the Asiatic Researches, cannot but have observed, that the accounts of the creation, the fall, the deluge, and the dispersion of mankind, recorded by the nations upon the vast continent of Asia, bear a strong resemblance to each other and to the narration in the sacred history, and evidently contain the fragments of one original truth, which was broken by the dispersion of the patriarchal families, and corrupted by length of time, by allegory, and idolatry. From this universal concurrence on this head, one of these things is necessarily true: either that all the traditions must have been taken from the author of the book of Genesis, or that the author of the book of Genesis made up his history from some or all of such traditions as were already extant; or lastly, that he received his knowledge of past events by revelation. Were then all these traditions taken from the Mosaic history? It has been shown by Sir W. Jones and Maurice, that they were received too generally and too early to make this supposition even possible; for they existed in different parts of the world in the very age when Moses lived. Was the Mosaic history composed from the traditions then existing? It is certain that the Chaldeans, the Persians, the most ancient inhabitants of India, and the Egyptians, all possessed the same story; but they had, by the time of Moses, wrapped up in their own mysteries, and disguised it by their own fanciful conceits: and surely no rational mind can believe, that if Moses had been acquainted with all the mystic fables of the East as well as of Egypt, he could out of such an endless variety of obscure allegory, by the power of human sagacity alone, have discovered the real origin; much less, that from a partial knowledge of some of them, he could have been able to discover the facts which suit and explain them all.* His

* It is highly probable, as will be shown afterwards, that both Moses and the Israelites had acquired a knowledge of many of the facts recorded in the book of Genesis from tradition; that Noah was acquainted with the principal events and transactions relative to Antediluvian times; and that these were transmitted by his son Shem to Abraham, from whom they passed to the other patriarchs. Still, it is evident that the book of Genesis could not have been compiled from materials drawn from these traditionary sources; much less from the corrupted traditions here alluded to.

plain recital, however, of the creation, the fall, the deluge, and the dispersion of mankind, does unquestionably develop the origin, and bring to light those facts; and it therefore follows, not only that the account is the true one, but there being no human means of his acquiring the knowledge of it, that it was, as he asserts it to have been, revealed to him by God himself.

We have now seen, from undoubted testimony, that the Pentateuch has been uniformly ascribed to Moses as its author; that the most ancient traditions remarkably agree with his account of the creation of the world, the fall of man, the deluge, the dispersion of mankind, and the departure of the Israelites from Egypt under Moses; that a people with such laws and institutions as he professes to have given them, have existed from remote antiquity; and we ourselves are eye-witnesses that such a people, so circumstanced, exist at this hour, and in a state exactly conformable to his predictions concerning them. But it may be observed, that the civil history of the Jews is seldom contested, even by those who imagine the Pentateuch to have been written in some age subsequent to that of Moses, from a collection of annals or diaries; it is the miraculous part of it which is chiefly disputed. To this observation, however, we may oppose the conclusive argument of a professed enemy to revealed religion, 'that the miraculous part of the Mosaic history is not like the prodigies of Livy and other profane authors, unconnected with the facts recorded; it is so intermixed and blended with the narrative that they must both stand or fall together.'—*Lord Bolingbroke*. With respect to the annals which are mentioned as the supposed foundation of this history, they must have been either true or false; if true, the history of the Israelites remains equally marvellous; if false, how was it possible for the history to acquire the credit and esteem in which it was so universally held? But upon what is this supposition founded? No particular person is mentioned with any colour of probability as the author or compiler of the Pentateuch; no particular age is pointed out with any appearance of certainty, though that of Solomon is usually fixed upon as the most likely. Yet why the most enlightened period of the Jewish history should be chosen as the best adapted to forgers or interpolation, nay, to the most gross imposition that was ever practised upon mankind, it is difficult to conjecture. Was it possible, in such an age, to write the Pentateuch in the name of the venerated law-giver of the Jews, from a collection of annals, and produce the firm belief that it actually had been written more than 400 years before; and this not only throughout the nation itself, but among all those whom the widely extended fame of Solomon had connected with him, or had induced to study the history and pretensions of this extraordinary people?

The truth of the Mosaic history receives farther confirmation from the character of Moses, from his qualifications as a historian, and from the opportunities he enjoyed of becoming acquainted with the events and transactions which he records.

Moses was well qualified to write his history, in consequence of his having received a princely education in the court of Pharaoh, and it is certain that Egypt was the most famous school of learning in ancient times. His parts and attainments are allowed to have been great,

even by his enemies, and several testimonies from heathen authors, in favour of his character as a historian, and as a sublime writer, have already been adduced. Whether we view him as a historian, as a prophet, as a poet, or as a law-giver, we find him varying and accommodating his style to his subject, and few writers excel in any one of these characters so much as he does in them all. It is evident also, that Moses had a chief concern in all the transactions recorded in the four last books of the Pentateuch, as legislator and governor of the Jews. Every thing was done under his eye and cognizance, and therefore he cannot be charged with ignorance of the facts which he relates.

With regard to the book of Genesis, although there are many things in it which could be derived only from divine revelation, yet there are many other events and facts which must have been known in the time of Moses by tradition, and when this book was first delivered many persons then living must have been competent to decide on the fidelity with which he relates those events. They must have heard of, and believed, the remarkable incidents in the lives of the patriarchs, the prophecies which they uttered, and the actions which they performed; for the longevity of man, in the earlier ages of the world, rendered tradition the criterion of truth; and in the days of Moses, the channels of information must have been as yet uncorrupted; for though ages had already elapsed, even 2432 years, before the birth of the sacred historian, yet those relations were easily ascertained, which might have been conveyed by seven persons from Adam to Moses; and that the traditions were so secure from error, we shall immediately be convinced, if we consider that Methusalem was 340 years old when Adam died, and that he lived till the year of the flood, when Noah had attained 600 years. In like manner, Shem conveyed tradition from Noah to Abraham, for he conversed with both for a considerable time. Isaac also lived to instruct Joseph in the history of his predecessors, and Amram, the father of Moses, was contemporary with Joseph. The Israelites then must have been able, by interesting tradition, to judge how far the Mosaic account was consistent with truth.—*Gray's Key to the Old Testament, Introd. to Genesis*. As to the hypothesis which some have entertained, namely, that Moses compiled the book of Genesis from written records preserved in the family of Shem, and extant in the time of Moses, we reject it as fanciful and destitute of any proper foundation.

Moses was also an honest and disinterested writer, and has given such proofs of impartiality and veracity, as are rarely to be found in the most faithful historians. Instead of flattering his countrymen, or courting their applause, he rather exposes their infidelity and wickedness; and while he celebrates the virtues of some of their ancestors, he at the same time records the failings and imperfections of the very best of them. He does not spare even his own family and his nearest relations. He freely relates the cruelty and barbarity of Levi, the founder of his family, in the affair of the Shechemites, and the curse entailed upon him on account of it. He gives an exact detail of the conduct of Aaron his brother, with respect to the golden calf, and also of Aaron and Miriam's sedition. Neither does he conceal his own faults, but fairly acknowledges his want of faith and confidence in God; and if at any time he commends himself,

it is when he finds it necessary to do so in order to vindicate himself from unjust calumnies.

No one can charge Moses with avarice, or with ambitious motives. He forsook all the pleasures and all the honours of the court of Egypt, 'choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God;' and though he was appointed to a high command, yet it was attended with continual labour and pain, with great trouble and vexation to himself, and with little profit or advantage to his family. The priesthood he settled in the line of Aaron, the supreme command he resigned to one of another tribe, and his own family he reduced to the rank of common Levites.

His excellent moral qualities furnish an additional argument in proof of his fidelity as an historian. Not only does he appear in all his writings to have had an ardent zeal for the glory of God, but also for the service and happiness of his countrymen. He delivered them from the meanest and bitterest slavery in a foreign land, and conducted them safely, through dangers and difficulties, to a land of liberty. Often did he stand between them and destruction, and rather than that they should be cut off, as they had deserved, he prayed and entreated that he himself might be blotted out of the book of life. A man who had so sincere a love for his friends and country, could not be a bad man; and if he had been a Grecian or Roman legislator, those who are now the most forward to traduce him, would then, perhaps, have been the most profuse and lavish in his praises.—*Bishop Newton's Works*, vol. i. dissert. i.—See also *Grave's Lectures on the four last Books of the Pentateuch*, Lectures ii. iii. iv.—*Blunt's Veracity of the five Books of Moses*.—*Horne's Introduction*, vol. i.

But a more particular consideration of the contents of the Pentateuch, as relating immediately to the Jews, will furnish irrefragable arguments to prove its authenticity, and the truth of its claims to inspiration. The Pentateuch contains directions for the establishment of the civil and religious policy of the Jews, which, it is acknowledged, existed from the time of Moses; it contains a code of laws, which every individual of the nation was required to observe with the utmost punctuality, under pain of the severest punishment, and with which, therefore, every individual must be supposed to have been acquainted; it contains the history of the ancestors of the Jews, in a regular succession, from the creation of the world, and a series of prophecies which, in an especial manner, concerned themselves, and which must have been beyond measure interesting to a people who were alternately enjoying promised blessings, and suffering under predicted calamities; it contains not only the wonders of creation and providence in a general view, but also repeated instances of the superintending care of the God of the whole earth over their particular nation, and the institution of feasts and ceremonies in perpetual remembrance of these divine interpositions; and all these things are professedly addressed in the name, and to the contemporaries, of Moses—to those who had seen the miracles he records, who had been witnesses to the events he relates, and who had heard the awful promulgation of the law. Let any one reflect upon these extraordinary and wonderful facts, and surely he must be convinced, that they could never have obtained the universal belief of those among whose ancestors they are said

to have happened, unless there had been the clearest evidence of their certainty and truth. Nor were these facts the transient occurrences of a single hour or day, and witnessed only by a small number of persons; on the contrary, some of them were continued through a space of forty years, and were known and felt by several millions of people: the pillar of the cloud was seen by day, and the pillar of fire by night during their whole journey in the wilderness; nor did the manna fail till they had eaten of the corn in the land of Canaan. We see Moses in the combined characters of leader, law-giver, and historian, not once or twice, or as it were cautiously and surreptitiously, but avowedly, and continually appealing to the conviction of a whole people, who were witnesses of these manifestations of divine power for the justice of their punishments, and resting the authority of the Law upon the truth of the wonderful history he records. And farther, in order to preserve the accurate recollection of these events, and prevent the possibility of any alteration in this history, he expressly commanded that the whole Pentateuch should be read at the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, at the feast of tabernacles, in the hearing of all Israel, that all the people, men, women, and children, and the strangers within their gates, might hear, and learn to fear the Lord their God, and observe to do all the words of the Law; and especially, that their children, who had not been eye-witnesses of the miracles which established its claim to their faith and obedience, might hear the marvellous history, which they were taught by their fathers, publicly declared and confirmed, and learn to fear and obey the Lord their God from the wonders of creation and providence, revealed to his servant Moses, and from the supernatural powers with which he was invested. (Deut. xxxi. 10, &c.) Can we require a more striking proof of the existence and designed publicity of the Law, than the command to 'write all the words of the Law very plainly on pillars of stone, and to set them up on the day they passed over Jordan, the day they took possession of the promised land, and to plaster them over to preserve them.' (Deut. xxvii. 2.)—See *Patrick in loc.* They were commanded also to teach the Law diligently to their children, and explain to them the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, and the history of their forefathers; to talk of them when sitting in the house, when walking in the way, when they lay down, and when they rose up; to bind the words for a sign upon their door posts and gates, and upon their hands, and as frontlets between their eyes. (Deut. vi.) Words cannot express more strongly than these do, the general obligation of the people to acquire an accurate knowledge of the Law, and to pay a constant, habitual attention to its precepts, whether these be taken in a literal or figurative sense. These repeated injunctions with regard to public and private instruction in the Law, also manifestly imply that the book of the Law existed in writing at that time, and that the people must have had easy access to copies of it, and without doubt the office of the Levite, whom every family was 'to keep within their gates,' must have been to teach the law. The command that every king upon his accession to the throne, should 'write him a copy of the law in a book, out of that which is before the priests,' (Deut. xvii. 18.) is a proof

not only that the Law existed in writing, but that there was a copy of it under the peculiar care of the priests; that is, deposited in the tabernacle or temple.

Is it credible that any people would have submitted to so rigorous and burdensome a law as that of Moses, unless they had been fully convinced, by a series of miracles, that he was a prophet sent from God? And being thus convinced of the divine mission of Moses, would they have suffered any writing to pass under his venerated name, of which he was not really the author? Had fraud or imposture of any kind belonged to any part of it, would not the Israelites, at the moment of rebellion, have availed themselves of that circumstance as a ground or justification of their disobedience? The Jews were exceedingly prone to transgress the law of Moses, and to fall into idolatry; but had there been the least suspicion of any falsity or imposture in the writings of Moses, the ringleaders of their revolts would have eagerly availed themselves of it, as the most plausible plea to draw them off from the worship of the true God. Can we think that a nation and religion so maligned as the Jewish were, could have escaped discovery if there had been any deceit in their religious polity, when so many lay in wait continually to expose them to all contumelies imaginable? Nay, among themselves in their frequent apostasies, and occasions given for such a pretence, how comes this to be never heard of, nor in the least questioned, whether the law was undoubtedly of Moses's writing or not? What an excellent plea would this have been for Jeroboam's calves in Dan and Bethel, for the Samaritan temple on mount Gerizim, could any the least suspicion have been raised among them concerning the authenticity of the fundamental records of the Jewish commonwealth. And what is very remarkable, the Jews, who were a people strangely suspicious and incredulous while they were fed and clothed by miracles, yet could never find ground to question this; nay, Moses himself, we find, was greatly envied by many of the Israelites in the wilderness, as is evident from the conspiracy of Korah and his accomplices, and that on the very ground that he 'took too much upon him:' how unlikely then is it, that amidst so many enemies he should dare to enter any thing into public records which was not most undoubtedly true, or undertake to prescribe a law to oblige the people and their posterity, or that after his own age any thing should come out under his name, which would not be presently detected by the emulators of his glory? What then is the thing itself incredible? surely not, that Moses should write the records we speak of? Were the people not able to understand the truth of it? What, not those who were in the same age, and conveyed it down by a certain tradition to posterity? Or did not the Israelites all constantly believe it? What, not they who would sooner part with their lives and fortunes, than admit any alteration or variation as to their law?—*Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. b. ii. c. i.*

Can we have more undoubted evidence that there were such persons as Solon, Lycurgus, and Numa, and that the laws bearing their names were theirs, than the history of the several commonwealths of Athens, Sparta, and Rome, which were governed by those laws? When writings are not of general concernment, they may be more easily counterfeited, but when they concern the rights,

privileges, and government of a nation, there will always be a sufficient number of persons whose interest will lead them to prevent impostures. It is no easy matter to forge a *magna charta*, and to invent laws; the caution and prudence of men are never so much on the alert as in matters which concern their estates and privileges. The general interest of men lies contrary to such impostures, and therefore they will prevent their obtaining credit among them. Now the laws of Moses are incorporated with the very republic of the Jews, and their subsistence and government depend upon them; their religion and laws are so interwoven the one with the other, that one cannot be separated from the other. Their right to their temporal possessions in the land of Canaan depended on their owning the sovereignty of God, who gave these possessions to them, and on the truth of the history recorded by Moses, concerning the promises made to the patriarchs; so that on that account it was impossible that those laws should be counterfeited on which the welfare of the nation depended, and according to which they were governed ever since they were a nation.—*Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. b. ii. c. i.*

Let those then who are disposed to deny the genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch, consider its real importance to the Jewish people, and the high veneration in which it was unquestionably held by them, and surely they must be convinced of the impossibility of ignorance or mistake concerning any fact relative to it; and in particular it will appear scarcely credible, that the Jews should err in attributing it to any person who was not its real author, or that they should not know who it was that digested it into the shape in which we now have it from materials left by Moses, had it been compiled in that manner in some subsequent age. The silence of history and tradition upon this point is a sufficient proof that no such compilation ever took place. If we believe that Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, why should we not believe that he wrote the account of that deliverance? If we believe that God enabled Moses to work miracles,* why should we not believe that he also enabled him to write the history of the creation?—*Bp. Tomline's Elem. of Christ. Theol. part i. c. i.*

The prophecies contained in the books of Moses furnish undeniable evidence of his divine mission, and consequently of the divine authority of these books. These prophecies not only relate to former times, but several of them have been fulfilled in later ages or are fulfilling at this time in the world. God hath 'blessed' and 'enlarged' the posterity of Shem and Japhet, and Canaan, in his posterity, hath been 'a servant of servants unto his brethren,' as Noah foretold. (Gen. ix. 25, 26, 27.) The posterity of Ishmael, the Arabs, are to this day wild men; their hand has been against every man, and every man's hand against them, and they still subsist a rude, unconquered race, notwithstanding the most powerful efforts of their enemies to subdue them; they still dwell in the presence of all their brethren. (Gen. xvi. 12.) The posterity of Abraham obtained possession of Canaan, according to the promise made to that patriarch, 400 years before its fulfilment. The seed of

* The evidence on which the truth of the miracles recorded by Moses, as well as those of our Saviour, rest, will be fully stated in the New Testament part of this history. See b. viii. sect ii. c. iv. p. 985.

Abraham multiplied as the stars of heaven, and it is computed that they are at this day as numerous as ever they were in Canaan, although they are dispersed into all parts of the world. (Gen. xv. 13. xxii. 17.) The sceptre continued in Judah till the time of the coming of Shiloh, and then departed, as Jacob foretold. (Gen. xlix. 10.) The prophet foretold by Moses has appeared, even Christ, the promised seed. (Deut. xviii. 15, &c.)

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses foretold that the Israelites should be blessed or cursed, according as they were obedient or disobedient to the commandments and statutes which he had given them; and all their subsequent history abundantly confirms the truth of the prediction. And what can be a stronger proof of the divinity of the Law of Moses? In particular, he foretold that a nation should come against them from far, swift as the eagle flieth, a nation whose tongue they should not understand; that this nation should besiege them in their gates; that they should be greatly straitened and distressed in the siege; that they should be plucked from off their own land; that they should become an astonishment, a proverb and a by-word amongst all nations; that they should be scattered among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other; and that their plagues should be wonderful, even great plagues, and of long continuance, (Deut. xxviii.) all which predictions the world has seen fulfilled, and still sees at this very day. And how was it possible for an author, who lived above three thousand years ago, to foretell so many particulars, which are transacting in the world even now, unless they were suggested by divine inspiration? Surely all reasonable men must conclude with the apostle, 'that prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' (2 Pet. i. 21.)—*Bishop Newton's Works*, vol. i.

The intrinsic excellence of the Mosaic writings, and their moral tendency, furnish another strong argument in favour of their divine origin. They give such a description of the Supreme Being, as our natural conceptions would lead us to acquiesce in. We behold him represented as infinite in wisdom, goodness, and power; and expecting from mankind that degree of submission and homage, which, we must easily perceive, is a reasonable service, and consonant with our notions of the relative situations of the Creator and his creatures. They deliver to the world things highly becoming of God to impart, and absolutely necessary for man to know. They explain the formation and origin of the universe, the creation of man, his state of innocence, fall, and expulsion from the seat of happiness; they announce to a guilty world the glorious promise of a deliverer, who should repair the ruin produced by the fall; they describe the propagation of mankind, their general corruption, the deluge, the confusion of tongues, the plantation of families, and their separation into kingdoms; they record the selection of a particular family, out of which the Messiah was destined to proceed; they commemorate the miracles by which God was pleased to redeem his chosen people from servitude, and lead them through the midst of many dangers and difficulties, to the land which he had promised them as their future inheritance. The laws which they enumerate as prescribed by God for the use of his people, are such as are consonant with his wisdom and goodness. Whilst the religious precepts and ordinances required a

solemnity, purity, and decency in divine worship, unknown to heathen nations, or unpractised by them, the other institutions, both moral and political, were calculated to promote the prosperity and comfort of all who lived under them. They prohibited idolatry, perjury, theft, murder, adultery, and every species of covetousness and envy, and enforced the opposite virtues of justice, mercy, chastity, and charity, with a due reverence towards our natural parents and accidental superiors. In almost every page, the people are exhorted to amendment and submission to their God and king; they are reminded of their former murmurings and miscarriages, and compassionately forewarned of the grievous punishments that should await their disobedience. The theology of the Mosaic law was pure, sublime, and devotional. The belief of one supreme, self-existent, and all-perfect being, the creator of the heavens and the earth, was the basis of all the religious institutions of the Israelites, the sole object of their hopes, fears, and worship. His adorable perfections, and especially the supreme providence of Jehovah, as the sole dispenser of good and evil, and the benevolent protector and benefactor of mankind, are described in the Pentateuch in unaffected strains of unrivalled sublimity; which while they are adapted to our finite apprehensions, by imagery borrowed from terrestrial and sensible objects, at the same time raise our conceptions to the contemplation of the spirituality and majesty of Him 'who dwelleth in light inaccessible.' In the decalogue, we have a repository of duty to God and man, so pure and comprehensive as to be absolutely without parallel. We recognise in the ten commandments, not the impotent recommendations of man, or the uncertain deductions of human reason, but the dictates of the God of purity, flowing from his immediate legislation, and promulgated with awful solemnity.

The sanctions also of the remaining enactments of the law, point out their divine origin, whilst the moral precepts which are scattered throughout the whole of the Pentateuch, possess such intrinsic excellence, such dignity and authority, as no human precepts ever possessed. The rites and ceremonies prescribed in the law are at once dignified and expressive; they point out the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the necessity of an atonement. As to the punishments of the law, they are ever such as the nature and circumstances of the crime render just and necessary; and its rewards are not such as flow merely from retributive justice, but from a fatherly tenderness and regard, which make obedience to the laws the highest interest of the subject. In short, the Mosaic law is calculated not only to restrain vice, but to infuse virtue. It alone, of all other laws, brings man to the footstool of his Maker, and keeps him dependent on the strong for strength, on the wise for wisdom, and on the merciful for grace. It abounds with promises of support and salvation for the present life, which no false system dared even to propose. Every where Moses, in the most confident manner, pledges his God for the fulfilment of all the gracious promises with which his laws are so plentifully interspersed. Who that dispassionately reads the Pentateuch, that considers it in itself, and in its references to that glorious gospel which it was intended to introduce, (see *Introduction to the New Testament*, ch. i. ii. p. 826.) can for a moment deny it the palm of infinite superiority over all the systems ever framed or

imagined by man?—*Robison on Revealed Religion.*—*Dr A. Clarke's Comment.*—*Horne's Introd.* vol. i.—*See also the Divine Authority of the four last books of the Pentateuch, established from internal evidence in Grave's valuable Lectures.*

Thus we have given a brief statement of the leading arguments in support of the genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration of the five books of Moses. These arguments will serve to confirm the faith of the believer, and when combined together, they present a body of evidence so strong, and so decisive, as cannot fail to remove every reasonable doubt, and satisfy every candid and unprejudiced inquirer, that the writings of Moses are of divine authority, and were dictated by the Spirit of the living God.

The same arguments which prove the genuineness, authenticity, and divine authority of the Pentateuch, are also applicable to the remaining books of the Old Testament, and the divine authority of the latter may be inferred from that of the former; for so great is their mutual and immediate dependence upon each other, that if the authority of the one be taken away, the authority of the other must necessarily be destroyed. The books that follow after Deuteronomy are all historical, devotional, moral, or prophetic. The historical books are those from Joshua to Esther, inclusive. Some of them bear the names of distinguished prophets, and the rest are universally attributed to writers invested with the same character. They contain a compendium of the Jewish history from the death of Moses to the reformation established by Nehemiah, after the return from the captivity, being a period of more than 1000 years. After the death of Moses, Joshua continued to record those miraculous particulars which demonstrated the divine interposition in favour of the Israelites, and to commemorate the events that preceded and accomplished their settlement in the land of Canaan. The period which succeeded the death of Joshua, during which the Hebrews were subjected to the government of the judges, opened a large scope for the industry of the sacred historians; and Samuel, or some other prophet, appears to have selected such particulars as were best calculated to describe this period, and to have digested them into the book of Judges, having doubtless procured much information from the records of the priests or judges,†

* With regard to the marks of a posterior date, or at least of posterior interpolation, so often urged with an insidious design to weaken the authority of the Pentateuch, it will be sufficient to observe, that it may safely be admitted that Joshua, Samuel, or some one of the succeeding prophets, wrote the account of the death of Moses contained in the last chapter of Deuteronomy; and that Ezra, when he transcribed the history written by Moses, changed the names of some places, which were then become obsolete, to those by which they were called in his time, and added, for the purpose of elucidation, the few passages which are allowed to be not suitable to the age of Moses. Now surely, when it is considered that these few passages are of an explanatory nature; that they are easily distinguished from the original writings of Moses; and that Ezra was himself an inspired writer, raised up by God to re-establish the Jewish church after the return from captivity, the cavils founded upon such circumstances can scarcely be thought deserving of any serious attention. The reader, however, will find a complete answer to these objections in the Appendix to Grave's Lectures on the Pentateuch, Sect. I.

† It appears from the testimony of Josephus, (Cont. Apion, i.) that public and circumstantial records were kept by the priests, and other publicly appointed persons, and to such re-

some of whom were inspired, though prophetic revelations were "scarce in those days," (1 Sam. iii. 1.) and divine communications were made by means of the Urim and Thummim, (Exod. xxviii. 30. Lev. viii. 8.) From the time of Samuel, the Jews seem to have been favoured with a regular succession of prophets, who, in an uninterrupted series, bequeathed to each other, with the mantle of prophecy, the charge of commemorating such important particulars as were consistent with the plan of sacred history; and who took up the history where the preceding prophet ceased, without distinguishing their respective contributions. It is possible, however, that the books of Kings and of Chronicles do not contain a complete compilation of the entire works of each contemporary prophet, but rather an abridgement of their several labours digested by Ezra, in or after the captivity, with the intention to exhibit the sacred history at one point of view; and hence it is that they contain some expressions which evidently result from contemporary description, and others that as clearly argue them to have been completed long after the occurrences which they relate. Hence also it is, that, though particular periods are more diffusively treated of than others, we still find throughout a connected series of events, and in each individual book a general uniformity of style.

But although we cannot determine with certainty the authors of the historical books, yet we may rest assured, that the Jews, who had already received inspired books from the hands of Moses, would not have admitted any others as of equal authority, if they had not been fully convinced that the writers were supernaturally assisted. And although the testimony of a nation is far from being, in every instance, a sufficient reason for believing its sacred books to be possessed of that divine authority which is ascribed to them, yet the testimony of the Jews, in the present case, has a peculiar title to be credited, from the circumstances in which it was delivered. It is the testimony of a people, who having already in their possession genuine inspired books, were the better able to judge of others who advanced a claim to inspiration, and who, we have reason to think, far from being credulous with respect to such a claim, or disposed precipitately to recognise it, proceeded with deliberation and care in examining all pretensions of this nature, and rejected them when not supported by satisfactory evidence—witness their rejection of the Apocryphal books. They were likewise forewarned that false prophets would arise, and deliver their own fancies, in the name of the Lord, and they were furnished with rules to assist them in distinguishing a true from a pretended revelation. (Deut. xviii. 20—22.) The testimony then of the Jews, who, without a dissenting voice, have asserted the inspiration of the historical books, authorises us to receive them as a part of the oracles of God, which were committed to their care.

The object of the historical books was to communicate instruction to his chosen people, and to mankind in general; and to illustrate the nature of God's providence in small as well as in great occurrences, in particular instances as well as in general appointments; they

records the sacred writers occasionally allude as bearing testimony to their accounts; or refer to them for a more minute detail of those particulars which they omit as inconsistent with their designs. See Josh. x. 13. 2 Sam. i. 18, and various other passages.

therefore often descend from the great outline of national concerns to the minute detail of private life. The relations, however, of individual events that are occasionally interspersed, are highly interesting, and admirably develop the designs of the Almighty, and the character of those times to which they are respectively assigned. Those seeming digressions likewise, in which the inspired writers have recorded such remarkable events as related to particular personages, or such occurrences in foreign countries as tended to affect the interest of the Hebrew nation, are not only valuable for the religious spirit which they breathe, but are to be admired as strictly consistent with the sacred plan. Thus the histories of Job, of Ruth, and of Esther, though apparently intrinsic appendages, are in reality connected parts of one entire fabric, and exhibit, in minute delineation, that wisdom which is elsewhere displayed in a larger scale, as they likewise present an engaging picture of that private virtue which, in an extended influence, operated to national prosperity. These books then constitute an important part of the sacred volume, which furnishes a complete code of instructive lessons, conveyed under every form, diversified with every style of composition, and enlivened with every illustration of circumstance.

The writers of the historical books everywhere display an acquaintance with the counsels and designs of God; they develop the secret springs and concealed wisdom of his government, and often reveal his future mercies and judgments in the clearest predictions. They invariably maintain a strict sincerity of intention, and in their description of characters and events they exhibit an unexampled impartiality; and from these considerations we derive another argument, that these historians wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

As to the book of Job, whether it was composed or translated by Moses, or any subsequent prophet, it is evident that it contains a true history, and that Job was a real, not a fictitious personage. The real existence of Job is affirmed by the concurrent testimony of all eastern tradition.—*Spanheim's Hist. Job.*—*Schaulter's Com. in Job.*—and he is mentioned as a real character by Ezekiel (ch. xiv.) and by St James (ch. v.). The style of the author, his mode of introducing the subject, the circumstantial detail of habitation, kindred and condition, the names of the persons mentioned, and the agreement of these circumstances with other accounts of that age and country in which Job is generally supposed to have lived; furnish evidence that this book contains a history of actual events. It is unquestionably to be considered as an inspired work, since it holds a place in the Jewish canon, and it likewise bears every internal mark of a divine origin. It every where abounds with the noblest sentiments of piety, uttered with the spirit of inspired conviction, and discovers to us religious instruction shining forth amidst the venerable simplicity of ancient manners. It is a work unrivalled for the magnificence of its language, and for the beautiful and sublime images which it presents. In the wonderful speech of the Deity (ch. xxxviii. to xli. inclusive,) every line delineates his attributes, every sentence opens a picture of some grand object in creation, characterized by its most striking features. Add to this that its prophetic parts reflect much light on the economy

of God's moral government, and every admirer of sacred antiquity, every inquirer after religious instruction, will seriously rejoice that the enraptured sentence of Job, (ch. xix. 23.) is realized to a more effectual and unforeseen accomplishment; that while the memorable records of antiquity have mouldered from the rock, the prophetic assurance and sentiments of Job are graven in scripture, which no time shall alter, no changes shall efface.—*Gray's Key to the Old Testament.*—*Dick on Inspiration.*

The book of Psalms is a collection of hymns, or sacred songs in praise of God, and consists of poems of various kinds. They are the productions of different writers, but are called the Psalms of David, because a great part of them was composed by him, who, for his peculiarly excellent spirit, was distinguished by the title of 'the Psalmist,' (2 Sam. xxiii. 1.). Some of them were perhaps penned before, and some after the time of David. Most modern commentators understand the different writers of them to have been Moses, David, Solomon, Asaph, Heman, Ethan, Jeduthan, and the three sons of Korah. Ezra probably collected these Psalms into one book, and placed them in the order in which they are now found. The Levites, as we learn from Josephus, were enjoined to preserve in the temple all such hymns as might be composed in honour of God, and of these, doubtless, there must have been a large collection from which the 150 Psalms we possess would appear to have been selected; but such only could be admitted into the canon, as were evidently inspired compositions, and we may judge of the scrupulous severity with which they were examined, since the numerous hymns of Solomon were rejected; and even, as it is said, some of David's himself were not considered as entitled to insertion. The divine authority of those, however, which we now possess, is established not only by their rank among the sacred writings, and by the unvaried testimony of every age, but likewise by many intrinsic proofs of inspiration. Not only do they breathe through every part a divine spirit of eloquence, and of the purest and most exalted devotion, but they contain numberless illustrious prophecies that were remarkably accomplished, and that are frequently appealed to by the evangelical writers. But the sacred character of the whole book is most completely established by our Saviour and his apostles, who in various parts of the New Testament appropriate the predictions of the Psalms as obviously apposite to the circumstances of their lives, and as intentionally preconcerted to describe them. In the language of this divine book, the prayers and praises of the church have been offered up to the throne of grace, from age to age, and in this particular there ever has existed, and we may say ever will exist, a wonderful communion of saints. The Psalms may be regarded as an epitome of the Bible, adapted to the purposes of devotion. 'What is there necessary for man to know,' says the pious Hooker, 'which the Psalms are not able to teach? from them we may learn heroic magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of divine wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come. Let there be any grief or disease incident to the soul of man, any wound or sickness

named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found.' Whether the true believer be in joy or sorrow, in prosperity or adversity, in health or in sickness; whether he be a prince or a peasant, rich or poor, young or old; whether he rejoice in the light of God's countenance, or tremble at his rebuke, he will find some of these exquisite songs of Zion adapted to his circumstances and in harmony with his feelings.

The Proverbs, as we are informed at the beginning and other parts of the book, were written by Solomon, the son of David, a man, as the sacred writings assure us, peculiarly endued with divine wisdom. Whatever ideas of his superior understanding we may be led to form, by the particulars recorded of his judgment and attainments, we shall find them amply justified on perusing the works which he has left behind him. This enlightened monarch, being desirous of employing the wisdom which he had received from God to the advantage of mankind, produced several works for their instruction. (1 Kings iv. 32.) Of these, however, three only were admitted into the canon, the others being rejected as uninspired productions. The book of Proverbs, the book of Ecclesiastes, and that of the Song of Solomon, are all that remain of him whose matchless wisdom called forth the wonder and admiration of surrounding nations. If, however, many valuable writings of Solomon have perished, we may rest assured that the most excellent have been preserved, and that we possess all which the Spirit of God judged to be suitable for our spiritual instruction.

The latter part of the book of Proverbs, from the beginning of the twenty-fifth chapter, is considered to have been collected after the death of Solomon, and added to what would seem to have been more immediately arranged by himself. The Proverbs in the thirtieth chapter are expressly called, The words of Augur the son of Jakeh; and the thirty-first chapter is entitled The words of king Lemuel. It seems certain that the collection called the Proverbs of Solomon, was arranged in the order in which we now have it by different hands; but it is not therefore to be concluded that they are not the productions of Solomon. The general opinion is that several persons made a collection of them, perhaps as they were uttered by him; Hezekiah among others, as mentioned in the twenty-fifth chapter: Augur, Isaiah, and Ezra might have done the same. The claims of the book of Proverbs, however, to be admitted into the sacred canon, has never been questioned. Besides the internal evidence of inspiration which we discover in it, the canonical authority of no other book of the Old Testament is so well ratified by the evidence of quotations in the New Testament. The scope of this book is to instruct men in the deepest mysteries of true wisdom and understanding, the height and perfection of which is the true knowledge of the divine will and the sincere fear of the Lord. To this end, the book is filled with the choicest sententious aphorisms, infinitely surpassing all the ethical sayings of the ancient sages, and comprising in themselves distinct doctrines, duties, &c., of piety towards God, of equity and benevolence towards man, and of sobriety and temperance; together with precepts for the right education of children, and for the relative situations of subjects, magistrates and sovereigns,—

Gray's Key to the Old Testament.—*Horne's Introduction*, vol. iv.

The book of Ecclesiastes, although it does not bear the name of Solomon, was penned by him, as is evident from several passages. (Comp. ch. i. 12, 16. ii. 4—9. xii. 9, 10.) The beautiful descriptions which this book contains of phenomena in the natural world and their causes, and of the economy of the human frame, all show it to be the work of a philosopher. It is generally supposed to have been written by Solomon in his old age, after he had repented of his sinful practices, and when, having seen and observed much, as well as having enjoyed every thing that he could wish, he was fully convinced of the vanity of every thing except piety towards God. Its canonical authority has always been recognised, and indeed, there can be no doubt of its title to be admitted into the sacred canon. Solomon was eminently distinguished by the illumination of the divine Spirit, and had even twice witnessed the divine presence. (1 Kings iii. 5. ix. 2. xi. 9.) The tendency of the book is excellent, and Solomon speaks in it with great clearness of the revealed truths of a future life and of a future judgment. It may be considered as a kind of inquiry into the chief good or highest happiness of man; an inquiry conducted on sound principles, and terminating in a conclusion which all must approve.—*Gray's Key.*—*Horne's Introduction*, vol. iv.—*See also Holden's Prelim. Dissert. to Ecclesiastes.*

The Song of Solomon is universally allowed to have been written by that monarch. Its divine authority rests upon indubitable evidence, although some rash critics have affirmed it to be merely a human composition. In this book the royal author appears, in the typical spirit of his time, to have designed to render a ceremonial appointment, descriptive of a spiritual concern. Bishop Lowth judiciously considers that the Song is a mystical allegory; of that sort which induces a more sublime sense on historical truths, and which, by the description of human events, shadows out divine circumstances. The sacred writers were by God's condescension authorised to illustrate his strict and intimate relation to the church by the figure of a marriage; and the emblem must have been strikingly becoming and expressive to the conceptions of the Jews, since they annexed notions of peculiar mystery to this appointment, and imagined that the marriage union was a counterpart representation of some original pattern in heaven. It is unquestionable that this beautiful composition had a predictive as well as a figurative character. The whole of it is a thin veil of allegory thrown over a spiritual alliance; and we discover every where through the transparent types of Solomon and his bride, the characters of Christ and his personified church, portrayed with those graces and embellishments which are most lovely and engaging to the human eye. It requires, however, to be explained with great caution, and some fanciful expositors, by their minute dissection of the allegory, have exposed it to the unmerited ridicule of profane minds. But the grand outlines, when soberly interpreted, in the obvious meaning of the allegory, will be found to accord with the affections and experience of every sincere Christian, and the tendency of the whole must be to purify the mind and to elevate the affections from earthly to heavenly things.

As to its form, the Song of Solomon may be considered as a dramatic poem of the pastoral kind. For a full and satisfactory proof of the divine authority of Solomon's Song, as well as an elucidation of its scope and design, the reader is referred to *Horne's Introduction*, vol. iv. part i. ch. iii. sect. v. See also *Gray's Key to the Old Testament*, *Dr Good's Translation of Solomon's Song*, and *Bishop Lowth's Prelections*, where the structure of the Poem is treated of.

It is universally acknowledged that the remaining books of the Old Testament, namely, the sixteen prophetic books and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, were written by the persons whose names they bear. The prophets profess themselves to be the respective authors of these books, and their testimony has been confirmed by the unanimous consent of Jews and Christians. The prophets were raised up by God among the Israelites, as the ministers of these dispensations. They flourished, in a continued succession, for above a thousand years, (reckoning from Moses to Malachi), all co-operating in the same designs, and conspiring in one spirit to deliver the same doctrines, and to prophecy concerning the same future blessings. Moses, the first and greatest of the prophets, having established God's first covenant, those who followed him were employed in explaining its nature, in opening its spiritual meaning; in instructing the Jews, and in gradually preparing them for the reception of that second dispensation which it prefigured. Their pretensions to be considered as God's appointed servants, were demonstrated by the unimpeachable integrity of their characters, by the intrinsic excellence and tendency of their instructions, and by the disinterested zeal and undaunted fortitude with which they persevered in their great designs. Their claims were still farther confirmed by the miraculous proofs which they displayed of divine support, and by the immediate completion of many less important predictions which they uttered. Such were the credentials of their exalted character which the prophets brought forward to their contemporaries; and we, who having lived to witness the appearance of the second dispensation, can look back to the connection which subsisted between the two covenants, have received additional evidence of the inspiration of the prophets, in the attestations of our Saviour and his apostles; and in the retrospect of a gradually maturing scheme of prophecy, connected in all its parts, and ratified in the accomplishment of its great object—the advent of the Messiah. We have still farther incontrovertible proof of the inspiration of the prophetic books, from the exact accomplishment, in these latter days, of numerous predictions contained in them. History bears indubitable testimony to the accurate fulfilment of many of these predictions; others are gradually receiving their accomplishment in the times in which we live, and afford the surest pledge and most positive security for the completion of those which remain to be fulfilled. The past, the present, and the future, have a connected reference to one great plan which infinite wisdom, prescience, and power, could alone form, reveal, and execute. Every succeeding age throws an increasing light upon these sacred writings, and contributes additional evidence to their divine origin.—*Bp. Tomline's Elem. of Christ. Theol.* part i. ch. i.—*Gray's Key*.—See *Newton and Keith on the Prophecies*.

There is an uncontradicted tradition in the Jewish church, that about fifty years after the temple was rebuilt, Ezra in conjunction with the great synagogue, made a collection of the sacred writings, which had been increased since the Jews were carried into captivity, by the Lamentations of Jeremiah and the prophecies of Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, and Zechariah; and as Ezra was himself inspired, we may rest assured, that whatever received his sanction, was authentic.* To this genuine collection, which according to former custom was placed in the temple, were afterwards annexed the sacred compositions of Ezra himself, as well as those of Nehemiah and Malachi, which were written after the death of Ezra. This addition, which was probably made by Simon the Just, the last of the great synagogue, completed the canon of the Old Testament; for after Malachi, no prophet arose till the time of John the Baptist, who as it were connected the two covenants. This complete collection, or a correct copy taken from it, remained in the temple, as Josephus informs us, till Jerusalem was taken by Titus, and it was then carried in triumph to Rome, and laid up with the purple veil in the royal palace of Vespasian.

Thus while the Jewish polity continued, and nearly 500 years after the death of Ezra, a complete and faultless copy of the Hebrew canon was kept in the temple at Jerusalem, with which all others might be compared. (See *Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* b. iii. c. i. and b. v. c. i. Compare *Deut.* xxxi. 26. 2 *Kings* xxii. 8.) And it ought to be observed, that although Christ frequently reprov'd the rulers and teachers of the Jews for their erroneous and false doctrines, yet he never accused them of any corruption in their written law, or other sacred books; and St Paul reckons among the privileges of the Jews that unto them were committed the oracles of God, (*Rom.* iii. 2.) without insinuating that they had been unfaithful to their trust. After the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, there was no established standard copy of the Hebrew Scriptures; but from that time the dispersion of the Jews into all countries, and the numerous converts to Christianity, became a double security for the preservation of a volume held equally sacred by Jews and Christians, and to which both constantly referred as to the written word of God. They differed in the interpretation of these Scriptures, but never disputed the validity of the text in any material point.

But though designed corruption was utterly impracticable, and was indeed never suspected, yet the carelessness and inadvertence of transcribers, during a long series of years, would unavoidably introduce some errors and mistakes. Great pains have been taken by learned men, especially by Kennicot and De Rossi, to compare the existing manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, and the result has been satisfactory in the highest degree.

Many various readings of a trivial kind have been discovered, but scarcely any of real consequence. These differences are indeed of so little moment, that it is sometimes absurdly objected to the laborious work of Kennicot, which contains the collations of nearly 700 manuscripts, that it does not enable us to correct a single important passage in the Old Testament; whereas this

* See more on this subject, p. 740 of this history, where an account of the institution of synagogues will be given.

very circumstance implies, that we have, in fact, derived from that excellent undertaking the greatest advantage which could have been wished for by every friend of revealed religion; namely, the certain knowledge of the agreement of the copies of the Old Testament scriptures, now extant in their original language, with each other, and with our Bibles. This point thus clearly established, is still farther confirmed by the general coincidence of the present Hebrew copies with all the early translations of the Bible, and particularly with the Septuagint version, the earliest of them all, and which was made 270 years before Christ. There is also a perfect agreement between the Samaritan and Hebrew Pentateuchs, except in one or two manifest interpolations, which were noticed immediately by the Jewish writers, (see Prideaux, part i. b. 6.) and this is no small proof of the correctness of both, as we may rest assured that the Jews and Samaritans, on account of their rooted enmity to each other, would never have concurred in any alteration. Nor ought it to be omitted, that the Chaldean paraphrases, which are translations of the Old Testament, from the Hebrew into Chaldaic, made for the benefit of those who had forgotten, or were ignorant of the Hebrew after the captivity, (vide Nehem. viii. 8.) are found to accord entirely with our Hebrew Bibles. To these facts we may add, that the reverence of the Jews for their sacred writings is another guarantee for their integrity; so great indeed was that reverence, that, according to the statements of Philo and Josephus, they would suffer any torments, and even death itself, rather than change a single point or iota of the scriptures.

The books of the Old Testament have been always allowed in every age, and by every sect of the Hebrew church, to be the genuine works of those persons to whom they are usually ascribed; and they have also been universally and exclusively, without addition or exception, considered by the Jews as written under the immediate influence of the Divine Spirit. Those who were contemporaries with the respective writers of these books, had the clearest evidence that they acted and spoke by the authority of God himself; and this testimony, transmitted to all succeeding ages, was in many cases strengthened and confirmed by the gradual fulfilment of predictions contained in their writings. (See Joseph. Cont. Apion, b. i. sect. 8.) The Jews of the present day, dispersed all over the world, demonstrate the sincerity of their belief in the authenticity and divine authority of the Hebrew scriptures, by their inflexible adherence to the law. By the anxious expectation with which they wait for the accomplishment of the prophecies, though they have sadly mistaken the meaning of these prophecies, and by the scrupulous care with which they preserve their copies of the Old Testament scriptures, and guard against corruptions in the text. It is a great argument for the truth of the scriptures, that they have stood the test, and received the approbation of so many ages, and still retain their authority, though infidels, in all ages, have endeavoured, by every means in their power, to disprove them; and it is a still farther evidence in behalf of these sacred records, that God has been pleased to show so remarkable a providence in their preservation. But the most decisive proof of the authenticity and inspiration of the ancient scriptures, is derived from the New Testament. Upon many occa-

sions, our Saviour referred to the Old Testament scriptures collectively, as of divine authority, and both he and his apostles constantly endeavoured to prove that Jesus was the Messiah foretold in the writings of the prophets. Christ tells his disciples that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning him, (Luke xxiv. 44.) and by thus adopting the common division of the law, the prophets and the Psalms, which comprehended all the Hebrew scriptures, our Lord ratified the canon of the Old Testament, as it was received by the Jews; and by declaring that those books contained prophecies which must be fulfilled, he established their divine inspiration, since God alone can enable men to foretell future events. (See also Mark vii. 13.) Both St Paul and St Peter bear strong testimony to the divine authority of the Jewish scriptures, in their collective capacity. (See in particular, 2 Tim. iii. 15. 2 Pet. i. 21.) Besides, there is scarcely a book in the Old Testament which is not repeatedly quoted in the New, as of divine authority.—*Bp. Tomline's Elem. of Christ. Theol.* part i. ch. i. The quotations from the Old Testament in the New, are largely treated of in *Horne's Introd. to the Bible*, vol. ii. part i. ch. iv.

Such is a brief outline of the principal arguments in proof of the genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration of the Old Testament scriptures. Had our limits permitted, we might have advanced many other arguments of the most convincing nature. We might have pointed out the admirable harmony, and intimate connection which subsist between all the parts of scripture, the excellence of the doctrines and moral precepts which they deliver, their tendency to promote the present and eternal happiness of mankind, and their wonderful adaptation to the circumstances and necessities of our fallen race—these and many other particulars we might have urged as strong evidences of the authenticity and inspiration of scripture. Enough, however, has been stated to satisfy every candid and unprejudiced inquirer, that the Old Testament scriptures are the word of God,* and that those holy men of God who first delivered these writings to the world, spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Besides, many points which we here omitted, or slightly touched upon, will be discussed at length in the body of the work.—See *Author's Preface*.

Upon the whole, we conclude, that we have such a number of evidences of the divine authority of the Old Testament, as no man can resist, who duly and impartially considers them; and as to those who refuse to be convinced by these evidences—who reject the testimony of Moses and the prophets, it may be truly asserted of them, that neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

When the gospel was established throughout the Roman empire, and when churches were planted in every nation, the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were gradually translated into the vernacular tongue of every country in which they were received. This we

* The genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration of the New Testament, will be proved in the introduction to the New Testament part of this history, and the nature and different degrees of inspiration, as applicable to the writers of the Old and New Testaments, will be there also pointed out.

learn from a variety of testimonies; but the following passage from Theodoret, who lived in the beginning of the fifth century, may be considered as alone decisive, 'We Christians are enabled to show the powers of apostolic and prophetic doctrines, which have filled all countries under heaven; for that which was formerly uttered in Hebrew, is not only translated into the language of the Greeks, but also of the Romans, the Indians, Persians, Armenians, Scythians, Samaritans, Egyptians, and, in a word, into all the languages that are used by any nation.'—*Theodor. ad Græc. In fid. Serm. 5.* The sacred writings being the foundation of the Christian religion, upon which they built the whole system of their morality and doctrine, and which the Christians were obliged to read both in public and private, the several churches of the world could not be long without such translations as might be understood by every individual. It is impossible to ascertain the exact time at which Christianity was introduced into this island, nor do we know how soon there was a translation of the scriptures into the language of its inhabitants. The earliest of which we have any account is a translation of the Psalms into the Saxon tongue by Adhelm, the first bishop of Sherborne, about the year 706. Egbert bishop of Landisfern, who died in the year 721, made a Saxon version of the four gospels, and not long after Bede translated the whole Bible into that language. There were other Saxon versions of the whole or parts of the Bible of a later date; and it appears indeed, that new translations were made from time to time, as the language of the country varied; but when the Roman pontiffs had established their spiritual tyranny in this as well as in other countries of Europe, they forbade the reading of these translations; and in the 14th century, the common people had been so long deprived of the use of the scriptures, that the latest of the translations had become unintelligible. Wickliff, therefore, who was a strenuous opposer of the corruptions and usurpations of the church of Rome, and from whom we are to date the dawn of the Reformation in this kingdom, between 1360 and 1380 published a translation of the whole Bible in the English language, then spoken, but not being sufficiently acquainted with the Hebrew and Greek languages, he made his translation from the Latin Bibles, which were at that time read in the churches.—*Bp. Tomline's Christ. Theol.—Gray's Key.—Lewis' Hist. of Translat. of the Bible.*

Tyndale was the first who undertook to translate the scriptures into English at the reformation. He published the New Testament at Antwerp in 1526, and the Dutch reprinted three editions of it, with some alterations by George Jaye, an English refugee, in 1527, 1528, 1530. Tyndale printed a second edition in 1534, and having translated the Pentateuch and the historical books as far as Nehemiah, they were printed at Halle, 1552, 1553. Coverdale at home laboured to complete what Tyndale had begun, and in the year 1535 the whole Bible was finished at the press. In 1547 another edition was published abroad, with some few corrections, under the feigned name of Matthewe. In 1540 archbishop Cranmer published a new edition, which he had corrected in some places, and to which he wrote a preface. This is called Cranmer's Bible. In 1553 Edward the sixth died, and was succeeded by Mary, who imme-

diately restored the popish service and sacraments, and persecuted the friends of the reformation with such cruelty that many of them fled into foreign countries, among whom was Coverdale, who, in Edward's reign, had been made bishop of Exeter. He and some others fixed their residence at Geneva, where they employed themselves in making a translation of the Bible. They began with the New Testament, which they published in duodecimo, printed with a small but beautiful letter, in 1557. This is the first printed edition of the New Testament in which the verses of the chapters are distinguished by numeral figures and breaks.

Strype, in the Annals of the Reformation, tells us, that the Geneva brethren, after publishing their New Testament, proceeded to revise the Old. But not having finished it when Elizabeth came to the throne, some of them staid behind the rest to complete their design. And having finished the Old Testament, they published the whole Bible at Geneva, in quarto, in the year 1560, printed by Rowland Hill. This is what is commonly called the Geneva Bible. The Geneva Bible was so universally used in private families, that there were above thirty editions of it, in folio, quarto, and octavo, printed from the year 1560 to the year 1616.

Queen Mary dying in November, 1558, was succeeded by Elizabeth, who, treading in the steps of her brother Edward VI. suppressed the Romish superstition in all her dominions, and filled the sees with Protestants. After this, archbishop Matthew Parker, having represented to the queen that many churches either were without Bibles, or had incorrect copies, she resolved that a revisal and correction of the former translation should be made, in order to publication. The archbishop therefore appointed some of the most learned of the bishops and others to revise the Bible commonly used, and to compare it with the originals; and to each of them he assigned a particular book of scripture, with directions not to vary from the former translation except where it was not agreeable to the original, and to add marginal notes for explaining the difficult texts, reserving to himself the oversight of the whole. A revisal of the English Bible on the same plan had been proposed by Cranmer, but it was never undertaken. Parker was more successful in his attempt. The persons employed by Parker performed their tasks with such cheerfulness, that the whole was ready for the press some time before the year 1568: for in that year the Bible of the bishops' revisal was printed in a very elegant manner, with a beautiful English letter, on a royal paper, in a large folio, by Richard Jugge, the queen's printer. This Bible, on account of the correction which the bishops made, was called the Bishops' Bible, and was authorized to be read in the churches.

In the year 1604, king James appointed a number of learned men to revise and correct the Bishops' Bible. From the injunctions or rules given respecting this work, it is clear that the learned men employed were not left to follow their own unbiassed judgment. The chief of these were, first, the ordinary Bible read in the churches, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed and as little altered as the original would permit. Third, the old ecclesiastical words to be kept: as the word *church* not to be translated *congregation*, &c. Fifth, the division of the chapters to be altered either

not at all or as little as might be. Sixth: no marginal notes to be affixed, but only for explaining the Hebrew and the Greek words, which could not be expressed in the text without some circumlocution. Fourteenth: the translation of Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthewe, Whitechurch, (the great Bible,) and Geneva, to be used where they agreed better with the original than the Bishops' Bible.

From this statement it is clear that the authorized version was only revised by the persons employed by James; but as this revision was made by some of the most learned men of that period, it is probable that it contains as faithful a representation of the original scriptures as could then be made. But when we consider, says Dr Marsh, the immense accession which has been since made, both to our critical and to our philological apparatus; when we consider that the whole class of literature, commencing with the London Polyglott and continued to Griesbach's Testament, was collected *subsequently* to that period; when we consider that the most important sources of intelligence for the interpretation of the original were likewise opened after that period, we cannot possibly pretend that our authorized version does not require amendment.—*Boothroyd's Introd. to his Bible*, part i. c. iii. 8vo ed. 1836.

Whenever therefore it shall be judged expedient by well advised and considerate measures to authorise a revisal of our present version, it will certainly be found capable of many and great improvements; but this is a work not likely to be taken in hand, and certainly no single person is competent to the task. It should be the production of collective industry and general contribution; and the prejudices and mistakes which must characterize the works of individuals, should be corrected by united inquiry, dispassionate examination, and fair criticism. We do not mean to disparage the labours of those individuals who have already given new translations of the Bible in whole or in part;* they are entitled to the public gratitude and encouragement, and their endeavours must contribute to illustrate the sacred pages, and tend to facilitate the great work of a national translation. Till, however, the execution of this work shall be judged expedient, every sincere and well disposed Christian, who makes the holy oracles his chief study and delight, may rest satisfied with the present translation, which is indeed highly excellent, being in its doctrines uncorrupt, and in its general construction faithful to the original. In any attempt at a new translation of the Scriptures, it should be one great aim to depart as little as possible from the present version, which has been familiarised by long use, and endeared by habitual reverence, of which the style has long served as a standard of our language, and of which the peculiar harmony and excellence could never be improved by any change which refinement might substitute.—*Gray's Key*.

The books of the Old Testament are divided into chapters and verses, to facilitate reference, and primarily

with a view to any natural division of the multifarious subjects which they embrace: but by whom these divisions were originally made is a question, concerning which there exists a considerable difference of opinion. That they are comparatively a modern invention is evident from its being utterly unknown to the ancient Christians, whose Greek Bibles, indeed, then had *Τίτλοι* and *Κεφαλαία* (*Titles and Heads*); but the intent of these was rather to point out the sum or contents of the text, than to divide the various books. They also differed greatly from the present chapters, many of them containing only a few verses, and some of them not more than one. The invention of chapters has by some been ascribed to Lanfranc, who was archbishop of Canterbury in the reigns of William the Conqueror and William II.; while others attribute it to Stephen Langton, who was archbishop of the same see in the reigns of John and Henry III. But the real author of this very useful division was cardinal Hugo de Sancto Caro, who flourished about the middle of the thirteenth century, and wrote a celebrated commentary on the Scriptures. Having projected a concordance to the Latin Vulgate version, by which any passage might be found, he divided both the Old and New Testaments into chapters, which are the same we now have: these chapters he subdivided into smaller portions, which he distinguished by the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, and G, which are placed in the margin at equal distances from each other, according to the length of the chapters. The facility of reference thus afforded by Hugo's divisions, having become known to Rabbi Mordecai Nathan, (or Isaac Nathan, as he is sometimes called,) a celebrated Jewish teacher in the fifteenth century, he undertook a similar concordance for the Hebrew Scriptures; but instead of adopting the marginal letters of Hugo, he marked every fifth verse with a Hebrew numeral, thus, א 1, ה 5, &c., retaining, however, the cardinal's divisions into chapters. This concordance of Rabbi Nathan was commenced A.D. 1438, and finished in 1445. The introduction of verses into the Hebrew Bible was made by Athias, a Jew of Amsterdam, in his celebrated edition of the Hebrew Bible, printed in 1661, and reprinted in 1667. He marked every verse with the figures in common use, except those which had been previously marked by Nathan with Hebrew letters, in the manner in which they at present appear in Hebrew Bibles. By rejecting these Hebrew numerals, and substituting for them the corresponding figures, all the copies of the Bible in other languages have since been marked. As, however, the modern divisions and sub-divisions are not always made with the strictest regard to the connexion of parts, it is greatly to be wished that all future editions of the scriptures might be printed after the judicious manner adopted by Mr Reeves in his equally beautiful and correct editions of the entire Bible; in which the numbers of the verses and chapters are thrown into the margin, and the metrical parts of scripture are distinguished from the rest by being printed in verses in the usual manner.—*Horne's Introd.* vol. ii. part i. p. 69, 70; 7th ed.

When we consider the utility, excellence, and perfection of the holy scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, since they are not merely the best guide we can consult, but the only one that can make us wise unto salvation, we must be convinced that it is the indis-

* Of the modern translations of the whole Bible, that of Dr Boothroyd is undoubtedly the best, and may be considered as a valuable help to the critical understanding of the holy Scriptures. The following translations of parts of Scripture by different individuals are held in high estimation, namely, The book of Job, by Dr Good, the Proverbs by Mr G. Holden, Isaiah by Lowth, Jeremiah by Dr Blayney, Ezekiel by Newcome, Daniel by Wint, Hosea by Horsely, the Minor Prophets by Newcome, the Gospels by Campbell, and the Epistles by Macknight.

pensable duty of all, carefully and constantly to peruse these sacred oracles, that through them they may be thoroughly furnished to every good work. This, indeed, is not only agreeable to the divine command, and to the design of the scriptures, but is further commanded to us by the gracious promise made by Him who cannot lie, to all true believers, that they shall all be taught of God. What time is to be appropriated for this purpose, must ever depend upon the circumstances of the individual. It is obvious, that some time ought daily to be devoted to this important study, and that it should be undertaken with devout simplicity and humility; prosecuted with diligence and attention; accompanied by prayer for the divine aid and teaching; together with a sincere desire to know and perform the will of God, and, laying aside all prejudice, to embrace all truths which are plainly delivered there, and to follow the scriptures wherever conviction may lead our minds. For it is indubitable, that those who are anxiously desirous of the knowledge of divine truth, will be assisted by the Spirit of God, in searching out the meaning of scripture, particularly in such subjects as have an especial reference to faith and religious practice. In order, however, to study the scriptures aright, it should be recollected that they are not to be contemplated as one entire book or treatise. The knowledge of divine truth, is, indeed, perfectly distinct from human science, in that it emanates immediately from the fountain of Infinite Wisdom. Yet has it this in common with human science, that it is made by its heavenly author to flow through the channel of human instruction. While, therefore, we receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, we must, nevertheless, examine it as it is delivered to us, clothed in the language of men, and subject to the general rules of human composition. The deference due to it as a divine production, does not interfere with this province of human learning; it only exacts submission with respect to the subject matter of the revelation, to which the critical investigation is entirely subordinate.

But besides the paramount importance of the contents of the holy scriptures, a farther motive to the diligent study of them, presents itself in the facilities that are offered to us for this purpose, by the numerous publications which have for their object the criticism, interpretation, and elucidation of the sacred volume. In fact, a willingness to know and to do the will of God, implies a willingness to resort to all necessary helps for advancement in the truth, and for security against error. The value of such helps was never questioned except by those who chose to despise what they did not possess. Only, it must ever be borne in mind, that although these auxiliaries are valuable for guiding us to a knowledge of the sense and literal meaning of scripture, they can never stand in the place of the divine teaching, which is the work of the Holy Spirit alone, and that without this teaching, the knowledge which they impart can be of no real or permanent value: 'For,' says the apostle, 'though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not charity, or Christian love, it is nothing.'—(1 Cor. xiii. 2).—*Vanmildert's Bampton Lectures*.—*Horne's Introd.* vol. i.

The books of scripture, as every one must perceive, are not arranged in our Bibles according to the order of time in which the events that they relate happened, but

rather according to the nature of the subjects. This arrangement is not peculiar to the English version, but is adopted in most copies of the scriptures. The collocation of the books of scripture, however, is not to be regarded as of canonical authority, for we find a different arrangement in the Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, and Latin versions. Neither have the sacred historians always related events according to the order of time; some are introduced by anticipations, and others again are placed first, which should be last.

From these circumstances, seeming contradictions have arisen, which have been eagerly seized by the adversaries of revealed religion, in order to perplex the minds and shake the faith of those who are not able to cope with their sophistries. Hence the utility of such a work as Stackhouse's *History of the Bible*, which gives, in plain and perspicuous language, a connected narrative of bible history, according to chronological order; and which likewise, in a series of notes and dissertations, explains difficulties as they occur; reconciles apparent contradictions, and refutes the objections which infidels have brought against various parts of scripture. Any one who peruses this work with attention, will be convinced of its importance, and of the valuable aid which it affords in elucidating scripture history.—See the *Author's Preface*.

Hence also chronology, or the science of computing and adjusting periods of time, is of great importance towards understanding the historical parts of scripture, as it shows the order and connection of the events therein recorded. It also enables us to ascertain the accomplishment of many of the prophecies, and sometimes leads to the discovery and correction of mistakes in numbers and dates which have crept into particular texts. Considerable differences exist in the chronology of the Hebrew scriptures, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint version, and Josephus, with regard to those periods, which extend from the creation to the deluge, and from thence to the calling of Abraham. These differences have led to different chronological systems, according as their authors have adhered to one or other of these authorities, or selected from them all.—(See this *History*, b. i. sect. v. ch. iii.) The chronology which is adopted in our Bibles, is that of the Hebrew scriptures, and is followed by Stackhouse. But of the authenticity of this system doubts are entertained by the best scripture critics, and Dr Hales, in his profound and elaborate work on chronology, has, we think, satisfactorily proved that the present system of Hebrew chronology is an adulteration, planned and executed by the Masorites,* in the fourth century, and that the chronology of Josephus, when rectified by a comparison with the Septuagint, and the other texts, is that which ought to be adopted. This system, which Dr Hales has established with great success, is unquestionably to be preferred to that in our Bibles, as it removes many of the difficulties with which scripture history is encumbered, when we follow the common system. Accordingly, in this edition of Stackhouse's history, the chronology of Dr Hales has been introduced, as far as could be done, consistently with the author's plan.

Ancient profane history, when studied in connection

* For an account of the Masorites, see b. vii. sect. ii. ch. iii. of this history.

with the history of the Israelites, is of very great importance to the elucidation of scripture. The Jews were connected either in a hostile or pacific manner with the Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, Egyptians, Assyrians, Medes, Babylonians, Persians, Arabians, Greeks, Romans, and other ancient nations, and hence a knowledge of the history of the nations is necessary for illustrating many passages of scripture, in which allusion is made to them. In the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, we likewise find many predictions relative to the heathen nations, which would be utterly unintelligible without the aid of profane history. The present work will be found valuable in this respect, as it gives, along with the sacred narrative, a connected view of profane history. The other works on the connection of sacred and profane history, most worthy of notice, are those of Shuckford, Prideaux, Russel, and Jahn.

A knowledge of the peculiar rites, manners, and customs of the Jews, and other nations that are either alluded to, or mentioned in the scriptures, is indispensably necessary to the right understanding of the sacred volume. There are many things recorded both in the Old and New Testament, which must appear to Europeans either obscure, unintelligible, repulsive, or absurd, unless, forgetting our own peculiar habits and modes of thinking, we transport ourselves, in a manner, to the East, and diligently study the customs, whether political, sacred, or civil, which obtained there. The first, and most important source to which we must betake ourselves for this purpose, is undoubtedly the Old and New Testaments themselves, the careful collation of which, will enable us to collect much information with regard to the customs and modes of living which obtained among the ancient Jews. The next sources of information are the apocryphal books, the writings of Philo, Josephus, the Talmudists, and the ancient history of eastern nations. Finally, if to these sources we add an acquaintance with the customs and manners which prevail in the east at the present day, as they are related by travellers of approved character, we shall have a sure and easy access to the knowledge of scripture antiquities; for as the Orientals, from their tenacious adherence to old usages, are not likely to differ materially from their ancestors, we have no great reason to be apprehensive, from comparing the manners, &c. of the modern Syrians, Arabs, and other nations of the East, with those of the Hebrews, that we should attribute customs to them which never obtained among them. The interpretation of the Bible, therefore, is not a little facilitated by the perusal of the voyages and travels of those who have explored the East. In this department of sacred literature, the compilations of Harmer, Burder, Paxton, and Horne, are particularly distinguished.

The knowledge of ancient geography, especially that of Palestine, and the neighbouring countries, tends, as is universally confessed, to illustrate almost innumerable passages of scripture. The principal English works on this subject are those of Wells, Mansford, Rosenmüller, (lately translated into English), Calmet's Dictionary by Taylor, Paxton and Horne. A pretty extensive Scripture Gazetteer is now in the course of publication by the Edinburgh Printing Company.

A knowledge of natural history enables us to explain

many otherwise obscure passages of scripture. Thus frequent mention is made in scripture of animals, trees, plants, and precious stones; sometimes sentiments are expressed, either in allusion to, or by metaphors taken from some fact in natural history; and sometimes characters are described in allusion to natural objects, and without the knowledge of these we cannot perceive the nature of the characters intended. The natural history of the Bible is expressly treated of by Paxton, Harris, Carpenter, Horne, and the Editor of Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible.

There is one branch of natural history which requires to be noticed here on account of the important bearing which it is made to have, at the present day, on the Mosaic history of the creation, we mean geology. It is strenuously maintained by geologists, that, without the aid of this science, as it is now improved by recent researches and discoveries, the first chapter of Genesis cannot be properly explained, nor the true origin of the earth understood. It therefore becomes necessary, for the biblical student to make himself acquainted with the leading facts of modern geology, in order that he may be able to judge whether or not these lofty claims are well founded. The intelligent curiosity of many, in every country of Europe, has been for some time, and still continues to be directed to a minute examination of the mineralogical contents and geological structure of our globe, and with the most encouraging success. Surprising discoveries have been made within the last fifty or sixty years, the remains of numerous plants and animals of a wonderful structure and size, have been found imbedded in the strata of the earth at a great depth, and many important facts relative to the present surface of the earth, and to the rocks and agencies immediately below it, have been disclosed. From an examination of the structure and size of these fossil remains, both of plants and animals, aided by a knowledge of comparative anatomy, and of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, geologists have come to the conclusion that a large proportion of them belong to species which now no where exist either on the earth or in the ocean, and that it is only in the superficial strata of the earth that the remains of plants and animals now existing are deposited. From a regular order in the superposition of the strata, recurring at distant intervals, and accompanied by a corresponding regularity in the order of succession of many extinct races of animals and vegetables, and various other facts, geologists farther conclude, that several destructions and subsequent new creations of animals and plants have taken place all over the surface of our globe since its original production out of nothing; that is, whole groups have been at once swept from existence by some powerful catastrophe, and their places supplied by other races called into existence by the creative fiat of the Almighty. They also infer, from the thickness of the strata containing the remains of extinct species, which amounts to many miles, that immense periods of time were necessary to bring about these changes, and hence that the materials of which the globe is composed, existed through many ages; 600,000 years according to some, prior to the era of man's creation; for that man was not witness to any of these changes, they consider evident from the fact that no human remains have hitherto been discovered along with those of extinct animals and veget-

ables, or lower down than the loose sand and gravel that cover the surface of the earth. This fact, however, has been disputed.—See *Turner's Sacred History*, vol. i. letter xviii. note 53.—*Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise*, vol. i. p. 103. Geologists also contend that none of the fossiliferous strata can be attributed to the deluge recorded in scripture, because it is apparent, from their structure and thickness, that they must have been deposited by some watery mass remaining over them in a state of tranquillity for a vastly longer period than the duration of Noah's flood; the traces of this latter catastrophe being to be sought for near the surface of the earth. For the evidences which geology furnishes in proof of the reality of the Mosaic deluge, see b. i. sect. vi. ch. iii. of this history.

As these conclusions seem to contradict the history of the creation in the first chapter of Genesis, as it has been interpreted by the generality of Christians in every age, geologists have proposed various hypotheses with the view of reconciling their opinions with the statements of the Mosaic record. We can only find room to mention two of these that have met with the greatest support.

Several eminent geologists have supposed, that the days of the Mosaic creation do not imply the same length of time which is now occupied by a single revolution of the globe, but successive periods, each of great extent, during which the different strata with their organic remains were deposited. In confirmation of this hypothesis, it has been asserted that the order of succession of the organic remains of a former world, accorded with the order of creation as related by Moses. As, however, more recent discoveries have shown that this order does not hold in many cases, and as such an interpretation of the word *day* contradicts the express declarations of scripture, particularly that contained in the fourth commandment, this hypothesis is now abandoned by most geologists, and even by some who were its chief supporters.—See *Buckland's Bridg. Treat.* vol. i. pp. 17, 597. The prevailing hypothesis now is, that the word *beginning*, as applied by Moses in Genesis i. 1. expresses an undefined period of time which was antecedent to the last great change that affected the surface of the earth, and to the creation of its present animal and vegetable inhabitants; during which period a long series of operations and revolutions have been going on; which, as they are wholly unconnected with the history of the human race, are passed over in silence by the sacred historian, whose only concern with them was barely to state that the matter of the universe is not eternal and self-existent, but was originally created by the power of the Almighty. For a detail of the various arguments in support of this hypothesis, we must refer the reader to Buckland's work, already quoted (vol. i. ch. ii.), and although it may be considered less objectionable than the former, yet it is not free from difficulties, as the more candid geologists allow. See Prof. Hitchcock's Tract on the connection between geology and the Mosaic account of the creation.—*Student's Cab. Lib.* No. xix. We cannot help thinking that geologists have been too premature in drawing their conclusions, and framing theories with respect to the origin of the earth. They should bear in mind that speculations upon these points, where the subject matter is confessedly so mysterious, ought always to

be indulged in with extreme caution, as being liable to the exaggerations and false conclusions of an excited imagination. The science of geology is but of recent origin, and although its progress has been wonderfully rapid, will any one venture to affirm that it has already arrived at full maturity, or that future researches may not greatly modify, or even overturn many of the present opinions? Great stress has been laid upon the alleged fact, that no fossilized human remains have been discovered in juxtaposition with those of extinct animals and vegetables; but this, although it may be true with regard to the continents of Europe and America, which alone have been partially examined, does not establish the conclusion intended; namely, that these animal and vegetable remains must be referred to a period much more remote than the creation of man; for it is highly probable that our race did not exist out of Asia until some time after the deluge. It is possible that fossilized human remains may be found in those parts of Asia inhabited by the antediluvians, and therefore geologists ought at least to have explored the Armenian, Babylonian, and Mesopotamian regions before they made their decision. Let it be granted that the first verse of the book of Genesis may bear the construction put upon it by geologists, which is by no means certain, still it seems inconsistent with the ideas which the Bible leads us to form respecting the wisdom of the Creator, to suppose that the earth which we inhabit was, during thousands of ages, utterly abandoned to reptiles, lizards, and hideous monsters, and all this to serve no beneficial purpose which we can perceive. Can it be that such loathsome and contemptible existences as these, were for myriads of ages the lords of the creation, instead of the image of the living God.—See *Prof. Stuart's Tract on the Modern Doctrines of Geology—Stud. Cab. Lib.*

The remarks of an enlightened philosopher of the present day, on these subjects, are so judicious and excellent, that we have great pleasure in giving them a place here. 'Although it is true that many of the geological phenomena have been represented by these observers, and others, to indicate that our earth has had a much longer duration than the strictest import of the terms used by Moses can allow, and especially in the succession of its organized races, yet, after the most patient comparison and consideration of their facts and reasonings, I cannot but feel that they have not at all advanced beyond plausible conjectures, as I also perceive that they are mostly at variance with each other; and that as fast as one theory of this sort is set up, it has been found to be wrong by a succeeding inquirer, who attempts, in his turn, to establish a different one, of the same tendency, in its stead. These are all fair exertions of ingenuity, and arise from a desire to let no fallacy stand, and from a love of exploring what has baffled anterior research; but these circumstances prove that none of these theories are true,—that the right theory has not yet been discovered,—that erroneous deductions have been made from the phenomena which have been seen,—and that these are not yet justly understood, nor their real bearings discerned. Hence, I continue in the belief, that whatever is true in fact and correct in inference on this subject, will be in the end found to be not inconsistent with the account of Moses, nor with the common meaning of the expressions he

uses. In studying the scriptures, it is peculiarly desirable that we should, on no occasion, depart any more from the usual and natural meaning of the words and phrases which there occur, than we do in reading any other author. They have been greatly disfigured by the forced construction which most men seek to put upon them; and much dissatisfaction has by this conduct been excited in the intelligent mind. The true construction of every part must be, not the possibilities of meaning which refining ingenuity may draw from the expression, but that sense and purport which the author himself, in penning them, intended that they should express. His personal meaning at the time, and not the import which our verbal criticism can now extract, should be the great object of our attention. And therefore it appears to me to be most probable, that whenever the right theory on the fabrication of our earth, and on the era and succession of its organized beings, shall be discovered, it will be found to be compatible with the Mosaic cosmogony, in its most natural signification. But until this desirable event arrives, there will be as much incongruity between this ancient account and our modern speculations, as there cannot but be between the devious excursions of an active imagination, and the simple and solid, but unattractive reality. Our German contemporaries, in some of their reveries on ancient history, are equally alert to prove that novelty of fancy is more sought for by many than justness of thought,—that it is easier to argue than to judge,—and that even truth becomes weariness when it ceases to be original, and has lost the impression of its beauty by its habitual familiarity. It is quite true that Moses did not profess to be a geologist, and had no business to be so. His object was, not to teach natural science, but to inculcate the existence, the laws, the will, and the worship of God; and to found the polity and social manners and institutions of his countrymen, on this only true foundation of national prosperity and of individual happiness. But as he was the chosen organ of divine truth to man, on his moral and religious duties, it is most probable that what he expresses on other subjects, in those compositions which were to be the permanent guides of the opinions and conduct of his nation, will be also what is true and proper. It is most consistent with all that we know of intelligent agency, to suppose that he who was instructed or guided to be the lawgiver and sacred preceptor of his people, would be likewise so informed, or influenced, as to avoid falsehood on every collateral subject which it would be in the course of his narration to notice. If we were directing or assisting any pupil to write on any topic, we should certainly not suffer him to insert any thing that we knew to be a fiction or a fallacy. It is therefore most rational to suppose that the same precaution was used by the Deity towards his selected messenger. Hence, I am induced to believe that what Moses expresses incidentally on other points besides those of his divine legislation, is substantially true, and will be found to be so, as soon as his judges or readers have acquired competent knowledge. It is our deficiency in this which hurries us to discredit, or to doubt, or oppose him. But on no collateral point, additional to his main subject, was he more likely to have been correct, either from true human traditions of preceding knowledge, or communications, or from new

supplementary aid, so far as that was needed, than in his notices of the divine creation. This was indeed the true basis of his mission and tuition; and it is brought prominently forward at once to our view, as if it were meant to be so. His brief intimations are, therefore, most probably the just outlines of all true geology; and thus far we may affirm, that the more our materials of judgment are increased by the multiplying labours of our geological students, the less founded any opposing speculations appear to become. It is now thirty-five years since my attention was first directed to these considerations. It was then the fashion for science and for a large part of the educated and inquisitive world, to rush into a disbelief of all written revelation; and several geological speculations were directed against it. But I have lived to see the most hostile of these destroyed by their as hostile successors; and to observe that nothing which was of this character, however plausible at the moment of its appearance, has had any duration in human estimation, not even among the sceptical. Augmented knowledge has, from time to time, overthrown the erroneous reasonings with which the Mosaic account has been repeatedly assailed; and has actually brought to light more facts in its favour, than at this late period of the earth could have been expected to occur. Those which are of this description are enlarging in number every year; and therefore my belief is, that the veracity of the chief Hebrew historian will be ultimately found to be as exact in what he has recorded in the cosmogony with which he commences his work, as it is in the account of his own legislation. There is certainly no appearance as yet that any contradictory theory will long survive its public enunciation. *Magna est Veritas, et prevalebit*, is the everlasting axiom. Truth, and truth only, will obtain any immortality in the intellectual, and therefore in our literary and social world.'—*Turner's Sacred History*, vol. i. pp. 30—34. London 1832.

Every lover of science, and every enlightened friend of religion, must applaud the noble and zealous efforts which so many learned and talented individuals of the present day are making, to penetrate the recesses of nature, and to discover the wonders that are hid in the deep places of the earth. The book of nature and the book of Revelation proceed from the same almighty and all-wise source, and therefore what is contained in the one must harmonize with what is contained in the other. It is only our weak and erring understandings that hinder us from perceiving this harmony in any particular instance; but we may rest assured, that the phenomena of nature, when rightly interpreted, will, instead of opposing and contradicting revelation, be found to confirm and support it. Already has geology lent its aid in this way,—it has furnished indubitable evidence that this earth could not have existed from eternity, but must have had a beginning; that it was originally in a state of chaos, and its surface buried under the deep; and that at a period less remote its surface was again swept over by a deluge. (See b. i. sect. vi. ch. iii. of this history.) These and several other circumstances recorded in scripture history, receive confirmation from the fact which geology has disclosed, and there is reason to believe that future inquiries will elicit additional evidence of this kind.—See *Prof. Hitchcock's Tract, Student's Cab. Lib.* No. xix. Let the geologist then pursue his researches

with all possible zeal and ardour ; but let him do so in a proper spirit, and by a patient investigation of facts ; let him abstain from rash speculations, into which the objects of his inquiries are, from their very nature, exceedingly apt to plunge him. Instead of attempting to accommodate scripture to his own conclusions, let him carefully examine whether these conclusions be accurate, or whether they may not be so modified as to be in accordance with the declarations of scripture, taken in their most natural and obvious sense. In this way may he reasonably hope to meet with success, and to arrive at conclusions which shall harmonize with those parts of Scripture, between which and geology there is at present a seeming inconsistency.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK I.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THINGS FROM THE CREATION TO THE FLOOD, IN ALL 1656 YEARS;
ACCORDING TO DR HALES 2256 YEARS.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE Pentateuch or five books of Moses, designated Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, contains the authentic history of the world during a period of 2515 years. "It is a wide description, gradually contracted; an account of one nation, preceded by a general sketch of the first state of mankind. The books are written in pure Hebrew, with an admirable diversity of style, always well adapted to the subject, yet characterised with the stamp of the same author; they are all evidently parts of the same work, and mutually strengthen and illustrate each other."¹

The name of the first Book of the Pentateuch, Genesis, which signifies generation or production, has been given to this portion of the Sacred Canon, because it contains an account of the generation or production of all things. "It narrates the true origin and history of all created things, in opposition to the erroneous notions entertained by the heathen nations; the origin of sin, and of all moral and physical evil; the establishment of the knowledge and worship of the only true God among mankind; their declension into idolatry; the promise of the Messiah; together with the origin of the church, and her progress and condition for many ages. It makes known to the Israelites the providential history of their ancestors, and the divine promises made to them; and shows them the reason why the Almighty chose Abraham and his posterity to be a peculiar people, to the exclusion of all other nations,—that from them should spring the Messiah. This circumstance must be kept in view throughout the reading of this Book, as it will illustrate many otherwise unaccountable circumstances there related. It was this hope that led Eve to exclaim, 'I have gotten a man—the Lord.' The polygamy of Lamech may be accounted for by the hope that the Messiah would be born of some of his posterity,—as also, the incest of Lot's daughters,—Sarah's impatience of her barrenness,—the polygamy of Jacob—the consequent jealousies

between Leah and Rachel:—the jealousies between Ishmael and Isaac, and especially Rebekah's preference of Jacob to Esau."²

SECT. I.

CHAP. I.—Of the Creation of the World.

THE INTRODUCTION.

A. M. 1. A. C. 4004; or, according to Hales, 5411. Gen. ch. 1.
and part of ch. 2.

THE chief design of the author of the Pentateuch is, to give a short account of the formation of the earth, and the origin of mankind; of the most remarkable events that attended them in the infancy of the world; and of the transactions of one particular nation more especially, from whence the Messiah was to spring; and therefore it cannot be well expected, that he should extend his history to the creation of the supreme empyrean heaven, which God might make the place of his own residence, and the mansions of those celestial beings, whom he constituted the ministers of his court, and attendants on his throne,^a an immense space of time, perhaps, before the

² *Horne's Introduction*, &c., vol. iv., pp. 5, 6.

^a This is no novel notion of our own, but what has been confirmed by many great authorities, as the learned and ingenious *Dr Burnet* testifies. For, speaking of some, who supposed that the whole universe was created at one and the same time, and the highest heaven and angels included in the first day's work. "It may be here proper," says he, "to present the words of *Hieronymus*." "The age of this globe hath not yet reached its six thousandth year, and how many eternities, how many cycles, how many centuries must we conceive to have existed prior to that time, in which angels, thrones, dominions, and other powers worshipped the omnipotent. In a book on the *Trinity*, (either by *Novatian* or *Tertullian*), a world of angels, far above our firmament, is said to have been created before the Mosiac world, in these words, that in the higher spheres God had formerly created angels, appointed spiritual powers, planted thrones, dominions, &c., and framed many other boundless expanses of skies, &c.; so that this world rather seems to have been the latest than the sole work of the Deity. In a word, *Cassian* remarks that in his time, that is, in the beginning of the

¹ *Gray's Key to the Old Testament*, p. 76.

A. M. 1. A. C. 4004; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, 5111. GEN. CH. 1. AND PART OF CH. 2.

Mosaic account of the origination of this planetary world begins.

In the introduction of the history indeed we are told, that 'God created ^a the heaven and the earth:' but when it is considered, that *heaven* in Scripture language, is very commonly set to signify no more than the upper region of the air; that we frequently read of ¹ 'the firmament of heaven,' ² the windows of heaven, ³ the bottles of heaven, and ⁴ the hoary frost of heaven,' &c., none of which extend beyond our atmosphere, we have no grounds to conclude, that at one and the same time God created every thing that is contained in the vast extraneous spaces of the universe. On the contrary, when we find him recounting to Job, that at the time ⁵ 'when he laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,' we cannot but infer, that these *stars*, and these *sons of God*, were pre-existent; and consequently no part of the Mosaic creation.

By the *heaven* therefore we are to understand no more, than that part of the world which we behold above us: but then I imagine we have very good reason to extend our conceptions of this world above us so far, as to include in it the whole planetary system. ^b The truth is, the several planets that are contained within the *magnus orbis*, (as it is called), or the circle which Sa-

turn. Herschell, or Urania describes about the sun, have so near a similitude and relation: the same form, the same centre, and the same common luminary with one another, that it can hardly be imagined but that they were the production of one and the same creation. And therefore, though the historian seems chiefly to regard the earth in his whole narration; yet there is reason to presume, that the other parts of the planetary world went all along on in the same degrees of formation with it.

2. It is to be observed farther, that this planetary world, or system of things, was not immediately created out of nothing, (as very probably the supreme heavens were,) but out of some such pre-existent matter as the ancient heathens were wont to call *chaos*. And accordingly we may observe, that in the history which Moses gives us of the creation, he does not say, that God at once made all things in their full perfection, but that ^c 'In the beginning he created the earth,' that is, the matter whereof the *chaos* was composed, which 'was without form,' without any shape or order, 'and void,' without any thing living or growing in it; 'and darkness was upon the face of the waters,' nothing was seen for want of light, which lay buried in the vast abyss.

According to tradition, then, and the representation which this inspired author seems to give us, ^d this *chaos*

¹ Gen. i. 20. ² Gen. vii. 11. ³ Job xxxviii. 37.

⁴ Job xxxviii. 29. ⁵ Ibid. ver. 4, 7.

fifth century, it was the common opinion of Catholics, that before the beginning of the Genesios, viz., the birth of the Mosaic world: it was beyond a doubt God must have created all these heavenly powers." Burnet's Arch. Phil. c. 8.

^a By *heaven*, some understand in this place the highest super-firmamentary heaven, and by the *earth*, that pre-existent matter whereof the earth was originally made; and so the sense of the words will be—"that God at first created the matter whereof the whole universe was composed, all at once, in an instant, and by a word's speaking; but it was the supreme heaven only which he then finished, and formed into a most excellent order, for the place of his own residence, and the habitation of his holy angels; the earth was left rude and indigested, in the manner that Moses has described it, until there should be a fit occasion for its being revised, and set in order likewise."

^b The better to understand this, and some other matters, in our explication of the formation of celestial bodies, it is proper to observe, that there are three more remarkable systems of the world, the Ptolemaic, Copernican, and what is called the New System, which astronomers have devised.

1. In the Ptolemaic, the earth and waters are supposed to be in the centre of the universe, next to which is the element of air, and next above that the element of fire; then the orb of Mercury, then that of Venus, and then that of the Sun; above the sun's orb those of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn; and above them all, the orbs of the fixed stars, then the crystalline orbs, and lastly, the *cælum empyreum*, or *heaven of heavens*. All these massy orbs, and vast bodies borne by them, are in this system supposed to move round the terraqueous globe once in twenty-four hours; and beside that, to perform other revolutions in certain periodical times, according to their distance from the supposed centre, and the different circumference they take.

2. In the Copernican system, the sun is supposed to be in the centre, and the heavens and earth to revolve round about it, according to their several periods; first Mercury, then Venus, then the Earth with its satellite the Moon; then Mars, then Jupiter with its four moons; lastly, Saturn with its five, or more moons revolving round it; and beyond, or above all these, is the firmament, or region of fixed stars, which are all supposed to be at equal distances from their centre the sun.

3. In the New System, the sun and planets have the same size and position as in the Copernican; but then, whereas the Copernican supposes the firmament of the fixed stars to be the

bounds of the universe, and placed at equal distance from its centre the sun; this new hypothesis supposes, that there are many more systems of suns and planets, besides that in which we have our habitation; that every fixed star, in short, is a sun, encompassed with its complement of planets, both primary and secondary, as well as ours; and that these stars, with their planets are placed at regular distances from each other, and, according to their distances from us, seem to vary in their respective magnitudes.—*Derham's Astro-theology*, in the preliminary discourse.

^c What our translators render 'in the beginning' some learned men have made 'in wisdom God created the heavens and the earth;' not only because the Jerusalem targum has it so, but because the Psalmist, paraphrasing upon the works of the creation, breaks forth into this admiration. 'O Lord! how wonderful are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all,' Ps. civ. 24. And again, exhorting us to give thanks unto the Lord for his manifold mercies, he adds, 'who by wisdom made the heavens,' Ps. cxxxvi. 5. where, by *wisdom*, as some imagine, he means the *Son of God*, by whom, says the evangelist, John i. 3. 'all things were made, or all things created,' says the apostle, Col. i. 16. 'that are in heaven, and that are in the earth;' and therefore the meaning of the phrase must be, that God, in creating the world, made use of the agency of his Son. Among the ancients (says *Petavius*, on the work of the six days, B. 1., c. 1.) it was a well known and very common opinion, that by the noun *principium*, or beginning, was signified the Word or Son. And to this interpretation the word *Elohim* in the plural number, joined with *bara* a verb singular, seems to give some countenance; though others are of opinion, that a noun plural, governing a verb singular, is no more than the common idiom of the Hebrew tongue; and for this idiom a very considerable commentator assigns this reason:—That the Hebrew language was originally that of the Canaanites, a people strangely addicted to idolatry and polytheism; and who therefore made more use of the plural *Elohim*, than of the singular *Eloah*; which usage the Jews continued, though they were zealous assertors of the unity of the Godhead, and thereupon most commonly joined a verb of the singular number with it, pursuant to their notions of the divine unity.—*Le Clerc's dissert. De ling. Hebraica*.

^d To mention one author out of the many which Grotius has cited, Ovid, in the beginning of his *Metamorphoses* has given us this description of it:

Before the appearance of the earth and sky
Which covereth all things, Nature

A. M. I. A. C. 4004; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, 5411. GEN. CH. 1. AND PART OF CH. 2.

was a fluid mass, wherein were the materials and ingredients of all bodies, but mingled in confusion with one another, so that heavy and light, dense and rare, fluid and solid particles, were jumbled together, and the atoms or small constituent parts of fire, air, water, and earth, (which have since obtained the name of *elements*), were every one in every place, and all in a wild confusion and disorder. This seems to be a part of God's original creation; but why he suffered it to continue so long, before he transformed it into an habitable world, is a question only resolvable into the divine pleasure: since, according to the ideas we have of his moral perfections, there is nothing to fix the creation of any thing sooner or later, than his own arbitrary will determined. Only we may imagine, that, after the revolt of so many angels, God, intending to make a new race of creatures, in order to supply their place, and fill up (as it were) the vacancy in heaven; and withal, resolving to make trial of their obedience before he admitted them into his beatific presence, singled out one (as perhaps there might be many chaotic bodies in the universe) placed at a proper distance from his own empyrean seat, to be the habitation of the creatures he was about to form, and might delay the fitting it up for them until the time which his infinite wisdom had determined for their creation was fully come.

3. It is to be observed farther, that though Moses might have in his view the whole planetary system, and know very well, that every day each planet advanced in the same proportion, as the earth did in its formation: yet what he principally chose to insist on (as a specimen of all the rest) was this sublunary creation. He who was versed in all 'the learning of the Egyptians,' could not be unacquainted with the vulgar, or what is usually called the *Ptolemaic hypothesis*, which came originally from Egypt into Greece; and yet, instead of expressing his notions according to this, or any other system, we find him giving us a plain narrative, how matters were transacted, without asserting or denying any philosophic truth. Had he indeed talked a great deal of globular and angular particles, of central motion, planetary vortices, atmospheres of comets, the earth's rotation, and the sun's rest, he might possibly have pleased the taste of some theorists better; but theories we know are things of uncertain mode. They depend in a great measure upon the humour and caprice of an age, which

Throughout the Universe had but one form
Which men have named Chaos—'Twas a
Raw and shapeless mass—a heap of nature's
Discordant seeds wildly huddled together
Nor else but useless weight, &c.

α If matter existed as chaos before the beginning of the Mosaic world, what was it? for what purpose, or in what place did it exist before that time? I answer, that things such as these are not too narrowly to be searched after, since, in a great measure, they exceed the power of human investigation. Thus, we see at times stars arising in our hemisphere which never before had been apparent, but whose pre-existence in some shape, and in some quarter of the universe, cannot properly be doubted. And, also, comets are frequently discovered, concerning whose origin and first place of abode the abilities of man cannot elicit the least dawning of information. In fine, it is not to be supposed that the heavens themselves are free from decay,—the celestial as well as the terrestrial bodies must have their inversions and transmutations; and by the lapse of time and return of chaos, the fixed stars may be converted into planets, and planets, when their deteriorated matter is consumed, in their turn may become fixed stars, &c.—*Burnet's Archaeol. Phil.*, c. 9.

is sometimes in love with one, and sometimes with another. But this account of Moses was to last for ever, as being the ground-work which God designed for all his future revelations; and therefore it was requisite to have it framed in such a manner, as that it might condescend to the meanest capacity, and yet not contradict any received notions of philosophy.

The Jews, it must be owned, were a nation of no great genius for learning; and therefore, if Moses had given them a false system of the creation, such as a simple people might be apt to fancy, he had both made himself an impostor, and exposed his writings to the contempt and derision of every man of understanding: and yet, to have given them a particular explication of the true one, must have made the illiterate look upon him as a wild romancer. By God's direction, therefore, he took the middle and wisest way, which was to speak exact truth, but cautiously, and in such general terms as might neither confound the minds of the ignorant Jews, nor expose him to the censure of philosophizing Christians: and we may well account it an evident token of a particular providence of God overruling this inspired penman, that he has drawn up the cosmogony in such a manner, as makes it of perpetual use and application; forasmuch as it contains no peculiar notions of his own, no principles borrowed from the ancient exploded philosophy, nor any repugnant to the various discoveries of the new.

4. It is to be observed farther, in relation to this account of Moses, that when God is said to give the word, and every thing thereupon proceeded to its formation, he did not leave matter and motion to do their best, whilst he stood by (according to Dr Cudworth's expression) as an idle spectator of this sort of atoms, and the various results of it; but himself interposed, and, conducting the whole process, gave not only life and being, but form and figure to every part of the creation.

The warmest abettors of mechanical principles do not deny, but that ¹ a divine energy at least must be admitted in this case, where a world was to be formed, and a wild chaos reduced to a fair, regular, and permanent system. The immediate hand of God (they cannot but acknowledge) is apparent in a miracle, which is an infraction, upon the standing laws of nature; but certainly, of all miracles, the creation of the world is the greatest, not only as it signifies the production of matter and motion out of nothing, but as it was likewise the ranging and putting things into such order, as might make them capable of the laws of motion which were to be ordained for them. ² For whatever notions we may have of the stated economy of things now, it is certain that the laws of motion (with which philosophers make such noise) could not take place before every part of the creation was ranged and settled in its proper order.

It may be allowed however, since, even in the Mosaic account, there are some passages, such as, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, and it was so,' that whatever comes under the compass of mechanical causes, might possibly be effected by matter and motion, only set on work by infinite wisdom, and sustained in their being and operation by infinite power; but whatever is above

¹ See *Whiston's Theory*.² See *Hale's Origin of Mankind*.

A. M. 1. A. C. 4004; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, 5411. GEN. CH. 1. AND PART OF CH. 2.

the power of second causes, such as the production of matter out of nothing, the formation of the seeds of all animals and vegetables, the creation of our first parents, and inspiring them with immortal souls, &c., these we affirm, and these we ought to believe, were the pure result of God's omnipotent power, and are ascribed to him alone.

To this purpose we may observe, that before our author begins to acquaint us with what particular creatures were each day successively brought into being, he takes care to inform us, (as a thing essential and preparatory to the work,) ^a 'that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.' For, whether by 'the Spirit of God,' we are to understand 'his holy and essential Spirit, which is the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity, whether that ² plastic nature, which (according to some) was made subservient to him upon this occasion, or any other emanation of the divine power and energy, it is reasonable to suppose, that its moving or incubation upon the chaotic mass, derived into it a certain fermentation, impregnated it with several kinds of motive influence, and so separated and digested its confused parts, as to make it capable of the disposition and order it was going to receive.

CHAP. II.—*The History.*

In this condition we may suppose the chaos to have been, when the ^b fiat for light was given; whereupon all the confused, stagnating particles of matter began to range into form and order. The dull, heavy, and terrene parts, which overclouded the *expansum* or firmament, had their summons to retire to their respective centres. They presently obeyed the Almighty's orders, and part of them subsided to the centre of the earth, some to Jupiter, some to Saturn, some to Venus, &c., till the

globes of these several planets were completed. And as the grosser parts subsided, the lighter, and more tenuous mounted up; and the lucid and fiery particles (being lighter than the rest) ascended higher, and, by the divine order, meeting together in a body, were put in a circular motion, and in the space of a natural day, made to visit the whole *expansum* of the chaos, which occasioned a separation of the light from darkness, and thereby a distribution of day and night: ^c and this was the work of the first day. ^d

The next thing which God Almighty commanded, was, that the waters, which as yet were universally dispersed over the face of the chaos, should retire to their respective planets, and be restrained within their proper limits by several atmospheres. Hereupon all the aqueous parts immediately subsided towards the centres of the several planets, and were circumfused about their globes; by which means the great *expansum* was again cleared off, and the region of the air became more lucid and serene. And this is the operation which Moses calls 'dividing the waters under ^e the firmament, from the waters which are above ^f the firmament,' for the waters under the firmament are the waters of the earth, the waters above the firmament are those of the moon, and other planets, which, in the second day's work, were dismissed to their several orbs, but were confusedly mixed, and overspread the whole face of the *expansum* before.

Thus, on the second day, the delightful element of air was disentangled and extracted from the chaos: and one part of the business of the third, was to separate the other remaining elements, 'water and earth.' For the watery particles, as we said, clearing the *expansum*, and falling upon the planetary orbs, must be supposed to cover the face of the earth, as well as other planets, when the great Creator gave the command for 'the waters to be gathered into one place, and the dry land

¹ *Cudworth's Intellectual System.*

² Gen. i. 2. It is observed by some later Jewish, as well as Christian interpreters, that the several names of God are often given as epithets to those things which are the greatest, the strongest, and the best of their kind; and thereupon they think, that since the word *Ruach* signifies the wind, as well as the Spirit, *Ruach Elohim* should be translated a most vehement wind, instead of 'the Spirit of God;' and that this signification agrees very well with Moses's account, which represents the earth so mixed with the waters, that it could not appear, and therefore stood in need of a wind to dry it. But besides that this sense seems to be a sad debasing of the text, it is certain, that the wind (which is nothing but the moving of the air) could not be spoken of now, because it was not created until the second day.

^a The word in the Hebrew, according to the opinion of some, both ancient and modern, interpreters, signifies literally a brooding upon the waters, even as a hen does upon her eggs; but, as there are only two places wherein the word occurs, Deut. xxxii. 11. and Jer. xxxiii. 9., Mr Le Clerc contends, that in neither of these it will properly admit of this sense; and therefore he rather thinks it (as our *Ainsworth* seems to do) to be a metaphor taken from the hovering and fluttering of an eagle, or any other bird, over its young, but not its sitting over, or brooding upon them. A distinction of no great moment in my opinion.

^b The words are, 'Let there be light,' which, as *Longinus* takes notice, is a truly lofty expression; and herein appears the wisdom of Moses that he represents God like himself, commanding things into being by his word, i. e. his will: for whosoever we read the words, *he said*, in the history of the creation, the meaning must be, that he willed so and so.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^c If we rather approve the Copernican hypothesis, we must say, that the earth, having now received its diurnal and annual motion, and having turned round about its axis, for about the space of twelve hours, made this luminous body, now fixed in a proper place, appear in the east, which, in the space of twelve hours more, seemed to be in the west; and that this revolution made a distinction between day and night.—*Bedford's Chronology.*

^d 'And the evening and the morning were the first day.' The Mosaic method of computing days from sunset to sunset, and of reckoning by nights instead of days, prevailed among the polished Athenians. From a similar custom of our Gothic ancestors, during their abode in the forests of Germany, words expressive of such a mode of calculation (such as fornight, se'night) have been derived into our own language.—*Burder's Oriental Customs*, vol. i. p. 1.—Ed.

^e Gen. i. 6. The seventy interpreters, in translating the word *Rakiagh*, the firm or solid, seem to have followed the philosophy of the first ages: for the ancients fancied that the heavens were a solid body, and that the stars were fastened therein, which might likewise be the notion of *Elihu*, Job xxxvii. 18.: since he represents the heaven to be strong or solid, 'like a molten looking-glass;' whereas, the proper sense of the word is something spread or stretched out. And to this both the psalmist and prophet allude, when they tell us, that 'God spreadeth out the heaven like a curtain,' Ps. civ. 2. and 'stretched them out by his discretion,' Jer. x. 12.

^f Several commentators suppose 'the waters above the firmament' to be those which hang in the clouds; but the notion of their being planetary waters seems more reasonable, because at this time, there were no clouds, neither had it as yet rained on the earth. See Gen. ii. 6.

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to appear.' Whereupon the mighty mountains instantly reared up their heads, and the waters, falling every way from their sides, ran into those large extended valleys, which this swelling of the earth, in some places, had made for their reception in others. The earth, being thus separated from the waters, and designed for the habitation of man and beast, (which were afterwards to be created,) was first to be furnished with such things as were proper for their support; grass for cattle, and herbs and fruit-trees for the nourishment of man. Immediately, therefore, upon the divine command, it was covered with a beautiful carpet of flowers and grass, trees and plants of all kinds, which were produced in their full proportion, laden with fruit, and not subjected to the ordinary course of maturation. For how great soever the fecundity of the primogenial earth might be, yet it is scarce to be imagined, how ^a trees and plants could be ripened, into their full growth and burden of fruit, in the short period of a day, any other way than by virtue of a supernatural power of God, which first collected the parts of matter fit to produce them; then formed every one of them, and determined their kinds; and at last provided for their continuance, by a curious enclosure of their seed, in order to propagate their species, even unto the end of the world: and this was the work of the third day.

When God had finished the lower world, and furnished it with all manner of store, that mass of fiery light, (which we suppose to have been extracted on the first day, and to have moved about the *expansum* for two days after,) was certainly of great use in the production of the ether, the separation of the waters, and the rarefaction of the land, which might possibly require a more violent operation at first, than was necessary in those lesser alterations, which were afterwards to be effected; and therefore, on the fourth day, God took and condensed it, and casting it into a proper orb, placed it at a convenient distance from the earth and other planets; insomuch that it became a sun, and immediately shone out in the same glorious manner, in which it has done ever since.

After this God took another part of the chaos, an opaque substance, which we call the 'moon;' and having cast it into a proper figure, placed it in another orb, at a nearer distance from the earth, that it might perpetually be moving round it, and that the sun, by darting its rays upon its solid surface, might reflect light to the terrestrial globe, for the benefit of its inhabitants: and, at the same time, that God thus made the moon, he made, in like manner, ^b the other five planets of the solar system,

^a There are two things wherein the production of plants, in the beginning, differed from their production ever since. 1. That they have sprung ever since out of their seed either sown by us, or falling from the plants themselves; but in the beginning, were wrought out of the earth, with their seed in them, to propagate them ever after. 2. That they need now (as they have ever since the creation) the influence of the sun, to make them sprout; but then they came forth by the power of God, before there was any sun, which was not formed till the next day.—*Patrick's Comment. in loc.*

^b I am very sensible that the words in the text are, 'He made the stars also,' ver. 16; but the whole sentence comes in so very abruptly, that one would be apt to imagine, that after Moses's time, it was clapped in by some body who had a mind to be mending his hypothesis, or else was added, by way of marginal note, at first; and at length crept into the text itself,

and their satellites. Nor was it only for the dispensation of light to this earth of ours, that God appointed the two great luminaries of the sun and moon to attend it, but for the measure and computation of time likewise: that a speedy and swift motion of the sun, (according to the Ptolemaic system,) in twenty-four hours round the earth, or of the earth (according to the Copernican) upon its own axis, might make a day; that the time from one change of the moon to another, or thereabouts, might make a month; and the apparent revolution of the sun, to the same point of the ecliptic line, might not only make a year, but occasion likewise a grateful variety of seasons in the several parts of the earth, which are thus gradually and successively visited by the reviving heat of the sunbeams: and this was the work of the fourth day.

After the inanimate creation, God, on the fifth day, proceeded to form the animate; and because fish and fowl are not so perfect in their kind, neither so curious in their bodily texture, nor so sagacious in their instinct, as terrestrial creatures are known to be, he therefore began with them, and ^c out of the waters, that is, out of such matter as was mixed and concocted with the water, he formed several of different shapes and sizes; some vastly big, ^d to show the wonders of his creating power; and some extremely small, to show the goodness of his indulgent providence. And (what is peculiar to this day's work) here we have the first mention made of God's blessing his creatures, and ^e bidding them be fruitful

(as F. Simon has evidenced in several other instances.) For the fixed stars do not seem to be comprehended in the six days' work, which relates only to this planetary world, that has the sun for its centre; *Patrick's Commentary and Nicholl's Conference*, vol. i. See answer to the subsequent objection.

^c From the words in Gen. ch. i. ver. 20. 'Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl, that may fly above the earth,' &c., some have started an opinion, that fowl derive their origin from the water; and others, from the words, 'Out of the ground God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air,' raise another, viz. that fowl took their beginning from the earth: but these two texts are easily reconciled, because neither denies what the other says, though they speak differently: as when Moses says, 'Let the waters bring forth fowl,' he does not by that say, that the earth did not bring forth fowl. It is most reasonable therefore to think that they had their original partly from the waters, and partly from the earth; and this might render the flesh of fowl less gross than that of beasts, and more firm than that of fishes. Hence Philo calls fowl the kindred of fish; and that they are so, the great congruity there is in their natures (they being both oviparous which makes them more fruitful than other animals, and both steering and directing their course by their tails) is a sufficient indication.

^d Moses instances in the whale, because it is supposed to be the principal and largest of all fishes; but the original word denotes several kinds of great fish, as *Bochart in his Hierozon*. p. 1. l. 1. c. 7. observes at large; and shows withal the prodigious bigness of some of them; but he should have added, that the word signifies a crocodile likewise, as well as a whale; *Patrick and Le Clerc in loc.*

^e That fish and fowl should here have a blessing pronounced upon them, rather than the beasts, which were made the sixth day, some have supposed this to be the reason:—that the production of their young requires the particular care of divine providence, because they do not bring them forth perfectly formed as the beasts do, but only lay their eggs, in which the young are hatched and formed, even when they are separate from their bodies: and "what a wonderful thing is this," says one, "that when the womb (as we may call it) is separated from the genitor, a living creature like itself should be produced?"—*Patrick's Commentary.*

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and multiply,' that is, giving them, at their first creation, a prolific virtue; and a natural instinct for generation, whereby they might not only preserve their species, but multiply their individuals: and this was the work of the fifth day.

Thus every thing being put in order; the earth covered with plants; the waters restored with fish; the air replenished with fowl; and the sun placed at a proper distance, to give a convenient warmth and nourishment to all; in order to make this sublunary world a still more comfortable place of abode, in the beginning of the sixth and last day, "God made the terrestrial animals, which the sacred historian distributes into three kinds: 1. Beasts, by which we understand all wild and savage creatures, such as lions, bears, wolves, &c. 2. Cattle, all tame and domestic creatures, designed for the benefit and use of men, such as oxen, sheep, horses, &c. And, 3. Creeping things, such as serpents, worms, and other kinds of insects.

Thus, when all things which could be subservient to man's felicity were perfected; when the light had, for some time, been penetrating into, and clarifying the dark and thick atmosphere; when the air was freed from its noisome vapours, and become pure and clear, and fit for his respiration; when the waters were so disposed, as to minister to his necessities by mists and dews from heaven, and by springs and rivers from the earth; when the surface of the earth was become dry and solid for his support, and covered over with grass and flowers, with plants and herbs, and trees of all kinds, for his pleasure and sustenance; when the glorious firmament of heaven, and the beautiful system of the sun, moon, and stars, were laid open for his contemplation, and, by their powerful influences, appointed to distinguish the seasons, and make the world a fruitful and delicious habitation for him; when, lastly, all sorts of animals in the sea, in the air, and on the earth, were so ordered and disposed, as to contribute, in their several capacities, to his benefit and delight: when all these things, I say, were, by the care and providence of God, prepared for the entertainment of this principal guest, it was then

a In the 24th verse of this chapter it is said, that God commanded the earth to produce such and such animals: 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind:' and yet, in the very next verse, it follows, that 'God made the beast of the earth, and every thing that moveth after his kind:' but this seeming contradiction is easily reconciled by putting together the proper meaning of both these passages, which must certainly be this—that God himself effectually formed these terrestrial animals, and made use of the earth only as to the matter whereof he constituted their parts. Some indeed have made it a question, whether these several creatures were at first produced in their full state and perfection, or God only created the seeds of all animals, (i. e. the animals themselves in miniature,) and dispersed them over the face of the earth, giving power to that element, assisted by the genial heat of the sun, to hatch and bring them forth; but for this there is no manner of occasion, since it is much more rational to suppose, that God did not commit the formation of things to any intermediate causes, but himself created the first set of animals in the full proportion and perfection of their specific natures, and gave to each species a power afterwards, by generation, to propagate their kind; for that even now, and in the present situation of things any perfect species cannot, either naturally or accidentally, be produced by any preparation of matter, or by any influence of the heavens, without the interposition of an almighty power, physical experiments do demonstrate.—*Patrick's Commentary; and Bentley's Sermons at Boyle's Lecture.*

that man was created, and introduced into the world in a manner and solemnity not unbecoming the lord and governor of it. To this purpose we may observe, that God makes a manifest distinction between him and other creatures, and seems to undertake the creation, even of his body, with a kind of mature deliberation, if not consultation with the other persons of the ever-blessed Trinity; ^b 'Let us make man.'^c

However this be, it is certain that the force and energy of the expression denotes thus much—that the production of mankind at first was so immediately the work of Almighty God, that the power of no subordinate intelligence could be capable of it: that the curious

b Gen. i. 26. The Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the consultation was real, and held with such angelical beings as God might employ in the work of man's creation; and they tell a story upon this occasion which seems a little fictitious, viz., that as Moses was writing his book by God's appointment, and these words came to be dictated, he refused to set them down, crying out, *O Lord! wouldst thou then plunge men in error, and make them doubt of the doctrine of the unity?* Whereupon it was answered by God, 'I command thee to write, and if any will err, let them err.' Several modern expositors account it only a majestic form of speech, as nothing is more common than for kings and sovereign princes to speak in the plural number, especially when they are giving out any important order or command. It has been observed, however, that as there were no men, and consequently no great men, when this was spoken; so there was no such manner of speech in use among men of that rank for many ages after Moses. Their common custom was, in all their public instruments and letters (the better to enhance the notion of sovereignty) to speak in the first person, as it was in our nation not long ago, and is in the kingdom of Spain to this very day; and therefore, upon the authority of almost all the fathers of the church: "For, from the very times of the apostles, they all nearly coincide in faithfully declaring that God the Father spake these words to the Son and Holy Ghost, or at least to the Son." *Whitby's Connexions of Fathers.* Others have thought that this language of Moses represents God speaking, as he is, that is, in a plurality of persons.

c "God is represented to have concerted the formation of man, in conjunction, it should seem, with other persons consulting in secret counsel." This circumstance has been justly received as furnishing evidence in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity. "It is generally admitted also, that the manifestations of the Divine Nature, which were made to the Patriarchs, to Moses, to Joshua, and others, were made in the person of Christ," the Angel or "Messenger of the Covenant." Thus, when the Lord appeared to Abraham, in the plains of Mamre, it is said, that three men stood by him, yet the Patriarch addressed them as he would have accosted one being, or directed himself to one as superior—"Nay, my Lord, pass not away," Gen. xviii. When Jacob wrestled with the man who appeared to him, he called the name of the place Peniel, "for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved;" and when he blessed the sons of Joseph, he expressed the hope that "the angel which redeemed him from all evil would bless the lads," Gen. xlviii. 16. The angel which appeared to Moses at the bush, said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, Ex. iii. 6. When Manoah inquired the name of the angel who appeared unto him, the angel answered, "Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?"—"Using the same Hebrew word which is applied to Christ by Isaiah, when in his ninth chapter and sixth verse, he styles him "Wonderful." We are told that Manoah, when he knew that he was an angel of the Lord, said unto his wife, "We shall surely die because we have seen God," Judges xiii. 18.

It was the object of the Jewish dispensation to preserve men from idolatrous propensities, and from following after strange gods. Moses and the prophets therefore insist principally on the unity of God, though when led to refer to the offices of the other persons of the Trinity, they could not but impart some notices of a doctrine which was afterwards distinctly to be revealed.—*Gray's Connexion, &c., pp. 121, 123.—Ed.*

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structure of man's body, the accommodation of it to faculties, and the furnishing it with faculties that are accommodated to it, (even as to its animal life,) imports a wisdom and efficacy far above the power of any created nature to effect. And this may possibly suggest the reason, why, in the formation of his body, God made choice of 'the dust of the ground,' viz., that from the incongruity of the matter we might judge of the difficulty, and learn to attribute the glory of the performance to him alone. And if the creation of the body of our great progenitor was a work of so much divine wisdom and power, we cannot but expect, that the spiritual and immaterial nature, the immortal condition, active powers, and free and rational operations, which, in resemblance of the Divine Being, the soul of man was to participate, should require some peculiar and extraordinary conduct in its production at first, and union with matter afterwards; all which is expressed by God's 'breathing into the man's "nostrils the breath of life," that is, doing something analogous to breathing, (for God has no body to breathe with,) whereby he infused a rational and immortal spirit (for we must not suppose that God gave any part of his own essence) into the man's head, as the principal seat thereof; 'and ^b man became a living soul.'

As soon as Adam found himself alive, and began to cast his eyes about him, he could not but perceive that he was in no small danger as being surrounded with a multitude of savage creatures, all gazing on him, and (for any thing he knew) ready and disposed to fall upon and devour him. And therefore, to satisfy his mind in this particular, God took care to inform him, that all the creatures upon earth were submitted to his authority; that on them he had impressed an awe and dread of him; had invested him with an absolute power and dominion over them; and, to convince him of the full possession of that power, he immediately appointed every creature to appear before him, which they accordingly did, and ^c by their lowly carriage, and gestures of respect suitable to their several species, evidenced their submission; and as they passed along, such knowledge had Adam then of their several properties and destinations, that he assigned them their names, which a small skill in the Hebrew tongue will convince us, were very proper, and significant of their natures.

This survey of the several creatures might possibly occasion some uneasy reflections in Adam, to see every one provided with its mate, but himself left destitute of any companion of a similar nature; and therefore, to

^a The original word, which our translators render *nostrils*, signifies more properly the *face* or *head*.

^b It is not to be doubted, but that Eve, the mother of all living, was created by Almighty God, and inspired with a rational and immortal soul, the same day with her husband; for so it is said, that in the sixth day, 'male and female created he them,' ver. 27; and therefore the historian only re-assumes the argument in the second chapter, to give us a more full and particular account of the woman's origin, which was but briefly delivered, or rather indeed but hinted at in the first.

^c Milton has expressed himself, upon this occasion, in the following manner:

As thus he spake, each bird, and beast, behold
Approaching, two and two; these cowering low
With blandishment; each bird stoop'd on his wing.
I nam'd them, as they pass'd, and understood
Their nature; with such knowledge God endu'd
My sudden apprehension.

answer his desires in this particular likewise, ¹ 'God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him,' which was intended, not only as an expedient for the performance of the wonderful operation upon him without sense of pain, ^d but as a trance or ecstasy likewise, wherein was represented to his imagination, both what was done to him, and what was the mystical meaning of it, and whereby he was prepared for the reception of that divine oracle ² concerning the sacred institution of marriage, which presently, upon his awaking, he uttered.

While Adam continued in this sleep, God, who, with the same facility wherewith he made him, could have formed the woman out of the 'dust of the earth,' (being willing to signify that equality and partnership, that love and union, and tenderness of endearment, which ought to interfere between husband and wife,) took part of the substance of the man's body, ^e near his side, and closing up the orifice again, out of that substance he ^f formed the body of Eve, and then 'breathing into her the breath of life,' made her, in like manner, 'become a living soul.'

This was the ^g conclusive act of the whole creation:

¹ Gen. ii. 21.

² Gen. ii. 23.

^d In like manner, he makes this sleep which fell upon Adam to have been a kind of trance or ecstasy, (for so the Seventy translate it,) and thus he relates the occasion and nature of it.

He ended, and I heard no more; for now
My earthly by his heavenly overpow'rd,
Which it had long stood under, strain'd to th' height
In that celestial colloquy sublime,
(As with an object that exceeds the sense,
Dazzled and spent,) sunk down, and sought relief
Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, call'd
By nature as in aid, and clos'd my eyes.
Mine eyes he clos'd, but open left the cell
Of fancy, my internal sight; by which
(Abstract as in a trance) methought I saw,
Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape
Still glorious, before whom awake I stood.—
Under his forming hands a creature grew
Man-like, but different sex; so lovely fair,
That what seem'd fair in all the world, seem'd now
Mean, or in her sunn'd up, in her contain'd,
And in her looks, which from that time intus'd
Sweetness into my heart, unselt before;
And into all things from her air inspir'd
The spirit of love, and amorous delight.

^e As the original word does not strictly signify a *rib*, and is all along rendered by the Seventy *pleura*, a side, so I thought it not improper to give it that construction, thereby to cut off from infidels an occasion for railery, and to spare them all their wit about the redundant or defective rib of Adam.

^f The original word signifies *building* or *framing* any thing with a singular care, contrivance, and proportion; and hence our bodies are in Scripture frequently called *houses*, Job iv. 19; 2 Cor. v. 1; and sometimes *temples*, John ii. 15; 1 Cor. iii. 16.

^g It is not very necessary to determine at what season of the year the world was made; yet it seems most probable, that it was about the autumnal equinox, and that not only because the trees were laden then with fruit, as the history tells us our first parents did eat of them; but because the Jews did then begin their civil year (viz. in the month *Tisri*, which answers to part of our September and October) from whence their sabbatical and jubilee years did likewise commence, Exod. xxiii. 16, xxxiv. 22; Lev. xxv. 9. The month *Abib* (which answers to part of our March and April) had indeed the honour afterwards to be reckoned among the Jews the beginning of their year in ecclesiastical matters, because the children of Israel, on that month, came out of the land of Egypt; but from the very creation, the month *Tisri* was always counted the first of their civil year, because it was the general opinion of the ancients, that the world was created at the time of the autumnal equinox; and for this reason, the Jews do still, in the era of the creation, as well as in that of contracts, and other instruments, compute the be-

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and upon a general survey of such harmony risen from principles so jarring and repugnant, and so beautiful a variety and composition of things from a mere mass of confusion and disorder, God was pleased with the work of his hands; and having pronounced it good, or properly adapted to the uses for which it was intended, 'he rested from all his work,' that is, he ceased to produce any more creatures, as having accomplished his design, and answered his original idea; and thereupon he "sanctified, and set apart the next ensuing day, (which was the seventh from the beginning of the creation, and the first of Adam's life,) as a time of solemn rest and rejoicing for ever after, to be observed and expended in acts of praise and religious worship, and in commemoration of the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of God, in the world's creation.

CHAP. III.—*The Objection.*

¹ 'WHERE wast thou, when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding. Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, and who laid the corner stone thereof?' is a question very proper to be put to those who demand a reason for the actions of God: for, if they cannot comprehend the works themselves, they are certainly very culpable in inquiring too busily into the time and manner of his doing them. But (to gratify the inquisitive for once) though we do not deny, that all things are equally easy to Almighty power, yet it pleased the divine Architect to employ the space of six days in the gradual formation of the world,

¹ Job xxxviii. 4, 6.

giving of their year from the first day of *Tisri*. Herein, however, the Jews differ from us; that whereas they make the world only 3760, most of the Christian chronologers will have it to be much about 4000 years older than Christ; so that by them 5732 years, or thereabouts, are thought a moderate computation of the world's antiquity. See *Usher's Annals*; *Bedford's Chronology*; and *Shuckford's Connection*.

a Whether the institution of the Sabbath was from the beginning of the world, and one day in seven always observed by the patriarchs, before the promulgation of the law; or whether the sanctification of the seventh day is related only by way of anticipation, as an ordinance not to take place until the introduction of the Jewish economy, is a matter of some debate among the learned; but I think with little or no reason, for when we consider, that as soon as the sacred penman had said, 'God ended his work, and rested,' he adds immediately, in the words of the same tense, 'he blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it;' when we compare this passage in Genesis with the twentieth chapter of Exodus, wherein Moses speaks of God's 'blessing and sanctifying the Sabbath' not as an act then first done, but as what he had formerly done upon the creation of the world; when we remember, that all the patriarchs from Adam to Moses had set times for their solemn assemblies, and that these times were weekly, and of divine institution; that upon the return of these weekly Sabbaths, very probably, it was that Cain and Abel offered their respective sacrifices to God; and that Noah, the only righteous person among the Antediluvians, Abraham, the most faithful servant of God after the flood, and Job, that *perfect and upright man, who feared God, and eschewed evil*, are all supposed to have observed it; we cannot but think, that the day whereupon the work of the creation was concluded, from the very beginning of time, was every week (until men had corrupted their ways) kept holy as being the birthday of the world, (as *Philo on the Creation of the World* styles it,) and the universal festival of mankind. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

because he foresaw, that such procedure would be a means conducive to the better instruction both of men and angels. Angels (as we hinted before) were very probably created, when the supreme heavens were made, at least some considerable time before the production of this visible world. Now, though they be great and glorious beings, yet still they are of a finite nature, and unable to comprehend the wonderful works of God. There are some things (as ² the apostle tells us) that these celestial creatures 'desire to look into;' and the more they are let into the knowledge and wisdom of God, the more they are incited to praise him. ³ That therefore they might not want sufficient matter for this heavenly exercise, the whole scene of the creation, according to the several degrees and natures of things, seems to have been laid open in order before them, that thereby they might have a more full and comprehensive view of the divine attributes therein exhibited, than they could have had, in case the world had started forth in an instant, or jumped (as it were) into this beautiful frame and order all at once; just as he who sees the whole texture and contrivance of any curious piece of art, values and admires the artist more, than he who beholds it in the gross only.

God was therefore pleased to display his glory before the angels, and by several steps and degrees, excite their praise, and love, and admiration, which moved them to songs and shouts of joy. By this means, his glory, and their happiness were advanced, far beyond what it would have been, had all things been created, and ranged in their proper order in a moment. By this means they had time to look into the first principles and seeds of all creatures, both animate and inanimate; and every day presented them with a glorious spectacle of new wonders; so that the more they saw, the more they knew, and the more they know of the works of God, the more they fear for ever love and adore him. But this is not all.

By this successive and gradual creation of things, in the space of six days, the glory of God is likewise more manifest to man, than it would have been, had they been made by a sudden and instantaneous production. The heavens, and 'all the host of them,' we may suppose, were made in an instant, because there were then perhaps no other creatures to whom God might display the glory of his works; but as they were made in an instant, we have little or no perception of the manner wherein they were made: but now, in this leisurely procedure of the earth's formation, we see, as it were, every thing arising out of the primordial mass, first the simple elements, and then the compounded and more curious creatures, and are led, step by step, full of wonder and admiration, until we see the whole completed. So that, in condescension to our capacity, it was, that God divided the creation into stated periods, and prolonged the succession of what he could have done in six moments, to the term of six days, that we might have clearer notions of his eternal power and godhead, and every particular day of the week, new and particular works, for which we are to praise him. And this, by the bye, suggests another argument, founded on the institution of the Sabbath day: For if, 'in six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, and, resting on the seventh day, did

² 1 Pt. i. 12.

³ *Jenkins's Reasonableness of the C. Religion.*

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bless and sanctify it,' this seems to imply, that God obliged himself to continue the work of the creation for six days, that showing himself (if I may so say) a divine example of weekly labour, and sabbatical rest, he might more effectually signify to mankind, what tribute of duty he would require of them, viz., that one day in seven, abstaining from business and worldly labour, they should devote and consecrate it to his honour, and religious worship.

There is therefore no necessity of departing from the literal sense of the Scripture in this particular. The reiterated acts, and the different operations mentioned by Moses, ought indeed to be explained in such a manner, as is consistent with the infinite power, and perfect simplicity of the acts of God, and in such a manner, as may exclude all notions of weakness, weariness, or imperfection in him; but all this may be done without receding from a successive creation, which redounds so much to the glory of God, and affords the whole intelligent creation so fair a field for contemplation.

Some of the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that in the first day, when God created light, at the same time, he formed and compacted it into a sun; and that the sun is mentioned again on the fourth day, merely by way of repetition; while others maintain, that this light was a certain luminous body (not unlike that which conducted the children of Israel in the wilderness) that moved round the world, until the day wherein the sun was created. But there is no occasion for such conjectures as these: every one knows, that darkness has, in all ages, been the chief idea which men have had of a chaos. ¹ Both poets and philosophers have made *Nox*, and *Erebus*, and *Tartarus*, the principal parts and ingredients of its description; and therefore it seems very agreeable to the reason of mankind, that the first remove from the chaos should be a tendency to light. But then by light (as it was produced the first day,) we must not understand the darting of rays from a luminous body, such as do now proceed from the sun, ² but those particles of matter only, which we call fire, (whose properties we know are light and heat,) which the Almighty produced, as a proper instrument for the preparation, and digestion of all other matter. For fire, being naturally a strong and restless element, when once it was disentangled and set free, would not cease to move, and agitate from top to bottom, the whole heavy and confused mass, until the purer and more shining parts of it being separated from the grosser, and so uniting together, (as things of the same species naturally do,) did constitute that light, which, on the fourth day, was more compressed and consolidated, and so became the body of the sun.

The author of the Book of Wisdom tells us indeed, that ³ 'God ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight;' but we cannot from hence infer, that in the six days, he was so nice and curious, as to weigh out to himself in gold scales (as it were) his daily work by grains and scruples. We indeed, who are finite creatures, may talk of the 'heat and burden of the day,' and, in a weekly task, are forced to proportion the labour of each day to the present condition of our strength; but this is the case of human infirmity, and no way compatible to God. To omnipotence nothing can be laborious,

nor can there be more or less of pains, where all things are equally easy. But, in the mean time, how does it appear, that even, in human conception, the work of the third day, which consisted in draining the earth, and stocking it with plants; or even of the fourth day, wherein the sun and moon, and other planets were made, was more difficult, than that of the first, which is accounted the simple production of light?

The compass of the chaos (as we supposed) took up the whole solar system, or that space, which Saturn circumscribes in his circulation round the sun: and if so, what a prodigious thing was it, to give motion to this vast unwieldy mass, and to direct that motion in some sort of regularity; in the general struggle and combustion, to unite things that were no ways akin, and to sort the promiscuous elements into their proper species; to give the properties of rest and gravitation to one kind, and of ascension and elasticity to another: to make some parts subside and settle themselves, not in one continued solid, but in several different centres, at proper distances from each other, and so lay the foundation for the planets; to make others aspire and mount on high, and having obtained their liberty by hard conflict, join together, as it were, by compact, and make up one body, which, by the tenuity of its parts, and rapidity of its motion, might produce light and heat, and so lay the foundation for the sun; to place this luminous body in a situation proper to influence the upper parts of the chaos, and to be the instrument of rarefaction, separation, and all the rest of the operations to ensue; to cause it, when thus placed, either to circulate round the whole planetary system, or to make the planetary globes to turn round it, in order to produce the vicissitudes of day and night, to do all this, and more than this, I say, as it is included in the single article of creating light, is enough to make the first day, wherein nature was utterly impotent, (as having motion then first impressed upon her,) a day of more labour and curious contrivance than any subsequent one could be, when nature was become more awake and active, and some assistance might possibly be expected from the instrumentality of second causes.

To excavate some parts of the earth, and raise others, in order to make the waters subside into proper channels, is thought a work not so comporting with the dignity and majesty of God; and therefore ⁴ some have thought that it possibly might have been effected by the same causes that occasion earthquakes, that is, by subterraneous fires and flatuses. What incredible effects the ascension of gunpowder has, we may see every day: how it rends rocks, and blows up the most ponderous and solid walls, towers, and edifices, so that its force is almost irresistible. And why then might not such a proportionable quantity of the like materials, set on fire together, raise up the mountains, (how great and weighty soever,) and the whole superficies of the earth above the waters, and so make receptacles for them to run into.

⁴ Thus we have a channel for the sea, even by the inter-

¹ Ps. civ. 6, 7, 8.

² This we may conceive to have been effected by some particles of fire still left in the bowels of the earth, whereby such nitrosulphurous vapours were kindled, as made an earthquake, which both lifted up the earth, and also made receptacles for the waters to run into. *Patrick's Commentary.*

¹ *Patrick's Commentary on the passage.*

² *Nicholls's Conference*, v. 1.

³ Wis. xi. 20.

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vention of second causes: nor are we destitute of good authority to patronize this notion; for, after that the Psalmist had said, 'the waters stood above the mountains,' immediately he subjoins, 'at thy rebuke they fled, at the voice of thy thunder (an earthquake, we know, is but a subterraneous thunder) 'they hasted away, and went down to the valley beneath, even unto the place which thou hadst appointed to them.'

However this be, it is probable, and (if our hypothesis¹ be right) it is certain, that on the fourth day, the sun, moon, and planets, were pretty well advanced in their formation. The luminous matter extracted from the chaos on the first day, being a little more condensed, and put into a proper orb, became the sun, and the planets had all along been working off, in the same degrees of progression with the earth; so that the labour of this day could not be so disproportionably great as is imagined. It is true indeed, the Scripture tells us, that God on this day, 'not only made the sun and the moon, but that he made the stars also;' and, considering the almost infinite number of these heavenly bodies, (which we may discern with our eyes, and much more with glasses,) we cannot but say, that a computation of this kind would swell the work of the fourth day to a prodigious disproportion: but then we are to observe, that our English translation has interpolated the words, 'he made,' which are not in the original; for the simple version of the Hebrew is this—and 'God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night and the stars;' which last words 'and the stars' are not to be referred to the word 'made' in the beginning of the verse, but to the word 'rule,' which immediately goes before them; and so this sentence, 'the lesser light to rule the night, and the stars:' will only denote the peculiar usefulness and pre-dominancy of the moon above all other stars or planets, in respect of this earth of ours; in which sense it may not improperly be styled (as 'some of the most polite authors are known to call it) the 'ruler of the night,' and 'a queen,' or 'goddess,' as it were, among the stars. With regard to us, therefore, who are the inhabitants of the earth, the moon, though certainly an opaque body, may not be improperly called 'a great light;' since, by reason of its proximity, it communicates more light, (not of its own indeed, but what it borrows from the sun,) and is of more use and benefit to us than all the other planets put together. Nor must we forget (what indeed deserves a peculiar observation) that the moon,³ by its constant deviations towards the poles, affords a stronger and more lasting light to the inhabitants of those forlorn regions, whose long and tedious nights are of some days', nay, of some months' continuance, than if its motion were truly circular, and the rays it reflects consequently more oblique. A mighty comfort and refreshment this to them, and a singular instance of the great

Creator's wisdom in contriving, and mercy in preserving all his works!

St Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, makes all mankind (as certainly our first parent literally was) clay in the hands of the potter, and thereupon he asks this question; 'Nay but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou formed me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?' It but badly becomes us therefore to inquire into the reason that might induce God to make the man and the woman at different times, and of different materials; and it is an impertinent, as well as impious banter, to pretend to be so frugal of his pains. What if God, willing to show a pleasing variety in his works, condescended to have the matter, whereof the woman was formed, pass twice through his hands, in order to 'soften the temper, and meliorate the composition? Some peculiar qualities, remarkable in the female sex, might perhaps justify this supposition: but the true reason, as I take it, is couched in these words of Adam,⁵ 'This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman, because she was taken out of man: therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh.'

Since God was determined, then, to form the woman out of some part of the man's body, and might probably have a mystical meaning in so doing; to have taken her (like the poet's *Minerva*) out of the head, might have entitled her to a superiority which he never intended for her; to have made her of any inferior, or more dishonourable part, would not have agreed with that equality to which she was appointed; and therefore he took her out of the man's side, to denote the obligations to the strictest friendship and society: to beget the strongest love and sympathy between him and her, as parts of the same whole; and to recommend marriage to all mankind, as founded in nature, and as the re-union of man and woman.

It is an easy matter to be sceptical; but small reason, I think, there is to wonder, why no mention is made in this place of the inspiration of the woman's soul. What

¹ Rom. ix. 20, 21.⁵ Gen. ii. 23, 24.

⁶ Milton has given us a very curious description of Eve's qualifications, both in body and mind.

Though well I understand, in the prime end
Of nature, her th' inferior in the mind,
And inward faculties, which most excel;
In outward also her resembling less
His image, who made both, and less expressing
The character of that dominion giv'n
O'er other creatures; yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
So in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do, or say,
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded, wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanc'd, and like folly shows.
Authority and reason on her wait.
As one intended first, but after made
Occasionally; and, to consummate all,
Greatness of mind, and nobleness their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic plac'd.

^c Arius Montanus, renders the Hebrew word *virago*, in the margin *virissa*, that is, *she-man*.

¹ Ray's *Wisdom of God in the Creation*.² Gen. i. 16.³ Derham's *Astro-theology*, ch. 4.

a Gleaming glory of the Firmament. Crested queen of the Constellations, *Horace*. Ornament of the Stars, *Virgil*. Bright goddess of the shaded earth, *Seneca*. Cinthia, mistress of the stilly hour, *Statius*' *Thebais*.

Phoebe borrowing still her brother's light,
And reigning Empress o'er the realms of night.

Mannilius.

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the historian means here, is only to represent a peculiar circumstance in the woman's composition, viz. her assumption from the man's side: and therefore what relates to the creation of her soul must be presumed to go before, and is indeed signified in the preface God makes before he begins the work; ¹ 'It is not good that man should be alone, I will make him an help-meet for him,' that is, of the same ² essential qualities with himself. For we cannot conceive of what great comfort this woman would have been to Adam, had she not been endowed with a rational part, capable of conversing with him; had she not had, I say, the same understanding, will, and affections, though perhaps in a lower degree, and with some accommodation to the weakness of her sex, in order to recommend her beauty, and to endear that softness wherein (as I hinted before) she had certainly the pre-eminence.

Such is the history which Moses gives us of the origin of the world, and the production of mankind: and if we should now compare it with what we meet with in other nations recorded of these great events, we shall soon perceive, that it is the only rational and philosophical account extant; which, considering the low ebb that learning was at in the Jewish nation, is no small argument of its divine revelation. What a wretched account was that of the Egyptians, (from whence the Epicureans borrowed their hypothesis,) that the world was made by chance, and mankind grew out of the earth like pumpkins? What strange stories does the Grecian theology tell us of Ouranos and Ge, Jupiter and Saturn; and what sad work do their ancient writers make, when they come to form men and women out of projected stones? How unaccountably does the Phenician historian ³ make a dark and windy air the principle of the universe; all intelligent creatures to be formed alike in the shape of an egg, and both male and female awakened into life by a great thunder-clap? The Chinese are accounted a wise people, and yet the articles of their creed are such as these—That one Tayn, who lived in heaven, and was famous for his wisdom, disposed the parts of the world into the order we find them; that he created out of nothing the first man Panson, and his wife Pansone; that this Panson, by a power from Tayn, created another man called Tanhom, who was a great naturalist, and thirteen men more, by whom the world was peopled, till, after a while, the sky fell upon the earth, and destroyed them all; but that the wise Tayn afterwards created another man, called Lotziram, who had two horns, and an odoriferous body, and from whom proceeded several men and women, who stocked the world with the present inhabitants. But, of all others, the Mahometan account is the most ridiculous; for it tells us, that the first things which were created, were the Throne of God, ^a Adam,

Paradise, and a great pen, wherewith God wrote his decrees: that this throne was carried about upon angels' necks, whose heads were so big, that birds could not fly in a thousand years from one ear to another; that the heavens were propped up by the mountain Koff; that the stars were firebrands, thrown against the devils when they invaded heaven, and that the earth stands upon the top of a great cow's horn; that this cow stands upon a white stone, this stone upon a mountain, and this mountain upon God knows what; with many more absurdities of the like nature.

These are some accounts of the world's creation, which nations of great sagacity in other respects have at least pretended to believe. But alas! how sordid and trifling are they, in comparison of what we read in the book of Genesis, where every thing is easy and natural, comporting with God's majesty, and not repugnant to the principles of philosophy? Nay, where every thing agrees with the positions of the greatest men in the Heathen world, ^b the sentiments of their wisest philosophers, and the descriptions of their most renowned poets. So that were we to judge of Moses at the bar of reason, merely as an historian; had we none of those supernatural proofs of the divinity of his writings, which set them above the sphere of all human composition; had

his vicegerent: that, surprised at this news, the Earth desired Gabriel to represent her fears to God, that this creature, whom he was going to make in this manner, would one day rebel against him, and draw down his curse upon her: that Gabriel returned, and made report to God of the Earth's remonstrances; but God resolving to execute his design despatched Michael, and afterwards Asraphel, with the same commission: that these two angels returned in like manner to report the Earth's excuses and absolute refusal to contribute to this work; whereupon he deputed Azrael, who, without saying any thing to the Earth took an handful out of each of the seven different layers or beds, and carried it to a place in Arabia, between Mecca and Taief: that after the angels had mixed and kneaded the earth which Azrael brought, God, with his own hand, formed out of it an human statue, and having left it in the same place for some time to dry, not long after communicating his spirit, or enlivening breath, infused life and understanding into it, and clothing it in a wonderful dress, suitable to its dignity, commanded the angels to fall prostrate before it, which Eblis (by whom they mean Lucifer) refusing to do, was immediately driven out of paradise. *N. B.* The difference of the earth employed in the formation of Adam, is of great service to the Mahometans in explaining the different colours and qualities of mankind who are derived from it, some of whom are white, others black, others tawny, yellow, olive-coloured, and red; some of one humour, inclination, and complexion, and others of a quite different.—*Cabnet's Dictionary* on the word *Adam*.

^b *Thales*, whom the Greeks suppose to be the first who deeply studied the causes of nature's works, asserts that the world is the work of God, and that God of all things is the most ancient since he had no beginning. *Pythagoras* said, that as often as he contemplated the fabric and beauty of this world, he seemed to hear that word of God, by which it was commanded to be. *Plato* thought that God did not form the world out of matter eternal and coeval with himself, but that he made it out of nothing, and according to his good pleasure, he also believed, that man was not only made by God, but that he was made after the image of God, and had a spirit akin and like to his Maker. Among the Latin poets, *Virgil* speaks after the same mode, when he introduces *Silenus* singing how the tender ball of earth grew out of the compressed seeds or ingredients of all things; and *Ovid*, too, when he tells of the birth of heaven and earth, and of man being formed after the image of God; while among the Greeks, *Hesiod*, in his *Theogony*, has celebrated, in most melodious lines, the formation of all things quite according to the doctrine of *Moses*. — *Huetius' Inquiries*.

¹ Gen. ii. 18.

² So the original word means, and so the vulgar Latin has translated it.

³ See *Cumberland's Sanchoniatho*.

^a As to the formation of Adam's body, Mahometans tell us many strange circumstances, viz., That after God, by long continued rains, had prepared the slime of the earth, out of which he was to form it, he sent the angel Gabriel, and commanded him, of seven layers of earth, to take out of each an handful; that upon Gabriel's coming to the Earth, he told her, that God had determined to extract that out of her bowels, whereof he proposed to make man, who was to be sovereign over all, and

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his works none of that manifest advantage of antiquity above all others we ever yet saw; and were we not allowed to presume, that his living near the time which he makes the era of the world's creation, gave him great assistances in point of tradition; were we, I say, to wave all this that might be alleged in his behalf; yet the very manner of his treating the subject gives him a preference above all others. Nor can we, without admiration, see a person who had none of the systems before him which we now so much value, giving us a clearer idea of things, in the way of an easy narrative, than any philosopher, with all his hard words and new-invented terms, has yet been able to do; and, in the compass of two short chapters, comprising all that has been advanced with reason, even from his own time to this very day.

CHAP. IV.—*The wisdom of God in the works of the Creation.*

THOUGH the author of the Pentateuch¹ never once attempts to prove the being of a God, as taking it all along for a thing undeniable; yet it may not be improper for us, in this place, to take a cursory view of the works of the creation, (as far at least as they come under the Mosaic account,) in order to show the existence, the wisdom, the greatness, and the goodness of their almighty Maker.

Let us then cast our eyes up to the firmament, where the rich handy-work of God presents itself to our sight, and ask ourselves some such questions as these. What power built, over our heads, this vast and magnificent arch, and 'spread out the heavens like a curtain?' Who garnished these heavens with such a variety of shining objects, a thousand, and ten thousand times ten thousand different stars, new suns, new moons, new worlds, in comparison of which this earth of ours is but a point, all regular in their motions, and swimming in their liquid ether? Who painted the clouds with such a variety of colours, and in such diversity of shades and figures, as is not in the power of the finest pencil to emulate? Who formed the sun of such a determinate size, and placed it at such a convenient distance, as not to annoy, but only refresh us, and nourish the ground with its kindly warmth? If it were larger, it would set the earth on fire; if less, it would leave it frozen: if it were nearer us, we should be scorched to death; if farther from us, we should not be able to live for want of heat: who then hath made it so commodious² 'a tabernacle (I speak with the Scriptures, and according to the common notion) out of which it cometh forth,' every morning, 'like a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant, to run his course?' For so many ages past, it never failed rising at its appointed time, nor once missed sending out the dawn to proclaim its approach: but at whose voice does it arise, and by whose hand is it directed in its diurnal and annual course, to give us the blessed vicissitudes of the day and night, and the regular succession of different seasons? That it should always proceed in the same straight path, and never once be known to step

aside; that it should turn at a certain determinate point, and not go forward in a space where there is nothing to obstruct it; that it should traverse the same path back again in the same constant and regular pace, to bring on the seasons by gradual advances: that the moon should supply the office of the sun, and appear at set times, to illuminate the air, and give a vicarious light, when its brother is gone to carry the day to the other hemisphere; ³ that it should procure, or at least regulate the fluxes and refluxes of the sea, whereby the water is kept in constant motion, and so preserved from putrefaction, and accommodated to man's manifold conveniences, besides the business of fishing, and the use of navigation: in a word, that the rest of the planets, and all the innumerable host of heavenly bodies should perform their courses and revolutions, with so much certainty and exactness, as never once to fail, but, for almost this 6000 years, come constantly about in the same period, to the hundredth part of a minute; this is such a clear and incontestable proof of a divine architect, and of that counsel and wisdom wherewith he rules and directs the universe, as made the Roman philosopher, with good reason, conclude, "That⁴ whoever imagines, that the wonderful order, and incredible constancy of the heavenly bodies, and their motions (whereupon the preservation and welfare of all things do depend) is not governed by an intelligent being, himself is destitute of understanding. For shall we, when we see an artificial engine, a sphere, a dial, for instance, acknowledge at first sight, that it is the work of art and understanding; and yet, when we behold the heavens, moved and whirled about with an incredible velocity, most constantly finishing their anniversary vicissitudes, make any doubt, that these are the performances, not only of reason, but of a certain excellent and divine reason?"

And if *Tully*, from the very imperfect knowledge of astronomy, which his time afforded, could be so confident, that the heavenly bodies were framed, and moved by a wise and understanding mind, as to declare, that, in his opinion, whosoever asserted the contrary, was himself destitute of understanding; ⁵ what would he have said, had he been acquainted with the modern discoveries of astronomy; the immense greatness of the world, that part of it (I mean) which falls under our observation; the exquisite regularity of the motions of all the planets, without any deviation or confusion; the inexpressible nicety of adjustment in the primary velocity of the earth's annual motion; the wonderful proportion of its diurnal motion about its own centre, for the distinction of light and darkness; the exact accommodation of the densities of the planets to their distances from the sun: the admirable order, number, and usefulness of the several satellites, which move about the respective planets; the motion of the comets, which are now found to be as regular and periodical, as that of other planetary bodies; and, lastly, the preservation of the several systems, and of the several planets and comets in the same system, from falling upon each other: what, I say, would *Tully*, that great master of reason, have thought and said, if these, and other newly discovered instances of the inexpressible accuracy and wisdom of the works

¹ *Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation.*

⁴ *Tully on the Nature of the Gods.*

⁵ *Clarke's Demonstration of a God.*

¹ See *Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacr.*, i. 3., c. 1. ² Ps. xix. 4, 5.

of God, had been observed and considered in his days? Certainly atheism, which even then was unable to withstand the arguments drawn from this topic, must now, upon the additional strength of these later observations, be utterly ashamed to show its head, and forced to acknowledge, that it was an eternal and almighty Being, God alone, who gave these celestial bodies their proper mensuration and temperature of heat, their dueness of distance, and regularity of motion, or, in the phrase of the prophet, ¹ 'who established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.'

If, from the firmament, we descend to the orb whereon we live, what a glorious proof of the divine wisdom do we meet with in this intermediate expansion of the air, which is so wonderfully contrived, as, at one and the same time, to support clouds for rain, and to afford winds for health and traffic; to be proper for the breath of animals by its spring, for causing sounds by its motion, and for conveying light by its transparency? But whose power was it, that made so thin and fluid an element, the safe repository of thunder and lightning, of winds and tempests? By whose command, and out of whose treasures, are these meteors sent forth to purify the air, which would otherwise stagnate, and consume the vapours, which would otherwise annoy us? And by what skilful hand is the ² water, which is drawn from the sea, by a natural distillation made fresh, and bottled up, as it were, in the clouds, to be sent upon the 'wings of the wind' into different countries, and, in a manner, equally dispersed, and distributed, over the face of the earth, in gentle showers?

Whose power and wisdom was it, that 'hanged the earth upon nothing,' and gave it a spherical figure, the most commodious that could be devised, both for the consistency of its parts, and the velocity of its motion? That 'weighed the mountains in scales,' and 'the hills in a balance,' and disposed of them in their most proper places for fruitfulness and health? That diversified the climates of the earth into such an agreeable variety, that, at the farthest distance, each one has its proper seasons, day and night, winter and summer? That clothed the face of it with plants and flowers, so exquisitely adorned with various and inimitable beauties, that even 'Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of them?' That placed the plant in the seed (as the young is in the womb of animals) in such elegant complications, as afford at once both a pleasing and astonishing spectacle? That painted and perfumed the flowers, gave them the sweet odours which they diffuse in the air for our delight, and, with one and the same water, dyed them into different colours, the scarlet, the purple, the carnation, surpassing the imitation, as well as comprehension of mankind? That has replenished it with such an infinite variety of living creatures, ³ so like, and at the same time so unlike to each other, that of the innumerable particulars wherein each creature differs from all others, every one is known to have its peculiar beauty, and singular use? Some walk, some creep, some fly, some swim; but every one has members and organs ⁴ fitted to its peculiar motions. In a word, the pride of the horse, and the feathers of the peacock, the

largeness of the camel, and the smallness of the insect, are equal demonstrations of an infinite wisdom and power. Nay, ⁵ the smaller the creature is, the more amazing is the workmanship; and when in a little mite, we do (by the help of glasses) see limbs perfectly well organized, a head, a body, legs, and feet, all distinct, and as well proportioned for their size, as those of the vastest elephants; and consider withal, that, in every part of this living atom, there are muscles, nerves, veins, arteries, and blood; and in that blood ramous particles and humours; and in those humours, some drops that are composed of other minute particles: when we consider all this, ⁶ I say, can we help being lost in wonder and astonishment, or refrain crying out, with the blessed apostle, ⁵ 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom, and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his works, and his ways of' creation and providence 'past finding out!'

But there is another thing in animals, both terrestrial and aqueous, no less wonderful than their frame; and that is their natural instinct. In compliance with the common forms of speech I call it so; but in reality, it is the providential direction of them, by an all-wise, and all-powerful mind. For what else has infused into birds the art of building their nests, either hard or soft, according to the constitution of their young? What else makes them keep so constantly in their nests, while they are hatching their young, as if they knew the philosophy of their own warmth, and its aptness for animation? What else moves the swallow, upon the approach of winter, to fly to a more temperate climate, as if it understood the celestial signs, the influence of the stars, and the change of seasons? What else ⁶ causes the salmon, every year, to ascend from the sea up a river, some four or five hundred miles perhaps, only to cast its spawn, and secure it in banks of sand, until the young be hatched, or excluded, and then return to the sea again? How these creatures, when they have been wandering, a long time, in the wide ocean, should again find out, and repair to the mouth of the same rivers, seems to me very strange, and hardly accountable, without having recourse either to some impression given

⁵ Rom. xi. 33.

⁶ *Ray's Wisdom of God.*

a "Where has nature disposed so many senses, as in a gnat?" (says *Pliny* in his *Natural History*, when considering the body of that insect,) "Where hath nature planted its organs of sight, and taste, and smell? where hath she generated that angry and shrill voice? and with what cunning adjoined its wings, lengthened its legs in front, and arranged that hungry cavity like a belly so greedy of blood, especially human? with what skill hath she pointed its sting for pricking the skin? and, although its slenderness be so great as to render it invisible, yet hath she made it so as to serve a double purpose, being sharpened in point for penetrating the skin, and at the same time hollowed out for sucking up the blood?" And if *Pliny* made so many queries concerning the body of a gnat, (which, by his own confession, is none of the least of insects,) what would he, in all likelihood, have done, had he seen the bodies of these animalcules, which are discernible by glasses, to the number of ten, twenty, or thirty thousand in a drop of pepper-water, not larger than a grain of millet? And if these creatures be so very small, what must we think of their muscles, and other parts? Certain it is, that the mechanism, by which nature performs the muscular motion, is exceedingly minute and curious, and to the performance of every muscular motion, in greater animals at least, there are not fewer distinct parts concerned, than many millions of millions, and these visible through a microscope.—*Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation.*

¹ Jer. li. 15.

² *Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation.*

³ *Dr Sam. Clarke's Sermons*, vol. ii.

⁴ *Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation.*

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at their first creation, or the immediate and continual direction, of a superior cause. In a word,¹ can we behold the spider's net, the silk worms' webs, the bees' cells, or the ants' granaries, without being lost in the contemplation, and forced to acknowledge that infinite wisdom of their Creator, who either directs their unerring steps himself, or has given them a genius (if I may so call it) fit to be an emblem, and to show mankind the pattern of art, industry, and frugality?

If from the earth, and the creatures which live upon it, we cast our eye upon the water, we soon perceive, that it is a liquid and transparent body, and that, had it been more or less rarefied, it had not been so proper for the use of man: but who gave it that just configuration of parts, and exact degree of motion, as to make it both so fluent, and at the same time so strong, as to carry and waft away the most unwieldy burdens? Who hath taught the rivers to run, in winding streams, through vast tracts of land, in order to water them more plentifully; then throw themselves into the ocean, to make it the common centre of commerce; and so, by secret and imperceptible channels, return to their fountain-head, in one perpetual circulation? Who stored and replenished these rivers with fish of all kinds, which glide, and sport themselves in the limpid streams, and run heedlessly into the fisher's net, or come greedily to the angler's hook, in order to be caught (as it were) for the use and entertainment of man? The great and wide sea is a very awful and stupendous work of God, and the flux and reflux of its waters are not the easiest phenomena in nature.² All that we know of certainty is this, that the tide carries and brings us back to certain places, at precise hours: but whose hand is it that makes it stop, and then return with such regularity? A little more or less motion in this fluid mass would disorder all nature, and a small incitement upon a tide ruin whole kingdoms: who then was so wise, as to take such exact measures in immense bodies, and who so strong, as to rule the rage of that proud element at discretion? Even he,³ 'who hath placed the sand for the bound thereof, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass;' and placed the Leviathan (among other animals of all kinds) 'therein to take his pastime, out of whose nostrils goeth a smoke, and whose breath kindleth coals;' so that 'he maketh the deep to boil like a pot, and maketh the sea like a pot of ointment,' as the author of the book of ⁴ Job elegantly describes that most important creature.

If now, from the world itself, we turn our eyes more particularly upon man, the principal inhabitant that God has placed therein, no understanding certainly can be so low and mean, no heart so stupid and insensible, as not plainly to see, that nothing but infinite wisdom could, in so wonderful a manner, have fashioned his body, and inspired into it a being of superior faculties, whereby he ⁵ 'teacheth us more than the beasts of the field, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven.'

Should any of us see a lump of clay rise immediately from the ground into the complete figure of a man, full of beauty and symmetry, and endowed with all the parts and faculties we perceive in ourselves, and possibly far more exquisite and beautiful; should we presently, after

his formation, observe him perform all the operations of life, sense, and reason; move as gracefully, talk as eloquently, reason as justly, and do every thing as dexterously, as the most accomplished man breathing: the same was the case, and the same the moment of time, in God's formation of our first parent. But (to give the thing a stronger impression upon the mind) we will suppose, ⁶ that this figure rises by degrees, and is finished part by part, in some succession of time; and that, when the whole is completed, the veins and arteries bored, the sinews and tendons laid, the joints fitted, and the liquor (transmutable into blood and juices) lodged in the ventricles of the heart, God infuses into it a vital principle; whereupon the liquor in the heart begins to descend, and thrill along the veins, and an heavenly blush arises in the countenance, such as scorns the help of art, and is above the power of imitation. The image moves, it walks, it speaks: it moves with such a majesty, as proclaims it the lord of the creation, and talks with such an accent, and sublimity of sentiment, as makes every ear attentive, and even its great Creator enter into converse with it: were we to see all this transacted before our eyes, I say, we could not but stand astonished at the thing; and yet this is an exact emblem of every man's formation, and a contemplation it is, that made holy David break out into this rapturous acknowledgment ⁷ 'Lord! I will give thee thanks, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well: thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book were all my members written.'

Nay, so curious is the texture of the human body, and in every part so full of wonder, that even *Galen* himself, (who was otherwise backward enough to believe a God,) after he had carefully surveyed the frame of it, and viewed the fitness and usefulness of every part, the many ⁸ several intentions of every little vein, bone, and muscle, and the beautiful composition of the whole, fell into a pang of devotion, and wrote an hymn to his Creator's praise. ⁸ And, if in the make of the body, how much more does the divine wisdom appear in the creation of the soul of man, a substance immaterial, but united to the body by a copula imperceptible, and yet so strong; as to make them mutually operate, and sympathize with each other, in all their pleasures and their pains; a substance endued with those wonderful faculties of thinking, understanding, judging, reasoning, choosing, acting, and (which is the end and excellency of all) the power of knowing, obeying, imitating, and praising its Creator; though certainly neither it, nor any superior rank of beings, angels, and archangels, or

⁶ *Hale's Origination of Mankind.*⁷ Ps. cxxxix. 14, 16.⁸ *Clarke's Sermons*, v. 1.

a Galen, in his book, *On the Formation of the Embryo*, takes notice, that there are, in a human body, above 600 muscles, in each of which there are, at least, ten several intentions, or due qualifications, to be observed; so that, about the muscles alone, no less than 6000 several ends and aims are to be attended to. The bones are reckoned to be 284, and the distinct scopes, or intentions of each of these, are above 40; in all, about 12,000; and thus it is in some proportion with all the other parts, the skin, ligaments, vessels, and humours; but more especially with the several vessels of the body, which do, in regard of the great variety and multitude of those several intentions required to them, very much exceed the homogeneous parts.—*Wilkin's Natural Religion*.

¹ *Charnock's Existence of a God.*² *Fenelon's Demonstration of a God.*³ Jer. v. 22.⁴ Job xli. 31.⁵ Job xxxv. 11.

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the 'whole host of heaven' can worthily and sufficiently do it; ¹ 'for who can express the mighty acts of the Lord, or show forth all his praise?' ²

Thus, which way soever we turn our eyes, whether we look upwards or downwards, without us, or within us, upon the animate or inanimate parts of the creation; we shall find abundant reason to take up the words of the Psalmist, and say, ³ 'O Lord, how wonderful are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.' ⁴ 'O, that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men! that they would offer him the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and tell out all his works with gladness!'

SECT. II.

CHAP. I.—Of the state of man's innocence.

THE HISTORY.

As soon as the seventh day from the creation (the first day, as we said of Adam's life, and consequently the first day of the week) was begun, Adam, awaking out of his sleep, musing, very probably, on his vision the preceding night, beheld the fair figure of a woman approaching him, ^a conducted by the hand of her almighty Maker; and, as she advanced, the several innocent beauties that adorned her person, the comeliness of her shape, and gracefulness of her gesture, the lustre of her eye, and sweetness of her looks, discovered themselves in every step more and more.

It is not to be expressed, nor now conceived, ^b what a full tide of joy entered in at the soul of our first parent, when he surveyed this lovely creature, who was destined to be the partner and companion of his life; when, by a secret sympathy, he felt that she was of his own likeness, and complexion, 'bone of his bone, and flesh of his

flesh,' his very self, diversified only into another sex; and could easily foresee, that the love and union which was now to commence between them was to be perpetual, and for ever inseparable. ⁴ For the same divine hand which conducted the woman to the place where Adam was, presented her to him in the capacity of a matrimonial father; and, ^c having joined them together in the nuptial state, pronounced his benediction over them, to the intent that ⁵ they might enjoy unmolested the dominion he had given them over the other parts of the creation, and, being themselves ^d fruitful in the procreation of children, might live to see the earth replenished with a numerous progeny, descended from their loins.

In the mean time God had taken care to provide our first parents ^e with a pleasant and delightful habitation

^a See *Patrick's Commentary*.^b See Gen. i. 28, 29, 30.^c The words of *Milton* upon this occasion are extremely fine.

all heav'n,

And happy constellations, on that hour
Shed their selectest influence; the earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill:
Joyous the birds; fresh gales, and gentle airs
Whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odours, from the spicy shrub.
Disporting.

Nor can we pass by his episode upon marriage, which, for its grave and majestic beauty, is inimitable.

Hail wedded love! mysterious law! true source
Of human offspring! sole propriety
In paradise, of all things common else!
By thee adul'trous lust was driv'n from men,
Among the bestial herds to range; by thee
(Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure)
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets!
Whose bed is undefil'd, and chaste pronounc'd—
Here love his golden shafts employs; here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings;
Reigns here and revels—

^d The words of the text are, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.' whereupon some have made it a question, whether this is not a command, obliging all men to marriage and procreation, as most of the Jewish doctors are of opinion? But to this it may be replied. 1. That it is indeed a command obliging all men so far, as it did not suffer the extinction of mankind, in which sense it did absolutely bind Adam and Eve, as also Noah, and his sons, and their wives, after the flood: but, 2. that it does not oblige every particular man to marry, appears from the example of our Lord Jesus, who lived and died in an unmarried state; from his commendation of those who made themselves 'eunuchs for the kingdom of God,' Mat. xix. 12.; and from St Paul's frequent approbation of virginity, 1 Cor. vii. 1, &c. And therefore, 3. it is here rather a permission than a command, though it be expressed in the form of a command, as other permissions frequently are. See Gen. ii. 16. Deut. xiv. 4. —*Poole's Annotations*.

^e The description which *Milton* gives us of the garden of paradise, is very agreeable in several places, but in one more especially, where he represents the pleasing variety of it.

— Thus was this place

A happy rural seat of various view.
Groves, whose rich trees wept od'rous gums and balm;
Others, whose fruit burnish'd with golden rind,
Hung amiable; (Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only) and of delicious taste.
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks,
Grazing the tender herb, were interpos'd;
Or palmy hillock, or the flow'ry lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store.
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.
Another side umbrageous grots, and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant. Meanwhile murm'ring waters fall
Down the slope hills, dispers'd, or in a lake
(That to the fringed bank, with myrtle crown'd,
Her crystal mirror holds) unite their streams.
The birds their choir apply. Airs, vernal airs,

¹ Ps. cvi. 2. ² Ps. civ. 24. ³ Ps. cvii. 21, 22.

^a It is the general opinion of interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, that God himself, or, more particularly, the second person in the ever-blessed Trinity, God the Son (who is therefore styled in Scripture, Isa. lxiii. 9. 'the angel of God's presence') appeared to Adam, on this and sundry other occasions, in a visible glorious majesty, such as the Jews call the *Schechinah*, which seems to have been a *very shining flame*, or *amazing splendour of light*, breaking out of a thick cloud, of which we afterward read very frequently, under the name of *the glory of the Lord*, and to which we cannot suppose our first parents to have been strangers. We therefore look upon it as highly probable, that this divine Majesty first conducted Eve to the place where Adam was, and not long after their marriage, conveyed them both, from the place where they were formed, into the garden of Eden.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b *Milton* has expressed the joy and transport of Adam, upon his first sight of Eve, in the following manner:

When out of hope, behold her! not far off;
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd
With what all earth, or heaven could bestow,
To make her amiable. On she came,
Led by her heavenly Maker (though unseen)
And guided by his voice; not uninform'd
Of nuptial sanctity, and marriage rites.
Grace was in all her steps, heav'n in her eye,
In ev'ry gesture dignity and love.
I overjoy'd, could not forbear aloud.
"This turn hath made amends, thou hast fulfill'd
Thy words, Creator bounteous, and benign!
Giver of all things fair! but fairest this
Of all thy gifts."

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in the country of Eden, ¹ which was watered by four rivers; by the Tigris, in Scripture called Hiddekel, on one side, and by Euphrates on the other, which, joining their streams together in a place where (not long after the flood) the famous city of Babylon was situate, pass through a large country, and then dividing again, form the two rivers, which the sacred historian calls Pison, and Gihon, and so water part of the garden of paradise, wherein were all kinds of trees, herbs, and flowers, which could any way delight the sight, the taste, or the smell.

Among other trees, however, there were two of very remarkable names and properties planted 'in the midst,' or most eminent part of the garden, to be always within the view and observation of our first parents, 'the tree of life,' so called, ² because it had a virtue in it, not only to repair the animal spirits, as other nourishment does, but likewise to preserve and ^a maintain them in the same equal temper and state wherein they were created, without pain, diseases, or decay; and 'the tree of knowledge of good and evil,' so called, ³ not because it had a virtue to confer any such knowledge, but ^b because the devil, in his temptation of the woman, pretended that it had; pretended, that ⁴ as God knew all things, and was himself subject to no one's control, so the eating of this tree would confer on them the same degree of knowledge, and put them in the same state of independency: and from this unfortunate deception (whereof God might speak by way of anticipation) it did not improperly derive its name.

Into this ^c paradise of much pleasure, but some dan-

Bible History, by M. Martin.

² *Patrick's Commentary*; and see c. iii. ver. 20.

³ *Nicholls' Conference*, vol. 1.

⁴ *Estius on the more difficult passages.*

Breathing the smell of fields, and groves, attune

The trembling leaves, while universal PAN

Knit with the GRACES, and the HOURS, in dance

Lead on the eternal Spring.

^a Others think, that the 'tree of life' was so called, in a symbolical sense, as it was a sign and token of that life which man had received from God, and of his continual enjoyment of it, without diminution, had he persisted in his obedience, and as this garden, say they, was confessedly a type of heaven, so God might intend by this tree to represent that immortal life which he meant to bestow upon mankind himself, Rev. xxii. 2. according to which is that famous saying of *St. Austin*, 'In the other trees he had nourishment, in these an oath.'—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b Others think the 'tree of knowledge' was so called, either in respect to God, who was minded by this tree to prove our first parents, whether they would be good or bad, which was to be known by their abstaining from the fruit, or eating it; or in respect to them, who, in the event, found by sad experience, the difference between good and evil, which they knew not before; but they found the difference to be this, that good is that which gives the mind pleasure and assurance; but evil that which is always attended with sorrow and regret.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Young's Sermons*, vol. 1.

^c The word 'paradise,' which the Septuagint make use of (whether it be of Hebrew, Chaldee, or Persian original) signifies 'a place enclosed for pleasure and delight;' either a park where beasts do range, or a spot of ground stocked with choice plants, which is properly a garden; or curiously set with trees, yielding all manner of fruit, which is an orchard. There are three places in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, wherein this word is found. 1. *Nehemiah* ii. 8. where that prophet requests of Artaxerxes' letters to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, or paradise; 2. in the *Song of Solomon*, iv. 13. where he says, that the plants of the spouse 'are an orchard of pomegranates;' and

ger, wherein was one tree of a pernicious quality, though all the rest were good in their kind, and extremely salutary, the Lord God conducted our first parents, who, at this time, were naked, and yet not ashamed, because their innocence was their protection. They had no sinful inclinations in their bodies, no evil concupiscence in their minds, to make them blush; and withal, the temperature of the climate was such, as needed no clothing to defend them from the weather, God having given them (as we may imagine) a survey of their new habitation, shown them the various beauties of the place, the work wherein they were to employ themselves by day, and ^d the bower wherein they were to repose themselves by night, granted them to eat of the fruit of every tree in the garden, except that one, 'the tree of knowledge of good and evil,' which (how lovely soever it might appear to the eye) he strictly charged them not so much as to touch, upon the penalty of incurring his displeasure, forfeiting their right and title to eternal life, and entailing upon themselves, and their posterity, ^e mortality, diseases, and death.

With this small restraint which the divine wisdom thought proper to lay upon Adam, as a token of his subjection, and a test of his obedience, God left him to the enjoyment of this paradise, where every thing was

3. in *Ecclesiastes* ii. 5. where he says, 'he made himself gardens,' or paradises. In all which senses the word may very fitly be applied to the place where our first parents were to live; since it was not only a pleasant garden and fruitful orchard, but a spacious park and forest likewise, whereinto the several beasts of the field were permitted to come.—*Edwards' Survey of Religion*, vol. 1. and *Calmel's Dictionary on the word 'Paradise.'*

^d The description which Milton gives us of this blissful bower, is extremely fine.

—It was a place,

Chosen by the sov'reign Planter, when he fram'd

All things to man's delightful use: the roof

Of thickest covert, was inwoven shade,

Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew

Of firm and fragrant leaf. On either side

Acanthus and each od'rous bushy shrub,

Fenc'd up the verdant wall. Each beauteous flower,

Iris, all hues, roses, and jessamin,

Rear'd high their flourish'd heads between, and wrought

Mosaic: under foot the violet,

Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay;

Broider'd the ground, more colour'd than with stone

Of costliest emblem. Other creatures here,

Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none;

Such was their awe of man!

^e The words in our version are, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;' which seem to imply, that on the day that Adam should eat of the tree of knowledge, he should die; which eventually proved not so, because he lived many years after; and therefore (as some observe very well) it should be rendered, 'Thou shalt deserve to die without remission;' for the Scripture frequently expresses by the future not only what will come to pass, but also what ought to come to pass; to which purpose there is a very apposite text in 1 *Kings* ii. 37. where Solomon says to Shimei, —'Go not forth hence (namely, from Jerusalem) any whither; for in the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt surely die,' that is, 'thou shalt deserve death without remission.' For Solomon reserved to himself the power of punishing him when he should think fit; and, in effect, he did not put him to death the same day that he disobeyed, any more than God did put Adam to death the same day that he transgressed in eating the forbidden fruit. This seems to be a good solution; though some interpreters understand the prohibition, as if God intended thereby to intimate to Adam the deadly quality of the forbidden fruit, whose poison was so very exquisite, that, on the very day he eat thereof, it would certainly have destroyed him, had not God's goodness interposed, and restrained its violence.—See *Essay for a New Translation*; and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

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pleasant to the sight, and accommodated to his liking. Not thinking it convenient however for him, even in his state of innocence, to be idle or unemployed, here he appointed him to dress and keep the new plantation, which, by reason of its luxuriancy, would in time, he knew, require his care. Here he was to employ his mind, as well as exercise his body; to contemplate and study the works of God; to submit himself wholly to the divine conduct; to conform all his actions to the divine will; and to live in a constant dependence upon the divine goodness. Here he was to spend his days in the continual exercises of prayer and thanksgiving; and, it may be, the natural dictates of gratitude would prompt him to offer some of the fruits of the ground, and some living creatures, by way of sacrifice to God. Here were thousands of objects to exercise his intellective faculties, to call forth his reason, and employ it; but that wherein the ultimate perfection of his life was doubtless to consist, was the union of his soul with the supreme good, that infinite and eternal Being, which alone can constitute the happiness of man.

¹ O! Adam, beyond all imagination happy: with uninterrupted health, and untainted innocence, to delight thee; no perverseness of will, or perturbation of appetite, to discompose thee; a heart upright, a conscience clear, and an head unclouded, to entertain thee; a delightful earth for thee to enjoy; a glorious universe for thee to contemplate; an everlasting heaven, a crown of never-fading glory for thee to look for and expect; and, in the mean time, the author of that universe, the King of that heaven, and giver of that glory, thy God, thy Creator, thy benefactor, to see, to converse with, to bless, to glorify, to adore, to obey!

This was the designed felicity of our first parents. Neither they nor their posterity were to be liable to sorrow or misery of any kind, but to be possessed of a constant and never-failing happiness; and, after innumerable ages and successions, were, in their courses, to be taken up into an heavenly paradise. For ² that the terrestrial paradise was to Adam a type of heaven, and that the never-ending life of happiness promised to our first parents (if they had continued obedient, and grown up to perfection under that economy wherein they were placed) should not have been continued in this earthly, but only have commenced here, and been perpetuated in an higher state, that is, after such a trial of their obedience as the divine wisdom should think convenient, they should have been translated from earth to heaven, is the joint opinion ^a of the best ancient, both Jewish and Christian writers.

¹ *Revolution Examined*, part 1

² *Bull's State of Man before the Fall*.

^a This same learned writer, (namely, *Bishop Bull*) has compiled a great many authorities from the fathers of the first centuries, all full and significant to the purpose, and to which I refer the reader, only mentioning one or two of more remarkable force and antiquity, for his present satisfaction. *Justin Martyr*, speaking of the creation of the world, delivers not his own private opinion only, but the common sense of Christians in his days: "We have been taught," says he, "that God, being good, did, in the beginning, make all things out of an uninformed matter for the sake of men, who, if by their works they had rendered themselves worthy of his acceptance, we presume, should have been favoured with his friendship, and reigned together with him, being made incorruptible, and impassable;" *Apol. 2. Athanasius*, among other things worthy our observation, con-

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties obviated, and Objections explained.*

THAT learned men should differ in their opinion about a question, which, it must be confessed, has its difficulties attending it, is no wonderful thing at all; but that Moses, who wrote about 850 years after the flood, should give us so particular a description of this garden, and that other sacred writers, long after him, should make such frequent mention of it, if there was never any such place, nay, if there were not then remaining some marks and characters of its situation, is pretty strange and unaccountable. The very nature of his description shows, that Moses had no imaginary paradise in his view, but a portion of this habitable earth, bounded with such countries and rivers as were very well known by the names he gave them in his time, and (as it appears from other passages in Scripture) for many ages after. ³ Eden is as evidently a real country, as Ararat, where the ark rested, or Shinar, where the sons of Noah removed after the flood. We find it mentioned as such in Scripture, as often as the other two; and there is the more reason to believe it, because, in the Mosaic account, the scene of these three memorable events is all laid in the neighbourhood of one another.

Moses, we must allow, is far from being pompous or romantic in his manner of writing; and yet it cannot be denied, but that he gives a manifest preference to this spot of ground above all others; which why he should do, we cannot imagine, unless there was really such a place as he describes: nor can we conceive, ⁴ what other foundation, both the ancient poets and philosophers could have had, for their fortunate islands, their elysian fields, their garden of Adonis, their garden of the Hesperides, their *Ortygia* and *Tobrobane*, (as described by *Diodorus Siculus*.) which are but borrowed sketches from what our inspired penman tells us of the first terrestrial paradise.

It is not to be questioned then, but that, in the antediluvian world, there really was such a place as this garden of Eden, a place of distinguished beauty, and more remarkably pleasant in its situation; otherwise we cannot perceive, ^b why the expulsion of our first parents

³ *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 1.

⁴ *Huetius' Inquiries*.

cerning the primordial state of our first parents, has these remarkable words: "He brought them therefore into paradise, and gave them a law, that if they should preserve the grace then given, and continue obedient, they might enjoy in paradise a life without grief, sorrow, or care; besides that they had a promise also of an immortality in the heavens;" *On the Incarnation of the Word*. And therefore we need less wonder, that we find it an article inserted in the common offices of the primitive church; and that in the most ancient liturgy now extant, that of *Clemens*, we read these words concerning Adam: "When thou broughtest him into the paradise of pleasure, thou gavest him free leave to eat of all other trees, and forbadeest him to taste of one only, for the hope of better things: that if he kept the commandment, he might receive immortality as the reward of his obedience."—*Apost. Const.* b. 8. c. 12.

^b *Eve's* lamentation upon the order which *Michael* brought for their departure out of paradise, is very beautiful, and affecting, in *Milton*.

"O unexpected shock, worse far than death!
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise, thus leave
Thee, native soil? Those happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of gods! where I had hope to spend
Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day

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from that abode should be thought any part of their punishment; nor can we see, what occasion there was for placing a 'flaming sword' about the 'tree of life;' or for appointing an host of the cherubims to guard the entrance against their return. The face of nature, and the course of rivers, might possibly be altered by the violence of the flood; but this is no valid exception to the case in hand: ¹ because Moses does not describe the situation of paradise in antediluvian names. The names of the rivers, and the countries adjacent, Cush, Havilah, &c., are names of later date than the flood; nor can we suppose, but that Moses (according to the known geography of the world, when he wrote) intended to give us some hints of the place, near which Eden, in the former world, and the garden of paradise, were seated.

Now the description which Moses gives us of it, is delivered in these words.—² 'And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold: and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium, and the onyx-stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; that is it which goes before Assyria: and the fourth is Euphrates.' So that to discover the place of paradise, we must find out the true situation of the land of Eden, whereof it was probably a part, and then trace the courses of the rivers, and inquire into the nature of the countries which Moses here specified.

The word עֵדֶן, which in the Hebrew tongue (according to its primary acceptation) signifies, 'pleasure' and 'delight;' in a secondary sense, is frequently made the proper name of several places, which are either more remarkably fruitful in their soil, or pleasant in their situation. Now, of all the places which go under this denomination, the learned have generally looked upon these three, as the properest countries wherein to inquire for the terrestrial paradise.

1. The first is that province which the prophet ³ Amos seems to take notice of, when he divides Syria into three parts, viz. Damascus, the plain of Aven, and the house of Eden, called *Cælo-Syria*, or the hollow Syria, because the mountains of Libanus and Antilibanus enclose it on both sides, and make it look like a valley. But ⁴ (how great soever the names be that seem to patronise it) this, by no means, can be the Eden which Moses means; not only because it lies not to the east, but to the north of the place where he is supposed to have

wrote his book, but more especially, because it is destitute of all the marks in the Mosaical description, which ought always to be the principal test in this inquiry.

2. The second place, wherein ⁵ several learned men have sought for the country of Eden, in Armeniâ, between the sources of the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Araxis, and the Phasis, which they suppose to be the four rivers specified by Moses. But this supposition is far from being well founded, because, according to modern discoveries, the Phasis does not rise in the mountains of Armenia (as the ancient geographers have misinformed us,) but at a great distance from them, in mount Caucasus: nor does it run from south to north, but directly contrary, from north to south, as some ⁶ late travellers have discovered. So that, according to this scheme, we want a whole river, and can no ways account for that which (according to Moses's description of it) 'went out of the country of Eden, to water the garden of paradise.'

3. The third place, and that wherein the country of Eden, as mentioned by Moses, seems most likely to be seated, is Chaldaea, not far from the banks of the river Euphrates. To this purpose, when we find Rabshakeh vaunting out his master's actions, ⁷ 'Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden, which were in Telassar?' As Telassar, in general, signifies any garrison or fortification; so here, more particularly it denotes ⁸ that strong fort which the children of Eden held in an island of the Euphrates, towards the west of Babylon, as a barrier against the incursions of the Assyrians on that side. And therefore, in all probability, ⁹ the country of Eden lay on the west side, or rather on both sides of the river Euphrates, after its conjunction with the Tigris, a little below the place where, in process of time, the famous city of Babylon came to be built.

Thus we have found out a country called Eden, which, for its pleasure and fruitfulness, ^a (as all authors agree,) answers the character which Moses gives of it; and are now to consider the description of the four rivers, in order to ascertain the place where the garden we are in quest of was very probably situate.

'The first river is Pison, or Phison,' (as the son of Sirach calls it,) that which compasseth the land of Havilah. Now, for the better understanding of this, we must observe, that ¹⁰ when Moses wrote his history, he was, in all probability, in Arabia Petrea, on the east

Which must be mortal to us both! O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At even, which I had bred with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names!
Who now will rear you to the sun, and rank
Your tribes, or water from the ambrosial fount
Then, lastly, nuptial bower, by me adorn'd,
With what to sight, or smell, was sweet! from thee
How shall I part, and whether wander down
Into a lower world? —

¹ Shuckford's Connection, l. 1. ² Gen. ii. 8, &c.

³ Amos i. 5. ⁴ Its chief abettors are Heidegger in his *History of the Patriarch; Le Clerc* in Gen. ii. 8.; *P. Abram* in his *Pharæas Old Testament*; and *P. Hardouin* in his edition of *Pliny*.

⁵ The chief patrons of this scheme are *Santon* in his *Atlas; Reland* in his *Treatise on the Site of Paradise*; and *Catmet*, both in his *Dictionary and Commentary* on Gen. ii. 8.

⁶ See *Thavenot*, and *Sir John Chardin's Travels*.

⁷ 2 Kings xix. 12. and Isa. xxxvii. 12.

⁸ See *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*.

⁹ *Calvin* on Gen. ii. 8. was the first starter of this opinion, and is, with some little variation, followed by *Marinus, Bochart, Huetius, Bishop of Auranches*, and divers others.

¹⁰ See *Wells's Geography*; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

^a *Herodotus*, who was an eye-witness of it, tells us, that where Euphrates runs out into Tigris, not far from the place where Ninus is seated, that region is, of all that he ever saw, the most excellent; so fruitful in bringing forth corn, that it yieldeth two hundred fold; and so plenteous in grass, that the people are forced to drive their cattle from pasture, lest they should surfeit themselves by too much plenty.—See *Herodotus, Clio*; and *Quintus Curtius*, l. 5.

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of which lies Arabia Deserta; but the sterility of the country will not admit of the situation of the garden of Eden in that place; and therefore we must go on eastward (as our author directs us) until we come to some place, through which Euphrates and Tigris are known to shape their course. Now Euphrates and Tigris, though they both rise out of the mountains of Armenia, take almost quite contrary courses. Euphrates runs to the west, and passing through Mesopotamia, waters the country where Babylon once stood; whereas Tigris takes towards the east, and passing along Assyria, waters the country where the once famed city of Nineveh stood. After a long progress, they meet a little below Babylon, and running a considerable way together in one large stream, with Babylonia and Chaldea on the west, and the country of Susiana on the east side, they separate again not far from Bassora, and so fall, in two channels, into the Persian gulf, enclosing the island Teredon, now called Balsara.

Now, taking this along with us, we may observe farther, that there are two places in Scripture which make mention of the land of Havilah. In the one we are told, that ¹ 'the Israelites dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt;' and in the other, that ² 'Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou goest to Shur, that is before Egypt;' where, by the expression, 'from Havilah unto Shur,' is probably meant the whole extent of that part of Arabia which lies between Egypt to the west, and a certain stream or river which empties itself into the Persian gulf, on the east. That Havilah is the same with this part of Arabia, is farther evinced from its abounding with very good gold. For all authors, both sacred and profane, highly commend the gold of Arabia; tell us, that it is there dug in great plenty; is of so lively a colour, as to come near to the brightness of fire; and of so fine a kind, so pure and unmixed, as to need no refinement. Bdellium (which by some interpreters is taken for pearl, and by others for an aromatic gum) is, in both these senses, applicable to this country: for the ^a bdellium, or gum of Arabia, was always held in great esteem; nor is there any place in the world which produces finer ^b pearls, or in greater quantities, than the sea about Baharen, an island situated in the Persian gulf; and as for ^c the onyx-stone in particular, (if we will believe what *Pliny* tells

us,) the ancients were of opinion, that it was no where to be found but in the mountains of Arabia. It seems reasonable therefore to conclude, (according to all the characters which Moses has given us of it,) that that tract of Arabia which lies upon the Persian gulf, was, in his days called 'the land of Havilah,' and that the channel which, after Euphrates and Tigris part, runs westward into the said gulf, was originally called Pison; and this the rather, because ^d some remains of its ancient name continued a long while after this account of it.

'The second river is Gihon, that which compasseth, or runneth along, the whole land of ^e Cush.' Where we may observe, that Moses has not affixed so many marks on the Gihon, as he does on the Pison, and that probably for this reason; ³ because, having once found out the Pison, we might easily discover the situation of the Gihon. For Pison being known to be the first river, in respect to the place where Moses was then writing, it is but natural to suppose, that Gihon (as the second) should be the river next to it; and, consequently, that other stream, which, after the Euphrates and Tigris are parted, holds its course eastward, and empties itself in the Persian gulf. For all travellers agree, that the country lying upon the eastern stream, which other nations call Susiana, is by the inhabitants to this day, ^f called Chuzestan, which carries in it plain footsteps of the original word Cush, or (as some write it) Chus.

Though therefore no remains of this river Gihon are to be met with in the country itself; yet, since it lies exactly the second in order, according to the method that Moses has taken in mentioning the four rivers; and, since the province it runs along and washes was formerly called 'the land of Cush,' and has at this time a

³ *Wells's Historical Geography*, vol. 1.

who is very curious in remarking the countries of precious stones, assures us, that those of the greatest value came out of Arabia.—B. last.

^d It is a great while since both this river and the river Gihon have lost their names. The Greek and Roman writers call them still, after their parting, by the names they had before they met, Euphrates and Tigris; but there was some remainder of the name of Pison preserved in the river Pisotigris, which is Pison mixed with Tigris (as *Mr. Carver* observes.) By *Xenophon* it is called simply *Physeus*, in which the name of *Pison* is plainly enough retained, and went under that name until the time of Alexander the Great. For *Q. Curtius* commonly calls *Tigris* itself by the name of *Phisis*, and says it was so called by the inhabitants thereabout, which, in all probability, was the name of this other river *Pison*, but, in process of time, lost by the many alterations which were made in its course, as *Pliny* tells us.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^e The Seventy translation renders the Hebrew word *Cush*, by the name of *Ethiopia*, and in this mistake is all along followed by our English version, (whereas by the land of Cush is always meant some part of Arabia,) which has led *Josephus*, and several others, into a notion, that the river Gihon was the Nile in Egypt; and supposing withal, that the country of Havilah was some part of the East Indies, they have run into another error, and taken Pison for the Ganges, whereby they make the garden of Eden contain the greatest part of Asia, and some part of Africa likewise, which is a supposition quite incredible.—*Patrick*, ib.; *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*; and *Shuckford's Connection*.

^f *Benjamin of Navarre* tells us, that the province of Elam, whereof Susa is the metropolis, and which extends itself as far as the Persian gulf, at the east of the mouth of the river Euphrates, or Tigris, (as you please to term it,) is called by that name.—*Wells*, ib.

¹ Gen. xxv. 18.

² 1 Sam. xv. 7.

^a *Galen* comparing the gum of Arabia with that of Syria, gives some advantage to the former, which he denies to the other; *On Simp. Medic.* b. 6. And *Pliny* prefers the bdellium of Arabia before that of any other nation, except that of Bactriana.—*Pliny*, b. 12. c. 9.

^b *Nearchus*, one of Alexander's captains, who conducted his fleet from the Indies, as far as the Persian gulf, speaks of an island there abounding in pearls of great value.—*Strabo*, B. 16.

And *Pliny*, having commended the pearls of the Indian seas, adds, that such as are fished towards Arabia, in the Persian gulf, deserve the greatest praise.—B. 6. c. 28.

^c *Strabo* tells us, that the riches of Arabia, which consisted in precious stones and excellent perfumes, (the trade of which brought them a great deal of gold and silver, besides the gold of the country itself,) made Augustus send *Aelius Gallus* thither, either to make these nations his friends, and so draw to himself their riches, or else to subdue them; b. 16. *Diodorus Siculus* describes at large the advantages of Arabia, and especially its precious stones, which are very valuable, both for their variety and brightness of colour; b. 2. And (to name no more) *Pliny*

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name not a little analogous to it; there is no doubt to be made, but that the said easterly channel, coming from the united stream of the Euphrates and Tigris, is the very Gihon described by Moses.

‘The third river is Hiddekel, that which goeth towards the east of, or, (as it is better translated) that which goeth along the side of Assyria.’ It is allowed by all interpreters, as well as the Seventy, that this river is the same with Tigris, or which, as *Pliny* says, was called Diglito, in those parts where its course was slow, but where it began to be rapid, it took the other name. And, though it may be difficult to show any just analogy between the name of Hiddekel and Tigris; yet, if we either observe Moses’s method of reckoning up the four rivers, or consider the true geography of the country, we shall easily perceive, that the river Hiddekel could properly be no other. ¹ For as, in respect to the place where Moses wrote, Pison lay nearest to him, and so, in a natural order, was named first, and the Gihon, lying near to that, was accordingly reckoned second; so, having passed over that stream, and turning to the left, in order to come back again to Arabia Petraea, (where Moses was,) we meet, in our passage, with Tigris in the third place; and so, proceeding westward through the lower part of Mesopotamia, come to Pherath, or Euphrates, at last. For Tigris, we must remember, parts Assyria from Mesopotamia, and meeting with Euphrates a little below Babylon, runs along with it in one common channel, until they separate again, and make the two streams of Pison and Gihon, which, as we said before, empty themselves into the Persian gulf.

‘The fourth river was “Euphrates;” but this lay so near the country of Judea, and was so well known to the inhabitants thereof, that there was no occasion for Moses particularly to describe it. From the course of these four rivers, however, which he manifestly makes the bounds and limits of it, we may perceive, that the land of Eden must necessarily lie upon the great channel which the Tigris and Euphrates make, while they run together, and where they part again, must there terminate: for so the sacred text informs us, namely, that ‘a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads;’ which words manifestly imply, that in Eden the river was but one, that is, one single channel; but ‘from thence,’ that is, when it was gone out of Eden, it was parted, and became four streams or openings, (for so the Hebrew word may be translated,) two upwards, and two below. For, supposing this channel to be our common centre, we may, if we look one way, that is, up towards Babylon, see the Tigris and Euphrates coming into it; and, if we look another way, that is, down towards the Persian gulf, see the Pison and the Gihon running out of it.

¹ *Wells’s Geography.*

a *Euphrates* is of the same signification with the Hebrew *Pherath*, and is probably so called, by reason of the pleasantness, at least the great fruitfulness, of the adjacent country. It must not be dissembled however, that it is one of those corrupt names which our translations have borrowed from the *Septuagint* version, and which probably the Greeks, as *Reland* on the *Site of Paradise* judiciously observed, took from the Persians, who often set the word *ab* or *au*, which signifies *water*, before the names of rivers, of which word, and *Frat*, (as it is still called by the neighbouring people,) the name *Euphrates* is apparently compounded.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 1.

It seems reasonable then to suppose, that this country of Eden lay on each side of this great channel, partly in Chaldea, and partly in Susiana: and, what may confirm us in this opinion, is, the extraordinary goodness and fertility of the soil. For, as it is incongruous to suppose, that God would make choice of a barren land wherein to plant the garden of paradise; so all ancient historians and geographers inform us, that not only Mesopotamia, Chaldea, a good part of Syria, and other neighbouring countries, were the most pleasant and fruitful places in the world; but modern travellers likewise particularly assure us, that in all the dominions which the Grand Seigneur has, there is not a finer country, (though, for want of hands, it lies in some places uncultivated) than that which lies between Bagdad and Bassora, the very tract of ground, which, according to our computation, was formerly called the land of Eden.

In what precise part of the land of Eden the garden of paradise was planted, the sacred historian seems to intimate, by informing us, that it ² ‘lay eastward in Eden:’ for he does not mean, that it lay eastward from the place where he was then writing, (that every body might easily know,) but his design was to point out, as near as possible, the very spot of ground where it was anciently seated. If then the garden of paradise lay in the easterly part of the country of Eden, and ³ ‘the river which watered it’ ran through that province (as the Scripture tells us it did) before it entered into the garden, then must it necessarily follow, that paradise was situated on the east side of one of the turnings of that river, which the conjunction of the Tigris and Euphrates makes, (now called the river of the Arabs,) and very probably at the lowest great turning, which Ptolemy takes notice of, and not far from the place where Aracca (in Scripture called Erec) at present is known to stand.

Thus we have followed the path which ⁴ the learned and judicious Huetius, bishop of Auranches, has pointed out to us, and have happily found a place wherein to fix this garden of pleasure. And, though it must be owned, that there is no draught of the country which makes the rivers exactly answer the description that Moses has given us of them; yet, it is reasonable to suppose, ⁴ that he wrote according to the then known geography of the country; that if the site, or number of rivers about Babylon, have been greatly altered since, this, in all pro-

² Gen. ii. 8. ³ Gen. ii. 10. ⁴ *Shuckford’s Connection.*

⁵ Upon this occasion, it may not be improper to set down a brief exposition of his opinion in his own words. “I assert then that the terrestrial Paradise was situated on the channel formed by the united waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, between the place of their junction and that of their separation before falling into the Persian gulf; and as several large windings are made by this channel, I affirm with greater precision, that Paradise was placed on one of these windings and apparently on the southern side of the largest (which hath been marked by Agathodæmon in the geographical tables of Ptolemy) when the river, after a long deflection to the west, again takes an eastward course about 32° 39’ N. Lat. and 80° 10’ E. Lon. very near where Aracca or the Erec of Scripture was placed. He adds still farther that the four heads of this river are the Tigris and Euphrates before their junction, and the two channels, through which it flows into the sea—of which channels, the western is Pison; and the country of Havilah which it traverses is partly in Arabia Felix, and partly in Arabia Deserta: the eastern one which I have mentioned is the Gihon, and the country called Chus is Susiana.”—See *Treatise on the Site of Paradise*, p. 16.

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ability, has been occasioned by the cuts and canals, which the monarchs of that great empire were remarkable for making; and that all modern observers find greater variations in the situation of places, and make greater corrections in all their charts and maps, than needed to be made in the description of Moses, to bring it to an agreement even with our latest accounts of the present country, and rivers near Chaldaea. But I espouse this opinion, without any formal opposition to the sentiments of other learned men, who doubtless, in this case, are left to their own choice; since the situation of paradise, (as the learned Bishop concludes,) whether it be in one part of the world, or in another, can never be esteemed as an article of our Christian faith.

CHAP. III.—Of the Image of God in Man.

WHOEVER looks into the history of the creation, as it is recorded by Moses, will soon perceive, that there was something so peculiar in the formation of man, as to deserve a divine consultation, and that this peculiarity chiefly consists in that “divine image and similitude wherein it pleased God to make him. This pre-eminence the holy penman has taken care, ¹ in two several places, to remind us of, in order to imprint upon us a deeper sense of the dignity of human nature; and therefore it may be no improper subject for our meditation in this place, to consider a little, wherein this divine image or likeness did consist; how far it is now impaired in us; and in what measure it may be recovered again.

What the image of God impressed upon man in the state of his integrity was, it is as difficult a matter for us, who date our ignorance from our first being, and were all along bred up with the same infirmities about us wherein we were born, to form any adequate perception of, ² as it is for a peasant bred up in the obscurities of a cottage, to fancy in his mind the unseen splendours of a court; and therefore we have the less reason to wonder, that we find such a variety of opinions concerning it.

³ Some of the Jewish doctors were fond enough to imagine, that Adam at first had his head surrounded with a visible radiant glory which accompanied him wherever he went, and struck awe and reverence into the other parts of the animal creation; and that his person was so completely perfect and handsome, that even God, before he formed him, assumed a human body of the most perfect beauty, and so, in a literal sense, made him after his own image and resemblance. But there needs no pains to refute this groundless fancy.

¹ Gen. i. 26, 27.

² South's Sermons, vol. 1.

³ Calmet's Dictionary on the word Adam.

a The words in the text are, *in our image, after our likeness*, which seem to be much of the same import; only a learned Jewish interpreter has observed, that the last words, *after our likeness*, give us to understand, that man was not created properly and perfectly in the image of God, but only in a kind of resemblance of him; for he does not say, *in our likeness*, as he does, *in our image*; but, *after our likeness*; where the *cap* of similitude (as they call it) abates something of the sense of what follows, and makes it signify only an approach to the divine likeness, in understanding, freedom of choice, spirituality, immortality, &c.—Patrick's Commentary.

⁴ Philo is of opinion, that this image of God, was only the idea of human nature in the divine understanding, by looking on which he formed man, just as an architect about to build an house, first delineates the scheme in his mind, and then proceeds to erect the fabric. But this opinion, how true soever, does not come up to the point in hand; because it makes no distinction between man and other creatures, (for they were likewise made according to the ideal image in the divine intellect) though it may be manifestly the intent of the Scripture account to give him a particular preference.

⁵ Origen, among ancient Christian authors, will have it to be the Son of God, who is called ⁶ ‘the express image of the Father:’ but there is no such restriction in the words of Moses. They are delivered ⁷ in the plural number; and therefore cannot, without violence, be applied to one single person in the Godhead; and, among the moderns, some have placed it in holiness alone, whilst others have thought it more properly seated in dominion. But these are only single lines, and far from coming to the whole portraiture.

The divine similitude, in short, is a complex thing, and made up of many ingredients; and therefore (to give our thoughts a track in so spacious a field) we may distinguish it into natural and supernatural; and accordingly, shall, 1. consider the supernatural gifts and ornaments; and then, 2. those natural perfections and accomplishments wherein this image of God, impressed on our first parents, may be said to consist.

⁸ An eloquent father of the church has set this whole matter before us in a very apt similitude, comparing this animal and living effigies of the King of kings, with the image of an emperor, so expressed by the hand of an artificer, either in sculpture or painting, as to represent the very dress and ensigns of royal majesty, such as the purple robe, the sceptre, and the diadem, &c. But as the emperor's image does represent, not only his countenance and the figure of his body, but even his dress likewise, his ornaments and royal ensigns; so man does then properly represent in himself the image and similitude of God, when to the accomplishments of nature (which cannot totally be extinguished) the ornaments of grace and virtue are likewise added; when “man's nature (as he expresses it) is not clothed in purple nor vaunts its dignity by a sceptre or diadem, (for the archetype consists not in such things as these,) but instead of purple, is clothed with virtue, which of all others, is the most royal vestment; instead of a sceptre, is supported by a blessed immortality; and, instead of a diadem, is adorned with a crown of righteousness.”

That our first parents, besides the seeds of natural virtue and religion sown in their minds, and besides the natural innocence and rectitude wherein they were created, were endued with certain gifts and powers supernatural, infused into them by the Spirit of God, is manifest, not only from the authority of ⁹ Christian writers, but from the testimony of Philo the Jew likewise, who is very full of sublime notions concerning the

⁴ On the World's Formation.

⁵ See Edwards' Survey of Religion, vol. 1.

⁶ Heb. i. 3.

⁷ Gen. i. 36. Let us make man.

⁸ Gregory Nyssen on Man's Formation, c. 4.

⁹ See Bull's State of Man before the Fall.

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divine image, and, in one place more especially, expresses himself to this purpose. ¹“The Creator made our soul,” says he, “while enclosed in a body able of itself to see and know its Maker; but, considering how vastly advantageous such knowledge would be to man, (for this is the utmost bound of its felicity,) he inspired into him from above something of his own divinity, which, being invisible, impressed upon the invisible soul its own character; that so even this earthly region might not be without some creature made after the image of God:” and this ² he asserts to be the recondite sense of Moses’s words in the history of man’s creation.

And indeed we need go no farther than this history of Moses, to prove the very point we are now upon. For, whereas it acquaints us, that the first man, in his state of integrity, was able to sustain the approaches of the divine presence, and converse with his Maker in the same language, it is reasonable to suppose, that it was a particular vouchsafement to him, to confirm his mind, and enlighten his understanding in this manner; because no creature is fit to converse with God without divine illumination, nor is any creature able to bear his majestic appearance, that is not fortified and prepared for it by a divine power.

Whereas it tells us, that ²“God brought every living creature unto Adam, to see what he would call them, and whatever, he called them, that was the name thereof;” it can hardly be supposed (considering the circumstances of the thing) but that this was the effect of something more than human sagacity. That, in an infinite variety of creatures, never before seen by Adam, he should be able on a sudden, without labour or premeditation, to give names to each of them, so adapt and fitted to their respective natures, as that God himself should approve the nomenclature, is a thing so astonishing, that we may venture to say, ³no single man, among all the philosophers since the fall, no Plato, no Aristotle, among the ancients, no Des Cartes, no Gassendus, no Newton, among the moderns; nay, no academy or royal society whatever durst have once attempted it.

Whereas it informs us, that Adam no sooner saw his

¹ Lib. Quod det potiori insid. solet, p. 171. ² Gen. ii. 19.

^a “The great Moses,” says he, “makes not the species of the rational soul to be like to any of the creatures, but pronounceth it to be the image of the invisible God, as judging it then to become the true and genuine coin of God, when it is formed and impressed by the divine seal, the character whereof is the eternal word. For God,” saith he, “breathed into his face the breath of life; so that he who receives the inspiration must of necessity represent the image of him that gives it, and for this reason it is said that man was made after the image of God.”—*Philo on the family of Noah.*

^b The knowledge of Adam is highly extolled by the Jewish doctors. Some of them have maintained, that he composed two books, one concerning the creation, and another about the nature of God. They generally believe, that he composed the xci. psalm; but some of them go farther, and tell us, that Adam’s knowledge was not only equal to that of Solomon and Moses, but exceeded even that of angels; and, for the proof of this, they produce this story—That the angels having spoke contemptuously of man, God made this answer,—That the creature whom they despised was their superior in knowledge; and, to convince them of this, that he brought all the animals to them, and bid them name them, which they being not able to do, he proposed the thing to Adam, and he did it immediately: with many more fancies of the same ridiculous nature.—*Saurin’s Dissertations.*

wife brought unto him, but ³ he told exactly her original, and gave her a name accordingly, though he lay in the profoundest sleep and insensibility all the while that God was performing the wonderful operation of taking her out of his side; this can be imputed to nothing, but either an immediate inspiration or some prophetic vision (as we said before) that was sent unto him while he slept. ⁴ From the conformity of parts which he beheld in that goodly creature, and her near similitude to himself, he might have conjectured indeed, that God had now provided him with a meet help, which before he wanted; but it is scarce imaginable, how he could so punctually describe her rise and manner of formation, and so surely prophesy, that the general event to his posterity would be, for the sake of her sex ‘to leave father and mother, and cleave to their wives,’ otherwise than by divine illumination; “which enabled him ⁵ (as one excellently expresses it) to view essences in themselves, and read forms without the comment of their respective properties; which enabled him to see consequences yet dormant in their principles, and effects yet unborn, and in the womb of their causes; which enabled, in short, to pierce almost into future contingencies, and improved his conjectures and sentiments even to a prophecy, and the certainties of a prediction.”

These seem to be some of the supernatural gifts, and what we may call the chief lines, wherein the image of God was so conspicuous upon Adam’s soul; and there was this supernatural in his body likewise, that ⁶ whereas it was made ‘of the dust of the earth,’ and its composition consequently corruptible, either by a power continually proceeding from God, whereof ⁷ ‘the tree of life’ was the divine sign and sacrament, or by the inherent virtue of the tree itself, perpetually repairing the decays of nature, it was to enjoy the privilege of immortality. ⁸ Not such an immortality as the glorified bodies of saints shall hereafter possess (for they shall be made wholly impassable, and set free from the reach of any outward impressions and elemental disorders which may impair their vigour, or endanger their dissolution,) but an immortality by donation, and the privilege of an especial providence, which engaged itself to sway and overrule the natural tendency which was in man’s body to corruption; and, notwithstanding the contrarieties and dissensions of a terrestrial constitution, to continue him in life as long as he should continue himself in his obedience.

2. Another chief part of the divine image and similitude in our first parents, was an universal rectitude in all the faculties belonging to the soul. Now the two great faculties, or rather essential acts of the soul, are the understanding and will; which, though (for the clearer conception of them) we may separate, are in their operation so blended and united together, that we cannot properly think them distinct faculties. It is the same individual mind which sees and perceives, as well as chooses or rejects the several objects that are presented to it. When it does the former, we call it the understanding, and when the latter, the will: so that they are both radically and inseparably the same, and differ only in the manner of our conceiving them. Nay, the clearest and

³ Gen. ii. 23.

⁴ Bull’s Sermons and Discourses.

⁵ South’s Sermons, vol. 1. ⁶ Hopkin’s Doctrine of the Two Covenants. ⁷ Gen. ii. 9. ⁸ Edward’s Survey of Religion, vol. 1.

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only distinct apprehension we are able to form of them, (even when we come to consider them separately,) is only this, that the understanding is chiefly conversant about intelligible, the will about eligible objects; so that the one has truth, and the other goodness in its view and pursuit. There are, besides these, belonging to the soul of man, certain passions and affections, which (according to the common notion and manner of speaking) have chiefly their residence in the sensitive appetite; and, however, in this lapsed condition of our nature, they may many times mutiny and rebel, yet, when kept in due temper and subordination, are excellent handmaids to the ¹ soul. Though the Stoics look upon them all as sinful defects, and deviations from right reason; yet it is sufficient for us, that our blessed Saviour (who took upon him all our natural, but none of our sinful infirmities) was known to have them, and that our first progenitor, in the state of his greatest perfection, was not devoid of them. Let us then see how far we may suppose that the image of God might be impressed upon each of these.

² His soul itself was a rational substance, immaterial, and immortal; and therefore a proper representation of that Supreme Spirit whose wisdom was infinite, and essence eternal.

³ His understanding was, as it were, the upper region of his soul, lofty and serene; seated above all sordid affections, and free from the vapours and disturbances of inferior passions. Its perceptions were quick and lively; its reasonings true, and its determinations just. A deluded fancy was not then capable of imposing upon it, nor a fawning appetite of deluding it to pronounce a false and dishonest sentence. In its direction of the inferior faculties, it conveyed its suggestions with clearness, and enjoined them with power; and though its command over them was but suasive, yet it had the same force and efficacy as if it had been despotical.

His will was then very ductile and pliant to the motions of right reason. It pursued the directions that were given it, and attended upon the understanding, as a favourite does upon his prince, while the service is both privilege, and preferment: and, while it obeyed the understanding, it commanded the other faculties that were beneath; gave laws to the affections, and restrained the passions from licentious sallies.

His passions were then indeed all subordinate to his will and intellect, and acted within the compass of their proper objects. His love was centred upon God, and flamed up to heaven in direct fervours of devotion. His hatred (if hatred may be supposed in a state of innocence) was fixed only upon that which his posterity only love, sin. His joy was then the result of a real good, suitably applied, and filled his soul (as God does the universe) silently and without noise. His sorrow (if any supposed disaster could have occasioned sorrow) must have moved according to the severe allowances of prudence; been as silent as thought, and all confined within the closet of the breast. His hope was fed with the expectation of a better paradise, and a nearer admission to the divine presence; and (to name no more) his fear, which was then a guard, and not a torment to the mind,

was fixed upon him, who is only to be feared, God, but in such a filial manner, as to become an awe without amazement, and a dread without distraction.

It must be acknowledged indeed, that the Scriptures do not expressly attribute all these perfections to Adam in his first estate; but, since the opposite weaknesses now infest the nature of man fallen, we must conclude (if we will be true to the rule of contraries) that these, and such like excellencies, were the endowments of man innocent. And if so, then is there another perfection arising from this harmony, and due composure of the faculties, which we may call the crown and consummation of all, and that is a good conscience. For, as in the body, when the vital and principal parts do their office, and all the smaller vessels act orderly, there arises a sweet enjoyment upon the whole, which we call health; so in the soul, when the supreme faculties of the understanding and will move regularly, and the inferior passions and affections listen to their dictates, and follow their injunctions, there arises a serenity and complacency upon the whole soul, infinitely beyond all the pleasures of sensuality, and which, like a spicy field, refreshes it upon every reflection, and fills it with a joyful confidence towards God.

These are some of the natural lines (as we may distinguish them) which the finger of God portrayed upon the soul of man: and (so far as the spiritual being may be resembled by the corporeal) ⁴ the contrivance of man's bodily parts was with such proportion and exactness, as most conduced to its comeliness and service. His stature was erect and raised, becoming him who was to be the lord of this globe, and the observer of the heavens. A divine beauty and majesty was shed upon it, such as could neither be eclipsed by sickness, nor extinguished by death; ⁵ for Adam knew no disease, so long as he refrained from the forbidden tree. Nature was his physician, and innocence and abstinence would have kept him healthful to immortality. And from this perfection of man's body, especially that port and majesty which appeared in his looks and aspect, there arose, in some measure, another lineament of the divine image, viz. ⁶ that dominion and sovereignty wherewith God invested him over all other creatures. For there is even still remaining in man a certain terrific character, (as ⁷ one calls it,) which, assisted by that instinct of dread that he hath equally implanted in their natures, commands their homage and obeisance; inasmuch, that it must be hunger or compulsion, or some violent exasperation or other, that makes them at any time rebel against their Maker's vicerent here below.

This is the best copy of the divine image that we can draw: only it may not be amiss to add, ⁸ that the holiness of man was a resemblance of the divine purity, and his happiness a representation of the divine felicity. And now, to look over it again, and recount the several lines of it. What was supernatural in it, was a mind fortified to bear the divine presence, qualified for the divine converse, fully illuminated by the divine Spirit; and a body that (contrary to the natural principles of its composition) was indulged the privilege of immortality. What

¹ South's Sermons, vol. 1.² Edward's Survey.³ South's Sermons, vol. 1.⁴ Bate's Harmony of the Divine Attributes. ⁵ South's Sermons, vol. 1.⁶ Gen. i. 26.⁷ Cornelius Agrippa, on Occult Philosophy.⁸ Bate's Harmony.

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was natural to it, was an universal harmony in all its faculties; an understanding fraught with all manner of knowledge; a will submitted to the divine pleasure; affections placed upon their proper objects; passions calm and easy; a conscience quiet and serene; resplendent holiness, perfect felicity, and a body adorned with such comeliness and majesty, as might justly challenge the rule and jurisdiction of this inferior world.

If it be demanded, how much of this image is defaced, lost, or impaired; the answer is, that ¹ whatever was supernatural and adventitious to man by the benignity of Almighty God, (as it depended upon the condition of his obedience to the divine command,) upon the breach of that command, was entirely lost: what was perfective of his nature, such as the excellency of his knowledge, the subordination of his faculties, the tranquillity of his mind, and full dominion over other creatures, was sadly impaired: but what was essential to his nature, the immortality of his soul, the faculties of intellection and will, and the natural beauty and usefulness of his body, does still remain, notwithstanding the concussions they sustained in the fall.

If it be asked, what we must do in order to repair this defaced image of God in us? the only answer we can have in this case, is, from the sacred oracles of Scripture. We must ² 'be renewed in the spirit of our mind, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' We must ³ 'be followers of God as dear children; grow in grace,' ⁴ 'be renewed in knowledge,' and ⁵ 'conformed to the image of his Son.' We must ⁶ 'give all diligence to add to our faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity:' that we may be ⁷ 'complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power:' and that ⁸ 'as we have borne the image of the earthly, we may also bear the image of the heavenly Adam.'

SECT. III.

CHAP. I.—Of the Fall of Man.

THE HISTORY.

THE sacred historian indeed gives us no account of Satan, the chief of the fallen angels, and grand adversary of God and man; but, from several other places in Scripture, we may learn, that he at first was made like other celestial spirits, perfect in his kind, and happy in his condition, but that, through pride or ambition, as we may suppose, falling into a crime, (whose circumstances to us are unknown,) he thence fell into misery, and, together ^a with his accomplices, was banished from the regions

of bliss; that, ^b in his state of exile, having lost all hopes, and despairing of reconciliation with the Almighty, he abandoned himself to all kinds of wickedness; and, upon the creation of man, out of pure envy to the happiness which God had designed for him, resolved upon a project to draw him into disobedience, and thence into ruin and perdition; but how to put his scheme in execution was the question. The woman he perceived, as by nature more ductile and tender, was the properer subject for his temptations; but some form he was to assume, to enable him to enter into conference with her. ^c The figure of a man was the fittest upon this occasion; but then it would have discovered the imposture, because Eve knew very well, that her husband was the only one of that species upon the face of the earth. And therefore considering, that the serpent, which before the fall was a bright and glorious creature, and (next to man) ^d endured

^a *History of the Old and New Testament, by M. Martin.*

therefore Empedocles, in the verses recited by Plutarch, makes mention of the fate of some demons, who, for their rebellion, were, from the summit of heaven, plunged into the bottom of the great deep, there to be punished as they deserved. To which the story of Ate, who once inhabited the air, but being always hurtful to man, and therefore, hateful to God, was cast down from thence, with a solemn oath and decree, that she should never return again, seems not a little to allude.—*Huetius in the Aletan Questions, b. 2.*

^b Our excellent Milton represents Satan within prospect of Eden, and near the place where he was to attempt his desperate enterprise against God and man, falling into doubts, and sundry passions, and then, at last, confirming himself in his wicked design.

But say I could repent, and could obtain,
By act of grace, my former state: how soon
Would height recall high thoughts! how soon unsay
What feign'd submission swore! Ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void—
All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
Of us, outcast, exil'd, his new delight,
Mankind, created; and for him this world,
So farewell Hope! and, with Hope, farewell fear!
Farewell Remorse! all good to me is lost!
Evil be thou my good! by thee at least
Divided empire with heaven's King I hold;
By thee, and more than half perhaps, will reign:
As man, ere long, and this new world shall know.

^c Milton, who is an excellent commentator upon the whole history of the fall, brings in the devil, after a long search to find out a beast proper for his purpose, concluding at last to make use of the serpent.

Him, after long debate (irresolute
Of thought revolv'd) his final sentence chose.
Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud in whom
To enter, and his dark suggestions hide
From sharpest sight: for in the wily snake
Whatever sleights, none would suspicions mark,
As from his wit, and native subtlety
Proceeding; which in other beast observ'd,
Doubt might beget of diabolic power
Active within, beyond the sense of brute.

The wisdom and subtlety of the serpent are frequently mentioned in Scripture, as qualities which distinguish it from other animals; and several are the instances, wherein it is said to discover its cunning. 1. When it is old, by squeezing itself between two rocks, it can strip off its old skin, and so grows young again. 2. As it grows blind, it has a secret to recover its sight by the juice of fennel. 3. When it is assaulted, its chief care is to secure its head, because its heart lies under its throat, and very near its head. And, 4. When it goes to drink at a fountain, it first vomits up all its poison, for fear of poisoning itself as it is drinking; with some other qualities of the like nature.—*Calmet's Dictionary.*

But a modern author of our own has given us this further reason for the devil's making use of the serpent in this affair, namely,—That as no infinite being can actuate any creature, beyond what the fitness and capacity of its organs will admit;

^a *Hale's Origination of Mankind.*

Eph. v. 1.

2 Peter i. 5, &c.

⁴ Col. iii. 10.

⁷ Col. ii. 10.

² Eph. iv. 23, 24.

⁵ Rom. viii. 29.

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 49.

^a That profane, as well as sacred writers, had the same notion of the fall of wicked angels, is manifest from a tradition they had (though mixed with fable) of the Titans and Giants invading heaven, fighting against Jupiter, and attempting to depose him from his throne, for which reason he threw them down headlong into hell, where they are tormented with incessant fire; and

with the greatest talents of sagacity and understanding, would be no improper instrument for his purpose, he usurped the organs of one of these, and through them, he addressed himself to the woman, the first opportunity when he found her alone.

After ^asome previous compliments (as we may imagine) and congratulations of her happy state, the tempter put on an air of great concern, and seemed to interest himself not a little in her behalf, by wondering why God, who had lately been so very bountiful to them, should deny them the use of a tree, ^b whose fruit was so tempting to the eye, so grateful to the palate, and of such sovereign quality to make them wise, and when Eve replied, that such was the divine prohibition, even under the penalty of death itself, ^c he immediately subjoins, that such a penalty was an empty threat, and what would never be executed upon them; that God would never destroy the 'work of his own hands,' creatures so accomplished

so, the natural subtilty of the serpent, and perhaps the pliability, and forkiness of its tongue (which we know enables other creatures to pronounce articulate sounds,) added to the advantages of its form, made it the fittest instrument of delusion that can be imagined.—*Revelation Examined.*

^a Milton has very curiously described the artful and insinuating carriage of the serpent, upon his first approach to speak to Eve.

He, bolder now, uncull'd, before her stood,
But, as in great admiring; oft he bow'd
His turret crest, and sleek enamell'd neck,
Frowning; and lick'd the ground whereon she trod.
His gentle dumb expressions turn'd at length
The eye of Eve, to mark his play: he, glad
Of her attention gain'd, with serpent tongue
Organic, or impulse of vocal air,
His fraudulent temptation thus began.

^b The first words in his address are, 'Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat,' &c., which do not look so much like the beginning, as the conclusion of a discourse, as the Jews themselves have observed; and therefore it is not improbable, that the tempter, before he spake these words, represented himself as one of the heavenly court, who was come, or rather sent, to congratulate the happiness which God had bestowed on them in paradise; an happiness so great, that he could not easily believe he had denied them any of the fruit of the garden.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^c Burnet, in his *Philosophical Archaeology*, has given us the whole dialogue (as he has framed it at least) between the serpent and Eve; which, though a little too light and ludicrous for so solemn an occasion, yet, because the book is not in every one's hands, I have thought fit to set down in a translation of his own words. "*Serpent.* Hail, fairest! what dost thou under this shade? *Eve.* I am gazing at the beauty of this tree. *Serpent.* It is indeed pleasant to the sight, but to the taste its fruit is much more so, hast thou yet tasted it, my mistress? *Eve.* Verily not, God hath forbade us the use of that tree. *Serpent.* What do I hear? Who is that God? who envies his own creatures the innocent delights of nature, nothing is more sweet, nothing more safe than that fruit, why should he forbid it, unless by some foolish law of his own. *Eve.* Nay, he forbade it under penalty of death. *Serpent.* Undoubtedly the matter is not understood by thee, the tree possesses no deadly property, but rather something divine and beyond the usual power of nature. *Eve.* I cannot answer thee myself, but I will go to my husband. *Serpent.* Why shouldst thou interrupt thy husband for an affair of so small importance. *Eve.* Shall I taste the apple? how beautiful its hue, how fragrant its smell, can it have a bad flavour? *Serpent.* Believe me, it is food not unworthy of the angels, taste of it, and if the flavour be bad cast it from thee, and deem me the most mendacious of liars. *Eve.* I will attempt, indeed the flavour is most agreeable, thou hast not deceived me, give me another that I may bear it to my husband. *Serpent.* That's well remembered! take this one, go to thy husband—Farwell, child of happiness, meanwhile I will give away, she will manage the rest." B. ii. chap. 7.

as they were, for so slight a transgression; and that the sole intent of this prohibition was, to continue them in their present state of dependence and ignorance, and not admit them to that extent of knowledge, and plenitude of happiness, which their eating of this fruit would confer upon them for God himself knew, that ^d the proper use of this tree was, to illuminate the understanding, and advance all the other faculties of the soul to such a sublimity, that the brightest angels in heaven should not surpass them; nay that they should approximate the Deity itself, in the extent of their intellect, and independence of their being. In short, he acquainted Eve, that the jealousy of the Creator was the sole motive of his prohibition; that the fruit had a virtue to impart, ^e an universal knowledge to the person who tasted it; and that therefore God, who would admit of no competitor, had reserved this privilege to himself. Above all, he engaged her to fix her eyes upon the forbidden fruit; he remarked to her its pleasantness to the sight, and left her to guess at its deliciousness. Eve, in the very midst of the temptation had a freedom of choice; but the fond conceit of 'knowing good and evil,' of becoming like God, and of changing her felicity (great indeed, but subordinate) for an independent state of happiness, and especially the deceitful bait of present sensual pleasure, blinded her reason by degrees; and as she stood gazing on the tree, filled all her thoughts, and the whole capacity of her soul. The sight of the fruit provoked her desire; the suggestions of the tempter urged it on; her natural curiosity raised her longing; and the very prohibition itself did something to inflame it; so that, at all adventures, she put forth her hand, and plucked, and eat.

Earth felt the wound, and nature, from her seat,
Sighing, through all her works, gave signs of wo,
That all was lost. ^f

She, however, had no such sense of her condition; but, fancying herself already in the possession of that chimerical happiness, wherewith the devil had deluded her, she invited her husband (who not unlikely came upon her while she was eating) to partake with her. ^g The most

^f Milton.

^g Saurin's Dissertations.

^d It is very well worth our observation, how ambiguous and deceitful the promise, which the tempter makes our first parents, was: for by 'opening the eyes,' she understood a further degree of wisdom, as the same phrase imports, Acts xxvi. 18.; and Eph. i. 18.; but he meant their perceiving their own misery, and confusion of conscience, as fell out immediately: by 'being like gods,' she understood the happiness of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as appears by the words of God himself, verse 22.; but he meant it of angels, (frequently styled *Elohim*, that is, *gods*), and of such fallen angels as himself, who are called 'principalities and powers,' Col. ii. 15. And 'by knowing good and evil,' she understood a kind of divine omniscience, or knowing all manner of things, (as the phrase frequently signifies;) but he meant it, that thereby she should experience the difference between 'good and evil,' between happiness and misery, which she did to her cost. A method this of cunning and reserve, which he has practised in his oracular responses ever since.—*Ainsworth's Annotations.*

^e The words 'good and evil,' when applied to knowledge, comprehend every thing that is possible for man to know, for so the woman of Tekoa, in her address to king David, tells him 2 Sam. xiv. 17. 'as an angel of God is my lord the king, to discern good and bad;' and that by the terms 'good and bad,' we are to understand 'all things,' the 20th verse of that chapter will inform us, where she continues her compliment, and says, 'My lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel, to know all things that are on the earth.'—*Le Clerc's Commentary.*

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absurd arguments appear reasonable, and the most unjust desires equitable, when the person who proposes them, is beloved; the devil therefore knew very well what he did, when he made his first application to the woman. Her charms and endearments, which gave her the ascendancy over her husband's affection, would be of more efficacy (he knew) than all the subtle motives which he could suggest; and therefore he made use of her to engage him in the like defection: and after some small reluctance (as we may suppose) he,¹ like an uxorious man, was by her entreaties prevailed on, (contrary to the sense of his duty, and convictions of his own breast,) to violate the command, merely because she had done it, and to share whatever fate God's indignation for that transgression should bring upon her. Thus the solicitations of the woman ruined the man, as the enchantments of the tempter ruined the woman. She held forth the fair enticing fruit to him; and he, rather than see her perish alone, chose to be involved in the same common guilt.²

Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and nature gave a second groan;
Sky low'r'd, and, murmuring thunder, some sad drops
Wept, at completing of the mortal sin.³

For as soon as they had eaten of the forbidden fruit, ^a 'their eyes were opened,' but in a sense quite different from what the tempter had promised them, namely, to see their own folly, and the impendent miseries, and make sad reflections upon what they had done. They had acquired knowledge, indeed, but it was a knowledge arising from sorrowful experience, that the serpent had beguiled them both, and drawn them from the good of happiness and innocence, which they knew before, into the evil of sin and misery, which (until that fatal moment) they had no conception of. ⁴ They saw a living God provoked; his grace and favour forfeited; his likeness and image defaced; and their dominion over other creatures withdrawn from them. They saw, very probably, the heavens grow angry and stormy; the angel of the Lord standing with his sword, threatening them with vengeance; and the devil himself, who before had seduced them, throwing off the disguise, and now openly insulting over them. They saw that ^b 'they were naked;' were stripped

of all their intellectual and moral ornaments; were subjected to irregular appetites and inordinate lusts; and blushed to see their external glory so much debased, that ^c they took and plaited together fig leaves, (which in eastern countries are very large,) in order to make themselves ^d such coverings as might both protect them from the injuries of the weather, and conceal their shame. Nor was their guilt attended with shame only, but with fear likewise, and many dismal apprehensions. ^e Before they sinned they no sooner heard 'the voice of the Lord' coming towards them, but they ran out to meet him, and, with an humble joy, welcomed his gracious visits; but ^f now God was become a terror to them, and they a terror

enemies.' Ex. xxxii. 25.—See *Le Clerc's Commentary*. Now those who take it in this sense, have observed farther, that by the word 'nakedness' according to the usual modesty of the Hebrew tongue) are meant all the irregular appetites to venereal pleasures, which Adam and Eve were strangers to in their state of innocence, but began now first to experience, and which the intoxicating juice of the forbidden tree might very probably excite.—*Nicholls's Conference*, vol. 1.

As with new wine intoxicated both,
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them, breeding wings,
Wherewith to scorn the earth: but that false fruit
Far other operation first display'd,
Carnal desire inflaming: he on Eve
Began to cast lascivious eyes, she him
As wantonly repaid, in lust they burn.—*Milton*.

^c Our translation indeed tells us, that our first parents 'sewed fig-leaves together,' which gives occasion to the usual sneer, What they could do for needles and thread? But the original word *tapar* signifies no more than to put together, apply, or fit, as is plain from Job xvi. 15., and Ezek. xiii. 28.; and the word *gneleh*, which we render leaves, signifies also branches of trees, such as were to make booths or bowers, Neh. xviii. 15. So that, to adapt or fit branches (which is translated sewing leaves together) is only to twist and plait the flexible branches of the fig-tree round about their waists, in the manner of a Roman crown, for which purpose the fig-tree, of all others, was the most serviceable, because, as *Pliny* tells us, b. 16. ch. 24., it had a leaf very large or shady.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d The word, in the translation is aprons; but since in the original it may signify any thing that covers or surrounds us, it may every whit as properly here be rendered a bower, or arbour, covered with the branches of the fig-tree wherein the fallen pair thought to have hid themselves from the sight of God; to which interpretation the subsequent verse seems to give some countenance.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*. Nor is *Milton's* description of the fig-tree uninclined to this sense:

— Such as at this day spreads her arms,
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother-tree; a pillar'd shade
High overarch'd, and echoing walks between.
There oft the Indian herdsman shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
In loop-holes, cut through thickest shade.

^e The word voice may be equally rendered noise: and since God's usual way of notifying his presence afterwards was either by 'a small still voice or noise,' 1 Kings xix. 12., or by a noise like 'that of great waters,' Ezek. i. 24., or like the rustling of wind in the trees,' 2 Sam. v. 24., we may reasonably suppose, that it was either a soft gentle noise like a breeze of wind among the trees of paradise, or a louder one, like the murmuring of some large river, which gave Adam notice of God's approaching.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^f *Milton* makes Adam, upon this occasion, express himself in this manner:

— How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy
And raptures oft beheld?—O! might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscur'd, where highest woods (impenetrable
To star or sun-light) spread their umbrage broad,
And brown as evening! Cover me, ye pines,
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more.

¹ *Mede's Discourses*.² *Edward's Survey of Religion*.³ *Milton*.⁴ *Miller's History of the Church*.

^a *Le Clerc* observes, that it is reputed an elegance in the sacred writing to make use of the figure, which rhetoricians call *antanaclasis*, whereby they continue the same word or phrase that went before, though in a quite different sense: as the learned *Grotius* upon John i. 16., and *Hammond* on Matth. viii. 22. have abundantly shown; and for this reason he supposes, that Moses repeats 'their eyes were opened,' which the devil had used before, though he means it in a sense quite different from the former.

^b Those who take the word 'naked' in a literal sense, suppose, that upon the fall, the air, and other elements, immediately became intemperate, and disorderly; so that our first parents soon knew, or felt, that they were naked, because the sun scorched them, the rain wet them, and the cold pierced them.—See *Patrick's Commentary*; and *King on the Origin of Evil*. But others take the expression rather in a figurative sense, namely, to denote the commission of such sins as man in his senses may well be ashamed of: and to this purpose they have observed, that when Moses returned from the mount, and found that the people had made and consecrated a golden image, the expression in Scripture is, 'That the people were naked,' that is, were become vile and reprobate sinners, (for so the word *γυμνός* signifies in the New Testament, Rev. xvi. 15.) 'for Aaron had made them naked, unto their shame, among their

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to themselves. Their consciences set their sin before them in its blackest aspect; and, as they had then no hopes of a future mediator, so there 'remained nothing for them but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation ready to devour them.' And accordingly, no sooner did they hear the sound of God's majestic presence drawing nearer and nearer to the place where they were, (which happened towards the cool of the evening,) but they immediately betook themselves to the thickest and closest places they could find in the garden, in order to hide themselves from his inspection; for so far were they fallen in their understanding, as never to reflect, 'that all places and things are naked and open to the eyes of him, with whom they had to do.'

Out of their dark retreat, however, God calls the two criminals, who, after a short examination, acknowledged their guilt indeed, but lay the blame of it, the man upon the woman, and the woman upon the serpent: whereupon God proceeds to pronounce sentence upon them, but first of all, upon the devil, as being the prime offender. The devil had made the serpent the instrument of his deception; and therefore ^a God first degrades it from the noble creature it was before this fact, to a foul creeping animal, which, instead of going erect, or flying in the air, was sentenced to creep upon its belly, and thereupon become incapable of eating any food but what was mingled with dust. And to the devil, who lay hid under the covert of the serpent, (and therefore is not expressly named,) he declares, that how much soever he might glory in his present conquest, a time should come, when a child, descended from the seed of that very sex he had now defeated, that is, the MESSIAS, should ruin all his new-erected empire of sin and death; and, ¹ 'having spoiled principalities and powers, should make a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross.' This could not fail of being matter of great comfort and consolation to Adam and Eve, to hear of the conquest of their malicious enemy, before their own sentences were pronounced, ^b which to the woman, was sorrow in con-

ception, pain in childbirth, and constant subjection to her husband's will; to the man, ^c a life of perpetual toil and slavery; and to them both, as well as all their posterity, a temporal death at the time appointed.

Nor was it mankind only which felt the sad effects of the induction of sin, but ^d even the inanimate part of the creation suffered by it. The fertility of the earth, and serenity of the air, were changed; the elements began to jar; the seasons were intemperate, and the weather grew uncertain: so that to defend themselves against the immoderate heat, or cold, or wind or rain, which now began to infest the earth, our first parents were instructed by God ^e how to make themselves vestments of the skins of

body, as, in the course of nature, must have occasioned the extraordinary pain here spoken of; for so we find, (that in the sentence pronounced against the serpent, against the earth, and against man, the word of God was not only declarative, but executive likewise, as producing a real change by a new modification of matter, or conformation of parts.—*Revelation Examined; and Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.

^c The words in the text are, 'In the sweat of thy face, shalt thou eat bread,' ver. 19. From whence some conclude, that the earth, before the fall, brought forth spontaneously, (as several of the ancient poets have described the golden age,) and without any pains to cultivate it; as indeed there needed none, since all things at first were, by the divine power, created in their full perfection. What labour would have been necessary in time, if man had continued innocent, we do not know; only we may observe from the words, that less pains would then have been required, than men are now forced to take for their sustenance. The wisdom, goodness, and justice of God, however, is very conspicuous, in decreeing, that toil and drudgery should be the consequence of departing from an easy and rational obedience; in making the earth less desirable to man, when his guilt had reduced him to the necessity of leaving it; and in keeping in order those passions and appetites which had now broke loose from the restraint of reason, by subduing their impetuosity with hard labour.—*Patrick's Commentary; and Revelation Examined*.

^d Milton brings in God, soon after the fall, appointing his holy angels to make an alteration in the course of the celestial bodies, and to possess them with noxious qualities, in order to destroy the fertility of the earth, and thereby punish man for his transgression.

The sun

Had its first precept so to move, so shine,
As might affect the earth with cold and heat
Scarce tolerable; and from the north to call
Decrepit winter; from the south to bring
Solstitial summer's heat. To the blank moon
Her office they prescrib'd, to th' other five
The'r planetary motions and aspects
Of noxious efficacy, and when to join
In synd unbenign; and taught the fix'd
Their influence malignant when to shower:
Which of them, rising with the sun, or falling,
Should prove tempestuous. To the winds they set
Their corners, when with bluster to confound
Sea, air, and shore: the thunder then to roll
With terror through the dark aerial hall.—
These changes in the heavens, though slow, produce
Like change on sea, and land, a sidereal blast,
Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot,
Corrupt and pestilent.

^e It cannot be denied, but that the skins of beasts were a very ancient sort of clothing. *Diodorus Siculus*, b. 1., where he introduces Hercules in a lion's skin, tells us no less; and the author to the Hebrews makes mention of this kind of habit: but the Jewish doctors have carried the matter so far, as to maintain, that as Adam was a priest, this coat of his was his priestly garment which he left to his posterity: so that Abel, Noah, Abraham, and the rest of the patriarchs, sacrificed in it, until the time that Aaron was made high priest, and had peculiar vestments appointed him by God. But all this fine fiction of theirs falls to the ground, if we can but suppose with some, that by the word which we render coats, we may not improperly

¹ Col. ii. 15.

^a *Josephus*, in the beginning of his *Antiquities*, pretends, that all creatures using the same language, and consequently being endued with reason and understanding, the serpent, excited by envy, tempted Eve to sin, and, among other things, received this signal punishment, namely, that it should be deprived of its feet, and ever after crawl upon the ground, which *Aben Ezra*, and several other Rabbins, confirm: but what is certain in the serpent's punishment, is this—that it actually eats the dry and dusty earth, (as *Bochart* and *Pliny* tell us,) otherwise we can hardly conceive how it could subsist in dry and sandy deserts, to which God, in a good measure, has condemned it.—*Revelation Examined*.

^b It is remarkable, that a woman is the only creature we know of, who has any sorrow in conception. This *Aristotle* expressly affirms, and only excepts the instance of a mare conceiving by an ass, and, in general, where there is any thing monstrous in the fetus. Other creatures, we find, are in more perfect health, and strength, and vigour, at that time, than before; but *Aristotle* reckons up ten different maladies, to which the woman is then naturally subject. And, as she is subject to sickness in the time of her conception, so it is farther remarkable, that she brings forth her offspring with more pain and agony than any other creature upon earth, even though she has some advantages in her make above other creatures, that might promise her, in this case, an alleviation; and therefore we may suppose, that, upon God's saying to the woman, 'In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children,' a real effect did immediately accompany the word spoken, and cause such a change in the woman's

those beasts, which, very probably, they were appointed to sacrifice, either in confirmation of the covenant of grace couched in the sentence pronounced against the serpent, or as a representation of that great expiatory sacrifice, which, in the fulness of time, God might inform them, was to be offered as a propitiation for the sins of all mankind; and, upon this account, it very likely was, that Adam changed his wife's name (who, as some think, was called *Isscha* before) into that of *Eve*, as believing that God would make her the mother of all mankind, and of the promised seed in particular, by whom he hoped for a restoration both to himself and his posterity, and to be raised from death to a state of happiness and immortal life.

Considering then *a* what a sad catastrophe this transgression of theirs had brought upon human nature, and that such a scene of complicated misery might not be perpetuated by means of the tree of life, God in his great mercy, found it convenient to remove them from the garden of paradise into that part of the country lying

understand tents, or arbours, to defend our first parents from the violence of the heats, and such hasty showers as were common in the countries adjacent to paradise, and where the winter was not so cold as to require coats made of skins, which would certainly be too warm. That they could not be the skins of slain animals is very manifest, because as yet there were no more than two of each species, male and female, nor had they propagated. And therefore others have imagined, that if the original word must mean coats, they were more probably made of the bark of trees, which are called *depkata*, the skins of them, as well as the hides of animals.—See *Le Clerc, and Patrick's Commentary*; and *Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.

a The words in the text are these, 'Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and taste of the tree of life, and live for ever,' Gen. iii. 22. The former of these sentences is held by most interpreters to be an irony, spoken in allusion to the devil's manner of tempting Eve, ver. 5.; but, from the latter part of the words, this question seems to arise, "Whether Adam and Eve, if they had tasted of the tree of life, after their transgression, should have lived for ever?" Now it is very manifest, that by the violation of God's command, they had justly incurred the penalty, 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' that is, shalt surely become mortal: from whence it follows, that whether they had, or had not eaten of the tree of life, they were, the moment they fell, subject to the necessity of dying, nor could the virtue of the tree, be what it would, preserve them from the execution of the sentence; and therefore these latter words, 'And now, lest he put forth his hand and taste of the tree of life, and live for ever,' are, in like manner, spoken sarcastically, and as if God had said, "Lest the man should vainly fancy in himself, that by eating of the tree of life, he shall be enabled to live for ever, let us remove this conceit from him, by removing him from this place, and for ever debarring him from any hopes of coming at that tree again."—*Estius on Diff. Passages*.

Examples of God's speaking by way of sarcasm, or upbraiding, are not uncommon in Scripture: but considering that, in 'the midst of judgment, he here thinketh upon mercy,' that before the sentence against our first parents, he promises them a restoration, and after sentence passed, does nevertheless provide them with clothing; some have thought, that the words, by taking the original verb (see *Gell's Essay*) to signify the time past, (as it may well enough do,) are rather an expression of pity and compassion, and of the same import as if God had said, "The man was once, like one of us, to know good and to pursue it; to know evil, and to avoid it; (for that is the perfection of moral knowledge;) but behold how he is now degenerated! And therefore, lest this degeneracy should continue upon him, and he become obdurate, the best way will be to seclude him from the tree of life, by expelling him from paradise." But this opinion seems to ascribe too much to the power of the tree, and is not supported with authority equal to the former.

towards the east, where at first he created them; and that he might prevent their meditating a return, he secured every passage leading to it with a guard of angels, (some of which flying to and fro in the air, in bright refulgent bodies, seemed to flash out fire on every side, or to resemble the *b* vibrations of a flaming sword) that thereby he might deter them from any thoughts of ever attempting a re-entrance, until he should think fit to destroy, and utterly lay waste the beauty of the place. Thus fell our first parents, and, from the happiest condition that can be imagined, plunged themselves and their posterity into a state of wretchedness and corruption: for, as from one common root, ¹ 'sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, forasmuch as all have sinned,' and been defiled by this original pollution.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties obviated, and Objections answered.*

How long our first parents continued in their state of innocence, and in the possession of the garden of Eden, is not so well agreed. The account of their fall in the series of history, follows immediately their introduction into their blissful abode; whereupon ² most of the Jewish doctors, and some of the Christian fathers, were of opinion, that they preserved their integrity but a very short while; that in the close of the same day wherein they were made, they transgressed the covenant, and were the very same day cast out of paradise." But we are to consider, that many circumstances are omitted in the Scriptures concerning the state of our first parents, and the manner of their transgression; that Moses makes mention of nothing but what is conducive to his main design, which is to give a brief account of the most remarkable transactions that had happened from the beginning of the world to his time; and that there are sundry good reasons which may induce us to believe, that the state of man's innocence was of a longer duration than those, who are for precipitating matters, are pleased to think it.

God indeed can do what he pleases in an instant; but

¹ Rom. v. 12.

² *Edward's Survey*, vol. 1.

b What is meant by the flaming sword represented to be in the hands of the cherubim, at the entrance of the garden of paradise, is variously conjectured by learned men: but, of all essays of this kind, that of *Tertullian*, who thought it was the *Torrid Zone*, is the most unhappy.—*Tertul. Apol.* ch. 47. The words of *Lactantius* are (*Divine Justice*, b. ii. ch. 12.) *Ipsam paradisum igne circumvallavit, He encompassed paradise with a wall of fire*: from whence a learned man of our nation, pretending that the original word signifies a dividing flame, as well as a flaming sword, supposes, that this flame was an ascension of some combustible matter round about the garden, which excluded all comers to it, till such time as the beauty of the place was defaced.—*Nicholls's Conference*, vol. 1. Some Rabbins are of opinion, that this flaming sword was an angel, founding their sentiments on that passage in the Psalms, where it is said, that 'God maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire,' Ps. civ. 4. And hereupon another learned man of our nation has imagined, that this flaming sword (which was accounted by the Jews a second angel) was of a different kind from the cherubim, namely, a seraph, or flaming angel, in the form of a flying fiery serpent, whose body vibrated in the air with lustre, and may fitly be described by the image of such a sword.—*Tennison of Idolatry*.

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man necessarily requires a succession of time to transact his affairs in; and therefore when we read of Adam, in the same day that he was created, (and that was not until God had made every beast of the field,) ¹ inquiring into the nature of every living creature, and imposing on them proper names; falling into a deep sleep, and, with some formality, (without doubt,) receiving his wife from the hand of God; removing into the garden of paradise, and (as we may well suppose) walking about, and taking some survey of it; receiving from God both a promise and prohibition, and thereupon (as we may suppose again) ² ratifying the first great covenant with him: when we read of all these things, I say, we cannot but think, that some time must be required for the doing of them; and therefore to suppose, after this, ³ that in the close of the same day, the woman wandered from her husband, met the serpent, entered into a parley with him, was overcome by his insinuations, did eat ⁴ of the forbidden fruit, did prevail with her husband to do the same, and thereupon perceiving themselves naked, did instantly fall to work, and make themselves aprons: to suppose, that in the same evening God comes down, summons the criminals before him, hears their excuses, decrees their punishments, drives them out of paradise, and places two cherubim to guard all avenues against their return; this is crowding too long a series of business into too short a compass of time, and thereby giving an handle to infidelity, when there is no manner of occasion for it.

We, who are not ignorant of Satan's devices, and how ready he is to wait for a favourable occasion to address his temptations to every man's humour and complexion, can hardly suppose, ⁵ that he would have set upon the woman immediately after the prohibition was given; and not rather have waited, until it was in some measure forgot, and the happy opportunity of finding her alone should chance to present itself; but such an opportunity could not well instantly have happened, because the love and endearments between this couple, at first, we may well imagine, was so tender and affecting, as not to admit of the least absence or separation: nor must we forget (what the history itself tells us) that they were so much accustomed to ⁶ 'the voice of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day,' as not to account it any new thing; and so well acquainted with the nature and plantation of the garden, as to run directly to the darkest thickets and umbrages, in order to hide themselves from his sight; which must have been the result of more than an hour or two's experience. And therefore, (if we may be allowed to follow others in their conjectures) ⁷ it was either on the tenth day of the world's age, that our first parents fell, and were expelled paradise, in memory of which calamity, ⁸ 'the great day of expiation,' (which was the tenth day of the year,) wherein 'all were required to afflict their souls,' was, in after ages, instituted; or (as others would rather have it) on the eighth day from their creation: ⁹ that as the first week in the world ended with the formation of man and woman, the second was probably concluded with their fatal seduction.

When man is said to have been made according to the

likeness and image of God, it cannot be supposed, but that he was created in the full perfection of his nature; and yet ¹⁰ it must be remembered, that 'a no created being can, in its own nature, be incapable of sin and default. Its perfections, be they what they will, are finite, and whatever has bounds set to its perfections, is, in this respect, imperfect, that is, it wants those perfections which a being of infinite perfections only can have; and whatever wants any perfection, is certainly capable of mis-carrying. And as every finite creature is capable of default, so every rational being must necessarily have a liberty of choice, that is, it must have a will to choose, as well as an understanding to reason; because a faculty of understanding, without a will to determine it, if left to itself, must always think of the same subject, or proceed in a series and connexion of thoughts, without any end or design, which will be a perpetual labour in vain, or a thoughtfulness to no purpose. And as every rational being has a liberty of choice, so, to direct that choice, it must of necessity have a prescribed rule of its actions.

God indeed, who is infinite in perfection, is a rule to himself, and acts according to his own essence, from whence it is impossible for him to vary; but the most perfect creatures must act by a rule, which is not essential to them, but prescribed them by God, and is not so intrinsic in their natures, but that they may decline from it; for a free agent may follow, or not follow, the rule prescribed him, or else he would not be free.

Now, in order to know how it comes to pass, that we so frequently abuse our natural freedom, and transgress the rules which God hath set us, we must remember, that ¹¹ the soul of man is seated in the midst, as it were, between those more excellent beings, which live perpetually above, and with whom it partakes in the sublimity of its nature and understanding, and those inferior terrestrial beings with which it communicates, through the vital union it has with the body; and that, by reason of its natural freedom, it is sometimes assimilated to the one, and sometimes to the other of these extremes. We must observe further, that, ¹² in this compound nature of ours, there are several powers and faculties, several inclinations and dispositions, several passions and affections, differing in their nature and tendency, according as they result from the soul or body; that each of these has its proper object, in a due application of which it is

⁹ *Clarke's Inquiry into the Original of Moral Evil.*

¹⁰ *Stillington's Sacred Origins.*

¹¹ *Clarke of the Original of Moral Evil.*

a God, though he be omnipotent, cannot make any created being 'absolutely perfect;' for whatever is absolutely perfect, must necessarily be self-existent: but it is included in the very notion of a creature, as such, not to exist of itself, but of God. An absolutely perfect creature therefore implies a contradiction: for it would be of itself, and not of itself, at the same time. Absolute perfection, therefore, is peculiar to God; and should he communicate his own peculiar perfection to another, that other would be God. Imperfection must, therefore, be tolerated in creatures, notwithstanding the divine omnipotence and goodness; for contradictions are no objects of power. God indeed might have refrained from acting, and continued alone self-sufficient, and perfect to all eternity; but infinite goodness would by no means allow of this; and therefore since it obliged him to produce external things, which things could not possibly be perfect, it preferred these imperfect things to none at all; from whence it follows, that imperfection arose from the infinity of divine goodness.—*King's Essay on the Origin of Evil.*

¹ *Burnet's Philosophical Archaeology.*

² *Bull's State of Man before the Fall.*

³ *Nicholls' Conference*, vol. 1.

⁴ *Patrick's Commentary.*

⁵ *Gen.* iii. 10.

⁶ *Usher's Annals.*

⁷ *Lev.* xvi. 29.

⁸ *Edward's Survey*, vol. 1.

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easy and satisfied; that they are none of them sinful in themselves, but may be instruments of much good, when rightly applied, as well as occasion great mischief, by a misapplication; and therefore a considerable part of virtue will consist in regulating them, and in keeping our sensitive part subject to the rational. This is the original constitution of our nature: and since our first parents were endued with the same powers and faculties of mind, and had the same dispositions and inclinations of body, it cannot be, but that they must have been liable to the same sort of temptations; and consequently liable to comply with the dictates of sense and appetite, contrary to the direction of reason, or the precepts of Almighty God. And to this cause the Scripture seems to ascribe the commission of the first sin, when it tells us that 'the woman saw the tree, that it was good for food, and pleasant to the eye, and desirable to make one wise,' that is, it had several qualities which were adapted to her natural appetites; was beautiful to the sight, and delightful to the taste, and improving to the understanding; which both answered the desire of knowledge implanted in her spiritual, and the love of sensual pleasure resulting from her animal part; and these heightened by the suggestions of the tempter, abated the horrors of God's prohibition, and induced her to act contrary to his express command.

God indeed all along foreknew that she would fall in this inglorious manner; but his foreknowledge did not necessitate her falling, neither did his wisdom ever conceive, that a fallen creature was worse than none at all.¹ The divine nature, as it is in itself, is incomprehensible by human understanding: and not only his nature, but likewise his powers and faculties, and the ways and methods in which he exercises them, are so far beyond our reach, that we are utterly incapable of framing just and adequate notions of them. We attribute to him the faculties of wisdom, understanding, and foreknowledge; but at the same time, we cannot but be sensible, that they are of a nature quite different from ours, and that we have no direct and proper conceptions of them. When we indeed foresee or determine anything, wherein there is no possible matter of obstruction, we suppose the event certain and infallible; and, were the foreknowledge and predetermination of God of the same nature with ours, we might be allowed to make the same conclusion: but why may not it be of such a perfection in God, as is consistent both with the freedom of man's will, and contingency of events? 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways far above our ways:' and therefore, though it be certain that he who made Eve, and consequently knew all the springs and weights, wherewith she was moved, could not but foresee, how every possible object, that presented itself, would determine her choice; yet this he might do, without himself giving any bias or determination to it at all:² just as the man, who sees the setting of the chimes, can tell, several hours before, what tune they will play, without any positive influence, either upon their setting or their playing. So that Eve, when she was tempted, could not say, 'I was tempted by God,' for God tempteth none: neither had the divine prescience any influence over her choice, but³ 'by her own lust was she drawn away, and

enticed; and when lust had conceived, it brought forth sin, and sin, when it was finished, brought forth death.'

That some command was proper to be laid upon man in his state of innocence, is hardly to be denied.⁴ Dependence is included in the very notion of a creature, and as it is man's greatest happiness to depend on God, whose infinite wisdom can contrive, and infinite power can effect whatever he knows to be most expedient for him; so was it Adam's advantage to have a constant sense of that dependence kept upon his mind, and (for that reason) a sure and permanent memorial of it, placed before his eyes, in such a manner, as might make it impossible for him to forget it.

And as this dependence on God was Adam's greatest happiness, so it seems necessary on God's part, and highly comporting with his character of a creator, that he should require of his creatures, in some acts of homage and obedience, (which homage and obedience must necessarily imply some kind of restraint upon their natural liberty) an acknowledgment and declaration of it. And if some restraint of natural liberty was necessary in Adam's case, what restraint could be more easy, than the coercion of his appetite from the use of one tree, amidst an infinite variety of others, no less delicious; and at the same time, what restraint more worthy the wisdom and goodness of God, than the prohibition of a fruit, which he knew would be pernicious to his creature?

The prohibition of some enormous sin, or the injunction of some great rule of moral virtue, we perhaps may account a properer test of man's obedience; but if we consider the nature of things, as they then stood, we may find reason perhaps to alter our sentiments.⁵ The Mosaic tables are acknowledged by all to be a tolerable good system, and to comprise all the general heads of moral virtue; and yet if we run over them, we shall find that they contain nothing suitable to man in the condition wherein we are now considering him.

Had God, for instance, forbidden the worship of false gods, or the worship of graven images; can we suppose, that Adam and Eve, just come out of the hand of their Maker, and visited every day with the light of his glorious presence, could have even been guilty of these? Besides that, the worship of false gods and images was a thing which came into the world several hundreds of years afterwards, either to flatter living princes, or supply the place of dead ones, who, the silly people fancied, were become gods. Had he prohibited perjury and vain swearing; what possible place could these have had in the infant and innocent state of mankind? Perjury was never heard of till the world was better peopled, when commerce and trade came in use, when courts of judicature were settled, and men began to cheat one another, and then deny it, and so forswear it: and oaths and imprecations could never have a being in a state of innocence: they borrow their original manifestly from the sinfulness of human nature.

The like may be said of all the rest. How could Adam and Eve have 'honoured their father and their mother,' when they never had any? What possible temptation could they have to be guilty of murder, when they must have acted it upon their own flesh? How could

¹ *Bishop King's Sermon of Predestination.*² *Young's Sermons*, vol. 1.³ James i. 14, &c.⁴ *Revelation Examined.*⁵ *Nicholls's Conference*, vol. 1. and *Jenkins's Reasonableness*, vol. 2.

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they commit adultery, when they were the only two upon the face of the earth? How be guilty of theft when they were the sole proprietors of all? How bear false witness against their neighbour, or covet his goods, when there was never a neighbour in the world for them to be so unjust to? And so (if we proceed to Christian precepts) how could they love enemies, how could they forgive trespasses, when they had no one in the world to offend against them? And the duties of mortification and self-denial, &c., how could they possibly exercise these, when they had no lust to conquer, no passion to overcome, but were all serene and calm within?

Since, therefore, all the moral precepts, that we are acquainted with, were improper for the trial of man's obedience in his state of innocence; it remains, that his probation was most properly to be effected, by his doing or forbearing some indifferent action, neither good nor evil in itself, but only so far good or evil, as it was commanded or forbidden. And if such a command was to be chosen, what can we imagine so natural and agreeable to the state of our first parents, (considering they were to live all their lives in a garden) as the forbidding them to eat of the fruit of a certain tree in that garden, a tree hard at hand, and might every moment be eaten of, and would therefore every moment give them an opportunity of testifying their obedience to God by their forbearing it? a wise appointment this, had not the great enemy of mankind come in and defeated it.

Who this great enemy of mankind was, and by what method of insinuation he drew our first parents into their defection, Moses, who contents himself with relating facts as they happened outwardly, without any comment, or exposition of them, or who, by a metonymy in the Hebrew tongue, uses the instrumental for the efficient cause, tells us expressly, that it was the serpent; and for this reason, some of the ancient Jews ran into a fond conceit, that ¹ this whole passage is to be understood of a real serpent; which creature, ² they suppose, before the fall, to have had the faculty of speech and reason both. But this is too gross a conception to have many abettors; and therefore the common, and indeed the only probable opinion is, that it was the devil; some wicked and malicious spirit (probably one of the chief of that order) who envied the good of mankind, the favours God had bestowed upon them, and the future happiness he had ordained for them, and was thereupon resolved to tempt them to disobedience, thereby to bring them to the same forlorn condition with himself, and his other apostate brethren; and that, to effect his purpose, he made use of a serpent's body, wherein to transact his fraud and imposture.

Why the devil chose to assume the form of a serpent, rather than that of any other creature, we may, in some measure, learn from the character which the Scripture gives us of it, namely, that 'it was more subtle than any beast of the field, that the Lord God had made;' where the word 'subtle' may not so much denote the craft and insiduousness, as the gentle, familiar, and insinuating nature of this creature. ³ That the serpent, before the fall, was mild and gentle, and more familiar with man, than any

other animal: that ^a it did not creep on the ground, but went with its head and breast reared up, and advanced: that by frequently approaching our first parents, and playing and sporting before them, it had gained their good liking and esteem, is not only the sentiment both ⁴ of Jews and ⁵ Christians, but what seems likewise to have some foundation in Scripture; for when God says, 'That he will put enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between his seed and her seed,' the implication must be, that there was some sort of kindness and intimacy between them before.

There is no absurdity then in supposing that this creature was beloved both by Adam and Eve. She especially might be highly delighted, and used to play and divert herself with it. ⁶ She laid it perhaps in her bosom, adorned her neck with its windings, and made it a bracelet for her arms. So that its being thus intimate with the woman, made it the proper instrument for the devil's purpose, who sliding himself into it, might wantonly play before her, until he insensibly brought her to the forbidden tree: and then, twisting about its branches, might take of the fruit, and eat, to show her, by experience, that there was no deadly quality in it, before he began his address; and his speech might be the less frightful or surprising to her, who, in the state of her innocence, not knowing what fear was, might probably think (as he might positively affirm) ^b that this new-acquired faculty proceeded from the virtue of the tree.

But there is another conjecture still more probable, if we will not allow, that the serpent was not of a common ordinary species, but one very probably something like that fiery flying sort, which, we are told, are bred in Arabia and Egypt. ⁷ They are of a shining yellowish colour like brass, and by the motion of their wings and vibration of their tails, reverberating the sunbeams, make

¹ Josephus's *Antiquities*. b. 1.⁵ Basil, *Hom. on Paradise*.⁶ Mede's *Discourses*.⁷ Tennison or *Idolatry*; Patrick's *Commentary*; and Nicholls's *Conference*, vol. 1.^a The beauty of the serpent, which the devil made choice of, is thus described by Milton:—

So spake the enemy of mankind, enclosed
In serpent, inmate bad! and toward Eve
Address'd his way: not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that tower'd,
Fold above fold, a surging maze! his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;
With burnish'd neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant: pleasing was his shape,
And lovely. —

^b Eve, upon hearing the serpent speak, inquires by what means it was, that it came by that faculty; and is told, that it was by eating of a certain tree in the garden.

I was at first, as other beasts that graze
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low ———
Till on a day, roving the field, I chanced
A goodly tree far distant to behold,
Laden with fruit of various colours, mix'd
Ruddy and gold —
To satisfy the sharp desire I had
Of tasting these fair apples, I resolved
Not to defer —
Sated at length, ere long, I might perceive
Strange alteration in me, to degree
Of reason in my inward powers; and speech
Wanted not long, though to this shape retained.
Thenceforth to speculation high or deep
I turn'd my thoughts, and with capacious mind
Considered all things visible in heaven,
Or earth, or middle.

¹ Le Clerc's *Commentary and Essays*.² Josephus, and several others.³ Mede's *Discourses*.

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a glorious appearance. Now, if the serpent, whose body the devil abused, was of this kind (though perhaps of a species far more glorious,) it was a very proper creature for him to make use of. For these serpents we find called in Scripture seraphs, or seraphim, which gave the name to those bright lofty angels, who were frequently employed by God to deliver his will to mankind, and, coming upon that errand, were wont to put on certain splendid forms, some of the form of cherubim, that is, beautiful flying oxen, and others the shape of seraphim, that is, winged and shining serpents. Upon this hypothesis, we may imagine farther, that the devil, observing that good angels attended the divine presence, and sometimes ministered to Adam and Eve in this bright appearance, usurped the organs of one of these shining serpents, which, by his art and skill in natural causes, he might improve into such a wonderful brightness, as to represent to Eve the usual shechinal, or angelical appearance, she was accustomed to; and, under this disguise, she might see him approach her without fear, and hear him talk to her without surprise, and comply with his seduction with less reluctance; as supposing him to be an angel of God's retinue, and now dispatched from heaven to instruct her in some momentous point, as she had often perhaps experienced before during her stay in paradise.

A learned Jew has expounded this transaction in a new and uncommon way. He supposes that the serpent did not speak at all, nor did Eve say any thing to it; but that, being a very nimble and active creature, it got upon the tree of knowledge, took of the fruit and eat it; and that Eve, having seen it several times do so, and not die, concluded with herself that the tree was not of such a destructive quality as was pretended; that as it gave speech and reason to the serpent, it would much more improve and advance her nature; and was thereupon emboldened to eat.

This opinion is very plausible, and, in some degree, founded on Scripture: for though the woman might perceive by her senses, that the fruit was pleasant to the eye, yet it was impossible she could know, either that it was good for food, or desirable to make one wise, any other way than by the example and experiment of the serpent, which merely by eating of that fruit, (as she thought,) was changed from a brute into a rational and vocal creature. This, I say, is a pretty plausible solution; and yet it cannot be denied, but that the text seems to express something more, and that there was a real dialogue between the woman and the serpent, wherein the serpent had the advantage. And therefore (to persist in our former exposition) it is not improbable, that the tempter, before ever he accosted Eve, transformed himself into the likeness of an angel of light, and prefacing his speech with some short congratulations of her happiness, might proceed to insnare her with some such cunning harangue as this:

"And can it possibly be that so good a God, who has so lately been so bountiful to you, as to give you such an excellent being, and invest you with power and dominion over all the rest of his creatures, should now envy you any of the innocent pleasures of nature? Has he indeed denied you the use of the tree of knowledge? But why did he plant it at all? Why did he adorn it

with such beautiful fruit? Why did he place it on an eminence in the garden, for you to behold daily, unless he is minded to tantalize you? The true design, both of the prohibition and penalty which you relate, is to keep you in ignorance, and thereby oblige you to live in perpetual dependence on him. He knows full well, that the virtue of this tree is to illuminate the understanding, and thereby to enable you to judge for yourselves, without having recourse to him upon every occasion. ² To judge for himself is the very privilege that makes him God; and for that reason he keeps it to himself: but eat but of this tree, and ye shall be like him; your beings shall be in your own hands, and your happiness vast and inconceivable, and independent on any other. What effect it has had on me, you cannot but see and hear, since it has enabled me to reason and discourse in this wise; and, instead of death, has given a new kind of life to my whole frame. And, if it has done this to a brute animal, what may not creatures of your refined make, and excellent perfections, expect from it? Why should you shrink back, or be afraid to do it then? You have here an opportunity of making yourselves, for ever; and the trespass is nothing. What harm in eating an apple? Why this tree of knowledge more sacred than all the rest? Can so great a punishment as death be proportionate to so small a fault? I come to assure you that it is not; that God has reversed his decree, and eat you what you will, ye surely shall not die."

³ Thus the serpent suggested to Eve, that God had imposed upon her, and she was willing to discover whether he had or no. Curiosity, and a desire of independency, to know more, and to be entire master of herself, were the affections which the tempter promised to gratify; and an argument like this has seldom failed ever since to corrupt the generality of mankind: insomuch that few, very few, have been able to resist the force of this temptation, especially when it comes (as it did to Eve) clothed with all the outward advantage of allurements. For whoever knows the humour of youth, and how he himself was affected at that time, cannot but be sensible, that as the fairness of the fruit, its seeming fitness for food, the desire of being independent, and under her own management and government, were inducements that prevailed with our first parents to throw off the conduct of God: so this curiosity of trying the pleasures of sense, this itch of being our own masters, and choosing for ourselves, together with the charming face of sin, and our ignorance and inexperience of the consequences of it, are generally the first means of our being corrupted against the good maxims and principles we received from our parents and teachers.

It is in the essential constitution of man, (as we said before,) that he should be a free agent; and if we consider him now as in a state of probation, we shall soon perceive, that God could not lay any restraint upon him, nor communicate any assistance to him, but what was consistent with the nature he had given him, and the state he had placed him in. God created man a free agent,⁴ that he might make the system of the universe perfect, and supply that vast opening which must otherwise have

² Bishop King's Discourse on the Fall, at the end of his Origin of Evil.

³ Bishop King's Sermon on the Fall.

⁴ Bishop King's Essay on the Origin of Evil.

¹ Isaac Abernethy.

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happened between heaven and earth, had he not interposed some other creature (endued with rationality, master of his own elections, and consequently capable of serving him voluntarily and freely) between angels and brutes. In the very act of creating him, therefore, God intended that he should be rational, and determined, as it were by a law, that he should be free; and having engrafted this in his make, it would have been a violation of his own laws, and infraction on his own work, to have interposed, and hindered the use of that faculty, which by the law of nature, he had established. We do not expect, that the situation of the earth, or the course of the sun should be altered on our account, because these seem to be things of great importance; and we apprehend it unreasonable, that for our private advantage, the order and harmony of things should be changed, to the detriment of so many other beings. But to alter the will, to stop the election, is no less a violation of the laws of nature, than to interrupt the course of the sun, because a free agent is a more noble being than the sun. The laws of its nature are to be esteemed more sacred, and cannot be changed without a great miracle: there would then be a kind of shock and violence done to nature, if God should interfere, and hinder the actions of free-will; and perhaps it would prove no less pernicious to the intellectual system, than the sun's standing still would be to the natural.

To apply these reflections to the matter now before us. Had God, to prevent man's sin, taken away the liberty of his will, he had thereby destroyed the foundation of all virtue, and the very nature of man himself. For virtue would not have been such, had there been no possibility of acting contrary, and man's nature would have been divine, had it been made impeccable. Had God given our first parents then such powerful influences of his Holy Spirit, as to have made it impossible for them to sin, or had he sent a guard of angels, to watch and attend them so as to hinder the devil from proposing any temptation, or them from hearkening to any; had he, I say, supernaturally overruled the organs of their bodies, or the inward inclinations of their minds, upon the least tendency to evil; in this case he had governed them, not as free, but as necessary agents, and put it out of his own power to have made any trial of them at all. All therefore that he could do, and all that in reason might be expected from him to do, was to give them such a sufficient measure of power and assistance, as might enable them to be a match for the strongest temptation; and this, there is no question to be made, but that he did do.

¹ We, indeed, in this degenerate state of ours, find a great deal of difficulty to encounter with temptations. We find a great blindness in our understandings, and a crookedness in our wills. We have passions, on some occasions, strong and ungovernable; and oftentimes experience an inclination to do evil, even before the temptation comes: but our first parents, in their primitive rectitude, stood possessed of every thing as advantageous the other way. They had an understanding large and capacious, and fully illuminated by the Divine Spirit. Their will was naturally inclined to the supreme good, and could not, without violence to its nature,

make choice of any other. Their passions were sedate, and subordinate to their reason; and, when any difficulties did arise, they had God at all times to have recourse to: by which means it came to pass, that it was as hard for them to sin, as it is difficult for us to abstain from sinning; as easy for them to elude temptations then, as it is natural for us to be led away by temptations now. And therefore, if, notwithstanding all these mighty advantages towards a state of impeccancy, they made it their option to transgress, their perverseness only is to be blamed, and not any want of sufficient assistance from their bounteous Creator.

Great indeed is the disorder which their transgression has brought upon human nature; but there will be no reason to impeach the goodness of God for it, if we take but in this one consideration, That what he thought not fit to prevent by his almighty power, he has, nevertheless, thought fit to repair by the covenant of mercy in his Son Jesus Christ. By him he has propounded the same reward, everlasting life after death, which we should have had, without death, before; and has given us a better establishment for our virtue now, than we could have had, had we not been sufferers by this first transgression.

For let us suppose, ² that, notwithstanding our first parents had sinned, yet God had been willing that original righteousness should have equally descended upon their posterity; yet we must allow, that any one of their posterity might have been foiled by the wiles of the tempter, and fallen, as well as they did. Now had they so fallen, (the covenant of grace being not yet founded,) how could they ever have recovered themselves to any degree of acceptance with God? Their case must have been the same, as desperate, as forlorn, as that of fallen angels was before: whereas, in the present state of things, our condition is much safer. Sin indeed, by reason of our present infirmity, may more easily make its breaches upon us, either through ignorance or surprise; but it cannot get dominion over us, without our own deliberate option, because it is an express gospel promise against the power of sin, that ³ it 'shall not have dominion over us;' against the power of the devil, that ⁴ 'greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world;' against the power of temptations, that ⁵ 'God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able;' against discouragement from the presence of our infirmities, that ⁶ 'we may do all through Christ that strengthens us;' and, in case of failing, that ⁷ 'we have an advocate with the Father, and a propitiation for our sins.' Thus plentifully did God provide for man's stability in that state of integrity, thus graciously for his restoration, in this state of infirmity. In both cases, his goodness has been conspicuous, and has never failed!

In like manner, (to absolve the divine nature from any imputation of passion or peevishness, of injustice or hard usage, in cursing the serpent and the earth; in driving our lapsed parents out of paradise, and in entailing their guilt and punishment upon the latest posterity,) we should do well to remember, that the serpent, against which the first sentence is denounced, is to be

¹ Nicholls's Conference, vol. 1.² Young's Sermons.³ Rom. vi. 14.⁴ 1 John iv. 4.⁵ 1 Cor. x. 13.⁶ Phil. iv. 13.⁷ 1 John ii. 1.

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considered here in a double capacity; both as an animal, whose organs the devil employed in the seduction of the woman; and as the devil himself, lying hid and concealed under the figure of the serpent: for the sentence, we may observe, is plainly directed to an intelligent being and free agent, who had committed a crime which a brute could not be capable of.

Now if we consider what a glorious creature the serpent was before the fall, we cannot but suppose that God intended this debasement of it,¹ not so much to express his indignation against it, (for it had no bad intention, neither was it conscious of what the devil did with its body,) as to make it a monument of man's apostasy, a testimony of his displeasure against sin, and an instructive emblem to deter all future ages from the commission of that which brought such vengeance along with it. In the Levitical law we find, that if a man committed any abomination with a beast,² the beast was to be slain as well as the man; and, by parity of reason, the serpent is here punished, if not to humble the pride, and allay the triumph of the devil, by seeing the instrument of his success so shamefully degraded, at least to remind the delinquents themselves of the foulness of their crime, and the necessity of their repentance, whenever they chanced to behold so noble a creature as the serpent was, reduced to so vile and abject a condition, merely for being the means of their transgression.

But God might have a farther design in this degradation of the serpent: he foresaw, that in future ages, Satan would take pride in abusing this very creature to the like pernicious purposes, and, under the semblance of serpents of all kinds, would endeavour to establish the vilest idolatry, even the idolatry of his own hellish worship. That therefore the beauty of the creature might be no provocation to such idolatry, it was a kind and beneficent act in God to deface the excellence of the serpent's shape, and, at the same time, inspire mankind with the strongest horror and aversion to it. Nor can it be denied, but that,³ if we suppose the devil possessed the serpent, and was, as it were, incarnate in it, the power of God could unite them as closely as our souls and bodies are united, and thereby cause the punishment inflicted on the literal serpent to affect Satan as sensibly as the injuries done our bodies do reach our souls; at least, while that very serpent was in being.

To consider Satan then under the form of a serpent, we shall see the propriety of the other part of the sentence denounced against him, and what comfort and consolation our criminal parents might reasonably collect from thence. That this part of the sentence, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,'⁴ is not to be understood in a literal sense, (because such sense is absurd and ridiculous,) every reader of competent understanding must own:

¹ *Patrick's Commentary; and Mede's Discourses.*

² Lev. xx. 15. ³ *Bishop King's Sermon on the Fall.*

⁴ Gen. iii. 15. 'It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' The following traditions of the promised Messiah are remarkable for their coincidence with the first promise; and must have had a higher origin than unassisted human invention. In the Gothic mythology, Thor is represented as the first-born of the supreme God, and is styled in the Edda, the eldest of sons; he was esteemed a "middle divinity, a mediator between God and man." With regard to his actions, he is said to have

and therefore its meaning must be such as will best agree with the circumstances of the transaction. Now the transaction was thus.—Adam, tempted by his wife, and she by the serpent, had fallen from their obedience, and were now in the presence of God expecting judgment. ⁴ They knew full well, at that juncture, that their fall was the victory of the serpent, whom by experience, they found to be an enemy to God and man: to man, whom he had ruined by seducing him to sin; and to God the noble work of whose creation he had defaced. It could not therefore but be some comfort to them, to hear the serpent first condemned, and to see that, however he had prevailed against them, he had gained no victory over their Maker, who was able to assert his own honour, and to punish this great author of iniquity. Nor was it less a consolation to them to hear from the mouth of God likewise, that the serpent's victory was not a complete victory over even themselves; that they and their posterity should be able to contest his empire; and though they were to suffer much in the struggle, yet finally they should prevail, bruise the serpent's head, and deliver themselves from his power and dominion over them.

This certainly is the lowest sense wherein our first parents could have understood this part of the sentence

⁴ *Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy.*

wrestled with death, and, in the struggle, to have been brought upon one knee, to have 'bruised the head' of the great serpent with his mace; and in his final engagement with that monster to have beat him to the earth, and slain him. This victory, however, is not obtained but at the expense of his own life: "Receding back nine steps, he falls dead upon the spot, suffocated with the floods of venom, which the serpent vomits forth upon him." (*Edda, Fab. 11. 25. 27. 32.*) Much the same notion, we are informed, is prevalent in the mythology of the Hindoos. Two sculptured figures are yet extant in one of their oldest pagodas, the former of which represents Chreeshna, an incarnation of their mediatorial god Vishnu, trampling on the crushed head of the serpent: while in the latter it is seen encircling the deity in its folds, and biting his heel. (*Mannie's History of Hindostan, vol. ii. p. 290.*) It is said that Zeradusht, or Zoroaster, predicted in the Zendavesta, that in the latter days would appear a man called Oshanderbeghâ, who was destined to bless the earth by the introduction of justice and religion; that, in his time, would likewise appear a malignant demon, who would oppose his plans, and trouble his empire, for the space of twenty years; that afterwards, Osiderbegha would revive the practice of justice, put an end to injuries, and re-establish such customs as are immutable in their nature: that kings should be obedient to him, and advance his affairs; that the cause of true religion should flourish; that peace and tranquillity should prevail, and discord and trouble cease. (*Hyde on the Religion of the Ancient Persians, c. 31.*) According to Abulpharagius, the Persian legislator wrote of the advent of the Messiah in terms even more express than those contained in the foregoing prediction. "Zeradusht," says he, "the preceptor of the Magi, taught the Persians concerning the manifestation of Christ, and ordered them to bring gifts to him, in token of their reverence and submission. He declared, that in the latter days a pure virgin would conceive; and that as soon as the child was born, a star would appear, blazing even at noonday with undiminished lustre. "You, my sons," exclaims the venerable seer, "will perceive its rising, before any other nation. As soon, therefore, as you shall behold the star, follow it whithersoever it shall lead you, and adore that mysterious child, offering your gifts to him with the profoundest humility. He is the almighty Word, which created the heavens." (Cited by *Hyde on the Religion of the Ancient Persians, c. 31.*)

On the subject of the antipathy between serpents and the human race, see *Mede's Works, b. i. disc. 39, p. 295. Franz History of Animals, part iv. c. 1. Töpsel's History of Serpents p. 604.*

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denounced against the serpent; and yet this very sense was enough to revive in them comfortable hopes of a speedy restoration. For when Adam heard that the seed of the woman was to destroy the evil spirit, he undoubtedly understood Eve to be that woman, and some issue of his by her to be that seed; and accordingly we may observe, that when Eve was delivered of Cain, the form of her exultation is, ¹ 'I have gotten a man from the Lord,' that is, I have gotten a man through the signal favour and mercy of God. ² Now this extraordinary exultation cannot be supposed to arise from the bare privilege of bearing issue, for that privilege (as she could not but know before this time) she had in common with the meanest brutes; and therefore her transport must arise from the prospect of some extraordinary advantage from this issue, and that could be no other than the destruction of her enemy.

Cain indeed proved a wicked man; but when she had conceived better expectations from Abel, and Cain had slain him, she, nevertheless, recovered her hopes upon the birth of Seth; because ³ God, saith she, 'hath appointed me another seed,' or one who will destroy the power of Satan, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. Thus we see, that the obscurity in which it pleased God to foretell the destruction of the evil spirit, gave rise to a succession of happy hopes in the breast of Adam and Eve; who (if they had known that this happiness was to be postponed for four thousand years) would, in all probability, have inevitably fallen into an extremity of despair.

But how necessary soever God might think it, to give our first parents, some general hopes and expectations of a restoration; yet, being now fallen into a state of sin and corruption, which must of course infect their latest posterity, he found it expedient to deprive them of that privilege of immortality, wherewith he had invested them, and (as an act of justice and mercy both) to turn them out of paradise, and debar them from the tree of life: of justice, in that they had forfeited their right to immortality, by transgressing a command, which nothing but a vain, criminal curiosity could make them disobey; and of mercy, in that, when sin had entailed all kinds of calamity upon human nature, in such circumstances, to have perpetuated life, would have been to perpetuate misery.

This, I think, can hardly be accounted the effect of passion or peevishness: and, in like manner, God's cursing the ground, or (what is all one) his depriving it of its original fruitfulness, by a different turn given to the air, elements, and seasons, was not the effect of anger, or any hasty passion, (which God is not capable of,) but of calm and equitable justice; since it was man (who had done enough to incur the divine displeasure) that was to suffer by the curse, and not the ground itself: for the ground felt no harm by 'bringing forth thorns and thistles,' but Adam, who for some time had experienced the spontaneous fertility of paradise, was a sufficient sufferer by the change, when he found himself reduced to hard labour, and forced 'to eat his bread by the sweat of his brows.'

It must be acknowledged therefore, ⁴ that there was

good reason, why the penalty of the first transgression should be greater than any subsequent one; because it was designed to deter posterity, and to let them see, by this example, that whatever commination God denounces against guilt will most infallibly be executed. We mistake, however, the nature of God's laws, and do in effect renounce his authority, when we suppose, that good and evil are in the nature of things only, and not in the commandments and prohibitions of God. ⁵ Whatever God is pleased to command or forbid, how indifferent soever it be in itself, is for that very reason, so far as it is commanded or forbidden by him, as truly good or evil, as if it were absolutely and morally so, being enacted by the same divine authority, which makes all moral precepts obligatory. God, in short, is our lawgiver, and whatever he commands, whether it be a moral precept or positive injunction, so far as he enacts it, is of the same necessary and indispensable obligation. Upon this it follows, that all sin is a transgression of the law, and a contempt of God's authority: but then the aggravations of a sin do arise from the measure of its guilt, and the parties' advantages to have avoided it; under which consideration, nothing can be more heinous than the sin of our first parents. It was not only a bare disobedience to God's command, by a perfect infidelity to his promises and threats; it was a sort of idolatry in believing the devil, and putting a greater trust in him, than in God. It was an horrible pride in them to desire to be like God, and such a diabolical pride, as made the evil angels fall from heaven. Covetousness, and a greedy theft it was, to desire and purloin, what was none of his own; and one of the most cruel and unparalleled murders that ever was committed, to kill and destroy so many thousands of their offspring. ⁶ Add to this, that it was a disobedience against God, an infinite being, and of infinite dignity; a God, who had given them existence, and that so very lately, that the impresses of it could not be worn out of their memory; that had bestowed so much happiness upon them, more than on all the creation besides; that had made them lords over all, and restrained nothing from them, but only the fruit of this one tree. Add again, that they committed this sin, against the clearest conviction of conscience, with minds fully illuminated by the divine Spirit, with all possible assistance of grace to keep them from it, and no untoward bent of nature, or unruly passion to provoke them to it: and, putting all this together, it will appear, that this was a sin of the deepest dye, and that no man, now-a-days, can possibly commit a crime of such a complicated nature, and attended with such horrid aggravations.

It is the opinion of some, ⁷ that the fruit of the forbidden tree might be impregnated with some fermenting juice, which put the blood and spirits into a great disorder, and thereby divested the soul of that power and dominion it had before over the body; which, by its operation, clouded the intellect, and depraved the will, and reduced every faculty of the mind to a miserable depravity, which, along with human nature, has been propagated down to posterity: ⁷ as some poisons (we

¹ Gen. iv. 1. ² *Revelation Examined*, vol. 1. ³ Gen. iv. 25.

⁴ *Revelation Examined*.

⁵ *Jenkins's Reasonableness*, vol. 2.

⁶ *Nicholls's Conference*, vol. 1.

⁷ *Jenkins's Reasonableness*, vol. 2.

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know) will strangely affect the nerves and spirits, without causing immediate death; and ¹ as the Indians (we are told) are acquainted with a juice which will immediately turn the person who drinks it into an idiot, and yet leave him, at the same time, the enjoyment of his health and all the powers and faculties of his body. But whatever the effect of the fruit might be, and whether the corruption of our nature and death, (with all the train of evils, which have descended to us,) lay in the tree, or in the will of God, there is no question to be made, but that our wise Creator might very justly decree, that human nature in general should be affected with it, and our happiness or unhappiness depend upon the obedience or disobedience of our first parents. We daily see, that children very often inherit the diseases of their parents, and that a vicious and extravagant father leaves commonly his son heir to nothing else but the name and shadow of a great family, with an infirm and sickly constitution. And if men generally now partake of the bad habits and dispositions of their immediate parents, why might not the corruption of human nature, in the first, have equally descended upon all the rest of mankind? ² The rebellion of a parent, in all civil governments, reduces his children to poverty and disgrace, who had a title before to riches and honours; and for the same reason, why might not Adam forfeit for himself, and all his descendants, the gift of immortality, and the promise of eternal life? God might certainly bestow his own favours upon his own terms: and therefore, since the condition was obedience, he might justly inflict death, that is, withhold immortality from us; and he might justly deny us heaven (for the promise of heaven was an act of his free bounty) upon the transgression and disobedience of our first parents. We were in their loins, and from thence our infection came: they were our representatives, and in them we fell: but then, amidst all this scene of calamity, we have one comfortable, one saving prospect to revive us, namely, that ³ 'Adam was the figure of him that was to come; and therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all mankind to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.'

This is the account we have of the fall: and though we pretend not to deny, that in some places there are figurative expressions in it, as best comporting with the nature of ancient prophecy, and the oriental manner of writing; yet this can be no argument, why we should immediately run to an allegorical interpretation of the whole.

That not only the poets, but some of the greatest philosophers likewise, had a strange affectation for such figurative documents, in order to conceal their true notions from the vulgar, and to keep their learning within the bounds of their own schools, we pretend not to deny: and yet, since it is apparent, that Moses could have no such design; ⁴ since he had no reason to fear any other philosophers setting up against him, or, running away with his notions; since he affects no other character,

but that of a plain historian, and pretends to relate matters just as they happened, without any disguise or embellishment of art; since he orders his books (which he endeavours to suit to the vulgar capacity) to be 'read in the ears of all the people,' and commands 'parents to teach them to their children;' it cannot be supposed, but that the history of the fall as well as the rest of the book of Genesis, is to be taken in a literal sense. All the rest of the book is allowed to be literal, and why should this part of it only be a piece of Egyptian hieroglyphic? Fable and allegory, we know, are directly opposite to history: the one pretends to deliver truth, undisguised, the other to deliver truth indeed, but under the veil and cover of fiction; so that, if this book of Moses be allowed to be historical, we may as well say, that what Thucydides relates of the plague of Athens, or Livy of the battle of Cannæ, is to be understood allegorically, as that what Moses tells us of the prohibition of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the garden of paradise for breaking it, is to be interpreted in a mystical sense.

Nay, we will put the case, that it were consistent with the character of Moses to have amused the people with fables and allegories; ⁵ yet we can hardly believe, but that the people retained some tradition among them concerning the formation of our first parents, and the manner of their defection. This they might easily have had from their illustrious ancestor Abraham, who might have deduced it from Noah, and thence, in a few successions, from Adam himself; and if there was any such tradition preserved among them, Moses must necessarily have lost all his credit and authority, had he pretended to foist in a tale of his own invention, instead of a true narration. For the short question is, —⁶ Did the children of Israel know the historical truth of the fall, or did they not? If they did know it, why should Moses disguise it under an allegory, rather than any of the rest of the book of Genesis? If they did not know it, how came it to be forgotten in so few generations of men, supposing it had ever been known to Adam's posterity? If Adam's posterity never rightly knew it, but had the relation thereof always conveyed down in metaphor and allegory, then must Adam, in the first place, impose upon his sons, and they upon succeeding generations; but for what reason we cannot conceive, unless that the most remarkable event that ever befell mankind (except the redemption of the world by Christ) so came to pass, that it was impossible to tell it to posterity any other way than in allegory.

It can scarce be imagined, but that some of the ancient writers of the Jewish church, as well as the inspired writers of the New Testament, had as true a knowledge of these distant traditions, as any modern espouser of allegories can pretend to; and therefore, ⁷ when we read in the book of Wisdom, that ⁸ 'God created man to be immortal, and made him to be the image of his own eternity;' but that, 'through the envy of the devil, death came into the world;' when the son of Sirach tells us, that ⁹ 'God,' at the first, 'filled man with the knowledge

¹ *Revelation Examined*, vol. 1.² *Jenkins's Reasonableness*, vol. 2.³ Rom. v. 14, 18.⁴ *Nicholls's Conference*, vol. 1.⁵ *Moses Vindicated*.⁶ *Jenkins's Reasonableness*, vol. 2.⁷ See *Bishop Sherlock's Dissertation 2. annexed to his Use and Intent of Prophecy*.⁸ Wisd. ii. 23, 24.⁹ Ecclus. xvii. 7.

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of understanding, and, shewed him good and evil,' but ¹ that 'error and darkness had their beginning, together with sinners;' that ² 'death is the sentence of the Lord over all flesh;' ³ that 'the covenant, from the beginning, was, Thou shalt die the death;' and that ⁴ 'of woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die:' when we read, and compare all these passages together, I say, can there be any reasonable foundation to doubt in what sense the ancient Jewish church understood the history of the fall?

Nay more. When not only we find the wicked, and the enemies of God represented under the image ⁵ of a 'serpent,' of a 'dragon,' of a 'leviathan, the crooked serpent,' &c.; and the prophet telling us expressly, that ⁶ 'dust shall be the serpent's meat;' but our blessed Saviour likewise declaring, that ⁷ 'the devil was a murderer from the beginning, a liar, and a father of lies;' St Paul asserting, that ⁸ the 'woman being deceived, was first in the transgression,' and that ⁹ the 'serpent beguiled her through his subtilty;' and St John, in his Revelation, ¹⁰ calling that wicked and malicious spirit, the devil, or the dragon, Satan, or the old serpent, indifferently; we cannot but perceive, that these passages are not only plain references to the first deception of mankind under the form of that creature, but that they virtually comprise the sum and substance of the Mosaic account. ¹¹ So that, if we have any regard either to the tradition of the Jewish church, or the testimony of Christ and his apostles, we cannot but believe, that the history of man's fall, and the consequences thereupon, were really such as Moses has represented them.

And to confirm us in this belief, we may observe farther, that the tradition of almost every nation is conformable to his relation of things: ¹² That not only the state of man's innocence, in all probability, gave rise to the poet's fiction of the golden age; but that the story of Adam and Eve, of the tree, and of the serpent, was extant among the Indians long ago, and (as travellers tell us) is still preserved among the Brachmans, and the inhabitants of Peru: ¹³ That, in the old Greek mysteries, the people used to carry about a serpent, and were instructed to cry *Eva*, whereby the devil seemed to exult, as it were, over the unhappy fall of our first mother; and that ¹⁴ in his worship in idolatrous nations, even now, there are frequent instances of his displaying this his conquest under the figure of a serpent: strong evidences of the truth of the Mosaic account! to say nothing of the rationale which it gives us of our innate 'pudor circa res venereas,' of the pains of childbirth, of the present sterility of the earth, of the slowness of children's education, of their imbecility above all other creatures, of the woman's subjection to her husband, of our natural antipathy to viperous animals, and (what hath puzzled the wisest of the heathen sages to discover) of the depravation of our wills, and our strong propensity to what is evil.

This origin of evil is a question which none of them could resolve. They saw the effect, but were ignorant of the cause; and therefore their conjectures were absurd. ¹⁵ Some of them laid the whole blame on matter, as if its union with the mind gave it a pernicious tincture. Others imagined a pre-existent state, and that the bad inclinations which exerted themselves in this world were first of all contracted in another. ¹⁶ Several established two principles, the one the author of all the good, and the other the author of all the evil (whether natural or moral) that is found in human nature: and, in prejudice to this absurdity, many betook themselves to atheism, and denied any first principle at all; accounting it better to have no God in the world, than such an unaccountable mixture of good and evil. But now, had but these wise men had the advantage of reading the Mosaic account, they would never have taken up with such wild hypotheses, but immediately concluded with our Saviour's argument, that ¹⁷ 'a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit;' because the explication of the rise of sin, by an original lapse, is not only freed from these absurdities wherewith other explications abound, but, according to the sense which the author of the Book of Wisdom has of it, sets the goodness of God in the creation of the world in its proper light; namely, that ¹⁸ 'God made not death, neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living. He created all things, that they might have their being, and the generations of the world were healthful. There was no poison of destruction in them, nor the kingdom of death upon the earth, until that ungodly men called it to them;' ¹⁹ and so error and darkness had their beginning together with sinners.

CHAP. III.—On the Sentiments entertained by the Ancients concerning the Origin of Moral Evil.

(SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.)

THE opinions which were entertained by the ancients concerning the origin of moral evil were various.

The operation of some injurious principle vitiating the nature of man, and perverting his moral views, could not be disputed; and the influence of a malignant power seemed even to have introduced disorder in the original appointments of Providence, and to have counteracted the beneficial tendency of his ordinances.

Popular convictions everywhere prevailed touching the existence of some beings of the higher order, who had revolted from the heavenly power which presided over the universe. It is probable that these convictions were originally founded on the circumstances referred to in Scripture with respect to Satan and his angels, as powerful but malevolent beings, who having first seduced Adam from his obedience, incessantly labour to deceive, corrupt, and destroy his descendants. The notion of the Magi of Plutarch, and of the Manicheans, concerning two independent principles, acting in opposition to each other, was also founded on the real circumstances

¹ Eccles. xi. 7.² Eccles. xli. 3.³ Eccles. xiv. 17.⁴ Eccles. xxv. 24.⁵ Isa. xiv. 29. xxvii. 1. Micah vii. 17.⁶ Isa. lxxv. 25.⁷ John viii. 44.⁸ 1 Tim. ii. 14.⁹ 2 Cor. xi. 3.¹⁰ Rev. xii. 9., xx. 2.¹¹ *Moses Vindicated.*¹² *Grotius on Truth.*¹³ *Nicholls's Conference*, vol. 1.¹⁴ See *Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs*, vol. 1.¹⁵ *Nicholls's Conference*, vol. 1.¹⁶ *Bishop King on the Origin of Evil.*¹⁷ Mat. vii. 18.¹⁸ Wis. i. 13, &c.¹⁹ Eccles. xi. 16.

of the apostasy of angels, and of their interference and influence in the affairs of men.

The original temptation, by which they drew our first parents from their duty, and led them to transgress the only prohibition which God had imposed, is described in the first pages of Scripture; and it is repeated under much disguise, in many fables of classical mythology.

Origen considers the allegorical relations furnished by *Plato*, with respect to *Porus* tempted by *Penia* to sin when intoxicated in the garden of *Jove*, as a disfigured history of the fall of man in paradise. It seems to have been blended with the story of *Lot* and his daughters. *Plato* might have acquired, in *Egypt*, the knowledge of the original circumstances of the fall, and have produced them, under the veil of allegory, that he might not offend the Greeks by a direct extract from the Jewish Scriptures.

The particular circumstances also of the leader of the evil spirits having envied man's happiness, and by disguising himself under the form of a serpent, occasioned his ejection from paradise, was figured out in other accounts.

The worship established towards the evil spirit by his contrivance, sometimes under the very appearance in which he seduced mankind, is to be found among the *Phœnicians* and *Egyptians*.

The general idea of the serpent as a mysterious symbol annexed to the heathen deities, and particularly assigned to *Æsculapius* the god of healing, might have been suggested by perverted representations of the agency of the fallen spirit, who assumed the form of a serpent; and the invocation of *Eve* in the *Bacchanalian* orgies, (with the production of a serpent, consecrated as an emblem, to public view,) seems to bear some relation to the history of our first parents who introduced sin and death into the world.

The tutelary deity of particular districts was sometimes introduced in the same manner; thus a serpent is represented by *Virgil* to have appeared to *Æneas*.

The first worship of *Apollo* was offered to him under the representation of a serpent; but *Apollo* was generally regarded as the deity who had killed the serpent *Python*, which word was probably derived from the Hebrew word which signifies a serpent. The account of *Discord* being cast out from heaven, referred to by *Agamemnon*, in the nineteenth book of *Homer's Iliad*, has been thought to be a corrupt tradition of the fall of the evil angels.

The original perfection of man, the corruption of human nature resulting from the fall, and the increasing depravity which proceeded with augmented violence from generation to generation, are to be found in various parts of profane literature. *Euryalus*, the *Pythagorean*, declared that man was made in the image of God. The loss of that resemblance was supposed to have resulted from the effects of disobedience, and was considered as so universal that it was generally admitted, as is expressed by *Horace*, that no man was born without vices. The conviction of a gradual deterioration from age to age, of a change from a golden period, by successive transitions to an iron depravity, of a lapse from a state devoid of guilt and fear, to times filled with iniquity, was universally entertained.¹

CHAP. IV.—Of Original Sin.

ORIGINAL sin indeed is a phrase which does not occur in the whole compass of the Bible; but the nature of the thing itself, and in what manner it came to be committed, are sufficiently related: so that those who admit of the authority of the Scriptures, make no question of the fact. The great matter in dispute is, what the effect of this transgression was; what guilt it contained; what punishment it merited; and in what degree its guilt and punishment both may be said to affect us.

Some have not stuck to affirm, ² that in the beginning of the world, there was no such thing as any express covenant between God and man; that the prohibition of the tree of knowledge was given to our first parents only, and they alone consequently were culpable by its transgression; that *Adam*, in short, was mortal, like one of us; he was no representative for his posterity; his sin purely personal; and that the imputation of guilt, down to this time, for an offence so many thousand years ago committed, is a sad reflection upon the goodness and justice of God.

In opposition to this, others think proper to affirm, that at the first creation of things, there was a covenant made with all mankind in *Adam*, their common head and proxy, who stipulated for them all; that by a transgression of this covenant, our first parents fell from their original righteousness, and thence became dead in sin, and actually defiled in all their faculties of soul and body; and that this corruption is not only the parent of all actual transgressions, but (even in its own nature) brings guilt upon every one that is born into the world, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all the miseries that attend it, spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

There is another opinion which concerns itself not with the imputation of the guilt, but only with the punishment of this transgression, and thereupon supposes, that though *Adam*, as to the composition of his body, was naturally mortal, yet, by the supernatural gift of God, (whereof the tree of life was a symbol or sacrament,) he was to be preserved immortal: from whence it is inferred, ³ That the denunciation of the sentence, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,' is to be understood literally indeed, but then extended no farther than natural death; which, considering the fears, and terrors, and sundry kinds of misery which it occasions, may be reputed punishment severe enough, though fairly consistent with our notions of God's goodness and justice, because it is but a temporal punishment, and abundantly recompensed by that eternal redemption which all mankind shall have in *Christ Jesus*.

Others again do so far approve of this, as to think it in part the punishment of original sin; but then they suppose, that besides this natural mortality, there is a certain weakness and corruption spread through the whole race of mankind, which discovers itself in their inclination to evil, and insufficiency to what is good.

² *Burnet on the Articles*; and *Taylor's Polemical Discourses*.

³ *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*; and *A Treatise on the Divine Imputation of Original Sin*, by *D. Whitby*.

¹ *Gray's Connexion*, pp. 135—140.

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This, say they, "the very heathens complain of; this the Scriptures every where testify; and therefore they conclude that since man was not originally made in this condition, (for God created him after his own image,) he must have contracted all this from his fall; and that therefore the threatening of death had an higher signification than the dissolution of the soul and body, namely, the loss of the divine favour, of all supernatural gifts and graces, and a total defection of the mind from God, which immediately ensued upon the transgression.

These are some of the principal opinions, (for the little singularities are innumerable,) and, in the midst of so many intricacies, to find out a proper path for us to pursue, we may resolve the whole controversy into this one question:—"Whether human nature be so far corrupted, and the guilt of our first parents' transgression so far imputed to their posterity, that every person, from the mother's womb, must necessarily go astray, and must certainly fall into everlasting perdition, without the means appointed in the new covenant for his preservation?" And in searching into this, the sentiments of the fathers, much more the alterations of the schoolmen, will help us very little. "The former are so divided in

their opinions, and the latter so abstruse in their arguments upon this subject, that an honest inquirer will find himself bewildered, rather than instructed; and therefore our safest recourse will be to the declarations of God's will, explained in a manner comporting with his attributes.

That God, who is the fountain of our being, is infinitely pure and holy, and can therefore be neither the author nor promoter of any sin in us, is obvious to our first conceptions of him; and therefore, if the corruption of our nature be supposed to be such as necessarily and unavoidably determines us to wickedness, without the least tendency to good, to give it a counterpoise, those who maintain the negative of the question, are in the right so far as they stand in defence of God's immaculate purity, and are known to be asserters of the freedom of human choice, without which the common distinctions of virtue and vice, and the certain prospects of rewards and punishments, are entirely lost. But when they carry the point so far as to deny any alteration in human nature now, from what it was at its first creation; as to deny, that Adam, in his state of uprightness, had any gifts and graces supernatural, any clearness in his understanding, any strength in his will, any regularity in his affections, more than every man of maturity and competent faculties has at this day; when they adventure to affirm, that there is no necessity of grace in our present condition, to assist our hereditary weakness, to enlighten our minds, and incline our wills, and conduct our affections to the purposes of holiness, but that every man may do what is good and acceptable to God by the power of his own natural abilities, they then run counter to the common experience of human infirmity; they overlook the declarations of God's word concerning his gracious assistance; and seem to despise the kind overture of that blessed agent, whereby we are 'renewed and sanctified in the spirit of our minds.'

In like manner, when the maintainers of absolute depravation contend, that man, in his present condition, is far departed from original righteousness, and, of his own accord, very much inclined to evil; that the order of his faculties is destroyed, and those graces which constituted the image of God, departed from him; that in this state he is now unable to raise himself from the level of common impotence, but requires the intervention of some superior principle to aid and assist him in his progress towards heaven; they say no more than what experience teaches us, and what the sacred records, which acquaint us with the dispensation of grace, are known to authorize. But when they carry their positions to a greater extent than they will justly bear; when they affirm, that ever since the first defection, the mind of man is not only much impaired, but grievously vitiated in all its faculties, having a strong aversion to every thing that is good, and an invincible propensity to what is evil; not one thought, word, or wish, that tends towards God, but the seeds and principles of every vice that bears the image and lineaments of the devil, inherent in it: when they advance such doctrines as these, I say, they debase human nature too low, and seem to impute such iniquity to its Maker as can hardly be wiped off, if every human soul be naturally inclined to all kind of wickedness when it comes from the hand of his creating power.

a St Austin, in his fourth book against Julian, brings in Cicero, on *Repub.* b. 3., complaining "That nature, in bringing forth man to existence, had behaved like a stepmother, and not a mother, he possessing a body naked, weak, and soon subject to decay; with a mind, harassed by troubles, crushed by fears, and sinking under oppressions; in which, however, there exists a latent divine flame of intellect." Whereupon the holy father makes this remark, "That author saw the effect, but was ignorant of the cause, for he knew not there was a heavy yoke laid on the sons of Adam; he was not enlightened with the light of revelation, and consequently original transgression was to him a thing totally unknown."

b The Scriptures state the corruption of human nature in such terms as these, namely, that 'by one man sin entered into the world' by whose 'disobedience many were made sinners,' Rom. x. 19., that 'by nature' therefore 'we are the children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3., and 'unable to receive the things of the Spirit, or to know them because they are spiritually discerned,' 1 Cor. ii. 14., for 'what is born of flesh, is flesh,' John iii. 6.; and 'who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' Job xiv. 4. The royal Psalmist therefore makes, in his own person, this confession of our natural depravity; 'Behold I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me,' Ps. li. 5., and St Paul makes this public declaration of our inability to do good; 'I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to perform that which is good, I find not; for though I delight in the law of God after the inward man, yet I see another law in my members, warring against the law in my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Rom. vii. 18., &c.

c Vossius, in his history of *Pelagianism*, assures us, that the whole Catholic church was always of opinion, that the guilt of Adam's sin was imputed to his posterity to their condemnation; so that children dying therein were consigned to everlasting punishment, at least to an everlasting separation from God: and, to confirm this assertion, he quotes a multitude of passages out of almost all the doctors of the Greek church. Taylor and Whitby, and some other writers upon this argument, produce the testimony of the same fathers to evince the very contrary position; so that there is no depending upon any thing where authors are so inconsistent with themselves, and so repugnant to one another. The truth is, before *Pelagius* appeared in the world, most of the ancient writers of the church were very inaccurate, both in what they thought and wrote concerning original sin and free-will; and it seems as if the providence of God permitted that heretic to arise, that thereby he might engage the maintainers of orthodoxy to study those points more maturely.—*Whitaker on Original Sin*, b. 2.

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There is certainly therefore another way of accounting for these difficulties, without any prejudice to the divine attributes, and that is this:—Not by ascribing any positive malignity to human nature, but only the loss of the image of God; because a mere privation of rectitude, in an active subject, will sufficiently answer all the purposes for which a positive corruption is pleaded.

¹ The soul of man, we know, is a busy creature: by the force of its own nature it must be in action; but then, without grace, and the image of God assisting and adorning it, it cannot act regularly and well. So that the difference between Adam and us, is not that we have violent inclinations to all manner of wickedness implanted in our nature, any more than he, in his innocence, had in his; but that we, in our present condition, want sundry advantages which he, in the height of his perfection, was not without. He had the free power of obedience; he had the perfect image of his Maker in all the divine qualities of knowledge and holiness, which we have not; and therefore, when we say, that he communicated to his posterity a corrupted nature, it must not be understood, as if that nature, which we receive, was infected with any vicious inclinations or habits, to sway and determine our mind to what is evil; but the meaning is, that he communicated to us a nature, which has indeed a power to incline, and act variously, but that he did not, withal, communicate to us the image of God, nor that fulness of knowledge and power of obedience, which were requisite to make all its actions and inclinations holy and regular: and our nature is therefore said to be corrupted, because it is comparatively bad; because it is reduced to its mere natural state, which at the best is a state of imperfection, and deprived of that grace which should have restrained it from sin, and of those other high endowments wherewith at first it was invested.

This is a fair account of our original corruption: it stands clear of the difficulties that attend the other opinions, and is not inconsistent with the notions we have of the divine attributes. For barely to withdraw those extraordinary gifts, which were not essential to man's nature, but such as God additionally had bestowed upon him; and he, by his transgression, unworthily forfeited, is what agrees very well with the wisdom and justice, and holiness of God to do; though to infuse a positive malignity, or such a strong inclination to wickedness in us, as induces a necessity of sinning, most certainly does not.

That 'the Judge of all the world cannot but do right,' and he, 'who keepeth mercy from generation to generation,' can have no hand in any cruel action, is a certain truth, and what our first reflections on the divine nature teach us. Those therefore who maintain, that Adam's sin is not imputed to us to our damnation, or that children unbaptized, are not the objects of divine vengeance, nor shall be condemned to hell, or an eternal expulsion from God's presence, for what was done many thousand years before they were born, are so far in the right, as they oppose an opinion which clouds the amiable attributes of God, and represents him in a dress of horror, and engaged in acts of extreme severity at least, if not

unrelenting cruelty. Hell certainly is not so easy a pain, nor are the souls of children of so cheap and so contemptible a price, as that God should snatch them from their mother's womb, and throw them into perdition without any manner of concern; and therefore, when men argue against such positions as these, they are certainly to be commended, because therein they vindicate the sacred attributes of God: but when they carry their opposition to a greater length than it will justly go, so as to affirm—that there was no such thing as a covenant between God and Adam, or if there was, that Adam contracted for himself only; that his guilt consequently was personal, and cannot in justice, be imputed to us; that since we had no share in the transgression, there is no reason why we should bear any part in the punishment: that we are all born, in short, in the same state of innocence, and are under the same favour and acceptance with Almighty God, that Adam, before the first transgression, was: when they advance such positions as these, in maintenance of their opposition, they sadly forget, that while they would seem advocates for the mercy and goodness of God, they are taking away the foundation of the second covenant; destroying the necessity of a divine mediator; and overlooking those declarations in Scripture, which affirm, that ² 'all the world is become guilty before God;' that 'all men, both Jews and Gentiles, are under sin; have come short of the glory of God,' ³ and are by nature the children of wrath.'

To make an agreement then between the word of God, and his attributes in this particular, we may fairly allow, that there really was a covenant between God and Adam at the first creation; that in making that covenant, Adam, as their head and common representative, stipulated for all mankind, as well as for himself; and that, in his transgression of it, the guilt and the punishment due thereupon, were imputed to all his posterity. This we may allow was the state and condition wherein Adam left us; but then we must remember, that ⁴ the whole scheme of man's salvation was laid in the divine counsel and decree from all eternity; that God, foreseeing man would fall, determined to send his Son to redeem him, and determined to do this long before the transgression happened: so that the wisdom and goodness of God had effectually provided beforehand against all the ill consequences of the fall, and made it impossible, that Adam's posterity should become eternally miserable, and be condemned to the flames and pains of hell, any other way than through their own personal guilt and transgressions. The redemption of the world was decreed, I say, from eternity, and was actually promised before any child of Adam was born, even before the sentence was pronounced upon our first parents; and as soon as it was pronounced, its benefits, without all controversy did commence. So that, upon this hypothesis, every infant that comes into the world, as it brings along with it the guilt of Adam's sin, brings along with it likewise the benefits of Christ's meritorious death, 'which God hath set forth, as a' standing 'propitiation for the sins of the whole world.' Nor can the want of baptism

¹ Hopkins on the Two Covenants.² Rom. iii. 9, 19, 23.³ Eph. ii. 3.⁴ Jenkins's Reasonableness, vol. 2.

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be any obstruction to this remedy, since the remedy was exhibited long before the rite was instituted; and since that rite, when instituted, (according to the sense of some learned fathers, was more a pledge of good things to come, ^a a type of our future resurrection, a form of adoption into the heavenly family, and of admission to those 'rich promises of God, which are hid in Jesus Christ,' than any ordinance appointed for the 'mystical washing away of sin.'

In short, as long as St Paul's epistles are read, the original compact between God and man, the depravation of human nature, and the imputation of Adam's guilt, must be received as standing doctrines of the church of Christ: but then we are to take great care, in our manner of explaining them, to preserve the divine attributes sacred and inviolate: and this may happily be effected, if we will but suppose, that our hereditary corruption is occasioned, not by the infusion of any positive malignity into us, but by the subduction of supernatural gifts from us; that the covenant of grace commenced immediately after the covenant of works was broken, and has included all mankind ever since; that the blood of Christ shields his children from the wrath of God; and that the imputation of Adam's guilt, and obnoxiousness to punishment, is effectually taken away, by the meritorious oblation of that 'Lamb of God which was slain from the foundation of the world.'

SECT. IV.

CHAP. I.—Of the Murder of Abel, and the Banishment of Cain.

THE HISTORY.

OUR first parents, we may suppose, ^b after a course of penance and humiliation for their transgression, obtained

^a According to Chrysostom and Theodoret, infants are baptized in order that that sacred rite may be to them an ark of future benefits—a type of a coming resurrection—a communication of our Lord's suffering, and that being born again from on high and sanctified, they may be brought to the right of adoption, and become co-heirs of grace by their participation in these sacred mysteries.—*Whitby on Original Sin.*

^b The oriental writers are very full of Adam's sorrows and lamentations upon this occasion. They have recorded the several forms of prayer wherein he addressed God for pardon and forgiveness; and some of the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the thirty-second psalm, wherein we meet with these expressions, 'I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said I will confess my transgression unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin,' was of his composing.

Our excellent *Milton*, to the same purpose, introduces Adam, after a melancholy soliloquy with himself, and some hasty altercations with Eve, proposing at length this wholesome advice to her:

What better can we do, than to the place
Repairing where he judg'd us, prostrate fall
Before him reverent; and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg; with tears
Wat'ring the ground, and with our sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek?
Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn
From his displeasure: in whose looks serene,
When angry most he seem'd, and most severe,
What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?

the pardon and forgiveness of God; and yet the corruption, which their sin introduced, remained upon human nature, and began to discover itself in that impious fact which Cain committed on his brother Abel. Cain was the first child that was ever born into the world; and his mother Eve was so fully persuaded, that the promised seed would immediately descend from her, that she supposed him to be the person who was to subdue the power of the great enemy of mankind; and therefore upon her delivery, she cried out, in a transport of joy, 'I have gotten a man from the Lord,' and accordingly gave him the name of Cain, which signifies possession or acquisition: never suspecting, that as soon as he grew up, he would occasion her no small sorrow and disconsolation.

The next son that she bore, (which was the year following,) ^d was called 'Abel, denoting sorrow and mourning; but very probably he might not receive that name, until his tragical end, which caused great grief to his parents, verifying the meaning of it. Other children, we may presume, were all along born to our first parents; but these are the two, who, for some time, made the principal figure; and as they had the whole world before them, there was small reason (one would think) for those feuds and contentions, which, in after ages, embroiled mankind. But the misfortune was, they were persons of quite different tempers; and accordingly, when they grew up, betook themselves to different employments; Cain, who was of a surly, sordid, and avaricious temper, to the tilling of the ground; and Abel, who was more gentle and ingenuous in his disposition, to the keeping of sheep.

It was a customary thing, even in the infancy of the world, to make acknowledgments to God, by way of oblation, for the bountiful supply of all his creatures; and accordingly ^f these two brothers were wont to bring

^c *Ish eth Jehovah*, which our translation makes 'a man from the Lord,' should rather be rendered 'the man, the Lord,' *Helvicus* has shown, in so many instances in Scripture, that *eth* is an article of the accusative case, that it seems indeed to be the Hebrew idiom; besides, that it is a demonstrative, or emphatic particle, which points at some thing or person, in a particular manner; and therefore several, both Jewish and Christian doctors, have taken the words in this sense:—That our grandmother Eve, when delivered of Cain, thought she had brought forth the Messiah, the God-man, who was to 'bruise the serpent's head,' or destroy Satan's power and dominion according to the promise which God had made her.—*Edward's Survey of Religion*, vol. 1.

^d On this point, commentators differ, several suppose Abel to be the twin brother of Cain.—*Ed.*

^e Others derive the name from a word which signifies *vanity*, and are of opinion, that Eve intended thereby, either to declare the little esteem she had of him, in comparison of her first born; or to show the vanity of her hopes, in taking Cain for the Messiah; or to denote, that all things in the world, into which he was now come, were mere 'vanity and vexation of spirit.'—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Saurin's Dissertation*.

^f In the last verse of this chapter we read, that it was in the days of Enos, when 'men first began to call on the name of the Lord;' and yet, in the third and fourth verses thereof, we find that Cain and Abel brought their respective offerings to the place (as we may suppose) of divine worship. Now, if the beginning of divine worship was in the days of Enos, what worship was this in the days of Cain and Abel? To have two beginnings for the same worship, is a thing incongruous, unless we can suppose, that the two brothers, when they came with their oblations, did not worship at all; neither opening their lips in the divine benefactor's praise, nor invoking a blessing upon what his bounty had sent them, which is highly inconsistent

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offerings, suitable to their respective callings: Cain, as an husbandman, the fruits of the ground; and Abel, as a shepherd, the firstlings, or (as some will have it) the "milk of his flock. Upon some set and solemn occasion then ¹(and not improbably at the end of harvest,) as they were presenting their respective offerings, God, who estimates the sincerity of the heart more than the value of the oblation, ²gave a visible token of his acceptance of Abel's ³sacrifice, preferable to that of Cain, which so enraged, and transported him with envy against his brother, that he could not help showing it in his countenance.^d

¹ *Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs.*

with the character of worshippers. But in answer to this, we must observe that the worship of God is of two kinds, public and private; that the worship wherein these brothers were concerned, was of the latter sort; for Cain is mentioned by himself, and Abel by himself. They came to the place of worship severally; their sacrifices were not the same: neither were the offerers of the same mind. But the worship which was instituted in the time of Enos, was of a public nature, when several families, under their respective heads, met together in the same place, and joined in one common service, whether of prayers, praises, or sacrifices. Though the phrase of 'men's beginning to call upon the name of the Lord,' may possibly bear another construction, as we shall show when we come to examine the place itself.—*Street's Dividing of the Hoof.*

a It is a pretty common opinion, that the eating of flesh was not permitted before the flood; and it is the position of *Grotius*, that no carnal sacrifices were at that time, offered; because nothing, but what was of use to man, was to be consecrated to God. The scarcity of cattle might very well excuse their being slain in the worship of God; and therefore since the same word in Hebrew, *Hhalab*, or *Hheleb*, according to its different punctuation, signifies both fat and milk, and accordingly is rendered both ways by the Seventy, many learned men seem rather to favour the latter, as finding it a custom among the ancient Egyptians, to sacrifice milk to their deities, as a token and acknowledgment of the fecundity of their cattle.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Saurin's Dissertation*. But the learned *Heidegger* is of an opinion quite the contrary.—See *Essay 15, on the Food of the Antediluvians*.

b The Jews are generally of opinion, that this visible token of God's accepting Abel's sacrifice, was a fire, or lightning, which came from heaven, and consumed it. The footsteps of this we meet with in a short time after, Gen. xv. 17., and the examples of it were many in future ages, namely, when Moses offered the first burnt-offering according to the law, Lev. ix. 24.; when Gideon offered upon the rock, Jud. vi. 21.; when David stayed the plague, 1 Chron. xxi. 26.; when Solomon consecrated the temple, 2 Chron. vii. 1.; and when Elijah contended with the Baalites, 1 Kings xviii. 38, &c. And accordingly, we find the Israelites, (when they wish all prosperity to their king,) praying, that God would be pleased 'to accept' (in the Hebrew, 'turn into ashes') 'his burnt sacrifice,' Ps. xx. 3.—*Patrick and Le Clerc's Commentary*.

c *Dr Hales* is of opinion that these sacrifices were not offered till Cain and Abel were each about 100 years old. If so, they were offered, according to his computation, about the year of the world, 200 or 201; and 5210 or 5211 before Christ.—*Ed.*

d Gen. iv. 4. 'Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock.' The universality of sacrificial rites will naturally produce an inquiry into the source, from which such a custom so inexplicable upon any principles of mere natural reason could have been derived. And here we are involuntarily led to the first institution of this ordinance, which is so particularly recorded in Scripture. When it pleased God to reveal his gracious purpose of redeeming lost mankind by the blood of the Messiah, it would doubtless be highly expedient to institute some visible sign, some external representation, by which the mysterious sacrifice of Mount Calvary might be prophetically exhibited to all the posterity of Adam. With this view, a pure and immaculate victim, the firstling of the flock, was carefully selected; and after its blood had been shed, was solemnly appointed to blaze upon the altar of Jehovah. When the first typical sacrifice was offered

God, however, in great kindness, condescended to expostulate the matter with him, telling him, ²"That his respect to true goodness was impartial, wherever he found it, and that ³therefore it was purely his own fault, that his offering was not equally accepted, that piety was the proper disposition for a sacrificer; and that, if herein he would emulate his brother, the same tokens of divine approbation should attend his oblations; ⁴that it was folly and madness in him to harbour any revengeful thoughts against his brother; because, if he proceeded to put them in execution, ⁵a dreadful punishment would

² *Patrick's Commentary.*

³ *Poole's Annotations.*

up, fire miraculously descended from heaven, and consumed it; and when this primitive ordinance was renewed under the Levitical priesthood, two circumstances are particularly worthy of observation—that the victim should be a firstling—and that the oblation should be made by the instrumentality of fire. It is remarkable that both these primitive customs have been faithfully preserved in the heathen world. The Canaanites caused their first born to pass through the fire, with a view of appeasing the anger of their false deities; and one of the kings of Moab is said to have offered up his eldest son as a burnt-offering, when in danger from the superior prowess of the Edomites, 2 Kings iii. 27. Nor was the belief, that the gods were rendered propitious by this particular mode of sacrifice, confined to the nations which were more immediately contiguous to the territories of Israel. We learn from *Homer*, that a whole hecatomb of firstling lambs was no uncommon offering among his countrymen. *Iliad*, iv. ver. 202. And the ancient Goths, having "laid it down as a principle, that the effusion of the blood of animals appeased the anger of the gods, and that their justice turned aside upon the victims those strokes which were destined for men," (*Mallet's North. Antiq.* vol. 1. chap. 7.) soon proceeded to greater lengths, and adopted the horrid practice of devoting human victims. In honour of the mystical number three, a number deemed particularly dear to heaven, every ninth month witnessed the groans and dying struggles of nine unfortunate victims. The fatal blow being struck, the lifeless bodies were consumed in the sacred fire, which was kept perpetually burning; while the blood, in singular conformity with the Levitical ordinances, was sprinkled partly upon the surrounding multitude, partly upon the trees of the hallowed grove, and partly upon the images of their idols. (*Mallet's North. Antiq.* vol. 1. chap. 7.) Even the remote inhabitants of America have retained similar customs, and for similar reasons.

e The words in our translation are, 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?' ver. 7. which some render, 'shalt thou not receive,' namely, a reward? others 'shalt thou not be pardoned?' and others again, 'thou shalt be elevated to dignity.' But if we consider, what God says to Cain in the two foregoing verses, 'that his countenance was fallen,' we cannot but perceive, that in this he promises him, that if he did well, he should have his face 'lifted up,' and that he should have no more reason to be sad; for so the Scripture frequently expresses a fearless and cheerful state: 'If iniquity be in thine hand,' says one of Job's friends, 'put it away from thee, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles; for then thou shalt lift up thy face without spot,' Job xi. 15.—*Essay for a New Translation.*

f The words in our translation are, 'Sin lieth at thy door:' where, by 'sin,' the generality of interpreters mean, the punishment of sin, which is hard at hand, and ready to overtake the wicked. But our learned *Lightfoot* observes that God does not here present himself to Cain, in order to threaten, but to encourage him, as the first words of his speech to him do import; and that therefore the bare description of 'lying at the door,' does plainly enough insinuate, that the text does not speak either of errors or punishment, but of a 'sacrifice for sin,' which the Scripture often calls by the Hebrew word here, and which was commonly placed before the door of the sanctuary, as may be seen in several passages of Scripture. So that, according to this sense, God is here comforting Cain, even though he did amiss in maligning his brother, and referring him to the propitiation of Christ, which, even then, was of standing force for the remission of sin.—*Essay for a New Translation.* But this sense of the word seems a little too far-fetched.

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immediately overtake him; and that least of all he had reason to be angry with him whose preference was only a token of his superior virtue, and not intended to supplant him of his birthright, which ¹should always be inviolate, and his brother be obliged to ^apay him the respect and homage that was due to his primogeniture; which, if he was minded to preserve, his wisest way would be to be quiet, and not proceed one step farther in any wicked design."

This was a kind admonition from God; but so little effect had it upon Cain, that instead of being sensible of his fault, and endeavouring to amend, he grew more and more incensed against his brother; insomuch that at last he took a resolution to kill him; but dissembled his design, until he should find a proper opportunity.

And, to this purpose, coming to his brother one day, and pretending great kindness to him, he asked him very friendly to take a walk with him in the fields, where, having got him alone, ^bupon some pretence or other, he picked a quarrel with him, and so fell upon him, and slew him, and afterward ²buried him in the ground; to prevent all discovery: but it was not long before he was called to an account for this horrid fact. God appeared to him, and having questioned him about his brother, and received some sullen and evasive answers from him,

¹ *Le Clerc's Commentary.* ² *Josephus's Antig.*, b. 1. c. 3.

^a The words in the text are 'unto thee shall be his desire,' Gen. iii. 16., which (however some expositors have clouded them) will appear to be plain and easy enough, if we do but consider, that there are two expressions, in the Hebrew tongue, to signify the readiness of one person to serve and respect another. The one is (*aine el yad*) or 'our eyes are to his hand;' the other (*teshukah el*) or 'our desire is to him.' The former expresses our outward attendance, and the latter the inward temper and readiness of our mind to pay respect. Of the former we have an instance in Ps. cxxliii. 'The eyes of servants are to the hand of their masters, and the eyes of a maiden are to the hand of her mistress,' that is, they stand ready with a vigilant observance to execute their orders. We meet the other expression in the place before us, and it imports an inward temper and disposition of mind to pay respect and honour. 'His desire will be unto thee,' that is, he will be heartily devoted (as we say in English) to honour and respect you. And 'thou shalt (or mayest) rule over him,' that is, you may have any service from him you can desire.—*Shuckford's Connexion*, vol. 1.

^b According to the English translation, Moses tells us, ver. 8. that 'Cain talked with Abel his brother.' The words strictly signify, 'Cain said unto Abel his brother;' after which there is a blank space left in the Hebrew copies, as if something was wanting. The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuag. version supply this, by adding the words,— 'Let us go into the fields;' but the Jerusalem Targum, and that of Jonathan, have supplied us with their whole conversation: "As they went along, I know, says Cain, that the world was created by the mercy of God, but it is not governed according to the fruit of our good works, and there is respect of persons in judgment. Why was thy oblation favourably accepted, when mine was rejected? Abel answered and said unto Cain, The world was created in mercy, and is governed according to the fruits of our good works. There is no respect of persons in judgment; for my oblation was more favourably received, because the fruit of my works was better, and more precious, than thine. Hereupon Cain in a fury breaks out, 'There is no judgment, nor judge, nor any other world; neither shall good men receive any reward, nor wicked men be punished. To which Abel replied, 'There is a judgment and a judge, and another world, in which good men shall receive a reward, and wicked men be punished.'" Upon which there ensued a quarrel, which ended in Abel's death. So that, according to this account, Abel suffered for the vindication of the truth, and was, in reality, the first martyr.—*Esthius on the more Difficult Passages*.

directly charged him with his murder; and then representing it, in its proper aggravations, as a crime unpardonable, and what cried aloud to Heaven for vengeance, he proceeded immediately to pass sentence upon him.

Cain's chief ³design and ambition was, to make himself great and powerful, in favour with God, and in credit with men, without any one to stand in competition with him; but in every thing he intended, he found himself disappointed, for attempting to accomplish his ends in so wicked a manner. Instead of growing great and opulent, the ground was sentenced 'not to yield him her strength,' that is, he was to be unprosperous in his husbandry and tillage: instead of enjoying God's favour without a rival, he was banished from his presence, and for ever excluded from that happy converse with the Deity, which, in these first ages of the world, it was customary for good men to enjoy: and instead of being a man of renown among his family, he became 'a fugitive and vagabond;' was banished from his native country, and compelled to withdraw into some distant and desolate part of the earth, as an abominable person, not worthy to live, nor fit to be endured in any civil community.

The same principle, which leads wicked men to the commission of crimes, in hopes of impunity, throws them into despair, upon the denunciation of punishment. This sentence of Cain, though infinitely short of the heinousness of his guilt, made him believe, ^cthat he was to undergo much greater evils than it really imported; and that not only the miseries of banishment, but the danger likewise of being slain by every one that came near him, was ensuant upon it. But, to satisfy him in this respect, God was pleased to declare, that his providence should protect him from all outward violence: and, to remove the uneasy apprehension from his mind, vouchsafed to give him a sign (very ⁴probably by some sensible miracle) that no creature whatever should be permitted to take away his life; but, that whoever attempted it should incur a very severe punishment; because God ⁵was minded to prolong his days in this wretched estate, as a monument of his vengeance, to deter future ages from committing the like murder.

Thus, by the force of the divine sentence, Cain left his parents and relations, and went into a strange country. He was banished from that sacred place where

³ *Shuckford's Introduction*, vol. 1. ⁴ *Universal History*, No. 2

⁵ *Patrick's Commentary*.

^c The words in our translation are, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear;' but as the Hebrew word (*Aven*) signifies 'iniquity,' rather than punishment, and the verb (*Nasha*) signifies 'to be forgiven,' as well as to 'bear,' it seems to agree better with the context, if the verse be rendered either positively, 'My iniquity is too great to be forgiven,' or (as the Hebrew expositors take it) by way of interrogation, 'Is my iniquity too great to be forgiven?' which seems to be the better of the two.—*Shuckford's Connexion*, vol. 1. A learned annotator has observed, that as there are seven abominations in the heart of him that loveth not his brother, Prov. xxvi. 25., there were the like number of transgressions in Cain's whole conduct; for, 1. he sacrificed without faith; 2. was displeased that God respected him not; 3. hearkened not to God's admonition; 4. spake dissemblingly to his brother; 5. killed him in the field; 6. denied that he knew where he was; and, 7. neither asked, nor hoped for mercy from God, but despaired and so fell into the condemnation of the devil.—*Ainsworth's Annotations*.

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God vouchsafed ^a frequent manifestations of his glorious presence; and though by the divine decree no person was permitted to hurt him, yet, being conscious of his own guilt, he was fearful of every thing he saw or heard: till having wandered about a long while in many different countries, he settled at length with his wife and family in the land of Nod; where, in some tract of time, and after his descendants were sufficiently multiplied, he built a city, that they might live together, and be united, the better to defend themselves against incursions, and ^b to secure their unjust possessions; and this place he called after the name of his son Enoch, which, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies a dedication.

This Enoch begat Jarad; Jarad begat Mehujael; Mehujael begat Methusael; and Methusael begat Lamech, who was ^c the first introducer of polygamy. For he married two wives, Adah and Zillah, by the former of which he had two children; Jabal, ^d who made great

^a Both *Lightfoot*, *Heidegger*, and *Le Clerc*, seem to be of opinion, that what we render the 'presence of the Lord,' was the proper name of that particular place where Adam, after his expulsion from paradise, dwelt; and accordingly we find that part of the country which lies contiguous to the supposed situation of paradise, called by Strabo (b. 16. *prosopora*.) However this be, it is agreed by all interpreters, that there was 'a divine glory,' called by the Jews SCHECHINAH, which appeared from the beginning, (as we said before, page 15, in the notes) and from which Cain being now banished, never enjoyed the sight of it again. If, after this, Cain turned a downright idolater, (as many think,) it is very probable that he introduced the worship of the sun (which was the most ancient idolatry) as the best resemblance he could find of the glory of the Lord which was wont to appear in a flaming light.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b The words of *Josephus* are these. "So far was Cain from mending his life after his afflictions, that he rather grew worse and worse, abandoning himself to his lusts, and all manner of outrage, without any regard to common justice. He enriched himself by rapine and violence, and made choice of the most profligate of monsters for his companions, instructing them in the very mystery of their own profession. He corrupted the simplicity and plain dealing of former times, with a novel invention of weights and measures, and exchanged the innocence of that primitive generosity and candour for the new tricks of policy and craft. He was the first who invaded the common rights of mankind by bounds and enclosures, and the first who built a city, fortified, and peopled it."—*Antiq.* b. 1. c. 3; and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^c *Le Clerc*, supposing that the increase of females at the beginning of the world was much greater than that of males, is of opinion that there might possibly want a man to espouse one of the women which Lamech married; nor can he think that Moses intended to blame him for what was the constant practice of some of the most eminent of the postdiluvian patriarchs. Bishop *Patrick* likewise makes this apology for him. "His earnest desire of seeing that blessed seed," says he, "which was promised to Eve, might perhaps induce him to take more wives than one, hoping, that by multiplying his posterity, some or other of them might prove so happy as to produce that seed. And this he might possibly persuade himself to be more likely, because the right which was in Cain, the first-born, he might now conclude, was revived in himself; and that the curse laid upon Cain was by this time expired, and his posterity restored to the right of fulfilling the promise." Both *Selden* and *Grotius* plead for the lawfulness of polygamy before the Levitical dispensation; but the learned *Heidegger* (who has a whole dissertation upon the subject) has sufficiently answered them, and proved at large, that this custom of multiplying wives is contrary both to the law of God and the law of nature.—*History of the Patriarchs, Essay 7th*.

^d The words in the text are,—'He was the father of such as dwell in tents;' for the Hebrews call him the father of any thing who was the first inventor of it, or a most excellent master of that art: and from the affinity of their names, as well as the similitude of their inventions, learned men have supposed, that

improvements in the management of cattle, and found out the use of tents, ¹ or movable houses, to be carried about to places of fresh pasture; and Jubal, who was the first inventor of all musical instruments, and himself a great master and performer. By the latter he had Tubal-Cain, the first who discovered ² the art of forging and polishing metals, and thereupon devised the making all sorts of armour, both defensive and offensive; and whose sister Naamah (a name denoting fair and beautiful,) is supposed to have first found out the art of spinning and weaving.

³ This is the register of Cain's posterity for seven generations: and Moses, perhaps, might the rather enumerate them, to show who were the real authors and inventors of certain arts and handicrafts, ⁴ which the Egyptians too vainly assumed to themselves: but then he barely enumerates them, without ever remarking how long any of them lived, (a practice contrary to what he observes in the genealogy of the Sethites,) as if he esteemed them a generation so reprobate as ⁵ not to deserve a place in the book of the living.

The murder of Abel had, for a long time, occasioned a great animosity between the family of Seth and the descendants of Cain, who, though at some distance, lived in perpetual apprehensions that the other family might come upon them unawares, and revenge Abel's untimely death: but Lamech, when he came to be head of a people, endeavoured to reason them out of this fear. For ⁶ calling his family together, ^e he argued with them to

¹ *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

² *Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs*.

³ *Howell's History of the Bible*.

⁴ *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

⁵ *Patrick's Commentary*.

⁶ *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 1.

Jabal was the Pales; and Jubal the Apollo; Tubal-Cain (which in the Arabic tongue, still signifies a 'plate of iron' or 'brass') the Vulcan, and his sister Naamah the Venus, or (as some will have it) the Minerva of the Gentiles.—*Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs*; and *Stillingfleet's Origins*, b. 3. c. 5.

^e This speech of Lamech, as it stands unconnected with any thing before it, is supposed by many to be a fragment of some old record which Moses was willing to preserve; and, because it seems to fall into a kind of metre, some have thought it a short sketch of Lamech's poetry, which he was desirous to add to his son's invention of music, and other arts. Many suppose, that Lamech, being plagued with the daily contentions of his two wives, here blusters and boasts of what he had done and what he would do, if they gave him any farther molestation. Others imagine, that as the use of weapons was found out by one of his sons, and now become common, his wives were fearful, lest somebody or other might make use of them to slay him; but that, in this regard, he desires them to be easy, because, as he was not guilty of slaying any body himself, there was no reason to fear any body would hurt him. The Targum of Onkelos, which reads the words interrogatively, favours this interpretation much? 'Have I slain a man to my wounding or a young man to my hurt?' that is, I have done no violence or offence to any one, either great or small, and have therefore no cause to be apprehensive of any to myself. But the Rabbins tell us a traditional story, which, if true, would explain the passage at once. The tradition is,—'That Lamech, when he was blind, took his son Tubal-Cain to hunt with him in the woods, where they happened on Cain, who being afraid of the society and converse of men, was wont to lie lurking up and down in the woods; that the lad mistook him for some beast stirring in the bushes, and directed his father, how, with a dart, or an arrow, he might kill him; and this (they say) was the man whom he killed by his wounding him; and that afterwards, when he came to perceive what he had done, he beat Tubal-Cain to death for misinforming him; and this was the young man whom he killed by hurting or beating him.' But besides the incongruity of a blind man's

A. M. 128. A. C. 3876; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 201. A. C. 5210. GEN. CH. 4. TO VER. 25.

this purpose. "Why should we make our lives uneasy with these groundless suspicions? What have we done, that we should be afraid? We have not killed any man, nor offered any violence to our brethren of the other family; and surely reason must teach them, that they can have no right to hurt or invade us. Cain indeed, our ancestor, killed Abel; but God was pleased so far to forgive his sin, as to threaten to take the severest vengeance on any one that should kill him; and if so, surely they must expect a much greater punishment, who shall presume to kill any of us. For 'if Cain shall be avenged seven-fold, surely Lamech,' or any of his innocent family, 'seventy-seven-fold.'" And it is not improbable, that by frequent discourses of this kind, as well as by his own example, he overcame the fears and shyness of the people, and (as we shall find hereafter) encouraged them to commence an acquaintance with their brethren, the children of Seth. This is the sum of what the Scripture teaches us of the deeds of Cain, and his wicked offspring, who were all swept away in the general deluge.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties obviated, and Objections answered.*

THOUGH it cannot be denied but that Moses might principally design to give us a history of the Jewish nation; yet, in the beginning of his account, and till they came to be distinguished from other nations in the patriarch Abraham, he could not have that under his peculiar consideration. He acquaints us, we find, with the origination of the first of other animals, whence they arose, and in what manner they were perfected; and when he came to treat of the formation of human creatures, it is but reasonable to imagine, that he intended likewise to be understood of the first of their kind. Now, that Adam and Eve were the first of their kind, the words of our Saviour, ¹ 'from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female,' are a full confirmation; because he produces the very same precept that was applied to Adam and Eve at their creation, 'therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife:' and that there could be none before them, the reason why ² 'Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living,' i. e. the person who was to be the root and source of all mankind that were to be upon earth, is a plain demonstration: for if she was the mother of all living, there certainly was no race of men or women before her.

¹ Mark x. 6.² Gen. iii. 20.

going a hunting, this story is directly contrary to the promise of God, which assured Cain, that no person should kill him, and seems indeed to be devised for no other purpose, but merely to solve the difficulty of the passage. Among the many interpretations which have been made of it, that which I have offered seems to be the most natural and easy, and is not a little countenanced by the authority of *Josephus*. "As for Lamech," says he, "who saw as far as any man into the course and methods of divine justice, he could not but find himself concerned in the prospect of that dreadful judgment which threatened his whole family, for the murder of Abel, and, under this apprehension, he breaks the matter to his two wives."—*Antiquities*, b. 1. c. 3.

St Paul, while he was at Athens, endeavoured to convince the people of the vanity of that idolatry into which he perceived them fallen, by this argument, among others,—that ³ 'God had made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth.' ⁴ Some Greek copies read it ἐξ ἐνός, 'of one man,' leaving out αἵματος, wherein they are followed by the vulgar Latin: but allowing the common reading to be just, yet still the word αἷμα, or blood, must be taken in the ^a sense wherein it occurs in the best Greek authors, namely, for the stock or root out of which mankind came; and so the apostle's reasoning will be—"That however men are now dispersed in their habitations, and differ much in language and customs from each other, yet they all were originally the same stock, and derived their succession from the first man that God created." Neither can it be conceived, on what account ⁵ Adam is called in Scripture 'the first man,' and that 'he was made a living soul of the earth, earthly,' unless it were to denote, that he was absolutely the first of his kind, and so was to be the standard and measure of all that followed.

The design of Moses is not to give us a particular account of the whole race of mankind descended from Adam, ⁶ but only of those persons who were most remarkable, and whose story was necessary to be known, for the understanding of the succession down to his time. Besides those that are particularly mentioned in Scripture, we are told in general, that 'Adam ⁷ begat sons and daughters; and if we will give credit to an ancient eastern tradition, he had in all thirty-three sons, and twenty-seven daughters, which, considering the primitive fecundity, would in a short time be sufficient to stock that part of the world at least where Adam dwelt, and produce a race of mechanics able enough to supply others with such instruments of husbandry as might then be requisite for the cultivation of the ground. ⁸ For in the infancy of the world, the art of tillage was not come to such a perfection but that Cain might make use of wooden ploughs and spades, and instead of knives and hatchets, form his tools with sharp flints or shells, which were certainly the first instruments of cutting. And though in those early days there was no great danger of Abel's losing his cattle by theft; yet, to provide them with cool shades in hot climates, to remove them from place to place as their pasture decayed, to take care of their young, and guard them from the incursions of beasts of prey, (with many more incidental offices,) was then the shepherd's province, as well as now.

According to the computation of most chronologers, it was in the hundred and twenty-ninth year of Adam's age, that Abel was slain; for the Scripture says expressly, that Seth, ⁹ (who was given in the lieu of Abel) was 'born in the hundred and thirtieth year, (very likely the year after the murder was committed,) to be a com-

³ Acts xvii. 26.⁴ *Stillingfleet's Sacred Origins*, b. 3. c. 4.⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 45.⁶ *Patrick's Commentary*. ⁷ Gen. v. 4.⁸ *Nicholls's Conference*, vol. 1. ⁹ Gen. v. 3.

a *Homer* employs it in this acceptance:—

'Since mine thou art indeed, and of my blood.'

Thence those that are near relations are called by *Sophocles*, 'of the same blood,' and accordingly *Virgil* uses *sanguis*, or blood, in the same sense: 'sprung from Trojan blood.'—*Stillingfleet's Sacred Origins*, b. 3. c. 4.

A. M. 123. A. C. 3876; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 209. A. C. 5211. GEN. CH. 4. TO VER. 25.

fort to his disconsolate parents. So that Cain must have been an hundred and twenty-nine years old when he abdicated his own country; at which time there might be a sufficient quantity of mankind upon the face of the earth, to the number, it may be, of an hundred thousand souls. For if the children of Israel, from seventy persons, in the space of a hundred and ten years, became six hundred thousand fighting men, (though great numbers of them were dead during this increase,) we may very well suppose, that the children of Adam, whose lives were so very long, might amount at least to a hundred thousand in a hundred and thirty years, which are almost five generations.

Upon this supposition, it will be no hard matter to find Cain a wife in another country; ^a though it is much more probable that he was married before his banishment, because we may well think that all the world would abhor the thoughts of marriage with such an impious vagabond and murderer. Upon this supposition we may likewise find him men enough to build and inhabit a city; especially ¹ considering that the word *Hir*, which we render *city*, may denote no more than a certain number of cottages, with some little hedge or ditch about them: and this cluster of cottages (as was afterwards customary) he might call by his son's name rather than his own, which he was conscious was now become odious every where. Upon this supposition, lastly, we may account for Cain's fear, lest every one that lighted on him would kill him; for by this time mankind was greatly multiplied, and ² though no mention is made of Abel's marriage, (as, in so short a compendium, many things must necessarily be omitted,) yet he perhaps might have sons who were ready to pursue the fugitive, in order to revenge their father's death; or some of his own sisters, enraged against him for the loss of their brother, might possibly come upon him unawares, or when they found him asleep, and so dispatch him.

Various are the conjectures of learned men ^b concern-

¹ *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

² *Patrick's Commentary.*

^a There is an original tradition, that Eve, at her two first births, brought twins, a son and a daughter: Cain, with his sister Azron, and Abel, with his sister Avin: that when they came to years of maturity, Adam proposed to Eve, that Cain should marry Abel's twin-sister, and Abel Cain's, because that was some small remove from the nearest degree of consanguinity, which even in those days, was not esteemed entirely lawful; that Cain refused to agree to this, insisting to have his own sister, who was the handsomer of the two; whereupon Adam ordered them both to make their offerings, before they took their wives, and so referred the dispute to the determination of God; that while they went up to the mountain for that purpose, the devil put it into Cain's head to murder his brother, for which wicked intent his sacrifice was not accepted: and that they were no sooner come down from the mountain, than he fell upon Abel, and killed him with a stone.—*Patrick's Commentary; and Universal History, No. 2.*

^b Almost all the versions have committed a mistake in translating ver. 15, that 'God had put a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.' The original says no such thing, and the LXX have very well rendered it thus: 'God set a sign before Cain, to persuade him, that whoever should find him should not kill him.' This is almost the same with what is said in Ex. x. 1, that 'God did signs before the Egyptians;' and Isa. lxvi. 19, that 'he would set a sign before the heathen;' where it is evident, that God did not mean any particular mark which should be set on their bodies, but only those signs and wonders which he wrought in Egypt, to oblige Pharaoh to let his people go; and the miraculous manner wherein he delivered them from

ing the mark which God set upon Cain, to prevent his being killed. Some think that God stigmatized him on his forehead with a letter of his own name, or rather set such a brand upon him, as signified him to be accursed. Others fancy that God made him a peculiar garment, to distinguish him from the rest of mankind, who were clothed with skins. Some imagine, that his head continually shook; others, that his face was blasted with lightning; others, that his body trembled all over: and others again, that the ground shook under him, and made every one fly from him: whereas the plain sense of the words is nothing more, than that God gave Cain a sign, or wrought a miracle before his face, thereby to convince him, that though he was banished into a strange land, yet no one should be permitted to hurt him; and to find out the land into which he was banished, is not so hard a matter as some may imagine.

The description which Moses gives us of it is this:—³ 'And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east side of Eden; and there he built a city, and called the name of it after the name of his son Enoch.' Hereupon ⁴ the learned *Huetius* observes, that *Ptolemy*, in his description of *Susiana*, places there a city called *Anuchtha*; and that the syllable *tha*, which ends the word, is, in the Chaldee language, a termination pretty common to nouns feminine, and consequently no part of the name itself: from whence he infers, that this *Anuchtha*, mentioned by *Ptolemy*, is the same with the city *Enoch* mentioned by *Moses*; especially since *Ptolemy* places it on the east side of *Eden*, which agrees very well with what *Moses* says of the land of *Nod*. ⁵ But though it be allowed, that *Anuchtha* and *Enoch* be the same name, yet it will not therefore follow, that there was no other city so called but that which was built by Cain. It is certain, that there was another *Enoch*, the son of *Jared*, and father of *Methuselah*, a person of remarkable piety, in the antediluvian age; and why might not the city, mentioned by *Ptolemy*, be called after him, in respect to his illustrious character, and miraculous exemption from death? or rather, why might it not take its name from some other *Enoch*, different from both the former, and living some generations after the flood? For it is scarce imaginable, how the city of *Enoch*, built before the flood, should either stand or retain its ancient name, after so violent a concussion, and total alteration of the face of nature.

Nor should it be forgot, that the province of *Susiana*, where *Huetius* places the land of *Nod*, is one of the most fruitful and pleasant countries in the world; whereas, considering that Cain's banishment was intended by God to be part of his punishment, it seems more reasonable to think, that he should, upon this account, be sent into some barren and desolate country, remote from the place of his nativity, and separated by mountains, and other

³ Gen. iv. 16, 17.

⁴ *On the Site of Paradise.*

⁵ *Well's Geography.*

the Babylonish captivity. This exposition is natural, and agreeable to the methods of divine providence, which is wont to convince the incredulous by signs and wonders; nor could any thing else assure Cain, in the fear he was under, that the first who met him should not kill him, after what God had said to him in the exprobaton of his crime.—*Patrick's Commentary, and Saurin's Dissertation.*

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natural obstructions, from the commerce of his relations. For which reason the learned Grotius is clearly of opinion, that the country into which Cain was sentenced to withdraw, was Arabia Deserta: to the barrenness of which, the curse that God pronounces against him, seems not improperly to belong. ¹ 'And now thou art cursed from the earth, and when thou tillest the ground, it shall not, henceforth, yield unto thee her strength.' But after all, their opinion is not to be found fault with, who suppose, that the word *Nod*, which signifies an *exile*, or *fugitive*, is not a proper, but only an appellative name; and that therefore, wherever the country was where Cain took up his abode, that, in after ages, was called *the land of Nod*, or the land of the banished man.

Thus the account, which Moses gives us of the murder of Abel, stands clear of the imputation of all absurdity or contradiction, wherewith the lovers of infidelity would gladly charge it. The time when his brother murdered him, was in the 129th year of the world's creation, when, ² according to a moderate computation, their and their parent's descendants could not but be very numerous. The manner in which he murdered him might not be with a sword or spear (which perhaps then were not in use,) ³ since a club, or stone, or any rural instrument, in the hand of rage and revenge, was sufficient to do the work. The place where he murdered him, is said to be in the field, ⁴ not in contradistinction to any large and populous city then in being, but rather to the tents, or cottages, where their parents and offspring might then live. The cause of his murdering him, was ⁵ a spirit of emulation, which, not duly managed, and made a spur to virtue, took an unhappy turn, and degenerated into malice: and the true reason of all (as the apostle has stated it) was, that ⁶ 'Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, because his own works were wicked, and his brother's righteous.'

¹ Gen. iv. 11.² *Le Clerc's Commentary.*³ *Shuckford's Connection.* ⁴ 1 John iii. 12.

^a Though we should suppose that Adam and Eve had no other children than Cain and Abel in the year of the world 128, which (as the best chronologers agree) was the time of Abel's murder; yet, as it must be allowed, that they had daughters married with these two sons, we require no more, than the descendants of these two children, to make a considerable number of men upon the earth in the said year 128. For, supposing them to have been married in the 19th year of the world, they might easily have had each of them eight children, some males, some females, in the 25th year. In the 50th year there might proceed from them, in a direct line, 64 persons; in the 74th year, there would be 572; in the 98th, 4096; and in the 122d year, they would amount to 32,768. If to these we add the other children, descended from Cain and Abel, their children, and the children of their children, we shall have in the aforesaid 122d year, 421,164 men, capable of generation, without ever reckoning the women, both old and young, or such children as are under the age of 17 years.—See *Chronological and Geographical Dissertation on the Bible History*, in the *Journal of Paris*, January, 1712, vol. li. p. 6.

^b There is an oriental tradition, that when Cain was confirmed in the design of destroying his brother, and knew not how to go about it, the devil appeared to him in the shape of a man, holding a bird in his hand; and that, placing the bird upon a rock, he took up a stone, and with it squeezed its head in pieces. Cain, instructed by this example, resolved to serve his brother in the same way; and therefore, waiting till Abel was asleep, he lifted up a large stone, and let it fall, with all its weight, upon his head, and so killed him; whereupon God caused him to hear a voice from heaven, to this purpose, 'The rest of thy days shalt

CHAP. III.—Of the Institution of Sacrifices.

The first plain account that we meet with of sacrifices, is here in the examples of Cain and Abel. Mention is made indeed of the skins of some beasts, wherewith God directed our first parents to be clothed; but expositors are not agreed, whether what we render skins might not denote some other sort of covering, or shelter from the weather; or, if they were the real skins of beasts, whether these beasts were offered unto God in sacrifice or no; whereas, in the Scripture before us, we have oblations of both kinds, *bloody* and *unbloody sacrifices*, (as they are commonly distinguished;) the fruits of the field, offered by Cain, and the firstlings of the flock, by Abel. So that from hence we may very properly take an occasion, to inquire a little into the original of sacrifices; for what ends and purposes they were at first appointed; and by what means they became an acceptable service unto God.

The Scriptures indeed make no mention of the first institution of sacrifices; and from their silence, in this respect, some have imagined that they proceeded originally from a dictate of nature, or a grateful inclination to return unto God some of his own blessings. But in so short an account of so large a compass of time, (as we have said before,) it may well be expected, that several things should be omitted. To this purpose, therefore, others have observed, that Moses says nothing of ⁷ Enoch's prophecy; nothing ⁸ of Noah's preaching; nothing ⁹ of the peopling of the world; though these be referred to in other parts of Scripture: ¹⁰ nor does he here introduce the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, with an intent to inform us of the origin of that rite, but merely to let us know what was the unhappy occasion of the first murder that ever was committed in the world.

The ¹¹ Jews indeed, to whom he primarily wrote, knew very well, that their own sacrifices were of divine institution, and that God had manifested his acceptance of them, at the very first solemn oblation after that institution, by a miraculous fire from the divine presence; nor had they any reason to doubt, but that they were so instituted, and so accepted from the beginning: and therefore there was less reason for Moses to expatiate upon a matter, which had doubtless descended to them in a clear and uninterrupted tradition.

A grateful sense of God's blessings will, at any time, engage us to offer him the *calves of our lips*, (as the Scripture terms them,) or the warmest expressions of our praise and thanksgiving; but what dictate of nature, or deduction of reason, could ever have taught us, that, to destroy the best of our fruits, or the best of our cattle, would have been a service acceptable to God? Goodness, and mercy, and lenity, and compassion, are the ideas we have of that infinite being; and who would then have thought, that putting an innocent and inoffensive creature to torture, spilling its blood upon the earth, and burning its flesh upon an altar, would have

⁵ Jude 14.⁶ 2 Pet. ii. 15.⁷ See Gen. iv.⁸ *Outram on Sacrifices.*⁹ *Revelation Examined.*

thou pass in perpetual fear.'—*Calmet's Dictionary on the word Abel.*

A. M. 128. A. C. 3876; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 209. A. C. 5211. GEN. CH. 4. TO VER. 25.

been either a grateful sight, or 'an offering of a sweet smelling savour' to the Most High?

No¹ being, we know, can have a right to the lives of other creatures, but their Creator only, and those on whom he shall think proper to confer it: but it is evident, that God, at this time, had not given man a right to the creatures, even for necessary food, much less for unnecessary cruelty; and therefore to have taken away their lives, without God's positive injunction, would have been an abominable act, and enough to desecrate all their oblations. When therefore we read, that his acceptance of sacrifices of old was usually testified by way of inflammation, or setting them on fire, by a ray of light which issued from his glorious presence, we must allow, that this was a proof of his previous institution of them; otherwise we cannot possibly think, why he should so far concern himself about them, as even to be at the expense of a miracle, to denote his approbation of them. ² 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord,' is the Apostle's way of arguing, 'or who hath been his counsellor?' And, in like manner, without a divine revelation, it would have been the height of vanity and presumption, to have pretended to determine the way of reconciliation with him, and (without his order and appointment) to have entered upon a form of worship, entirely new and strange, by killing of beasts, and burning their fat. ³ 'No man,' says another Apostle, 'taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron;' nor can any one lay hold on the promise of forgiveness of sins (which is the great design of all sacrificing) any other way than by symbols of God's own institution.

In ⁴ most nations indeed, the custom of sacrificing did prevail: but that it did not arise from any principle of nature or reason, is manifest from hence—⁵ that the gravest and wisest of the heathen philosophers always ^a condemned bloody sacrifices as impious, and unacceptable to their gods; but this they would not have done, had they looked upon them as any branch of natural religion, which none were more warm in extolling than they. It is no improbable conjecture, therefore, that other nations might take the rite of sacrificing from the Jews, to ⁶ which the devil, in heathen countries, might instigate his votaries, purely to ape God, and imitate his ordinances: or if this commencement of sacri-

ficing among them is thought to be too late, why may not we suppose, that they received it by tradition from their forefathers, who had it originally from Adam, as he had it from God by a particular revelation? Now that there was some warrant and precept of God for it, seems to be intimated by the author to the Hebrews, when he tells us, that ⁷ 'by faith Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice, than Cain:' for ⁸ if 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, faith is founded on some word, and relieth on divine command or promise; and therefore, when Abel offered the best of his flock in sacrifice, he did what was enjoined him by God, and his practice was founded upon a divine command, which was given to Adam, and his sons, though Moses, in his short account of things, makes no mention of it.

In fine, if it appears from history, that sacrifices have been used all over the world, have spread as far, as universally among men, as the very notions of a Deity; if we find them almost as early in the world as mankind upon the earth, and, at the same time, cannot perceive that mankind ever could, by the light of reason, invent such notions of a Deity, as might induce them to think, that this way of worship would be an acceptable service to him; if mankind indeed could have no right to the lives of the brute creation, without the concession of God; and yet it is evident, that they exercised such right, and God approved of their proceeding, by visible indications of his accepting the sacrifices; then must we necessarily suppose, that sacrifices were of his own institution at first; and that they were instituted for purposes well becoming his infinite wisdom and goodness.

For we must remember, that Adam and Eve were, at this time, become sinners, and though received into mercy, in constant danger of relapsing; that, by their transgression, they had forfeited their lives, but as yet could have no adequate sense, either of the nature of the punishment, or the heinousness of the sin which procured it; and that now they were to beget children, who were sure to inherit their parents' corruption and infirmity. Since man, therefore, had forfeited his life by his transgressions, and God, notwithstanding, decreed to receive him into mercy, nothing certainly could better become the divine wisdom and goodness, than the establishment of some institution, which might at once be a monition both of the mercy of God, and the punishment due to sin. And because God foresaw that man would often sin, and should often receive mercy, it was necessary, that the institution should be such as might frequently be repeated; and in such repetition, frequently remind man of his own endless demerit, and of God's infinite goodness to him; to which purpose the institution of sacrifices for sin was of excellent use and service.

Both from the commandment which at first was given to Adam, and the sentence which was afterwards denounced against him, we learn, that death was the penalty of his disobedience; and since it was so, certainly it was highly proper, that he should know what he was to suffer; and consequently that he should see death in all its horror and deformity, in order to judge rightly of the evil of disobedience. And what could exhibit this evil

¹ Revelation Examined. ² Rom. xi. 34. ³ Heb. v. 4.

⁴ Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs, Essay 1.

⁵ Edward's Survey of Religion, vol. 1.

⁶ Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs, Essay 8.

^a It is the opinion of Tertullian, *Apol.* c. 46. that none of the ancient philosophers ever compelled the people to sacrifice living creatures. Theophrastus is quoted by Porphyry in Eusebius' *Evangelical Preparation*, b. 1. c. 9. as asserting that the first men offered handfuls of grass; that, in time, they come to sacrifice the fruits of the trees; and, in after ages, to kill and offer cattle upon altars. Many other authors are cited for this opinion. Pausanias on *Phrygian Crops*, seems to intimate, that the ancient sacrifice was only fruits of trees (of the vine especially,) and of honeycombs and wool. Empedocles on the *most Ancient Times*, affirms, that the first altars were not stained with the blood of creatures; and Plato on *Laws*, b. 6. was of opinion, that living creatures were not anciently offered in sacrifice, but cakes of bread, and fruits, and honey, poured upon them; for "The heavenly deities delight not in the sacrifice of an ox," was an old position of more writers than Ovid.—See Shuckford's *Connection*, vol. 1. b. 2

⁷ Heb. xi. 4.

⁸ Rom. x. 17.

A. M. 128. A. C. 3876; OR, ACCORDING TO HATES, A. M. 200. A. C. 5211. GEN. CH. 4. TO VER. 25.

more strongly, than the groans and struggles of innocent creatures, bleeding to death for his guilt, before his eyes, and by his own hands? Sights of this kind are shocking to human nature even yet, though custom hath long made them familiar: with what horror then, may we imagine that they pierced the hearts of our first parents, and how was that horror aggravated, when they considered themselves as the guilty authors of so much cruelty to the creatures which were about them? Nay, when the groans of these dying animals were over, what a sad, a ghastly spectacle must their cold carcasses yield? and even after their oblation, how dismal a meditation must it be, to consider the beauty and excellency of these animate beings reduced to an handful of dust; especially, when they could not see them in that condition, but under sad conviction, that they themselves must follow the same odious steps to destruction?

We can hardly conceive, how God could strike the human soul with a deeper sense of misery from guilt, or with more abhorrence of the sad cause of that misery, than by this method of appointing sacrifices: nor can we imagine how our first parents could have ever sustained themselves under such afflicting thoughts, had not God, in his infinite goodness, caused some ray of hope to shine through this scene of mortality and misery, and made sacrifices (at the same time that they were such lively emblems of the horror of guilt) the means of its expiation, and the seals of his covenant of grace.

That God entered into a covenant of mercy with man, immediately after the fall, is evident from the sentence passed upon the serpent, wherein that covenant is comprised: and therefore, as we find that, in after ages, his usual way of ratifying covenants of this kind was by sacrifices; so we cannot imagine that he failed to do so at this time, when such mercy was more wanted than ever it was since the foundation of the world. Sacrifices indeed have no natural aptitude to expiate guilt, in which sense, the apostle affirms it ² 'to be impossible for the blood of bulls, and of goats, to take away sins.' The death of a beast is far from being equivalent to the death of a man, but infinitely short of that eternal death to which the man's sinfulness does consign him: but still, as sacrifices are federal rites, and one of those external means which God had instituted, under the antediluvian dispensation, for man's recovery from sin, we cannot but suppose, but that, when piously and devoutly offered, they were accepted by him, for the expiation of transgressions; though it must be owned, that they did not, of themselves, or by their own worthiness, atone for any thing, but only in virtue of the expiatory sacrifice of the Messiah to come, whereof they were no more than types and shadows. To speak strictly and properly, therefore, these sacrifices did not really and formally, but typically and mystically expiate, that is, they did not pacify God's anger, and satisfy his justice, and take away sin, by their own force and efficacy, but as they were figures and representations of that universal sacrifice, which (in the divine intention) 'was slain from the foundation of the world,' and, 'in the fulness of time,' was to come down from heaven, in order to fulfil the great undertaking of 'making atonement for the sins of all mankind.'

Thus to represent the horrid nature of sin, and to seal the eternal covenant of mercy; to be types of the great expiatory sacrifice of Christ's death, and a standing means of obtaining pardon and reconciliation with God, seem to be some of the principal ends of God's instituting sacrifices at first: and what was of use to gain them a favourable acceptance in his sight, we may, in some measure, learn from the reasons, that are usually alleged, for his rejection of Cain's, and approbation of Abel's sacrifice.

Most of the Jewish interpreters have placed the different events of these two sacrifices in the external quantity or quality of them. They tell us, that 'Cain brought of the fruits of the ground' indeed, but not of the first-fruits (as he should have done,) nor the fullest ears of corn, (which he kept for himself,) but the lankest and latest; and, even what he brought, 'twas with a niggardly hand and grudging mind; so that he raised God's aversion ³ 'by offering to him of that which cost him nothing:' whereas Abel found a kind acceptance, because 'he honoured the Lord with his substance:' he brought of the 'firstlings of his flock,' and the very best and fattest of them, as thinking nothing too good to be offered in devotion and gratitude to him from whom he received all.

⁵ Allowing the maxim of the Jewish church, namely, 'that without blood there is no remission,' to have been good, from the first institution of sacrifice, a very learned writer supposes, that Abel came, as a petitioner for grace and pardon, and brought the atonement appointed for sin; but Cain appeared before God as a just person, wanting no repentance, and brought an offering in acknowledgment of God's goodness and bounty, but no atonement in acknowledgment of his own wretchedness; and that upon this account his oblation was rejected, as God's expostulation with him seems to imply: 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at thy door,' that is, if thou art righteous, thy righteousness shall save thee; but if thou art not, by what expiation is thy sin purged? it lieth still at thy door.

The author to the ⁶ Hebrews has given us, I think, a key to this difficulty, when he tells us, that 'by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.' ⁷ The faith (of which the apostle gives us several instances in this chapter) is the belief of something declared, and, in consequence of such belief, the performance of some action enjoined by God: 'By faith Noah, being warned by God, prepared an ark,' that is, he believed the warning which God gave him and obediently made the ark which he had appointed him, to make: 'By faith Abraham, when called' to go into a strange land, 'which God promised to give him for an inheritance, obeyed,' that is, he believed that God would give him what he had promised, and, in consequence of such belief, did what God commanded him: and thus it was, that 'Abel, by faith, offered a better sacrifice than Cain,' because he believed what God had promised, that 'the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head,' and, in consequence of such belief, offered such a sacri-

³ 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.⁴ Prov. iii. 9.⁵ Bishop Sherlock's *Use of Prophecy*, dis. 3.¹ *Revelation Examined*.² Heb. x. 4.⁶ Chap. xi. ver. 4.⁷ *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 1. b. 2.

A. M. 138. A. C. 3876; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 200. A. C. 5211. GEN. CH. 4. TO VER. 25.

fice for his sins, as God had appointed to be offered, until the seed should come.

¹ In order to offer a sacrifice by faith then, there are three things requisite. 1st, That the person who offers should do it upon the previous appointment and direction of God. 2dly, That he should consider it as a sign and token of the promise of God made in Christ, and of remission of sins through his blood; and 3dly, That, while he is offering, he should be mindful withal (in the phrase of St Paul) 'to present himself a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God.' In the first of these qualifications Cain was right enough, because he had learned from his father, that, as God had appointed sacrifices, it was his duty to offer them: but herein was his great defect, that while he was offering, he gave no attention to what he was about; nor once reflected on the promise of God, made in paradise, nor placed any confidence in the merits of a Saviour, to recommend his services; but, vainly imagining that his bare oblation was all that was required to his justification, he took no care to preserve his soul pure and unpolluted, or to constitute his members as 'instruments of righteousness unto God.' In short, his oblation was the service of an hypocrite, lying unto God, and using the external symbols of grace 'for a cloak of maliciousness;' whereas Abel's sacrifice was attended with awful meditations on that 'seed of the woman' which was to become the world's Redeemer, with warm applications to him for mercy and forgiveness, and with holy resolutions of better obedience, of abandoning all sin, 'and always abounding in the work of the Lord;' and therefore there is no wonder, that their services met with so different a reception. For, however sacrificing was an external rite, yet the rite itself would by no means do, unless the attention of the mind, and the integrity of the heart went along with it, ² 'he that killed an ox was as if he slew a man; and he that sacrificed a lamb as if he cut off a dog's neck;' so detestable in the sight of God was ³ the richest oblation, when the sacrificer was not a good man; nay, so ready was he to pass by all observances of this kind, if the worshipper came but, in other respects, qualified: ⁴ 'For he that keepeth the law bringeth offerings enough; he that taketh heed to the law offereth a peace-offering; he that requiteth a good turn offereth fine flour; and he that giveth alms sacrificeth praise.' To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord; and to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation.⁵

¹ Heidegger's *History of the Patriarchs, Essay V.*

² Isa. lxi. 3. ³ Eccus. xxxv. 1, &c.

⁴ That it is not the quality of the sacrifice, but the mind and disposition of the sacrificer, which God regards, was the general sentiment of the wisest heathens, as appears by that excellent passage in Persius:—

'Justice upright, and sanctity of heart,
A polished mind, pure at its inmost core
A breast imbued with no dishonest art,
These I will yield, and duly Jove adore.'

Sat. 2.

And that other in Seneca:—

'It is not by victims, though they be most valuable and glitter with gold, that honour is paid to the gods, but by worshipping them with a pious and upright heart.'—*On Old Age*, 1. 6.

CHAP. IV.

On the Design of Sacrifice:—On the Sacrifices of the Patriarchal Dispensation.

(SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.)

SCRIPTURE assures us that Christ was 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' But what meaning are we to attach to these expressions, unless we understand them as referring to the significant and emblematical rite of sacrifice, instituted to prefigure the death incurred by sin, and the atonement by which its guilt was to be expiated? It is admitted that this atonement had a retrospective efficacy; that through it God declared his righteousness for the remission of sins that were past; and have we not, therefore, the best grounds for regarding the institution of sacrifice as having been intended from the beginning impressively to show forth the death of the Redeemer? He is described as 'the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world,' because he really fulfilled that which the sacrifice of lambs and of other animals prefigured.

In the first promise there is allusion to the sufferings of the Mighty Deliverer. In order that the great truths comprehended in this promise might be more clearly understood and deeply felt, we have every reason to believe that sacrifice was immediately and divinely instituted as an explanatory ordinance. Though the words of the institution are not recorded, the fact cannot be questioned; because sacrifice constituted a part of the worship of God from the fall of man; and we must feel assured that it could not be acceptably used in his worship but in consequence of divine appointment. We know that the inferior animals were not used as food, at least with the divine permission, till after the flood; and, consequently, there could be no occasion for slaying them, unless it were for sacrifice, till after that period. Our first parents having been clothed at the expense of life, and by the special interposition of God, had a striking representation given them of the mode in which forfeited happiness should be restored, and of that perfect righteousness by which they were justified before God. It was an intimation to them that the Deliverer, denominated the Seed of the woman, should redeem them by his sufferings.

Thus have we presented to our view immediately after the fall, and before the first transgressors were expelled from paradise, the two principal methods in which God unfolded to mankind the way of salvation, namely, prophecy and typical sacrifice. Both these methods of divine revelation were continued in the church with increasing clearness and precision till the coming of Christ; and both were intended to direct the faith of the people to the Substitute and Surety of sinners, who by the one offering up of himself was to obtain eternal redemption. In the first promise we have the foundation of that series of prophecies which was delivered from age to age, which announced the divine nature, the incarnation, the sufferings, death, and subsequent glories of the Redeemer. In the first sacrifice we have the basis of that series of typical observances, which prefigured the mediation and atonement of the Son of God.

A. M. 128. A. C. 3876; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 200. A. C. 5211. GEN. CH. 4. TO VER. 25.

Prophecy was the annunciation of what was future, expressed not by words but by signs. These signs were indefinitely varied; and, accordingly, the rites appointed to be observed in the worship of God, and the vicissitudes of the church in its trials and triumphs, recorded in the Old Testament, were emblematical. They served unto the example and shadow of good things to come. But the most prominent of these emblems was sacrifice, which by its direct reference to the atonement of Christ, aided the faith and hope of believers, and which by its universal use, even when its original design was forgotten, may have prepared mankind for that message of salvation which, in the fulness of time, was sent to them through a crucified Redeemer.

These views are confirmed by the circumstances recorded in Scripture regarding the sacrifice of Abel. By faith we are told that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord: and Abel, he brought of the firstlings of his flock. If we bear in mind the observations already made, we shall readily perceive the ground on which the sacrifice of Abel was accepted, while that of Cain was rejected. Abel offered his sacrifice in faith, in strict accordance with the command of God, and in firm reliance on his promise: he acknowledged by the death inflicted on an innocent animal his own desert as a sinner, and his trust in the way of redemption and recovery which God had mercifully provided: he thus as a true penitent approached God in worship, looking for pardon and reconciliation, renewing and sanctifying grace, through an atonement. But Cain, viewing God merely as his Creator and Preserver, offered the fruits of the earth as an acknowledgment of his goodness, entirely overlooking his own character as a sinner, and disregarding the divinely instituted sacrificial rite, the appointed emblem of the new and living way of access to God. "In short, Cain, the first-born of the fall, exhibits the first-fruits of his parents' disobedience, in the arrogance and self-sufficiency of reason, rejecting the aids of revelation, because they fell not within its apprehension of right. He takes the first place in the annals of deism, and displays, in his proud rejection of the ordinance of sacrifice, the same spirit, which, in later days, has actuated his enlightened followers, in rejecting the sacrifice of Christ."

The terms in which God expostulates with Cain convey a rebuke for his not offering an animal sacrifice like his brother Abel: 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, a sin-offering lieth even at the door.' There is here a reference to sin-offering as a known institution, the neglect of which in Cain incurred the divine displeasure, and the observance of animal sacrifice is anew enforced. The sacrifice which Abel presented unto God was of this description. The reason of its acceptance, according to the apostle Paul, was the faith in which it was offered; faith in the Redeemer promised under the appellation of the seed of the woman. "Of this faith, the offering of an animal in sacrifice, appears to have been the legitimate, and consequently the instituted, expression. The institution of animal sacrifice, then, was coeval with the fall, and had a reference to the sacrifice of our redemption.

But, as it had also an immediate, and most apposite, application to that important event in the condition of man, which, as being the occasion of, was essentially connected with, the work of redemption; *that* likewise, we have reason to think, was included in its significance. And thus, upon the whole, sacrifice appears to have been ordained, as a standing memorial of the death introduced by sin, and of that death which was to be suffered by the Redeemer."

First, then, it is evident, that the offering of Abel was different in its nature from that which was presented by Cain; and that this difference constituted the principal ground for the acceptance of the one, and the rejection of the other. It was a more full, a more ample sacrifice, that is, it partook more essentially of the nature of sacrifice, than the offering of Cain. It was 'of the firstlings of his flock,' an animal slain in solemn sacrifice unto God, in obedience to a known divine command, whereas Cain offered merely of the fruit of the ground, as an expression of thankfulness to the bounty of God. Hence,

Secondly, Abel is said to have offered his more excellent sacrifice by faith. On this circumstance there is much stress laid by the apostle, as he adduces it in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, as an example illustrative of the power and efficacy of faith. But what was the object of this faith? Unquestionably a divine revelation, the promise of the Messiah, to which such frequent allusion is made in Scripture, and in firm reliance on which the patriarchs lived and died. 'These all,' Abel and all the others whom the apostle had named, 'not having received the fulfilment of the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' This could not be the promise of entering the land of Canaan, because to Abel, Enoch, and Noah, no such promise was given, and because that even in regard to Abraham, the evangelist (John viii. 56.) explains the expression of his seeing the promises afar off, and embracing them, as signifying his seeing the day of Christ and rejoicing. To the completion of the great promise of the coming of the Seed of the woman, to accomplish the redemption of mankind, Abel looked with firm reliance on the truth of God. In the faith of this promise he offered unto God the kind of sacrifice which had been enjoined as the evidence of dependence on divine mercy, and as the typical expression of that atonement which was to be made in the fulness of time. And, therefore,

In the third place, he obtained the testimony of God to the acceptableness of his sacrifice, and to his own personal justification before God. 'By which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh.' He thus became heir of the righteousness of God which is by faith, 'even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe.' It was declared by God himself, that he was righteous before him, by his visibly attesting the excellency and acceptableness of his oblation.

We thus discover the reason for the difference in the divine reception of the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. This cannot be accounted for by those who deny the divine origin of sacrifice. Abel's sacrifice, as our author remarks, was more excellent than his brother's, because

A. M. 130. A. C. 3874; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 230. A. C. 5181. GEN. CH. 5. AND 6. TO VER. 13.

it was offered with faith in the great atonement, which he believed was in due time to take away the sin of the world; and because it consisted of what had been divinely instituted to prefigure the atonement in which he appears to have reposed all his trust.

S E C T. V.

CHAP. I.—Of the General Corruption of Mankind.

THE HISTORY.

GREAT ^a WAS the grief, no doubt, which our first parents felt upon the loss of the righteous Abel, and the expulsion of their wicked son Cain; but, to alleviate, in some measure, this heavy load of sorrow, God was pleased to promise them another son, whose fate should be different, and himself a lasting comfort and consolation to them: and therefore, as soon as Eve was delivered of the child, she called his name Seth, which signifies *substitute*, because God had been so good as to send him in the room of his brother Abel, whom Cain slew. Adam, when he had Seth, was 130 years old: he lived after that 800 years, and begat several other children (though Moses makes no mention of them.) So that the ^b whole of his life was 930 years.

A. M. 235, or 435. Seth, when he was 105 years old, had a son named Enos: after which time he lived 807 years; so that the whole of his life was 912.

A. M. 325, or 625. Enos, when 90, had a son named Cainan: after which he lived 815 years; in the whole 905.

A. M. 395, or 795. Cainan, when 70, had a son named Mahalaleel: after which he lived 840 years; in all 910.

A. M. 460, or 960. Mahalaleel, when 65, had a son named Jared: after which he lived 830 years; in all 895.

^a The Jewish, and some Christian doctors, say, that Adam and Eve mourned for Abel one hundred years, during which time they lived separate, Adam particularly, in a valley near Hebron thence named *the valley of tears*. And the inhabitants of Ceylon pretend, that the salt lake on the mountain of Columbo, was formed by the tears which Eve shed on this occasion. All fiction.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

^b If it be asked, how it came to pass, that Adam, who was immediately created by God, and, consequently, more perfect than any of his kind, did not outlive Methuselah, who was the eighth from him? the answer which some have given, namely, that his grief and affliction of mind for the loss of paradise, and the misery which, by his transgression, he had entailed upon his offspring, might affect his constitution, and by degrees, impair his strength, is not much amiss: but there is another reason which seems to me better founded, namely, that, whereas Adam was created in the full perfection of his nature, and all his descendants, being born infants, did gradually proceed to maturity; subtracting the time from their infancy to their manhood, we shall find, that Adam outlived them all. For we must not compute, as we do now, (when the extent of man's life is usually no more than seventy) that his complete manhood was at thirty, or thereabouts. In the very catalogue now before us, we read of none (except Enoch, and two others, who begat children before they were ninety or upwards;) and therefore, subtracting those years (which we may suppose interfered between his birth and his manhood) from the age of Methuselah, we may perceive, that Adam surpassed him to the number of almost sixty.—*On the more Difficult Passages*.

A. M. 622, or 1122. Jared, when 162, had a son named Enoch: after which he lived 800 years; in all 962.

A. M. 687, or 1287. Enoch, when 65, had a son named Methuselah: after which he lived 300: in all 365.

A. M. 874, or 1474. Methuselah, when 187, had a son named Lamech: after which he lived 782; in all 969.

A. M. 1056, or 1656. Lamech, when 182, had a son named Noah: after which he lived 595; in all 777: and

A. M. 1556, or 2256. Noah, when he was 500 years old, had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, ^c from whom the world, after the deluge, was replenished.

^d This is the genealogy which Moses gives us of the posterity of Adam, in the line of Seth, until the time of the deluge; but we must observe, that these are far from being all his progeny. In the case of our great progenitor Adam, he informs us, that after the birth of Seth, ¹ 'he had several sons and daughters,' though he does not so much as record their names; and the like we may suppose of the rest of the antediluvian patriarchs. For

¹ Gen. v. 4.

^c Of these three sons, the eldest was Japhet, as appears from Gen. x. 21., the second was Shem, from Gen. x. 21., and the youngest Ham, from Gen. ix. 24. Nevertheless, both here, and a little lower, Shem is named first; whether it was, that the rights of primogeniture were transferred to him (though the sacred historian says nothing of it,) or God was minded, thus early, to show that he would not be confined to the order of nature, in the disposal of his favours, which he frequently bestowed upon the younger children; or (what I think the most likely) because the nation of the Jews were to descend from him, and he, and his posterity, were to be the principal subject of this whole history.—*Patrick and Le Clerc's Commentary, and Pool's Annota.*

^d From this catalogue we may further observe, that the custom in those times was, to give children their names according to the occurrences in life, or expectations of their parents. Thus Seth, being a good man, was grieved to see the great degeneracy in other parts, though he endeavoured to preserve his own family from the contagion; and therefore called his son *Enos*, which signifies *sorrowful*. Enos, perceiving the posterity of Cain to grow every day worse and worse, was concerned for their iniquity, and began to dread the consequences of it; and therefore called his son *Cainan*, which denotes *lamentation*. Though Cainan had his name from the wickedness of Cain's family, yet he himself was resolved to maintain the true worship of God in his own; and therefore called his son *Mahalaleel*, that is, *a praiser and worshipper of God*. In the days of Mahalaleel (as the tradition tells us) a defection happened among the sons of Seth, who went down from the mountains where they inhabited, and adjoined themselves to the daughters of Cain; and therefore he called his son's name *Jared*, which signifies *descending*. Jared, to guard against the general corruption, devoted himself and his descendants, more zealously to the service of God, and, accordingly, called his son *Enoch*, which means *a dedication*. Enoch, by the spirit of prophecy, foreseeing the destruction which would come upon the earth, immediately after the death of his son, called his name *Methuselah*, which imports as much; for the first part of the word, *Methu*, signifies *he dies*, and *Selah*, the *sending forth of water*. Methuselah, perceiving the wickedness of the world, in the family of Seth, as well as that of Cain, to grow every day worse and worse, called his son *Lamech*, which intimates *a poor man, humbled, and afflicted with grief*, for the present corruption and fear of future punishment. And Lamech conceiving better hopes of his son (as some imagine) that he should be the promised seed, the restorer of mankind after the deluge, or a notable improver of the art of agriculture, called his name *Noah*, which denotes *a comforter*.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*. We may observe, from this catalogue, however, that the patriarchs, in those days, were not so superstitious, as to think any thing ominous in names; and therefore we find, that Jared feared not to call his son Enoch, by the very name of Cain's eldest son, Gen. iv. 17., even a Methuselah called his son Lamech, by the name of one of Cain's grandchildren, ch. iv. ver. 18.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

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it is incongruous to think, that Lamech was 181, and Methuselah, 187, before they ever had a child, when it so plainly appears that his father Enoch had one at 65. The true reason then of this omission is,—that the historian never intended to give us a catalogue of the collateral branches (which doubtless were many) but only of the principal persons by whom, in a right line, the succession was continued down to Noah, and thence to Abraham, the founder of the Jewish nation.

Not long after the departure of Cain, the whole world was divided into two families, or opposite nations: the family of Seth, which adhered to the service of God, "became more frequent in religious offices; and, as their number increased, met in larger assemblies, and in communion, to perform the divine worship by way of public liturgy; and, ¹ for this their piety and zeal, were styled the sons or servants of God, in distinction to the family of Cain, which now became profligate and profane, renouncing the service of God, and addicting themselves to all manner of impiety and lasciviousness; from whence they had the name of the 'sons and daughters of men.'

In this period of time, Enoch, one of the family of Seth, and the seventh in a direct line from Adam, a per-

¹ Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs.

a The words in our translation are,—'Then,' that is, in the days of Enos, 'began men to call upon the name of the Lord,' ch. iv. 26.; but, it being very probable, that public assemblies for religious offices, were held long before this time, and that even when Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices, their families joined with them in the worship of God; some men of great note, such as, *Bertram, Hackspan, and Heidegger*, take them in the same sense with our marginal translation; 'then began men,' that is, the children of Seth, 'to call themselves by the name of the Lord,' that is, the servants and worshippers of the Lord, in contradistinction to the Cainites, and such profane persons as had forsaken him. It must not be dissembled, however, that the word *Hochal*, which we translate *began*, in several places of Scripture signifies to *profane*; and upon this presumption many of the Jewish writers, and some of no obscure fame among us, have taken the words so, as if Moses intended to intimate to us, that men began now to apostatize from the worship of God, to fall into idolatry, and to apply the most holy name, which alone belongs to the great Creator of heaven and earth, to created beings, and especially to the sun. But, considering that Moses is here speaking of the pious family of Seth, and not of that of Cain; that when the Hebrew word signifies to *profane*, it has always a noun following it; but when an affirmative mood follows, (as in the passage before us,) it always signifies to *begin*; and withal, that the eastern writers present this Enos as an excellent governor, who, while he lived, preserved his family in good order, and, when he died, called them all together, and gave them a charge to keep all God's commandments, and not to associate themselves with the children of Cain; considering all this, I say, we can hardly suppose that Moses is here pointing out the origin of idolatry, but rather the invention of some religious rites and ceremonies in the external worship of God at this time, or the distinction which good men began to put between themselves and such as were openly wicked and profane. For that the true meaning of the expression *Karabeshem*, according to our marginal translation, is to *call or nominate by*, or *after* the name of any one, is manifest from several instances in Scripture. Thus, Gen. iv. 17, *Jikra*, he called the name of the city *Beshem*, *by*, or *after* the name of his son, Numb. xxxii. 42, *Jikra*, he called it *Nobabeshem*, *by*, or *after* his own name; and in Psal. xlix. 11. *Kareau*, they call their lands *Bishmothom*, *by*, or *after* their own names; and the name here intimated is afterwards expressly given them by Moses himself, Gen. vi. when he tells us, that 'the sons of God saw the daughters of men.'—*Patrick's Commentary*; and *Calmel's Dictionary on the word Enos*; and *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 1. b. 1.

son of singular piety and sanctity of life, not only took care of his own conduct, ^b as considering himself always under the eye and observation of a righteous God, but, by his good advices and admonitions, endeavoured likewise to put a stop to the torrent of impiety, and reform the vices of the age; for which reason God was pleased to show a signal token of his kindness to him; for he exempted him from the common fate of mankind, and, without suffering death to pass upon him, translated him into the regions of bliss.

In this period of time, Adam, who (according to the sentence denounced against him at the fall) was to return to his native dust, departed this life, and (as the tradition is) having called his son Seth, and the other branches of his numerous family about him, he gave them strict charge, that they should always live separate,

^b This seems to be the natural sense of the expression of *walking with God*; and excellent to this purpose is this passage of Seneca, if we take what he tells us of the presence of God in a Christian sense:—

"Verily we must so conduct ourselves as if we lived in God's presence,—we must so think as if some one could look into the recesses of our hearts, and there is one who can, for what availeth it that any thing be kept hid from man? nothing is concealed from God; he is present in our minds, and knoweth our thoughts."—B. 1. Epist. 83; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

But, considering how usual a thing it was, in these early ages of the world, for angels to be conversant with good men, it may not improperly be said of Enoch, and of Noah both, that they walked with God in this sense, namely, that they had oftentimes familiar converse with these messengers, who might be sent with instructions from him how they were to behave upon several occasions: for this answers the traditions of the heathens, namely, that in the golden age, their gods had frequent intercourse with men:

An endless life shall be his gift, and he,
Great heroes with the gods conveyed shall see;
While he by them with loving eyes beheld.

Virg. Ec. 4.

And to the same purpose:—

More oft of old th' inhabitants of heaven,
Were wont to show themselves to human eyes,
When piety not yet was held in scorn.

Catul. in Nap. Thet. et Pelci.

c Where Adam was buried cannot be collected from Scripture. St Jerome, in Matt. xxvii. seems to approve of the opinion of those who imagine that he was buried at Hebron, in the cave of Machpelah, or the double cave, which Abraham, many ages after, bought for a burying place for himself and family, Gen. xxiii. 3. &c. The oriental Christians say, that when Adam saw death approaching, he called his son Seth, and the rest of his family to him, and ordered them to embalm his body with myrrh, frankincense, and cassia, and deposit it in a certain cave, on the top of a mountain, which he had chosen for the repository of his remains, and which was thence called the cave of *All-Konuz*, a word derived from the Arabian *Kanaza*, which signifies to *lay up privately*. And this precaution (as the Jews will have it) was ordered by Adam to be taken, lest his posterity should make his relics the object of idolatry. Several of the primitive fathers believe, that he died in the place where Jerusalem was afterwards built, and that he was interred on Mount Calvary, in the very spot where Christ was crucified; but others are of opinion, that (though he did not die at Jerusalem,) yet Noah, at the time of the deluge, put his body into the ark, and took care to have it buried there by Melchisedec, the son of Shem, his grandson. The Mahometans will have his sepulchre to have been on a mountain near Mecca; and the ancient Persians, in Serendil, or Ceylon: so ambitious is every nation to have the father of all mankind reposed with them. When Eve, the mother of all living, died is nowhere expressed in Scripture; but there are some who venture to tell us, that she outlived her husband ten years.—See the *Universal History*; and *Calmel's Dictionary on the word Adam*.

A. M. 1042, A. C. 2962; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 1070. A. C. 4311. GEN. CH. 5. AND 6. TO VER. 13.

and have no manner of intercourse with the impious family of the murderer Cain.

In this period of time, Noah, the great-grandson of Enoch, and a person of equal virtue and piety, was born: and as it was discovered to Enoch at the birth of Methuselah, that soon after that child's death, the whole race of mankind should be destroyed for their wickedness; so was it revealed to Lamech, at the birth of his son,¹ that he and his family should be preserved from the common destruction, and so become the father of the new world; and for this reason ^a he called him *Noah*, which signifies *a comforter*: though others imagine, that the name was therefore given him, because his father, by the spirit of prophecy, foreknew, that God, in his days, would remove the curse of barrenness from off the face of the earth, and, after the time of the deluge, restore it to its original fertility.

After the death of Adam, the family of Seth (to fulfil

¹ *Bedford's Scripture Chronology.*

^a The substance of Lamech's prophecy, according to our translation, is this:—'He called his son Noah, saying; This same shall comfort us, concerning the work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed; and the sense of learned men upon it hath been very different. Some are of opinion, that there is nothing prophetic in this declaration of Lamech's, and that the only cause of his rejoicing was, to see a son born, who might in time be assisting to him in the toil of cultivating the ground. But in this there is nothing particular: in this sense Lamech's words may be applied by every father at the birth of every son; nor can we conceive why a peculiar name should be given Noah, if there was no particular reason for it. The Jewish interpreters generally expound it thus: 'He shall make our labour in tilling the ground more easy to us,' in that he shall be the inventor of several proper tools and instruments of husbandry, to abate the toil and labour of tillage; and some will tell us, that he therefore received his name, because he first invented the art of making wine, a liquor that cheers the heart, and makes man forget sorrow and trouble. But the invention of fit tools for tillage, after that Tubal-Cain had become so great an artificer in brass and silver, seems to belong to one of his descendants, rather than Noah; and as Noah was not the first husbandman in the world, so neither can it be concluded from his having planted a vineyard, that he was the first vine-dresser. Another opinion, not altogether unlike this, is,—that Lamech, being probably informed by God, that his son Noah should obtain a grant of the creatures for food, Gen. ix. 5. and knowing the labour and inconveniences they were under, rejoiced in foreseeing what ease and comfort they should have, when they obtained a large supply of food from the creatures, besides what they could produce from the ground by tillage. The restoration of mankind by Noah, and his sons surviving the flood, is thought by many to answer the comfort which Lamech promised himself and his posterity: but the learned *Heidegger*, after an examination of all these, and some other opinions, supposeth that Lamech, having in mind the promise of God, expected that his son should prove the blessed seed, the Saviour of the world, who was to bruise the serpent's head, and, by his atonement, expiate our sins, which are the works of our own hands, and remove the curse which lay upon sinners. But this, in my opinion, is too forced an exposition. Lamech, it is certain, in virtue of God's promise, expected a deliverance from the curse of the earth, and foresaw that that deliverance would come through his son: but how came it through his son, unless it came in his son's days? And in what instance could it appear, unless it were something subsequent to the flood? And what could that possibly be, unless the removal of the sterility of the earth, and restoring it to its original fruitfulness? For which reason we find God, after the flood, declaring, that 'he will not curse the earth for man's sake;' and solemnly promising, that 'while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest shall not cease,' Gen. viii. 22. See *Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs*; *Patrick and Le Clerc's Commentary*; *Poole's Annotations*; *Shuckford's Connection*; and *Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy*, Dissertation 4.

their father's will) removed from the plain where they had lived, to the mountains over against paradise, where Adam is said to have been buried; and for some time lived there in the fear of God, and in the strictest rules of piety and virtue. But as the family of Cain, daily increased, they came at length to spread themselves over all the plain which Seth had left, even to the confines of the hill-country, where he had fixed his abode, and there they^b lived in all kind of riot, luxury, and licentiousness.

'The noise of their revellings might possibly reach the holy mountain where the Sethites dwelt; whereupon some of them might be tempted to go down, merely to gratify their curiosity perhaps at first, but being taken with their deluding pleasures, and 'intoxicated with the charms of their women, (who were extremely beautiful,) they forgot the charge which their forefathers had given them, and so took to themselves wives of the daughters of Cain; from which criminal mixture were born men of vast gigantic stature, who for some time infested the earth: and, in a few generations after, the whole family of Seth (very probably after the death of their pious ancestor) followed the like example, and, forgetting their obligations to the contrary, entered into society with the Cainites, and made intermarriages with them; from whence arose another race of men, no less remarkable for their daring wickedness than for their bold undertakings and adventurous actions.

Evil communications naturally corrupt good manners; and so the example of the wicked family prevailed, and, by degrees, eat out all remains of religion in the posterity of Seth. Noah indeed, who was a good and pious man, endeavoured what he could,² both by his counsel and authority, to bring them to a reformation of their manners, and to restore the true religion among them;

² *Josephus's Antiquities*, b. 1. c. 4.

^b Some of the oriental writers have given us a large account of their manner of living. "As to the posterity of Cain," say they, "the men did violently burn in lust towards the women, and, in like manner, the women, without any shame, committed fornication with the men; so that they were guilty of all manner of filthy crimes with one another, and, meeting together in public places for this purpose, two or three men were concerned with the same woman, the ancient women, if possible, being more lustful and brutish than the young. Nay, fathers lived promiscuously with their daughters, and the young men with their mothers; so that neither the children could distinguish their own parents, nor the parents know their own children. So detestable were the deeds of the Cainites, who spent their days in lust and wantonness, in singing and dancing, and all kinds of music, until some of the sons of Seth, hearing the noise of their music and riotous mirth, agreed to go down to them from the holy mountain, and, upon their arrival, were so captivated with the beauty of their women, (who were naked) that they immediately defiled themselves with them, and so were undone. For when they offered to return again to their former abodes, the stones of the mountain became like fire, and permitted them to pass no farther."—*Eutych. Annals*, p. 27.

^c Our excellent *Milton* describes the manner of their being captivated with the daughters of Cain in these words:

—They on the plain
Long had not walk'd, when from their tents, behold,
A bevy of fair women, richly gay,
In gems, and wanton dress: to 'th' harp they sung
Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on.
The men, though grave, eyed them; and let their eyes
Rove without rein; till in the amorous net
First caught, they lik'd, and each his liking chose.

A. M. 1536. A. C. 2468; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 2136. A. C. 3275. GEN. CH. 5. AND 6. TO VER. 13.

“but all he could do was to no purpose. The bent of their thoughts had taken another turn; and all their study and contrivance was, how to gratify their lusts and inordinate passions. In one word, the whole race of mankind was become so very wicked, that one would have really thought they had been confederated together against Heaven, to violate God’s law, to profane his worship, and spurn at his authority; so that his patience and long-suffering came at length to be wearied out: and though he is not a man that he should repent, or the son of man, that he should grieve at any thing, yet his concern for the general corruption is represented under that notion, the better to accommodate it to our capacity, and to express his fixed resolution of destroying all mankind for their iniquity, and with them all other creatures made for their use, ^b as if he had repented that ever he made them.

Before he resolved upon their destruction, however, we find him in great struggle and conflict with himself; his justice calling for vengeance, and his mercy pleading for forbearance; till at length his justice prevailed, and denounced the sentence of condemnation upon the wicked world: but still with this reserve—That if, ^c within the

space of 120 years, (which was the term limited for their revival,) they should forsake their evil ways, repent, and reform, his mercy should be at liberty to interpose, and reverse their doom. All which he communicated to his servant Noah, who, for his justice and singular piety in that corrupt and degenerate age, had found favour in his sight; and for whose sake his family, which consisted of eight persons in all, was to be exempted from the general destruction.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties obviated, and Objections answered.*

THAT God of his infinite wisdom might, for very good reasons, think proper to create man at first, and in all the full perfection of his nature, notwithstanding he could not but foresee, that he would sadly degenerate, and turn rebel to his will, is a question we have already endeavoured to resolve, ¹ when we treated of the fall of Adam; and by what means his posterity, in the succession of so few generations, as passed from the creation to the flood, became so very corrupt, as to lay God under a necessity to destroy them, may in a great measure be imputed to the length of their lives, and the strength and vigour of their constitutions. For, supposing all mankind, since the original defection, to be born in a state of depraved nature, with their understandings impaired, their wills perverted, and their passions inflamed; ² we can scarce imagine any restraint consistent with human freedom, sufficient to check their unruly appetites in that height of vigour, and confidence of long life. For if we, who rarely, and with no small difficulty, stretch out the span of seventy years, are hardly withheld from violence and villany by all the dictates of reason and terrors of religion, what can we conceive sufficient to have kept them back, in their strength and security in sin from a continued series of eight or nine hundred years? No interposition of Providence can be supposed available to the reformation of mankind under these circumstances, unless it were such as would either change their nature, or destroy their freedom; and therefore we have reason to believe, that in the space of about 1800 years from the creation, God found them degenerated to such a degree, as if they had lost all sense of their humanity; for this some have made the import of the text, ‘my Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh,’ that is, it is in vain to use any farther methods of mercy, or monitions of providence with man, who is now entirely given up

^a Josephus tells us, that Noah, for a long while, opposed the growing impiety of the age; but that at last, finding himself and family in manifest danger of some mortal violence for his goodwill, he departed out of the land himself, and all his people;—*Antiq. b. l. c. 4*; and (as the tradition is,) he settled in a country called *Cyparissos*, which had its name from the great quantity of cypress-trees which grew there, and whereof (as we shall observe hereafter) in all probability he built the ark.

^b As languages were at first invented by such persons as were neither philosophers nor divines, we cannot at all wonder, that we meet with many improprieties in speech, and such actions imputed to God, as no ways comport with the dignity of his nature. Thus, when the Holy Scriptures speak of God, they ascribe hands, and eyes, and feet to him; not that he has any of these members, according to the literal signification; but the meaning is, that he has a power to execute all those acts, to the effecting of which, these parts in us are instrumental, that is, he can converse with men, as well as if he had a tongue or mouth; can discern all that we do or say, as perfectly as if he had eyes and ears; and can reach us, as well as if he had hands or feet, &c. In like manner, the Scripture frequently represents him, as affected with such passions as we perceive in ourselves, namely, as angry and pleased, loving and hating, repenting and grieving, &c.; and yet, upon reflection, we cannot suppose, that any of these passions can literally affect the divine nature; and therefore the meaning is, that he will as certainly punish the wicked, as if he were inflamed with the passion of anger against them; as infallibly reward the good, as we will those for whom we have a particular affection; and that when he finds any alteration in his creatures, either for the better or the worse, he will as surely change his dispensations towards them, as if he really repented, or changed his mind. It is by way of analogy and comparison, therefore, that the nature and passions of men are ascribed to God: so that when he is said to repent or grieve, the meaning must be, not that he perceived any thing that he was ignorant of before, to give him any uneasiness, (for ‘known unto him are all his ways from the beginning,’) but only that he altered his conduct with regard to men, as they varied in their behaviour towards him, just as we are wont to do when we are moved by any of those passions and changes of affections, we, ‘who dwell in houses of clay, and whose foundations are in the dust:’ for the very heathens can tell us, that “to alter what hath been accomplished is a lessening of majesty, and a confession of error, for of necessity the same thing must always satisfy him whom nothing but the best can please.” *Seneca in Pref. Nat. Quest.*—See *Le Clerc’s Commentary*; *Bishop King on Predestination*; and *Ainsworth’s Annotations*.

^c This was the term allowed mankind for their repentance, and prevention of their ruin: and yet, if we compare ch. v. 32.

¹ See p. 30.

² *Revelation Examined*, vol. I.

with ch. vii. 11., we shall find, that between this time and the flood, there were but 100 years. How then did God perform his promise? Now, in answer to this, it may be said, that the increasing wickedness of mankind might justly hasten their ruin, and forfeit the benefit of this indulgence: but what I take to be the true solution is this:—This promise (though mentioned after what we read in ch. v. 32.) seems nevertheless to have been made 20 years before it: for that verse is added there out of its proper place, only to complete the genealogy: and therefore, after this narrative of the wickedness of the world it is repeated here in its due order, in the 10th verse: nor are such transpositions uncommon in Scripture, without any diminution to its authority.—*Poole’s Annotations*.

A. M. 1536. A. C. 2468; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 2136. A. C. 3275. GEN. CH. 5. AND 6. TO VER. 13.

to fleshly appetites, and by that means sunk down into the lowest condition of brutality.

By what gradations man arrived at his height of corruption, is not so evident from Scripture: but there are two passages, ¹ 'the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence;' which seem to point out some particular vices: for by 'violence' is plainly meant cruelty, and outrage, and injustice of every kind; and by corruption, the Jews always understand, either idolatry, or unlawful mixtures and pollutions; the latter of which seems to be denoted here because of the subsequent explication of the words, 'for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.'

Now, if we look into the history, we shall find, that the first act of violence was committed by Cain upon his brother Abel; the first act of incontinence by Lamech, in the matter of his polygamy; and that as one of his sons invented the instruments of luxury, so the other invented the instruments of violence and war. As luxury therefore naturally begets a disposition to injure others in their property, and such a disposition, armed with offensive weapons, in the hands of men of a gigantic stature and strength, (as many of the antediluvians very probably were,) tends to beget all manner of insolence and outrage to our fellow-creatures; so these two cardinal vices might naturally enough introduce that train of corruption which drew God's judgments upon the inhabitants of the earth.

Had God indeed given them no intimations of this his design, no calls to repentance, no means and opportunities of becoming better, before he determined their destruction, something might then be said in opposition to the righteousness of this procedure; but ² since, from the very beginning, he was pleased, in the sentence he passed upon the serpent, to give them a remarkable promise, that the seed of the woman should destroy the power of that evil spirit which brought sin into the world, and consequently, ³ that all parents were obliged to train up their children in the ways of virtue and religion, without which it was impossible for any of them to be the promised seed, which was to restore mankind to their original perfections; since he himself instituted sacrifices, as a means admirably well fitted to inspire mankind with an horror of guilt, and he, at the same time, a perpetual memorial of the divine mercy from generation to generation; since, in his expulsion of Cain from his presence, and exaltation of Enoch into heaven, he made an open declaration to all future ages, that his vengeance should at all times pursue sin, but his bounty had always in store an ample reward for the righteous; since at this time he exhibited himself to mankind in a more sensible manner than he does now, causing them to hear voices, and to dream dreams, and, by sundry extraordinary means, convincing them of their duty, and giving them directions for the conduct of their lives; since, at this time, they had the principles of religion (which were but very few) conveyed to them by an easy tradition, which, by Methuselah's living 248 years with Adam, and dying but a little before the flood, in the compass of 1600 years and more, had but two hands to pass through: and, lastly, since God appointed Noah in particular to be 'a

preacher of righteousness,' ⁴ as the apostle styles him, to exhort that wicked race to forsake their sins, and return unto him; to warn them of their impending doom, if they persisted in their provocations; to give them notice, that 120 years was the stated time of their reprieve, and that, at the end of that period, his fixed determination was to destroy them utterly, unless their amendment averted the judgment. Since these and many more methods of mercy were all along employed by God (and especially in the days that his long-suffering waited, while the ark was preparing) for the recovery of mankind, before the deluge came upon them, they are sufficient to vindicate the ways of God with man, and to justify his severity in bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, which neither his restraints nor rewards, nor all the monitions and exhortations of his prophets, added to his own declarations, institutions, inflictions, and denunciations of vengeance, could reclaim, in the course of so many centuries.⁵

Other living creatures, it is true, were not culpable in this manner: they all answered the ends of their production, and man was the only rebel against his Maker. But as, in an universal deluge, it was impossible to preserve them alive without a miracle; so, having, in some measure, been made instrumental to man's wickedness, innocent though they were, they were all to be destroyed, in order to evince the malignity of sin, and God's abhorrence of it. For the great end of his providence, in sending the deluge was not so much to ease himself of his adversaries, as to leave a perpetual monument of his unrelenting severity, that thereby he might deter future ages from the like provocations. And this is the inference which the apostle draws from all his judgments of old: ⁶ 'If God spared not the angels,' says he, 'that sinned, but cast them down to hell; if he spared not the old world, but brought in a flood upon the ungodly; if he turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, and condemned them with an overthrow; these are an ensample unto those, that after shall live ungodly;' for (however they may escape in this life) 'he hath reserved the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.'

The Scripture indeed seems to impute all this iniquity to the marriages between the sons of God and the daughters of men; but the misfortune is, that several interpreters, being led away by the authority of the LXX, who (according to Philo) did anciently render what we style the *sons of God*, by ἀγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ, have supposed, that wicked and apostate angels assumed, at this time, human bodies, and, having had carnal communication with women, begat of them a race of giants; and from this original, the notion of *incubi*, or devils conversing with women in the like manner, has ever since been derived. *St Austin*, ^a among many others, is very positive

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 5. ² *Le Clerc's Commentary*. ³ 2 Pet. ii. 4, &c.

^a *Dr Whitby*, in his *Writings of the Fathers*, page 5, has instanced in almost all the fathers of the four first centuries, who were of this opinion; such as *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Athenagoras*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Tertullian*, *St Cyprian*, *Lactantius*, *Eusebius*, &c., and supposes that this notion took its rise from the vain traditions of the Jews; because we find not only *Philo* reading the word ἀγγελοι, or *angels*, in the Septuagint version, but *Josephus* likewise asserting, "that the angels of God mixing with women, begat an insolent race (not much unlike that of the giants in the Greek fables) overbearing right with power."—*Antiquities*, b. 1. c. 4.

¹ Gen. vi. 11. ² *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 1. b. 1

³ *Revelation Examined*, vol. 1.

A. M. 1536. A. C. 2468; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 2136. A. C. 3275. GEN. CH. 5. AND 6. TO VER. 13.

in this opinion. ¹“Several people have had the trial,” says he, “and several have heard it from those who knew it to be true, that the *silvani* and *fauni*, commonly called incubi, have been often fatal to women, and have defiled their bed. It is likewise affirmed with so much confidence, that certain demons (called *durii* among the Gauls) have not only attempted, but likewise perpetrated these kinds of impure actions, that it would be foolish to make any question of it.” But besides the incompatibility of the notion of a spirit, and the nature of an incubus, the sons of God are here represented under circumstances quite different to what we may suppose of any demons assuming human shape.

²An incubus (if any such there be) can desire commerce with a woman, for no other reason, but only to draw her into the gulf of perdition. Any carnal gratification of his own cannot be his motive, because pleasure, in an assumed body, if it is pretended to, must be fictitious: but here the sons of God are said to be enamoured with the daughters of men, and (to satisfy their lusts) ‘to take to themselves wives of all that they chose,’ which denoting a settled marriage and cohabitation with them, can hardly be imagined in the case before us. From those marriages we may farther observe, that a generation of living men, called in Scripture men of renown, did ensue; but it is impious to think, that God would ever concur with the devil, violating the laws of generation which he had established, and prostituting the dignity of human nature, by stamping his own image upon, or infusing an human soul into whatever matter a fiend should think fit to ingenerate.

In prejudice taken to this opinion, therefore, several interpreters have made choice of another, which, though somewhat more reasonable, is nevertheless subject to exceptions. It supposes, that, by the sons of God in this place, are meant the princes, great men, and magistrates in those times, who, instead of using their authority to punish and discountenance vice, were themselves the greatest examples and promoters of lewdness and debauchery; taking the daughters of men, or of the inferior and meaner sort of the people, and debauching them by force. But ³besides the harshness of the construction, which (contrary to Scripture-phrases) makes all great and powerful sons to be called the sons of God, and all mean and plebeian women the daughters of men, there is this error in the supposition, that the great men we are now speaking of, did not offer any force or violence to these inferior women; ‘they saw that they were fair, and made choice of them for wives.’ They did not take them merely to lie with them, and so dismiss them; but voluntarily entered into a state of matrimony and cohabitation with them. And this being all the matter, wherein is the heinousness of the offence, if men of a superior rank marry with their inferiors, especially when an excess of beauty apologizes for their choice? Or, why should a few unequal matches be reckoned among some of the chief causes which brought upon the world an universal destruction?

The most common, therefore, and indeed the only probable opinion is, that the sons of God were the descendants of Seth, who, for the great piety wherein they

continued for some time, were so called, and that daughters of men were the progeny of wicked Cain. And why the intermarriages of these two families (even though there was no express prohibition from God) came to be so provoking to him, and in the end so destructive to themselves, is the next point of our inquiry.

It has been a question among the learned, whether or no, in the ages before the flood, idolatry was practised? but there seems to be no great foundation for our doubting it, though some have endeavoured to establish it upon incompetent texts. The only expression in Scripture that bears a proper aspect this way is in Gen. vi. 5. where we are told, ‘That God saw, that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.’ The words seem parallel to that passage of the apostle, ⁴‘they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened;’—whereupon it follows, ‘that they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.’ Since therefore Moses makes use of ⁵the like expression concerning the age soon after the flood, men fell into idolatry, until the true worship of God was again established in Abraham’s family, it seems very probable that he intended us an intimation hereof in the manner of his expressing himself. Nor can we imagine but that, when St Peter compares the false teachers of his age with the people of the antediluvian world, in the nature of their punishment, he means to inform us, that they resembled them likewise in the nature of their crime, in their ⁶‘bringing in damnable heresies,’ and abetting such doctrines, as ‘even denied the Lord that bought them;’ or that, when St Jude ⁷expresses his indignation against certain ungodly men in his days, ‘who denied the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ,’ in such words as these, ‘Woe unto them, for they are gone in the way of Cain;’ he leaves us to infer, that Cain and his posterity were the first that threw off the sense of a God, and, instead of the Creator, began to worship the creature.

Now if the Cainites were, at this time, not only profligate in their manners, but abettors of infidelity, and promoters of idolatry; for the family of Seth, who professed the true worship of God, to enter into communion, or any matrimonial compacts with them, could not but prove of fatal consequence. ‘Tis a solemn injunction which God gives the Israelites, against all idolatrous nations, ⁸‘Thou shalt not make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.’ And, that this is no special but a general prohibition, extensive to all nations that profess the true worship of God, is evident from the reason that is annexed to it; ‘for they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods.’ This was what Balaam knew full well, and therefore, perceiving that he could injure the children of Israel no other way, he advised the Moabites to commence a familiarity with them; whereupon it soon came to pass, that ⁹‘The people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods, and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.’

¹ On the Monarchy of God, b. 15. c. 23.

² Heidegger’s History of the Patriarchs. ³ Ibid.

⁴ Rom. i. 21, 23.

⁵ Gen. viii. 21.

⁶ 2 Pet. ii. 1, 5.

⁷ Ver. 4, 11.

Deut. vii. 3, 4.

⁹ Num. xxv. 1, 2.

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'Twas the danger of seduction into a state of idolatry that made Abraham, before the law, so very anxious and uneasy, lest his son Isaac should marry a Canaanitish woman; and though we, under the gospel, ¹ 'know,' very well, 'that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one,' yet we are admonished by the same apostle, who teaches us this, 'Not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship,' says he, 'has righteousness with unrighteousness, what communion hath light with darkness, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?' ² From all which it seems to follow, that the sin was very heinous in the family of Seth, to mix with the wicked seed of Cain, when they could not but foresee, that the consequence would be their seduction from the true worship of God; and that the heinousness of their sin seems still to be enhanced, if, what some oriental writers tell us be true, namely, that God gave them this prohibition by the mouth of their great forefather Adam, and that their custom was, at certain times, to swear by 'the blood of Abel' (which was their solemn oath) that they would never leave the mountainous country where they inhabited, nor have any communion with the descendants of Cain.

How the commixture of the two different families came to produce a set of giants is not so easy a matter to determine. Those who pretend to reduce it to natural causes, or the eager lust and impetus of their parents, are vastly mistaken, ³ because giants there were among the Cainites, before this conjunction, and we read of several in other nations many ages after the flood. The more probable opinion therefore is, ⁴ that God permitted it in vengeance to their parents' crimes, and that the children begotten by such unlawful mixtures might, (some of them at least,) be accounted monstrous in their kind, (for thus the word *Nephilim* ^a certainly signifies,) and so become the abhorrence of all future generations.

It must be acknowledged, indeed, that translators have not agreed in their notions of this word. *Aquila*, instead of *gigantes*, renders it ^b *men who attack*, or fall with impetuosity upon their enemies; and *Symmachus* will have it mean ^c *violent and cruel men*, the only rule of whose actions is their strength and force of arms: and from hence some have imagined, that the giants spoken of in Scripture were famous for the crimes and vio-

lences they committed rather than the height or largeness of their stature. But to hinder this from passing for a truth, we have the histories of all ages, both sacred and profane, and several other remains and monuments, to evince ^b the being of such prodigious creatures in almost every country.

⁷ That there were multitudes of giants in the land of promise, before the Israelites took possession of it, such as Og king of Basan, and the Anakims, whom ⁸ the Moabites called *Enims*, that is, *terrible men*, and ⁹ the Ammonites, *Zamzummins*, that is, *the inventors of all wickedness*, whose posterity were in being in the days of David, and whose bones were to be seen at Hebron, the chief place of their abode, is manifest from the sacred records. ¹⁰ 'All the people,' say the spies who were sent to take a survey of the land, 'are men of stature; and there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which came of the giants,' so unmeasurably large, that 'we were but like grasshoppers' in comparison of them. And therefore we need less wonder, that we find ¹¹ *Josephus*, upon the same occasion, telling us, "That the race of giants was not then extinct, who, on account of their largeness and shapes (not at all to be likened to those of other men) were amazing to see, and terrible to hear of." *Homer* ¹² speaks of the giants Otus and Ephialtes, who, at the age of nine years, were nine cubits about, and six and thirty in height; he likewise describes ¹³ the bigness of the Cyclops Polyphemus, who was of such prodigious strength, that he could, with the greatest facility, take up a stone which two and twenty four-wheeled chariots would scarce be able to move. This we allow to be, in some measure, romantic, but still it confirms the tradition, that several persons of old were of a gigantic stature.

"That the Cyclopes and Læstrigones," ¹⁴ says *Bochart*, "were once in Sicily, we have the account, not only in the poets, *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and *Euripides*, *Virgil*, *Ovid*, and *Silius*, but in the historians and geographers (I mean *Thucydides* and *Strabo*) who were Grecians, and in *Trogus*, *Mela*, *Pliny* and others, who were Romans; and that there was something of truth in the fables concerning them, we are assured by those bones of giants, which were dug out of the earth in the memory of our fathers." ^c

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 4. ² 2 Cor. vi. 14, &c. ³ Gen. vi. 4.

⁴ See *Heidegger's Lives of the Patriarchs*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

⁵ Ἐπιπτόντες.

⁶ Βαῖον.

^a There were giants in the earth, or *nephilim*, from *naphal*, "he fell." Those who had apostatized, or fallen from the true religion. The Septuagint translated the original word by γίγαντες, which literally signifies *earth-born*, and which we, following them, term giants, without having any reference to the meaning of the word, which we generally conceive to signify persons of *enormous stature*. But the word when properly understood makes a very just distinction between the sons of men and the sons of God; those were the *nephilim*, the fallen, earth-born men, with the animal and devilish mind. These were the sons of God, who were born from above; children of the kingdom, because children of God. It may be necessary to remark here, that our translators have rendered seven different Hebrew words by the one term *giants*, namely, *nephilim*, *gibborim*, *enachim*, *rephaim*, *emim* and *zamzummin*; by which appellatives are probably meant in general, persons of great knowledge, piety, courage, wickedness, &c., and not of men of enormous stature as is generally conjectured.—*Dr A. Clarke, on Gen. vi. 4.*

⁷ *Huetius's Inquiries*. ⁸ Deut. ii. 11. ⁹ Ver. 21.

¹⁰ Num. xiii. 33. ¹¹ *Antiquities*, b. 5. c. 2. ¹² *Odyss.* b. 11.

¹³ *Ibid.* b. 9.

¹⁴ *Cannan* i. 30.

^b *Mr Whiston*, in his *Original Records*, has a supplement concerning the old giants, wherein, according to the apocryphal book of Enoch, he divides the giants into three kinds, and in this division thinks himself countenanced by the works of Moses, Gen. vi. 2, &c.; the first and lowest kind of which are called *cluidim*, and are of stature from 4 cubits to 15; the second are *nephilim*, from 15 to 40 cubits; and the third, or great giants, 40 cubits at least, and many times above.

^c *Fazelus* relates, and out of him *Cluverius*, that, A. D. 1547, near Panormum in Sicily, the body of a giant was dug up, about 18 cubits or 27 feet tall. The same authors relate, that, A. D. 1516, was dug up, near Mazarene in Sicily, the body of a giant, 20 cubits or 30 feet tall. The same authors relate, that, A. D. 1518, near Syracuse, was dug up another body of the same dimension. They inform us, that, A. D. 1550, near En-tella in Sicily, was dug up a body of about 22 cubits or 33 feet high, whose skull was about 10 feet in circumference; and they describe the corpse of a giant of portentous magnitude, found standing in a vast cave, near Drepanum in Sicily, A. D. 1342,

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But I forbear more instances of this kind, and, ^a referring the reader, for his farther conviction, to such authors as have professedly handled this subject, shall only crave leave to make this remark—¹ that, in all probability, no small part of the eldest cities, towers, temples, obelisks, pyramids, and pillars, some of which are still remaining, and deservedly esteemed the wonders of the world, ^b were the structure of these ancient giants; and, as they surpass the abilities of all later ages, so they seem to me to be the visible and undeniable remains, monuments, and demonstrations, not only of their existence, but of their prodigious stature and strength likewise; since in an age, ignorant of mechanical powers and engines, such vast piles of building could no otherwise have been erected.

Without concerning ourselves then with the fictions and fables of the poets, or ² whether the giants of old rebelling against heaven, were able to heap mountains upon mountains, in order to scale it, or to hurl rocks, and islands, and huge flaming trees against it, in order to shake, or set it on fire; all that we pretend to say is, that in ancient days, there were giants, in great numbers, who (excepting the largeness of their stature) were formed and fashioned like other men, and waged no other war with heaven, than what all wicked persons are known to do, when they provoke the Divine Majesty by their crimes and enormous impieties. This is the whole of what the Scriptures assert, and I know no occasion we have to defend the wild hyperboles of the poets.

Amidst the antediluvian corruption, and even while these abominable and gigantic men were in being, Moses makes particular mention of one person of eminent sanctity, and who found a favour extraordinary, for having preserved his innocence, and persisted in his duty, notwithstanding the wickedness of the age wherein he lived. Enoch was certainly, in other respects, an ex-

traordinary person. ³ St Jude distinguishes him as a prophet: 'the Arabians represent him as a great scholar; the Babylonians look upon him as the author of their astrology; the Greeks call him their Atlas, and affirm, that he was the first who taught men the knowledge of the stars; but it was not for these rare qualities, so much as for his singular piety and virtue, that God exempted him from the common fate of mankind.

The Jewish doctors indeed will have the words of Moses concerning him to import no more, than his sudden and untimely death, because he lived not near so long as the other patriarchs. But the paraphrase which St Paul gives us of them, ⁴ 'By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him; for, before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God;' this paraphrase, I say, will not suffer us to doubt of the truth of the Christian interpretation. And indeed, ⁵ unless the Christian interpretation be true, the whole emphasis of Moses' words is lost, and they become a crude tautology. For, if we say, that Enoch was not, that is, was no longer living, because God took him, that is, God caused him to die; it is the same, as if we should say, God caused him to die, because he took him away by death, which is flat and insipid, a proof of the same thing by the same thing, and hardly consistent with common sense: whereas, if we interpret the words in this manner—Enoch was not, that is, was nowhere to be found, was seen neither among the living nor the dead here on earth, for God took him, that is, because God translated to another place, soul and body together, without undergoing the pains of death; here is a grace and energy in the expression, not unbecoming the style of an inspired penman.

The reason which Moses assigns for God's taking him, in this wise, is, that 'he walked with God:' but if God's taking him means no more than his hasty death, it was far from being a divine attestation of his piety, (because length of days are the promised reward of that;) and therefore we may be allowed to infer, that his walking with God was not the cause of his ablation by death, but of his assumption into glory. The truth is, ⁶ about fifty-seven years before this event, Adam, the father of all living, had submitted to the sentence denounced against him, and resigned his breath; and whatever notions his posterity might have of a life immortal in reversion, yet it seemed expedient to the divine wisdom, at this time, in the person of Enoch, to give them, as it were, anticipation of it, and to support and comfort them under the sense of their mortality, with the prospect, and assured hope, that after the dark entry of death was passed, they were to be admitted into the mansions of bliss.

Our Saviour, indeed, when he came upon earth, (though declared from heaven to be the Son of God,) was not exempted from the common condition of our mortality. ⁷ 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy

¹ *Whiston's Supplement*, part 2.

² *Calmet's Dissertation on the Giants*, vol. 2.

whose staff was like the mast of a ship, and the forepart of whose skull would contain some Sicilian bushes, which are about a third part of our English bushel.—See *Whiston's Supplement* concerning the old giants, in his *Authentic Records*, part 2.

^a That there have been giants in the world admits of no doubt, but probably no *nations* of such giants as these. Indeed, the enormous bones of most supposed giants have, by subsequent and more accurate observation, been found to be bones of animals, of species which nowhere exist.—*Bishop Gleig*.

They that desire to see more instances of this kind may find them cited by *Huetius* in his *Inquiries*, &c., b. 2.; *Augustine* on the *Government of God*, b. 15.; *Josephus' Antiquities*, b. 1. c. 5, 18.; *Pliny*, b. 1.; *Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs*, Essay 11.; *Grotius* on *Truth*, b. 1.; *Hackwell's Apology*, b. 3.; *Whiston's Original Records*, part 2.; and our *Philosophical Transactions*, Nos. 234, 272, 274, 346, and 370.

^b The works of this kind which our author reckons up are, 1. The Giants' Dance, upon Salisbury plain in England, now called Stone-henge. 2. The Giant's Causeway in the north of Ireland. 3. The Circular Gigantic Stone at Ravenna. 4. The Tower of Babel. 5. The Two Obelisks mentioned by *Herodotus*. 6. The Temple of Diana in Egypt. 7. The Labyrinth in Egypt. 8. The Lake Mæris, 480 miles long, and dug by human labour, all by the same *Herodotus*. 9. The Sphinx of Egypt. 10. The most ancient Temple in Egypt. 11. The Agrigentine Temple. 12. The Pyramidal Obelisk, all mentioned by *Diodorus Siculus*. 13. The Temple of Solomon. 14. The Palace of Solomon at Jerusalem. 15. That at Balbeck. 16. That at Tadmor. 17. The Palace and Buildings at Persepolis. 18. The Temple of Belus at Babylon. 19. The Temple at Chillemburum. And 20. The first Temple of Diana at Ephesus.—*Whiston's Supplement*.

³ Ver. 14, &c. ⁴ *Calmet's Dictionary* on the word Enoch.

⁵ Heb. xi. 5.

⁶ *Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs*, Essay 9.

⁷ *Patrick's Commentary*. ⁸ Heb. ii. 14.

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him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.' His errand was to propitiate for our sins; but since,¹ 'without shedding of blood there is no remission,' the decree was, that he should die, which when he had satisfied he rose again; and after forty days' converse with his disciples 'even² while they beheld him,' we are told, 'he was taken up into heaven, and a cloud received him out of their sight.' And, in like manner, if the end of Enoch's assumption was for the conviction of mankind in that great article of faith, the reality of another world, it seems reasonable to believe, that the thing was done publicly and visibly; that either some bright and radiant cloud, guided by the ministry of angels, gently raised him from the earth, and mounted with him up on high, (which seems to be our Saviour's case,) or that a³ 'strong gust of wind,' governed by the same angelic powers, in some vehicle or other, resembling a bright 'chariot and horses,' transported him into heaven, (which seems to be the case of Elijah,) and that, in his passage thither, his body was transformed, his corruptible into incorruption, his mortal into immortality 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,'⁴ as we are told it will happen to those who are alive, when the 'last trumpet shall sound.'

It is an idle conceit therefore of some of the Jewish, as well as Christian doctors, that Enoch was not translated into the celestial, but only into the old terrestrial paradise, wherein Adam, before his transgression lived. Whether the beauty of that place went to ruin, or no, as soon as our first parents were ejected, and no hand left to dress it, it is certain, it could never withstand the violence of the flood; and consequently Enoch must have perished in it, unless we can suppose,⁵ that he was preserved by some such miracle as the Israelites were, when they passed through the Red sea, and that the waves, towering up on all sides, surrounded it like a wall, and kept that particular spot dry; which is by too much bold a supposition, especially when it contradicts that authority, which tells us, that⁶ 'the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and that all the high hills, which were under the whole heavens, were covered.'

Whatever therefore some may fancy to themselves, we acknowledge now no other paradise, than what is represented in the Scriptures, as a place in which God gives the brightest evidence of his presence, and communicates his glory with the utmost majesty: a place which St Paul calls⁶ 'the third heaven,' whereunto Elijah was translated, and wherein our blessed Saviour is now⁷ 'preparing mansions for us, that where he is, we may be also.' Into this happy place we suppose Enoch to have been conveyed, and it is no mean confirmation of the truth of the Mosaic account, that we find, among the heathen world, notions of the like translation: that we

find Bacchus assuring Cadmus, that by the help of Mars, he should live for ever in the isles of the blessed; that we find Aganympha made immortal by the favour of Jupiter; and, after the death of her husband, Hercules, Alcmena, translated by Mercury, and married to Rhodamantus; with many more allusions of the like nature.⁸

And in like manner, it is far from being a bad argument for the truth and reality of the flood,⁹ that we find, almost every where in the Latin and Greek historians, horrid descriptions of the lives of the giants, which occasioned that heavy judgment: that we find *Berosus* the Chaldean, as he is quoted by¹⁰ *Josephus*, relating the same things which Moses does, concerning the great deluge, the destruction of mankind by it, and the ark, in which Noachus (the same with Noah) was preserved, and which rested on the tops of the Armenian mountains: that we find *Abydenus*, the Assyrian (as he is cited¹¹ by *Eusebius*) taking notice of the wood of the vessel, wherein Xisuthrus (^b for so he calls Noah) was saved, and telling us, that the people of Armenia made use of it for amulets to drive away diseases, that we find *Alexander Polyhistor*, in a passage produced¹² by *Cyril*, informing us of an Egyptian priest who related to *Solon*, out of the sacred books of the Egyptians, (as he supposes,) that, before the particular deluges known and celebrated by the Grecians, there was of old an exceeding great inundation of waters, and devastation of the earth: and (to mention no more) that we find¹³ *Lucian* giving us a long account of an ancient tradition, which the people of Hierapolis had of the deluge, ^c varying very little from

⁸ *Huetius' Inquiries*, &c., b. 2. c. 10.⁹ *Grotius on Truth*, b. 2. sect. 16. ¹⁰ *Against Apion*, b. 1.¹¹ *Evangelical Preparation*, b. 9. ¹² *Against Julian*.¹³ *Concerning the Syrian Goddess*.

^b *M. Le Clerc*, in his notes upon *Grotius on Truth*, b. 1. sect. 16, seems to intimate, that *Xisuthrus*, *Ogyges*, and *Deucalion*, are all names signifying the same thing in other languages, as *Noah* does in Hebrew, wherein Moses wrote; and that the deluges which are said to have happened in their times, and are thought to be different, were in reality one and the same.

^c The account, though somewhat long, is not unpleasant, and deserves our observation. This race of men (says he) which now is, was not the first: these are of a second generation, and from their first progenitor Deucalion, who increased to so great a multitude as we now see. Now of these former men they tell us this story.—They were contentious, and did many unrighteous things; they neither kept their oaths, nor were hospitable to strangers; for which reason this great misfortune came upon them. All on a sudden the earth disembowelled itself of a great quantity of water, great showers fell, the rivers overflowed, and the sea swelled to a prodigious height; so that all things became water, and all men perished. Only Deucalion was left unto the second generation, upon the account of his prudence and piety; and the manner in which he was saved was this:—He had a great ark or chest, into which he came with his children and the women of his house, and then entered hogs, and horses, and lions, and serpents, and all other animals which live upon the earth, together with their mates. He received them all, and they did him no harm; for by the assistance of heaven there was a great amity between them, so that all sailed in one chest as long as the water did predominate. This is the account which all the Greek historians give of Deucalion. But what happened afterwards (as it is told by the people of Hierapolis) is worthy our observation, namely, That in their country there was a chasm, into which all this water sunk, whereupon Deucalion built an altar, and erected a temple over it, which he consecrated to Juno; and to verify this story, not only the priests, but the other inhabitants likewise of Syria and Arabia, twice every year, bring abundance of water which they pour into the temple, and though the chasm be but small, yet it receives a prodigious quantity of it; and when

¹ Heb. ix. 22. ² Acts xix., and Luke xxiv. 51.³ 2 Kings ii. 11. ⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 52. ⁵ Gen. vi. 19.⁶ 2 Cor. xii. 2. ⁷ John xiv. 2, 3.

^a *Bonserius* says, "that it was probable that paradise had been preserved free from rain, the waters having raised themselves completely around its borders, and become consolidated like a wall, similar to the waters of the Red Sea during the passage of the Israelites. But in this case, no probability is requisite, where a certainty may be averred. When no trace of a miracle is apparent, we are not to support its having existed by any probable assumption of our own."—*Heidegger's Lives of the Patriarchs*, Essay on the Ablation of Enoch.

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what our sacred historian relates: when we find all this, I say, we cannot but acknowledge, that these, and the many more historians who are usually produced upon this head, are a strong testimony of the truth and authority of Moses; and therefore, to conclude this reply, or vindication of him, with the reflection of the learned ¹ *Scaliger* upon the agreement he perceived between Moses and Abydenus, in the account they both give of the dove and the raven which Noah is said to have sent out; "Though the Greek historians," says he, "do not always agree in particulars with the sacred one, yet they are rather to be pitied for not having had the advantage of true and authentic antiquities and records to set them right, than to forfeit their value and authority, from such slips and deviations from the truth of the story as render their testimony and confirmation of the truth of the sacred history much stronger, because much less to be suspected than if they agreed with it in every circumstance."

CHAP. III.—Of the Heathen History, the Chronology, Religion, Learning, Longevity, &c., of the Antediluvians.

WE are now arrived at a period, where it may be convenient to take some notice of such heathen writers as have given us an account of the times before the flood, through which we have hitherto been tracing Moses: and those that are esteemed of the best credit and repute, are only three; *Berosus*, who wrote the history of the Chaldeans; *Sanchroniatho*, who compiled that of the Phœnicians; and *Manetho* who collected the antiquities of Egypt.

The Chaldeans were certainly a nation of great and undoubted antiquity. ² In all probability they were the first formed into a national government after the flood, and therefore were more capable of having such arts and sciences flourish among them as might preserve the memory of eldest times, to the latest posterity: and yet, even among these people, who enjoyed all the advantages of ease, quiet, and a flourishing empire, we find no credible and undoubted records preserved.^a *Berosus*, their historian, was, (as ³ *Josephus* assures us) a priest of Belus, and a Babylonian born, but afterwards flourished in the isle of Cos, and was the first who brought the Chaldean astrology into request among the Greeks; in honour of whose name and memory, the Athenians (who were great encouragers of novelties) erected a

statue for him with a golden tongue, a good emblem of his history, ⁴ says one, which made a fair and specious show, but was not within what it pretended to be, especially when it attempts to treat of ancient times. It cannot be denied, however, but that some fragments of it which have been preserved from ruin by the care and industry of *Josephus*, *Tatianus*, *Eusebius*, and others, have been very useful, not only for proving the truth of Scripture history to the heathens, but for confirming likewise some passages relating to the Babylonish empire.

After a description of Babylonia, and a strange story concerning a certain creature, which, in the first year of the world, came out of the Red sea, and, conversing familiarly with men, taught them the knowledge of letters, and several arts and sciences, he proceeds to give us a short account of ten kings which reigned in Chaldea before the flood, and these corresponding with the number which Moses mentions, Alorus, the first, is supposed to be Adam; and Xisuthrus, the last, Noah; and of this Xisuthrus he pursues the story in this manner.

⁵ Cronus, or Saturn, appearing to him in a dream, gave him warning, that on the fifteenth day of the month Dæsius, mankind should be destroyed by a flood, and therefore commanded him to build a ship; and, having first furnished it with provisions, and taken into it fowls and four-footed beasts, to go into it himself, with his friends and nearest relations. Xisuthrus did as he was ordered, built a vessel, whose length was five furlongs, and breadth two furlongs; and having put on board all that he was directed, went into it, with his wife, children, and friends. When the flood was come, and began to abate, he let out some birds, which finding no food, nor place to rest on, returned to the ship again. After some days, he let out the birds again, but they came back with their feet daubed with mud; and when, after some days more, he let them go the third time, they never came back again, whereby he understood that the earth appeared again above the water, and so, taking down some of the planks of the ship, he saw it rested upon a mountain. This is the substance of what we have in *Berosus*, who varies very little from our sacred historian during this period.⁶

Sanchroniatho is highly recommended both by *Porphyry*, the great adversary of Christianity, and by his translator into Greek, *Philo Biblius*. *Theodoret* is of opinion, that his name, in the Phœnician tongue, signifies φιλαλήθης, a lover of truth; which name, as *Bochart* imagines, was given him when he first set himself to write history: but how faithful he has been in transcribing his account of things from his records, we cannot determine, unless we had the books of *Taautus*, and the sacred inscriptions and records of cities, from whence he pretends to have extracted his history, to compare them together. If we may judge by what remains of his writings, which is only his first book concerning the Phœnician theology extant in *Eusebius*, we shall hardly think him deserving so large a commendation: but be that as it will, the method wherein he proceeds is this.—After having delivered his cosmogony, or generation of the other parts of the world, he tells us, that the first pair of human creatures were Protogonus and Æon, (as *Philo*, his

¹ Notes, &c., for the Correction of Dates.

² *Stillingfleet's Sacred Origins*, b. 1. c. 3. ³ *Against Appion*, b. 1. they do this, they relate how Deucalion first instituted this custom in memory of that calamity, and his deliverance from it.

^a The common opinion that they were the descendants of Chusid, the nephew of Abraham, is at once unsatisfactory and indefensible, for they were a nation before the call of that patriarch when he dwelt with his father Terah in Ur of the Chaldees. They are mentioned in the book of Job, not a very great portion of time after the call of Abraham, and if the hypotheses of Dr Hales and the astronomical calculations of Dr Brindley be true, the era of Job carries their antiquity still higher, as it is fixed by both these gentlemen at upwards of 400 years before the call of Abraham. If, with *Josephus* and some of the rabbins, we suppose, that the Chaldeans are the progeny of Arphaxad, they may have been a nation long before the call of Abraham.—*Bell's edition of Rollin's Ancient History*, p. 161.

⁴ See *Universal History*, and *Shuckford's Connection*, b. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Stillingfleet's Sacred Origins*, b. 1. c. 2.

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translator, calls them,) the latter of whom found out the food which is gathered from trees: that their issue were called *Genus* and *Genea*, who were the first that practised idolatry; for, upon the occasion of great droughts, they made their adorations to the sun, calling him *Beel-amen*, which, in Phœnician, is the *Lord of heaven*; that the children of these were *Phos*, *Pur*, and *Phlox*, that is, *light*, *fire*, and *flame*, who first found out the way of generating fire, by rubbing pieces of wood against one another: that these begat sons of vast bulk and stature, whose names were given to mount Cassius Libanus, Antilibanus, and Brathys, whereon they seized: that of these were begotten Memrumus, and Hypsuranius, the latter of whom was the inventor of huts made of reeds and rushes, and had a brother called Usous, the first worshipper of fire and wind, in whose time women became very abandoned and debauched: that many years after this generation, came Agreus and Halieus, the inventors of the arts of hunting and fishing: that of these were begotten two brothers, the first forgers and workers in iron; the name of one is lost, but Chrysor (who is the same with Vulcan) found out all fishing tackle, and, in a small boat, was the first that ventured to sea, for which he was afterwards deified: that from this generation came two brothers, Technites and Autochthon, who invented the art of making tiles; from these Agrus, and Agrotus, who first made courts about houses, fences, and cellars; and from these Amynus, and Magus, who showed men how to constitute villages, and regulate their flocks. This is the substance of what *Sanchoniatho* relates during this period; and how far it agrees with the account of Moses, especially in the idolatrous line of Cain, our learned bishop *Cumberland* has all along made his observations.

Manetho Sebennita was high priest of Heliopolis in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, by whose order he wrote his history; but that which destroys the credit of it, (though it gave him an opportunity of invention,) is, that ¹he professes to transcribe his Dynasties from inscriptions on the pillars of Hermes (whom the Egyptians, out of veneration, call Trismegistus) in the land of Seriad, which land no one knows any thing of, and which pillars being engraven before the flood, can hardly be supposed to escape undefaced.

The plain truth is, the LXX translation was, not long before this time, finished; and when the Jewish antiquities came to appear in the world, the Egyptians (who are mighty pretenders this way) grew jealous of the honour of their nation, and were willing to show, that they could trace up their memoirs much higher than Moses had carried those of the Israelites. ²This was the chief design of *Manetho's* making his collections. He was resolved to make the Egyptian antiquities reach as far backwards as he could; and therefore, as many several names as he found in their records, so many successive monarchs he determined them to have had; never con-

sidering that Egypt was at first divided into three, and afterwards into four sovereignties for some time, so that three or four of his kings were many times reigning together: which, if duly considered, will be a means to reduce the Egyptian account to a more reasonable compass.

^a The substance of the account however (as it stands unexplained in *Manetho*) is this:—That there were in Egypt thirty dynasties of gods, consisting of 113 generations, and which took up the space of 36,525 years; that when this period was out, then there reigned eight demigods in the space of 217 years; that after them succeeded a race of heroes, to the number of fifteen, and their reign took up 443 years; that all this was before the flood, and then began the reign of their kings, the first of whom was Menes.

Now, in order to explain what is meant by this prodigious number of years, we must observe, ³that it was a very usual and customary thing for ancient writers to begin their histories with some account of the origin of things, and the creation of the world. Moses did so in his book of Genesis; *Sanchoniatho* did so in his Phœnician history; and it appears from *Diodorus*, that the Egyptian antiquities did so too. Their accounts began about the origin of things, and the nature of the gods; then follows an account of their demigods, and terrestrial deities; after them came their heroes, or first rank of men; and last of all, their kings. Now, if their kings began from the flood; if their heroes and demigods reached up to the beginning of the world: then the account which they give of the reigns of their gods, before these, can be only their theological speculations put into such order as they thought most philosophical.

To make this more plain, we must observe farther, that the first and most ancient gods of the Egyptians, and of all other nations, (after they had departed from the worship of the true God,) were the luminaries of heaven; and it is very probable, that what they took to be the period of time in which any of these deities finished their course, that they might call the time of his reign. Thus a perfect and complete revolution of any star which they worshipped, was the reign of that star;

³ *Shuckford's Connection*, b. 1.

^a The accounts of *Manetho* seem at first sight so extravagant that many great writers look upon them as mere fictions, and omit attempting to say any thing concerning them; though other learned men (and more especially our countryman *Sir John Marsham*, in his *Canonical Chronology*, p. 1.) not well satisfied with this proceeding, have undertaken an examination of them and with some success. The misfortune is, we have none of the original works from whence they were collected, nor any one author that properly gives us any sight or knowledge of them. The historians *Diodorus Siculus* and *Herodotus*, did not examine these matters to the bottom; and we have no remains of the old Egyptian Chronicon, or of the works of *Manetho*, except some quotations in the works of other writers. The Chronographia of Syncellus, wrote by one *George*, an abbot of the monastery of St Simeon, and called St Syncellus, as being suffragan of Tarasius, patriarch of Constantinople, is the only work we can have recourse to. From these antiquities Syncellus collected the quotations of the old *Chronicons* of *Manetho*, and of *Eratosthenes*, as he found them in the works of *Africanus* and *Eusebius*; and the works of *Africanus* and *Eusebius* being now lost, (for it is known that the work which goes under the name of *Eusebius' Chronicon* is a composition of *Scaliger's*) we have nothing to be depended upon but what we find in *Syncellus* above mentioned. —*Shuckford's Connection*.

¹ See *Stillingfleet's Sacred Origins*, b. 1. c. 2. No. 11.

² *Shuckford's Connection*, part 1. b. 1.

^a Allowing the thirty dynasties, which he described from memoirs preserved in the archives of the Egyptian temples, to be successive, they make up a series of more than 5,300 years to the time of Alexander the Great, which can be nothing but a manifest forgery.—*Rollin*, p. 20.

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and as a period of 36,525 years is what they call an entire mundane revolution, that is, when the several heavenly bodies come round to the same point, from which all their courses began; so is it very remarkable, that they made the sum total of the reigns of all their several gods, to amount to the self-same space of time. This I take to be a true state of the Egyptian dynasties: and if so, it makes their history not near so extravagant as has been imagined, and sinks their account of time some hundred years short of the Jewish computation.

The Jewish computation indeed is not a little ambiguous, by reason of the different methods, which men find themselves inclined to pursue. The three common ways of computing the time from the creation to the flood, are, that which arises from the Hebrew text, from the Samaritan copies, and from the LXX. interpretation.

THE COMPUTATION OF MOSES.

1. According to the Hebrew text.	Began his life in the year of the world	Had his son in the year of his life	Lived after his son's birth, years	Lived in all, years	Died in the year of the world
Adam	1	130	800	930	930
Seth	130	105	807	912	1042
Enos	235	90	815	905	1140
Cainan	325	70	840	910	1235
Mahalaleel....	395	65	830	895	1290
Jared	460	162	800	962	1422
Enoch	622	65	300	365	987
Methuselah ...	687	187	782	969	1656
Lamech	874	182	595	777	1651
Noah	1056	500			

2. According to the Samaritan.	Began his life in the year of the world	Had his son in the year of his life	Lived after his son's birth, years	Lived in all, years	Died in the year of the world
Adam	1	130	800	930	930
Seth	130	105	807	912	1042
Enos	235	90	815	905	1140
Cainan	325	70	840	910	1235
Mahalaleel....	395	65	830	895	1290
Jared	460	62	785	847	1307
Enoch	522	65	300	365	887
Methuselah....	587	67	653	720	1307
Lamech	654	53	600	653	1307
Noah	707	500			

3. According to the Septuagint.	Began his life in the year of the world	Had his son in the year of his life	Lived after his son's birth, years	Lived in all, years	Died in the year of the world
Adam	1	230	700	930	930
Seth	230	205	707	912	1042
Enos	435	190	715	905	1340
Cainan	625	170	740	910	1535
Mahalaleel....	795	165	730	895	1690
Jared	960	162	800	962	1922
Enoch	1122	165	200	365	1187
Methuselah ...	1287	187	782	969	2256
Lamech	1474	188	565	753	2227
Noah	1662	500			

The difference between the Hebrew and Samaritan computation is easily perceived, by comparing the two former tables together; nor will it be any hard matter to reconcile them, if we consider what ¹ *St Jerome* informs us of, namely, that there were Samaritan copies which made Methuselah 187 years old at the birth of Lamech; and Lamech 182 at the birth of Noah. Now, if this be true, it is easy to suppose 62 (the age of Jared at the birth of Enoch) to be a mistake of the transcriber, who might drop a letter, and write 62 instead of 162; and thus all the difference between the Hebrew and Samaritan copies will entirely vanish.

But it is not so between the Hebrew and the Septuagint. The Hebrew, according to the highest calculation, makes no more than 1656 years before the flood, but the Septuagint raises it to no less than 2262; so that in this one period (without saying any thing of the wide difference between them in subsequent times) there is an addition of above 600 years, which can hardly be accounted for by any mistake of transcribers, because all the ancient and authentic copies, both of the Hebrew and Septuagint, agree exactly in their computation. And therefore the generality of learned men, despairing

¹ *In his Inquiries on Genesis.*

a Lud. Capellus, in his *Sacred Chronology* prepared by *Walton* for the *Polyglot Bible*, attempts to reconcile this difference by telling us from *St Austin*, *On the Government of God*, c. 13 that this edition was not made by the LXX. themselves, but by some early transcriber from them, and probably for one or other of these two reasons. 1st, Perhaps, thinking the years of the antediluvians to be but lunar, and computing, that at this rate the six fathers (whose lives are thus altered) must have had their children at five, six, seven, or eight years old (which could not but look incredible;) the transcriber, I say, finding this, might be induced to add one hundred years to each in order to make them of a more probable age of manhood at the birth of their respective children: or, 2dly, If he thought the years of their lives to be solar, yet still he might imagine, that infancy and childhood were proportionably longer in men who were to live seven, eight, or nine hundred years, than they are in us; and that it was too early in their lives for them to be fathers at sixty, seventy, or ninety years of age; and for this reason, might add one hundred years, to make their advance to manhood (which is commonly not till one-fourth part of life is over) proportionable to what was to be the term of their duration.—*Shuckford's Connection*, c. 1.

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of a reconciliation, have fairly entered the lists, and taken the side which they thought most tenable.

Those who espouse the cause of the Greek version, draw up their arguments in this rank and order. They tell us, that the alteration in the Septuagint computation must have been purposely made; because, where letters must necessarily have been added, and where sometimes both parts of a verse, and sometimes two verses together are altered, and so altered, as still to keep them consistent with one another; this, whenever done, must be done designedly, and for no other reason that they can imagine, but rarely a detection of errors in the Hebrew copies.

They tell us, that, though they have no positive proof of such errors in the present Hebrew copies, yet they have good grounds to suspect there are such, because that, before the time of Antiochus, the Jews, while in peace, were so very careless about their sacred writings, that they suffered several variations to creep into their copies; that when Antiochus fell upon them, he seized and burnt all the copies he could come at, so that none, but such as were in private hands, escaped his fury; that, as soon as that calamity was over, those copies which were left, in private hands, the Jews got together, in order to transcribe others from them; and that, from these transcriptions, came all the copies now in use. Now suppose, say they, that these private copies which escaped the fury of Antiochus, but were made in an age confessedly inaccurate, had any of them dropped some numerical letters, this might occasion the present Hebrew text's falling short in its computations: and, to confirm this,

They tell us, that *Josephus*,¹ who expressly declares, that he wrote his history from the sacred pages,² in his account of the lives of the antediluvian patriarchs, agrees with the Septuagint; and that the Greek historians before *Josephus*, such as *Demetrius Phalerius*, *Philo* the elder, *Eupolemus*, &c., very accurate writers, and highly commended by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and *Eusebius*, in their calculation, differ very much from the common Hebrew: so that not only *Josephus*, but these elder historians likewise must have either seen, or been informed of certain Hebrew copies which agreed with the Septuagint, and differed from what have descended to us. In short,

They tell us,³ that the whole Christian church, Eastern and Western, and all the celebrated writers of the church, are on their side; that all the ancient manuscripts have exactly the same computations with the common Septuagint, except here and there a variation or two, not worth regarding; and therefore they conclude, that, as there is a manifest disagreement between the Greek and Hebrew copies in this respect, the mistake should rather be charged upon the Hebrew, than the Septuagint; because, as the Hebrew is thought by some to fall short, and the Septuagint to exceed, in its account of the lives of the patriarchs, it is obvious to conceive, that a fault of this kind may be incurred by way of omission rather than addition.

Those who maintain the authority of the Hebrew text, as the standard and rule of reckoning the years of the patriarchs, oppose their adversaries in this manner.

They tell us⁴ that the Hebrew text is the original, in which the Spirit of God indicted the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and being, consequently, authentic, is better to be trusted than any translation made by men liable to error, as the Seventy interpreters were; and that the Jews, to whom⁵ were committed these oracles of God, used the greatest diligence to preserve them pure and entire, inasmuch, that in the course of so many years (as⁶ *Josephus* testifies in his time) no person durst add, take away, or misplace any thing therein.

They tell us, that no reason can be assigned, why the Hebrew text should be corrupted, but many very probable ones, why the Septuagint might; since, either to exalt the antiquity of their own nation, or to conform to the dynasties of the Egyptians, the Jewish interpreters at Alexandria might falsify their chronology; since, in this very point, there are so many different readings in the Septuagint, and so many errors and mistranslations in it, that⁷ the learned *Dr Lightfoot* (to whom, as yet, no sufficient reply has been made) has proved it a very corrupt and imperfect version.

They tell us that the Hebrew computations are supported by a perfect concurrence and agreement of all Hebrew copies now in being; that there have been no various readings in these places, since the Talmuds were composed; that, even in our Saviour's time, this was the current way of calculation, since the paraphrase of *Onkelos* (which is on all hands agreed to be about that age) is the same exactly with the Hebrew in this matter; that *St Jerome* and *St Austin* (who were the best skilled in the Hebrew tongue of any fathers in their age) followed it in their writings, and the vulgar Latin, which has been in use in the church above 100 years, entirely agrees with it.

They tell us, that *Demetrius*, the real historian, (for *a Phalerius* was none,) lived not before the reign of Ptolemy Philopater, the grandson of Philadelphus, near seventy years after the Septuagint translation was made: that *Philo* was contemporary with our Saviour, wrote almost 300 years after the said translation, and, living constantly at Alexandria, might very well be supposed to copy from it; that *Josephus*, though a Jew and perfectly skilled in the Hebrew language, in many instances, (which learned⁸ men have pointed out,)

⁴ *Millar's Church History.*

⁵ Rom. iii. 2.

⁶ *Against Apion*, b. 1.

⁷ See his Works, vol. 2. p. 932. edit. Utrecht, 1699.

⁸ See *Cave's History*; *Litt.* p. 2. in *Joseph*; and *Well's Dissertation upon the Chronicles of Josephus*, pp. 19—21.

a *Demetrius Phalerius* was the first president of the college of Alexandria, to which the library belonged, where the original manuscripts of the Septuagint were repositied. He was a great scholar as well as an able statesman and politician; but I doubt *Bishop Walton* is mistaken, when (in his ninth Preface to the Polyglot Bible) he quotes him as one of those Greek historians whose works might prove the Septuagint computation to be more probable than the Hebrew. The Phalerian *Demetrius* lived a busy, active life, was a great officer of state, both at home and abroad, and I do not find that ever he wrote any history. It was *Demetrius* the historian therefore, that the Bishop should have quoted; but he, living in the time that I mentioned, does not make much to this purpose.—*Shuckford's Connection*, b. 1.

¹ *Against Apion.*

² *Antiquities*, b. 1. c. 3.

³ *Shuckford's Connection*; and *Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs.*

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adheres to the Greek in opposition to the Hebrew; and that the fathers of the first ages of the church, though they were very good men, had no great extent of learning; understood the Greek tongue better than the Hebrew; and for that reason gave the preference to the Septuagint computation.

In this manner do the advocates for the Hebrew text defend its authority: and, since it is confessed, there has been a transmutation somewhere, if that transmutation was designedly and on purpose done, (as the adverse party agrees,) it is indifferent¹ whether it was done by way of addition or subtraction: only as it is evident, that the Greeks did compute by numerical letters, whereas it is much questioned, that the Hebrews ever did, the mistake or falsification rather seems to lie on the side of the Greek translators, the very form of whose letters was more susceptible of it.

This is a true state of the controversy, wherein the arguments for the Hebrew computation do certainly preponderate; though the names, the venerable *α* names, on the contrary side, have hitherto been more numerous. *b*

¹ *Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs.*

a The names for the Septuagint computation, which the learned *Heidegger*, in his *History of the Patriarchs*, (as he takes them from *Baronius*), has reckoned up, are such as these: Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, St Cyprian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Hippolytus, Origen, Lactantius, Epiphanius, Philastrius, Orosius, Cyril, the two Anastasii, Nicephorus, and Suada; to whom he might add several more, as *Heidegger* suggests, while those among the ancients who contended for the Hebrew calculation, were only St Austin and St Jerome, but men of great skill and proficiency in the Hebrew language.—*On the Age of the Patriarchs*, Essay 10.

b Such may have been the case 100 years ago: but it certainly is not so now. *Dr Hales* has proved, with the force of demonstration, that there was originally no difference between the Hebrew genealogies and those of the Greek version; that the computation of *Josephus* was, in his own time, conformable to both; and consequently that the chronology either of the original Hebrew, or of the Greek version of the Scriptures, as well as of the writings of *Josephus*, has been since adulterated. That the wilful adulteration took place in the Hebrew rather than in the Greek copies, is rendered highly probable by the reasons which follow. According to *Dr Hales*, who has bestowed much pains on the question, the Masorites, who published the edition of the Hebrew Bible which is now in use, deducted a century from the age at which each of the patriarchs—Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahaleel, and Enoch—had their respective sons whose genealogy is decided by Moses. Their motive for this conduct he states from *Ephrem Syrus*, who lived about the period at which the change was made, and of whom the learned *Cave* says (*Hist. Lit.*)—"From his earliest years he exercised himself in monastic philosophy, and with all his energy so perfected himself in the studies of the more learned sciences, that with ease he could understand the most difficult theorems." Such a man was not likely to write at random of a fact, of which he had the best possible opportunity of ascertaining either the truth or the falsehood. That *Ephrem* had such an opportunity is unquestionable; for he died A. D. 378; and the corruption of the Hebrew chronology, though it began as early as A. D. 130, appears not to have made any considerable progress for two centuries, *Eusebius* having found, in the Hebrew copies which he consulted, different accounts of the same times, some following the longer, and others the shorter computations. Now *Ephrem* affirms, that the Jews "subtracted 600 years from the generations of Adam, Seth, &c., in order that their own books might not convict them concerning the coming of Christ: he having been predicted to appear for the deliverance of mankind after 5500 years.

The reader will look in vain for this prediction in the books of the Old Testament; but the Cabalists found in the first chapter

It might be some entertainment to the reader, could we but give him any tolerable view of the religion,

of the book of Genesis, that the world would last 6000 years, because the letter *Alpha*, which stands for 1000, occurs six times in the first verse; because God was six days about the creation; and because with him 'a thousand years are but as one day!' after this, they taught that there was to be "a seventh day, or a millenary sabbath of rest." Now it being certainly foretold that the Messiah should be sent in the last times, it appears that the Rabbis inferred his advent to be about the middle of the sixth millenary, or the 5500th year of the world; and to find a pretence for rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, it occurred to them to alter the generations of the patriarchs, by which the age of the world might be known, by subtracting a century from Adam's age until the birth of Seth, and adding the same to the residue of his life, and doing the same thing with respect to the generation of many others of Adam's descendants down to Abraham. By this device their computation showed that Jesus Christ was manifested near the middle of the fifth, instead of the sixth, millenary of the world, which according to them was to last 7000 years; and they said, We are still in the middle of the time, and the time appointed for the Messiah's advent is not yet come.

Those Rabbis, however, were obliged to leave the ages at which Jared, Methuselah, and Lamech had their several sons, as they found them. "Had these been curtailed, like the rest, and the century taken from each added to the subsequent life of the patriarch as is done in other cases, Jared would have survived the deluge 66 years; Methuselah 200 years; and Lamech 95 years. Not daring, therefore, to shorten the lives of these three patriarchs, the Jews were forced to let the original amounts of their generations remain unaltered."

"The tradition of the Jews respecting the age of the world was found also in the *Sybilline Oracles*; in *Hesiod*; in the writings of *Darius Hystaspes*, the old king of the Medes, derived probably from the Magi; and in *Hermes Trismegistus*, and was adopted by the early Christian fathers. Its prevalence therefore throughout the Pagan, Jewish, and Christian world, whether well-founded, or otherwise, was a sufficient reason for the Jews to invalidate it, by shortening their chronology." This probability is heightened by the testimony of *Justin Martyr* and *Irenaeus*, who were both eminent Christian writers of the second century, the former a Samaritan by birth, and well skilled in the Hebrew tongue, as well as in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. Now, in his celebrated conference with *Trypho* the Jew, *Justin* expressly charges the Rabbis with having expunged many passages out of the Septuagint version; whilst *Irenaeus* affirms of the same Rabbis, that if they had known the use that was to be made of their Scriptures, they would not have hesitated to burn these Scriptures? The Septuagint version was indeed their abhorrence, because it was generally referred to by the Christian writers; and, in order to bring it as much as possible into disrepute, they instituted, in the beginning of the second century, a solemn fast on the 8th of *Tebeth* (*December*) to curse the memory of its having been made! Had it been in their power, there cannot be a doubt, but that, with these dispositions, they would have destroyed that version entirely; but this was not in their power, whilst it was easy to alter the chronology of the Hebrew text, so as to make it suit their own purposes.

"In the course of the Jewish war," says *Dr Hales*, "until the final destruction of Jerusalem, and expulsion of the Jews from Judea in the reign of Adrian, vast numbers of the Hebrew copies must have been lost or destroyed, besides those that were taken away by the conquerors among other spoils; and the few, that were left, were confined in a great measure to the Jews themselves, as the Hebrew language was not generally understood like the Greek. Whereas, of the Greek copies, even if all, that were possessed by the Hellenistic Jews, not only in Palestine, but throughout the world, had been destroyed, which was far from being the case, yet the copies of the Septuagint, in the possession of the Christians everywhere, rendered any material adulteration of the Greek text, at least in so important a case as that of the genealogies, well nigh impossible." The Jews did however all that they could to deprive the Christians of the arguments with which it furnished them in proof of Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. They set up three other Greek versions in opposition to the Septuagint,

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polity, and learning, of the antediluvian people: but the sacred history, in this respect, is so very short, and the

hints suggested therein, so very few, and so very obscure withal, that, during this period, we are left, in a great measure, in the dark. However, we cannot but observe, that it is a mistaken notion of some authors, who affirm, that at the beginning of the world, for almost 2000 years together, mankind lived without any law, without any precepts, without any promises from God; and that the religion from Adam to Abraham was purely natural, and such as had nothing but right reason to be its rule and measure. The antediluvian dispensation indeed was, in the main, founded upon the law of nature; but still it must be acknowledged, that there was (as we showed before) a divine precept concerning sacrifices; that there was a divine promise concerning the blessed Seed; and that there were several other precepts and injunctions given the patriarchs, besides those that were built upon mere reason.

The law of sacrifices (which confessedly at this time obtained) was partly natural, and partly divine. As sacrifices were tokens of thankfulness and acknowledgments, that the fruits of the earth, and all other creatures, for the use and benefit of man were derived from God; they were a service dictated by natural reason, and so were natural acts of worship: ^a but, as they carried with them the notion of expiation and atonement for the souls of mankind especially as they referred to the Messias, and signified the future sacrifice of Christ, they were certainly instituted by God, and the practice of them was founded upon a divine command.

It is not to be doubted, ¹ but that Adam instructed his children to worship and adore God, to commemorate his goodness, and deprecate his displeasure; nor can we suppose, but that they, in their respective families, put his instructions in execution; and yet we find, that in

¹ *Edward's Survey of Religion, b. 1.*

Josephus rather than that of *Dr Hales*, and therefore the true computation of *Moses*.

According to Hales, &c.	Began his life in the year of the world	Had his son in the year of his life	Lived after the birth of his son—years	Lived in all—years	Died in the year of the world
1. Adam.....	1	230	700	930	930
2. Seth.....	230	205	707	912	1142
3. Enos.....	435	190	715	905	1340
4. Cainan.....	625	170	740	910	1534
5. Mahalaleel....	795	165	730	895	1690
6. Jared.....	960	162	800	962	1922
7. Enoch.....	1122	165	200	365	1487
8. Methuselah....	1287	187	782	969	2256
9. Lamech.....	1474	182	Heb. { 595 LXX. { 565	Heb. { 777 LXX. { 753	Heb. { 2251 LXX. { 2227
10. Noah.....	1656	500			
Deluge.....	2256	600			

Gleig's Edit.

^a This seems inconceivable, though it is an opinion that has been held by men of the highest eminence in the church, as well for learning as for piety. Whilst men possessed no notion of property, what could lead them to offer gifts to God? And though they must have been all conscious of guilt, is it possible that they could hope to propitiate the Creator by taking away the life of his, not their, guiltless creatures. For complete proof of the Divine institution of all kinds of sacrifice, the reader may have recourse to *Maage's Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice.*—*Gleig's Edit.*

framed on the Hebrew text curtailed in the manner which has been already mentioned. The first was that of *Aquila*, published about A. D. 128—two years before the *Seder Olam Rabba*; the second by *Symmachus*; and the third by *Theodotion*. *Aquila* was originally a pagan priest, and afterwards a Christian; but being excommunicated for the irregularity of his conduct, he became a Jew, and the most rancorous enemy of the gospel of Christ. By *Epiphanius* he is charged with wresting the Scriptures, in order to invalidate their testimonies to the claim of our Lord to the character of the Messias; and, in an unpublished Greek tract in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, it is said—"Wherever you find in the Hebrew (for even there he also obliterated) or in the Greek, the testimonies concerning Christ disguised, know that it was the insidious contrivance of *Aquila*."

That he might be able to perform these exploits, *Aquila*, when he became a Jew, put himself under the tuition of the famous Rabbi Akiba, who, for forty years was president of the Sanhedrim, and had 40,000 pupils, which qualified him to become one of the most subtle and formidable as well as most malignant adversaries of Christianity. It was under the auspices, and by the instigation of this famous Rabbi, that in the year 130, was published or "sealed," says *Dr Hales*, "the *Seder Olam Rabba*, or Jewish curtailed system of chronology; and as *Aquila's* version agrees with it, there can be little doubt, but that in this exploit, he was aiding to his master. These facts were undoubtedly known to *Usher* and other eminent chronologers; but, as *Dr Hales* observes, "the superstitious veneration for what was called the Hebrew verity, or supposed immaculate purity of the Masorite editions of the Hebrew text, which generally prevailed among the most eminent divines and Hebrew scholars of the last age, precluded all discussions of this nature." "But the inspection of various editions since, and the copious collations of the Hebrew text with a great number of MSS. collected from all parts of the world, by the laudable industry and extensive researches of *Kennicott*, *De Rossi*, and other learned men, have proved that the sacred classics are no more exempt from various readings than the profane." Errors many and great have crept into the chronology of the Scriptures as well in the original Hebrew as in the Septuagint version; nor have the antiquities of *Josephus* by any means escaped the confusion with respect to dates, which disfigures the Sacred Oracles from which those antiquities were transcribed.

It is, however, chiefly by the means of some genuine dates and numbers which still fortunately subsist in the work of *Josephus*, that our author has been enabled to restore the Scripture chronology to its original state. This he has done by strictly following the analytical method of investigation, which, he truly observes, is at least as applicable to chronology as to natural philosophy. The leading elementary date, by reference to which he has adjusted the whole range of sacred and profane chronology, "is (I quote his own words) the birth of Cyrus, before Christ 599, which led to his accession to the throne of Persia, B. C. 559; of Media, B. C. 551; and of Babylonia, B. C. 536; for, from these several dates carefully and critically ascertained and verified, the several respective chronologies of these kingdoms branched off; and from the last especially, the destruction of Solomon's temple by Nebuchadnezzar, B. C. 586, its corrector date, which led to its foundation, B. C. 1027; thence, to the Exode, B. C. 1648; thence to Abraham's birth, B. C. 2153; thence to the reign of Nimrod, 2554; thence to the deluge, B. C. 3155; and thence to the creation, B. C. 5411. And this date of the creation is verified, by the rectification of the systems of *Josephus*, and *Theophilus*, who was bishop of Antioch, A. D. 169, and the first Christian chronologist." By the same patient and analytical investigation, *Dr Hales* has ascertained the genealogies of the antediluvian patriarchs, to have been very different from what they are represented to have been in the present Hebrew; and though it would undoubtedly be presumptuous to say that his system is without errors, it appears to approach so near to perfection, that the following computation, which differs widely from those of the Hebrew, Samaritan, and Septuagint texts at present, must, I think, be acceptable to the reader. It may be considered as the original computation of

A. M. 1536. A. C. 2468; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 2136. A. C. 3275. GEN. CH. 5. AND 6. TO VER. 13.

the days of Enos, (besides all private devotion) a public form of worship was set up; that the people had the rites of their religion, which God had appointed, fixed, and established; and that, very probably, as Cain built cities for his descendants to live in, so Enos might build temples, and places of divine worship, for his to resort to.^a

The distinction of clean and unclean animals was another divine injunction under this dispensation. God refers Noah to it, as a thing well known, when he commands him¹ to put into the ark seven pairs of clean, and two of unclean creatures: and² though, in respect of man's food, this distinction was not before the law of Moses, yet some beasts were accounted fit and others unfit for sacrifices from the beginning. The former were esteemed clean, and the latter unclean: and it seems safer to make a positive law of God the foundation of this distinction, than to imagine that men, in such matters as these, were left to their own discretion.

The prohibition of marrying with infidels or idolaters, was another article of this dispensation, as appears from God's angry resentment when the children of Seth entered into wedlock with the wicked posterity of Cain. And, to mention no more, under this period were given those six 'great precepts of Adam' (as they are generally called) whereof the Jewish doctors make such boast; ^b and of these the 1. was of strange worship, or idolatry; the 2. of cursing the most holy name, or blasphemy; the 3. of uncovering the nakedness, or unlawful copulation; the 4. of bloodshed, or homicide; the 5. of theft and rapine; and the 6. of judgment, or the administration of justice in the public courts of judicature. So that, from the very first, 'God did not leave himself without a witness' (as the apostle terms it) but, in one degree or other, made frequent manifestations of his will to mankind.

That government of one kind or other, is essential to the well-being of mankind, seems to be a position 'founded in the nature of things, the relation wherein

men, at first, stood towards one another, and the several qualifications in them, which, in a short time, could not but appear. The first form of government, without all controversy, was patriarchal; but this form was soon laid aside, when men of superior parts came to distinguish themselves; when the head of any family either outpowered or outwitted his neighbour, and so brought him to give up his dominion, either by compulsion or resignation. Government, however, at this time, seems to have been placed in fewer hands, than it is now: not that the number of people was less, but their communities were larger, and their kingdoms more extensive, than since the flood; ³ inasmuch, that it may well be questioned, whether, after the union of the two great families of Seth and Cain, there was any distinction of civil societies, or diversity of regal governments at all. It seems more likely, that all mankind then made but one great nation, living in a kind of anarchy, and divided into several disorderly associations; which, as it was almost the natural consequence of their having, in all probability, but one language; so it was a circumstance which greatly contributed to that general corruption which otherwise perhaps could not so universally have prevailed. And for this reason we may suppose, that no sooner was the posterity of Noah sufficiently increased, but a plurality of tongues was miraculously introduced, in order to divide them into distinct societies, and thereby prevent any such total depravation for the future.

The enterprising genius of man began to exert itself very early in music, brass-work, iron-work, and every science, useful and entertaining, and the undertakers were not limited by a short life. They had time enough before them to carry things to perfection: but whatever their skill, learning, or industry performed, all remains and monuments of it have long since perished.

⁴ Josephus indeed gives us this account of Seth's great knowledge in astronomy, and how industrious he was to have it conveyed to the new world. "Seth, and his descendants;" says he, "were persons of happy tempers, and lived in peace, employing themselves in the study of astronomy, and in other searches after useful knowledge; but, being informed by Adam, that the world should be twice destroyed, first by water, and afterwards by fire, they made two pillars, the one of stone, and the other of brick, and inscribed their knowledge upon them, supposing that the one or other of them might remain for the use of posterity." ⁵ But how strangely improbable is it, that they, who foreknew that the destruction of the world should be by a flood, should busy themselves to write astronomical observations on pillars, for the benefit of those who should live after it? Could they think, that their pillars would have some peculiar exemption, above other structures, from the violence

¹ Gen. vii. 2.

² Patrick's Commentary.

^a These conjectures are without all foundation. The pious family of Seth undoubtedly worshipped God in public as well as in private, from the very beginning; though it was not till the days of Enos that they began to "call themselves by the name of the Lord," or to assume the denomination of "the sons of God," to distinguish themselves from the profane race of Cain.—See Hales's Analysis, &c., vol. ii. p. 34.; Bishop Gleig's Edit.

^b The commandments given to the sons of Noah are the same with these. They are an abridgment of the whole law of nature; but have one positive precept annexed to them; and are generally placed in this order. 1. "Thou shalt serve no other gods, but the Maker only of heaven and earth. 2. Thou shalt remember to serve the true God, the Lord of the world, by sanctifying his name in the midst of thee. 3. Thou shalt not shed the blood of man created after the image of God. 4. Thou shalt not defile thy body, that thou mayest be fruitful and multiply, and, with a blessing replenish the earth. 5. Thou shalt be content with that which thine is, and what thou wouldst not have done to thyself, that thou shalt not do to another. 6. Thou shalt do right judgment to every one, without respect to persons. 7. Thou shalt not eat the flesh in the blood, nor any thing that hath life, with the life thereof." This is the heptalogue of Noah, or the seven words, which, as the Jews tell us, were delivered to his sons, and were constantly observed by all the uncircumcised worshippers of the true God.—*Bibliotheca Biblica, Occasional Annotations*, 15. vol. 1.

^c To this purpose Cicero (*On Laws*, b. 3. c. 1.) tells us, that

³ *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 2.

⁴ *Antiquities*, b. 1. c. 2.

⁵ *Stillingfleet's Sacred Origins*, b. 1. c. 2.

"Without government, neither family, nor nation, nor mankind, nor the world, nor the universe, could last." Seneca asserts that, "it (government) is the chain by which the state is held together, it is the vital breath which these numerous thousands of citizens inhale, who would, of their own accord, immediately sink into nothing but an inert mass and easy prey, were that spirit of order withdrawn."

A. M. 1536. A. C. 2468; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 2136. A. C. 3275. GEN. CH. 5. AND 6. TO VER. 13.

and outrage of the waters? If they believed that the flood would prove universal, for whose instruction did they write their observations? If they did not, to what end did they write them at all, since the persons who survived, might communicate their inventions to whom they pleased? The plain truth is, ¹ *Josephus*, who frequently quotes heathen authors, and *Manetho* in particular, to this story of Seth's pillars from the pillars of *Hermes* mentioned in that historian: for, as the Jews had an ancient tradition concerning Seth's pillars, *Josephus*, in reading *Manetho*, might possibly think his account misapplied, and thereupon imagine, that he should probably hit on the truth, if he put the account of the one and the tradition of the other together; and this very likely might occasion his mistake.

² The eastern people have preserved several traditions of very little certainty concerning Enoch. They believe, that he received from God the gift of wisdom and knowledge to an eminent degree, and that God sent him thirty volumes from heaven, filled with all the secrets of the most mysterious science. St Jude, it is certain, seems to cite a passage from a prophecy of his; nor can it be denied, but that in the first ages of Christianity, ^a there was a book, well known to the Jews, that went

under his name: but besides that this piece is now generally given up for spurious, there is no need for us to suppose, that St Jude ever quoted any passage out of this, or any other book of Enoch.

³ Enoch was a prophet, we are told, and as such was invested with authority, 'to cry aloud, and spare not, to reprove the wicked, and denounce God's judgments against them; and as he was a good man, it was easy for St Jude to imagine, that he would not sit still, and see the impieties of the people grow so very exorbitant, without endeavouring to repress them, by setting before them 'the terrors of the Lord.' He could not discharge the office of a good man, and a prophet, without forewarning them of the ⁴ 'Lord's coming, with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that were ungodly among them: and because this was his office and duty, the apostle infers, (as by the Spirit of God he might certainly know,) that he did so, though he might not make that inference from any passage in his prophecy; because it is a known observation, that ^b many things are alluded to in the New Testament, which were never perhaps in any book at all.

Of all the strange matters that occur in this period of time, there is nothing which looks so like a prodigy as the longevity of those men who at first inhabited the earth; nor is any event so apt to affect us with wonder,

¹ *Shuckford's Connection*, b. 1.

² *Calnet's Dictionary* on the word Enoch.

^a *Joseph Scaliger*, in his annotations upon *Eusebius's Chronicle*, has given us some considerable fragments of it, which *Heidegger* in his *History of the Patriarchs*, has translated into Latin, which the curious, if they think proper, may consult: but the whole seems to be nothing but a fabulous collection of some Jew or other, most unworthy the holy patriarch. *Tertullian*, however, has defended it with great warmth, and laments much, that all the world is not as zealous as himself, in the maintenance of its authenticity. He pretends, that it had been saved by Noah in the ark, from thence transmitted down to the church, and that the Jews, in his days, rejected it, only because they thought it was favourable to Christianity.—*Miller's History of the Church*; and *Saurin's Dissertations*. The great objections against this book are, that neither *Philo*, nor *Josephus*, (those diligent searchers into antiquity,) make any mention of it; and that it contains such fabulous stories as are monstrous and absurd. But to this some have answered, that such a book there certainly was, notwithstanding the silence of these Jewish antiquaries: and that after the apostle's time, it might be corrupted, and many things added to it by succeeding heretics, who might take occasion from the antiquity thereof, and from the passage of Michael's contending with the devil about the body of Moses, to interpolate many fables and inventions of their own.—*Raleigh's History of the World*.—That there is still extant a very ancient book called *The Prophecies of Enoch* is a fact which will admit of no controversy; but it is not from that work, but from another Jewish book called *The Assumption of Moses*, which, though now lost, was extant in the time of *Origen*, that the passage about Michael's contention with the devil appears to have been quoted by the apostle St Jude. Of *The Prophecies of Enoch* *Mr Bruce* gives us the following account:

"Amongst the articles I consigned to the library at Paris, was a very beautiful and magnificent copy of *The Prophecies of Enoch* in large quarto; another is amongst the books of Scripture, which I brought home, standing immediately before the book of Job, which is its proper place in the Abyssinian Canon; and a third copy I have presented to the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The more ancient history of that book is well known." The church at first looked upon it as apocryphal, and it was never admitted into any ancient canon of Scripture that I have seen or heard of.

"We may observe that Jude's appealing to the apocryphal books did by no means import, that either he believed, or warranted, the truth of them." No man ever supposed that St Paul warranted the truth of all that *Aratus* the poet had written, or

³ *Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs*.

⁴ Jude 14, 15.

even that he believed that we are the offspring of God in the very sense in which that poet probably taught that we are; but he appealed to him as sufficient authority among the Athenians in support of his own doctrine, that all men have sprung from one origin. It was an argument *ad hominem*, such as "our Saviour himself often makes use of. You, says he to the Jews, deny certain facts, which must be from prejudice, because you have them allowed in your own books, and believe them there. And a very strong and fair way of arguing it is; but this is by no means any allowance that these books are true. In the same manner you, says St Jude, do not believe the coming of Christ and a latter judgment; yet your ancient Enoch, who, you suppose, was the seventh from Adam, tells you this plainly, and in so many words long ago. And indeed the quotation is word for word the same, in the second chapter of the book. All that is material to say farther concerning the book of Enoch is, that it is a Gnostic book, containing the age of the Emims, Anakims, and Egregores, (descendants of the sons of God, when they fell in love with the daughters of men), who were giants." The editor of *Bruce's Travels* says, I know not on what sufficient authority, that, "the book in question was originally written in Greek by some Alexandrian Jew;" but I suspect that he confounds with *The Prophecies of Enoch*, *The Assumption of Moses*, of which fragments may be found perhaps in different authors, and which was certainly written in Greek. The question, however, is of no importance; for it appears from the summary of its contents given by the editor, that *The Prophecies of Enoch*, received into the Sacred Canon by the Abyssinian church, are indeed, what he calls them—an absurd and tedious work.—*Bruce's Travels*, vol. 2. p. 412. ed. 3.; *Bishop Gleig's Edit.*

^b There are many instances in the New Testament of facts alluded to, which we do not find in any ancient books. Thus the contest between Michael and the devil is mentioned, as if the Jews had, some where or other, a full account of it. The names of the Egyptians, Jannes, and Jambres, are set down, though they are nowhere found in Moses' history. St Paul tells us, that Moses exceedingly quaked and feared on Mount Sinai; but we do not find it so recorded anywhere in the Old Testament. In all these cases, the apostles and holy writers hinted at things, commonly received as true, by tradition, among the Jews, without transcribing them from any real book.—*Shuckford's Connection*, b. 1.

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as the disproportion between their lives and ours. We think it a great thing, if we chance to arrive at fourscore, or an hundred years; whereas they lived to the term of seven, eight, nine hundred, and upwards, as appears ^a by the joint testimony both of sacred and profane history. The only suspicion that can arise in our minds upon this occasion, is, that the computation might possibly be made, not according to solar, but lunar years; but this, instead of solving the difficulty, runs us into several gross absurdities.

The space of time, between the creation and the flood, is usually computed to be 1656 years, which, if we suppose to be lunar, and converted into common years, will amount to little more than 127; too short an interval, by much, to stock the world with a sufficient number of inhabitants. From one couple we can scarce imagine, that there could arise 500 persons in so short a time; but suppose them a thousand, they would not be so many as we sometimes have in a good country village. And were the floodgates of heaven opened, and the great abyss broken up, to destroy such an handful of people? were the waters raised fifteen cubits above the highest mountains, throughout the face of the whole earth, to drown a parish or two? This certainly is more incredible than the longest age which the Scriptures ascribe to the patriarchs; besides that, this short interval leaves no room for ten generations, which we find from Adam to the flood; nor does it allow the patriarchs age enough, (some of them, upon this supposition, must not be above five years old,) when they are said to beget children.

It is generally allowed, and may indeed be proved by the testimony of Scripture, that our first fathers lived considerably longer, than any of their posterity have done since; but, according to this hypothesis, (which depresses the lives of the antediluvians, not only below those who lived next the flood, but even below all following generations to this day,) Methuselah, who was always accounted the oldest man since the creation, did but reach to the age of seventy-five, and Abraham, who is said to have died in a good old age, was not completely fifteen.

The patrons of this opinion therefore would do well to tell us, when we are to break off this account of lunar years in the sacred history. If they will have it extended no farther than the flood, they make the postdiluvian fathers longer-lived than the antediluvian, but will be puzzled to assign a reason, why the deluge should occasion longevity. If they will extend it to the postdiluvians likewise, they will then be entangled in worse difficulties; for they will make their lives miserably short, and their age of getting children altogether incongruous and impossible.

From the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that the years whereby Moses reckons the lives of the antediluvians, were solar years, much of the same length with what we now use; and that therefore there must be a reason, either in their manner of life, their bodily con-

stitution, the temperament of the world wherein they lived, or (what is most likely) the particular vouchsafement of God, to give them this mighty singular advantage above us.

Some have imputed this extraordinary length of life in the antediluvians to the sobriety of their living, and simplicity of their diet; that they eat no flesh, and had no provocations to gluttony, which wit and vice have since invented. ¹ This indeed might have some effect, but not possibly to the degree we now speak of; since there have been many moderate and abstemious people in all ages, who have not surpassed the common period of life.

Others have ascribed it to the excellency of the fruits, and some unknown quality in the herbs and plants of those days: but the earth, we know, was cursed immediately after the fall, and its fruits, we may suppose, gradually decreased in their virtue and goodness, until the time of the flood; and yet we do not see, that the length of men's lives decreased at all during that interval.

Others therefore have thought, that the long lives of the men of the old world proceeded from the strength of their stamina, or first principles of their bodily constitution; which, if they were equally strong in us, would maintain us, as they think, in being, as long: but though it be granted, that both the strength and stature of their bodies were greater than ours, and that a race of strong men, living long in health, will have children of a proportionably strong constitution; yet, that this was not the sole and adequate cause of their longevity, we have one plain instance to convince us, namely, that Shem, who was born before the deluge, and had in his body all the virtue of an antediluvian constitution, fell 300 years short of the age of his forefathers, because the greatest part of his life was passed after the flood.

The ingenious theorist whom I have quoted, for this reason, imagines, that before the flood, the situation of the earth to the sun was direct and perpendicular, and not, as it is now, inclined and oblique. From this position he infers, that there was a perpetual equinox all the earth over, and one continued spring; and thence concludes, that the equality of the air, and stability of the seasons were the true causes of the then longevity; whereas the change, and obliquity of the earth's posture, occasioned by the deluge, altered the form of the year, and brought in an inequality of seasons, which caused a sensible decay in nature, and a gradual contraction in human life.^b

¹ Burnet's Theory of the Earth, b. 2. c. 4.

^b This is a perfectly groundless fancy warranted neither by Scripture nor by philosophy.

“At the creation, the two great lights, the sun and the moon, were ordained, among other uses, to be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years, Gen. i. 14. But seasons and years are produced by this obliquity. If, then, seasons and years existed before the deluge, so must the obliquity. But that they did, is evident from the history: for the duration of time, from the creation to the deluge, is measured by the years of the generations of the patriarchs from Adam to Noah, Gen. v. And when God promised Noah, that ‘while the earth remained, seed-time and harvest, or (spring and autumn), cold and heat, or (winter and summer), and day and night should not cease,’ plainly signifying, that the world should go on after the deluge

^a *Manetho*, who wrote the story of the Egyptians; *Berosus*, who wrote the Chaldean history; those authors, who give us an account of the Phœnician antiquities; and among the Greeks, *Hesiodus*, *Hecateus*, *Hellanicus*, *Ephorus*, &c., do unanimously agree, that in the first ages of the world, men lived 1000 years.

—Burnet's Theory, b. 2. c. 4.

A. M. 1656. A. C. 2349; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 2256. A. C. 3155. GEN. vi. 12. TO ix. 20.

His reasoning, upon this point, is very elegant. "There is no question," says he, "but every thing upon earth, and especially the animate world, would be much more permanent, if the general course of nature was more steady, and more uniform. A stability in the heavens makes a stability in all things below; and that change, and contrariety of qualities which we have in these regions, is the fountain of corruption—the ether in their little pores, the air in their greater, and the vapours and atmosphere that surround them, shake, and unsettle their texture and continuity; whereas, in a fixed state of nature, where these principles have always the same constant and uniform motion, a long and lasting peace ensues, without any violence, either within, or without to discompose them. We see, by daily experience," continues he, "that bodies are kept better in the same medium, (as we call it,) than when they are sometimes in the air, and sometimes in the water, moist and dry, hot and cold, by turns; because these different states weaken the contexture of their parts. But our bodies, in the present state of nature, are put in an hundred different mediums, in the course of a year; the winds are of a different nature, and the air of a different weight and pressure, according as the weather and seasons affect them. All these things are enough to wear out our bodies soon, very soon, in comparison of what they would last, if they were always encompassed with one and the same medium, and that medium were always of one and the same temper."

This is all very pretty: but the author's grand mistake is, that it was not so in the primitive earth. He has no authority to show, that how high soever the waters might swell at the deluge, the centre of the earth gave way 'or the foundations of the round world were shaken.' The earth, no doubt, had, before, as well as after the flood, an annual as well as diurnal motion. ¹ It stood to the sun in the same oblique posture and situation, and was consequently subject to the same seasons and vicissitudes that the present earth is; and if the air was more mild, and the elements more favourable at that time, this we may account the peculiar blessing of God, and not the result of the earth's position to the sun, or any fancied stability in the weather. The truth is, whatever we may attribute to second causes, why bodies that are naturally mortal and corruptible should subsist so long in the primitive ages of the world; yet the true cause of all is to be ascribed to the will of God, who impregnated our first parents with such vigour, and gave their posterity for some time such robust constitutions, as depended not upon the nature of their diet, the stability of the seasons, or the temperature of the air. After the flood, God soon made a sensible change in the length of man's days. For, perceiving the general iniquity to increase again, and thereupon designing to make an alteration in the world's continuance, he hastened the period of human life, that the number of souls he intended

to send into the world before the consummation of all things, might have a speedier probation. Man's age accordingly went on sinking by degrees, until a little before David's time, it came to be fixed at what has been the common standard ever since. ² 'The days of our age are threescore years and ten: and though some men be so strong, that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.' This is our stated period; and therefore for us, who live in this postdiluvian world, and have the term of our trial so much shortened, the subsequent prayer of the devout Psalmist will always be necessary, always seasonable; 'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.'

S E C T. V I.

CHAP. I.—Of the Deluge.

THE HISTORY.

God (as we said before) had given mankind a reprimand for an hundred and twenty years; but when he saw that all his lenity and forbearance tended to no purpose, except it was to make them more bold and licentious in their sins, he declared to his servant Noah, that within a short time his resolution was to destroy them, and with them all other creatures upon the face of the earth, by a flood of waters; but ^a assured him, at the same time, that since he had comforted himself better, and approved his fidelity to his Maker, he would take care to preserve him and his family, and whatever other creatures were necessary for the restoration of their species from the general calamity.

To this purpose he gave him orders to build a kind of vessel, not in the form of ships now in use, but rather

² Ps. xc. 10.

^a The words in our translation are, *With thee will I establish my covenant*: but 1st, by the word *covenant*, we are not here to understand a mutual compact or agreement, but only a simple and gracious promise, as it is likewise used, Numb. xviii. 19, xxv. 12, and in several other places; which promise, though only mentioned here, was doubtless made before, as may easily be gathered from these words, and some foregoing passages, and from the necessity that Noah should have some such support and encouragement during all the time of his ministry. 2dly. This covenant of God might relate to his sending the promised seed, and redemption of mankind by the Messiah; and in this sense will import, that as the Messiah was to come out of Noah's loins, so the divine providence would take care to preserve him alive. But, 3dly. A learned and right reverend author is of opinion, that this covenant of God relates to his reinstating the earth in its primitive fertility in Noah's lifetime. To which purpose he observes, that as soon as the flood was over, God declares, 'I will not again curse the ground for man's sake;' from which declaration it appears, (says he) 1st, That the flood was the effect of that curse which was denounced against the earth for man's sake; and 2dly, That the old curse was fully executed and accomplished in the flood; in consequence of which, a new blessing is immediately pronounced upon the earth, Gen. xiii. 22. 'While the earth remaineth, seed-time, and harvest, and cold, and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.'—*Poole's Annotations, and Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy*

¹ See *Keill's Examination of Burnet's Theory*.

as it had done before, and that the same vicissitude of seasons should prevail as of day and night; how is it possible to represent, that God found it necessary to forewarn Noah that he must expect successive changes of seasons, and vicissitudes of heat and cold, such as he had never yet experienced!"—*Hales's Analysis*, 8vo, vol. 1. p. 324.—Ed.

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inclining to the fashion of a ^a large chest or ark, and himself prescribed the plan whereby he was to proceed. —That to make the vessel firm and strong, and able to endure the pressure of the waves, the wood most proper for that purpose ^b should be cypress; and that to prevent the waves from penetrating, or the sun from cracking it, as well as to secure it from worms, and make it glide more easy upon the water, his business would be, as soon as it was finished, ^c to pitch it, or rather smear it all over with bitumen, (whereof there was plenty in the country), both within and without; that to make its proportion regular, its length should be six times more than its breadth, and ten times more than its height; and to give it capacity enough, the first of these should be ^d 300 cubits, that is, in our measure, 450 feet; the second 50 cubits, or 75 feet; and the third 30 cubits, or 45 feet; that to make it commodious for the reception of everything, it was to consist of three stories or decks, of equal

height each, and each divided into stalls and apartments proper for the things that were to be put into it; that for turning off the rain, the roof was to be made sloping; that for letting in of light ^e there were windows to be so and so disposed, or ^f some other convenience answerable to them; and that, for the more easy induction of the many things it was to contain, a door or entry-port was to be made in its side.

These were the instructions which God gave Noah, who accordingly went to work, and being assisted with the hands of his family, (for ^g the rest of the world doubtless derided him,) in the time that was appointed him, and seven days before the rain began to fall, ^h he had com-

^e There are various translations of the word *zohar* which occurs but once in the whole Bible in this sense. It seems to be derived from a root in the Chaldee, which signifies 'to shine,' or 'give light;' and therefore our version renders it a *window*; but if so, it must be collective, and mean several windows, because it is not likely that there should be but one in so vast a building, and from the following words, 'in a cubit shalt thou finish it above,' some have supposed, that the window was to be a cubit square, or but a cubit high, which would have been much too small. But the relative 'it' being, in the Hebrew, of the feminine gender, and *zohar* of the masculine, these two words cannot agree; and therefore the proper antecedent seems to be the 'ark,' which was covered with a roof raised a cubit high in the middle. This, however, in the original, may signify no more than an injunction to build the ark by the cubit, as the common measure, by which the work was to be marked out and directed.—See *Universal History*; *Saurin's Dissertation*; and *Lamy's Introduction*.

^f What that other convenience was, we shall have occasion to show when we come to treat of the word *zohar*, (which we here render 'window,') in answer to the subsequent objection.

^g The Apostle to the Hebrews (xi. 7.) mentions Noah's building the ark as an heroic act of faith; 'By faith Noah,' says he, 'being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith;' for we may well imagine, that this work of his was not only costly and laborious, but esteemed by the generality very foolish and ridiculous; especially when they saw all things continue in the same posture and safety for so many scores of years together; whereby Noah, without doubt, became all that while the song of drunkards, and the sport of the wits of the age.—*Poole's Annotations*. The Mahometans have a tradition, that when he began to work upon this famous vessel, all that saw him derided him, and said, "You are building a ship; if you can bring water to it, you will be a prophet, as well as a carpenter;" but he made answer to these insults, "You laugh at me now, but I shall have my turn to laugh at you: for at your own cost you will learn, that there is a God in heaven who punishes the wicked."—*Calmet's Dictionary* on the word Noah.

^h It is somewhat strange, that the torrent of interpreters should suppose, that Noah was 120 years about this work, when he gives no intimation to that purpose, but sufficient reasons to believe, that he was not near so long as is imagined. It is plain from Scripture that 'he was 500 years old when he begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth,' (Gen. v. 32), and that when he received the command for building the ark, the same sons were married; for the text says expressly, 'Thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee,' (Gen. vi. 18.) So that all the time between the birth and marriage of the said sons must at least be supposed to intervene before the command to build the ark was given; and between the command and the execution of it, must not be so long as is imagined, without a concurrence of miracles, to prevent that part of it which was first built from being rotten and decayed before the last part of it was finished.—*Saurin's Dissertation*. If the wood was of the nature described in a preceding note, no miracle would be necessary to preserve it during the period, 120 years, employed in building it; and from its immense size, and great tonnage, as shown before, it is not wonderful that so much time should be occupied in its construction. If this was the case, Noah began it in his 480th year; while he was childless; a striking proof of his

^a The word *thebath*, which we render *ark*, is only read here, and in another place, where Moses, when an infant, is said to have been put into one made of bulrushes, Exod. ii. 3. It is supposed to come from a root which signifies 'to dwell or inhabit;' and may therefore here denote 'a house, or place of abode.' And indeed, if we consider the use and design, as well as the form and figure of this building, we can hardly suppose it to be like an ark or chest, wherein we usually store lumber, and put things out of the way; but rather like a farm house, such as are in several countries, where the cattle and people live all under one roof. As soon as men began to hew down timber, and to join it together, for the purpose of making houses, nothing can be supposed a more simple kind of edifice than what was made rectangular, with a bottom or floor, to prevent the dampness of the ground; a sloping cover or roof to carry off the rain that should fall; stalls and cabins for the lodging of man and beast; and to keep out wind and weather effectually, a coat of bitumen or pitch. Of this kind was this building of Noah's, and may therefore rather be termed a place of abode, than an ark or chest, properly so called.—*Le Clerc's Commentary on the Passage*.

^b The timber whereof the ark was framed Moses calls *gopher-wood*; but what tree this gopher was, is not a little controverted. Some will have it to be cedar, others the pine, others the box, and others (particularly the Mahometans) the Indian plane-tree; but our learned *Fuller* in his *Miscellanies*, has observed, that it was nothing else but that which the Greeks call *Kυρῳῖνος*, or the cypress-tree; for taking away the termination, *cypar*, and *gopher* differ very little in the sound. This observation the great *Bochart* has confirmed, and shown very plainly, that no country abounds so much with this wood as that part of Assyria which lies about Babylon. And to this we may add the observation of *Theophrastus*, who, speaking of trees that are least subject to decay, makes the cypress-tree the most durable of all; for which *Vitruvius* gives us this reason, viz. that the sap, which is in every part of the wood has a peculiar bitter taste, and is so very offensive that no worm or other corroding animal will touch it: so that such works as are made of this wood will in a manner last for ever.—See *Universal History*; *Patrick's Commentary*; *Bochart's Annotations*, b. 1. c. 4; and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 1. c. 9.

^c The Arabic translation says expressly *pitch it with pitch*, but the bitumen (which was plentiful in that country, and as others think intended here) was of the same nature, and served to the same use as pitch, being glutinous and tenacious, and proper to keep things together.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d A cubit is the measure from the elbow to the finger's end, containing six hand-breadths, or a foot and a half: so that 300 cubits make exactly 450 feet. There are some, however, who take these for geometrical cubits, every one of which contain six of the common; but there is no need for any such computation, since, taking them for common cubits, it is demonstrable (as will appear hereafter) that there might be room enough in the ark for all sorts of beasts and birds, together with Noah's family and their necessary provision.—*Ainsworth's Annotations*; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

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pleted the whole. Whereupon God gave him instructions that he should take into the ark every living thing of all flesh, both cattle, and beasts of the field, birds and fowls of the air, and reptiles of all kinds; ^a of the unclean, one pair only, but of the clean seven pair; that when the general desolation was over, they might increase again, and replenish the earth; and that when every thing was thus settled and disposed of, himself and his family should likewise go into the ark, and take up their apartments.

Pursuant to those directions, Noah and his family went into the ark, leaving the rest of the world in their security and sensuality, in the 600th year of his age, much ^b about the middle of September; when in a few days after, ¹ the whole face of nature began to put on a dismal aspect, as if the earth were to suffer a final dissolution, and all

¹ *Howell's Complete History.*

implicit faith, both in the divine threatenings and promises: for his eldest son, Japheth, (Gen. x. 21.) was not born till twenty years after, in the 500th year of his age, (Gen. v. 32.); and his second, Shem, two years after, (Gen. xi. 10.) Such is the apostle Paul's description.—'By faith, Noah, having been instructed by the divine oracle, concerning things not yet seen, (the ensuing deluge, &c.) moved with fear, prepared an ark, for the saving of his house,' or future family, (Heb. xi. 7).—Ed. In what place Noah built and finished his ark, is no less made a matter of dispute. One supposes that he built it in Palestine, and planted the cedars whereof he made it in the plains of Sodom: another takes it to have been built near Mount Caucasus, on the confines of India: and a third in China, where he imagines Noah dwelt before the flood. But the most probable opinion is, that it was built in Chaldaea, in the territories of Babylon, where there was so great a quantity of cypress in the groves and gardens, in Alexander's time, that that prince built a whole fleet out of it, for want of other timber. And this conjecture is confirmed by the Chaldean tradition, which makes Xisuthrus (another name for Noah) set sail from that country.—See *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 1.

^a The distinction between beasts that were clean and unclean, being made by the law, has given some a colour to imagine, that Moses wrote this book after his coming out of Egypt, and receiving the law, but to this it may be answered, that though, with respect to man's food, the distinction of clean and unclean, was not before the law, yet some were accounted fit for sacrifices, and others unfit, from the very first beginning; and then unclean beasts, in this place, must denote such as are rapacious which were not to be offered to God. In short, since the rite of sacrificing was before the flood, we may very well be allowed to suppose that this distinction was also before it: and to suppose farther, that as the rite was undoubtedly of God's institution, so the difference of clean and unclean creatures to be sacrificed, was of his appointment likewise. But there is a farther doubt arising from this passage, and that is—whether there went into the ark but seven of every clean, and two of every unclean species, or fourteen of the first, and two of the last. Some adhere to the former exposition, but others to the latter, which seems to be the natural sense of the Hebrew words, *seven and seven*, and *two and two*. Besides, if there were but seven of the clean beasts, one must have been without a mate; and if it be suggested, that the odd one was for sacrifice, it is more than Moses tells us, who, on the contrary, repeats it, that the animals all went in by pairs.—*Patrick's Commentary*; *Poole's Annotations*; and *Universal History*, c. 1.

^b The words in the text are, *In the second month*; but, for the better understanding of this, we must remember, that the year among the Hebrews, was of two kinds; the one ecclesiastical, which began in March, and chiefly regarded the observation of their fasts and festivals, of which we read Exod. xii. 2. and the other civil, for the better regulating of men's political affairs, which began in September. Accordingly the second month is thought by some to be part of April, and part of May, the most pleasant part of the year, and when the flood was least expected, and least feared; but by others part of October, and

things return to their primitive chaos. ^c The cataracts of heaven were opened, the abyss of waters, in the centre of the earth poured out, and the sea, forgetting its bounds, overspread the earth with a dreadful inundation.

Too late does wretched man perceive the approach of his deserved fate; and in vain does he find out means for his preservation. The tops of the hills, the tallest trees, the strongest towers, and the loftiest mountains can give him no relief: it is but a small reprieve a most that they can yield him; for as the waters swell, and the waves come rushing on, hills, trees, towers, mountains, and every little refuge, must disappear with him. Noah himself cannot help him. Though he might now remember his predictions, and so flee to him for succour, yet God has shut the door of the ark, and it cannot be opened; ² and so it shall be to every one, at the last great day, who shall not be found in Christ, the only ark of our salvation.

For forty days and nights together, without the least intermission, did the clouds continue raining; when at length the ark began to float, and to move from place to place as the waves drove it. And though there might be some short cessations afterwards, yet at certain intervals, the rain continued falling, and the waters swelling, till in process of time, the flood began to cover the mountains, and, by a gradual increase, came at last to

² *Millar's History of the Church*; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Poole's Annotations.*

part of November, a little after that Noah had gathered in the fruits of the earth, and laid them up in the ark: so that the flood came in with the winter, and was by degrees dried up in the following summer. And this opinion seems to be more probable, because the most ancient, and first beginning of the year, was in September; and the other beginning of the year in March, was but a later institution among the Jews; with respect to their festivals and other sacred affairs, which are not at all concerned here.—*Poole's Annotations*. Dr Hales, however, is of opinion, and from the evidence he has adduced, it seems correctly, that the deluge began in spring, and that the second month was reckoned by the sacred year, which began about the vernal equinox; and as Noah was a year and ten days in the ark, himself, family, and the animals would leave it at the beginning of May, the season most suited for the enjoyment of animal life, and before winter, ample provision would be produced for their support, the heat also would have so dried the moisture from the earth as to make it a healthy and comfortable residence.—See *Hales' Anal.*, vol. 1. 322–332.—Ed.

^c Ovid, who is supposed to have extracted most of the beginning of his *Metamorphoses* out of the sacred records, has described both the induction and retreat of the waters in a manner very conformable to the original, from whence he had them. Their induction thus:—

The south wind quick on moistened wings darts forth,
Its fearful face in pitchy darkness shaded;
And as its mighty arm the hanging clouds oppress'd,
A crash is made; dense rains rush down from heaven.
The Ocean-king his trident poised and struck the earth,
Which trembled and laid bare the waters' gulfs.
The rivers boundless rush along the plains;
And 'long with crops drag trees, and kine, and men,
And hallowed domes, and shrines, and sacred things.

Their retreat thus:—

The clouds he struck, and rains drove to the north,
When earth to heaven was shown and heaven to earth;
The sleepless ocean now can boast a shore,
The channel too contains its brimming streams,
The floods are lulled, the hills seem to arise,
The ground appears, and with the waves' decrease
All parts increase, when now, the long day done,
The hidden trees their naked tops present,
And on their branches bear the clammy clay.

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raise its surface fifteen cubits (above twenty-two feet of our measure) higher than the tops of the highest of them.

In this elevation the flood continued until the latter end of March: when, as one friend is apt to remember another in distress, (the Scripture here speaks in the style of men, so God,) reflecting upon Noah, and the poor remains of his creation, floating in the ark, caused a drying north wind to arise, the floodgates of heaven to be stopped, and the eruption of the waters out of the womb of the earth to cease; by which means the deluge began to abate, and the waters subside, so that in a short time, the ark, which must have drawn great depth of water, stuck on a mountain, named *Ararat*, and there rested; and not long after the tops of other mountains began to appear.

This happened in the beginning of May, when the summer was coming on apace: but Noah, wisely considering, that although the mountains were bare, the valleys might still be overflowed, waited forty days longer before he attempted any farther discovery; and then ^aopening the window, he let go a raven, as supposing that the smell of dead bodies would allure him to fly a good distance from the vessel; but the experiment did not do; the raven, after several unsuccessful flights, finding nothing but water, returned to the ark again. Seven days after this, he let fly a dove, a bird of a strong pinion, and, from the remotest places always accustomed to come home, and therefore proper to make farther discoveries. But she finding nothing but water likewise, immediately returned to the ark, and was taken in. After this he waited seven days more, and then

^a It is very observable, that the words which we render 'window' in vi. 16., and viii. 6. of Genesis, are far from being the same: in the former place, the word is *zohar*, (the nature of which we shall have a proper occasion to explain) in the latter, it is *hhalon*, which signifies indeed 'an oval hole' or 'window' in any building, but here is a window of a peculiar denomination. That it was customary among the Jews to have a room in the upper part of their houses set apart for divine worship, in Hebrew called *Beth-alijah*, or simply *alijah*, in Greek *ἐπιώγον*, and in Latin *oratorium*; and that, in this place of prayer, there was always an *hhalon*, an hole or window, which pointed to the *hikla*, or place whereunto they directed their worship, is evident from several passages in Scripture. Among the Jewish constitutions, in the code, called *Beracoth*, there is a certain canon grounded upon this custom, namely, 'That no man shall pray, but in a room where there is an *hhalon* opening towards the holy city:' and of Daniel it is particularly related, that when he knew that the decree for his destruction was signed, 'he went into the house, and his' *hhalon*, 'his window being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, as he did aforetime,' Dan. vi. 10. for that this was not a common window, but one dedicated to religious worship, is plain from the people's discerning, by its being open, that he was at prayers. Nor is it improbable that this window might have some visible sign, either of the name of God, or of the holy city, or of the sanctuary, or the like, inscribed on it; because it is a constant tradition, that these oratories or rooms for prayer were always so made as to have their angles answer to such certain points of the heaven, and to have the mark of adoration so evidently distinguished, that none might mistake it, if they cast but their eye upon the wall. Now, as the practice among the Jews of worshipping in upper rooms, with their faces towards a hole or window in the wall, was never introduced by any positive law, and yet universally prevailed, it is reasonable to believe, that at first it was derived from Noah, and that the windows in their oratories were made in imitation of this *hhalon*, or point of adoration in the ark.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 2.; *Occasional Annotations in the Appendix*.

sent her forth again; and she, in the evening, brought in her mouth an olive branch, the emblem of peace, and a token to Noah that the waters were abated much. Whereupon he waited seven days more, and then let her fly the third time; but she finding the waters gone, and the earth dry, returned no more; so that he was now thinking of uncovering the roof, and going out of the ark himself; but having a pious regard to the divine providence and direction in all things, he waited 55 days longer, and then received orders from God for him and his family to quit the vessel, but to take care at the same time that every other creature should be brought forth with him.

Thus ended ^bNoah's long and melancholy confinement; which, by a due computation from the time of his going into the ark, to that of his coming out, was exactly the space of a solar year.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.*

How many wise ends the providence of God might have in bringing this destruction upon the earth, it is impossible for us to find out: but even supposing that he had but this one, namely, to rid himself of a generation that was become profligate, and past all hopes of amendment; yet the number of mankind, which, before the

^b *Mr Basnage* (in his *Jewish Antiquities*, vol. 2. p. 299.) has given us the calendar of this melancholy year of Noah's confinement.

The Year of the World's Creation, 1656.

- I. September. Methuselah died at the age of 969 years.
- II. October. Noah and his family entered the ark.
- III. November the 17th. 'The fountains of the great deep were broken open.'
- IV. December the 26th. The rain began, and continued forty days and forty nights.
- V. January. All the men and beasts that were upon the earth were buried under the waters.
- VI. February. The rain continued.
- VII. March. The waters remained in their elevation till the 27th, when they began to abate.
- VIII. April the 17th. The ark rested on Mount Ararat.
- IX. May. They did nothing while the waters were retreating.
- X. June the 1st. The tops of the mountains appeared.
- XI. July the 11th. Noah let go a raven, which (as *Basnage* thinks) returned to him no more.
- The 18th. He let go a dove, which returned.
- The 25th. He let go the dove again, which returned with an olive branch.
- XII. August the 2d. The dove went out the third time, and returned no more.
- I. September the 1st. The dry land appeared.
- II. October the 27th. Noah went out of the ark with his family. During this long continuance in the ark, the form of prayer, which some oriental writers make Noah to have offered unto God, runs in this manner: "O Lord, thou art truly great, and there is nothing so great as that it can be compared to thee; look upon us with an eye of mercy, and deliver us from the deluge of waters. I entreat this of thee for the love of Adam, thy first man; for the love of Abel, thy saint; for the righteousness of Seth, whom thou hast loved. Let us not be reckoned in the number of those, who have disobeyed thy commandments; but still extend thy merciful care to us, because thou hast hitherto been our deliverer, and all thy creatures shall declare thy praise.—Amen."—*Calmet's Dictionary* on the words Deluge and Noah.

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flood, was vastly superior to what the present earth perhaps is capable of sustaining, caused every place to be inhabited, and that none might escape the avenging hand, caused every place to be overflowed. And indeed, if we consider the longevity of the first inhabitants of the earth, and the pretty near equality of their ages (which seem to have been providentially designed for the quick propagation of mankind) we shall soon perceive, that, in the space of 1600 years, mankind would become so numerous, that the chief difficulty would be where we should find countries to receive them. For if, in the space of about 266 years (as the sacred history acquaints us) the posterity of Jacob, by his sons only, (without the consideration of Dinah his daughter) amounted to 600,000 males above the age of twenty, all able to bear arms, what increase may not be expected from a race of patriarchs, living six, seven, eight, or nine hundred years apiece, and some to the 500th year of their lives begetting sons and daughters. For, ¹ if we suppose the increase of the children of Israel to have been gradual, and proportionate through the whole 266 years, it will appear, that they doubled themselves every fourteen years at least; and if we should continue the like proportion through the entire 114 periods (which the space from the creation to the deluge admits) the product, or number of people on the face of the earth at the deluge, would at least be the 100th in a geometric double proportion, or series of numbers, two, four, eight, sixteen, &c., where every succeeding one is double to that before it: and to how an immense sum this proportion would arise, ² those who know any thing of the nature of geometric progressions, will soon perceive. So that had

the antediluvians only multiplied as fast before, as it is certain the Israelites did since the flood, the number of mankind actually alive and existing at the deluge must have been not only more than what the present earth does contain, but prodigiously more than what the whole number of mankind can be justly supposed, ever since the deluge; nay indeed, with any degree of likelihood, ever since the first creation of the world. Upon which account, though this calculation must not at all be esteemed real, or to exhibit in any measure the just number of the posterity of Adam alive at the time of the deluge, yet it certainly shows us how vastly numerous (according to the regular method of human propagation) the offspring of one single person may be; how plentifully each quarter of the world must then have been stocked with inhabitants; and that consequently, to destroy its inhabitants, the inundation must have fallen upon every quarter, and encompassed the whole globe.

And accordingly, if we take the circuit of the globe, and inquire of the inhabitants of every climate, we shall find, ² that the fame of this deluge is gone through the earth, and that in every part of the known world there are certain records or traditions of it; that the Americans acknowledge, and speak of it in their continent; that the Chinese (who are the most distant people in Asia) have the tradition of it; ³ that the several nations of Africa tell various stories concerning it; and that, in the European parts, the flood of Deucalion is the same with that of Noah, only related with some disguise. So that we may trace the deluge quite round the globe, and (what is more remarkable still) every one of these people have a tale to tell, some one way, some another, concerning the restoration of mankind, which is a full proof that they thought all mankind were once destroyed in that deluge.

¹ *Whiston's Theory of the Earth*, b. 3. c. 3.

a The ingenious *Dr Burnet* (in his *Theory of the Earth*, b. 1.) has computed the multiplication of mankind in this method. "If we allow the first couple," says he, "at the end of 100 years, or of the first century, to have left ten pair of breeders (which is no hard supposition) there would arise from these, in 1500 years, a greater number than the earth was capable of containing, allowing every pair to multiply in the same decuple proportion, that the first pair did. But, because this would rise far beyond the capacity of the earth, let us suppose them to increase, in the following centuries, in a quintuple proportion only, or, if you will, only in a quadruple, and then the table of the multiplication of mankind, from the creation to the flood, would stand thus:

Century 1—10	Century 9—655360
2—40	10—2621440
3—160	11—10485760
4—640	12—41943040
5—2560	13—167772160
6—10240	14—671088640
7—40960	15—2684354560
8—163840	16—10737418240

This product is excessively too high, if compared with the present number of men upon the face of the earth, which I think is commonly estimated to between three and four hundred millions; and yet this proportion of their increase seems to be low enough, if we take one proportion for all the centuries. For though in reality the same measure cannot run equally through all the ages, yet we have taken this as moderate and reasonable between the highest and the lowest; but if we had only taken a triple proportion, it would have been sufficient (all things considered) for our purpose.—These calculations, however, are founded on the Hebrew computation, which represents the patriarchs before the flood as having children at an age by much too early. All animals whose lives are of long duration appear not to arrive at puberty till an age of proportional length; something similar or at least analogous is observable in the vegetable kingdom; and

according to the computation of the Septuagint version and of the annals of *Josephus*, the same law regulated the generations of mankind before and after the flood. It was chiefly this consideration that influenced *Eusebius* to prefer the computation of the Septuagint version to that of the Hebrew text: and it is one of the many cogent reasons which induced *Dr Hales* to reject the Hebrew chronology as it appears in the present text of the Masorites.

"Dividing human life," says this learned author, "into three periods, it appears from observation and experience, that the generative powers continue in full vigour during the second period.—It is not probable, therefore, that the age of puberty among the antediluvians, who lived to 900 years and upwards, began sooner than at the age of 160 or 170 years, corresponding to 14 or 15 years at present." If, as is probable, there was likewise a longer period, in that age, between the births of children in the same family than is common in the present contracted span of human life, though the earth might have been fully peopled before the deluge, there would be no danger of its being overstocked with inhabitants, as it must have been, according to the calculations of our author, and *Dr Burnet* from the present Hebrew genealogies.—*Bishop Gleig's edition.*

b The Hindoo mythology is in a great measure founded on it; and it is the commencement of their present era or caliyug. *Sir William Jones* says expressly that, in Hindoo mythology, "the three first avatars, or descents of Veesnho, relate to an universal deluge, in which only eight persons were saved."—See *Works of Sir W. Jones*, vol. 1. p. 29. 4to, 1799.

c For the truth of all this, see *Bryant's Mythology*, *Maurice's Indian Antiquities*, and *Howard's Thoughts on the Structure of the Globe*. On the whole controversy concerning the deluge, nothing superior to this last work or more satisfactory is to be found in any language.

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Nay, instead of the surrounding globe, we need only turn aside the surface a little, and look into the bowels of the earth, and we shall find arguments enough for our conviction. For ^athe beds of shells which are often found on the tops of the highest mountains, and the petrified bones and teeth of fishes which are dug up some hundreds of miles from the sea, are the clearest evidences in the world, that the waters have, some time or other, overflowed the highest parts of the earth; nor can it, with any colour of reason, be asserted, that these subterraneous bodies are only the mimicry or mock productions of nature, for that they are real shells, the nicest examination both of the eye and microscope does evince, and that they are true bones, may be proved by burning them, which (as it does other bones) turns them first into a coal, and afterwards into a calx.

These considerations bid fair for the universality of the deluge; but then, if we take in the testimony of Scripture, this puts the matter past all doubt. For when we read, that, by reason of the deluge, ¹“every living substance was destroyed, which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven;” that during the deluge, ²“the waters exceedingly prevailed, and all the high hills that were under the whole heavens were covered;” and that, when the deluge was over, God made a covenant with Noah, that ³“there should be no more a flood to destroy the earth, and to cut off all flesh;” we cannot but conclude, that every creature under heaven, except what was preserved in the ark, was swept away in the general devastation.

And, indeed, unless this devastation was general, we can hardly conceive what necessity there was for any ark at all. ⁴Noah and his family might have retired into some neighbouring country, as Lot and his family saved themselves by withdrawing from Sodom, when that city was to be destroyed. This had been a much better expedient, and might have been done with much more ease, than the great preparations he was ordered to make, of a large vessel, with stalls and apartments for the reception of beasts and birds. Beasts might have possibly saved themselves by flight; but if they did not,

Noah might, after the deluge, have furnished himself from other places, which this desolation had not reached; and as for the birds, they, without much difficulty, might have flown to the next dry country, perching upon trees, or the tops of mountains, by the way, to rest themselves if they were tired, because the waters did not prevail upon the earth all on a sudden, but swelled by degrees to their determinate height.

Now, if the swelling of these waters to a height, superior to that of the loftiest mountains, was only topical, we cannot but allow, that unless there was a miracle to keep them up on heaps, they would certainly flow all over the earth; because these mountains are certainly high enough to have made them fall every way, and join with the seas, which environ the earth. All liquid bodies, we know, are diffusive: their parts being in motion, have no tie or connexion one with another, but glide, and fall off any way, as gravity and the air press them; and therefore, when the waters began to arise at first, long before they could swell to the height of the hills, they would diffuse themselves every way, and thereupon all the valleys and plains, and the lower parts of the earth, would be filled all the globe over, before they could rise to the tops of the mountains in any part of it. So vain and unphilosophical is the opinion of those, who, to evade the difficulty of the question, would fain limit or restrain the deluge to a particular country, or countries. For if we admit it to be universal, say they, where shall we find a sufficient quantity of water to cover the face of the earth, to the height that Moses mentions?

Some indeed have thought it the best and most commendous way, to call in the arm of omnipotence at once, and to affirm, That God created waters on purpose to make the deluge, and then annihilated them again, when the deluge was to cease. But our business is not here to inquire what God could work by his almighty power; but to account for this event, in the best manner we can, from natural causes. ⁵Moses, it is plain, has ascribed it to natural causes, the continued rains for forty days, and the disruption of the great abyss; and the manner of its gradual increase and decrease, wherein he has represented it, is far from agreeing with the instantaneous actions of creation and annihilation.

Others, instead of a creation, have supposed a transmutation of element, namely, either a condensation of the air, ⁶or a rarefaction of the waters; but neither of these expedients will do: for, besides that air is a body of a different species, and (as far as we know) cannot, by any compression or condensation, be changed into water, even upon the supposition that all the air in the atmosphere were in this manner condensed, it would not produce a bed of water over all the earth, above 32 feet deep; because it appears, by undoubted experiment, that a column of air from the earth to the top of the atmosphere, does not weigh more than 32 feet of water: much less would the spirit of rarefaction answer the purpose, ⁷because, if we suppose the waters but fifteen times rarer than they naturally are, (as we most

¹ Gen. vii. 23.² Gen. vii. 19.³ Gen. ix. 11.⁴ Burnet's Theory, b. 1.

^a A learned author, who has lately undertaken an examination of revelation, has enforced this argument with a good deal of life and spirit. “Whereas Moses assures us,” says he, “that ‘the waters prevailed fifteen cubits above the highest mountains,’ let the mountains themselves be appealed to for the truth of this assertion. Examine the highest eminences of the earth, and they all, with one accord, produce the spoils of the ocean, deposited upon them on that occasion, the shells and skeletons of sea-fish and sea-monsters of all kinds. The Alps, the Appenines, the Pyrenees, the Andes, and Atlas, and Ararat, every mountain of every region under heaven, from Japan to Mexico, all conspire, in one uniform, universal proof, that they all had the sea spread over their highest summits. Search the earth, and you will find the moose-deer, natives of America, buried in Ireland; elephants, natives of Asia and Africa, buried in the midst of England; crocodiles, natives of the Nile, in the heart of Germany; shellfish never known in any but the American seas, together with entire skeletons of whales, in divers countries; and what is more, trees and plants of various kinds, which are not known to grow in any region under heaven. All which are a perfect demonstration that Moses’ account of the deluge is incontestably true.”—Part I. Dissertation 2.

⁵ Burnet's Theory, b. 1. c. 3.⁶ Kircher on the Ark of Noah, b. 2. c. 4.⁷ Burnet's Theory, and Le Clerc's Commentary.

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certainly do, to make them reach the tops of the highest mountains,) it will be difficult to conceive, how they could either drown man or beast, keep alive the fish, or support the heavy bulk of the ark. The truth is, Moses, in his account of the deluge, says not one word of the transmutation of elements: the forty days' rain, and the disruption of the abyss, are the only causes which he assigns; and these, very likely, will supply us with a sufficient quantity of water when other devices fail.

¹ A very sagacious naturalist, observing, that at certain times, there are extraordinary pressures on the surface of the sea, which force the waters outwards upon the shores to a great height, does very reasonably suppose, that the divine power might, at this time, by the instrumentality of some natural agent, to us at present unknown, so depress the surface of the ocean, as to force up the water of the abyss through certain channels and apertures, and so make them a partial and concurrent cause of the deluge. It cannot be denied, indeed, but that the divine providence might, at the time of the deluge, so order and dispose second causes, as to make them raise and impel the water to an height sufficient to overflow the earth; but then, because there must be another miracle required to suspend the waters upon the land, and to hinder them from running off again into the sea, our author seems to give the preference to another hypothesis, which, at the time of the deluge, supposes the centre of the earth to have been changed, and set nearer to the centre or middle of our continent, whereupon the Atlantic and Pacific oceans must needs press upon the subterraneous abyss, and so compel the water to run out at those wide mouths, and apertures, which the divine power had made in breaking up the fountains of the great deep. Thus the waters being poured out upon the face of the earth, and its declivity changed by the removal of the centre, they could not run down to the sea again, but must necessarily stagnate upon the earth, and overflow it, till upon its return to its old centre, they in like manner would retreat to their former receptacles. But the misfortune of this hypothesis is, that besides the multitude of miracles required in it, it makes the deluge topical, and confined to our continent only, whereas, according to the testimony of the Spirit of God in the Holy Scriptures, it was certainly universal.

² A very ingenious theorist seems to be of opinion himself, and labours to persuade others, that the "deluge

was occasioned by the dissolution of the primeval earth; the dissolution of the earth by the fermentation of the enclosed waters; the fermentation of the waters by the continued intense heat of the sun; and the great heat of the sun, by the perpendicular position of the axis of the earth to the plane of the ecliptic. But allowing the position of the earth to be what he imagines, ³ yet it seems difficult to conceive, how the heat of the sun should be so intense, as to cause great cracks in it, and so raise the waters in it into vapours; or how the waters, thus rarefied, should be of force sufficient to break through an arch of solid matter, lying upon them some hundred miles thick. It is much more probable, that if the action of the sun was so strong, the abyss (which the theorist makes the only storehouse of waters in the first earth) would have been almost quite exhausted, before the time of the deluge: nor can we believe that this account of things is any way consonant to the Mosaic history, which describes a gradual rise and abatement, a long continuance of the flood, and not such a sudden shock and convulsion of nature, as the theorist intends, in which, without the divine intervention, it was impossible for the ark to be saved.

⁴ Another learned theorist endeavours to solve the whole matter, and supply a sufficiency of water from the trajection of a comet. For he supposes, "That, in its descent towards the sun, it pressed very violently upon the earth, and by that means, both raised a great tide in the sea, and forced up a vast quantity of subterraneous waters; that, as it passed by, it involved the earth in its atmosphere for a considerable time; and, as it went off, left a vast tract of its tail behind, which (together with the waters, pressed from the sea, and from the great abyss) was enough to cover the face of the whole earth, for the perpendicular height of three miles." But (to pass by smaller objections) that which seems to destroy his whole hypothesis is this—⁵ That it is far from being clear, whether the atmosphere of a comet be a watery substance or not. The observations of the most curious inquirers make it very probable, that the circle about

³ Keil's *Examination of Burnet's Theory*. ⁴ Mr Whiston.

⁵ Keil's *Answer to Whiston's Theory*; and Nicholls's *Conference*, vol. 1.

they began to be rarefied, and raised into vapours; which rarefaction made them require more space than they needed before, and finding themselves pent in by an exterior earth, they pressed with violence against the arch to make it yield to their dilatation: and as the repeated action of the sun gave force to these enclosed vapours more and more, so, on the other hand, it weakened more and more the arch of the earth, that was to resist them, sucking out the moisture that was the cement of its parts, and parching and chapping it in sundry places; so that, there being then no winter to close up its parts, it every day grew more and more disposed to a dissolution, till at length, when God's appointed time was come, the whole fabric broke; the frame of earth was torn in pieces, as by an earthquake; and those great portions or fragments, into which it was parted, fell down into the abyss, some in one posture, some in another.

Thus the earth put on a new form, and became divided into sea, and land; the greatest part of the abyss constituting our present ocean, and the rest filling up the cavities of the earth. Mountains and hills appeared on the land, islands in the sea, and rocks upon the shore, so that, at one shock, providence dissolved the old world, and made a new one out of its ruin. See the *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 1. where this extract out of *Burnet's Theory* is made.

¹ Ray's *Physico-Theological Discourse concerning the Deluge*.

² Dr Burnet.

α To have a more perfect idea of the author's scheme, we must remember, that he conceives the first earth, from the manner of its formation, to have been externally regular and uniform, of a smooth and even surface, without mountains, and without a sea; and that all the waters, belonging to it, were enclosed within an upper crust, which formed a stupendous vault around them. This vast collection of waters he takes to have been the great deep, or abyss of Moses, and that the disruption of it was the chief cause of the deluge. For he supposes, that the earth being, for some hundreds of years, exposed to the continual heat of the sun, which, by reason of the perpendicular position, which, as he imagines, the earth's axis then had to the plane of the ecliptic, was very intense, and not allayed by the diversity of seasons, which now keep our earth in an equality of temper; its exterior crust was, at length, very much dried, and when the heat had pierced the shell, and reached the waters beneath it,

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the body of a comet is nothing but the curling or winding round of the smoke, rising at first to a determinate height, from all parts of the comet, and then making off to that part of it which is opposite to the sun; and if this opinion be true, the earth, by passing through the atmosphere of a comet, ran a greater risk of a conflagration, than a deluge.

These are the several expedients which the wit of men have devised, to furnish a sufficient quantity of water, in order to effect a deluge, but all incompetent for the work. Let us now turn to the sacred records, and see what the two general causes assigned therein, 'the opening of the windows of heaven,' and 'the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep,' are able to supply us with, upon this occasion.

1. By 'the opening of the windows of heaven,' must be understood the causing the waters which were suspended in the clouds, to fall upon the earth, not in ordinary showers, but in floods, or (as the Septuagint translate it) in cataracts,¹ which travellers may have the truest notion of, who have seen those prodigious falls of water, so frequent in the Indies, and where the clouds many times do not break into drops, but fall, with a terrible violence, in a torrent.

How far these treasures of waters in the air might contribute to the general inundation, we may, in some measure, compute from what we have observed in a thunder-cloud,² which in the space of less than two hours, has sometimes poured down such a vast quantity of water, as besides what sunk into the dry and thirsty ground and filled all the ditches and ponds, has caused a considerable flood in the rivers, and set all the meadows on float.

Now, had this cloud (which for ought we know moved forty miles forward in its falling) stood still, and emptied all its water upon the same spot of ground, what a sudden and incredible deluge would it have made in the place? What then must we suppose the event to have been, when the floodgates of heaven were all opened, and on every part of the globe, the clouds were incessantly pouring out water with such violence, and in such abundance, for forty days together?

It is impossible for us indeed to have any adequate conception of the thing,³ though the vast inundations which are made every year in Egypt, only by the rains which fall in Ethiopia, and the like annual overflowings of the great river Oroonoke in America, whereby many islands and plains, at other times inhabited, are laid twenty feet under water, between May and September, may give us a faint emblem, and be of some use to cure our infidelity in this respect.

2. The other cause which the Scripture makes mention of, is the 'breaking up of the fountains of the great deep,' whereby those waters, which were contained in vast quantities in the bowels of the earth, were forced out, and thrown upon the surface of it.⁴ That there is a mighty collection of waters inclosed in the bowels of the earth, which constitutes a large globe in the interior or central part of it; and that the waters of this globe communicate with that of the ocean, by means of certain

hiatus, or apertures, passing between it and the ocean, is evident from the Caspian and other seas, which receive into themselves many great rivers, and having no visible outlets, must be supposed to discharge the water they receive, by subterraneous passages into this receptacle, and by its intervention, into the ocean again. The ⁵ Mediterranean in particular, besides the many rivers that run into it, has two great currents of the sea, one at the straits of Gibraltar, and the other at the Propontis, which bring in such vast tides of water, that, many ages ago, it must have endangered the whole world, had it not emptied itself, by certain secret passages, into some great cavity underneath. And for this reason, some have imagined, ⁶ that the earth altogether is one great animal, whose abyss supplies the place of the heart in the body of the earth, to furnish all its aqueducts with a sufficiency of water, and whose subterraneous passages are like the veins of the body, which receive water out of the sea, as the veins do blood out of the liver, and in a continued circulation, return it to the heart again.

However this be, it is certainly more than probable, (because a matter of divine revelation,) that there is an immense body of water inclosed in the centre of the earth, to which the Psalmist plainly alludes, when he tells us, that ⁷ 'God founded the earth upon the seas, and established it upon the floods;' that ⁸ 'he stretched out the earth above the waters;' that ⁹ 'he gathered up the waters as in a bag, (so the best translations have it,) 'and laid up the deep as in a storehouse.' Nay, there is a passage or two in the Proverbs of Solomon, (where Wisdom declares her antiquity, and pre-existence to all the works of the earth,) which sets before our eyes, as it were, the very form and figure of this abyss: ¹⁰ 'When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the deep, and strengthened the fountains of the abyss.' Here is mention made of the abyss, and the fountains of the abyss; nor is there any question to be made, but that the fountains of the abyss here are the same with those which Moses mentions, and which, as he tells us, were broken up at the deluge. And what is more observable in this text, the word which we render compass, properly signifies a circle, or circumference, or an orb, or sphere: so that, according to the testimony of Wisdom, who was then present, there was

⁵ Nicholls's Conference, vol. I. ⁶ Stillingfleet's Sacred Origins.

⁷ Ps. xxiv. ii.

⁸ Ps. cxxxvi. 6.

⁹ Ps. xxxiii. 7.

¹⁰ Prov. viii. 27, 28.; Sir Walter Raleigh's History.

^a The Caspian sea is reckoned in length to be above 120 German leagues, and in breadth, from east to west, about 90 of the same leagues. There is no visible way for the water to run out: and yet it receives into its bosom near 100 large rivers, and particularly the great river Wolga, which of itself is like a sea for largeness, and supposed to empty so much water into it in a year's time, as might suffice to cover the whole earth; and yet it is never increased nor diminished, nor is observed to ebb or flow, which makes it evident, that it must necessarily have a subterraneous communication with other parts of the world. And accordingly, *Father Avril*, a modern traveller, tells us, that near the coast of Xylam there is in this sea a mighty whirlpool, which sucks in every thing that comes near it, and consequently has a cavity in the earth into which it descends.—See *Moll's Geography* at the end of Persia in Asia, p. 67; *Stillingfleet's Sacred Origins*, b. 3. c. 4.; and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, c. 12.

¹ Patrick's Commentary.

² Ray on the Deluge.

³ Patrick's Commentary.

⁴ Woodward's Natural History.

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in the beginning a sphere, orb, or arch, set round the abyss, by the means of which, the fountains thereof were strengthened; for we cannot conceive, how they could have been strengthened any other way, than by having a strong cover or arch made over them.

If such then be the form of this abyss, that it seems to be a vast mass or body of water lying together in the womb of the earth, it will be no hard matter to compute what a plentiful supply might have been expected from thence, in order to effect an universal deluge. ¹ For, if the circumference of the earth (even according to the lowest computation) be 21,000 miles, the diameter of it (according to that circumference) 7000 miles; and consequently from the superficies to the centre, 3500 miles; and if (according to the best account) "the highest mountain in the world (taking its altitude from the plain it stands upon) does not exceed four perpendicular miles in height; then we cannot but conclude, that in this abyss there would be infinitely more water than enough, when drawn out upon the surface of the earth, to drown the earth to a far greater height than Moses relates. In a word, since it is agreed on all hands, that in the time of the chaos, the waters did cover the earth, insomuch that nothing of it could be seen, till God was pleased to make a separation: why should it be thought so strange a thing, that, upon a proper occasion, they should be able to cover the earth again; ² especially when the waters above the firmament came down to join those below, as they did at the beginning?

³ *Seneca*, treating of that fatal day (as he calls it) when the deluge shall come, (for he supposed that the world was to be destroyed alternately, first by water, and after that by fire,) and questioning how it might be effected, whether by the force of the ocean overflowing the earth, by perpetual rains without intermission, by the swelling of rivers, and opening of new fountains, or (what he rather supposes) by a general concourse and combination of all these causes, concludes his inquiry at last with these remarkable words, "There are vast lakes," says he, "which we do not see, much of the sea which lies hidden and concealed, and many rivers which glide in secret; so that there may be causes of a deluge on all sides, when some waters flow under the earth, others flow round about it, and being long pent up, may overwhelm it. And as our bodies sometimes dissolve into sweat, so the earth shall melt, and, without the help of other causes, shall find in itself what shall drown it.—There being in all places, both openly and secretly, both from above and from beneath, an eruption of waters ready to overflow and destroy it."

¹ *Patrick's Commentary*.

² See b. 1., c. 1. p. 6.

³ *Natural Inquiries*, 3. c. 27.

a If we measure mountains from the plain on which they stand, as proposed by the learned author, the above will be found rather to exceed than to be below the truth; as no mountain has yet been discovered of such an height. If, however, we measure them from the level of the sea, which is the proper method, it will be found that there are many which exceed this height. When our author wrote, the Peak of Teneriffe was esteemed the highest mountain in the world, but subsequent discoveries have completely disproved that opinion. The English mile contains 5280 feet, so that the Peak of Teneriffe being 12,672 feet above the level of the sea, was little more than two miles high. In the Andes, in South America, however, there are mountains which far exceed this in height; as, the Sorata, 25,400 feet, the

But whatever solutions we may gather, either from sacred or profane authors, it seems necessary, after all, to call in the divine power to our assistance. "For though the waters which covered the earth at the creation might be sufficient to cover it again; yet how this could be effected by mere natural means, cannot be conceived. Though the waters, suspended in the clouds, might fall in great torrents for some time, yet, when once their store was exhausted, (as at this rate it could not last long,) nothing but an almighty voice could have commanded a fresh supply of forty days' continuance from those other planetary spaces where he had settled their abode; and though the subterraneous stores did certainly contain a fund sufficient to complete the deluge, yet there wanted on this occasion an almighty hand, either to break down the arch which enclosed the abyss, or by some secret passages to force the waters out of it upon the surface of the earth; and so stopping the reflux, suspend them for such a determinate time, at such an elevation. There needed some almighty hand, I say, to do this: and accordingly we may observe, that though Moses makes mention of two natural causes that might be conducive to the work, yet he introduces God as superintending their causes, and assuming indeed the whole performance to himself: for 'behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven, and every thing that is on the earth shall die.'

Thus, with the help and concurrence of God, we have found a sufficient quantity of water for the destruction of the old world: let us now consider the make and capacity of the vessel wherein the several animals that were to replenish the new were to be preserved.

⁵ Could we but imagine, that by some strange revolution the whole art of shipping should come to be lost in this part of the world, and that there happened to remain such a short account of one of our largest ships (the Royal Anne, for instance) as that it was so many feet long, broad, and deep; could contain in it some hundreds of men, with other living creatures, and provisions for them all during several months; and that the strength of it was such, that it was not broken in pieces all the time that the great storm endured; would it not be very pleasant for any one to conclude from hence, that this ship, according to the description of it, was nothing but an oblong square, without any more contrivance than a common chest made by the most ignorant joiner? And yet such are some men's inferences when they talk of this noble structure.

Moses indeed makes mention of little else but the dimensions of the ark, its stories, and capacity to hold the things to be placed in it; but it does not therefore follow, but that it might have the convexity of a keel, (as many large flat-bottomed vessels have,) as well as a prow, to make it cut the waters more easily. The design

⁴ *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 1.

⁵ *Bibliotheca Biblica; Occasional Annotations*, 13.

Illimanni, 24,250, or between four and five miles above the level of the sea. The highest mountains in the world yet discovered, are in the Himalayan range, between Hindostan and Thibet, in Asia; the highest peak of which is 29,000 feet, or between five and six miles above the level of the sea. In the same range there are the Dhawalagiri, 28,104 feet, Swetachar, 25,261 feet, and various others above 20,000 feet.—Ed.

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of the vessel however was not to make way, (as they call it at sea,) but to preserve its inhabitants; and this it was more capable of doing (as ^a may be proved to a demonstration) than if it had been built according to the most modern model, even supposing the waters, from the first to the last, to have been never so boisterous. But this they were not: whatever storms and convulsions there might be in particular places, when the floodgates of heaven were at first opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up, (and then the ark was not afloat,) the sacred text takes no notice of any rough weather till after the 150 days of the flood's gradual increase, when, upon the ceasing of the rains from above, and the waters from beneath, God sent forth a strong driving wind, but then the ark was at rest. So that all the time that the ark was afloat, or (as the Scripture expresses it) while it 'went on the face of the waters,' the winds were asleep, and the weather, though rainy, was free from all storms and angry commotions. Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that, be the structure of the ark what it will, it was certainly suited both to the burden it was to carry, and the weather it was to live in; and on this, and sundry other accounts, ^b upon experiment, perhaps it may be found to be the most complete and perfect model that ever was devised.

Had we never seen a ship, and should be told what a number of men, and what a quantity of provision and merchandise one of the largest rates will carry, it would seem no less incredible to us than what Moses tells us of the things which were contained in the ark. The ark, according to his account, was 300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth, and 30 in height; and if we suppose the cubit, here mentioned, at the lowest computation, to be but a foot and a half long, yet was the length of it (according to that proportion) 450 feet, the breadth 75, and the height 45; and consequently the whole capacity 1,580,750 cubical feet, which was space enough, in all conscience, to receive every thing, and much more than

every thing that was to be contained in it. For it appears from the sacred text, that the form of the ark was rectangular; ¹ and being intended only for a kind of float to swim above the water, the flatness of its bottom did render it much more capacious. It appears from the same text, that this ark consisted of three stories, and the whole height of it being 45 feet, it may well be supposed that this height was equally divided among the three stories, and so each story was 15 feet high, only deducting a foot and a half, or one cubit, for the slope of the roof, or the cover of the upper story. ² It is likewise pretty well agreed by interpreters, that the lowest story was appointed for four-footed animals, as most commodious for them; the middle story for their provender, and what they were to live upon; and the upper story partly for the birds, and what they were to eat, and partly for Noah and his family, together with their utensils: and that each of these stories was spacious enough to receive what was to be put therein, will appear to any one who will give himself the trouble ^c of making a geometrical calculation.

He who looks upon the stars, as they are confusedly scattered up and down in the firmament, will think them to be (what they are sometimes called) innumerable, and above the power of all arithmetic to count; and yet, when they are distinctly reduced to their particular constellations, and described by their several places, magnitudes, and names, it appears, that of those which are visible to the naked eye, there are not many more than 1000 in the whole firmament, and few more than half so many (even taking in the minuter kinds of them) to be seen at once in any hemisphere. And in like manner, he who should put the question, How many kinds of beasts or birds there are in the world? would be answered, even by such as in other respects are knowing and learned enough, that there are so many hundreds of them as cannot be enumerated; whereas, upon a distinct

¹ *Wilkins's Essay towards a Real Character.*

Wells's Geography, vol. 1. c. 2.; *Lamy's Introduction.*

^c *Buteo* has plainly demonstrated, that all the animals contained in the ark could not be equal to 500 horses; (the learned *Heidegger*, from *Temporarius*, makes them 400 oxen;) and yet it is not to be questioned, but that a building very near as long as St Paul's church, and as broad as the middle isle of that church is high within, is capable of affording stabling for such a number of horses.—See *Dr Bundy's translation of Lamy's Introduction*. *Kircher* (in his *Ark of Noah*, c. 8.) has given us large calculations of the dimensions of the ark, and from thence concludes, that this vessel was capacious enough to receive, not only Noah and his family, all other creatures and their food, but even an entire province likewise. *Wilkins*, (in his *Essay towards a Real Character*), and from him *Wells* (in his *Geography of the Old Testament*) have both entered into a large detail of things, and given us an exact and complete idea of the capacity of the ark, and of its proportion, together with what it might contain. *Le Peletier* (in his *Essay on the Ark of Noah*) follows another English author, *Bishop Cumberland*, who, in his Discovery of the weights and measures of the Jews, has proved, that the ancient cubit of the Jews was the old derah of Memphis; whereupon *Peletier* allows 1,781,377 cubical feet of Paris for the whole contents of the ark, so that it might hold (as he pretends) 42,413 tons of lading. But a certain anonymous author has published a dissertation upon the same principles, wherein he compares the ark to our modern ships, and computes its measure according to the tons it might contain, and thereupon makes it larger than forty ships of 1000 tons each.—See *Dissertation, Historical, Chronological, Geographical, &c.* d. 2; *Journal of Paris for January, 1712*, vol. 51. p. 9.

^a For let us suppose, that without any addition of art, it was nothing more than an oblong square, whose length was sextuple to the breadth, and decuple to the height; it is demonstrable, that a piece of wood of that proportion being lighter than the water, will be always supported by it. For instance, take a plank of oak exactly square, let it be one foot broad, six feet long, and seven or eight inches thick, answering the proportion of the ark; there is nobody, I believe, will say, that any waves or winds will be strong enough to break this piece of timber, notwithstanding its right angles. Now, let any solid of this fashion be multiplied in a decuple, centuple, or millicuple proportion, and let the force of the waves, and the invasive power of the wind, be multiplied also with it in the same proportion, the resistance of a rectangular solid (which is perfectly impenetrable, and exactly the case of the ark) will be proof against any given force whatever.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.; *Occasional Annotations*, 13.

^b About the beginning of the last century, Peter Janson, a Dutch merchant, caused a ship to be built for him, answering in its respective proportions, to those of Noah's ark, the length of it being 120 feet, the breadth of it 20, and the depth of it 12. At first this ark was looked upon no better than as a fanatical vision of this Janson, (who was by profession a Menonist,) and, whilst it was building, he and his ship were made the sport of the seamen, as much as Noah and his ark could be. But afterwards it was found that ships built in this fashion were, in the time of peace, beyond all others most commodious for commerce; because they would hold a third part more, without requiring any more hands, and were found far better runners than any made before.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.

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inquiry into all such as are yet known, or have been described by credible authors, it will appear, that they are much fewer than is commonly imagined, ¹ not an 100 sorts of beasts, and not 200 of birds.

And yet, out of this number, as small as it is, we must except all animals that are of equivocal generation, as insects; all that are accustomed to live in water, as fish and water-fowl; all that proceed from a mixture of different species, as mules; and all that, by changing their climate, change their colour and size, and so pass for different creatures, when in reality they are the same. We must observe farther, that all creatures of the serpentine kind, the viper, snake, slow-worm, lizard, frog, toad, &c., might have sufficient space for their reception, and for their nourishment in the hold or bottom of the ark, which was probably three or four feet under the floor, whereon the beasts are supposed to stand: and that the smaller creatures, such as the mouse, rat, mole, &c., might find sufficient room in several parts of the ark, without having any particular places or cells appointed for them: so that the number of the several species of animals to be placed in the first, or lowest story, upon the foot of this deduction, stands thus:

Beasts which live on Hay.		On Fruits and Roots.	On Flesh.	
Horse	Stone-buck	Hog	Lion	Stoat
Ass	Shamois	Barboon	Bear	Weasel
Camel	Antelope	Ape	Tiger	Castor
Elephant	Elk	Monkey	Pard	Otter
Bull	Hart	Sloth	Ounce	Dog
Urus	Buck	Porcupine	Cat	Wolf
Bison	Rein-deer	Hedge-hog	Civet-cat	Fox
Bonassus	Roe	Squirrel	Finet	Badger
Buffalo	Rhinoceros	Guinea-pig	Polecat	Jackall
Sheep	Camelopard	Ant-bear	Martin	Caraguya.
Sirepsiceros	Hare	Armaddilla		
Broad-tail	Rabbit	Tortoise		
Goat	Marmotte			

Now, concerning these creatures God gives Noah this injunction; ² ‘Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and the female; and of beasts that are not clean, by two, the male and the female. Taking the words then in their highest acceptation, namely, that Noah was to receive into the ark one pair of every species of unclean animals, and seven pair of every species of clean; yet, considering that the species of unclean animals, which were admitted by pairs only, are many in comparison of the clean, and the species of large animals few in comparison of the smaller; we cannot but perceive (as by a short calculation it will appear) that this lower story, which was ten cubits high, three hundred long, and fifty broad, that is, 235,000 solid feet in the whole, would be capable of receiving with all manner of convenience, not only all the sorts of beasts that we are acquainted with, but probably all those other kinds which are any where to be found under the copes of heaven.

It is a pretty general opinion, and what seems to be founded on Scripture, that before the flood, both men, beasts, and birds fed only upon fruits and vegetables. ³ ‘Behold I have given you every herb,’ says God, ‘bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, to you it shall be for meat; and to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life; I have

given every green herb for meat:’ ^a Nor do there want instances in history of some very ravenous creatures that have been brought to live upon other kind of food than flesh. So that there was no necessity for Noah’s providing so many supernumerary sheep (as some would have it) to feed the carnivorous animals for a whole year. ⁴ The same divine providence which directed all the animals, of whatever country, to make towards the ark, which took from them their fierceness, and made them tame and gentle upon this occasion, might likewise beget in them a loathing of flesh, (supposing they eat it before,) and an appetite for hay, corn, fruits, or any other eatables that were most obvious in this time of distress. And as they were shut up, and could not spend themselves by motion, but might have their stomachs palled with the continued agitation of the vessel, they may well be supposed to stand in need of less provision than at other times.

If then (to make our computation) we should say, that ⁵ all the beasts in the lower story of the ark were equal, in their consumption of food, to 300 oxen (which is more by a great deal than some calculations have allowed,) that 30 or 40 pounds of hay are ordinarily sufficient for an ox for one day; and that a solid cubit of hay, well compressed, will weigh about 40 pounds; then will this second story, being of the same dimensions with the other, that is, 225,000 solid feet, not only allow a space for a sufficient quantity of hay, but for other repositories of such fruits, roots, and grain, as might be proper for the nourishment of those animals that live not upon hay; and for such passages and apertures in the floor as might be necessary for the putting down hay and other provender to the beasts in the lower story.

Upon the whole therefore it appears, that the middle

^a *Heidegger’s History of the Patriarchs*, Essay 17.

^b *Wilkins’s Essay*, part 2. c. 5.

^a It is not to be denied, but that several learned men have taken great pains to provide flesh for the carnivorous animals shut up in the ark, when it is beyond all controversy that the stomachs of such animals are fitted for the digestion of fruits and vegetables: that such food would be more salutary both for them and their keepers, and would create a less demand of drink throughout the course of so long a confinement; and yet there is not the least foundation from the text to suppose, that any such provision was made for creatures of such an appetite, but several instances in history do show, that even the most rapacious of them all may be brought to live upon other diet than flesh. Thus *Philostratus*, in his *Apollonius*, b. 5, tells us of a lion in Egypt, which, though it went into the temple constantly, would neither lick the blood of sacrifices, nor eat any of the flesh when it was cut in pieces, but fed altogether on bread and sweet-meats; and *Sulpitius Severus* [*Dial. l. c. 7.*] gives us this account of a monk of Thebas. ‘When we came to the tree, whither our courteous host led us, we there perceived a lion, at the sight of which I and my guide began to tremble; but as the holy man went directly up to it, we, though in no small fright, followed after. The beast at our approach modestly retired, and stood very quiet and still, while the good man gathered it some branches of apples, and as he held them out, the lion came up and eat them, and so went off.’ The like story is told by *Phocas* in his *Description of the Holy Land*, c. 13, of some lions beyond the river Jordan, whom an Anchorite, named Iberus, fed with pulse and crusts of bread; and to the animals in the ark, feeding in this manner, the prophet *Isaiah*, speaking of the times of the Messiah, (ch. xi. 6, 7,) is supposed by our author to allude. ‘The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fating together, and a little child shall lead them; and the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw with the ox.’—*Heidegger’s History of the Patriarchs*, Essay 17.

¹ *Wilkins’s Essay*.

² Gen. viii. 2.

³ Gen. i. 29, 30.

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story of the ark was likewise large enough to hold all that was requisite to be put therein: and as for the third and upper story, there can no manner of doubt be made, but that it was sufficient to hold all the species of birds, even though they were many more than they are generally computed. The accurate *Bishop Wilkins*^a has divided them into nine sorts, and reckons them to be 195 in the whole, but then the greatest part of them are so very small that they might well enough be kept in partitions or cages piled one upon another. The food necessary for their sustenance would not take up any great proportion of room, and the remainder of the story would make a commodious enough habitation for Noah and his family, together with little closets and offices, wherein to dispose of their several domestic matters and utensils.

Upon the whole inquiry then, says the same learned prelate, it does, of the two, appear more difficult to assign a sufficient number and bulk of necessary things to answer the capacity of the ark, than to find sufficient room in it for the convenient reception of them; and thereupon he truly, as well as piously, concludes,¹ "That had the most skilful mathematicians and philosophers been set to consult what proportions a vessel designed for such an use as the ark was, should have in the several parts of it, they could not have pitched upon any other more suitable to the purpose than these mentioned by Moses are; insomuch, that the proportion of the ark (from which some weak and atheistical persons have made some poor efforts to overthrow the authority of the sacred Scriptures) does very much tend to confirm and establish the truth and divine authority of them. Especially, if we only consider, that in these days men were less versed in arts and sciences; at least, that the ark was, in all probability, the first vessel of any bulk that was made to go upon the water: whence the justness of the proportion observed in its several parts, and the exactness of its capacity to the use it was designed for, are reasonably to be ascribed, not to bare human invention and contrivance, but to the divine direction, expressly given to Noah by God himself, as the sacred historian acquaints us."

Thus we have placed the several kinds of creatures in the ark, and furnished them with a competent stock of provision.

And now, if it should be asked, How came they all thither? the reply in that case will be this—² That the

¹ *Wilkins's Essay*.

² *Revelation Examined*, part 1.

^a The manner of his reckoning them up is this:—

1. Carnivorous birds,	66
2. Phytivorous birds of short wings,	17
3. Phytivorous birds of long wings,	18
4. Phytivorous birds of short thick bills,	16
5. Insectivorous birds the greater,	15
6. Insectivorous birds the less,	12
7. Aquatic birds near wet places,	17
8. Aquatic fissipedes,	16
9. Aquatic plenipedes,	18

In all, 195

To these perhaps may be added some exotic birds; but as the number of these is but small, so we may observe the carnivorous, which is the largest species, that they were reputed unclean, and consequently but two of each sort admitted into the ark.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, 2, 12.

country of Eden is very reasonably supposed by learned men to be next adjacent to the garden of that name, from whence Adam was expelled; and that, as all early accounts of that country point it out to us, as one of the most fruitful and delicious regions in the earth, (though now greatly changed,) there is no reason to imagine that Adam sought for any habitation beyond it. There, according to many concurring circumstances, was this famous ark built; there is gopher-wood (very reasonably supposed to be cypress) found in great abundance; there is asphaltus, wherewith the ark, to defend it from the impression of the waters, was daubed and smeared both within and without; and not far from thence is mount Ararat, where the ark as the waters began to abate, is known to have rested; and in this situation, there is not any reason to imagine, that any one species of animals could be out of Noah's reach.³ There they were all natives of the same country, and he perhaps, some time before the flood, might have tamed some of every kind, so that, when the deluge came on, they might easily be brought to the ark, and every one ranged in its proper place, before that Noah shut it up.

But now that they are all shut up, what shall we do for air to keep them alive, or for light to direct them in what they are to do? Mention indeed is made of a window, left in the upper part of the ark; but this is said to be no more than a cubit square, and what is this in proportion to so vast a fabric? Either, therefore, we must devise some relief for them in this exigence, or we shall soon find the poor remains of the creation in utter darkness, and in the shadow of death.

⁴ As the word *Zohar*, which we render *window*, is never mentioned in the singular number through the whole compass of the Bible, but only this once, it perhaps may be no very easy thing to find out its true signification. Whether the LXX. interpreters understood the meaning of it; whether they knew, in the Greek language, any word capable of expressing it; or whether they might think it of so sacred a nature, as not proper to be published at all; but so it is, that they prudently have omitted it in their translation, and will have the precept or direction, which God gives Noah, to mean no more than that he should finish the ark, by closing it on the top, and compacting it well together.

The word has its original from a verb which signifies *to burn*, or *shine like oil*; and indeed wherever it occurs (as it sometimes occurs in the dual number,) it always signifies some bright and luminous body: and accordingly some of the Jewish doctors were of opinion, that this must have been a kind of precious stone or carbuncle, which was hung up in the midst of the ark, to give light all around: and to this purpose *R. Levi* tells us, that "during the whole 12 months that Noah was shut up in the ark, he needed neither the light of the sun by day, nor the light of the moon by night; for there was a jewel belonging to him which he hung up in the ark; and as it waxed dim, he knew that it was day, but as its lustre was more intense he knew that it was night." But this opinion is not well founded: because such authors as have written best upon the qualities of precious stones, do all

³ *Howell's History*, vol. 1. b. 1.

⁴ See *Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1; *Occasional Annotations*.

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agree, that (whatever the ancients may say,) there is no such thing as a night-shining carbuncle to be found in nature.

That it is possible to make a self-shining substance, either liquid or solid, the hermetical phosphor of *Balduinus*, the aerial and glacial noctilucas of *Mr Boyle*, and several other preparations of the like sort, together with the observations of the most accurate philosophers upon the production and propagation of light, and the prodigious ejaculation of insensible effluvioms, are sufficient demonstration. The most surprising substance of this kind was the pantarba of *Jarchus*, "which shone in the day as fire, or as the sun, and at night, did discover a flame or light, as bright as day, though not altogether so strong; which was, in short, of that fiery and radiant nature, that if any one looked on it in the daytime, it would dazzle the eyes with innumerable gleams and coruscations;" nor can we well doubt but that Noah, who (as oriental traditions say) was a profound philosopher; who was certainly a person of much longer experience than any later liver can pretend to; (and what is more) was under the peculiar favour and direction of God, perceiving the necessity of the thing, should be equally able to prepare some perpetual light, which should centrally send forth its rays to all parts of the ark, and by its kind effluvioms, cherish every thing that had life in it. Now, if this be allowed, (and this is more consonant to the letter of the text ^a than any other interpretation that has hitherto been advanced,) then will all the difficulties, which either are, or can be raised about the manner of subsistence, in a close vessel, by creatures of so many different species, vanish immediately. But, if it be not allowed, then it is impossible without admitting a whole train of miracles, to give the least account, how respiration, nutrition, motion, or any other animal function whatever, could be performed in a vessel so closely shut up; and therefore it is the safest to conclude that, according to the divine direction, there must have been something placed in the ark, which by its continual emanation, might both purify and invigorate the includ-

ed air) might correct and sweeten all noxious vapours, and exhalations; and, like the sun, send such a vivifying light, that nothing should die that was within the ark, that is, so far as the beams thereof did reach.

Thus we have rescued Noah and his family from the danger of suffocation in their confinement, by the supply of a vicarious light to purify the air and dispel all vapours, as well as enable them to go about their work: but now that the waves swell, and the vessel mounts on high, even above the top of the highest hills under heaven, they run into another quite different danger, namely, that of being starved to death, amidst the colds, and extreme subtilty of the air, in the middle region, wherein no creature can live. ¹ But the middle region of the air, we ought to remember, is not to be looked upon as a fixed point, which never either rises or falls. It is, with respect to us, more or less elevated, according to the greater or less heat of the sun. In the cold of winter it is much nearer to the earth, than in the warmth of summer; or, (to speak more properly) the cold which reigns in the middle region of the air during the summer, reigns likewise in the lower region during the winter. Supposing the deluge then to out-top the highest mountains, it is evident, that the middle region of the air must have risen higher, and removed to a greater distance from the earth and waters; and, on the contrary, that the lower region must have approached nearer to both, in proportion as the waters of the deluge increased or decreased; so that upon the whole, the ark was all alone in the lower region of the air, even when it was carried fifteen cubits above the highest mountains; and the men and beasts which were enclosed in it, breathed the same air, as they would have done on earth, a thousand or twelve hundred paces lower, had not the deluge happened.

But during this whole course of the ark, since Noah was shut up in so close a place, where he was not capable of making any observations, where indeed he could see neither sun, moon, nor stars, for many months, it may very well be wondered, how he could possibly have any just mensuration of time, had we not reason to suppose, that he certainly had within the ark a chronometer of one kind or other, which did exactly answer to the motion of the heavens without. The invention of our present horological machines indeed, and particularly of the pendulum watch, (which is the most exact corrector of time,) is but of modern date; but it does not therefore follow, but that the same or other equivalent pieces of art might, in former ages, have been perfectly known to some great men. Suppose that Mr Huygens, or some other, was the inventor of pendulums in these parts of the world, yet it is more than probable, that there was a pendulum clock made many years before at Florence, by the direction of the great Galileo; and that, long before that, there was another at Prague, which the famous Tycho Brahe made use of, in his astronomical observations. And therefore, unless we fondly imagine, that we postdiluvians have all the wit and ingenuity that ever was, we cannot but think, that Noah, who not only had long experience himself, but succeeded to the inventions of above 1600 years, which, considering the longevity of people then, were much better preserved

^a *P. Lamy*, to evade some difficulties that he could not so well solve, tells us, that the form of the ark, is so little ascertained by Moses, that every one is left to his own conjectures concerning it; and therefore he supposes, that as the ark was divided into three stories, or floors, and the word *Zohar*, which we translate *window*, signifies, *splendour*, *light*, *noon*, &c., the whole second story (in which he places the animals) was quite open all round except some parts, which were grated to hinder the birds from flying in and out; otherwise, he cannot conceive how they could have had sufficient light, and air, and a free passage for it, to prevent stagnations, and many other inconveniences which, upon this supposition, would have been removed. The lower story indeed was included within wooden walls, and well guarded with pitch, as being all under water; but the two upper stories, being above water, were either entirely open, or secured with lattices and grates; and the top or open parts, covered with goat skins, or sheep skins, sewed together, as the tabernacle afterwards was, which Noah could easily let down, or roll up, according as rain, or storm, or a want of air, made it necessary. And then, as for keeping the beasts clean, he supposes, that the stalls were so open and shelving at the bottom, that water might have been let in high enough to have washed the feet of the cattle, and to have cleansed the stalls of itself.—See his *Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, b. 1. c. 3; and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, c. xi. But all this is pure imagination, and inconsistent with the notion which the sacred history gives us of it.

¹ See *Cubnet's Dictionary* on the word Deluge.

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than they can be now,) was provided with horological pieces of various kinds, before he entered the ark. Or, if we can suppose him destitute of these, yet what we have said of the *zohar*, is enough to evince, that by the observation of that alone, there could be no difficulty in distinguishing the nights from the days, and keeping a journal accordingly.

But now, that the flood subsides, and the ark is landed, and all its inhabitants are to disembark, how can we suppose, that several of the animals shall be able to find their way from the mountains of Armenia, into the distant parts of the West Indies, which (as far as we can find) are joined to no other part of the known world, and yet have creatures peculiar, and such as cannot live in any other climate? This is a question that we must own ourselves ignorant of, ¹ in the same manner, as we pretend not to say, by what means that vast continent was at first peopled. But by what method soever it was that its first inhabitants came thither, whether by stress of weather, or designed adventure, by long voyages by sea, or (supposing a passage between one continent and another) by long journeyings by land, it is plain, that by the same means, some creatures at first might have been conveyed thither: and as their number at that time could be but small, we may suppose that, by a promiscuous copulation with one another, they might beget a second sort, which in process of time, the nature and temperature of the climate might so far alter, as to make them pass for a quite different species, and so affect their constitution as to make them live not so commodiously in any other climate. To convey either men or beasts, all on a sudden, from the warmest parts of Africa, to the coldest places in the north, would be a probable means to make them both perish; but the case would not be so, if they were to be removed by insensible degrees, nearer to these places; nor can we say, that there never were such creatures in those parts of Asia, where Noah is thought to have lived, as are now to be found in America; because it is very well known, that formerly there have been many beasts of a particular species in some countries, such as the hippopotami in Egypt, wolves in England, and beavers in France, where at present there are few or none of them to be found.

If, after all, it should be asked, why God made use of this, rather than any other method, to destroy the wicked, and preserve the righteous? the proper answer is, that whatever pleaseth him, that hath he done, both in heaven and in earth; for as his will is not to be controlled, so neither is it to be disputed. For argument's sake, however, let us suppose, for once, that instead of drowning the world, God had been pleased to destroy by plague, famine, or some other sore judgment, all mankind, except Noah and his sons, who were to be eye-witnesses of this terrible execution, to live to see the earth covered with dead bodies, and none left to bury them, the fields uncultivated, and the cities lie waste and desolate without inhabitants, who can conceive what the horror of such a sight would have been? And who would have been content to live in such a world, to converse only with the images of death, and with noisome carcasses? But God,

in mercy, shut up Noah in the ark, that he should not see the terrors and consternations of sinners when the flood came; and he washed away all the dead bodies into the caverns of the earth, with all the remains of their old habitations. So that when Noah came out of the ark, he saw nothing to disturb his imagination, nor any tokens of that terrible vengeance which had over run the world, to offend his sight: only, when he looked about him, and saw every thing gone, he could not but fall into this contemplation, that God, 'when he enters into judgment with the wicked, ² will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy. He will dash them one against another, even father and son together, and ³ cause his fury to rest upon them, until his anger be accomplished.'

CHAP. III.—*The Reality of the Deluge proved from Natural History.*

(SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.)

"I CONCLUDE," says the illustrious Cuvier, "that if there be a fact well established in geology, it is this, that the surface of our globe has suffered a great and sudden revolution, the period of which cannot be dated farther back, than five or six thousand years. This revolution has, on the one hand, engulfed and caused to disappear, the countries formerly inhabited by men, and the animal species at present best known; and on the other, has laid bare the bottom of the last ocean, thus converting its channel into the now habitable earth."

1. Of the reality of this mighty deluge, we have universal evidence. Nearly the whole table lands, and gentle acclivities of the mountains, are covered with deposits of gravel and loam, to the production of which no cause now seen in action is adequate, and which can therefore be referred only to the waters of a sudden and transient deluge. It is from this circumstance that the deposit alluded to is termed *diluvium* by geologists. In it, the pebbles and loam are always promiscuously blended, whereas among the regular secondary and tertiary strata, they occur separate in alternate beds. On the contrary, the marl, sand, and gravel deposited by existing rivers and lakes, or plains exposed to occasional inundation, is called *alluvium*.

"In the whole course of my geological travels," says *Dr Buckland*, "from Cornwall to Caithness, from Calais to the Carpathians, in Ireland or in Italy, I have scarcely ever gone a mile, without finding a perpetual succession of deposits of gravel, sand, or loam, in situations that cannot be referred to the action of modern torrents, rivers, or lakes, or any other existing causes; and with respect to the still more striking diluvial phenomenon of drifted masses of rocks, the greater part of the northern hemisphere, from Moscow to the Mississippi, is described by various geological travellers, as strewed on its hills, as well as valleys, with blocks of granite and other rocks of enormous magnitude, which have been drifted, mostly in a direction from north to south, a distance, sometimes, of many hundred miles from their

¹ See *Universal History*. Of this, however, we shall give the conjectures of the learned, when we come to treat of the dispersion of nations in our next book.

² Jer. xiii. 14.

³ Ezek. v. 13.

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native beds, across mountains and valleys, lakes and seas, by a force of water, which must have possessed a velocity to which nothing that occurs in the actual state of the globe affords the slightest parallel."

According to the theory of Hutton, the mountains of a former earth, were worn down and diffused over the bottom of a former ocean. There they were exposed to the power of subjacent internal fire; and after due induration were heaved up by the explosive violence of the same force, into the inclined or nearly vertical positions, in which the great mountain strata now stand. "How often," says Mr Playfair, in his eloquent illustrations of this theory, "these vicissitudes of decay and renovation have been repeated, is not for us to determine; they constitute a series, which, as the author of this theory has remarked, we neither see the beginning nor the end."

This theory is now demonstrated to be a mere phantom. The circumstance that gneiss and mica slate, allowed to be primitive rocks, and to have been formed, as the Huttonians suppose, at the bottom of the sea, by the same process as the calcareous and other secondary strata that are full of shells; the circumstance that gneiss and mica slate are barren of animal exuviae, proves the falsehood of this theory. Whence do these organic ruins come, and why are they absent in the former class of rocks, both of them formed in the same sea, and under similar circumstances?

The Huttonians ascribe the excavation of every great valley on the globe, to the disintegrating power of the stream or river by which they have been traversed. But this is often a mere thread compared to the sloping width of the valley, and should, at the utmost, have produced merely a narrow and precipitous glen. The observed action of streamlets is rather to fill up the dell through which it glides, than to enlarge its dimensions. An example will hardly be found of a valley, which can be legitimately ascribed to the action of the stream that is seen passing through it. This is not the place to enlarge on this subject. Suffice it to remark, that even though the lands adjoining the valleys were composed of loose matter; the waters now running along the bottom, could not have scooped out the valleys, supposing them to have a tenfold force, above what they actually possess; the slope of the existing surface not being sufficiently great to give these masses of water the rapidity requisite to produce that effect, and to carry off the loose soil which filled either the valley or the gorge. Finally, the actual waters, so far from having contributed to form the long and numerous depressions which furrow the surface of the earth, continually tend to fill up these hollows. In short, to the production of the great valleys of the globe no cause now seen in action is adequate, and they can be referred only to the waters of a sudden and mighty deluge.

The reality of this universal catastrophe is attested by the fact, that rocks replete with marine remains are spread over two-thirds of the surface of every part of our continents which have been explored. They abound at great elevations, rising to the loftiest summits of the Pyrenees, nearly 11,000 feet above the level of our present ocean, and to still loftier points in the Andes. It is remarkable that the true geographical summits of the Pyrenean ridge

are composed of secondary shell-limestones, which surpass the granite, gneiss, and mica slates, in elevation, and may have been deposited over the primitive rocks while they stood under the primeval ocean.

In addition to this, it may be remarked, that on the secondary mountains of the Jura, particularly the slopes facing the Alps, a great many loose fragments of primitive rocks are strewed over the surface, at heights of 2,500 feet above the Lake of Geneva. They have undoubtedly travelled across the line of these valleys, their composition proving clearly the mountain ridges from which they came. We may hence infer, that at the period of their transfer from the Savoy Alps, the Lake of Geneva did not exist, otherwise they must have remained at its bottom, instead of being found on its opposite bounding mountain at a great elevation. This, and similar facts indicate the scooping out of the valleys between the mountains, by the pressure of the diluvial deflux. Analogous phenomena abound in England. There are found among the diluvial strata of England large blocks and pebbles, the fragments of various primitive and transition rocks, which *Dr Buckland* supposes to have been drifted from the nearest continental strata of Norway.

"The Alps and Carpathians, and all the other mountain regions I ever visited in Europe," says this respectable writer, "bear in the form of their component hills the same evidence of having been modified by the force of water, as do the hills of the lower regions of the earth; and in their valleys also, where there was space to afford it a lodgment, I have always found diluvial gravel of the same nature and origin with that of the plains below, and which can be clearly distinguished from the postdiluvian detritus of mountain torrents or rivers. The bones of the Mastodon are found in diluvial gravel in the Camp de Geans in South America, 7,800 feet above the level of the sea; and in the Cordilleras at an elevation of 7,200 feet, near the volcano of Imbaburra, in the kingdom of Quito. *M. Humboldt* found a tooth of an extinct species of fossil elephant at Hue-huetoca, on the plain of Mexico. Our high mountains in Europe are so peaked that animal remains, though drifted round their summits, could hardly be expected to lie upon them, but would be washed down their steep slopes. In central Asia, bones of horses and deer which were found at a height of 16,000 feet above the sea, in the Himmala mountains, are now deposited at the Royal College of Surgeons in London. These facts attest, that all the high hills that were under the whole heavens were covered by the waters of the deluge."

It is now maintained by geologists of the highest eminence, that the rounded blocks of granite to which I have alluded as spread over the Jura and neighbouring countries, were rolled into their present situations at the time of the rising from below of Mont Blanc and the Alpine mountains, to which they belong in composition—mountains considered by *Von Buch* as the latest of all mineral formations, and newer than even the tertiary strata. Hence they are contemporaneous with the deluge, indicating at once its transcendent causes and effects. In support of this conclusion, *M. Deluc*, of Geneva, published in the memoirs of the Physical Society of that city for May, 1827, a similar opinion;—

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that the Alpine ridges have been formed after the tertiary rocks; and that the blocks of granite have been dispersed by that mighty upheaving of the land. The great masses remain nearest the parent mountains, and being least travelled, are more angular: the smaller and lighter ones, having been proportionally more violently agitated, and rolled to greater distances, have become rounded by the attrition.

In the stratum of mingled sand and gravel, which forms the detritus of the deluge, and to which the name diluvium has been given, are usually found the fossil bones of ancient animals. Skeletons, or their parts, have been also discovered in great numbers in the limestone caves of this and many other countries, which are supposed with much probability, to have been the dens of antediluvian animals, the last tenants of which were drowned in the universal deluge. The species so common in the diluvial detritus, namely, the elephants, the rhinoceroses, the horses, are very rare in the bone caves of Germany. In this respect, the Kirkdale cave in Yorkshire differs widely from the others, since it abounds as much in the bones of the great and little herbivorous animals as those of the carnivorous. The elephant, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus, are found at Kirkdale; as well as bones of oxen, deer, down to rats and birds. No marine animals of any species have left their bones either in the Kirkdale or German caves.

There are only three general causes which can be possibly imagined to have introduced the bones in such quantities into these vast subterranean vaults; first, they are either the remains of animals which dwelt and died peaceably in these chambers; or, second, of animals which inundations and other violent causes carried in; or, third, of the animals which had been enveloped in the stony strata, whose watery solution produced the caverns themselves, but the soft parts were dissolved away by the agent that scooped out the mineral substance of the caves. This last hypothesis is refuted by the circumstance, that the strata themselves in which the grottoes are excavated contains no bones; and the second, by the entire state of preservation of the smallest prominences of the bones, which precludes the idea of their having been rolled. Even if some bones are worn smooth, as *Dr Buckland* has remarked, they are so only on one side; which at the utmost merely proves that something has polished their surface in the bed where they lay. We are therefore compelled to resume the first supposition, and to regard these caverns as the dens of antediluvian carnivora, which dragged in thither and devoured the animals, or parts of animals, that fell in their way. *Professor Buckland's* writings furnish numerous proofs and illustrations of the truth of this position.

These few observations may suffice to illustrate the nature and extent of that evidence which is furnished by science in proof of the reality of the mighty deluge mentioned in the Mosaic record. The works of *Cuvier*, *Buckland*, and *Dr Ure's New System of Geology*, will put the student in possession of the means of enlarging his knowledge of this highly interesting subject. I shall now advert

II. To what may have been supposed to have been the physical cause of this catastrophe. This, I conceive, to

be a proper and useful subject of inquiry, since we know that God usually accomplishes his purposes by means or second causes; and especially since such inquiry may enable us to answer objections and remove difficulties. At the same time, it should be remembered that even though we were incapable of assigning any secondary causes for the production of the deluge, the evidence for the reality of this event would not be thereby affected. All power is God's; and whatsoever he wills,—the will itself omnipotent fulfils.

The theory which appears to me to come nearest the truth on this subject is that which ascribes the phenomena of the deluge to the operation of forces acting under the bottom of the primeval ocean by which its waters were rolled over the ancient continents, many of which were broken down and sunk in the sea, whilst new territories were upheaved and laid bare. *Sir H. Davy's* discovery of the metallic bases of the earths and alkalis proves that such latent forces do exist in the bosom of the earth; and from the phenomena of volcanoes we may form some conjecture of their tremendous power. The metals of the alkalis and earths, from their affinity for oxygen, could not possibly exist on the surface of the earth; on this principle, volcanic fires would be occasioned whenever these metals were extensively exposed to the action of air and water.

The upheaving of the bed of the ocean, and the depression of the dry land, would occasion the deluge. When the barriers of the ocean began to give way before the explosive forces, the water would invade the shores, and spread over the sunken land, augmenting greatly the evaporating surface, and thus bringing the atmosphere to the dew-point, a state of saturation to which, previously, it could seldom, and in few places, attain, on account of the area of the dry land being great, relative to that of the sea. From this cause, as well as from the immense quantity of vapours which are known to rise from water, into the higher and cooler regions of the air, at the period of eruptions, a great formation of cloud and deposition of rain would ensue.

At each successive upheaving of the submarine strata, the inundation would advance farther on the land, drowning in their places the animals which had been driven for shelter into their dens; and washing away by its reflux, the tenants of the plains, into the slimy channel of the deep. By such a retiring billow in the dreadful earthquake of 1755, three thousand inhabitants of Lisbon were suddenly swept off its quay, and swamped in the bed of the Tagus. In the progress of the elevation of submarine strata, and submersion of what previously had been dry land, the stage of equilibrium would arrive, when the circumfluent waves would roll over the loftiest pinnacles of the globe. The destruction of the human race, with the exception of the eight individuals enclosed in the ark, would thus be completed.

According to the principles of *Mr Penn*, the ratio of land to water was inverted by the deluge, for he assumes that our actual seas correspond in surface to the antediluvian lands; and our actual lands to the antediluvian seas. But the researches of *Professor Buckland* on the Kirkdale and Franconia caves; as well as those of *Baron Cuvier* on the grotto of Oiselles, concur to prove that these were dens inhabited by antediluvian quadru-

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ped, and therefore must have formed a portion of its dry land.

I am disposed then to consider volcanic agency as a main cause of the phenomena of the deluge. This power has now a limited range in comparison of its ancient extent. There are at present two hundred and five burning volcanoes on the globe. One hundred and seven of these are in islands, and ninety-eight on continents, but ranged mostly along their shores. The American volcanoes are among those most distant from the sea. In Peru, they are about seventy miles from it. The position of all our active volcanoes in the neighbourhood of the ocean, is a very striking fact. It becomes much more so when we observe submarine volcanoes burning in the very bosom of the sea.

The most remarkable volcano ever described is in the island of Hawii. It is near the base of Mouna Roa, a mountain 15,000 feet high. An interesting account of it is given by Mr Ellis in his *Polynesian Researches*. "A whole lake of fire was seen to open suddenly up, in a part at a little distance. This lake could not have been less than two miles in circumference, and its action was more horribly sublime, than any thing I ever imagined to exist, even in the idler visions of unearthly things. Its surface had all the agitation of an ocean. Billow after billow tossed its monstrous bosom into the air, and occasionally the waves from opposite directions met with such violence, as to dash the fiery spray in the concussion forty or fifty feet high."

In order to produce the deluge it was only necessary that the Creator should remove restraints from those forces which actually exist in the earth. These forces under the direction of infinite wisdom, operating in the manner already described, seem to be sufficient to verify the account of this mighty catastrophe recorded by Moses. 'The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.' I shall now consider

III. The alleged objections to the truth of the Mosaic account of the deluge. I shall only here advert to those which relate to natural phenomena.

1. While the bones of the lower animals have been found abundantly in the diluvium and caves of the earth, in no instance have the remains of man been discovered. Human bones moulder as slowly in the earth as those of the inferior tribes; yet not one of them has been found of a truly fossil character. This circumstance is felt by many as a difficulty; and is regarded by some as furnishing an objection to the reality of the deluge.

The two following considerations furnish a satisfactory solution of this difficulty. First, that the greater part, if not the whole of the portion of the earth which was inhabited by the human race prior to the deluge, is now at the bottom of the ocean. It is admitted by all, that part of the antediluvian earth is now submersed. It is equally certain that mankind had occupied but a comparatively small part of the globe. From the prodigious herds of wild beasts which prowled through these northern regions, it is confidently inferred that human society was not established there. Indeed the only authentic data from which we can form any conclusion on the subject

lead to the belief that primeval population had not rapidly advanced. The average period which each of the primeval patriarchs lived before his eldest son was born, was $117\frac{1}{2}$ years. Judging from these data, the only ones we have, the increase of population must have been slow; divine mercy limiting the victims of guilt and perdition. Multiplying in this ratio, the race of man could not spread widely over the world, thinned as the members must also have been by mutual violence.

It is highly probable that the portion of the earth inhabited by the family of man is now at the bottom of the sea; especially as we know from the physical constitution of the globe, as well as from principles already alluded to, that at least a great part of the bed of the antediluvian ocean is now dry land, and that, consequently, the dry land of the primeval world is, to a considerable extent, at the bottom of the sea.

A second consideration is, that mankind was confined to Asia and the east prior to the deluge; and that the interior of the earth in those parts of the world, have not yet been explored. It is only of course in those portions of the earth which were inhabited by the antediluvians that we are to look for traces of their former existence; and on the supposition that the sea does not now cover all the early dwelling places of the race, we are certain that they have not yet undergone a particular examination.

2. The change in regard to the longevity of man said to be introduced at the deluge is calculated, it is alleged, to awaken suspicion in regard to the truth of the Mosaic account of that catastrophe. Prior to that era men lived to the age of seven, eight, or nine hundred years; but immediately after, the period of human life was greatly shortened. How are we to account for so great a change?

It is a sufficient solution of this difficulty to say, that the Great Author and Lord of life can limit its duration as it pleaseth him. Without presuming to say, whether the changes which the deluge produced on the globe were sufficient, as natural causes, to shorten the mortal existence of man, it is certain that such a revolution was effected in the constitution of our globe, as rendered its surface much colder and moister than it had previously been. From the circumstances which fully establish this position we may select the two following.

First, the almost incredible number of bones of fossil elephants found in northern Siberia, which indicate no marks of having been rolled or transported from a distance, attest the existence formerly on its plains, of huge herbivorous animals. These demonstrate that a vigorous vegetation clothed countries now covered with frost a great part of the year, when even in summer sterilizing cold and humidity perpetually reign, and where at present the rein-deer can hardly pick up from beneath the snow its scanty mouthful of moss. *Pallas* informs us that in those northern regions there is scarcely a river, on the banks of which, bones of the ancient elephant may not be found. They are imbedded in, or loosely covered with diluvial matter, intermixed with a few marine productions. The immense supply of food requisite to the sustenance of the elephant, the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus, the mastodon, and the tapir, could only be produced in a warm climate.

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Secondly, the ruins of vegetable life buried in our frozen circumpolar strata, clearly attest the genial climate which prevailed, and cherished their growth on the primeval earth. The numerous examples of this kind which occur furnish proofs that the hyperborean region where they occur, at one time displayed the noble scene of a luxuriant and stately vegetation.

3. It is objected to the Mosaic history that it represents the rainbow as formed after the flood, and as the sign of a covenant then made; whereas, as a natural phenomenon, the rainbow must have been occasionally exhibited from the beginning of the world. In answer to this it may be remarked, in the first place, that there is nothing absurd in fixing on a natural phenomenon as a sign and memorial of peace and reconciliation. The very best purpose was served by the rainbow, expressed by the sacred historian, when he represents God as saying, 'This is the token of the covenant, which I will make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you for perpetual generations:' for natural and inanimate objects, such as pillars and heaps of stones, were considered as tokens, and even a kind of witnesses, in the contracts of all the civilized nations of remote antiquity. Of this we have several instances in the books of the Old Testament, but surely not one so apposite as that of the rainbow. Noah and his sons undoubtedly knew,—either by the science of the antediluvian world, or by the immediate teaching of God,—that the rainbow is a physical proof, as long as it is seen, that a general deluge is not to be dreaded: and therefore, if their minds, filled with terror and astonishment at what they had escaped, should ever have become fearfully apprehensive of a future deluge, the sight of the bow would immediately dissipate their fears.

But, in the second place, philosophers are now of opinion that the rainbow, from the constitution of the primeval atmosphere, could not have been formed till after the deluge. Immediately after the flood, the sea-soaked lands would send up universal exhalations round the chilly globe; whence showers and rainbows would become, for some time at least, almost daily appearances. This conclusion of physical research, coincides well with our ancient history of the new drained earth. 'And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. And the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.' The ark preserved eight intelligent witnesses, come to mature age, of antediluvian skies and seasons. It is inferred, both from the emphatic words in which the sign of Heaven's favour is announced, as well as from the purpose which it was ordained to serve, that it must have been equally strange as it was glorious in their sight. In such clouds as might often be stretched in the cooler upper regions of their skies, no bow could be set. Heavy dews, deposited during the night and early dawn, from the well known influence of ground chilled by calorific radiation, would supply the place of rain for vegetable sustenance; as now happens in Lima and many other regions of our

present globe. It is alleged that this theory receives support from the following declaration of the sacred historian. 'For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the whole earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.'

The rainbow thus becomes a most significant emblem of God's providential regard to man. It is a phenomenon which results from, and declares the remodelled constitution of the terraqueous sphere. It is a type of sin and suffering; of reconciliation and of peace; a memorial of the sublimest truths of revelation and science. 'While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.'

IV. It is alleged that Hindoo chronology, founded on astronomical observation, is irreconcilable with the era of the deluge according to the sacred historian; and the inference deduced from this allegation by those who advance it is, that the Mosaic record is false.

In a commentary on *Baillie's Treatise on the Hindoo Chronology*, by Professor Playfair, read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and published in their Transactions, he announced the following conclusions:—"The observations on which the astronomy of India is founded were made more than 3000 years before the Christian era, (consequently more than 650 years before the deluge by the Hebrew chronology), and in particular, the places of the sun and moon, at the beginning of the Calyougham, (the age of misfortune 3102 A. C.) were determined by actual observation."—"It is through the medium of astronomy," continues Professor Playfair, "alone, that a few rays from those distant objects (the ancient inhabitants of the globe) can be conveyed in safety to the eye of a modern observer, so as to afford him a light, which, though it be scanty, is pure and unbroken, and free from the false colouring of vanity and superstition."

In this opinion, so confidently announced, *Professor Playfair* was singularly unfortunate, since its falsity has been fully proved by *La Place* and *Delambre*. "Every thing," says the former, "leads us to conclude that they (the Indian tables) are not of high antiquity. They have two principal epochs which go back, one to the year 3102, and the other to 1491 years before the Christian era. These are linked together by the mean movements of the sun, moon, and planets, so that one of the epochs is necessarily fictitious. The celebrated author (*M. Bailly*) to whom I refer, has tried to establish in his *Treatise on Indian Astronomy*, that the first of these epochas is founded on observation. Notwithstanding his proofs, expounded with all the interest which he could bestow on the most complex subjects, I consider it very probable, that this epocha has been invented for the purpose of giving a common origin upon the zodiac to the movements of the celestial bodies. In fact, if we assume for our point of departure, the epocha of 1491, and go back by means of the Indian tables, to the year 3102 before the Christian era, we obtain a general conjunction of the sun, moon, and planets, as these tables suppose; but this conjunction differs too much from the result of our best tables, to have taken place, demonstrating that the epocha to which it refers, is not grounded on observation. The tables altogether, and particularly

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the impossibility of the conjunction which they suppose at the same epocha, prove on the contrary that they have been constructed in modern times.

"The whole system of the Indian tables," says *Cuvier*, "so elaborately conceived, falls to pieces of itself, now that it has been proved that this epocha was adopted at an after period from calculations retrospectively made, the result of which is false. *Mr Bentley* has discovered that the tables of Tirvalour, on which the assertions of *Bailly* were principally founded, must have been computed towards the year 1281 of the Christian era, (only 547 years ago,) and that the Sourya-Siddhanta, which the Brahmins esteem their most ancient scientific treatise on astronomy, pretending that it was given by revelation, more than twenty millions of years since, could have been composed only 767 years before our own time."

Delambre speaks with equal decision, and to the same effect, in his *History of Astronomy, Ancient and Modern*. "The extensive treatise on Indian astronomy," says he, "by *Bailly*, has been laboured with more care than any of his other works. We regret only to remark too frequently in it, that spirit of system which predominates in all his productions. Instead of giving a simple exposition of facts, which may enable us afterwards to consider them in every point of view, he espouses an opinion to which he makes every thing conform. If we be allowed to hazard a conjecture, we would say, that *Bailly* never writes but to prop a system formed beforehand; that he glances slightly over the writings of the ancients, reading them in bad translations; and, that he runs over all the calculations in order to pick out obscure passages, which may lend some countenance to his ideas.

When we inquire why the Indians chose the remote and fictitious epoch of Cole-young, or misfortune, we perceive, in the first place, that it was from national vanity; and in the next, that they might make all the planets start from one point, a conjunction which their method of calculation required. If we further ask, why they adopted a complicated method, which employs divisions and multiplications of enormous numbers, with so many additions, subtractions, reductions, and different precepts, the answer is, that they did not wish for written tables; they wanted numbers which could be put into technical verses, even into songs, so that the calculations might be performed without opening a book. These facts, now well known through the labours of the Asiatic Society, are alone sufficient to subvert the whole system.

"*Mr Playfair* acknowledges that the Indians have not actually demonstrated either of the two processes which they point out for these calculations. I would be tempted to believe that they were ignorant of these demonstrations; if they had known the principle, their table would have been probably a little better. *Mr Playfair* has not calculated it anew; he has not even had the discernment to perceive the error of the divisor 225, substituted, probably by an error of the copy, for the true divisor 235.5"¹

"The idea of the Hindoo system, given by *Mr Bentley*," says *M. Delambre*, "is so natural, that I am astonished it did not occur to *Mr Bailly*, and make the pen fall from his hand. It occurred to myself on the first perusal of *Mr Bailly's* book, before the publication of the first volume of the *Asiatic Researches*; and it

made such an impression on my mind, that I could never place the least reliance on the pretended proofs that he adduced, nor would I have ever seriously entered into the discussion could I have avoided it in this history of astronomy.

"Finally, it appears that there does not exist at present a single Hindoo book, which can possess an antiquity higher than 1300 years; and that none of the romances called *pouranas* date farther back, from the present time, than 604 years, while some of them are more modern still. Their great geographical treatises are merely a tissue of the most incredible absurdities."¹

With respect to the knowledge which prevailed among heathen nations of the general deluge, it may be observed, that the destruction of mankind which was effected by this catastrophe, was so signal and so extensive a judgment, that the remembrance of it was every where retained, and traditions of it every where preserved. Express mention of this memorable infliction of divine wrath, is to be found in the earliest writings, and the accounts of its general or partial operation appear in various relations. *Berosus* and *Abydenus* speak of it in histories of the Medes and Assyrians; and records of the event extended through the east, and thence were circulated through every country, exciting a peculiar interest in those lands in which some memorial and vestige of it were to be found.

The Egyptians had a sacred ship, called *Baris*, which represented the ark; and the story of the *Argos* is supposed, somewhat fancifully, by *Bryant*, to have been derived from Egypt, and to have a relation to the ark, represented by the sacred ship of *Osiris*. An allusion to the ark is to be found also in many sacred rites of antiquity. *Nonnus*, who was born at Persepolis in Egypt, in the fifth century, and who collected in his *Dionysica*, scattered remnants of knowledge, from the hieroglyphical descriptions and ancient hymns of the country, alludes to the circumstances of the deluge. Relations respecting this event were to be found in various parts of Greece. *Aristotle* speaks of its effects in Epirus. The Thesalonians believed it to have prevailed in their country.

The people of Phocis supposed the ark to have rested on *Parnassus*. *Lucian*, a native of Samosata, gives also an account of the flood. Not only did a general belief prevail, that a deluge had taken place, but the history of the world among the heathens seems to take its origin from that period, inasmuch that many blended the idea of a creation with that of the universal flood; and supposed the system of the world to arise from a chaos of elements, of which water was the primary principle."²

CHAP. IV.—Of Mount Ararat.

BEFORE we conclude this chapter, and this book together, it may not be improper to give the reader some account of the mountains of Ararat in general: in what part of the world that particular one which is here intended is said to be situate; and, according to the relations both of ancient geographers and modern travellers,

¹ *History of Ancient Astronomy*, vol. 1. p. 500. *Ure's Geology*.

² *Grog's Connection*, &c. pp. 147—152.

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of what form and magnitude this mountain is. But in this inquiry some difficulties will arise, by reason of the different traditions concerning it.

The author of the verses ^a which go under the name of the *Sibylline Oracles*, places the mountains of Ararat in the borders of Phrygia, not far from Celænæ, at the head of the two rivers Marsyas and Meander: but it appears from good authorities, that there is in reality no mountain at all in that place, or at most, but a small hill, an eminence made by art, and not by nature; and therefore the learned *Bochart* has happily found out the ground of this mistake, when he tell us, that not far from this city, Celænæ, there is another town called Apamea, and sur-named *Κιβωτός* or the ark; not from any tradition that Noah's ark ever rested there, but purely on account of its situation; because it is encompassed with three rivers, Marsyas, Obrimas, and Orgas, which give it the resemblance of a chest or ark, in the same manner that the port of Alexandria was so called, by reason of the bay which enclosed the ships.

Sir Walter Raleigh, ¹ and from him some later writers ² are of opinion, that the mountains of Ararat were those of Caucasus, towards Bactria and Saga Scythia. This, as they imagine, agrees with the general notion, that the Seythians might contend for the antiquity of their original with any other nation; with the Chaldean tradition, concerning the actions of their great man Xisuthrus, who is commonly supposed to be the same with Noah; with the language, learning, and history of the Chinese, who are thought to be Noah's immediate descendants; and with the journey which some of his other descendants are said to have taken, namely, ³ 'from the east to the land of Shinar.' A modern chronologer has endeavoured to prove, that the place where Noah built the ark was called Cyparissos, not far from the river Tigris, and on the north-east side of the city of Babylon; that while the flood continued, it sailed from thence to the north-east, as far as the Caspian sea, and when the flood abated, the north wind brought it back by a southern course, and landed it upon Mount Caucasus, east of Babylon, and about nine degrees distant from it in longitude; and that this opinion, as he imagines, is more agreeable to the course which the ark, by meeting with contrary currents, would be forced to make; to the sense of Scripture, in bringing the sons of Noah from the east, and in settling the children of Shem (who went not to Shinar) in this place, and to the great convenience of Noah's landing not too far from the country, where he lived before the flood.

¹ *History of the World*.

² *Heylin's Cosmography*; and *Stuckford's Connection*, b. 2.

³ Gen. xi. 2.

^a The verses, as they are set down by *Gallens, de Sibyllis*, p. 589, are these:—

There is upon the Phrygian borders black.

A steep, far-stretching mount, called Ararat.

Where rise the founts of Marsyas' mighty stream,

'Twas on its lofty ridge where stood the ark.

But that which shows the spurioussness of these verses, is this:—That the Sibyl, speaking of herself as contemporary with Noah, takes notice of the river Marsyas, which, whatever name it had at first, was certainly, after the death of Midas, called the *fountain of Midas*, and retained that name until the time of Mar-syas, by whom it was altered; and this must be long after the death of this Sibyl.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 2. c. 2.

that thereby he might be capable of giving better directions to his family now to disperse themselves, and to replenish the new world as occasion did require. But besides that there appears little or no authority for all this; the observation of travellers into those countries may make it be questioned, whether such a vessel as the ark is represented, drawing much water, and very unfit for sailing, could be able to reach Mount Caucasus from the province of Eden (where it is generally thought to have been built) in the space of the flood's increase, which was no more than 150 days. The most probable opinion therefore is, that by the word Ararat, the Holy Scriptures denote that country which the Greeks, and from them other western nations, do call Armenia. In this sense it is taken by the Septuagint, by the Chaldee paraphrase, by the Vulgate, by Theodoret and by divers others. The learned *Bochart* has brought together a multitude of arguments, all tending to the same conclusion; but then the question is, on what particular mountain it was that the ark landed?

1. The most prevailing opinion for some time was, that one of the mountains which divide Armenia on the south from Mesopotamia, and that part of Assyria, which is inhabited by the Curds, (from whence the mountains took the name Curdu,) which the Greeks changed into Cordirei, ^b and several other names, was the place where the ark landed: and what makes for this opinion is, that whereas the deluge was in a great measure occasioned by the overflowing of the ocean, as the Scriptures tell us, that flux of waters which came from the Persian sea, running from the south, and meeting the ark, would of course carry it northward upon the Cordiæan mountains, which seems to be voyage enough for a vessel of its bulk and structure to make in the stated time of the flood's increase.

The tradition which affirms the ark to have rested on these mountains must have been very ancient, since it is the tradition of the Chaldeans themselves, and in former ages was very little questioned, till men came to inquire into the particular part of these mountains whereon it settled, and then the authors seemed to place it out of Armenia; *Epiphanius* on the mount Lubar, between the country of the Armenians and Cordiæans; and all the eastern authors, both Christian and Mahometan, on mount Themanin, or Al-Judi, which overlooks the country of Diarrhabia, or Moussal, in Mesopotamia.

To confirm this tradition, however, we are told that the remainders of the ark were to be seen upon these mountains. *Berosus* and *Abydenus* both declare, that there was such a report in their time; the former observes farther, that several of the inhabitants thereabouts scraped the pitch off the planks as a rarity, and carried it about them for an amulet; and the latter says, that they used the wood of the vessel against several diseases with wonderful success; as the relics of this ark were likewise to be seen in the time of *Epiphanius*, if we may believe him. The town of Themanin, which signifies

^b The Greek and Latin writers name them *Corduchii*, *Cordies*, *Cordici*, *Carduani*, *Cordi*, *Cordoi*, *Cordi*, &c. The orientals call them likewise *Curdon*, *Cordyn*, *Curud*, &c. *Bochart* supposes that they are the same which are called by mistake in *Josephus*, *Caran*.—See *Universal History*; and *Phalegomena* b. 1. c. 3.

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eight, situated at the foot of the mountain Al-Judi, was built, we are told, in memory of the eight persons who came out of the ark; and formerly there was a monastery, called the monastery of the ark, upon the Curdu mountains, where the Nestorians used to celebrate a festival, on the very spot where they supposed the ark stopped; but in the year of Christ 776, that monastery was destroyed by lightning, together with the church, and a numerous congregation in it; and since that time, the credit of this tradition has in some measure declined, and given place to another, which at present prevails.

2. This opinion places mount Ararat towards the middle of Armenia, near the river Araxes, or Aras, above 280 miles distant from Al-Judi, to the north-east. ¹ St Jerome seems to have been the first who hath given us an account of this tradition. "Ararat, says he, is a champaign country, incredibly fertile, through which the Araxes flows at the foot of mount Taurus, which extends so far; so, that by the mountains of Ararat, whereon the ark rested, we are not to understand the mountains of Armenia in general, but the highest mountains of Taurus, which overlook the plains of Ararat." Since his time, its situation in this place has been remarked by several other writers; and all the travellers into these places now make mention of no other mount Ararat than what the Armenians call Masis, (from Amasia, the third successor of Haikh, the founder of their nation,) and what the Mahometans do sometimes name Agri-dagh, that is, the heavy or great mountain, and sometimes Parmak-dagh, the Finger-mountain, alluding to its appearance; for as it is straight, very steep, and stands by itself, it seems to resemble a finger, when held up.

The mount Ararat, which the Armenians, as we said, call Masis, and sometimes Mesesoussar, (because the ark was stopped there when the waters of the flood began to abate,) stands about twelve leagues to the east (or rather south-east) of Erivan, (a small city seated in the upper Armenia, four leagues from Aras, or Araxes, and ten to the north-west of Nakschivan; which, because *nak*, in Armenian, signifies a ship, and *schivan*, stopped or settled, is supposed to have its name from the same occasion. This mountain is encompassed by several little hills, and on the top of them are found many ruins, which are thought to have been the buildings of the first men, who might fear, for some time, to go down into the plains. It stands by itself in the form of a sugar-loaf, in the midst of one of the greatest plains that is to be seen, and separated from the other mountains of Armenia, which make a long chain. It consists of two hills, whereof the less is more sharp and pointed; but the larger (which is that of the ark) lies north-east of it, and rears its head far above the neighbouring mountains. It seems so high and big indeed, that when the air is clear, it does not appear to be above two leagues from Erivan, and yet may be seen some four or five days' journey off; but from the middle to the top, it is always covered with snow, and for the space of three or four months in the year, has its upper part commonly hid in the clouds.

The Armenians have a tradition, that on the summit of this mountain there is still a considerable part of the ark remaining, but that it is impossible to get up to the top

of it. ² For they tell us of one traveller, a person of singular piety, who endeavoured to do it, and had advanced as far as the middle of the mountain; when, being thirsty and wanting water, he put up a prayer to God, who caused a fountain to spring out of the ground for him, and so saved his life; but at the same time, he heard a voice, saying, 'Let none be so bold as to go up to the top of this mountain.'

How difficult the ascent of this mountain is (without any particular revelation) we may inform ourselves from the following account which Mr Tournefort gives of it.

"About two o'clock in the afternoon," ³ says he, "we began to ascend the mountain Ararat, but not without difficulty. We were forced to climb up in loose sand, where we saw nothing but juniper and goats-thorn. The mountain, which lies south and south-south-east from Eimiadzim, or the three churches, is one of the most sad and disagreeable sights upon earth; for there are neither trees nor shrubs upon it, nor any convents of religious, either Armenians or Franks. All the monasteries are in the plain, nor can I think the place inhabitable, in any part, because the soil of the mountain is loose, and most of it covered with snow

"From the top of a great abyss, (as dreadful an hole as ever was seen,) opposite to the village of Akurlu, (from whence we came), there continually fall down rocks of a blackish hard stone, which make a terrible resound. This, and the noise of the crows that are continually flying from one side to the other, has something in it very frightful; and to form any notion of the place, you must imagine one of the highest mountains in the world opening its bosom, only to show one of the most horrid spectacles that can be thought of. No living animals are to be seen but at the bottom, and towards the middle of the mountain. They who occupy the lowest region, are poor shepherds and scabby flocks. The second region is possessed by crows and tigers, which passed by, not without giving us some dread and uneasiness. All the rest of it, that is, half of it, has been covered with snow ever since the ark rested there, and these snows are covered half the year with very thick clouds.

"Notwithstanding the amazement which this frightful solitude cast us into, we endeavoured to find out the monastery we were told of, and inquired whether there were any religious in caverns. The notion they have in the country, that the ark rested here, and the veneration which all the Armenians have for this mountain, (for they kiss the earth as soon as they see it, and repeat certain prayers after they have made the sign of the cross), have made many imagine, that it must be filled with religious. However, they assured us that there was only one forsaken convent at the foot of the gulf; that there was no fountain throughout the whole mount; and that we could not go in a whole day to the snow, and down again to the bottom of the abyss; that the shepherds often lost their way; and that we might judge what a miserable place it was, from the necessity they were under to dig the earth from time to time, to find a spring of water for themselves and their flocks; and in short, that it would be folly to proceed on our way,

¹ Isaiah xxxviii.

² *La Boulaye's Voyages*

³ See his *Voyages into the Levant*, Letter VII

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because they were satisfied our legs would fail us; nor would they be obliged to accompany us for all the treasures of the king of Persia.

"When we considered what the shepherds had told us, we advised with our guides; and they, good men, unwilling to expose themselves to the danger of dying for thirst, and having no curiosity, at the expense of their legs, to measure the height of the mountain, were at first of the same sentiments with the shepherds; but afterwards concluded, that we might go to certain rocks, which were more prominent and visible than the rest, and so return by night to the place where we were; and with that resolution we went to rest. In the morning, after that we had ate and drunk very plentifully, we began to travel towards the first ridge of rocks, with one bottle of water, which, to ease ourselves, we carried by turns; but notwithstanding we had made pitchers of our bellies, in two hours' time they were quite dried up; and as water shook in a bottle is no very pleasant liquor, our hopes were, that when we came to the snow, we should eat some of it to quench our thirst.

"It must be acknowledged, that the sight is very much deceived when we stand at the bottom, and guess at the height of a mountain; and especially, when it must be ascended through sands as troublesome as the Syrtes of Africa. It is impossible to take one firm step upon the sands of mount Ararat; in many places, instead of ascending, we were obliged to go back again to the middle of the mountain; and, in order to continue our course, to wind sometimes to the right, and sometimes to the left.

"To avoid these sands, which fatigued us most intolerably, we made our way to the great rocks, which were heaped upon one another. We passed under them, as through caverns, and were sheltered from all the injuries of the weather, except cold, which was here so keen and intense, that we were forced to leave the place, and come into a very troublesome way, full of large stones, such as masons make use of in building, and were forced to leap from stone to stone, till I, for my part, was heartily weary, and began to sit down, and repose myself a little, as the rest of the company did.

"After we had rested ourselves, we came about noon to a place which afforded us a more pleasing prospect. We imagined ourselves so near, that we could have even touched the snow (we thought) with our teeth; but our joy lasted not long; for what we had taken for snow, proved only a chalk-rock, which hid from our sight a tract of land above two hours' journey distant from the snow, and which seemed to have a new kind of pavement, made of small pieces of stones broken off by the frost, and whose edges were as sharp as flints. Our guides told us, that their feet were quite bare, and that ours in a short time would be so too; that it grew late, and we should certainly lose ourselves in the night, or break our necks in the dark, unless we would choose to sit down, and so become a prey to the tigers. All this seemed very feasible; and therefore we assured them, that we would go no farther than the heap of snow, which we showed them, and which, at that distance, appeared hardly bigger than a cake; but when we came to it, we found it more than we had occasion for; the heap was above thirty paces in diameter. We every one eat

as much as we had a mind for, and so, by consent, resolved to advance no farther. It cannot be imagined how much the eating of snow revives and invigorates: we therefore began to descend the mountain with a great deal of alacrity; but we had not gone far, before we came to sands, which lay behind the abyss, and were full as troublesome as the former; so that about six in the afternoon we found ourselves quite tired out and spent. At length, observing a place covered with mouse-ear, whose declivity seemed to favour our descent, we made to it with all speed, and (what pleased us mighty well) from hence it was that our guides showed us (though at a considerable distance) the monastery, whither we were to go to quench our thirst. I leave it to be guessed, what method Noah made use of to descend from this place, who might have rid upon so many sorts of animals, which were all at his command: but as for us, we laid ourselves upon our backs, and slid down for an hour together upon this green plat, and so passed on very agreeably, and much faster than we could have gone upon our legs. The night and our thirst were a kind of spurs to us, and made us make the greater speed. We continued therefore sliding in this manner, as long as the way would permit; and when we met with small flints which hurt our shoulders, we turned and slid on our bellies, or went backwards on all-four. Thus by degrees we gained the monastery; but so disordered and fatigued by our manner of travelling, that we were not able to move hand or foot."

I have made my quotation from this learned botanist and most accurate traveller the longer, not only because it gives us a full idea of the mountain, so far as he ascended, but some distrust likewise of the veracity¹ of a certain Dutch voyager, who seems to assure us, that he went five days' journey up mount Ararat to see a Romish hermit; that he passed through three regions of the clouds, the first dark and thick, the next cold and full of snow, and the third colder still; that he advanced five miles every day, and when he came to the place where the hermit had his cell, he breathed a very serene and temperate air; that the hermit told him, he had perceived neither wind nor rain all the five and twenty years that he had dwelt there; and that on the top of the mountain there still reigned a greater tranquillity, which was a means to preserve the ark without decay or putrefaction.

There is one objection which may be made to all that we have said concerning the situation of this famous mountain, and that is,—Whereas the sons of Noah, when they quitted the country where the ark rested, are said to² 'journey from the east into the land of Shinar,' it is plain, that if they removed from any part of Armenia, they must have gone from the north or north-west; but this we shall take occasion to examine when we come to treat of their migration. In the mean time, it is worthy of our observation, and some argument of our being in the right,³ that the situation of Ararat, as we have supposed it, whether it be mount Masis, or the mountain of Curdu, was very convenient for the journey of the sons of Noah, because the distance is not very great, and the descent

¹ *Struy's Voyages*, c. 17.² Gen. xi. 2.³ *Universal History*, b. 1.

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easy, especially from the latter, into the plains of Mesopotamia, whereof Shinar is a part. Nor should we forget, that the neighbourhood, which the sacred history, by this means, preserves between the land of Eden, where man was created; that of Ararat, where the remains of mankind were saved; and that of Shinar, where they fixed the centre of their plantations, is much more natural, and seems to have a better face and appearance of truth, than to place these scenes at so vast a distance, as some commentators have done.

One inquiry more, not concerning mount Ararat only, but every other mountain that is dispersed over the whole earth, is this,—Whether they were in being before the induction of the flood? The ingenious author of the Theory, so often quoted, is clearly of opinion, that ¹the face of the earth, before the deluge, was smooth, regular, and uniform, without mountains, and without a sea; and that the rocks and mountains which every where now appear, were made by the violent concussions which then happened, and are indeed nothing else but the ruins and fragments of the old world. But all this is confuted by the testimony of Divine Wisdom, who declaring her own pre-existence, ²‘I was set up from everlasting,’ says she, ‘from the beginning, or ever the earth was; when there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water, before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet God had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.’ So that, according to this declaration, not only the fountains of waters which we see upon the face of the earth, but even mountains (which some have accounted its greatest deformities) and all hills, were part of the original creation, and contemporary with the first foundations of the earth; and though a deluge can scarce be supposed to overspread the globe, without making some transmutation in it, yet that it could not shock the pillars of the round world, or cause a total dissolution in nature, we have the same divine testimony assuring us, that at the time of the first creation, ³‘God laid the foundation of the earth so sure, that it should not be removed for ever.’

It is a groundless imagination, then, to ascribe the origin of mountains and other lofty eminences to a certain disruption of the earth in the time of the deluge; when God, from the very first beginning, designed them for such excellent purposes. For, besides that several of these rocks and mountains (as well as the broad sea) are really an awful sight, and fill the mind with just notions of God’s tremendous majesty, which a small river or a smooth surface does not do so well; and besides, that they yield food for several animals formed by nature to live upon them, and supply us from without with many wholesome plants, and from within with many useful metals; by condensing the vapours, and so producing rain, fountains, and rivers, they give the very plains and valleys themselves the fertility which they boast of. For this seems to be the design of hills, (says ⁴a learned inquirer into the original of springs and fountains,) ‘That their ridges, being placed through the

midst of the continent, might serve, as it were, for alembics, to distil fresh water for the use of man and beast; and their heights to give a descent to those streams which run gently, like so many veins of the microcosm, to be more beneficial to the creation.’

⁵ Nay, we may appeal to the sense of mankind, whether a land of hills and dales has not more pleasure and beauty both, than any uniform flat, which then only affords delight when it is viewed from the top of an hill. For what were the Tempe of Thessaly, so celebrated in ancient story for their unparalleled pleasantness, but a vale divided by a river, and terminated with hills? are not all the descriptions of poets embellished with such ideas, when they would represent any places of superlative delight, any blissful seats of the muses and nymphs, any sacred habitations of gods and goddesses? They will never admit that a wild flat can be pleasant, no not in the ^aElysian fields: they too must be diversified. Swelling descents and declining valleys are their chief beauties; nor can they imagine ^beven paradise a place of pleasure, or heaven itself ^cto be heaven without them. So that such a place as our present earth is, distinguished into mountains, rivers, vales, and hills, must, even in point of pleasure, claim a pre-eminence before any other, that, presenting us with no more than a single scene, and, in one continued plain superficies, must of necessity pall the prospect. But then, if we consider farther the riches that are repositied in these mountains, the gold and precious stones, the coal, the lead, the tin, and other valuable minerals that are dug out of their bowels, all useful in their kinds, and fitted for the accommodation of human life, we shall be apt to overlook the fantastical pleasantness of a smooth outside, and to think with Moses, the man of God, that ⁶‘Blessed of the Lord is any land for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills.’

CHAP. V.—Of Mount Ararat.

(CONTINUED BY THE EDITOR.)

THE following interesting account of Mount Ararat is taken from the description of the recent journey of Professor Parrot to that mountain.

‘Ararat has borne this name for 3300 years: we find it mentioned in the most ancient of books, the History of the Creation, by Moses, who says, ‘the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.’ In other passages of the Old Testament, written several centuries later, in Isaiah xxxvii. 38., 2 Kings xix. 37., we find mention of a land of Ararat, but in Jeremiah li. 27., of a kingdom of Ararat; and the very credible Armenian writer, Moses of Chorene, states that this name was borne by a

⁵ Bentley’s Sermons at Boyle’s Lect. ⁶ Deut. xxxiii. 13, 15.

^a But father Anchises ‘midst a valley green—
Climb that ridge—a rising ground he gains.

^b Flowers worthy of paradise, which not wise art,
In beds and curious knots, but nature’s boon,
Pour’d forth profuse, on hills, and dale, and plain.

^c For earth hath this variety from heaven
Of pleasure, situate on hill or dale.—Milton’s Paradise Lost, b. 4.

¹ Burnet’s Theory b 1., c. 5.

² Prov. viii. 23, &c.

³ Ps. civ. 5.

⁴ Dr Halley.

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whole country, and that it was so called after an old Armenian king, Arai the Fair, who lived about 1750 years before Christ, and fell in a bloody battle against the Babylonians on a plain of Armenia, which is hence called Arai-Arat, that is, the ruin of Arai. It was formerly called Amasia, after the ruler Amassis, the sixth descendant from Japhet, and from him Mount Massis also derives its name. This is the only name by which it is now called among the Armenians, for though the Armenian translation of the Old Testament always calls it Mount Ararat, yet the people (to whom the Bible can be no authority, since they do not read it) have retained the name of Massis, and do not know it by the other; so that if we were to ask an Armenian, even if he came from the Holy Mountain itself, respecting Mount Ararat, he would be as ignorant as if we were to ask a European respecting Mount Massis as a place of note. To the Turks and Persians, the name of Ararat is of course unknown. By the first it is called by the Arabic name Agridagh, that is, Steep Mountain, and as the Arabic is almost a universal language in those parts, it is known to the Koords, Persians, and even the Armenians, by this name. It is said that some of the Persians call it Kuhl-Nuh, that is, Noah's Mountain, but on this I am not competent to decide, as I spoke to only a few Persians, and these invariably called it Agridagh.

"The mountains of Ararat rise at the southern extremity of a plain, which the Araxes traverses in a considerable bend, and which is about 50 wersts in breadth, and more than 100 in length. Ararat consists of two mountains, namely, the Great Ararat, and its immediate neighbour, the Little Ararat, the former lying to the north-west, the latter to the south-east, their summits ten wersts and a half apart from each other in a right line, and the base of both mountains united by a broad level valley. This is occupied by the herdsmen for the pasturage of their flocks, and was formerly used as a safe retreat by the predatory Koords, by which they were enabled to keep up an easy and safe communication between the northern and southern provinces.

"The summit of the Great Ararat is situated in 39° 42' north latitude, and 61° 55' east longitude from Ferro; its perpendicular height is 16,254 Paris feet, or nearly five wersts above the level of the sea, and 13,530 Paris feet, or rather more than four wersts, above the plain of the Araxes. The north-eastern declivity of the mountain may be estimated at twenty, its north-western at thirty wersts in length. In the former we recognise, at some distance, the deep black chasm, which many have compared to an extinct crater, but which has always appeared to me to resemble a cleft, as if the mountains had once been split from above. From the summit, for about one werst in a perpendicular, or four wersts in an oblique direction, it is covered with a mantle of eternal snow and ice, the lower edge of which is indented according to the elevation or depression of the ground. This is the hoary head of Ararat. The Little Ararat lies in 39° 19' north latitude, 62° 2' east longitude from Ferro. Its summit is elevated 12,284 Paris feet, above the level of the sea.

"The impression which the sight of Ararat makes on every one whose mind is capable of comprehending the stupendous works of the Creator, is awful and mysteri-

ous, and many a sensitive and intelligent traveller has endeavoured, with glowing pen and skilful pencil, to describe this impression; and in the feeling, that no description, no delineation, can come up to the sublime object before him, every one who has made such an attempt, must certainly have experienced how difficult it is to avoid, both in language and in sketching, everything that is poetical in expression or exaggerated in form, and to keep strictly within the bounds of the truth.

"All the Armenians are firmly persuaded that Noah's ark exists to the present day on the summit of Mount Ararat, and that in order to preserve it, no person is permitted to approach it. We learn the grounds of this tradition from the Armenian chronicles in the legend of a monk of the name of James, who was afterwards patriarch of Nisibis, and a contemporary and relative of St Gregory. It is said that this monk, in order to settle the disputes which had arisen respecting the credibility of the sacred books, especially with reference to their account of Noah, resolved to ascend to the top of Ararat to convince himself of the existence of the ark. At the declivity of the mountain, however, he had several times fallen asleep from exhaustion, and found on awaking that he had been unconsciously carried down to the point from which he first set out. God at length had compassion on his unwearied though fruitless exertions, and during his sleep sent an angel with the message, that his exertions were unavailing, as the summit was inaccessible, but as a reward for his indefatigable zeal, he sent him a piece of the ark, the very same which is now preserved as the most valuable relic in the cathedral of Etschmiadsin. The belief in the impossibility of ascending Mount Ararat has, in consequence of this tradition, which is sanctioned by the church, almost become an article of faith, which an Armenian would not renounce even if he were placed in his own proper person upon the summit of the mountain."

On the 27th of September, O. S., 1829, this intrepid traveller stood on the summit of Mount Ararat.

We have lately received an account of an ascent of Mount Ararat, in the middle of August, 1834, accomplished by a Mr Antonomoff, a young man holding an office in Armenia, who was induced to make the attempt partly to satisfy his own curiosity, and partly out of regard for the reputation of professor Parrot; whose having actually reached the summit of the mountain is still obstinately denied, particularly by the inmates of the convent, who fancy that the truth would lower the opinion of the people with regard to the sanctity of their mountain. Mr Antonomoff succeeded in reaching the summit; the large cross set up by Mr Parrot was nearly covered with snow; the smaller cross planted on the summit was not to be found, and was probably buried in the snow. One of his guides, who had also accompanied Mr Parrot, showed him the spot where it had been set up. He asked some persons to look while he was at the top, and try if they could see him. On his coming down, however, nobody would admit having seen him there; they all affirmed that to reach the summit was impossible; and though he and his guides agreed, the magistrates of the village refused not only to give him a certificate of his having ascended the mountain, but even of his guides having declared that he had done so.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK II.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THINGS FROM THE FLOOD TO THE CALL OF ABRAHAM, IN ALL 426 YEARS
AND 6 MONTHS.—ACCORDING TO DR HALES 1007 YEARS.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE great object of the Sacred Historian, is to furnish a brief historical survey of the gradual discovery of the plan of redeeming mercy. We must bear this in mind in order to account for his brevity in regard to many things, and his silence in respect to others. He notices those facts and events which bear on his design; and for this reason he hastens forward from Noah to Abraham, the great progenitor of the Messiah.

By many successive works and dispensations of God, all tending to one great end and effect, all united as the several parts of a scheme, and altogether making up one great work,—was the most High unfolding the plan of redemption, and preparing the way for its full accomplishment by the atoning sacrifice of the Redeemer. Like a house or temple that is building; first the workmen are sent forth, then the materials are gathered, then the ground fitted, then the foundation is laid, then the superstructure is erected, one part after another, till at length the top stone is laid, and all is finished. The great works of God in the world during the whole space of time from the fall to the coming of Christ, were all preparatory to this. There were many great changes and revolutions in the world, and they were all, only the turning of the wheels of Providence in order to this, to make way for the coming of Christ, and what he was to do in the world. They all pointed hither, and all issued here. Hither tended especially all God's great works towards his church. The various dispensations under which the church was placed, were to prepare the way for his coming. God wrought many lesser salutations and deliverances for his people before the coming of the Great Deliverer. These salvations were all but so many images and forerunners of the great salvation which Christ was to work out for his people. All anterior revelations were only so many forerunners and comets of the great light that he should bring, who came to be the light of the world. That whole space of time, was, as it were, the time of night, wherein the church of God was not indeed wholly without light; but

it was like the light of the moon and stars, a dim light in comparison of the light of the sun: 'It had no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth.'

With these views, we proceed to the interesting details recorded in the following book.

SECT. I.

CHAP. I.—*The Remainder of what is recorded of Noah to his death.*

A. M. 1657, A. C. 2347; or, according to Hales, A. M. 2257. A. C. 5154.
Gen. viii. 20. to the end of ch. ix.

It may perhaps be thought a little strange, that Noah, who lived so long in this period of time, and was himself the principal person after the flood, should bear so small a share, and have his name so seldom mentioned in the subsequent actions related by Moses. He was certainly alive a great while after the confusion of Babel, for the Scriptures make mention of his death, not till three hundred and fifty years after the flood; and yet surely, if either he had been present at Babel, or lived in any of the countries, whereinto mankind was dispersed after that confusion, a person of such eminence could not, at once, have sunk to nothing, and been no more mentioned in the history and settlement of these nations, than if he had been quite extinct. To account for this difficulty (which is chiefly occasioned by the silence of Scripture) ¹ some learned authors of late have attempted to find out mount Ararat in another place. They suppose, that it was Caucasus, not far from China, where the Ark rested, and near which Noah settled, when he came out of it; that only part of his descendants travelled into Shinar, the remainder continued with him; and that the reason, why Moses mentions neither him, nor them, is, because

¹ Dr Alix's Reflect. on the Books of the Holy Scripture; Whiston's Chronology of the Old Testament; Shuckford's Connection, and Bedford's Scripture Chronology.

A. M. 1657. A. C. 2347; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 2257. A. C. 3154. GEN. CH. viii. 20. TO THE END OF CH. ix.

they lived at so great a distance, and had no share in the transactions of the nations round about Shinar, to whom alone (after the dispersion of mankind) he is known to confine his history. This opinion, which seems to solve the difficulty at once, is supported by some such arguments as these: that the Mosaic history is altogether silent, as to the peopling of China at the dispersion, and confines itself within the bounds of the then known world; that the Chinese language and writing are so entirely different from those among us, introduced by the confusion at Babel, that it cannot well be supposed they were ever derived from them; that the learned sciences seem anciently to have been better known in China, than in these parts of the world, their government and constitution much firmer, and better settled, and their histories more certain and authentic than ours; that (taking the first king Fohi and Noah to be the same person) Fohi is said to have had no father, which agrees well enough with Noah, because the memory of his father might be lost in the deluge? that Fohi's mother conceived him as she was encompassed with a rainbow, which seems to be an imperfect tradition of the rainbow's first appearance to Noah after the flood; and that the reign of Fohi is coincident with the times of Noah, and the lives of his successors correspondent with the lives of the men of the same ages, recorded in Scripture.

But as this opinion is conjectural only, the histories and records of China of a very uncertain and precarious authority, and such as are reputed genuine, of no older date than some few centuries before the birth of Christ, the major part of interpreters have thought fit to reject this account of things as fabulous, and have thereupon supposed either that Noah, settling in the plains of Armenia, did not remove from thence, and had, consequently, no hand in the building of Babel; or that, if he did remove with the rest into the plains of Shinar, being now superannuated and unfit for action, the administration of things was committed to other hands, which made his name and authority the less taken notice of.

It must be acknowledged however, that the design of the sacred historian is to be very succinct in his account of the affairs of this period, because he is hastening to the history of Abraham, the great founder of the Jewish nation, whose life and adventures, upon that account, he thinks himself concerned to relate more at large: for what he has farther told us of the patriarch Noah, amounts to no more than this.

CHAP. II.—*The History.*

As soon as Noah and his family were landed, and all the creatures committed to his charge were come safe out of the ark, he selected some of every kind, both beasts and birds, but such only as were clean, and, by God's appointment, proper for sacrifice; and having built the first altar that we read of, restored the ancient rite of Divine worship, and ^a offered burnt-sacrifices

thereon. And this he did with so grateful a sense of the Divine goodness, and so reverential a fear of the Divine Majesty, as procured him a gracious acceptance, and, in testimony of that acceptance, several grants and promises.

God's promises were, that, ^b though mankind were naturally wicked and apt to go astray from the very womb, yet, be their iniquities ever so great, he would not any more destroy the earth ^c by a general deluge, or disturb the order of nature, and ^d the several seasons of the year, and their regular vicissitudes: and in confirmation of this, he appointed the rainbow for a token, which, (whether it used to appear before the flood or no) was now to be the ratification of the truth of his promise and his faithful witness in heaven.

The grants which God gave Noah and his sons were,

in mercy, to preserve the order of the world in its frame; to punish the guilty, and spare the lives of the innocent; and not to proceed with rigour, for the wickedness of some particulars, to the destruction of the whole; otherwise, the survivors of this calamity would be more wretched, than those that were washed away in the common ruin. If, after having suffered horror of thought, and the terror of so dismal a spectacle, they should only be delivered from one calamity to be consumed by another." *Antiq.* b. 1. c. 4. But that this should be the purport of his prayer, is not very likely, because we find no such indications of terror in Noah, who knew the great and criminal causes of the deluge to be such as could not happen every year, and who, having found favour in the eyes of God, and a miraculous preservation from a general destruction, can hardly be supposed to have cast away his confidence in him so soon, and, instead thereof, to be possessed with an abject and servile fear: and therefore we may conclude, that the nature of his prayer and sacrifice was eucharistical, and not deprecatory.—*Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs*, Essay 19.

^b The words, in our translation are, 'I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake,' for 'the imagination of man's heart is evil,' which is certainly very injuriously rendered, because it makes the sacred author speak quite contrary to what he designed, and is an affront to the justice, goodness, and wisdom of God, who, by this translation of 'for,' instead of 'though,' might seem to bless man for his evil imaginations.—*Essay for a New Translation*.

^c For particular inundations there have been at several times, in divers places, whereby towns and countries have been overwhelmed with all their inhabitants.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^d All the versions do manifestly, in this place, confound the four seasons of the year, which Moses exactly distinguishes. For the Hebrew word *kor*, which they render cold, signifies the winter, because of the cold that then reigns. The word *chom*, which they render heat, signifies the spring, because of the heat which abounds in Judea about the end of the spring, in the months of May and June, which is the harvest time in that country. The word *kajts*, which they render summer, does indeed signify so; but when the word *coroph*, which they term the winter, should be rendered autumn, which is the time of ploughing, and cultivating the ground, as may be seen, Prov. xx. 4. So that the whole sentence, which contains the promise of God, Gen. viii. 22. if rendered justly, should run thus—'While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, winter and spring, summer and autumn, day and night, shall not cease.'—*An Essay for a New Translation*. We cannot but observe however, that this vicissitude of times and seasons, which is here promised as a blessing to mankind, is a full confutation of the dreams of such writers as are apt to fancy, "That in the primordial earth there was every where a perpetual spring and equinox; that all the parts of the year had one and the same temper, face, and temper; and that there was no winter or summer, seed-time or harvest, but a continual temperature of the air, and verdure of the earth;" which, if it were true, would make this promise of God a punishment, rather than a blessing to mankind.—See *Burnet's Theory*, b. 2. c. 3, and *Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs*, Essay 19.

^a Josephus tells us, that Noah, in a persuasion, that God had doomed mankind to destruction, lay under a mortal dread for fear of the same judgment over again, and that it would end in an anniversary inundation; so that he presented himself before the Lord with sacrifices and prayers, "humbly beseeching him,

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not only ^a the same dominion which our first parents, before the fall, had over the animal creation, and a full power to keep them in submission and subjection, but a privilege likewise to kill any of these creatures for food; only with this restriction, that they were not to ^b put them to unnecessary torture, or to eat any part of their blood, which might be a means to introduce the shedding of human blood. The human kind, notwithstanding their apostasy, did still retain some lineaments of the Divine similitude; and, therefore, whosoever murdered any of them did thereby deface the image of God; and whether it were man ^c or beast, stranger or near rela-

^a A learned, and right reverend author, to show the renovation of the earth after the deluge, and its deliverance from the curse inflicted upon it by reason of Adam's transgression, runs the parallel between the blessings and privileges, granted to Adam, soon after his creation, and those restored to Noah and his posterity, soon after the flood. To our first parents it is said, 'Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth,' Gen. i. 28. To Noah and his sons it is said, 'The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea, into your hand are they delivered,' Gen. ix. 2. To Adam and Eve are granted for food 'every herb bearing seed; and every tree, in the which is the fruit of the tree, yielding seed,' Gen. i. 29. But Noah and his sons have a large charter, 'Every moving thing that liveth, shall he meat to you, even, as the green herb, have I given you all things,' Gen. ix. 3. The blessing upon the earth, at the creation, was, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, and herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind,' Gen. i. 11. The blessing after the flood is, 'While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest shall not cease,' Gen. viii. 22. In the beginning, 'the lights in the firmament were appointed to divide the day from the night, and to be for seasons, and for days, and years,' Gen. i. 14. After the flood, the new blessing is, 'That spring and autumn, summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease,' Gen. viii. 22. Whereupon our author asks, what is bestowed in the first blessings, that is wanted in the second? What more did Adam enjoy in his happiest days? What more did he forfeit in his worst, with respect to this life, than that which is contained in these blessings? If he neither had more, nor lost more, all these blessings you see expressly restored to Noah and his posterity; and, from all this, laid together, he concludes, that the old curse upon the ground was, after the deluge, finished and completed.—*Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy.*

^b The words in the text are,—"But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat." This the Hebrew doctors generally understand to be a prohibition to cut off any limb of a living creature, and to eat it while the life, that is, the blood was in it; whilst yet it lives and palpates, or trembles, as a modern interpreter has truly explained their sense; and in this they are followed by several Christians, who think (as Maimonides did) that there were some people in the old world, so savage and barbarous, that they did eat raw flesh, while it was yet warm from the beast, out of whose body it was cut piecemeal. Plutarch tells us, that it was customary, in his time, to run red hot spits through the bellies of live swine, to make their flesh more delicious; and I believe some among us have heard of whipping pigs, and torturing other creatures to death, for the same purpose. Now these things could not be committed, if such men thought themselves bound in conscience, to abstain from all unnecessary cruelties to the creatures, and to bleed them to death, with all the dispatch they could, before they touched them for food.—See *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Revelation Examined*, vol. ii. p. 20.

^c If it here should be asked, how any beast that is neither capable of virtue nor vice, can be deemed culpable, in case it should chance to kill any man? the answer is,—That this law was ordained for the benefit of men, for whose use all beasts were created. For, 1st, such owners, as were not careful to prevent such mischiefs, were hereby punished. 2dly, Others were admonished by their example to be cautious. 3dly, God thereby instructed them, that murder was a most grievous crime, whose

tion, was appointed by the magistrate to be put to death; and, with these grants and promises, he gave them encouragement (as he did our first progenitors) to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," which was now left almost destitute of inhabitants.

But how much soever the deluge might deprive the earth of its inhabitants, it had not so totally destroyed the trees, and plants, and other vegetables, but that in short time they began to appear again; and being encouraged by the kindly warmth of the sun, discovered their several species by the several fruits they bore. Noah before the flood ^d had applied himself to husbandry, and now, upon the recovery of the earth again, betook himself to the same occupation. Among his other improvements of the ground he had planted a vineyard, and perhaps was the first man who invented a press to squeeze the juice out of the grape, and so make wine. Natural curiosity might tempt him to taste the fruit of his own labour; but, being either unacquainted with the strength of this liquor, or through age and infirmity unable to bear it, so it was, that, drinking a little too freely, he became quite intoxicated with it; and so falling asleep in his tent, lay with his body uncovered, and, in a very indecent posture, was exposed to the eyes of his children.

Ham, who espied his father in this condition, instead of concealing his weakness proclaimed it aloud; and to his other two brothers, Shem and Japhet, made him the subject of his scorn and derision. But so far were they from being pleased with his behaviour in this respect, that taking a garment, and laying it upon both their shoulders, they went backward till, coming to their father, they dropt the garment upon him, and so covered the nakedness which their pious modesty would not permit them to behold. Nor is it improbable that, to prevent the like indecency, they watched him during the remaining time of his sleep, and might possibly, upon his awaking, acquaint him with what had happened: whereupon, perceiving how unworthily his son Ham had served him, ^e he cursed his race in the person of Canaan his grandson; and reflecting how respectfully his other two sons had behaved, he rewarded their pious care

punishment extended even to beasts; and 4thly, the lives of men were hereby much secured, when such beasts, as might do th like mischief another time, were immediately dispatched, and taken out of the way.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^d Anciently the greatest men esteemed nothing more honourable, and worthy their study, than the art of agriculture. *Nihil homine libero dignius*, nothing more becoming a gentleman, was the saying of the Roman orator; and for the truth of this the Fabii, the Catos, the Varros, the Virgils, the Plinys, and other great names are sufficient witnesses.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. i. p. 251.

^e It is a tradition among the eastern writers, that Noah, having cursed Ham and Canaan, the effect of his curse, was, that not only their posterity were made subject to their brethren, and born, as we may say, in slavery; but that likewise, all on a sudden, the colour of their skin became black; for they maintain, that all the blacks descended from Ham and Canaan; that Noah seeing so surprising a change, was deeply affected with it, and begged of God, that he would be pleased to inspire Canaan's masters with a tender and compassionate love for him; and that his prayer was heard. For, notwithstanding we may till, at this day, observe the effect of Noah's curse, in the servitude of Ham's posterity; yet we may remark likewise the effect of his prayer, in that this sort of black slaves is sought for, and made much of in most places.—*Cabnet's Dictionary* on the word *Ham*.

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with each one a blessing, which, in process of time, was fulfilled in their posterity.

This is all that the Scripture informs us of concerning Noah, only we are given to understand, that he lived 350 years after the deluge, in all 950; and, if we will believe the tradition of the orientals, he was buried in Mesopotamia, where, not far from a monastery, called *Dair-Abunah*, that is, the monastery of our father, they show us in a castle a large sepulchre, which they say belonged to him; but as for the common opinion of his dividing the world among his three sons before his death, giving to Shem, Asia,—to Ham, Africa,—and to Japhet, Europe, there is no manner of foundation for it either in Scripture or tradition.

CHAP. III.—*Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.*

It is a sad perversion of the use of human understanding, and no small token of a secret inclination to infidelity, when men make the condescensions of Scripture an argument against its Divine authority; and from the figures and allusions which it employs in accommodation to their capacities, draw conclusions unworthy of its sacred penmen, and unbecoming the nature of God.

In relation to sacrifices, we find God declaring himself very fully in these words: ¹ 'Hear, O my people, and I will speak; I will testify against thee, O Israel, for I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee, because of thy sacrifices, or for thy burnt-offerings, because they were not always before me. I will take no bullock out of thine house, or he-goats out of thy fold;—for thinkest thou that I will eat bull's flesh, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most High, and call upon me in the time of trouble, so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me.' So that it is not the oblation itself, but the grateful sense and affections of the offerer, that are acceptable to God, and which, by an easy metaphor, may be said to be as grateful to him ² as perfumes or sweet odours are to us.

And indeed, if either the sense of gratitude or fear, if either the apprehension of God's peculiar kindness, or of his wrathful indignation against sin, did ever produce a sincere homage, ³ it must have been upon this occasion when the patriarch called to remembrance the many vows he had made to God in the bitterness of his soul, and in the midst of his distress; when, coming out of the ark, he had before his eyes the ruins of the old world, so many dreadful objects of the divine vengeance; and at the same time saw himself safe amidst his little family, which must have all likewise perished, had they not been preserved by a miraculous interposition. And with such affections of mind as this scene could not but excite, it would be injurious not to think that his prayers and oblations were answerably fervent, and his joy and thanksgiving such as became so signal a deliverance.

But it was not upon account of these only that his service found so favourable a reception. Sacrifices, ⁴ (as

we showed before) were of Divine institution, and prefigurative of that great propitiation, which God, in due time, would exhibit in the death of his Son. Whatever merit they have, they derive from Christ, ⁵ 'who gave himself for us, as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.' It was in the sense of this, therefore, that Noah approached the altar which he had erected, and while he was offering his appointed sacrifices, failed not to commemorate 'this Lamb of God which was slain from the foundation of the world,' and so found his acceptance in the Beloved; for he is the ⁶ 'Angel which comes and stands at the altar, having a golden censer, and to whom is given much incense, that he may offer it with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne.' ^a

⁵ Eph. v. 2.

⁶ Rev. viii. 3.

^a At the command of God, Noah, and all who were with him in the ark came out of it, when the earth again became habitable. He first employed himself in an act of worship, expressive of his thankfulness to God for his preservation, and of his dependence for life and acceptance, on the atonement of the promised Deliverer. 'He built an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.' It is evident from these words,

First, that Noah had received the institution of sacrifice from his ancestors, and not from immediate revelation. This was an ordinance in use in the worship of God with which he appears to have been familiar: and though its observance is not expressly mentioned in the period that intervened between the time of Abel and the flood, we cannot doubt that it was used by the faithful as the expression of their belief in the truth of the great promise. Noah erected an altar, on which he presented to God the divinely appointed typical sacrifice of propitiation.

Secondly, the typical sacrifice was acceptable to God. 'The Lord smelled a sweet savour.' But how could the slaughter of animals in honour of the Deity be pleasing in his sight? Has he not said, 'every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills? I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?' We must therefore consider the burnt-offerings of Noah as acceptable to God only as they were designed to testify and show forth the offering and sacrifice which Christ presented unto God for a sweet-smelling savour; and because they were so regarded by Noah when he practised them in the worship of his Maker, as the expression of his faith and hope, and confidence. This view is fully established,

Thirdly, by a consideration of the nature of the covenant which was founded upon, and connected with, the sacrifice of Noah. The covenant established with this patriarch, on occasion of presenting his sacrifice, was a positive engagement without any re-stipulation, the absolute promise of good to himself and to his posterity. He gave to Noah a new grant of the earth and of the inferior animals, different from that which had been originally conveyed to Adam, inasmuch as this was founded upon the covenant of grace, or upon the great atonement by which the provisions of that covenant are secured. To this grant was annexed a promise, that the earth should no more be visited with such an overwhelming calamity, but should be preserved till the consummation of all things.

There was included in the covenant made with Noah, an express grant of animal food to man. While to Adam was given for meat, every herb upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree, to Noah it was said, 'Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you: even as the green herb have I given you all things.' But while animal food was permitted, the eating of blood was prohibited, chiefly, I apprehend, on account of its being used by divine appointment to make atonement.

Fourthly, the distinction of animals into clean and unclean,

¹ Psalm l. 7, &c. ² Patrick's Commentary.

³ Saurin's Dissertations. ⁴ See p. 47, &c.

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We mistake the matter however very much, if we imagine that the merit of Noah's sacrifice, (even when purified with the blood of Christ) was the procuring cause of the covenant here mentioned. The covenant was in the divine counsel from everlasting, and God only here takes an occasion to acquaint Noah with it: but then we may observe, that he expresses himself in such terms as lay no restraint upon him from sending a judgment of waters, or from bringing a general conflagration upon the world at the last day. He binds himself only "never to smite any more every living thing in the manner he had done," that is, with an universal deluge; but if any nation deserves such a punishment, and the situation of their country well admits of it, he may, if he pleases, without breach of this covenant, bring a local inundation upon them; though it must be acknowledged, that whenever we find him threatening any people with his ¹ "sore judgments," he never makes mention of this.

It was a general tradition among the heathens, that the world was to undergo a double destruction, one by water and the other by fire. The destruction by fire St Peter has given us a very lively description of. ² "The heavens and the earth which are now," says he, 'are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment; for then shall the heavens pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.' But all this is no infraction upon the covenant made with Noah, which relates to the judgment of a flood: and, though this catastrophe will certainly be more terrible than the other, yet it has this great difference in it, ³ that it is not sent as a curse, but as a blessing upon the earth, not as a means to deface and destroy, but to renew and refine it; and therefore the same apostle adds. ⁴ "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Thus the covenant of God standeth sure: but then, in relation to the sign or sacrament of it, whether it was previous or subsequent to the deluge, this has been a matter much debated among the learned. It cannot be denied indeed, but that ^a this curious mixture of light and shade discernible in the rainbow, arises naturally

from the superficies of those parts, which constitute a cloud, when the rays of the sun from the adverse part of the hemisphere are darted upon it; and for this reason, ⁵ whenever there is the like disposition of the sun to the cloud, it may be imagined that the same phenomenon may be seen, and consequently at certain times has been seen, not from the deluge only, but from the first foundation of the world. ⁶ But as this opinion has nothing in Scripture to enforce it, so are there no grounds in nature to give it any sanction, unless we will assert this manifest untruth,—That every disposition of the air, and every density of a cloud, is fitly qualified to produce a rainbow.

This meteor (as the Scripture informs us)^b was appoint-

⁵ See Brown's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*.

⁶ Dr Jackson upon the Creed, b. 1. c. 16.

reflects it back on the retina of the eye;—so that in a rainbow there is partly anaklasis, or the refraction of a ray of light in the massy depth of the vapour, and partly diaklasis, or the reflection of that ray on the eye,—which circumstances cannot be found united unless in a cloud that is dewy and just about to dissolve itself into rain,—for it must be only so rare as that a solar ray can somewhat penetrate it, and at the same time so dense, that when the ray hath sunk in it a little, the cloud may repel it.—Its form is circular and bent, by reason of the sun's form; for a rainbow always appears in the quarter of the heavens right opposite to that luminary, formed by some cloud reflecting back its rays.—The colours of the rainbow arising from the various mixture of light and shade, are three in number, phoinikeos, or purple and red—prasinos, leek-green or green, and alourgos, blue, sea-coloured;—for when the solar rays first enter the cloud, because less of the opaque is passed through, the colour shown is red or purple; when it hath entered somewhat farther, the glow of the colour is diminished, and thus arises green; but having sunk into the mass of the vapour as far as the lowest bend of the arch, the colour from want of transparency is blue.—*Essay 19th*. This description is pretty lively, and gives us some idea of this strange phenomenon; and yet we must own, that the nature of refraction, on which the colours of the rainbow do depend, is one of the abstrusest things that we meet with in the philosophy of nature. Our renowned Boyle, who wrote a treatise on the subject of colours, after a long and indefatigable search into their natures and properties, was not able so much as to satisfy himself what light is, or (if it be a body) what kind of corpuscles, for size and shape, it consists of, or how these insensible corpuscles could be so differently, and yet withal so regularly refracted; and he freely acknowledges, that however some colours might be plausibly enough explained, in the general, from experiments he had made, yet whensoever he would descend to the minute and accurate explication of particulars, he found himself very sensible of the great obscurity of things. Dr Halley, the great ornament of his profession, makes the same acknowledgment; and, after having, from the given proportion of refraction, accounted both for the colours and diameter of the rainbow, with its several appearances, he could hence discern (as he tells us) farther difficulties lying before him: particularly, from whence arose the refractive force of fluids, which is a problem of no small moment, and yet deservedly to be placed among the mysteries of nature, nor yet subject to our senses or reasoning. And the noble theorist of light himself, after his many surprising discoveries, built even upon vulgar experiments, found it too hard for him to resolve himself in some particulars about it; and, notwithstanding all his prodigious skill in mathematics, and his dexterous management of the most obvious experiments, he concludes it at last to be a work too arduous for human understanding, absolutely to determine what light is, after what manner refracted, and by what modes and actions it produceth in our minds the phantasies of colours.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 2. Occasional Annotations 2. in the Appendix.

^b That this rainbow was thought to be of somewhat more than mere natural extraction, the physical mythology of the ancient heathens seems to testify, and it is not improbable, that, from the tenor of God's covenant, here made with Noah, which might be communicated to them by tradition, Homer, the great

¹ See Ezek. xiv. 21.

² 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10.

³ Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs, vol. i. Essay 19.

⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 13.

recognised by Noah, tends to prove the divine institution of sacrifice. For, since animal food was not in use, at least by divine permission, before the deluge, such distinction can be conceived only in reference to sacrifice. Accordingly, we find the first use to which this distinction is applied in Scripture, is that of sacrifice: Noah having taken of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings. The question is, how was this difference first made? Was it by the common reason of mankind which led them to determine that ravenous creatures were unfit for sacrifice? Are we not rather warranted to believe that it was introduced by God at the same time that he instituted sacrifice. "Whoever considers carefully," says Dr Kennicott, "will find, that the law is part a republication of antecedent revelations and commands, long before given to mankind."—*Devar on the Atonement*, pp. 40—45.

^a The learned Heidegger has given an account of the nature and colours of the rainbow, and by what different causes they are produced, in these very expressive words, "The chief cause of the rainbow is the sun, or the solar ray received into a vapoury cloud, and in it refracted by the various mediums composing the mass—one of which, the more rare, is the air itself; another, more dense, is the vapour which both receives the solar ray and

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ed by God to be a witness of his covenant with the new world, and a messenger to secure mankind from destruction by deluges; so that, had it appeared before the flood, the sight of it afterwards would have been but a poor comfort to Noah and his posterity, whose fear of an inundation was too violent ever to be taken away by a common and ordinary sign.

For, suppose that God Almighty had said to Noah,¹ "I make a promise to you, and to all living creatures, that the world shall never be destroyed by water again; and for confirmation of this, behold I set the sun in the firmament;" would this have been any strengthening of Noah's faith, or any satisfaction to his mind? "Why," says Noah, "the sun was in the firmament when the deluge came, and was a spectator of that sad tragedy; and as it may be so again, what sign or assurance is this against a second deluge?" But now, if we suppose, on the other hand, that the rainbow first appeared to the inhabitants of the earth after the deluge, nothing could be a more proper and apposite sign for Providence to pitch upon, in order to confirm the promise made to Noah and his posterity, that the world should no more be destroyed by water. The rainbow had a secret connexion with the effect itself, and so far was^b a natural

sign; and as it appeared first after the deluge, and was formed in a thin watery cloud, there is, methinks, a great easiness and propriety of its application for such a purpose. For if we suppose, that while God Almighty was declaring his promise to Noah, and what he intended for the sign of it, there appeared at the same time in the clouds^c a fair rainbow, that marvellous and beautiful meteor which Noah had never seen before, it could not but make a most lively impression upon him, quickening his faith, and giving him comfort and assurance that God would be steadfast to his purpose.

For God did not "set this bow in the clouds for his own sake," to engage his attention and revive his memory, whenever he looked on it (though that be the expression which the Holy Spirit, speaking after the manner of men, has thought fit to make use of), but for our sakes was it placed there, as an illustrious symbol of the Divine mercy and goodness, and to confirm our belief and confidence in God: and therefore, whenever² 'we look upon the rainbow, we should do well to praise him who made it; for very beautiful is it in the brightness thereof. It compasseth the heavens with a glorious circle, and the hands of the Most High have bended it.'

And as the goodness of God was very conspicuous to Noah and his posterity, in giving them a new sign for the confirmation of his promises; so it was no less remarkable in the new charter which he granted them, for the enlargement of their diet. That our first parents,^a in their state of integrity, had not the liberty of eating flesh is very evident, because they were limited by that injunction which appoints herbs and fruits for their food:³ 'Behold I have given you every herb, bearing seed,

¹ Burnet's Theory.

father of Epic poetry, does by an easy and lively fiction, bring in Jupiter, the king of heaven, sending Iris, his messenger, with a peremptory command to Neptune, the prince of waters, to desist from any farther assisting the Grecians, and annoying the Trojans; and, at the same time, that Iris is sent with this message to the watery deity, the poet has so contrived the matter, that Apollo, or the sun, which is the parent and efficient cause of the rainbow, be sent with another message to Hector, and the Trojans, in order to encourage them to take the field again, and renew their attack. The meaning of all which fine machinery, is no more than this,—that, after a great deal of rain, which had caused an inundation, and thereby made the Trojan horse useless, the sun began to appear again, and the rainbow in a cloud opposite to the sun, which was a sure prognostic of fair weather.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. I.; Occasional Annotations, 2. in the Appendix.

a When God gives a sign in the heavens, or on the earth, of any prophecy or promise to be fulfilled, it must be by something new, or by some change wrought in nature, whereby he testifies to us that he is able and willing to stand to his promise. Thus God puts the matter to Ahaz, 'Ask a sign of the Lord, ask it either in the depth, or in the height above;' and when Ahaz would ask no sign, God gives him one unasked; 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.' Thus when Abraham asked a sign, whereby he might be assured of God's promise, that his seed should inherit the land of Canaan, it is said, that 'when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between the pieces' of the beasts, which he had cut asunder, Gen. xv. 17. And, in like manner, in the sign given to Hezekiah for his recovery, and to Gideon for his victory, in the former case, 'the shadow went back ten degrees in Ahaz's dial, Isa. xxxviii. 8. and, in the latter, 'the fleece was wet, and all the ground about it dry;' and then, to change the trial, 'it was dry, and all the ground about it wet,' Judges vi. 38, 39. These were all signs, proper, significant, and satisfactory, having something new, surprising, and extraordinary in them, denoting the hand and interposition of God; but where every thing continues to be as it was before, and the face of nature, in all its parts, the very same, it cannot signify anything new, nor any new intention of the author of nature; and, consequently, cannot be a sign or pledge, a token or assurance of the accomplishment of any new covenant, or promise made by him.—*Burnet's Theory*, b. 2. c. 5.

b Common philosophy teaches us, that the rainbow is a natural sign, that there will not be much rain after it appears, but that the clouds begin to disperse: for, as it never appears in a thick cloud, but only in a thin, whenever it appears after showers which

² Eccles. xliii. 11, 12.

³ Gen. i. 29, 30.

come from thick clouds, it is a token that they now grow thin; and therefore the God of nature made choice of this sign, rather than any other, to satisfy us, that he would never suffer the clouds to thicken again to such a degree as to bring another deluge upon the earth.—*Patrick's Comment*. A rainbow is formed from the opposite sun darting its rays on a cloud that is not thick; it therefore naturally signifies, that by the command of God the rain will no more overwhelm the world: for how can it take place, since neither is the heaven totally overspread with clouds, nor are those clouds which exist exceedingly dense.—*Valesius on Sacred Philosophy*, c. 9.

c The ingenious Marcus Marci is of opinion, that the rainbow which first appeared to Noah after the flood, and was so particularly dignified by God, as to be consecrated for a divine sign, was not the common one, but a great and universal iris, inimitable by art, which he has defined by a segment of a circle, dissected into several gyrations (or rounds) by the diversity of the colours, differing one from another, begotten by the sunbeams refracted in the atmosphere, and terminated with an opaque superficies. But whether this serves to explain the matter any better, or whether the common rainbow be not an appearance illustrious enough to answer the purposes for which it was intended, we leave the curious to inquire; and shall only observe farther, that, whether it was an ordinary or extraordinary bow which appeared to Noah, it is the opinion of some, that the time of its first appearing, was not immediately after he had sacrificed, (as is generally supposed,) but on the 150th day of the flood, when God remembered Noah, upon which very day of the year they likewise calculate the birth of Christ (as pretypified thereby) to have exactly fallen out, and that even the glory of the Lord, which shone round about the shepherds, was a gracious phenomenon, corresponding with this sign of the covenant.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, ibid.

d This notion the Pagan poets and philosophers had received. For Ovid in his description of these times, gives us to understand that they fed on no flesh, but lived altogether on herbs and

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which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree, yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.' Nay, so far was mankind from being indulged the liberty of eating flesh at that time, that we find 'the beasts of the field,' creatures that in their nature are voracious, 'and the fowl of the air, and every thing that crept upon the earth,' under the same restraint, as having nothing allowed them for their food but the herbage of the ground; because it was the Almighty's will that, in the state of innocence, no violence should be committed, nor any life maintained at the loss and forfeiture of another's.

This was the original order and appointment, and so it continued after the fall; for we can hardly suppose that God would allow a greater privilege to man, after his transgression, than he did before. On the contrary, we find him¹ cursing the ground for man's sake, and telling him expressly, that 'in sorrow he should eat of it all the days of his life;' and though it should bring forth thorns and thistles to him, yet here the restriction is still continued, 'Of the herbs of the field thou shalt eat,' which is far from implying a permission to make use of living creatures for that purpose.

Nay, farther, we may observe, that such a permission had been inconsistent with God's intention of punishing him by impoverishing the earth; since, had God indulged him the liberty of making use of what creatures he pleased for his food, he might easily have made himself an amends for the unfruitfulness of the earth, by the many good things which nature had provided for him. The dominion, therefore, which God at first gave mankind over brute animals could not extend to their slaying them for food, since another kind of diet was enjoined them; nor could the distinction of clean and unclean respect them as things to be eaten, but as things to be sacrificed. The first permission to eat them was given to Noah and his sons, and is plainly a distinct branch of power, from what God grants when he tells them,² 'The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth,' &c.

If it be asked, For what reason God should indulge Noah and his posterity in the eating of flesh after the flood, which he had never permitted before it? the most probable answer is—That he therefore did it, because

¹ Gen. iii. 17, 18.

² Gen. ix. 2.

fruits, when he introduces Pythagoras, a great inquirer into the ancient and primitive practices of the world, expressing himself in this manner:—

But that old time which we the golden call,
Was blessed with every useful fruit, and all
Those flowery herbs which beautify the ground,
By Nature's hand were thickly strewn around.
No land was then defiled with human gore,
The birds unhurt through airy space might soar;
The timorous hare might widely, dauntless, roam,
Gambol its fill, make every field its home;
No wily fisher snared the finny tribe,
Lured from their homes by his deceitful bribe;
Fraud and deceit were wholly yet unknown,
On every land peace raised her golden throne.

Met. 50. 15.

Porphyry, in his book on Abstinence, asserts the same thing, namely, that in the golden age no flesh of beasts was eaten, and he is to be pardoned in what he adds afterwards, namely, that war and famine introduced this practice. He was not acquainted with Genesis; he knew not that God's order to Noah after the flood was, 'that every living creature should be meat for him.'—*Edwards' Survey of Religion*, vol. 1. p. 117.

the earth was corrupted by the deluge, and the virtue of its herbs, and plants, and other vegetables, sadly impaired by the saltness and long continuance of the waters, so that they could not yield that wholesome and solid nutriment which they did before: Though others rather think, that God indulged them in this,³ 'because of the hardness of their hearts;' and that, perceiving the eagerness of their appetites towards carnal food, and designing withal to abbreviate the term of human life, he gave them a free license to eat it; but knowing at the same time that it was less salutary than the natural products of the earth, he thence took occasion to accomplish his will and determination of having the period of human life made much shorter. Nor is the reason which⁴ Theodoret assigns for God's changing the diet of men from the fruits of the earth to the flesh of animals much amiss, viz., "That foreknowing, in future ages, they would idolize his creatures, he might aggravate the absurdity, and make it more ridiculous so to do, by their consuming at their tables that to which they sacrificed at their altars; since nothing is more absurd than to worship what we eat."

It cannot be denied, indeed, but that the grant of dominion which God gave Adam in his state of innocence is now much impaired; and that the creatures, which to him were submissive through love, by us must be used with severity, and subjected by fear. But still it is no small happiness to us that we know how to subdue them; that the horse and the ox patiently submit to the bridle and the yoke; and such creatures as are less governable, we have found out expedients to reclaim. For though man's strength be comparatively small, yet is there no creature in the earth, sea, or air, but what, ^a by some stratagem or other, he can put in subjection under him.

But ⁵ 'canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a spear? Will he make many supplications unto thee? Will he speak soft words unto thee? Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?' All these questions, how expressive soever of the several qualities of this portentous creature, may nevertheless be answered in the affirmative, viz. That how large soever in bulk, and how tremendous soever in strength this animal may be, yet the Greenland fishermen, who every year return with

³ Matt. xix. 8.

⁴ In Gen. Quest. 55. p. 44.

⁵ Job xli. 1., &c.

^a This superiority of man over all other creatures, his holding them in subjection, and making them subservient to his uses, we find elegantly described by Oppianus, in the following verses:—

There is not in the universe a nobler thing than man.
The deathless sons of heaven alone before him take the van;
The potentate of all below, he holds his regal rod,
And earth with all its habitants bend to his lofty nod.
How many a fury-breathing brute, that roams the mountain brow,
Has fallen a prey to ravenous birds, struck by his deadly blow;
How many of these winged tribes that sweep the clouds and sky,
Are victims to the shaft of death, aimed by his piercing eye.
Though pigmy be his form, indeed, yet the lion's lordly might,
Can't free it from his well-wrought snares, nor th' eagle's airy flight
Ensure it freedom from his grasp; the strongest feel his chain,
The elephant, whose monstrous bulk rolls o'er the eastern plain,
Must yield to him its boundless strength—a slave for evermore
The patient labour-bearing mule, must still its fate deplore.

B. 5. *Halieuticon*.

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its spoils, do literally perform what our author seems to account impossible; they ¹ 'fill his skin with barbed irons, and his head with fish-spears, and so they play with him as with a bird; they bind him for their maidens, and part him among their merchants.'

In short, God has implanted in all creatures a fear and dread of man. ² This is the thing which keeps wolves out of our towns and lions out of our streets; and though the sharpness of hunger, or violence of rage, may at certain times make them forget their natural instinct (as the like causes have sometimes divested man of his reason), yet no sooner are these causes removed, but they return to their ordinary temper again, without pursuing their advantage, or combining with their fellow-brutes to rise up in rebellion against man, their lord and master.

^a Some modern writers of no small note are clearly of opinion, that the Ararat where the ark rested was mount Caucasus, not far from China, where Noah and some part of his family settled, without travelling to Shinar, or having any hand in the building of Babel; and the arguments they alleged for the support of this opinion are such as these:—That the Mosaic history is altogether silent as to the peopling of China at the dispersion, and wholly confines itself within the bounds of the then known world; that the Chinese language and writing are so entirely different from those among us (introduced by the confusion at Babel), that it cannot well be supposed they were ever derived from them; and that (taking their first king Fohi and Noah to be the same person) there are several ^b traditions relating to them, wherein they seem to agree, that the reign of Fohi coincides with the times of Noah, and the lives of his successors correspond with the men of the same ages recorded in Scripture; and from hence they infer, that the true reason why Moses makes so little mention of Noah, in the times subsequent to the flood, is this, That he lived at too great a distance, and had no share in the transactions of the nations round about Shinar, to whom alone, after the dispersion of mankind, he is known to confine his history. This indeed is solving the difficulty at once: but then, as this opinion is only conjectural, the histories and records of China are of a very uncertain and precarious authority, and such as are reputed genuine of no older date than some few centuries before the birth of Christ, ^c the major part of the learned world has supposed, either that Noah, settled in the country of

Armenia, did not remove from thence, nor had any concern in the work of Babel, and so falls not under the historian's consideration; or that, if he did remove with the rest into the plains of Shinar, being now superannuated and unfit for action, the administration of things was committed to other hands, which made his name and authority the less taken notice of.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the design of the sacred penman is to be very succinct in his account of the affairs of this period, because he is hastening to the history of Abraham, the great founder of the Jewish nation, and whose life and adventures he thinks himself concerned, upon that account, to relate more at large. However this be, it is certain, from the tenor of his writing, that he is far from leading us into any suspicion of his having a private malignity to Noah's character. He informs us, that, amidst the corruption of the antediluvian world, he preserved himself immaculate, and did therefore 'find favour in the sight of God,' and was admitted to the honour of his immediate converse: that, to preserve him from the general destruction, God instructed him how to build a vessel of security, undertook the care and conduct of it himself, and, amidst the ruins of a sinking world, landed it safe on one of the mountains of Armenia; that, as soon as the deluge was over, God accepted of his homage and sacrifice, and not only renewed to him the same charter which he had originally granted to our first progenitor, but over and above that, gave him an enlargement of his diet which he had not granted to any before; and with him made an everlasting covenant, never to destroy the world by water any more, whereof he constituted his bow in the clouds to be a glorious symbol. In this point of light it is that Moses has all along placed the patriarch's character; and therefore, if in the conclusion of it he was forced to shade it with one act of intemperance, this, we may reasonably conclude, proceeded from no other passion but his love of truth; and to every impartial reader must be ^d a strong argument of his veracity, in that he has

Jones has shown it to be in the highest degree probable that the Chinese empire was not founded at an earlier period than the 12th century before the Christian era; and that the people themselves, far from being aborigines, are a mixed race descended from Hindoos and Tartars. During the life of Noah, he and his family, are supposed to have lived agricultural lives, in the fertile plain of Armenia, at the foot of mount Ararat, which according to Tournefort, is a most delightful region—still famous for its vines; and there the venerable patriarch died 350 years after the deluge, but long before the impious rebellion of part of his descendants in the plain Shinar, which introduced into the world the confusion of tongues. Where Dr Shuckford met with the Chinese history which he quotes I know not; but Sir William Jones has proved, by the testimony of Confucius himself, that no historical monument then existed in China of events of an earlier date than 1100 years before our era. The stories of Fohi's conception by the rainbow, and his having reared seven sorts of animals for sacrifice, certainly do not appear to have been derived by tradition from Noah's preservation in the ark; but that tradition passed into China from Hindostan, where, in the most ancient writings, many accounts of the deluge are still preserved.—See *Asiatic Researches*, vol. ii. mem. 25. and *Hales's Analysis*, &c. vol. i.—Ed.

^d To confirm in some measure, the truth of this account of Moses, we have an heathen story, which seems to have sprung from some tradition concerning it: for it tells us, that on a certain day, Myrrha, wife, or (as others say) nurse to Hammon, and mother of Adonis, having her son in her company, found Cynistas sleeping in his tent, all uncovered, and in an

¹ Job xii. 5, &c. ² Miller's History of the Church, b. 1. c. 1.

^a Dr Alix, in his Reflections on the Books of the Holy Scriptures. Mr Whiston, in his Chronology of the Old Testament. Shuckford in his Connection, and Bedford, in his Scripture Chronology.

^b Thus, in the Chinese history, Fohi is said to have had no father, which agrees well enough with Noah, because the memory of his father might be lost in the deluge; that Fohi's mother conceived him as she was encompassed with a rainbow, which seems to allude to the rainbow's first appearing to Noah after the flood; and that Fohi carefully bred up seven sorts of creatures which he used to sacrifice to the supreme Spirit of heaven and earth, which is an imperfect tradition of Noah's taking into the ark of every clean beast by sevens, and of his making use of none but these in all his burnt-offerings.—*Shuckford's Connect.* b. 2.

^c There seems to be no foundation whatever for the hypothesis that Noah was the founder of the Chinese monarchy, or indeed that he ever saw the country known by that name. Sir William

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interspersed the faults with the commendations of his worthies, and, through his whole history, drawn no one character so very fair, as not to leave some blemishes, some instances of human frailty still abiding on it. And indeed, if we consider the thing rightly, we shall find it an act of singular kindness, and benefit to us, that God has ordered the faults and miscarriages of his saints so constantly to be recorded in Scripture; since 'they are written for our instruction,' to remind us of our frailty, and to alarm our caution and fear.

Noah, we read, had escaped the pollutions of the old world, and approved his fidelity to God in every trying juncture; and yet we see him here falling of his own accord, and shamefully overcome in a time of security and peace, when he had no temptations to beset him, nor any boon companions to allure him to excess: and therefore his example calls perpetually upon ¹ 'him that thinketh he standeth, to take heed lest he fall.' More especially it informs us, that ² 'wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise;' and therefore it exhorts, in the words of the wise man, ³ 'Look not thou upon wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it will bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things: yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, and as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.'

There is not however all the reason that is imagined to suppose that Noah was drunk to any such excessive degree. The same word which is here used occurs ⁴ in another place in this book of Genesis; where we read, that Joseph's brethren drank and were merry with him; and yet the circumstances of the entertainment will not suffer us to think that they indulged themselves in any excess, in the presence of him whom, as yet, they knew to be no other than the governor of Egypt. And, in like manner, if we may be allowed to take the word here in an innocent sense, its import will only be, that Noah drank of the wine plentifully perhaps, but not to a debauch, and so fell asleep. For we must observe, that Moses's design is, not to accuse Noah of intemperance, but only to show upon what occasion it was that the Canaanites, whom the people under his command were now going to engage, were accused, and reprobated by God, even from the days of Noah, and consequently in more likelihood to fall into their hands.

Without perplexing ourselves therefore to find out such excuses as several interpreters have devised; as, that Noah was unacquainted with the nature of the vine in general, ^a or with the effects of this in particular, or

that the age and infirmity of his body, or the deep concern and melancholy of his mind, made him liable to be overcome with a very little; we may adventure to say, that he drank plentifully without impeaching his sobriety; and that, while he was asleep, he chanced to be uncovered, without any stain upon his modesty. There is a great deal of difference between satiety and intemperance, between refreshing nature and debauching it; and considering withal that the fashion of men's habits was at that time loose, (as they were likewise in subsequent ages before the use of breeches was found out) such an accident might have easily happened without the imputation of any harm.

⁵ The Jewish doctors are generally of opinion, that Canaan, ^b having first discovered his grandfather's nakedness, made himself merry therewith, and afterwards exposed it to the scorn of his father. Whoever the person was, it is certain that he is called the younger, ⁶ or little son of Noah, which cannot well agree with Ham, because he was neither little, nor his younger son, but the second, or middlemost, as he is always placed: ⁷ nor does it seem so pertinent to the matter in hand, to mention the order of his birth, but very fit (if he speaks of his grandson) to distinguish him from the rest. So that, if it was Canaan who treated his grandsire in this unworthy manner, the application of the curse to him, who was first in the offence, is far from being a mistake in Noah. It is no random anathema, which he let fly at all adventures, but a cool, deliberate denunciation, which proceeded not from a spirit of indignation, but of prophecy. The history indeed takes notice of this malediction, immediately upon Noah's awaking out of his sleep, and being informed of what had happened; but this is occasioned by its known brevity, which (as we have often remarked) relates things as instantly successive, when a considerable space of time ought to interfere. In all

⁵ Calmet's Dict. on the word Canaan. ⁶ Gen. ix. 24.

⁷ Patrick's Commentary.

by him; and, as some have imagined, that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a vine; so by the description given thereof, and the fatal consequences attending it, there seems to be a plain allusion to it, and some reason to believe, that it was one and the same tree, by which the nakedness both of Adam and Noah was exposed to derision.—*Targ. Jonath.*

^b Interpreters have invented several other reasons, why the curse, which properly belonged to Ham, was inflicted on his son Canaan; as, 1st, When Canaan is mentioned, Ham is not exempted from the malediction, but rather more deeply plunged into it, because parents are apt to be more affected with their children's misfortunes than their own; especially if themselves brought the evil upon them by their own fault or folly. 2dly, God having blessed the three sons of Noah at their going out of the ark, it was not proper that Noah's curse should interfere with the divine blessing, but very proper that it should be transferred to Canaan, in regard to the future extirpation of the people which were to descend from him. But, 3dly, Some imagine that there is here an ellipsis, or defect of the word father, since such relative words are frequently omitted, or understood in Scripture. Thus, Matt. iv. 21, James of Zebedee, for the son of Zebedee; John xix. 25, Mary of Cleopas, for the wife of Cleopas; and Acts vii. 16, Emmor of Sychem, for the father of Sychem, which our translation rightly supplies; and, in like manner, Canaan may be put for the father of Canaan, as the Arabic translation has it, that is, Ham, as the Septuagint here render it. And though Ham had more sons, yet he may here be described by his relation to Canaan, because in him the curse was more fixed and dreadful, reaching to his utter extirpation, whilst the rest of Ham's posterity, in after ages, were blessed with the saving knowledge of the gospel.—*Poole's Annotations.*

¹ 1 Cor. x. 12. ² Prov. xx. 1. ³ Prov. xxiii. 31, &c.

⁴ Ch. xliii. 34.

indecent posture. She ran immediately, and informed Hammon of it; he gave notice of it to his brothers, who, to prevent the confusion which Cynistas might be in to find himself naked, covered him with something. Cynistas, understanding what had passed, cursed Adonis, and pursued Myrrha into Arabia; where, after having wandered nine months, she was changed into a tree, which bears myrrh. Hammon and Ham are the same person, and so are Adonis and Canaan.—*Calmet's Dictionary* on the word Ham.

^a It is a Jewish tradition or allegory, that the vine which Noah planted was not of ordinary terrestrial growth, but was carried down the river out of Paradise, or at least out of Eden, and found

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probability these predictions of Noah, which point out the different fates of his posterity, were such as¹ we find ^a Jacob pronouncing over his sons a little before his death; and it is not unlikely that the common opinion, of Noah's dividing the earth among his, might take its original from these last words that we read of him, which were certainly accomplished in their event.

The curse upon Canaan^b is, that he should be a servant to Shem; and,² about 800 (or, according to Dr Hales, 1546) years after this, did not the Israelites, descendants of Shem, take possession of the land of Canaan, subdue thirty of its kings, destroy most of its inhabitants, lay heavy tributes upon the remainder, and, by oppressions of one kind or other, oblige some to flee into Egypt,^c others into Africa, and others into Greece? He was doomed likewise to be a servant to Japhet; and did not the Greeks and Romans, descended from Japhet, utterly destroy the relics of Canaan, who fled to Tyre, built by the Sidonians; to Thebes, built by Cadmus; and to Carthage, built by Dido? For who has not heard of the conquests of the Romans over the Africans?

The blessing upon Japhet is, that his territories should be enlarged:³ and can we think otherwise, when (as we shall show anon) not only all Europe, and the Lesser Asia, but Media likewise, and part of Armenia, Iberia, Albania, and the vast regions towards the north, which anciently the Scythians, but now the Tartars, inhabit, fell to the share of his posterity? It was likewise declared, that he should dwell in the tents of Shem; and is it not notorious that the Greeks and Romans invaded and

conquered that part of Asia where the posterity of Shem had planted themselves; that both Alexander and Cæsar were masters of Jerusalem, and made all the countries thereabout tributary? "You," says ^d Justin Martyr, (speaking to Trypho the Jew concerning his nation,) "who are descended from Shem, according as God had appointed, came into the land of the children of Canaan and made it your own; and, in like manner, according to the Divine decree, the sons of Japhet (the Romans) have broken in upon you, seized upon your whole country, and still keep possession of it. Thus the sons of Shem," says he, "have overpowered and reduced the Canaanite; and the sons of Japhet have subdued the sons of Shem, and made them their vassals; so that the posterity of Canaan are become, in a literal sense, servants of servants."

But, in the blessing bestowed upon Shem, why the God of Shem, you will say, and not the God of Japhet?⁴ They were both of them equally observant of their father, and joined in the pious office that they did him. The preference, if any, was due to the first-born; and therefore we may presume, that if the blessing here, peculiar to Shem, had been any part of a temporal covenant, or any thing in the power of his father to bestow, he would have conferred it on Japhet. But as the apostle to the Hebrews tells us,⁵ 'that he was heir of righteousness which is by faith,' he foresaw that in Seth's family God would settle his church; that of his seed Christ should be born according to the flesh; and that the covenant which should restore man to himself and to his Maker, should be conveyed through his posterity. And this accounts for the preference given to Shem; for Noah spake not of his own choice, but declared the counsel of God, who had now, as he frequently did afterwards, 'chosen the younger before the elder.'

Thus it appears upon inquiry, that these prophecies of Noah were not the fumes of indigested liquor, but⁷ the words of truth and soberness: and though their sense was not so apparent at the time of their being pronounced, yet their accomplishment has now explained their meaning, and verified that observation of the apostle (which very probably alludes to the very predictions now before us). 'No prophecy is of any private interpretation, for the prophecy came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

CHAP. IV.—Of the Prohibition of Blood.

THE grant which God was pleased to give Noah and his posterity, to eat the flesh of all living creatures, has this remarkable restriction in it,⁸ 'But the flesh, with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat.'^d Whether this prohibition related to the eating of things

^a Dial. contra Tryp. Jud. p. 288.

^b Bp. Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy, p. 103.

^c Heb. xi. 7.

^d Acts xxvii. 25.

^e Gen. ix. 4.

^f Mr Bruce has given a very satisfactory account of the practice of eating blood in Aethiopia. This custom, so prevalent in several places, is forbidden in the Scriptures. A recital of the narrative will probably suggest to the reader the reasons of the prohibition. Mr Bruce tells us, that not long after our losing

¹ Gen. xlix.

² Patrick's Commentary in locum.

³ Patrick's Commentary.

^a That which may confirm us in this opinion is,—That Jacob, when he calleth his children together, acquaints them, that his purpose is 'to tell them that which shall befall them in the last days;' and that he does not always presage blessings, but sometimes ill luck to their posterity, and (in the same manner that Noah does) now and then drops a note of his displeasure, according as their behaviour has been; for thus he says of Simeon and Levi, in regard to the slaughter of the Shechemites, 'Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel,' Gen. xlix. 7.

^b Dr Hales, who perfectly agrees with our author, that the curse was pronounced on Canaan only, and not on Ham and his descendants generally, and who has a long dissertation on the subject, second edition, pp. 344—348, justly remarks, that the curse denounced against Canaan's posterity, to be 'servant of servants,' the lowest of servants, even slaves, to their brethren in general, did not affect individuals, nor even nations, so long as they continued righteous. In Abraham's days Melchisedek, whose name was expressive of his character, signifying 'king of righteousness,' was a worthy and revered 'priest of the most high God.' And Abimelech, whose name denotes 'parental king,' pleaded the integrity of his heart, and righteousness of his nation before God; and his plea was accepted. Yet they appear to have been Canaanites. (See Gen. xiv. 18—20; xv. 16; xx. 4—9.) At the same time the impieties and abominations of their neighbours, in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, &c., drew down the signal vengeance of Heaven in their overthrow.—Ed.

^c Procopius (on the Vandal war, b. ii. c. 10) tells us, that, in the province of Tingitana, and in the very ancient city of Tingis, which was founded by them, there are two great pillars to be seen, of white stone, erected near a large fountain, with an inscription in Phœnician characters, to this purpose, "We are people preserved by flight, from that rover Jesus, the son of Nave, who pursued us." And what makes it very probable that they bent their flight this way, is the great agreement, and almost identity, of the Punic with the Canaanitish, or Hebrew language.—*Calmet's Dictionary* on the word *Canaan*.

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strangled, and such as died of themselves, in which the blood was settled,¹ as some will have it, or to the eating of the flesh of creatures reeking in blood, and their limbs cut off, while they themselves were yet alive,² as others imagine, is not so material here to inquire, since the former was prohibited by subsequent laws, both³ in the Jewish and Christian church, and the latter was a practice too abhorrent to human nature, one would think, to need any prohibition at all. Whether, therefore, it be blood congealed, or blood mingled in the flesh, that is here primarily intended, the injunction must at least equally extend to blood simple and unmixed; nor can any interpretation imaginable be more natural and obvious than this: 'Though I give you the flesh of every creature, that you shall think proper to make use of for food, yet I do not, at the same time, give you the blood with it. The blood is the life, or vehicle, or chief instrument of life in every creature; it must therefore be reserved for another use, and not be eaten.'

This is the true sense of the prohibition, compared with those parts of the Levitical law, wherein we find it re-enjoined: but then the question is, whether this in-

junction be obligatory upon us now, under the dispensation of the gospel? or whether the gospel, which is the law of liberty, has set us free from any such observance? and a question it is, that ought the rather to be determined, because some have made it a matter of no small scruple to themselves, whilst others have passed it by with neglect, as a law of temporary duration only, and now quite abrogated.

That therefore the reader may, in this matter, chiefly judge for himself, I shall fairly state the arguments on both sides; and, when I have done this, by a short examination into the merits of each evidence, endeavour to convince myself and others, on which side of the question it is that truth preponderates, and consequently, what ought to be the practice of every good Christian in relation to this law.

Those who maintain the lawfulness of eating blood, do not deny, but that this prohibition obliged Noah and his posterity, that is, all mankind, to the time of the promulgation of the law; do not deny, but that, at the giving of the law, this prohibition was renewed, and more explicit reasons were given for the observation of it; nay, do not deny,

¹ St Chrysostom, and Ludovicus de Dieu.

² Maimonides, and our Selden de Jure Gentium.

³ See Lev. xvii. 12, and Acts xv. 20.

"sight of the ruins of this ancient capital of Abyssinia, we overtook three travellers driving a cow before them; they had black goat skins upon their shoulders, and lances and shields in their hands; in other respects they were but thinly clothed; they appeared to be soldiers. The cow did not seem to be fatted for killing, and it occurred to us all, that it had been stolen. This, however, was not our business, nor was such an occurrence at all remarkable in a country so long engaged in war. We saw that our attendants attached themselves in a particular manner to the three soldiers that were driving the cow, and held a short conversation with them. Soon after, we arrived at the hithermost bank of the river, where I thought we were to pitch our tent: the drivers suddenly tript up the cow, and gave the poor animal a very rude fall upon the ground, which was but the beginning of her sufferings. One of them sat across her neck, holding down her head by the horns, the other twisted the halter about her fore feet, while the third, who had a knife in his hand, to my great surprise, in place of taking her by the throat, got astride upon her belly, before her hind legs, and gave her a very deep wound in the upper part of the buttock. From the time I had seen them throw the beast upon the ground I had rejoiced, thinking that when three people were killing a cow, they must have agreed to sell part of her to us; and I was much disappointed upon hearing the Abyssinians say, that we were to pass the river to the other side, and not encamp where I intended. Upon my proposing they should bargain for part of the cow, my men answered, what they had already learned in conversation, that they were not then to kill her; that she was not wholly theirs, and they could not sell her. This awakened my curiosity; I let my people go forward, and staid myself, till I saw, with the utmost astonishment, two pieces, thicker and longer than our ordinary beef steaks, cut out of the higher part of the buttock of the beast: how it was done, I cannot positively say."—*Travels*, vol. iii., p. 142.

"We have an instance in the life of Saul, that shows the propensity of the Israelites to this crime. Saul's army, after a battle, *few*, that is, fell voraciously upon the cattle they had taken, and threw them upon the ground to cut off their flesh, and eat them raw; so that the army was defiled by eating blood, or living animals, 1 Sam. xiv. 33. To prevent this, Saul caused to be rolled to him a great stone, and ordered those that killed their oxen, to cut their throats upon that stone. This was the only lawful way of killing animals for food; the tying of the ox, and throwing it upon the ground, was not permitted as equivalent. The Israelites did probably in that case, as the Abyssinians do at this day; they cut a part of its throat, so that blood might be seen on the ground, but nothing mortal to the animal followed from that wound; but

after laying his head upon a large stone, and cutting his throat, the blood fell from on high, or was poured on the ground like water, and sufficient evidence appeared that the creature was dead, before it was attempted to eat it. We have seen that the Abyssinians came from Palestine a very few years after this, and we are not to doubt, that they then carried with them this, with many other Jewish customs, which they have continued to this day."—*Bruce's Travels*, vol. iii., p. 299.

To corroborate the account given by Mr Bruce, in these extracts, it may be satisfactory to affix what Mr Antes has said upon the subject, in his observations on the manners and customs of the Egyptians, p. 17. "When Mr Bruce returned from Abyssinia, I was at Grand Cairo. I had the pleasure of his company for three months almost every day; and having, at that time, myself an idea of penetrating into Abyssinia, I was very inquisitive about that country, on hearing many things from him which seemed almost incredible to me; I heard many eye-witnesses often speak of the Abyssinians eating raw meat. I shall proceed to relate one of those occurrences which Mr Pearce himself witnessed.

"On the 7th of February, he went out with a party of Lasta soldiers on one of their marauding expeditions, and in the course of the day they got possession of several head of cattle, with which, towards evening, they made the best of their way back to the camp. They had then fasted for many hours, and still a considerable distance remained for them to travel. Under these circumstances, a soldier attached to the party, proposed cutting out the "ghulada" from one of the cows they were driving before them, to satisfy the cravings of their hunger. This term Mr Pearce did not at first understand, but he was not long left in doubt upon the subject; for, the others having assented, they laid hold of the animal by the horns, threw it down, and proceeded without farther ceremony to the operation. This consisted in cutting out two pieces of flesh from the buttock, near the tail, which, together, Mr Pearce supposed, might weigh about a pound. As soon as they had taken these way, they sewed up the wounds, plastered them over with cow dung, and drove the animal forwards, while they divided among their party the still reeking steaks.

They wanted Mr Pearce to partake of this meat, raw as it came from the cow, but he was too much disgusted with the scene to comply with their offer; though he declared he was so hungry at the time, that he could without remorse have eaten raw flesh, had the animal been killed in the ordinary way; a practice which I may here observe, he never could before be induced to adopt, notwithstanding its being general throughout the country. The animal, after this barbarous operation, walked somewhat lame, but nevertheless managed to reach the camp without any apparent injury, and immediately after their arrival it was killed by the Worari, and consumed for their supper."—*Salt's Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 295.

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but that under the gospel it was enjoined by a very competent authority, to some particular Christians at least, for some determinate time. But then they contend, that, during these several periods, there could be no moral obligation in the injunction, but that, (setting aside the divine authority,) 'neither if they did eat, were they the worse, neither if they did not eat, were they the better.'

For, if there was any moral turpitude in the act of eating blood, or things connixed with blood, how comes it to pass, say they, that, though God prohibited his own people the Jews, yet he suffered other nations to eat² any thing that died of itself, and consequently had the blood settled in it? If³ meat commendeth us to God, the same Providence, which took care to restrain the Jews⁴ (for is he the God of the Jews only, is he not also of the Gentiles?) from what was detestable to him, as well as abhorrent to human nature, would have laid the same inhibition upon all mankind; at least he would not have enjoined his own people to give to a proselyte of the gate, or to sell to an alien, or heathen, such meat as would necessarily ensnare them in sin.

The law, therefore, which enjoined Noah and his children to abstain from blood, must necessarily have been a law peculiar to that time only. ⁵ Cain, in the first age of the world, had slain Abel, while there were but few persons in it: God had now destroyed all mankind except eight persons; and, to prevent the fate of Abel from befalling any of them, he forbids murder under a capital punishment; and to this purpose, forbids the use of blood, as a proper guard upon human life in the infancy of the world. Under the Mosaic covenant he renews this law, indeed, but then he establishes it upon another foundation, and makes blood therefore prohibited, because he had appointed it⁶ 'to be offered upon the altar, and to make an atonement for men's souls; for it is the blood,' saith he, 'that maketh an atonement for the soul;' and what was reserved for religious purposes, was not at that time convenient to be ate. But now that these purposes are answered, and these sacrifices are at an end, the reason of our abstinence has ceased, and consequently our abstinence itself is no longer a duty.

Blood, we allow, had still something more sacred in it; it was a type of the sacrifice of Christ, who was to be offered upon the altar of his cross; but that oblation being now made, the reason of its appropriation, and being withheld from common use, is now no more. And though the council at Jerusalem made a decree, even subsequent to the sacrifice of Christ, that the brethren, who were of the Gentiles, should abstain from things strangled, and from blood; yet before we can determine any thing from this injunction, the occasion, place, time, and other circumstances of it, must be carefully looked into.

The occasion of the decree was this—while Paul and Barnabas were preaching the gospel at Antioch, certain persons, converted from Judaism, came down from Jerusalem, and very probably pretending a commission from the apostles, declared it their opinion, that whoever embraced the Christian religion, was obliged, at the same time, to be circumcised, and observe the whole law.

The place, where the question arose, was Antioch, where (as Josephus tells us) there was a famous Jewish university, full of proselytes of the gate, as they were called, and who, in all probability, were converted by the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who were among those that were dispersed at the first persecution,⁷ which immediately ensued the martyrdom of Stephen.

The persons who moved this question, were⁸ some of the sect of the Pharisees, converted to Christianity, but still so prejudiced in favour of their old religion, or at least of the divine rite of circumcision, that they thought there was no coming to Christ without entering in at that gate.

The persons to whom the question related, were proselytes of the gate, that is, Gentiles by birth, but who had renounced the heathen religion, as to all idolatry, and were thereupon permitted to live in Palestine, or wherever the Jews inhabited; and had several privileges allowed them, upon condition that they would observe the laws of society, and conform to certain injunctions, that¹⁰ Moses had prescribed them.

The time when this question arose, was not long after the conversion of Cornelius; so that this body of proselytes was, very probably, the first large number of Gentiles that were received into the Christian church, and this the first time that the question was agitated,—whether the proselytes of the gate, who, as the zealots pretended, could not so much as live among the Jews, without circumcision, could be allowed to be a part of the Christian church without it?

Under these circumstances the council at Jerusalem convened, and accordingly made their decree, that the proselytes of the gate (for it is persons of this denomination only which their decree concerns) 'should¹¹ abstain from the meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication;' the very things which,¹² according to the law of Moses, they engaged themselves to abstain from, when they were first admitted to the privilege of sojourning among the Jews. So that, in effect, the decree did no more than declare the opinion of those who made it, to those to whom it was sent, namely, that Christianity did not alter the condition of the proselytes in respect of their civil obligations, but that, as they were bound by these laws or Moses before their conversion, so were they still; and, consequently, that the sense of St Paul is the same with the sense of the council at that time; ¹³ 'let every one abide in the calling,' that is, in the civil state and condition wherein he is called. But, supposing the decree to extend farther than the proselytes of Antioch, yet there was another reason why the council at Jerusalem should determine in this manner, and that was, the strong aversion which they knew the Jewish converts would have conceived against the Gentiles, had they been indulged the liberty of eating blood; and, therefore, to compromise the matter, they laid on them this prudent restraint, from the same principle that we find St Paul declaring himself in this manner:¹⁴ 'Though I am free from all men, yet have I made myself a servant unto all, that I might gain the more. Unto the Jew, I became as

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 8. ² Deut. xiv. 21. ³ 1 Cor. viii. 8.
⁴ Rom. iii. 29. ⁵ Miscellanea Sacra, vol. 2. ⁶ Lev. xvii. 11.

⁷ Acts xi. 20. ⁸ Acts xv. 5. ⁹ Miscellanea Sacra, vol. 2.
¹⁰ Lev. xvii. ¹¹ Acts xv. 29. ¹² See Lev. xvii. and xviii.
¹³ 1 Cor. vii. 20. ¹⁴ 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20, 22.

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a Jew, that I might gain the Jew; to the weak, became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might, by all means, save some.'

Nay, admitting the decree was not made with this view, yet, being founded on laws which concerned the Jewish polity only, it could certainly last no longer than the government lasted; and, consequently, ever since the temple worship has expired, and the Jews have ceased to be a political body, it must have been repealed; and accordingly, if we look into the gospel, say they, we may there find a repeal of it in full form. For therein we are told,¹ that 'the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost';² that 'meat commendeth us not unto God';³ that 'what goeth into the mouth, defileth not the man';⁴ that 'to the pure, all things are pure; and'⁵ that there is nothing unclean of itself, but only to him, that esteemeth it to be unclean, it is unclean; for every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified with the word of God and prayer;⁶ and therefore we are ordered,⁷ that 'whatever is sold in the shambles, even though it be a thing offered to idols, that to eat, asking no questions for conscience sake'; and are told, that⁸ 'whoever commandeth us to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe, and know the truth,' ought to be ranked in the number of seducers.

In a word, the very genius of the Christian religion, say they, is a charter of liberty, and a full exemption from the law of Moses. It debars us from nothing but what has a moral turpitude in it, or at least, what is too base and abject for a man, that has the revelation of a glorious and immortal life in the world to come: and, as there is no tendency of this kind in the eating of blood, they therefore conclude that this decree of the apostles, either concerned the⁹ Jewish proselytes only, who, in virtue of the obedience they owed to the civil laws of Palestine, were to abstain from blood; or obliged none but the Gentiles of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, to whom it was directed; was calculated for a certain season only, either to prevent giving offence to the Jews, who were then captious, or to reconcile Gentile and Jewish converts, who were then at some variance; but was to last no longer than till the Jews and Gentiles were formed into one communion. So that now the prohibition given by God to Noah, the laws given by Moses to the Israelites, and the decree sent by the apostles to the Christians at Antioch, are all repealed and gone, and a full license given to us to eat blood with the same indifference as any other food; if so be we thereby¹⁰ 'give no offence to our weaker brethren, for whom Christ died.'

Those who maintain the contrary opinion, namely, that the eating of blood, in any guise whatever, is wicked and unlawful, found the chief of their arguments upon the limitation of the grant given to Noah, the reasons that are commonly devised for the prohibition, and the literal sense of the apostolic decree.

¹¹ When princes give grants of lands to any of their

subjects, say they, they usually reserve some royalties (such as the mines, or minerals) to themselves, as memorials of their own sovereignty, and the other's dependence. If the grant, indeed, be given without any reserve, the mines and minerals may be supposed to be included in it; but when it is thus expressly limited, 'You shall have such and such lordships and manors, but you shall not have the mines and minerals with the lands, for several good reasons specified in the patent,' it must needs be an odd turn of thought to imagine that the grantee has any title to them; and yet this is a parallel case: for, when God has thus declared his will to the children of men, 'You shall have the flesh of every creature for food, but you shall not eat the blood with it,' it is every whit as strange an inference, to deduce from hence a general right to eat blood.

The commandment given to Adam, is,¹² 'Of every tree in the garden thou shalt freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat.' This is the first law; and the second is like unto it,¹³ 'Every moving thing, that moveth, shall be meat for you; even as the green herb, have I given you all things; but flesh, with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat.' This, upon his donation both to Adam and Noah, God manifestly reserves to himself, as an acknowledgment of his right to be duly paid; and when it was relaxed or repealed, say they, we cannot tell.

Nay, so far from being repealed, that it is not only in his words to Noah that God has declared this inhibition, but in the law, delivered by his servant Moses, he has explained his mind more fully concerning it.¹⁴ 'Whatever man there is, of the house of Israel, or of the strangers, that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.' This is a severe commination, say they; and therefore observe, how oft, in another place, he reiterates the injunction, as it were with one breath.¹⁵ 'Only be sure that thou eat not the blood, for the blood is the life, and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth, as water; thou shalt not eat it, that it may go well with thee and thy children after thee.'

Now there are several reasons, continue they, why God should be so importunate in this prohibition: for, having appointed the blood of his creatures to be offered for the sins of men, he therefore requires, that it should be religiously set apart for that purpose; and, having prohibited the sin of murder under a severe penalty, he therefore guards against it, by previously forbidding the eating of blood, lest that should be an inlet to savageness and cruelty.

The Scythians (as¹⁶ Herodotus assures us) from drinking the blood of their cattle, proceeded to drink the blood of their enemies; and were remarkable for nothing so much as their horrid and brutal actions. The animals that feed on blood are perceived to be much more furious than others that do not; and thereupon they observe that blood is a very hot, inflaming food, that such foods create choler, and that choler easily kindleth into cruelty. Nay, they observe farther, that eating of blood gave occasion to one kind of early idolatry among the Zabii

¹ Rom. xiv. 17. ² 1 Cor. viii. 8. ³ Matth. xv. 11.

⁴ Tit. i. 15. ⁵ Rom. xiv. 14. ⁶ 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

⁷ 1 Cor. x. 25, 28. ⁸ 1 Tim. iv. 1, 3. ⁹ Miscellanea Sacra, vol. 2.

¹⁰ 1 Cor. viii. 11, &c. ¹¹ See Revelation Examined, vol. 2.

¹² Gen. ii. 16, 17. ¹³ Gen. ix. 3, 4. ¹⁴ Lev. xvii. 10.

¹⁵ Deut. xii. 23, &c. ¹⁶ Book 4.

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in the east, namely, the worship of demons, whose food, as they imagined, was blood; and therefore they who adored them, had communion with them by eating the same food. Good reason, therefore, say they, had God in the gospel, as well as the law, to prevent a practice, which he could not but foresee would be attended with such pernicious effects.

For the apostolic decree, as they argue farther, did not relate to one sect of people only, the proselytes of the gate, who were lately converted to Christianity; nor was it directed to some particular places only, and with a design to answer some particular ends, the prevention of offence, or the reconciliation of contending parties; to subsist for a determinate time, and then to lose all its obligation: but it concerned all Christians, in all nations, and in all future ages of the church, was enacted for a general use and intent, and has never since been repealed. And to support these assertions, they proceed in this method:—

Before the passing of this decree, say they, St Paul preached Christianity to the whole body of the Gentiles at Antioch. For he had not long preached in the synagogues, before the Gentiles¹ besought him, that he would preach to them the same words, that is, the doctrine of Jesus Christ, on the next Sabbath-day; and accordingly we are told, that, on 'the Sabbath-day, came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God;' which certainly implies a concourse of people, more than the proselytes of the gate, nay more than the whole body of the Jews, who were but a handful in comparison of the rest of the inhabitants of that great city; and that this large company was chiefly made up of Gentiles, the sequel of the history informs us. For when the² Jews saw the multitude they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed; and the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.³

Now this transaction at Antioch, say they, happened seven years before the decree against blood and things strangled was passed at Jerusalem; and therefore as the Gentiles, not in Antioch only, but in all the region round about, were no strangers to the doctrine of Jesus Christ, there is reason to suppose that this decree, when passed, was not confined to one particular set of men, but directed to all Gentile converts at large. For hear what the president of the council says upon this occasion;³ 'Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, who from among the Gentiles are turned to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood: for Moses of old time hath in every

city them that preach him, being read in the synagogue every Sabbath-day.'

My sentence (says the apostle) is, that ye write unto the Gentile converts upon these points; 'For Moses has those of old in every city that preach him,' that is, there is no necessity of writing to any Jewish convert, or any proselyte convert to Christianity, to abstain from these things, because all that are admitted into synagogues (as the proselytes were) know all these things sufficiently already. And accordingly, upon this sentence of St James, the decree was founded and directed (according to the nature of the thing) to those whom it was fitting and necessary to inform in these points, that is, to those who were unacquainted with the writings of Moses.

The letter, indeed, which contained the decree, was directed to the brethren at Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia; but it would be shocking and unchristian to think, that the precepts of an apostolic epistle were obligatory to those only to whom the epistle was directed. The purport of it concerned all. It was to apprise the heathen converts to Christianity, that they were exempted from the observance of the law of Moses, except in four instances laid down in that canon; and as it was of general concern for all converts to know, the apostles, we may presume, left copies of it in all the churches: for so we are told expressly of St Paul and his companions, that,⁴ 'as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep, which were ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem; and so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.'

The apostles, say they, out of Christian prudence, might do many things to prevent offences, and to accommodate matters to the people's good liking: but certainly it looks below the dignity of a synod to meet, and debate, and determine a question with the greatest solemnity, merely to serve a present exigence; to leave upon record a decree which they knew would be but of temporary obligation; and yet could not but foresee would occasion endless scruples and disputes in all future ages of the church. If it was to be of so short a continuance, why was not the repeal notified, and why were not so many poor ignorant people saved, as died martyrs in the attestation of it? But, above all, how can we suppose it consistent with the honour and justice of the apostles, to impose things as necessary, which were but of transient and momentary duration?

Observe the words of the decree, cry they, 'It seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, namely, that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.' If these abstinences were only intended to be enjoined for a season, could they properly be enjoined under the denomination of necessary things? Is that the appellation for duties of a transient and temporary observation? Did neither the apostles nor the Holy Ghost know the distinction between necessary and expedient? Or, suppose it not convenient to make the distinction at that time, how come things of a temporary, and those of an

¹ Acts xiii. 42, &c. ² Acts xiii. 45, &c. ³ Acts xv. 19—22.

⁴ Acts xvi. 4, 5.

A. M. 1657. A. C. 2347; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 2257. A. C. 3154. GEN. CH. viii. 20. TO THE END OF CH. ix.

eternal obligation, to be placed upon the same foot of necessity in the same decree? Or, were fornication and idol-pollutions to be abstained from only for a season, in compliment to the infirmity of the Jews; or in order to make up a breach between some newly initiated converts? These are absurdities, say they, which cannot be avoided, when men will assert the temporary obligation of this decree.

Some general declarations in Scripture, especially in St Paul's epistles, seem indeed like a repeal of it; but then, if we consider the scope and occasion of these declarations, we shall soon perceive that they were intended to be taken in a limited sense; otherwise they are not consistent with the decree itself. Our blessed Saviour, for instance, tells the people, that not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man, but that which cometh out of it.⁷ But now, if this declaration of his destroys the validity of the apostolic decree, it will follow, 1st, That this decree was repealed just twenty years before it was made, which is a supposition somewhat extraordinary; and, 2dly, That the whole body of the apostles did, after full debate, make a most solemn decree, and that under the influence of the Spirit of God, in direct contradiction to the express declaration of their Lord and Master, which is a little too contiguous to blasphemy; and therefore let us consider the occasion of our Saviour's words.

The Pharisees, it seems, were offended at his disciples for sitting down to meat before they had washed their hands, as being a violation of one of their traditional precepts. Whereupon our Saviour tells the company, 'Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man'—never meaning to give them a permission to eat any thing prohibited by the law, but only to instruct them in this,—That there was not all that religion, or profanation of religion, which the Pharisees pretended, in observing, or not observing the tradition of the elders, by eating with washed or unwashed hands; that the thing itself was of an indifferent nature; nor could a little soil taken in at the mouth, by eating with dirty hands, defile the man, because nothing of that kind could properly be called a pollution.

St Paul himself, was one of the council of Jerusalem when the prohibition of blood was ratified by the Spirit of God, and imposed on the Gentiles, who were converted to the Christian faith; and therefore we can hardly think that, in his epistles, which were written not many years after, he should go about to abolish the observation of those precepts, which, after mature deliberation, were enacted by a general assembly of the church; and therefore, when he tells us that the kingdom of God, that is, the Christian religion, 'consisteth not of meat and drink, and that meat commendeth us not unto God,' he must be understood in a comparative sense, namely, that it neither consists in, nor commendeth us so much, as holiness and purity of life. When he declares, 'that every creature of God is good, that nothing is unclean of itself, and that to the pure all things are pure,' &c., he must necessarily be understood with this restraining clause—In case there be no particular statute to the contrary; for where there is one, all the sanctity in the world will not give a man a toleration to break it: and when he complains of some men's commanding us to

abstain from certain meats, as an infringement upon our Christian liberty, and a branch of the doctrine of devils; the meats which they forbade must be supposed to be lawful in their kind, and under no divine prohibition; otherwise we bring the apostles, who inhibited the use of blood, under the like imputation.

It cannot be denied, indeed, that¹ St Paul allows Christians to eat things offered to idols, which may seem to invalidate this apostolic decree. But, the answer to this, is—² That the plain intention of the council at Jerusalem, in commanding to abstain from meats offered to idols, was to keep Christians from idolatry, or, as St James expresses it, 'from pollutions of idols:' and the true way to effect this, they knew, was by prohibiting all communion with idols and idolaters in their feasts, which were instituted in honour of their idols, and were always kept in their temples. But how is this command defeated by St Paul's permitting the Corinthians to eat any part of a creature sold in the shambles, or set before them in private houses, (though that creature might chance to have been slain in honour to an idol,) since the Christian, who ate it in this manner, did not eat it in honour to the idol, but merely as common food?

To illustrate this by a parallel instance. Suppose that the apostolic decree had commanded Christians to abstain from things stolen. Would not any one conceive that the design of this command was to prohibit theft, and all communion with thieves in their villany? Yes, surely. Suppose then that any one of the council should, after this, tell the people whom he preached to, that they might buy any meat publicly sold in the shambles, or set before them in private houses, asking no questions for conscience sake, though possibly the butcher or the host might have stolen the meat; would any one think that this permission was intended to invalidate the decree of abstaining from things stolen? And if such a construction would be absurd in the one case, why should it not be deemed so in another? Especially when St Paul himself so expressly, so solemnly, deters Christians from all participation in idolatrous feasts.³ 'The things which the Gentiles sacrifice,' says he, 'they sacrifice to devils, not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and of devils, ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of devils.'

In a word, say they, whatever the sense of certain passages in St Paul's writings may seem to be, they cannot be supposed to contradict the decree at Jerusalem: a decree to which himself consented, nay, which he himself principally occasioned, and which he himself actually carried about, and deposited with the several churches. For to imagine that, with his own hands, he deposited the decree in one church, under the sanction of a canon ratified by the Spirit of God, and then immediately went to another, and preached against that very canon, and decried it as inconsistent with Christian liberty, is to charge the apostle with such an inconsistency of behaviour, folly, and prevarication, as but badly comports with the character of an ambassador of Jesus

¹ 1 Cor. x. 27.

² Revelation Examined, vol. 2, p. 66.

³ 1 Cor. x. 20, 21.

A. M. 1757. A. C. 2247; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 2857. A. C. 2554. GEN. CH. xi. TO VER. 10.

Christ: and, therefore, unless we are minded to impair the authority, and sap the foundation of revealed religion, we must allow the decree to be still in force; and the command, which prohibits the eating of blood, still chargeable upon every man's conscience. A command given by God himself to Noah, repeated to Moses, and ratified by the apostles of Jesus Christ; given immediately after the flood, when the world, as it were, began anew, and the only one given on that occasion; repeated with awful solemnity to the people whom God had separated from the rest of the world to be his own; repeated with dreadful denunciations of Divine vengeance upon those who should dare to transgress it; and ratified by the most solemn and sacred council that was ever assembled upon earth, acting under the immediate influence of the Spirit of God; transmitted from that sacred assembly to the several churches of the neighbouring nations by the hands of no meaner messengers than two bishops and two apostles; asserted by the best writers and most philosophic spirits of their age, the Christian apologists, and sealed with the blood of the best men, the Christian martyrs; confirmed by the unanimous consent of the fathers, and revered by the practice of the whole Christian church for above 300 years, and of the eastern church even to this very day.

These are some of the chief arguments on both sides of the question: and, to form a judgment hereupon, we may observe—That, though this prohibition of eating blood can hardly be deemed a commandment of moral obligation, yet is it a positive precept which cannot but be thought of more weight and importance, for being so oft, and so solemnly enjoined; that though the reasons alleged for its injunction are not always so convincing, yet the prevention of cruelty and murder, which is immediately mentioned after it, will, in all ages, be ever esteemed a good one; and though the liberty granted in the gospel seems to be great, yet it can hardly be understood without some restriction.

It seemed once good to the Holy Ghost, among other necessary things, to prescribe an abstinence from blood; and when it seemed otherwise to him, we are nowhere, that I know of, instructed. Could it be made appear, indeed, that this prescription was temporary and occasional, designed to bind one set of men only, or calculated for the infant-state of the church, the question would be then at an end: but since there are no proper marks in the apostles' decree to show the temporary duration of it; and the notion of proselytes of the gate, to whom alone it is said to be directed, (how commodious soever it may be to solve all difficulties,) upon examination is found to be groundless or uncertain, the obligation, I fear, lies upon every good Christian still. But as this is not every one's sentiment;¹ 'as one believeth that he may eat all things, and another thinketh it the safe side of his duty to abstain; so let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.'

¹ Rom. xiv. 2, 3, 13, 19.

SECT. II.

CHAP. I.—Of the Confusion of Languages.

THE HISTORY.

It is reasonable to believe, that, for some years after the flood, Noah and his family lived in the neighbourhood of the mountains of Armenia, where the ark rested; thence removed into the countries of Syria; then crossing the Tigris into Mesopotamia, and so shaping their course eastward, came at length to the pleasant plain of Babylon, on the banks of the river Euphrates. The fertility of the soil, the delightfulness of the place, and the commodiousness of its situation, made them resolve to settle there; and to build a city which should be the metropolis of the whole earth, and in it a vast high tower, which should be the wonder of the world; for the present use, a kind of pharos, or landmark, and, to future ages, a monument of their great tower and might.^a

By this project they promised themselves mighty matters; but that which chiefly ran in their heads, was their keeping together in one body, that, by their united strength and counsels, as the world increased, they might bring others under their subjection, and make themselves universal lords: but one great discouragement to this, their project, was—That in the place, which they had chosen for the scene of all their greatness, there was no stone to build with. Perceiving, however, that there was clay enough in the country whereof to make bricks,^b and plenty of a pitchy substance called bitumen,

^a It is the opinion of many eminent critics, that the whole of Noah's descendants were not engaged in the rebellious project of building the tower of Babel—but only the descendants of Ham, or a portion of them; and this they ground chiefly on the opinion, that it is not likely the whole family of Noah would leave the fertile regions of Armenia, but that portions of them would emigrate as their number increased. During the life of that patriarch, and the lives of his sons, Dr Hales is of opinion that the whole of his descendants occupied Armenia, extending themselves gradually into the adjacent fertile and pleasant regions of Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Media. The same learned chronologer is likewise of opinion that the regions destined for the respective possessions of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, were pointed out by Noah himself a little before his death, in that famous prophecy relative to the curse upon Canaan, that he should be a servant to Shem (spoken by Noah on awakening from his disgraceful sleep) which has been already considered; and he supports this opinion by apostolical authority. "We learn," says he, "from St Paul, (Acts xvii. 26,) that the division of the earth among the sons of Noah was not made at random," but that "God made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell upon the whole face of the earth, having ordained the predetermined seasons, and the boundaries of their respective settlements." This important event took place, according to the same author, B. C. 2614, about 191 years after the death of Noah, and about 29 years after the death of Shem, when Japheth and Ham were probably dead likewise.—Ed.

^b The word which our translators make slime, is in Hebrew *hemar*, in Greek *ῥοφαλτος*, in Latin bitumen; and that this plain did very much abound with it, which was of two kinds, liquid and solid; that liquid bitumen here swam upon the waters; that there was a cave and fountain which was continually casting it out; and that this famous tower, at this time, and the no less famous walls of Babylon were afterwards built with this kind of cement, is confirmed by the testimony of several profane authors. For thus Strabo tells us, "In Babylonia much bitumen abounds; there are two kinds of it," says Eratosthenes,

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which would serve instead of mortar, with one consent they went to work, and, in a short time, every hand was employed in making bricks, building the city, and laying the foundation of a prodigious pile, which they purposed to have carried up to an immense height, and had already made a considerable progress in the work, when God, dissatisfied with their proceedings, thought proper to interpose, and, at the expense of a miracle, quashed all their project at once, inasmuch, that this first attempt of their vanity and ambition became the monument of their folly and weakness.

The blessing which God had given Noah and his sons, to increase and multiply, and replenish the earth, had now, for above an hundred years, (according to Hales, 540 years,) exerted itself to good purpose; but, though the number of their descendants was very large, yet the language which they all spake was but one, the same which had descended to them ^a from their great progenitor, Adam, and very probably was pronounced in the same common manner. To frustrate their undertaking, therefore, God determined with himself ^b to confound their

^a a liquid and a solid—the liquid kind is called Naphtha, and arises in the plain of Susa, but the solid, which also has the property of growing hard, is found in Babylonia, in a fountain nigh to the Naphtha,” b. 16. Thus Justin, speaking of Semiramis, says, “She built Babylon, and covered over the wall of the city with bricks, instead of sand, bitumen being used—the latter substance in several parts of that country arises out of the earth,” b. 1. And thus Vitruvius, who is elder than either, says, “In Babylon there is a place of vast magnitude, having liquid bitumen swimming on its surface, with that bitumen and bricks Semiramis surrounded the wall of Babylon which she built,” b. 8. To these we may add some modern testimonies, which tell us that these springs of bitumen are called oyum Hit, the fountains of Hit; and that they are much celebrated by the Persians and Arabs. All modern travellers, except Rauwolf, who went to Persia and the Indies by the way of Euphrates, before the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, mention these fountains as a very strange and wonderful thing.—See *Biblioth. Bib.* vol. i. p. 281.; *Heidegger's Hist. Patr.* Essay 21, and *Univers. Hist.* b. i. c. 2.

^a That the children of Noah did speak the same language with Adam is very manifest; because Methuselah, the grandfather of Noah, lived a considerable time with him, and unquestionless spake the same language: and that this language was no other than the Hebrew is very probable from this argument—that Shem, the son of Noah, was for some time contemporary with Abraham, who descended from him, and whose family continued the same language that they both spake until the time of Moses, who recorded the history of his own nation in his native language; so that, what we have now in the Pentateuch, according to the opinion of all Hebrew, and most Christian writers, is the very same with what God taught Adam, and Adam his posterity.—*Patrick's Commentary.* It is, however, very doubtful whether Shem was contemporary with Abraham—according to the chronology of Hales, he was not.—Ed.

^b Some commentators, from the word *confound*, are ready to infer, that God did not make some of these builders speak new different languages, only that they had such a confused remembrance of the original language they spake before, as made them speak it in quite a different manner: so that, by the various inflections, terminations, and pronunciations of divers dialects, they could no more understand one another, than those who understand Latin can comprehend those who speak French, Italian, or Spanish, though these languages do certainly arise from it. But this we conceive to be a great mistake—not only because it makes all languages extant to be no more than so many different dialects of the same original, and, consequently reducible to it; but because, upon examination, it will appear that there are certain languages in the world, so entirely different from each other, that they agree in no one essential property whatever, and must, therefore, at this time, have been of immediate infusion.

language; by which means it came to pass, that though their tongues still retained the faculty of speech, yet, having lost the pronunciation of their native language, on a sudden they were so changed and modified to the expression of another, (which was of a sound quite different,) that the next stander-by could not comprehend what his neighbour meant, and this, in a short time, ran them into the utmost disorder and confusion: for these different dialects produced different ideas in the minds of the builders, which, for want of understanding one another, they employed to improper objects, and so were obliged to desist from their enterprise; and, not only that, but being by this means deprived of the pleasure and comfort of mutual society, except with such as spake the same language, all those who were of one dialect joined themselves together, and leaving the devoted place, (as they then thought it,) departed in tribes, ^c as their choice or their chance led them, to seek out fresh habitations. Thus God not only defeated their design, but likewise accomplished his own, of having the world more generally, and more speedily peopled, than it otherwise would have been. And, to perpetuate the memory of such a miraculous event, the place, which was first called Babel, and, with small variation, afterwards Babylon, from this confusion of languages, received its denomination.

This confusion of tongues, if not dispersion of the people, is supposed by most chronologers to have fallen 101 years after the flood; for Peleg, the son of Eber, who was great grandson to Shem, was certainly born in that year, and is said to have had the name Peleg given him, because that in his time the earth was divided.—To this short period, between the deluge and the confusion of tongues, however, no countenance is given in Sacred Scripture. It is not said that the earth was divided at Peleg's birth, but in his time, or days. Now if, as our author reasonably supposes in the succeeding chapter, that the confusion of tongues, and the consequent dispersion of the people, did not take place till Peleg was 100 years old, there was abundance of time, even according to the Hebrew chronology, for such a multiplication of mankind, as an attempt like that of the building of Babel seems to imply. Dr Hales, however, seems to have sufficiently proved that Peleg was not born till 401 years after the deluge, and that the division did not take place till he was 140 years old. Consequently there was a period of 541 years, from the deluge till the confusion of tongues and the dispersion of mankind.—Ed.

CHAP. II.—Objections answered and Difficulties explained.

THOSE, who have undertaken to settle the geography of the Holy Scriptures, tell us that the land of Shinar was

^c The dispersion of Noah's sons was so ordered, that each family and each nation dwelt by itself; which could not well be done (as Mr Mede observes) but by directing an orderly division, either by casting of lots, or choosing according to their birth-right, after that portions of the earth were set out, according to the number of their nations and families; otherwise, some would not have been content to go so far north as Magog did, whilst others were suffered to enjoy more pleasant countries.

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all that valley, which the river Tygris runs along, from the mountains of Armenia northwards to the Persian Gulf, or at least to the southern division of the common channel of the Tygris and Euphrates. ¹ So that the country of Eden was part of the land of Shinar: and as Eden was probably situate on both sides of the aforementioned channel, so it is not unlikely, that the valley of Shinar did extend itself on both sides (but on the western side, without all doubt) of the river Tygris.

Now the mountains of Armenia, according to the account of most geographers, lie north, and not east from Shinar and Assyria; but then it may be supposed, ² either that Moses, in this place, followed the geographical style of the Assyrians, who called all that lay beyond the Tygris, the east country, though a great part of it, towards, Armenia, was really northward; or (as ³ some others will have it) that as mankind multiplied, they spread themselves in the country eastward of Ararat; and so making small removes from the time of their descent from the mount, to the time of their journeying into the land of Shinar, they might properly enough be said to have begun their progress from the east. But, without the help of these solutions, and taking Moses in a literal sense, he is far from being mistaken. ⁴ Most geographers indeed have drawn the mountain of Ararat a good way out of its place, and historians and commentators, taking the thing for fact, have been much perplexed to reconcile this situation with its description in Scripture: whereas, by the accounts of all travellers, for some years past, the mountain which now goes under the name of Ararat, lies about two degrees more east, than the city of Shinar or Senjar, from whence the plain, in all probability takes its name; and therefore, if the sons of Noah entered it on the north side, they must of necessity have journeyed from the east, or, which is the same thing, have travelled westward from the place, where they set out, in order to arrive at the plain of Babylon. ^a

Historians, indeed, as well as commentators, have generally given in to the common opinion, that Shem and his family were not concerned in this expedition, but for what reason we cannot conceive, since there is no fact in all the Mosaic account more firmly established than this—That the whole race of mankind then in being were actually engaged in it.

¹ Wells' Geography, vol. 1. p. 210.

² Bochart's Phaleg. b. 1. c. 7. ³ Kercher's Turris Babel, p. 12.

⁴ Universal History, b. 1. c. 2.

^a The Chaldean historian Berosus, informs us, that "they proceeded circuitously to Babylonia." And Mr Penn (Remarks on the Eastern origination of mankind, Oriental Collect. vol. ii. Nos. 1 and 2,) guided only by a geographical view of the country, happily conjectures, that they followed the course of the great river Euphrates; which rising in the mountains of Armenia, flows at first in a westerly direction: then it turns to the south, and at length bending eastward, it reaches Babylon from the north-west. Its progress therefore is *circuitous*; and as the approach to Shinar would be most easily and naturally effected by following its winding course; so, in that case, the route of the emigrants would minutely correspond with Berosus and with Scripture, which represent them as travelling from the original settlement, eastward of the springs of the Euphrates, whose circuitous course, according to the ingenious remarks of Faber, is described in the Sanscrit word *Uratta*, pronounced *Urat*, and signifying a circle, so nearly analogous to the Hebrew name of the river *Phrat*.—Hales's Analysis, vol. 1. p. 358, second edition.—Ed.

As soon as Moses has brought the three sons of Noah out of the ark, he takes care to inform us that ⁵ 'of them was the whole earth overspread:' after he has given us the names of their descendants, at the time of their dispersion, he subjoins, and ⁶ 'by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood:' and then proceeding to give us an account of this memorable transaction, he tells us, that ⁷ 'the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech,' and that as they, namely, the whole earth, ⁸ journeyed from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and dwelt there, &c., ⁹ so that, from the beginning to the end of this transaction, the connexion between the antecedent and relative is so well preserved, that there is no room to suppose, that any less than all mankind, were gathered together on the plain of Shinar, and assisted in the building of Babel: nor seems it improbable that Moses has made these unusual repetitions, to inculcate the certainty of that fact, and to take away all ground for supposing that any other branch of Noah's posterity was in any other part of the earth, at that time. ^b

The time indeed when this transaction happened, is very differently computed by chronologers, according as they follow the LXX interpreters, who make it 531, or, as rectified by Dr Hales, 541; the Samaritan copy, which makes it 396; or the Hebrew, which allows it to be no more than 101 years from the flood, to the confusion of tongues, and less, we may suppose, to the first beginning to build the tower. If we take either of the former computations, the thing answers itself: upon a moderate multiplication, there will be workmen more than enough, even without the posterity of Shem: but if we submit to the Hebrew account of time, we shall find ourselves straitened, if we part with one third part of our complement, in so laborious a work. There is no necessity, however, to suppose, ¹⁰ with some, that every one of these progenitors, as soon as married, (which was very early) had every year twins by his wife, which, according to arithmetic progression, would amount to no less than 1,554,420 males and females, in the shortest period given. Half the number would be sufficient to be employed on this occasion, and ¹¹ half the number will be no unreasonable supposition, considering the strength of constitution men had then, and the additional blessing which God bestowed upon them, and whereby he interested his peculiar providence, that for the increase of the human race, for the restoration of a desolated world, there should be some peculiar fruitfulness granted to man; that even to boys, breaking the appointed laws of nature, power

⁵ Gen. ix. 19. ⁶ Gen. x. 32. ⁷ Gen. xi. 1. ⁸ Ibid. ver. 2.

⁹ Universal History, b. 1. c. 2.

¹⁰ Temporarius in Demonst. Chronol. b. 2.

¹¹ Usher's Chron. Sacra. p. 27.

^b If we adhere to the Hebrew chronology, then this reasoning of our author cannot be admitted as conclusive; for, according to that chronology, not only Shem, Ham, and Japheth, but even Noah himself, were alive at this time; and it is surely impossible to believe that they could join in such a rebellious project, while the recollection of the deluge must have been fresh in their minds. The chronology of the Septuagint, which Dr Hales thinks correct, removes this difficulty, by dating the confusion of tongues at 541 years after the flood, but at this time mankind would be so much increased, that it is doubtful whether they could be all assembled on the plain of Shinar.—See previous note, page 109.—Ed.

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should be given of replenishing the earth, ¹ as Petavius elegantly expresses it.

But, after all, there seems to be no occasion for supposing an extraordinary increase of people, or for confining the first undertaking of this great building to the compass of one hundred years after the flood. In the tenth chapter of Genesis it is said indeed, that unto Eber were born two sons, and that the name of one was Peleg, which being derived from an Hebrew word, that signifies to divide, has this reason annexed to it, for in his days was the earth divided. Now by the subsequent account of Peleg's ancestors we find that he was born in the 101st year after the flood; from whence it is concluded that the earth began to be divided at his birth. But this is a conclusion, that by no means results from the text, which only says, that 'in his days was the earth divided;' words which can, with no manner of propriety, imply that this division began at his birth.

His name, indeed, was called Peleg; but it does not therefore follow that this name was given him at his birth; it might have been given at any time after, from his being a principal agent among his own family, in the division made in his days; as several names have throughout all ages been given upon the like accidents, not only to private persons but to whole families. Or suppose the name to be given at his birth, yet no reason can be assigned why it might not be given prophetically, as well as that of Noah, from an event then foreseen, though it might not come to pass for some considerable time after the name was given.

² Since Peleg, then, according to the sacred account, lived 239 years, and his younger brother Jocktan, and his sons, were a considerable colony in the distribution of the world, it is much more rational to suppose, that this distribution did not begin till a good part of Peleg's life was expended. Suppose it however to be no more than an hundred years after his birth, yet we may still retain the Hebrew computation, and have time and hands enough for carrying on the great work of Babel before this distribution, since mankind might very well be multiplied to some millions in the compass of two hundred years.

Putting all these considerations together, then, we can hardly imagine that there wanted a sufficient number of men to go upon an enterprise, which, though not strictly chargeable with sin, because there was no previous command forbidding it, yet, in the sense of God himself, bold and presumptuous enough. ³ 'Behold the people is one, and they have all one language, and now this they begin to do;' this is their first attempt, and after this nothing ^a will be restrained from them; they will think

themselves competent for any thing, that they shall have a fancy to do. For though God could have no reason to apprehend ^b any molestation from their attempts (as the poets make heaven all in an uproar, upon the invasion of the giants,) yet, since they were contrary to his gracious design of having the earth replenished, it was an act highly consistent with his infinite wisdom and goodness to see them disappointed.

The divine purpose was that men should not live within the limits of one country only, and so be exposed to perpetual contentions, while every one would pretend to make himself master of the nearest and most fertile lands; but that, possessing themselves of the whole, and cultivating almost every place, they might enjoy a proportionable increase of the fruits of the earth. ⁴ Thorns and briars were springing up every where; woods and thickets spreading themselves around; wild beasts increasing; and all this while the sons of Noah gathering in a cluster, and designing so to continue; so that it was highly seasonable for God to confound their mistimed projects, and disperse them.

Their purpose was to make themselves a name by enslaving others. ^c But God foresaw, ^d that absolute power and universal empire were not to be trusted in any mortal hand; that the first kings would be far from being the best men; but as they acquired a superiority by fraud and violence, so they would not be backward to maintain it by oppression and cruelty: and therefore, to remedy such public grievances, he determined with himself that there should be a diversity of governments in the world; that if the inhabitants of any place chanced to live under a tyrannical power, those that were no

⁴ Waterland's Scripture Vindicated, part 1.

⁵ Le Clerc's Dissertation.

^b What their attempts were, the historian has represented in their own words: 'and they said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven,' Gen. xi. 4. But far be it from any one to imagine, that these builders could be so stupidly ignorant, as ever to think by this means to climb up to heaven, or that they would not have chosen a mountain rather than a plain or a valley for this, if they could once have entertained so gross an imagination. It is a common hyperbole this in the Sacred Writings, to signify any great and lofty building, as may be seen in Deut. i. 18., Dan. iv. 8., and in several other places; nor is the like manner of expression unusual among profane authors likewise: for Homer, speaking of the island of Calyso, tells us, that in it was a place

where a various sylvan scene
Appeared around, and groves of living green,
Poplars and alders ever quivering played,
And nodding cypress formed a fragrant shade,
Whose lofty branches waving swept the sky, &c.

Odys. v. 238.

By a literal interpretation of the Hebrew idioms, however, it is a common thing for the greatest absurdities to be received by the unwary for realities; and not at all a wonder, that the misunderstanding the text should give rise to what we are told of the giants in the fable attempting to scale heaven, and of the expedition of Cosigna and his companions, who had contrived ladders for that end; hoping that so they might make their nearer addresses to the queen of heaven. And thus even the silliest of the Pagan tales may be traced up to their original; for there is generally some foundation for them in truth, either misunderstood or misapplied. —See *Le Clerc's Commentary*; *Voss. Hist. Græc. b. 1. c. 3.* and *Bibliotheca Biblica ad locum.*

^c By this remark our author evidently implies that the whole of mankind were not engaged in this enterprise. For if the whole race were so, there could have been no others to enslave; it is therefore surprising that a few paragraphs before, he should have asserted this to be the case. —Ed.

¹ Doct. Temp. b. 9. c. 14.

² Revelation Examined, vol. 2. Dissert. 3. Gen. xi. 6.

^a The common versions say of the builders of the tower of Babel, 'And now nothing will or shall be restrained from them which they have imagined to do.' But this is false in fact; because God soon put a stop to their design by confounding them, and 'scattering them abroad from thence, over the face of the earth.' We may observe, therefore, that the same particle which is indeed sometimes taken negatively, is evidently here to be taken interrogatively, and is equal to the most express affirmation: and therefore the text should thus be translated, 'Shall they not be restrained in all they imagine to do?' Yes, they shall; which accordingly was immediately executed. —*Essay for a New Translation.*

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longer able to endure the yoke, might flee into other countries and dominions (which they could not do if the whole was one entire monarchy) and there find a shelter from oppression. And as he knew how conducive the bad example of princes would be towards a general corruption of manners, he therefore took care to provide against this malady, by appointing several distinct kingdoms and forms of governments, at one and the same time; that if the infection of vice got ascendancy, and prevailed in one place, virtue and godliness, and whatever is honourable and praiseworthy, might find a safe retreat, and flourish in another. Thus all the mischiefs which might possibly arise from an universal monarchy, and all the advantages that do daily accrue from separate and distinct governments, were in the divine foresight and consideration, when he put a surprising stop to the building of these men, and their ambitious schemes of empire together.

For in what manner soever it was that he effected this; ^a whether it was by disturbing their memories, or perverting their imaginations, by diversifying their hearing, or new-organizing their tongues, by an immediate infusion of new languages, or a division of the old into so many different dialects; and again, whether these tongues, or dialects of tongues, ^b were few or more; whether there were only so many originals at first, (as

^a Since Moses has nowhere acquainted us, says the learned Heidegger (in Hist. Patriar. b. 1. Essay 211) in what manner the confusion of languages was effected, every one is left to follow what opinion he likes best, so long as that opinion contains nothing incongruous to the received rule of faith: nay, it may not be inconvenient to produce several opinions upon this subject, to the intent that every one may embrace that which seems to him most conformable to truth. And therefore he instances in the opinions of several learned men, but in those more particularly of Julius Scaliger, who ascribes this event to a confusion of notions which God miraculously sent among the builders; and that of Isaac Casaubon, who will needs have all the different languages now extant to be no more than derivatives from the Hebrew. Scaliger's words, as Heidegger quotes them, are these:—"For they (the Hebrews) say that in order to put a stop to their impious undertaking, God the omnipotent and all-wise caused, that to him who asked for a stone, one would bring mortar, another sand, another pitch, another bitumen, and another water, I even think, that perhaps there would not be wanting some who would think that a reproach was meant to them, and who on that account would quarrel and fight when some signal act of cunning befell them. For, if to him that sought for a stone, one brought one thing, others other things, and all different things, the mode of one sound, increased to a diversity of species, would seem to have entered into different understandings: therefore one old language would still remain, though indeed of various meanings." The words of Casaubon are as follows: "If at Babel languages became totally different, the Chaldeans and Assyrians should of necessity retain these strangely-begotten tongues. But we see that the very contrary has happened; for other languages have preserved and still preserve traces of a Hebrew origin, just the more evident and explicit in proportion as they are farther removed from the ancient and first abode of man. For every tribe that in situation is nearest to the Hebrew nation, uses a language most akin to its language, and the greater the distance is from it, the greater is the difference. This is evident from a comparison of the Syriac, Chaldaic, Arabic, Carthaginian languages, with that of the Hebrews, and still more evident on a diligent inspection of the Greek language. The Greeks at first dwelt in Asia. Thence the Ionians (or as Æschylus, in a Hebrew manner calls them Javones,) passed into Europe. In the most ancient writers of the Greeks there are many Hebrew words which afterwards became obsolete, or somewhat changed. We observe also, that the Greeks of Asia Hebrewized more than those of Europe."

^b It is not to be thought that there were as many several dialects

many perhaps as there were either tribes or heads of families,) and all the rest were no more than derivatives from them, the operations of an Almighty power are equally visible, and the footsteps of divine wisdom apparent, in the very method of his disappointing these ambitious builders.

¹ He could, no doubt, with the same facility, have sent down fire from heaven to consume them; but then that would have been but a momentary judgment, whereof we should have known nothing but what we read in the dead letter of a book; whereas, by this means, the remembrance of God's interposition, is preserved to all future ages, and in every new language that we hear we recognise the miracle.

² It was equally the finger of God, we allow, whether the minds or the tongues of the workmen were so founded; but then, in that case, the miracle does not so plainly and so flagrantly appear, nor would it have had so good an effect upon the builders themselves; because men may quarrel, and break off society without a miracle, whereas they cannot speak with new tongues by their own natural strength and ingenuity.

Nor was the formation of a new language only more miraculous, but to the imaginations of the persons, upon whom it is wrought, incredibly more surprising than any disagreement in opinion, or any quarrel that might thereupon ensue. And therefore I have always thought, that this account of the confusion of tongues which God wrought at Babel, would scarce have been told so particularly, and represented as God's own act and deed, had it only arisen from a quarrel among the builders, which obliged them to leave off their work, and scatter themselves over the face of the earth. For when God is here described as coming down in person to view their work, something almost as solemn as the creation, full as solemn as the denunciation of the flood, when Noah was commanded to build the ark, is certainly intended by that expression: and therefore, when Moses acquaints us, that 'there was but one language at that time,' the circumstance would be impertinent, if he did not intimate withal, that very soon after there were to be more.

¹ Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 1. Essay 21.

² Wotton on the Confusion of Languages at Babel.

as there were men at Babel, so that none of them understood one another. This would not only have dispersed mankind, but utterly destroyed them; because it is impossible to live without society, or to have any society without understanding one another. It is likely therefore that every family had its peculiar dialect, or rather that some common dialect, or form of speaking, was given to those families whom God designed to make one colony in the following dispersion. Into how many languages the people were divided it is impossible to determine. The Hebrews fancy seventy, because the descendants of the sons of Noah, as they are enumerated in Scripture, are just so many: the Greek fathers make them seventy-two, because the LXX. version adds two more, (Elisa among the sons of Japheth, and Canaan among the sons of Shem,) and the Latin fathers follow them. But this is all conjecture, and what is built upon a very weak foundation. For, in many places, so many people concurred in the use of the same speech, that of the seventy scarce thirty remained distinct, as Bochart has observed: and among these, others have supposed that the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic, in the east; the Greek and Latin in the west; and the Finnish, Slavonian, Hungarian, Cantabrick, and the ancient Gaulish in the north, are generally reputed originals; besides some more that might be discovered in Persia, China, the East Indies, the midland parts of Africa, and all America, if we had but a sufficient knowledge of the history of these people.—See *Patriar's Commentary and Wotton on the Confusion of Languages at Babel.*

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The prophet Isaiah, indeed, speaking of the conversion of some Egyptians to the Jewish faith, tells us, that 'in that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language (or lip, as it is in the margin) of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of Hosts.' Speaking the language of Canaan¹ is thought by some to mean no more than being of the same religion with the Jews, who inhabited the land of Canaan, but why may it not be interpreted literally, as it is in our translation? Might not these five cities particularly, to show the value and reverence that they had for the religion of the Jews, learn their language; especially since they would thereby be better enabled to understand the books of Moses and the prophets, which were written in that tongue? Do not the Mahometans, whatever they are, Turks, Tartars, Persians, Moguls, or Moors, all learn Arabic, because Mahomet wrote the Alcoran in that language? Why, then, should we be offended at the literal sense of the words, when the figurative is so low and flat in comparison of it? ² 'In that day Egypt shall be like a woman; it shall be afraid and fear, because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of Hosts;' ³ 'the Lord of Hosts shall be a terror unto Egypt,' and ⁴ 'in that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt,' that is, they shall become proselytes to the law of Moses; and, that they may not mistake in understanding the sense of the law, which they shall then embrace, they shall agree to learn the language in which it is written. This is an easy and genuine sense of the words: but instead of that, to fly to a forced and abstruse one, merely to evade the evidence of a miracle, savours of vanity at least, if not of irreligion.

In short, all interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, understood this confusion of Babel to be a confusion of languages, not of opinions. They saw the texts, if literally understood, required it; they observed a surprising variety of tongues essentially different from one another; and they knew that this was not in the least inconsistent with the power of God. They did not question, but that he, who made the tongue, could make it speak what and how he pleased; and they acquiesced (as all wise and honest interpreters should) in the literal explanation, perceiving that nothing unworthy of God, or trifling or impossible in itself, resulted from it.

But why should we have recourse to miracles, say they, when the business may as well be done without them; when it is but supposing, that all languages, now extant, sprung originally from one common root; and that they are no more than different forms or dialects of it, which the force of time, assisted with some incidental courses, without the intervention of any superior power, naturally produces.

To give this objection a satisfactory answer, we shall be obliged to look a little into the nature of languages in general, that thereby we may show, that there are some languages, now extant in the world, which are essentially different from each other; that languages, when once established, are not so subject to variation as is pretended; and that, in the ages subsequent to this extraordinary event, they could not, in any natural way, undergo

all the alterations we now perceive in them, supposing them all descended from one common stock.

Now, in order to this, we must observe, that every language consists of two things, matter and form: the matter of any language are the words, wherein men who speak the language express their ideas: and the several ways whereby its nouns are declined, and verbs conjugated, are its form.

The Latins and Greeks vary their nouns by terminations, as, *vir, viri, viro, virum, ἀνθρωπος, ἀνθρώπου, ἀνθρώπου, ἀνθρώπων*. We decline by the prepositions *of, to, from, the*, in both numbers; but the Hebrews have no different terminations in the same number, and only vary thus,—*ish*, man; *ishim*, men; *ishah*, woman; *ishoth*, women: the rest are varied by prepositions inseparably affixed to the words, as, *ha-ish*, the man; *le-ish*, to the man; *be-ish*, in the man, &c., which prepositions thus joined make one word with the noun to which they are affixed, and are herein different from all those languages which come from a Latin, or Teutonic original.

The western and northern people consider every transitive verb, either actively or passively, and then they have done; as *amo*, in Latin is, I love; *amor*, I am loved; and so in Greek, *ἀγαπάω, ἀγαπᾷμαι*: but in Hebrew, every word has, or is supposed to have, seven conjugations; in Chaldee and Syriac six; and in Arabic thirteen, all differing in their significations.

The western languages abound with verbs that are compounded with prepositions, which accompany them in all their moods and tenses, and therein vary their signification; but in the eastern there is no such thing. For though they have, in Arabic especially, many different significations, some literal and some figurative, yet still their verbs as well as nouns are uncompounded.

In the Greek, both ancient and barbarous, in the Latin, and the dialects arising from it, and in all the branches of what we call the old Teutonic, the possessive pronouns, *my, thy, his, yours, theirs*, &c., make a distinct word from the noun to which they are joined, as *Πατήρ ἡμῶν*, Pater noster, *fader vor*, our father, &c. But in all oriental tongues the pronoun is joined to the end of the noun, in such a manner as to make but one word. Thus, *ab*, in Hebrew, is father; *abi*, my father; *abinu*, our father. In Chaldee, from the same root, *abouna*, is our father; in Syriac, *abun*; in Arabic and Ethiopic the same.

Once more. All western languages mark the degree of comparison in their adjectives, by proper terminations, as, wise, wiser, wisest; *sapiens, sapientior, sapientissimus*; *σοφός, σοφώτερος, σοφώτατος*: but none of the eastern tongues, already mentioned, have any thing in them like this.

These are some of the marks and characters which distinguish the eastern from the western languages; and, what is farther observable, these characters have none of them disappeared, or shifted from one to another, for near three thousand years. They appear in every book of the Old Testament, from Moses down to Malachi; in the Chaldee paraphrasts, in the Syriac versions, in the Misna, in the Gemara, and in every other rabbinical book, down to the Jewish writers of the present age: but, on the other side, if we consider Homer's poems, which are the oldest monuments we have of the Greek

¹ Le Clerc's Commentary.

² Isa. xix. 16.

³ Isa. xix. 17.

⁴ Isa. xix. 19.

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language; if we take Theocritus for the Doric dialect; Euripides, or Thucydides, for the Attic; Herodotus, or Hippocrates, for the Ionic; and Sappho for the Æolic, and so descend to the Greek, which is spoken at this day, we shall see the general marks of western languages running through them all. These idioms show themselves, at first sight, to be nothing more than dialects manifestly springing from the same common root, which never did, and (as far as we may judge from the practice of above two thousand years) never will, conjugate verbs, decline nouns, or compare adjectives, like the Hebrew or Arabic. These languages did always compound verbs and nouns with prepositions, which essentially alter the sense. These languages had never any possessive pronouns affixed to their nouns, to determine the person, or persons, to whom of right they belong; nor do they affix any single letter to their words, which may be equivalent to conjunctions, and connect the sense of what goes before with what follows, which any person, but tolerably initiated in the eastern languages, must know to be their properties.

And, indeed, if we cast but our eye a little forward into the sacred history, it will not be long before we may perceive some instances of this difference between languages. For, when Jacob and Laban made a covenant together, they erected an heap of stones, on which they ate, and Laban called it *Jegar-Sahadutha*, but Jacob, *Gal-ed*, which words signify (those in Chaldee, which are Laban's, and the other in Hebrew, which are Jacob's) an heap of witnesses; and, in like manner, Pharaoh calls Joseph, *Tsophnath-Paaneahh*, which words are neither Hebrew nor Chaldee: so that here we see three distinct dialects formed in Jacob's time; and yet we may observe, that the world was then thin, commerce narrow, and conquests few, so that the people were constrained to converse with those of their own tribe, and consequently could keep their dialect far more entire than it is possible to do now, when commerce, conquests, and colonies, planted in regions already peopled with nations that speak distinct languages, may be supposed to bring in a deluge of new words, and make innumerable changes. But nations seldom trade much abroad, or make invasions upon their neighbours, or send forth plantations into remote countries, until they are pretty well stocked at home, which could hardly be the case of any one country for several ages after the dispersion.

It is a mistaken notion which some have imbibed, that every little thing, be it but the change of air, or difference of climate (which at most can but affect the pronunciation of some letters or syllables) can make a diversity in languages. Small and insensible alterations, which perhaps will appear in an age or two, will undoubtedly happen, but unless people converse much with strangers, their language will subsist, as to its constituent form, the same for many generations.

The Roman language, for instance, was brought to a considerable perfection before Plautus's time; and though now and then some obsolete words may appear in his writings, yet any man that understands Latin may read the books that were written in it, from Plautus down to Theodoric the Goth, which was near seven hundred years; and had not the barbarous nations broken into Italy, it might have been an intelligible language for

several ages more. And, in like manner, we may say, that had not the Turks, when they overrun Greece, brought darkness and ignorance along with them, the Greek tongue might have continued even to this day; since it is manifest, from Homer's poems, and Eustathius's commentaries upon them, that it subsisted for above two thousand years, without any considerable alteration; for the space of time between the poet and his commentator was no less.

And if the languages which we are acquainted with remained so long unchanged, to any great degree, in times of more commerce and action than what could be subsequent upon the dispersion; there is reason to believe, that (though it be difficult to define the number of them) there are many more original languages in the world than some men imagine: for, if we consider their great antiquity, their mutual agreement in the fundamentals (which we have described) can be no argument that any one of them is derived from the rest; since it is natural to suppose, that when God confounded the speech of the builders of Babel, he made the dialects of those people, who were to live near one another, so far to agree, that they might, with less difficulty, and in a shorter space of time, mutually understand each other, and so more easily maintain an intercourse together. For though their association, considering the ends that engaged them in it, was certainly culpable, yet perhaps it might not deserve so severe a punishment as an entire separation of every tribe among them from their nearest kindred, with whom they had hitherto spent all their time.

To sum up the force of this argument in a few words. If we consider the time since the building of the tower of Babel, not yet 4000 years,^a and the great variety of languages that are at present in the world; if we consider how entirely different some are to others, so that no art of etymology can reduce them to the least likeness or conformity; and yet, in those early days, when the world was less peopled, and navigation and commerce not so much minded, there could not be that quick progression of languages; and if we examine the alterations which such languages as we are acquainted with have made in two or three thousand years past, where colonies of different people have not been imported, we shall find the difference between language and language to be so very great, and the alteration of the same language in a considerable tract of time to be so very small, that we shall be at a loss to conceive whence so many and so various languages could have proceeded, unless we take in the account of Moses, which unriddles the whole difficulty, and justly ascribes them to the same Almighty power, which taught our first parents to speak one tongue in the beginning, and, in after ages, inspired the apostles of Jesus Christ with the gift of many.^b

^a According to Hales, 4363.

^b From the most ancient and most authentic of all historical records, the Sacred Scriptures, we know the fact, that all mankind were originally descended from a single pair, and that our great progenitor did undoubtedly possess and make use of articulate language. What the particular language was which was then employed, we have no means of ascertaining. We are, however, sufficiently warranted to conclude, that this primeval language must have consisted at first of very few and simple sounds, and that it was gradually extended as the new situation of men in society required new modes of expression. The primitive language, in all probability, continued radically the same, though

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CHAP. III.—Of the Tower of Babel.

THAT there really was such a building as the tower of Babel, erected some ages after the recovery of the earth

enlarged by accessions closely related to the parent stock during the whole antediluvian ages; and there is little reason to doubt, when we take into view the longevity of the patriarchs, affording opportunities to men of different generations to mingle together, that from Adam down to Noah the language first made use of suffered no essential change. When the tremendous event of the deluge reduced the whole population of the earth to a single family, the primitive language, as received and used by the patriarch Noah, would still be preserved in his family, and form the only language then used among men. In this state, we find that language continued till the confusion of tongues at Babel, before which period we are assured by the sacred historian, 'the whole earth was of one language and of one speech.' Whether this primitive language was the same with any of the languages of which we have still any remains, has been a subject of much dispute. That the primitive language continued at least till the dispersion of mankind, consequent upon the building of Babel, there seems little reason to doubt. When by an immediate interposition of divine power, the language of men was confounded, we are not informed to what extent the confusion of tongues prevailed. It is unnecessary to suppose that the former language was completely obliterated, and entire new modes of speech at once introduced. It is quite sufficient if such changes only were effected, as to render the speech of different companies, or different tribes, unintelligible to one another, that their mutual co-operation in the mad attempt in which they had all engaged might be no longer practicable. The radical stem of the first language might therefore remain in all, though new dialects were formed, bearing among themselves a similar relation with what we find in the languages of modern Europe, derived from the same parent stem, whether Gothic, Latin, or Slavonian. In the midst of these changes, it is reasonable to suppose that the primitive language itself, unaltered, would still be preserved in some one at least of the tribes or families of the human race. Now in none of these was the transmission so likely to have taken place, as among that branch of the descendants of Shem from which the patriarch Abraham proceeded. Upon these grounds, therefore, we may conclude that the language spoken by Abraham, and by him transmitted to his posterity, was in fact the primitive language, modified, indeed, and extended in the course of time, but still retaining its essential parts far more completely than any other of the languages of men. If these conclusions are well founded, they warrant the inference, that in the ancient Hebrew there are still to be found the traces of the original speech. Whether this ancient Hebrew more nearly resembled the Chaldean, the Syrian, or what is now termed the Hebrew, it is unnecessary here to inquire; these languages, it has never been denied, were originally and radically the same, though, from subsequent modifications, they appear to have assumed somewhat different aspects.

We may conceive the original language of the family of Noah spread in various directions; carried by one set of colonies through Armenia, Persia, and the adjacent territories, into all the regions of the east, as far perhaps as Tartary and China, and forming the groundwork of the Armenian, the ancient Persian, the Sanscrit, perhaps, too, of the originally spoken Chinese, as well as of all the languages related to each of them; carried by another set into the regions of Arabia, Egypt, Abyssinia, and the remote parts of Africa, and there giving origin to the old Egyptian, the Coptic, the Ethiopic, and their related tongues; and carried by a third set to Scythia, or the Russian territory, Asia Minor, Ionia, Greece, Italy, and gradually through the farther parts of Europe, and there constituting the radical groundwork of the old Pelasgic, the Gothic, the Celtic, and all their kindred or derivative dialects. Among those families whose migrations were least extensive, this primitive tongue, undergoing fewest changes, would retain most of its original form; and thus it is probable, that in the language of Jacob and his descendants, of the Phœnicians, the Chaldeans, and the communities connected with them, more of the primitive form and character remained, than among the remoter and more widely scattered tribes that spread through Africa and Europe.

from the deluge, is evident from the concurrent testimony of several heathen writers. For when, besides the particular description which ¹ Herodotus, the father of the Greek historians, gives us of it, we find Abydenus, as he is ² quoted by Eusebius, telling us, "That the first race of men, big with a fond conceit of the bulk and strength of their bodies, built in the place where Babylon now stands, a tower of so prodigious an height, that it seemed to touch the skies, but that the winds and the gods overthrew the mighty structure upon their heads." When we find Eupolemus, as he is ³ cited by Alexander Polyhistor, leaving it upon record, "That the city of Babylon was first built by giants who escaped from the flood; that these giants built the most famous tower in all history; and that this tower was dashed to pieces by the almighty power of God, and the giants dispersed and scattered over the face of the whole earth." And lastly, when ⁴ we find Josephus mentioning it as a received doctrine among the Sybils, "That at a certain time, when the whole world spake all one language, the people of those days gathered together and raised a mighty tower, which they carried up to so extravagant an height, that it looked as if they had proposed to scale heaven from the top of it; but that the gods let the winds loose upon it, which, with a violent blast, beat it down to the ground, and at the same time struck the builders with an utter forgetfulness of their native tongue, and substituted new and unknown languages in the room of it."—When we find these, and several other authors, I say, that might be produced, bearing testimony to Moses in most of the material circumstances attending the building of this tower, we cannot but conclude, that the representation which he gives us of the whole transaction is agreeable to truth.

The short is, all the remains now extant of the most ancient heathen historians (except Sanchoniatho) concur in confirming the Mosaic account of this matter, and the sum of their testimonies is, ⁵ That a huge tower was built by gigantic men at Babylon; that there was then but one language among mankind; that the attempt was offensive to the gods; and that therefore they demolished the tower, overwhelmed the workmen, divided their language, and dispersed them over the face of the whole earth.

There is one circumstance, indeed, wherein we find these ancient historians differing with Moses, and that is, in affirming that the tower was demolished by the anger

¹ Book i. c. 181.² Præparat. Evang. b. ix. c. 14.³ Alex. Polyhist. apud Euseb. Præp. Evan. b. ix. c. 18.⁴ Antiq. b. i. c. 5.

See Josephus's Antiq. b. i. c. 5. Eusebius's Præpar. Evang. b. ix. c. 14, &c. and Huetius's Quæst. Aletan. b. ii. p. 189.

If these theoretical views of the filiation of tongues cannot be fully and directly confirmed by the immediate comparison of the different languages as they now are found to exist, this is not in the least to be wondered at, considering the inevitable changes many of them must have undergone in their progress through different countries; but if we attentively mark the precise manner in which such changes might be expected to operate, and make the necessary allowances on that account, in comparing the apparent groundwork of the languages scattered over the globe, a coincidence will be found, far closer and more striking than could at first be supposed.—*Dr Dewar's Dissertation on Language*, in the 7th volume of the Edinburgh Philosophical Transactions, *Edin. Encyclopædia*, Article *Language*; *Townsend's Character of Moses*, vol. iii.

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of God, and by the violence of the winds. But as it seems more consistent with the divine wisdom (for the admonition of posterity) to have such a monument of men's folly and ambition for some time standing; so we may observe that, in confirmation of our sacred penman, who speaks of it as a thing existing in his time, Herodotus, the Greek historian, tells us expressly that he himself actually saw it, as it was repaired by Belus, or some of his successors; Pliny, the Latin historian, that it was not destroyed in his days; and some modern travellers, (whom by and by we shall have occasion to quote,) that there are some visible remains of it extant even now: and, therefore, the fancy of its being beat down with the winds is taken up, in pure conformity^a to some Persian tales recorded of Nimrod, whom these historians suppose to be the first projector of it. It cannot be denied, indeed, but that the generality of interpreters, meeting with the expression of¹ the children of men, whereby they understand bad men and infidels, as opposed to the children of God, which usually denote the good and the faithful, are apt to imagine, that none of the family of Shem, which retained (as they say) the true worship and religion, were engaged in the work, but some of the worsor sort of people only, who had degenerated from the piety of their ancestors. But by the children of men in that place, it is evident that we are to understand all mankind, because in the initial words of the chapter they are called² the whole earth. Nor can we well conceive how, in so short a time after that awakening judgment of the deluge, the major part of mankind, even while Noah and his sons were still alive, should be so far corrupted in their principles, as to deserve the odious character of unbelievers.

³ Josephus, indeed, and some other authors, are clearly of opinion that Nimrod, a descendant from the impious Ham, was the great abettor of this design, and the ring-leader of those who combined in the execution of it. But, though the undertaking seems to agree very well with the notion which the Scriptures give us of that ambitious prince, yet, besides that⁴ others, extremely well

¹ Gen. xi. 15. ² Gen. xi. 1. ³ Antiq. b. i. c. 5.

⁴ Bochart's Phaleg. b. i. c. 10.

^a The author of the book called *Malem* tells this story:—That when Nimrod saw that the fire, into which he caused Abraham to be cast for not submitting to the worshipping of idols, did him no damage, he resolved to ascend into heaven, that he might see that great God whom Abraham revealed to him. In vain did his courtiers endeavour to divert him from this design; he was resolved to accomplish it, and therefore gave orders for the building of a tower that might be as high as possible. They worked upon it for three years together, and, when he went up to the top, he was much surprised to see himself as far from heaven as when he was upon the ground: but his confusion was much increased, when they came to inform him next morning that his tower was fallen and dashed in pieces. He commanded them then that another should be built, which might be higher and stronger than the former; but when this met with the same fate, and he still continued an obstinate persecutor of those who worshipped the true God, God took from him the greatest part of his subjects, by the division and confusion of their tongues, and those who still adhered to him he killed by a cloud of flies, which he sent amongst them.—*Calmet's Dictionary* on the word *Nimrod*. The poets, in like manner, having corrupted the tradition of this event with fictions of their own, do constantly bring in Jupiter defeating the attempts of the Titans in this manner:—"Jupiter, from the citadel of heaven, hurling his thunderbolts, overturned the ponderous masses on their founders," &c.—*Ovid*.

versed in all Jewish antiquities, have made it appear that Nimrod was either very young at the time, or even not yet born, when the project of building the tower and city was first formed, there is reason to believe (even supposing him then alive, and in great power and authority among his people,) that he was not in any tolerable condition to undertake so great a work.

The account which Moses gives us of him is—that he⁵ began to be a mighty one in the earth; which the best writers explain, by his being the first who laid the foundation of regal power among mankind; but it is scarce imaginable how an empire, able to effect such a work, could be entirely acquired, and so thoroughly established, by one and the same person, as to allow leisure for amusements of such infinite toil and trouble.

⁶ Great and mighty empires, indeed, have seemingly been acquired by single persons; but when we come to examine into the true original of them, we shall find, that they began upon the foundations of kingdoms already attained by their ancestors, and established by the care and wisdom of many successive rulers for several generations, and after a long exercise of their people in arts and arms, which gave them a singular advantage over other nations that they conquered. In this manner grew the empires of Cyrus, Alexander, and all the great conquerors in the world; nor can we, in all the records of history, find one large dominion, from the very foundation of the world, that was ever erected and established by one private person: and, therefore, we have abundant reason to infer that Nimrod, though confessedly the beginner of sovereign authority, could, at this time, have no great kingdom under his command.

But admitting his kingdom to be larger than this supposition; yet, from that day to this, we can meet with no works of this kind attempted but from a fulness of wealth and wantonness of power, and after peace, luxury, and long leisure had introduced and established arts: so that nothing can be more absurd than to attribute such a prodigious work to the power and vanity of one man, in the infancy both of arts and empire, and when we can scarce suppose that there was any such thing as artificial wealth in the world.

Since, then, this building was undoubtedly very ancient, as ancient as the Scripture makes it, and yet could not be effected by any separate society in the period assigned for it, the only probable opinion is, that it was (as we said before) undertaken and executed by the united labours of all the people that were then on the face of the earth. It is not unlikely, however, that after the dispersion of the people, and their leaving the place unfinished,⁷ Nimrod and his subjects, coming out of Arabia, or some other neighbouring country, might, after their fright was over, settle at Babel, and there building the city of Babylon, and repairing the tower, make it the metropolis (as afterwards it was) of all the Assyrian empire.

To this purpose there is a very remarkable passage⁸ in Diodorus Siculus, where he tells us, "That on the walls of one of the Babylonian palaces was portrayed a general hunting of all sorts of wild beasts, with the figure of a woman on horseback piercing a leopard, and

⁵ Gen. x. 8. ⁶ Revel. Examined, vol. ii. dissert. 3.

⁷ Bochart's Phaleg. b. i. c. 10.

⁸ *Ibid*, b. i.

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a man fighting with a lion; and that on the walls of the other palace were armies in battalia, and huntings of several kinds." Now of this Nimrod, the sacred historian informs us, that he was a great and remarkable hunter, so as to pass into a proverb; and this occupation he might the rather pursue as the best means of training up his companions to exploits of war, and of making himself popular by the glory he gained, and the public good he did, in destroying those wild beasts, which at that time infested the world. And as this was a part of his character, the most rational account that we can give of these ornaments in the Babylonian palaces is, that they were set up by some of Nimrod's descendants in their ancestor's imperial city, in memory of the great founder of their family, and of an empire which afterwards grew so famous.

¹ Eutychius, patriarch of Alexandria, will needs have it, that Nimrod was the first author of the religion of the Magians, the worshippers of fire: and from hence, very probably, ² a late archbishop of our own has thought that this tower of Babel (whose form was pyramidal, as he says, and so resembling fire, whose flame ascends in a conic shape) was a monument designed for the honour of the sun, as the most probable cause of drying up the waters of the flood. "For though the sun," says he, "was not merely a god of the hills, yet the heathens thought it suitable to his advanced station to worship him upon ascents, either natural, or where the country was flat, artificial, that they might approach, as near as possibly they could, the deity they adored." This certainly accounts for God's displeasure against the builders, and why he was concerned to defeat their undertaking; but as there is no foundation for this conjecture in Scripture, and the date of this kind of idolatry was not perhaps so early as is pretended, the two ends which Moses declares the builders had in view, in forming their project, will be motives sufficient for their undertaking it.

For, if we consider, that they were now in the midst of a vast plain, undistinguished by roads, buildings, or boundaries of any kind, except rivers; that the provision of pasture, and other necessities, obliged them to separate, and that, when they were separated, there was a necessity of some landmark to bring them together again upon occasion, otherwise all communication, and with it all the pleasures of life, must be cut off; we can hardly imagine any thing more natural, and fit for this purpose, than the erection of a tower, large and lofty enough to be seen at great distances, and consequently sufficient to guide them from all quarters of that immense region; and when they had occasion to correspond, or come together, nothing certainly could be more proper than the contiguous buildings of a city for their reception and convenient communication.

If we consider, likewise, that all the pride and magnificence of their ancestors were now defaced, and utterly destroyed by the deluge, without the least remains or memorial of their grandeur; that consequently the earth was a clear stage whereon to erect new and unrivalled monuments of glory and renown to themselves; and that at this juncture they wanted neither art nor abilities,

neither numbers nor materials, to make themselves masters of what their vanity projected; we may reasonably suppose, that the affectation of renown was another motive to their undertaking; since it is very well known, that this is the very principle which has all along governed the whole race of mankind, in all the works and monuments of magnificence, the mausoleums, pillars, palaces, pyramids, and whatever has been erected of any pompous kind, from the foundation of the world to this very day. So that, taking their resolution under the united light of these two motives, the reasoning of the builders will run thus:—"We are here in a vast plain; our dispersion is inevitable; our increase, and the necessities of life demand it. We are strong and happy when united; but, when divided, we shall be weak and wretched. Let us then contrive some means of union and friendly society, which may, at the same time, perpetuate our fame and memory. And what means so proper for these purposes as a magnificent city, and mighty tower, whose top may touch the skies? The tower will be a landmark to us, through the whole extent of this plain, and a centre of unity, to prevent our being dispersed; and the city, which may prove the metropolis of the whole earth, will at all times afford us a commodious habitation. Since then we need fear no dissolution of our works by any future deluge, let us erect something that may immortalise our names, and outvie the labours of our antediluvian fathers." And that this seems to have been the reasoning of their minds, will further appear, if we come now to take a short survey of the dimensions of the building, according to the account which the best historians have given us of it.

It is the opinion of the learned ³ Bochart, that whatever we read of the tower, enclosed in the temple of Belus, may very properly be applied to the tower of Babel; because, upon due search and examination, he conceives them to be one and the same structure. Now of this tower ⁴ Herodotus tells us; that it was a square of a furlong on each side, that is, half a mile in the whole circumference, whose height, being equal to its basis, was divided into eight towers, built one upon another; but what made it look as divided into eight towers, was very probably the manner of its ascent. The passage to go up it, continues our author, was a circular or winding way, carried round the outside of the building, to its highest point: ⁵ from whence it seems most likely that the whole ascent was, by the benching-in, drawn in a sloping line from the bottom to the top eight times round it, which would make it have the appearance of eight towers one above another. This way was so exceedingly broad, that it afforded space for horses and carts, and other means of carriage, to meet and turn; and the towers, which looked like so many stories upon one another, were each of them seventy-five feet high, in which were many stately rooms, with arched roofs sup-

³ See Phaleg. part I. b. i. c. 9.⁴ Book I.⁵ Prideaux's Connection, part 1.

^a Here they speak as if they feared a dispersion; but it is hard to tell for what cause, unless it was this:—That Noah, having projected a division of the earth among his posterity, (for it was a deliberate business, as we noted before,) the people had no mind to submit to it, and therefore built a fortress to defend themselves in their resolution of not yielding to his design; but what they dreaded, they brought upon themselves by their own vain attempt to avoid it.—See *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Usher to A. M. 1757*.

¹ Calmet's Dictionary on the word Nimrod.² Tenison on Idolatry.

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ported by pillars, which were made parts of the temple, after the tower became consecrated to that idolatrous use; and on the uppermost of the towers, which was held more sacred, and where their most solemn devotions were performed, there was an observatory, by the benefit of which it was, that the Babylonians advanced their skill in astronomy beyond all other nations.

Some authors,^a following a mistake in the Latin version of Herodotus, wherein the lowest of these towers is said to be a furlong thick, and a furlong high, will have each of the other towers to be of a proportionate height, which amounts to a mile in the whole: but the Greek of Herodotus (which is the genuine text of that author) says no such thing, but only that it was a furlong long, and a furlong broad, without mentioning any thing of its height; and ¹ Strabo, in his description of it, (calling it a pyramid, because of its decreasing or benching-in at every tower,) says of the whole, that it was a furlong high, and a furlong on every side; for to reckon every tower a furlong high, would make the thing incredible, even though the authority of both these historians were for, as they are against it. Taking it only as it is described by Strabo, it was prodigious enough; since, according to his dimensions only, without adding any farther, it was one of the most wonderful works in the world, and much exceeded the greatest of the pyramids of Egypt, though it was not built of such durable materials.

In this condition continued the tower of Babel, or the temple of Belus, until the time of Nebuchadnezzar; but he enlarged it by vast buildings, which were erected round it, in a square of two furlongs on every side, or a mile in circumference, and enclosed the whole with a wall of two miles and an half in compass, in which were several gates leading to the temple, all of solid brass, which very probably were made of the brazen sea, the brazen pillars, and the other brazen vessels which were carried to Babylon, from the temple of Jerusalem; for so we are told, that all the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar carried from thence, he put ² into the house of his god in Babylon, that is, into the house or temple of Bel, for ^b that was the name of the great god of the Babylonians, surrounding it with the pomp of these additional buildings, and adorning it with the spoils of the temple of Jerusalem. This tower did not subsist much above an hundred years, when Xerxes, coming from his

Grecian expedition, wherein he had suffered a vast loss of men and money, out of pretence of religion,^c as being himself a Magian, and consequently detesting the worship of God by images,³ but in reality with a design to repair the damages he had sustained, demolished it, and laid it all in rubbish; having first plundered it of all its immense riches, among which were several images or statues of massy gold, and one⁴ particularly of forty feet high, which very probably was ^d that which Nebuchadnezzar⁵ consecrated in the plains of Dura.

Thus fell this great monument of antiquity, and was never repaired any more; for though Alexander, at his return to Babylon after his Indian expedition, expressed his intention of rebuilding it, and accordingly set ten thousand men on work to rid the place of its rubbish; yet, before they had made any progress therein, that great conqueror died on a sudden, and has ever since left both the city and tower so far defaced, that the very people of the country are at a loss to tell where their ancient situation was. Since some late travellers, however, have, in their opinions, found out the true ruins, and remains of this once renowned structure, we shall not be averse to gratify our reader's curiosity ^e with an account of what one, of the best authority among them, has thought fit to communicate to the public.

"In the middle of a vast and level plain," says he, "about a quarter of a league from Euphrates (which in that place runs westward), appears an heap of ruined buildings like a huge mountain, the materials of which

^a Prideaux's Connection, part 1. ⁴ Diodorus Siculus, b. 2.

⁵ Dan. iii. 1. ^e See Vi Aggi di Pietro della Valle, part 2. b. 17.

^c The two great sects of religion among the Persians were the Magians and Sabians. The Sabians worshipped God through sensible images, or rather worshipped the images themselves. The Babylonians were the first founders of this sect; for they first brought in the worship of the planets, and afterwards that of images, and from thence propagated it to all other nations where it prevailed. The Magians, on the contrary, worship no images of any kind, but God only, together with two subordinate principles; the one, the author and director of all good, and the other, the author and director of all evil. These two sects have always had a mortal enmity to each other; and therefore it is no wonder that Xerxes, who had always the Archimagus attending him in his expeditions, with several other inferior Magi, in the capacity of his chaplains, should by them be prevailed on to take Babylon in his way to Susa, in order to destroy all the idolatrous temples there.

^d Nebuchadnezzar's golden image is said indeed in Scripture to have been sixty cubits, that is, ninety feet high, but that must be understood of the image and pedestal altogether. For that image being said to have been but six cubits broad or thick, it is impossible that the image could have been sixty cubits high; for that makes its height to be ten times its breadth or thickness, which exceeds all the proportions of a man, forasmuch as no man's height is above six times his thickness, measuring the slenderest man living at the waist. But where the breadth of this image was measured it is not said; perhaps it was from shoulder to shoulder, and then the proportion of six cubits' breadth will bring down the height exactly to the measure which Diodorus has mentioned. For the usual height of a man being four and an half of his breadth between the shoulders, it must, according to this proportion, have been twenty-seven cubits high, which is forty feet and an half. Nor must it be forgot what Diodorus further tells us, namely, that this image contained a thousand Babylonish talents of gold, which, upon a moderate computation, amounts to three millions and an half of our money. But now, if we advance the height of the statue to ninety feet without the pedestal, it will increase the value to a sum incredible; and therefore it is necessary to take the pedestal likewise into the height mentioned by Daniel.—Prideaux's Connection, part 1. b. 2.

¹ See Phaleg, b. 16. ² 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7. Dan. i. 2.

^a The words of Herodotus are, "In the midst of the temple there is built a solid tower, eight furlongs in length and breadth; upon this tower another one is erected, and still on till altogether they are eight in number." Now, though it be allowed that the word *μῆκος* may signify height as well as length, yet it is much better to take Herodotus in the latter sense here, otherwise the tower (if every story answers the lowest) will rise to a prodigious height, although nothing near to what Jerom (b. 5. Commentary on Isaiah) affirms, from the testimony of eye-witnesses, as he says, who examined the remains of it very carefully, namely, that it was no less than four miles high.—Universal History, b. 1. c. 2.

^b Bel is supposed to have been the same with Nimrod, and to have been called Bel from his dominion, and Nimrod from his rebellion; for Bel, or Baal, which is the same name, signify Lord, and Nimrod rebel, in the Jewish and Chaldean language. The former was his Babylonish name, by reason of his empire in that place, and the latter his Scripture name, by reason of his rebellion, in revolting from God to follow his own wicked designs. Prideaux's Connection, part 1. b. 2.

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are so confounded together that one knows not what to make of it. Its figure is square, and rises in form of a pyramid with four fronts, which answer to the four quarters of the compass, but it seems longer from north to south than from east to west, and is, as far as I could judge by my pacing it, a large quarter of a league. Its situation and form correspond with that pyramid which Strabo calls the tower of Belus; but even in his time it had nothing remaining of the stairs and other ornaments mentioned by Herodotus, for the greatest part of it was ruined by Xerxes and Alexander, who designed to have restored it to its former lustre, but was prevented by death.

"There appear no marks of ruins round the compass of this rude mass, to make one believe that so great a city as Babylon ever stood here. All that one can discover, within fifty or sixty paces of it, is only the remains here and there of some foundations of buildings; and the country round about it is so flat and level, that one can hardly conceive it should be chosen for the situation of so noble a city, or that there ever were any considerable structures on it. But considering withal, that it is now at least four thousand years since that city was built, and that in the time of Diodorus Siculus, as he tells us, it was almost reduced to nothing, I, for my part, am astonished that there appears so much as there does.

"The height of this mountain of ruins is not in every part equal, but exceeds the highest palace in Naples. It is a misshapen mass, wherein there is no appearance of regularity. In some places it rises in points, is craggy, and inaccessible, in others it is smooth, and of easy ascent.—Whether ever there were steps to ascend it, or doors to enter into it, it is impossible at present to discover; and from hence one may easily judge, that the stairs ran winding about on the outside, and that, being the less solid parts, they were the soonest demolished, so that there is not the least sign to be seen of them now.

"In the inside of it, there are some grottos, but so ruined that one can make nothing of them; and it is much to be doubted, with regard to some of them, whether they were built at the same time with the work, or made since by the peasants for shelter, which last seems to be more likely. It is evident from these ruins, however, that the tower of Nimrod (so our author calls it) was built with great and thick bricks, as I carefully observed, causing holes to be dug in several places for that purpose; but they do not appear to have been burned, but only dried in the sun, which is extremely hot in these parts.

"In laying these bricks, neither lime nor sand was made use of, but only earth tempered and petrified; and in those parts which made the floors, there had been mingled with the earth, which served instead of lime, bruised reeds or hard straws, such as large mats were made of, to strengthen the work. In several other places, especially where the strongest buttresses were to be, there were, at due distances, other bricks of the same size, but more solid, and burnt in kilns, and set in good lime or bitumen, but the greater number were such as were dried in the sun."

This is the most of what this sedulous traveller could discover; and yet, upon the foot of these remarks, he makes no doubt to declare, "That this ruin was the ancient Babel or the tower of Nimrod (as he calls it),

for besides the evidence of its situation, it is so acknowledged to be, and so called by the inhabitants of the country to this very day." Notwithstanding some others are of a contrary opinion, namely,¹ that this and some other ruins not far distant from it, are not the remains of the original tower, but rather some later structures of the Arabs.

We cannot dismiss this subject, however, without making some reflections on the vanity and transitoriness of all sublunary things, as well as the veracity of all God's predictions; since that goodly city, which was once the pride of all Asia, and the designed metropolis of the whole universe, according to the words² of the prophets, 'is fallen, is fallen low, very low, and become a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing without an inhabitant;' and that stately tower, which once reared its head on high, and seemed to menace the stars, is brought down to the ground, even to the dust; insomuch, that the place of it is to be seen no more; or, if by chance found out by some inquisitive traveller, the whole is now become only a confused heap of rubbish, according to the word of God by the same prophet;³ 'I will roll thee down from the rocks, and make thee as a burnt mountain, and they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, but thou shalt be an everlasting desolation, saith the Lord.'^a

¹ Universal History, b. l. c. 2. ² Isa. xxi. 9. and Jer. li. 37.

³ Jer. li. 25, 26.

^a Various have been the conjectures respecting the reasons which induced the human race to unite, as one man, in this great enterprise. Some have supposed that their design was to raise a tower so high as to enable them to climb up to heaven; a strange opinion, founded upon a literal interpretation of these words in Scripture:—'Let us build a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven;' an expression evidently intended to signify no more than that its height was to be uncommonly great. Similar expressions are to be found in Deut. i. 28, and ix. 1, where the cities of the heathen nations, who inhabited the land of Canaan, are described as 'great, and walled or fenced up to heaven.' Nor was it uncommon for the Greek poets to use the expressions, high as heaven, or reaching to the sun, when they wished to describe things of an extraordinary height. Josephus and some others have thought that it must have been designed to preserve them from a second deluge, which they greatly dreaded; but had that been the case, they would have betaken themselves to the mountains, and not made choice of the low country, for building a place of security. A third opinion is, that, as the tower was in the form of a pyramid, to the figure of which the flame of fire bears a resemblance, it was a monument designed in honour of the sun, to whose influence they ascribed the drying up of the flood. But there is no foundation in Scripture for that conjecture, and the date of that species of idolatry was probably not so early as it supposes. The reason assigned in Scripture is, 'Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.' The most probable conjecture, therefore, seems to be, that, as they were now in a vast plain, undefined by any buildings, or roads, or any distinct boundaries; and as they must soon separate to attend their flocks, or go in quest of provisions, or perhaps dreading a dispersion, in consequence of Noah's projected division of the earth among his posterity;—they built this tower, as a *pharos*, or landmark, to enable them to find their way back to the surrounding city; which, with its immense tower, they believed would be a lasting monument of their fame, and transmit their name with honour to posterity. In this view, their design had been to make the whole world one kingdom, and Babel its metropolis.

This interpretation seems also to account for the reason of the divine frustration of their great design, and of their consequent dispersion. It is given in these words, 'Behold the people is one, and they have all one language, and this they begin to do, and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do;' that is, not as some have explained the words

A. M. 1759. A. C. 2245; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 2850. A. C. 2552. GEN. CH. x.; AND CH. xi. VER. 10. TO THE END.

SECT. III.

CHAP. I.—Of the Dispersion and First Settlement of the Nations.

THE HISTORY.

IN what manner the children of Noah were admitted to the possession of the several countries they afterwards came to inhabit, the sacred historian has not informed us; but this we may depend on, that ¹ this great division of the earth was not the result of chance, but of mature deliberation; not a confused irregular dispersion, wherein every one went where he pleased, and settled himself where he liked best, but a proper assignment of such and such places, for every division and subdivision of each nation and family to dwell in. ^a Japheth, as we said before, though usually mentioned last, yet was in reality the eldest son of Noah, and accordingly has his

¹ Mede's Discourses, 49, 50, b. 1.

—if this scheme shall succeed, the divine plan for the government of the world will be frustrated; but, as the words more naturally signify, this their first attempt, and if they succeed in it, they will think themselves able for any undertaking,—no enterprise will appear too great for them. Accordingly, the very dispersion which they dreaded, they brought upon themselves, by their vain attempt to avoid it. 'The name of it was called Babel, because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth, and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.'—*Ancient Universal History*, vol. 1. *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, article *Babel*.

^a According to the Armenian tradition, recorded by Abalragi, Noah distributed the habitable earth from north to south between his sons, and gave to Ham the region of the blacks; to Shem the region of the tawny (fuscum); and to Japheth the region of the ruddy (rubrum). p. 9. And he dates the actual division of the earth in the 140th year of Peleg, A. C. 2614, or 541 years after the deluge, and 191 years after the death of Noah, in the following order:—To the sons of Shem was allotted the middle of the earth, namely, Palestine, Syria, Assyria, Samaria, (Singer or Shinar,) Babel (or Babylonian), Persia, and Hegar (Arabia). To the sons of Ham, Terman (or Idumea, Jer. xlix. 7), Africa, Nigritia, Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia, Sciudid, and India, (or India east and west of the river Indus.) To the sons of Japheth, also Garbia (the north), Spain, France, the countries of the Greeks, Scelavonians, Bulgarians, Turks, and Armenians, (Annals, p. 11.) In this curious and valuable geographical chart, Armenia, the cradle of the human race, was allotted to Japheth by right of primogeniture; and Samaria and Babel to the sons of Shem. The usurpation of these regions, therefore, by Nimrod, and of Palestine by Canaan, was in violation of the divine decree. Though the migration of the three primitive families from the central regions of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, began about A. C. 2614, or 541 years after the deluge; yet it would be a considerable length of time before they all reached their destinations. Sir William Jones conjectures that the migration lasted about four centuries, (*Asiatic Researches*, vol. 4. p. 4.) in the course of which, by successive colonizations, they established far distant communities, and various modes of society and government. The Phœnicians, Arabians, Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Lybians, southwards; the Persians, Ethiopians, Indians, and Chinese, eastwards; the Scythians, Celts, and Tartars, northwards; and the Goths, Greeks, and Latins, even as far as the Peruvians and Mexicans of South America, and the Indian tribes of North America, westwards. All these various inhabitants of the globe retain a striking affinity in the leading principles of their language, customs, and religions, however diversified in process of time, from each other, by local circumstances; such affinity evincing their common descent from one and the same parent stock.—*Hales's Analysis*, vol. 1. p. 351. and vol. 2. p. 50. Second edition.—Ed.

^b The following account of the plantations of the three sons of

descendants here placed in the front of the genealogy. He had ^b seven sons: Gomer, who seated himself in Phrygia; Magog, in Scythia; Madai, in Media; Javan, in Ionia, or part of Greece; Tubal, in Tibarene; Mashech, in Moschia, (which lies in the north-east parts of Cappadocia); and Tiras, in Thrace, Mysia, and the rest of Europe towards the north.

The sons of Gomer were Ashkanaz, who took possession of Ascania, (which is part of Lesser Phrygia); Riphah, of the Riphæan mountains; and Togarmagh, of part of Cappadocia and Galatia.

The sons of Javan were Eliskah, who seated himself in Peloponnesus; Tarshish, in Spain; Kittim, in Italy; and Dodanim ² (otherwise called Rhodanim) in France, not far from the banks of the river Rhone, to which he seems to have given the name. By these, and the colonies which in some space of time proceeded from them, not only a considerable part of Asia, but all Europe and the islands adjacent were stocked with inhabitants; and the several inhabitants were so settled and disposed of, that each tribe or family who spake the same language kept together in one body; and (though distant in situation) continued, for some time at least, their relation to the people or nation from whom originally they sprang.

Shem, the second son of Noah, (and from whom the Hebrew nation did descend,) had himself five sons; whereof Elam took possession of a country in Persia, called after himself at first, but in the time of Daniel it obtained the name of Susiana; Assur, of Assyria; Arphaxad, of Chaldea; Lud, of Lydia; and Aram, of Syria, as far as the Mediterranean Sea.

The sons of Aram were Uz, who seated himself in the country of Damascus; Hul, near Cholobatenne in Armenia; Mash, near the mountain Masius; and Gether, in part of Mesopotamia.

Arphaxad had a son named Salah, who settled near Susiana, and begat Eber, (the father of the Hebrew nation,) who had likewise two sons: Peleg, whose name imports division, because in his days mankind was divided into several colonies; and Jocktan, who had a large offspring to the number of thirteen sons, all seated in Arabia Felix, and who, in all probability, were the progenitors of such people and nations as in those parts, in after ages, had some affinity to their several names. For here it was that the Allumœotæ, who took their name from Almodad, the Selapeni, from Sheleph, and the Abalitræ, from Obal, &c., lived, namely, from that part of Arabia which lies between Musa (a famous sea-port in the Red Sea), and the mountain Climax, which was formerly called Sephar, from a city of that name built at the bottom of it, and then the metropolis of the whole country.

Ham, the youngest son of Noah, had four sons: whereof Cush settled his abode in that part of Arabia which lies towards Egypt; Mizraim, in both Upper

² 1 Chron. i. 7.

Noah and their descendants, is extracted from Bochart's *Phaleg*; Heidegger's *Historia Patriarchum*, vol. 1. Essay 22; Wells' *Sacred Geography*, vol. 1; Bedford's *Scripture Chronology*, b. 2; Shuckford's *Connection*, vol. 1; Parker's *Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1; the Authors of the *Universal History*, b. 1; Le Clerc and Patrick's *Commentaries*; Poole and Ainsworth's *Annotations*, with other authors of the like nature; from whom we have made use of the most probable conjectures, and to whom we refer the reader, rather than encumber him with a multitude of explanatory notes.

A. M. 1759. A. C. 2245; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 2859. A. C. 2552. GEN. CH. x.; AND CH. xi. VER. 10. TO THE END.

and Lower Egypt; Phut, in part of Lybia; and Canaan, in the land which was afterwards called by his name, and in other adjacent countries.

The sons of Cush, were Seba, who settled on the south-west part of Arabia; Havilah, who gave name to a country upon the river Pison, where it parts with Euphrates, to run into the Arabian Gulf; Sabtah, who lived on the same shore (but a little more northward) of the Arabian Gulf; Raamah, who, with his two sons, Sheba and Dedan, occupied the same coast, but a little more eastward; and Sabtecha, who (we need not doubt) placed himself among the rest of his brethren. But among all the sons of Cush, Nimrod was the person who in those early days distinguished himself by his bravery and courage. His lot chanced to fall into a place that was not a little infested with wild beasts; and therefore he betook himself to the exercise of hunting, and, drawing together a company of stout young fellows, not only cleared the country of such dangerous creatures, but, procuring himself likewise great honour and renown by his other exploits, he raised himself at length to the dignity of a king (the first king that is supposed to have been in the world), and, having made Babylon the seat of his empire, laid the foundation of three other cities, namely, Erech, Accad, and Calnech, in the neighbouring provinces; and so, passing into Assyria, and enlarging his territories there, he built Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah, and Resen, (Larissa,) situate upon the Tigris. But to return to the remainder of Ham's posterity.

Mizraim, his second son, became king of Egypt, which after his death was divided into three kingdoms by three of his sons; Ananim, who was king of Tanis or Lower Egypt, called afterwards Delta; Naphtulim, who was king of Naph or Memphis in Upper Egypt; and Pathrusim, who set up the kingdom of Pathros or Thebes in Thebais. Ludim and Lehabim peopled Lybia. Caslubim fixed himself at Cashiotis, in the entrance of Egypt from Palestine; and having two sons, Philistim and Caphterim, the latter he left to succeed him at Cashiotis, and the former planted the country of the Philistines, between the borders of Canaan and the Mediterranean Sea. The sons of Canaan were Sidon, the father of the Sidonians, who lived in Phœnicia; Heth, the father of the Hittites, who lived near Hebron; Emor, the father of the Amorites, who lived in the mountains of Judea; and Arvad, the father of the Arvadites, not far from Sidon: but whether the other sons of Canaan settled in this country cannot be determined with any certainty and exactness; only we must take care to place them somewhere between Sidon and Gerar, and Admah and Zeboim; for these were the boundaries of their land.

Upon the whole, then, we may observe, that the posterity of Japheth came into the possession, not only of all Europe, but of a considerable portion of Asia; ¹ for two of his sons, Tiras and Javan, together with their descendants, had all those countries which from the Mediterranean Sea, reach as far as Scandinavia northward; and his other sons, from the Mediterranean extending themselves eastward over almost all Asia Minor, and part of Armenia, over Media, Iberia, Albania, and those vast regions towards the north, where for-

merly the Scythians, but now the Tartars dwell: that the posterity of Ham held in their possession all Africa, and no small part of Asia; ² Mizraim, both the Upper, Lower, and Middle Egypt, Marmorica, and Ethiopia, both east and west; Phut, the remainder of Africa, Lybia Interior and Exterior, Numidia, Mauritania, Getulia, &c.; Cush, all Arabia that lies between the Red Sea and the Gulf; beyond the Gulf, Carmania, and no small part of Persia; and towards the north of Arabia (till expelled by Nimrod), Babylonia, and part of Chaldea: and Canaan, Palestine, Phœnicia, part of Cappadocia, and that large tract of ground along the Euxine Sea, even as far as Colchis: and that the posterity of Shem had in their possession part both of the Greater and Lesser Asia; ³ in the Lesser, Lydia, Mysia, and Caria; and in the Greater, Assyria, Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Susiana, Arabia Felix, &c., and perhaps eastward all the countries as far as China.

These are the plantations ⁴ of the families of the sons of Noah in their generations; and after this manner 'were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.' And now to descend to a more particular account of the posterity of his son Shem, from whom the Hebrews (who are the proper subjects of our history) were descended.

A. M. 1658, or 2258. Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he had a son named Arphaxad; after which time he lived 500 years; so that the whole of his life was 600.

A. M. 1693, or 2393. Arphaxad, when 35 (135), ^a had a son named Salah, after which he lived 403 (303); in all 438.

A. M. 1723, or 2523. Salah, when 30 (130), had a son named Eber (from whom his descendants were called Hebrews), after which he lived 403 (303) years; in all, 433.

A. M. 1757, or 2557. Eber, when 34 (134), had a son named Peleg, in whose time (as we said) the earth came to be divided; after which he lived 430 (330) years; in all, 464.

A. M. 1787, or 2787. Peleg, when 30 (130), had a son named Reu, after which he lived 209 (109), years; in all, 239.

A. M. 1819, or 2919. Reu, when 32 (132), had a son named Serug; after which he lived 207 (107) years; in all 239.

A. M. 1849, or 3049. Serug, when 30 (130), had a son named Nahor, after which he lived 200 (100) years; in all 230.

A. M. 1878, or 3128. Nahor, when 29 (79), had a son named Terah; after which he lived 119 (69) years; in all 148. But of all these persons, it must be remarked, that they had several other children of both sexes, though not recorded in this history.

A. M. 1948, or 3258. Terah, when 70 (130), had three sons, one after another, Abram, Nahor, and Haran; whereof Haran, the eldest, died, before his father, in his native country of Ur, leaving behind him one son, whose name was Lot, and two daughters,

² Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 1. Essay 22. Sect. 2.

³ Ibid. Sect. 3.

⁴ Gen. x. 52.

^a All the dates within () are taken from Dr Hales's Analysis.

¹ Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 1. Essay 22. Sect. 1.

A. M. 1997. A. C. 2007; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3318. A. C. 2093. GEN. CH. x.; AND CH. xi. VER. 10. TO THE END.

whereof the elder, namely, Milcah, was married to her uncle Nahor, and the younger, *a* whose name was Sarai, was married to her uncle Abram; but at this time she was barren, and had no children.

The corruption of mankind was now become general, and idolatry and polytheism began to spread like a contagion; *b* the people of Ur in particular, ¹ as is supposed by the signification of the name, worshipped the element of fire, which was always thought a proper symbol of the sun, that universal god of the east. Terah, the father of Abram, ² was certainly a companion (some say a priest) of those who adored such strange gods; nor was Abram himself (as it is generally imagined) uninfected. But God being minded to select this family out of the rest of mankind, and in them to establish his church, ordered Terah to leave the place of his habitation, which was then corrupted in this manner; which accordingly he did, and taking with him his son Abram and his wife, together with his grandson Lot, left Ur, with an intent to go into Canaan, but in his journey fell sick at *c* Haran (which Stephen calls Charran) a city of Mesopotamia, where being forced to make his abode for some time, ^d in the 145th (205th) year of his age he died.

¹ See Calmet's Dictionary on the word Ur.

² Jos. xxiv. 2, 14.

a It is very probable that Sarai was called Iscah, before she left Ur; because, in the 29th verse, we read that Haran had a daughter of that name; and yet we cannot suppose but that, had she been a distinct person, Moses would have given us an account of her descent, because it so much concerned his nation to know from whom they came both by the father and mother's side.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

b The city of Ur was in Chaldea, as the Scripture assures us in more places than one; but still its true situation is not so well known. For some think it to be the same as Camarina in Babylonia; others confound it with Orcha, or Orche in Chaldea; while others again take it for Ura or Sura, upon the banks of the river Euphrates. Bochart and Grotius maintain that it is Ura, in the eastern part of Mesopotamia, which was sometimes (as it appears from Acts vii. 2, 4.) included under the name Chaldea; and this situation seems the more probable, not only because it agrees with the words of St Stephen in the above-cited place, but with the writings of Ammianus Marcellinus likewise, who himself travelled this country, and mentions a city of this name, in the place where Bochart supposes it, about two days' journey from Nisibis.—*Wells' Geography*, vol. 1.

c Haran, which is likewise called Charan, according to the Hebrew, and Charran, according to the Greek pronunciation, was a city situated in the west or north-west part of Mesopotamia, on a river of the same name, which very probably runs into the river Chaboras, as that does into the Euphrates. It is taken notice of by Latin writers, on account of the great overthrow which the Parthians gave the Roman army under the command of Crassus, and, as some think, had its name given by Terah, in memory of Haran, his deceased son. But others think it is much better derived from the word Hharar, which denotes its soil to be hot and adust, as it appears to be from a passage out of Plutarch, in the life of Crassus, and several other ancient testimonies.—See *Calmet's Dictionary*, *Wells' Geography*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary in locum.*

d St Stephen (in Acts vii. 4.) tells us, that after the death of his father, Abraham removed from Haran, or, as he calls it Charran, to the land of Canaan. In Gen. xii. 4. we are told that Abraham was 'seventy-five years old when he departed out of Charran.' In Gen. xi. 26. it is said that Terah was 'seventy years old when he begat Abraham;' and yet, in verse 32. of the same chapter, it is affirmed, that 'he died, being two hundred and five years old.' But at this rate Terah must have lived 60 years after Abraham's going from Haran: for 75 (the number of Abraham's years when he left Haran) being added to 70, the number of Terah's years when he begat Abraham, make 145

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.*

It may seem not a little strange to some, perhaps, why Moses, in his account of the times, both preceding and subsequent to the flood, should be so particular in setting down the genealogies of the patriarchs; but he who considers that this was the common method of recording history in those days, will soon perceive that he had reason sufficient for what he did, namely, to give content and satisfaction to the age wherein he wrote. We indeed, according to the present taste, think these genealogies but heavy reading; nor are we at all concerned who begat whom, in a period that stands at so distant a prospect; but the people, for whom Moses wrote, had the things either before their eyes, or recent in their memories. They saw a great variety of nations around them, different in their manners and customs, as well as their denominations. The names whereby they were then called, were not to them so antique and obsolete as they are to us. They knew their meaning, and were acquainted with their derivation. And therefore it was no small pleasure to them to observe, as they read along, the gradual increase of mankind; how the stem of Noah spread itself into branches almost innumerable, and how, from such and such a progenitor, such and such a nation, whose history and adventures they were no strangers to, did arise. Nor can it be less than some satisfaction to us, even at this mighty distance, to perceive, that, after so many ages, the change of languages, and the alteration of names, brought in by variety of conquests, we are still able to trace the footsteps of the names recorded by Moses; by the help of these can discover those ancient nations which descended from them, and with a little care and application, the particular regions which they once inhabited; whereof the best heathen geographers, without the assistance of these sacred records, were never in a capacity so much as to give us a tolerable guess.

But there is a farther reason for our historian's writing in this manner. God had promised to Adam, and, in him, to all his posterity, a restoration in the person of the Messiah. This promise was renewed ³ to Noah, and afterwards confirmed to Abraham, the great founder of

³ See Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy.

years only; whereas the account in Genesis is, that he lived 205. This therefore must certainly proceed from a fault crept into the text of Moses; because of the 205 years which are given to Terah, when he died at Haran, he only lived 145, according to the Samaritan version, and the Samaritan chronicle, which, without doubt, do agree with the Hebrew copy, from which they were translated.—*An Essay for a New Translation.* But, as Dr Hales justly remarks, the chronology of this period has been considerably embarrassed by the vulgar error that Abraham was the eldest of Terah's sons, because he is first named. The consequence of this has been, that the date of his birth is usually assigned to the seventieth year of Terah, because it is said that Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. "But this is the date of the birth of Haran, who was undoubtedly the eldest son; because his daughters, Milcah and Iscah (the latter surnamed Sarai and Sarah) were married to their uncles, Nahor and Abram respectively; and Sarah was only ten years younger than her husband, Gen. xvii. 17.; Abram was probably the youngest son, born by a second wife, Gen. xx. 12, when Terah was 130 years old, Gen. xi. 32; xii. 4."—*Analysis, &c.* vol. 2. p. 107, second edition.—Ed.

A. M. 1997. A. C. 2007; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3318. A. C. 2093. GEN. CH. x. AND CH. xi. VER. 10. TO THE END.

the Jewish nation. Fit therefore it was, in this regard, that he should record exact genealogies, and that all other sacred historians should successively do the same: nor can we sufficiently admire the divine wisdom, in settling such a method, in the beginning of the world, by Moses, and carrying it on by the prophets, as might be of general use, as long as the world should last. For, as the expectation of the Messiah put the Jews upon keeping an exact account of all their genealogies; so, when Christ came into the world, it was evident, beyond dispute, that he was of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and of the lineage of David, according to the promises, which had, from time to time, been recorded of him.

It is well worth our observation, however, that, in the catalogue which Moses gives us of the descendants of Noah, he makes mention of no more than sixteen sons of the three brothers, or principal founders of so many original nations; nor of any more than seven of these sixteen, of whom it is recorded that they had any children; and even of these seven, there is one (we may observe) whose children are not numbered.¹ But it is not to be imagined, that in two or three hundred years, upon a moderate calculation, or even but in one hundred years, at the lowest account, Noah should have had no more than sixteen grandsons, and that, of these too, the majority should go childless to the grave; it is much more likely, or rather self-evident that the nine grandsons, of whom we find nothing in Scripture, were nevertheless fathers of nations, as well as any of the rest, and not only of original nations called after their names, but of lesser and subordinate tribes, called after their sons' names; and (what makes the amount to seem much less) there is reason to suppose, that how many soever the grandchildren of Noah were, we have, in this tenth chapter of Genesis, the names of those only who were patriarchs of great nations, and only of such nations as were in the days of Moses known to the Hebrews. For, if we read it attentively, we shall perceive,² that the design of the holy penman, is not to present us with an exact enumeration of all Noah's descendants, (which would have been infinite) no, nor to determine who were the leading men above all the rest; but only to give us a catalogue, or general account of the names of some certain persons, descended of each of Noah's children, who became famous in their generations; and so pass them by, as having not space enough in his history to pursue them more minutely. For we may observe, that the constant practice of our author (as it is indeed of all other good authors) is to cut things short that do not properly relate to his purpose; and when he is hastening to his main point, to mention cursorily such persons as were remarkable (though not the subject he is to handle) in the times whereof he treats.

Thus, in the entrance of his history, his business was to attend to the line of Seth, and therefore, when he comes to mention the opposite family of Cain,³ he only reckons up eight of them, and these the rather because they were the real inventors of some particular arts, which the Egyptians vainly laid claim to. And, in like

manner, when he comes to the life of Isaac, Jacob's was the next line wherein his history was to run, and therefore he contents himself with giving us a catalogue of some of Esau's race, but such of them only as were in after-ages⁴ 'the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession,' as he expresses it. Unless, therefore, we would desire it in an author, that he should be luxuriant and run wild, we cannot, with any colour of reason, blame the divine historian for stopping short upon proper occasions; for had he pursued all the families descended from Noah into their several plantations, and there given us the history of all their various adventures, the world, we may almost say, would not have contained the books which he must have written.

What grounds there may be for the supposition I cannot tell; but to me there seems to be no reason why we should be obliged to maintain, that all the parts of the habitable world were peopled at once, immediately after the confusion of languages. The historian, indeed, speaking of the persons he had just enumerated, gives us to know, that⁵ 'by these were the nations divided after the flood;' but how long after the flood he does not intimate; so that there is no occasion to understand the words, as though he meant, that, either by these only, or by these immediately, or by these all at once, was the earth replenished; but only, that among others (unmentioned because not so well known to the Jews) there were so many persons of figure descended from the sons of Noah, who, some at one time, and some at another, became heads of nations, and had, by their descendants, countries called after their names; so that⁶ by them the nations were divided, that is, people were broken into different nations on the earth, not all at once, or immediately upon the confusion, but at several times, as their families increased and separated after the flood.

For, considering that the number of mankind was then comparatively small, and the distance of countries, from the place of their dispersion, immensely wide; it is more reasonable to think that these several plantations were made at different times and by a gradual progression. Moses indeed informs us, that the earth was portioned out among the children of Noah after their tongues: supposing, then, that the number of languages was, according to the number of the heads of nations, sixteen, these sixteen companies issued out of Babel at separate times, and by separate routes, and so took possession of the next adjacent country whereunto they were to go. Here they had not settled long before the daily increase of the people made the bounds of their habitation too narrow; whereupon the succeeding generation, under the conduct of some other leader, leaving the place in possession of such as cared not to move, penetrated farther into the country, and there settling again, and again becoming too numerous, sent forth fresh colonies into the places they found unoccupied; till, by this way of progression on each side, from the centre to every point of the circumference, the whole world came in time to be inhabited in the manner that we now find it. If then the several parts of the globe were, by the sons of

¹ Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. I., Occasional Annotations, 17.

² Shuckford's Connection, b. 3.

³ Gen. iv.

⁴ Gen. xxxvi. 43.

⁵ Gen. x. 52.

⁶ Shuckford's Connection, vol. I. b. 3.

A. M. 1937. A. C. 2007; OR, ACCORDING TO HALE'S, A. M. 3318. A. C. 2093. GEN. CH. x. AND CH. xi. VER. 10. TO THE END.

Noah, gradually and at sundry times peopled, there wanted not all at once so many; and if several of the sons of Noah, who had their share in peopling the globe, are not taken notice of by Moses, there might possibly be many more to plant and replenish the earth, than we are aware of. Let us then see what their number, upon a moderate computation, might at this time be supposed to be.

To this purpose we are to remember, that we are not to make our computation according to the present standard of human life, which, ^a since the time of the flood, is vastly abbreviated; that the strength of constitution, necessary to the procreation of children, which, by a continued course of temperance and simplicity of diet, then prevailed, is now, by an induction of all manner of riot and excess, sadly impaired; and that the divine benediction which, in a particular manner, was then poured out upon the children of Noah, could not but prove effectual to the more than ordinary multiplication of mankind; so that length of days, assisted by the blessing of God, and attended with a confirmed state of health, could not but make a manifestly great difference between their case and ours.

^b Various are the ways which have been attempted by learned men, to show the probable increase of mankind in that period of time: but, for our present purpose, it will be sufficient to suppose ¹ that the first three couples, that is, Noah's three sons and their wives, in twenty years' time after the flood, might have thirty pair, and, by a gradual increase of ten pair for each couple in forty years' time, till the three hundred and fortieth year after

the flood, in which Peleg died, there might rise a sufficient number (^c as appears by the table under the page) to spread colonies over the face of the whole earth. And, if to these the several collateral descents of Noah's posterity were taken in; if the children which Noah himself might possibly have in the 350 years he lived after the flood; which Shem and his two brothers might have in the last 160; which Salah and his contemporaries might have in the last 160; and which Heber and his contemporaries might have in the last 191 years of their lives, which are not reckoned in the account, together with the many more grandsons of Noah and their progeny, which in all probability (as we observed before) are not so much as mentioned in it; it is not to be imagined how much these additions will swell the number of mankind to a prodigious amount above the ordinary calculation.

But allowing the number at this time to be not near so large as even the common computation makes it; yet we are to remember that, at the first planting of any country, an handful of men as it were took up a large tract of ground. ² At their first division they were scattered into smaller bodies, and seated themselves at a considerable distance from one another, the better to prevent the 'increase of the beasts of the field upon them.' These small companies had each of them one governor, who, in Edom, seems to be called ³ a duke, and in Canaan, ⁴ a king, whereof there were no less in that small country than one and thirty at one time: but of what power or military force these several princes were, we may learn from this one passage in Abraham's life, namely, that ⁵ when Chedorlaomer, in conjunction with three other kings, had defeated the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, with three kings more that came to their assistance, plundered their country, and taken away Lot and his family, who at this time sojourned in these parts; Abraham, with no more than 318 of his own domestics, pursues the conquerors, engages them, beats them, and, together with his nephew Lot, and all his substance, recovers the spoil of the country which these confederate kings were carrying away. A plain proof this, one would think, that this multitude of kings which were now in the world were titular, rather than real; and that they had none of them any great number of subjects under their command. For though Canaan was certainly a very fruitful land, and may therefore be presumed to be better stored with inhabitants than any of its neighbouring provinces; yet we find that when Abraham and Lot first came into it, though ⁶ 'they had flocks and herds, and tents, that the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together;' yet, as soon as they were

¹ Bishop Cumberland's *Origines Gentium*, Tract. 4, and *Millar's Church History*, ch. 1. part 2.

^a In the Mosaic history we find by what degrees the long lives which preceded the flood were after it shortened. The first three generations recorded in Scripture after the deluge, Arphaxad, Salah, and Heber, lived above 350 years; yet not so long as their ancestor Shem, who, being born 100 years before the flood, lived above 500 after it. The three next generations, Peleg, Reu, and Serug, lived not much above 250 years; and from their time, only Terah lived about 200. All the others after him were below that number. Moses came not to be above 120; and, in his days, he complains, that the age of man was shortened to about seventy or eighty years; and near this standard it has continued ever since.—*Millar's Church History*, p. 35.

^b Petavius (*de Doct. Temp.* b. ix. c. 14.) supposes that the posterity of Noah might beget children at seventeen; and that each of Noah's sons might have eight children in eight years after the flood; and that every one of these eight might beget eight more: by this means in one family (as in that of Japheth, 238 years after the flood) he makes a diagram, consisting of almost an innumerable company of men. Temperarius, (as the learned Usher in his *Chron. Sacra*, ch. 5. tells us,) supposes that all the posterity of Noah, when they attained twenty years of age, had every year twins; and hereupon he undertakes to make it appear, that in 102 years after the flood, there would be in all 1,534,400; but, without this supposition of twins, there would, in that time, be 388,605 males, besides females. Others suppose, that each of the sons of Noah had ten sons, and, by that proportion, in a few generations, the amount will rise to many thousands within a century. And others again insist on the parallel between the multiplication of the children of Israel in Egypt, and thereupon compute, that, if from seventy-two men, in the space of 215 years, there were procreated 600,000, how many will be born of three men in the space of 100 years? But what method soever we take to come to a probable conjecture, we still have cause to believe, that there was a more than ordinary multiplication in the posterity of Noah after the flood.—*Stillingfleet's Origines Sacrae*, b. iii. c. 4.

² Bedford's *Scripture Chronology*, b. i. c. 5.

³ Gen. xxxvi. to the end.

⁴ Jos. xii. 9 to the end.

⁵ Gen. xiv.

⁶ Gen. xiii. 5, 6.

c Yrs of the World.	Yrs after the Flood.	Pairs of Men and Women.
1676	20	50
1716	60	300
1756	100	3,000
1796	140	30,000
1836	180	300,000
1876	220	3,000,000
1916	260	30,000,000
1956	300	300,000,000
1996	340	3,000,000,000

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separated, they found no difficulty to settle in any part thereof, with the rest of its inhabitants.

How great soever the growth of the Assyrian monarchy became at last, yet we have too little certainty of the time when it began, ever to question, upon that account, the truth of the population of the world by the sons of Noah. Ninus, whom profane history generally accounts the first founder of it, is placed,¹ by one of our greatest chronologers, in the 2737th year of the world, according to the Hebrew computation; so that, living in the time of the Judges, he is supposed to have been contemporary with Deborah, but² others think this is a date much too early. Nimrod, we must allow, founded a kingdom at Babylon, and perhaps extended it into Assyria, but this kingdom was but of small extent, if compared with the empires which arose afterwards; and yet, had it been ever so much greater, it could not have been of any long continuance, because the custom in those early days was for the father to divide his territories among his sons. After the days of Nimrod, we hear no more in the Sacred Records of the Assyrian empire till about the year 3234, when we find Pul invading the territories of Israel, and making Menahem tributary to him. It is granted indeed, that the four kings who, in the days of Abraham invaded the southern coast of Canaan, came from the countries where Nimrod had reigned, and perhaps were some of his posterity who had shared his conquests; but of what small significance such kings as these were, we are just now come from relating. Sesac and Memnon, two kings of Egypt, were great conquerors, and reigned over Chaldea, Assyria, and Persia; and yet in all their histories there is not one word of any opposition they received from the Assyrian monarchy then standing: and though Nineveh in the time of Joash king of Israel, was become a large city, yet it had not yet acquired that strength, as not to be afraid (according to the preaching of Jonah) of being invaded by its neighbours, and destroyed within forty days. Not long before this, it had freed itself indeed from the dominion of Egypt, and had got a king of its own, but what is very remarkable,³ its king was not as yet called the king of Assyria, but only⁴ the king of Nineveh; nor was his proclamation for a fast published in several nations, no nor in all Assyria, but only in Nineveh, and perhaps the villages adjacent; whereas, when once they had established their dominion at home, secured all Assyria properly so called, and began now to make war upon their neighbouring nations, their kings were no longer called the kings of Nineveh, but began to assume the title of the kings of Assyria. These, and several more instances which the author I have just now cited has produced, are sufficient arguments to prove that the Assyrians were not the great people some have imagined in the early times of the world; and that if they made any figure in Nimrod's days, it was all extinguished in the reigns of his successor, and never revived until God, for the punishment of the wickedness of his own people, was pleased to raise them from obscurity,

and as the Scripture expresses it,⁵ 'stirred up the spirit of Pul, and the spirit of Tiglathpilneser, king of Assyria.'

And in like manner we may observe, that, whatever noise has been made in the world with the astronomical observations of the Chaldeans, which Aristotle is said to have sent into Greece, and which Alexander is thought to have taken at Babylon, the whole is a mere fiction and romance. There is nothing extant (as⁶ a very good judge of ancient and modern learning tells us) in the Chaldaic astrology of older date than the era of Nabonassar, which begins but 747 years before Christ. By this era the Chaldeans computed their astronomical observations, the first of which falls about the 27th year of Nabonassar, and all that we have of them are only seven eclipses of the moon, and even these but very coarsely set down, and the oldest not above 700 years before Christ. And, to make short of the matter, the same author informs us farther, that the Greeks were the first practical astronomers who endeavoured in earnest to make themselves masters of the sciences; that Thales was the first who could predict an eclipse in Greece, not 600 years, and that Hipparchus made the first catalogue of the fixed stars not above 650 years before Christ.^a

What the history of the Chaldeans and Egyptians, and their boasted antiquity is, we have had occasion to take notice⁷ elsewhere, and need only here to add, that, bating that strange affectation wherein they both agree, of being thought so many thousand years older than they have any authentic testimonies to produce, there is a manifest analogy between Scripture history and what Berosus has told us of the one, and Manetho of the other. Referring therefore to what has been already said of them, we have only to observe, that⁸ the genealogy which the Chinese—another people pretending to high antiquity—give us of the family of their first man, Puoncuus, seems to carry a near resemblance to Moses' patriarchal genealogies; Thienhoang, their second king's civilizing the world, answers very well to Seth's settling the principles and reforming the lives of men; and Fohi's fourth successor, whom they accuse of destroying their ancient religion and introducing idolatry, is plainly copied from the history of Nimrod, who was probably the first establisher of idol worship. So that from these, and some other particulars in their history, we may be allowed to conclude that the ancient Chinese (as all other nations did) agreed in the main with Moses in their antiquities; and that the true reason of their chronological difference is, that the reigns of the Chinese kings (in the very same manner as the Egyptian dynasties) were not successive,⁹ but of several contemporary princes, who at one and the same time had different and distinct dominions.

⁵ 1 Chron. v. 26. ⁶ Wotton's Reflections, ch. xxiii.

⁷ See Apparatus, p. 43, and the History, p. 61.

⁸ Bibliotheca Biblica, in the Introduction, p. 77.

⁹ M. de Loubere's History of Siam.

^a The most ancient astronomical observations known to us are Chinese, next to them are the Chaldeans or Hindoos, both of whom had made considerable progress in astronomy at a very early period; to them succeed the Egyptians, who in placing their pyramids exactly facing the four cardinal points of the compass; and, by the zodiacs discovered in Egypt, are proved to have made considerable progress in the science; and, after the Egyptians, came the Greeks, who certainly made greater progress in the science than any of their predecessors.—Ed.

¹ Usher's Annot. Vet. Test. A. M. 2737.

² Stillingfleet's Origines Sacre, b. iii. c. 4, and Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology.

³ Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology, ch. 3.

⁴ Jonah iii.

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The want of certain records of ancient times, and, consequently, the gross ignorance which some nations laboured under as to their original, has thrown several into a wild notion and conceit that they were self-originated, came never from any other place, and had never any primordial founder or progenitor. But now, whatever hypothesis they are minded to take; whether they suppose a beginning or no beginning of human generation; whether they suppose men to have sprung out of the sea or out of the land; to have been produced from eggs cast into the matrix of the earth, or out of certain little pustulæ or fungosities on its surface; to have been begotten by the *anima mundi* in the sun, or by an *anima terræ*, pervading the body of this terraqueous globe; to have been sent forth into the world silently and without noise, or to have opened the womb of their common mother with loud claps of thunder: and, whether they suppose the succession of generations of mankind a *parte ante*, to have been infinite, indefinite, or finite, and the geniture, or origination of mankind, to have been either the same with the geniture of the great world, or later, or heterogeneous, or quite foreign to it: take they which of these hypotheses they will, I say, and when they once come to reason upon it, they will soon find themselves hampered and entangled with absurdities and impossibilities almost innumerable.

All nations to whom the philosophers, in search after knowledge, resorted, had memorials, we find, left among them of the first origin of things; but the universal tradition of the first ages was far better preserved among the eastern than western nations, and these memorials kept with greater care by the Phœnicians and Egyptians, than by the Greeks and Romans. ¹ Among the Greeks, however, when they first undertook to philosophize, the beginning of the world, with the gradual progression of its inhabitants, was no matter of dispute; but that being taken for granted, the inquiry was, out of what material principles the cosmical system was formed; and Aristotle, arrogating to himself the opinion of the world's eternity as a nostrum, declared that all mankind before him asserted the world's creation.

From this wild notion of Aristotle, in opposition to an universal tradition and the consent of all ages, the poets took occasion to turn the histories of the oldest times into fables; and the historians, in requital and courtesy to them, converted the fables which the poets had invented into histories, or rather popular narratives; and most of the famous nations of the earth, that they might not be thought more modern than any of their neighbours, took occasion too of forging certain antiquities, foolish genealogies, extravagant calculations, and the fabulous actions and exploits of gods and heroes, that they might thus add to their nobility, by an imaginary anticipation of time, beyond the possible limits that could be made known by any pretence of certainty.

The wiser sort of men, however, saw into this, and from the ordinary increase and propagation of mankind, the invention and growth of arts and sciences, and the advancements carried on in civil discipline and government, could discern the folly and superstition of all such romantic pretensions: but then, having lost the true

ancient tradition, they were driven to the necessity of a perpetual vicissitude, either of general or particular deluges; by which, when things were come to their crisis and perfection, they were made to begin again, and all preceding memoirs were supposed to be lost in these inundations. But this is all a groundless conjecture, a mere begging of the question, and a kind of prophesying backwards of such alterations and revolutions as it is morally impossible for them to know any thing of.

Since, therefore, an eternal succession of generations is loaded with a multitude of insuperable difficulties, and no valid arguments are to be found for making the world older than our sacred books do make it; since the presumed grandeur of the Assyrian and other monarchies, too soon after the flood to be peopled by Noah's children, is a gross mistake, and the computations of the Chaldeans and other nations, from their observations of the celestial bodies, groundless and extravagant; since all the pretensions of the several aborigines are found to be ridiculous, and the more plausible inventions of successive revolutions entirely imaginary; since neither the self-originists, nor the revolutionists, even upon their own principles, can account for what is most easily accounted for by the writings of Moses; and (what is a farther consideration) since ^a there are many customs and usages, both civil and religious, which have prevailed in all parts of the world, and can owe their original to nothing else but a general institution; which institution could never have been, had not all mankind been of the same blood originally, and instructed in the same common notices before they were divided in the earth:—since the matter stands thus, I say, we have all the reason in the world to believe, that this whole narration of Moses concerning the origination of mankind, their destruction by the flood, their renovation by the sons of Noah, their speedy multiplication to a great number, their dispersion upon the confusion of languages, and their settling themselves in different parts of the world according to their allotments, is true in fact; because it is rational and consistent with every event, consonant to the notions we have of God's attributes, and not repugnant to any system of either ancient or modern geography that we know of.

Time, indeed, and the uncertain state of languages; the different pronunciation of the same word, according to the dialect of different nations; the alterations of names in several places, and substitution of others of the like importance in the vernacular tongue; the disguising of ancient stories in fables, and frequently mistaking the idiom of oriental languages; the inundation of barbarism in many countries, and the conquests and revolutions generally introductive of new names, which have happened

^a Such are, 1. The numbering by decades; 2. The computing time by a cycle of seven days; 3. The sacredness of the seventh number, and observation of a seventh day as holy; 4. The use of sacrifices, propitiatory and eucharistical; 5. The consecration of temples and altars; 6. The institution of sanctuaries and their privileges; 7. Separation of tithes and first-fruits to the service of the altar; 8. The custom of worshipping the Deity discalceated or barefooted; 9. Abstinence of husbands from their wives before sacrifice; 10. The order of priesthood, and the maintenance of it; 11. Most of the expiations and pollutions mentioned by Moses, in use among all famous nations; 12. An universal tradition of two protoplasts, deluges, and renewing mankind afterwards.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1. p. 296.

¹ *Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1. Occasional Annotations, c. 17.

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almost in all; these, and several other causes, create some perplexity in determining the places recorded by Moses, and ascertaining the founder of each particular nation: but still, notwithstanding these disadvantages, we may, in some measure, trace the footsteps of the sons of Noah, issuing out from Babel into the different quarters of the world, and, in several countries, perceive the original names of their founders preserved in that of their own.

For though the analogy of names be not, at all times, a certain way of coming to the knowledge of things; yet, in this case, I think it can hardly be denied, but that the Assyrians descended from Assur; the Canaanites, from Canaan; the Sidonians, from Sidon; the Lydians, from Lud; the Medes, from Madai; the Thracians, from Tiras; the Elamites, from Elam; the Ionians, from Javan; with several others produced by ¹Grotius, ²Montanus, ³Junius, ⁴Pererius, and, more especially, ⁵by Bochart, that most splendid star of France, (as ⁶one calls him upon this occasion,) who, with wonderful learning and industry, has cleared all this part of sacred history, and given a full and satisfactory account of the several places where the posterity of Noah seated themselves after the deluge.

How the large continent of America came to be peopled (since no mention of it is made in the writings of Moses, and so vast a sea separates it from every other part of the known world,) is a question that has exercised the wit of every age since its first discovery. It is worthy our observation, however, that though all the great quarters of the world are, for the most part, separated from each other by some vast extensive ocean; ⁷yet there is always some place or other, where some isthmus or small neck of land is found to conjoin them, or some narrow sea is made to distinguish and divide them. Asia and Africa, for instance, are joined together, by an isthmus which lies between the Mediterranean sea and the Arabian gulf. Upon the coasts of Spain and Mauritania, Europe and Africa are divided by no larger a sea than the Fretum Herculis, or straits of Gibraltar; and above the Palus Meotis, Europe has nothing to part it from Asia but the small river Tanais. America, as it is divided into north and south, is joined together by a neck of land, which, from sea to sea, is not above eighteen leagues over: what separates North America from the northern parts of Asia is only the straits of Anien; or South America, from the most southern parts of Asia, is only the straits of Magellan. And therefore, since Providence, in the formation of the earth, has so ordered the matter, that the principal continents are, at some places or other, either joined together by some little isthmus, or generally separated by some narrow sea; and (what is further to be observed) since most of the capital islands in our part of the hemisphere, such as Sumatra in Asia, Madagascar in Africa, and England in Europe, are generally at no great distance from the continent; we have some reason to presume that there may possibly be a certain neck of land (though not as yet discovered) which may join some part of Asia, or perhaps some part of Europe, to the main continent of America. Or, if we may not be allowed that supposition,

yet ⁸why might not there formerly have been such a bridge (as we may call it) between the south-east part of China and the most southern continent of this new world, though now broken off (as ⁹some suppose England to have been from France) by the violent concussions of the sea; as indeed the vast number of islands which lie between the continent of China and New Guinea (which are the most contiguous to each other) would induce one to think, that once they were all one continued tract of land, though, by the irruption of the sea, they are now crumbled into so many little islands?

The difference, however, between the inhabitants of South and North America is so remarkably great, that there is reason to imagine they received colonies at first from different countries; and therefore some are of opinion, that as the children of Shem, being now well versed in navigation, might, from the coasts of China, take possession of the southern parts; so might the children of Japheth, either from Tartary pass over the straits of Anien, or out of Europe, first pass into Norway, thence into Iceland, thence into Greenland, and so into the northern parts of America. And this they think the more probable, because of the great variety of languages which are observed among the natives of this great continent; a good indication, as one would imagine, of their coming thither at different times and from different places. ^a

⁸ Patrick's Commentary. ⁹ See the New General Atlas.

^a The discoveries of Captain Cook and other celebrated navigators, whilst they have detected the mistakes that prevailed in the days of our author respecting a southern continent and immense oceans in the north, have rendered it much less difficult now than it was then to trace the population of America from Asia and Europe. It appears from Cook's and King's Voyage, vol. 3. p. 272, "that the continents of Asia and North America are usually joined together by ice during the winter. In Behring's Straits, at a place about 66° N. the two coasts are only thirteen leagues asunder, and about midway between them lie two islands, the distance of which from either shore is short of twenty miles. At this place the natives of Asia could find no difficulty in passing over to the opposite coast, which is in sight of their own. That in a course of years such an event would happen cannot admit of a doubt. 'The canoes which we saw,' says Mr Darnell, 'among the Tschutski were capable of performing a much longer voyage; and however rude they may have been at some distant period, we can scarcely suppose them incapable of a passage of six or seven leagues. People might even have been carried over by accident upon floating ice; they might also have travelled across on sledges or on foot, for we have reason to believe that the straits are entirely frozen over in the winter; so that during that season the continents, with respect to the communication between them, may be considered as one.'

North America might likewise have been peopled from Europe. The Lutheran and Moravian missionaries, who first settled in Greenland, have informed us that the north-west coast of that country is separated from America by a very narrow strait: "that at the bottom of the bay into which this strait conducts, it is highly probable that they are united; that the inhabitants of the two countries have some intercourse with one another; that the Esquimaux of America perfectly resemble the Greenlanders in their aspect, dress, and mode of living; that some sailors, who had acquired the knowledge of a few words in the Greenlandish language, reported that these were understood by the Esquimaux; that, at length, a Moravian missionary, well acquainted with the language of Greenland, having visited the country of the Esquimaux, found, to his astonishment, that they spoke the same language with the Greenlanders, that they were in every respect the same people; and he was accordingly received and entertained by them as a friend and a brother."

There can therefore be no doubt, but that either that part of America, which is occupied by the Esquimaux, was first peopled from Greenland, or Greenland from North America. The great historian, however, from whose works these extracts are immedi-

¹ See Annot. b. i. de Verit. ² Phaleg. ³ Gen. x. ⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Phaleg.

⁶ Heidegger.

⁷ Heidegger's Hist. Patriarcharum, vol. i. Essay 22.

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We, indeed, according to the common forms of speech, call those places islands, which are on every side sur-

ately taken, justly observes, that the Esquimaux are the only tribe of Americans who can be rationally supposed to have emigrated from the north of Europe. All the other American nations, from Cape Horn to the northern confines of Labrador, appear to have migrated from the north-east of Asia. "There is (says he) such a striking similitude in the form of their bodies, and the qualities of their minds, that notwithstanding the diversities occasioned by the influence of climate, or unequal progress in improvement, we must pronounce them to be all descended from one source. It is remarkable, that in every peculiarity, whether in their persons or dispositions, which characterize the Americans, they have some resemblance to the rude tribes scattered over the north-east of Asia, but almost none to the nations settled in the northern extremities of Europe. We may therefore refer them to the former origin, and conclude that their Asiatic progenitors, having settled in those parts of America where the proximity of the two continents have been discovered, spread gradually over its various regions. This account of the progress of population in America coincides with the traditions of the Mexicans concerning their own origin, which, imperfect as they are, were preserved with more accuracy, and merit greater credit than those of any other people in the New World. According to them, their ancestors came from a remote country, situated to the north-west of Mexico. The Mexicans point out their various stations as they advanced from this into the interior provinces, and it is precisely the same route which they must have held if they had been emigrants from Asia. The Mexicans, in describing the appearance of their progenitors, their manners, and habits of life at that period, exactly delineate those of the rude Tartars, from whom I suppose them to have sprung." — *Robertson's History of America*, book iv.

This is undoubtedly such an account of the peopling of the New World as ought to satisfy every candid reader. It is, however, true, as Dr Hales observes, that South America may have been peopled by means of the great chain of lately discovered islands scattered between the two vast continents, and successively colonized from Asia; and also on its eastern side, by vessels driven by storms, or trade winds and currents, from the shores of Europe and Africa. There can, indeed, be little doubt, as the same learned author observes, but that such of the tropical isles, in the great South Sea or Pacific Ocean, as are inhabited, were colonized by the Malays, those Phœnicians, as he calls them, of the oriental world; for the Malayan language is found to prevail in some degree through all the various clusters of those isles, from Madagascar westwards, near the African coast, to the remotest of Captain Cook's discoveries, the Marquesas and Easter island, towards South America. Nor let any man object to this theory, by asking what could induce the Malays first to undertake voyages of discovery in so immense an ocean. The discoveries were probably made by ships driven far out of their intended course, to islands from which those who had unexpectedly arrived at them could never return; and this is now well known to have actually happened to barbarians less likely than the Malays to undertake voyages of discovery. Captain Cook, in his last voyage, when carrying back Omai to his native country, discovered the island called Wateoo; and had scarcely landed with his passenger on the beach, when Omai recognised among the crowd three of his own countrymen, natives of the Society Isles. The Society Isles are distant from Wateoo about two hundred leagues; and the account which those men gave of their arrival at that island is extremely affecting, while its truth could not be questioned. "About twenty persons of both sexes had embarked on board a canoe at Otaheite, to cross over to the neighbouring island Alixtea. A violent and contrary wind drove them they knew not whither, to a distance from both islands. They had all perished but four men, when their vessel was overset in sight of Wateoo, when canoes came off and carried them ashore." Had all the persons, male and female, who left Otaheite, been thus driven on a desert island, who can entertain a doubt but that in a short time they would have peopled it; and if a few barbarians were thus carried, in a wretched canoe, not intended for voyages out of sight of land, to an island distant 600 miles, there is surely no difficulty in conceiving that the oriental Phœnicians, in better vessels, and with greater skill in seamanship, may have successively colonized the

rounded by the sea; but the Hebrews were wont to give that name to all maritime countries, such as either had several islands belonging to them, or such as had no islands at all, provided they were divided from Palestine or from Egypt by the sea, and could not conveniently be gone to any other way. ¹ Such are the countries of the Lesser Asia and the countries of Europe, where the descendants of Japheth were seated; and that by these are denoted the isles of the Gentiles, ^a might be evinced from several parallel passages in Scripture. At present we need only take notice, that as the Lesser Asia was from Babel the nearest place of Japheth's allotment, it is very probable that he and his sons continued there for some time, till the increase of their progeny made them send out colonies, which not only peopled the isles of the Mediterranean and Ægean seas, but, passing into Europe, spread themselves farther and farther, till at length they came to take possession of the very island wherein we now live.

To this purpose the writers on this subject have made it appear, that, from their original country, which was Asia Minor, they sent a colony to the Mæotic Lake, on the north of the Euxine sea, and as they were called Cimmerii in Asia, so they gave the name of Bosphorus Cimmerius to the straits we there meet with; that, after this, spreading farther they fell down the Danube, and settled in a country, which ^b from them was called Germany; that from Germany they advanced still farther, till they came into France, for the inhabitants of France (as ^b Josephus tells us) were anciently called Gomerites; and that from France they came into the south part of Britain, and therefore we find that the Welsh (the ancient

¹ Wells' Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 1.

^a Antiq. b. i.

islands between Asia and South America, and at last America itself. Indeed if there be any credit due to the Peruvian traditions concerning the founders of their empire, Manco Capac and his wife must have been far advanced in civilization; and were probably some enlightened Asiatics driven on the Peruvian coast. — See Hales' *Analysis of Chronology*, and Prichard's *Researches into the Physical History of Man* — one of the most satisfactory works on the colonization of the earth, and the varieties of the human species, that I have ever seen.

^a Thus the prophet Isaiah (ch. xi. ver. 10, 11) speaking of the calling of the Gentiles, and of the restoration of the Jews, has these words — 'The Lord shall recover the remnant of his people from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamah, and from the isles of the sea:' where, by the isles of the sea (which is the same with the isles of the Gentiles) we must necessarily understand such countries as are distinct from the countries which are here expressly named; namely, Assyria, Egypt, &c., and, therefore, most likely the countries of Lesser Asia and Europe. The same prophet, in order to show God's omnipotency, speaks in this manner — 'Behold the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold he takes up the isles as a very little thing,' ch. xl. 15. Where, if by isles we mean those which we call strictly so, the comparison of the disparity is lost, because those which we call isles are indeed very little things; and therefore the proper signification of the word in this place must be those large countries which were beyond the sea, in regard to Egypt whence Moses came, or Palestine whither he was now going. — *Wells' Geography*, vol. 1. p. 113.

^b The people of this country are called *Germans*, and they call themselves *Germen*, which is but a small variation and easy contraction for *Gomeren*, that is, the *Gomerians*: for the termination *en* is a plural termination in the German language, and from the singular number *Gomer* is formed *Germen*, by the same analogy that from brother we form brethren. — *Wells' Geography*, vol. 1. p. 127, and *Bedford's Script. Chron.* b. ii. c. 4.

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inhabitants of this isle) call themselves Kumero or Cymro; call a woman Kumeraes, and the language they speak Kumeraeg; which several words carry in them such plain marks of the original name from whence they are derived, that if any regard is to be had to etymologies in cases of this nature, we cannot forbear concluding that the true old Britons, or Welsh, are the genuine descendants of Gomer. And since it is observed that the Germans were likewise the descendants of Gomer, particularly the Cymbri, to whom the Saxons, and especially the Angles, were near neighbours, it will hence likewise follow that our ancestors, who succeeded the old Britons^a in the eastern part of this isle, were in a manner descended from Gomer, the first son of Japheth.

Thus we see¹ that the plantations of the world by the sons of Noah and their offspring, recorded by Moses in this tenth chapter of Genesis, and by the inspired author of the first book of Chronicles, are not unprofitable fables, or endless genealogies, but a most valuable piece of history, which distinguishes from all other people that particular nation of which Christ was to come; gives light to several predictions and other passages in the prophets; shows us the first rise and origin of all nations, their gradual increase and successive migrations, cities building, lands cultivating, kingdoms rising, governments settling, and all to the accomplishment of the divine benediction,—² ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth; and the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every other creature.’

CHAP. III.—Of the Sacred Chronology and Profane History, Letters, Learning, Religion, and Idolatry, &c., during this period.

BEFORE we enter upon the history of the world, as it is delivered in some heathen authors, from the time of the flood to the calling of Abraham, it may not be improper to settle the sacred chronology; and that the rather, because the difference is very considerable, as appears by the subsequent table, according as we follow the computation of the Hebrew text, of the Samaritan copies, of the Greek interpreters, or of Josephus. But, before we come to this, we must observe, that in the catalogue which we refer to, Moses takes notice of no other branch

¹ Millar's Church History, ch. i. per. 2. ² Gen. ix. 1, 2.

^a To show how the western part of our island came likewise to be peopled, the above-cited author of Scripture chronology supposes, that when Joshua made his conquests in the land of Canaan, several of the inhabitants of Tyre, being struck with the terror of his arms, left their country, and being skilled in the art of navigation, sailed into Africa, and there built a city called Carthage, or the “city of the wanderers,” as he interprets the word; that the Syrians and Phœnicians, being always considerable merchants, and now settling in a place convenient for their purpose, began to enlarge their trade; and, coasting the sea shore of Spain, Portugal, and France, happened at length to chop upon the islands called Cassiterides, now the islands of Scilly, whereof he gives us a description from Strabo; that, having here fallen into a trade for tin and lead, it was not long before they discovered the Land's End, on the west side of Cornwall, and finding the country much more commodious than Scilly, removed from thence, and here made their settlement. And this conjecture he accounts more feasible, by reason of the great affinity between the Cornish language and the ancient Hebrew Phœnician.—B. ii. c. 4, p. 195.

of Noah's family, but only that of Shem and his descendants in a direct line to Abraham; and the different computations³ relating to them may be best perceived by the following table:—

	Heb	Sam	Sept	Josephus restored by Hales	Heb	Sam	Sept	Josephus restored by Hales	Heb	Sam	Sept	Josephus restored by Hales
After the flood												
1. Shem was...	2	2	2	2	500	500	500	500	600			600
2. Arphaxad....	35	135	135	135	403	303	330	303	438			438
3. Cainan.....	0	0	130	0	0	8	330	0	9			9
4. Eber.....	30	130	130	130	403	303	330	303	433			433
5. Peleg.....	34	134	134	134	430	270	270	270	404			404
6. Reu.....	32	132	132	132	207	107	207	107	239			239
7. Serug.....	30	130	130	130	200	100	200	100	230			230
8. Nahor.....	28	78	79	79	119	69	120	69	145			145
9. Terah the father of Abraham.	70	70	70	70 at the birth of Haran, 130 at the birth of Abraham.					75	205	145	205
In all	232	942	1072	1002								
	Before they had children.				After they had children.				At their deaths.			

Now, whoever casts his eye into this table may easily perceive, that except the variations which may possibly have been occasioned by the negligence of transcribers, the difference between the Samaritan and Septuagint chronology, and that of Josephus, is so very small, that one may justly suspect that the Samaritan has been transcribed from the Septuagint, on purpose to supply some defect in its copy, and that Josephus had, for some reason or other, adopted the chronology of the same version; but that the difference between the Greek and Hebrew chronology is so very great, that the one or other of them must be egregiously wrong; because the Seventy do not only add a patriarch, named Cainan, never mentioned in the Hebrew, and so make eleven generations from Shem to Abraham instead of ten; but, in the lives of most of these patriarchs, they insert 100 years before they came to have children, that is, they make them fathers 100 years later than the Hebrew text does, though (to bring the matter to a compromise) they generally deduct them in the course of their lives.

On both sides have appeared men of great learning; but they who assert the cause of the Septuagint, are not unmindful to urge the testimony of St Luke, who,⁴ between Arphaxad and Salah, has inserted the name of Cainan, which (as he was an inspired writer) he could never have done, had not the Septuagint been right in correcting the Hebrew Scriptures: besides that, the numbers in the Septuagint give time for the propagation of mankind, and seem to agree better with the history of the first kingdoms of the world.

On the other hand, they who abide by the Hebrew text, cannot think that the authority of the Septuagint is so sacred as their adversaries imagine. Upon examination they find many things added, many things omitted, and, through the whole, so many faults almost every where occurring, that “were a man to recount them all” as St Jerom⁵ expresses it, “he would be obliged not only to write one, but many books;” “nor need we seek for distant examples of this kind,”⁷ says Bochart, “since this very genealogy is all full of anachronisms, vastly different both from the Hebrew and the vulgar version.”

³ Usher's Chron. Sacr. c. 2. ⁴ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 1. b. 3. Ch. iii. 36. ⁵ On Jeremiah xvi. ⁷ Phaleg. b. ii. c. 2.

^a This is according to the Alexandrian manuscript; in the Vatican it is 125.

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Editions moreover there were of an ancient date, which, in imitation of the Alexandrian manuscript preserved by Origen in his Hexapla, had none of this insertion. Both Philo and Josephus, though they make use of the Septuagint version, know nothing of Cainan; and Eusebius and Africanus, though they took their accounts of these times from it, have no such persons among their postdiluvians; and therefore¹ it is highly reasonable to believe, that this name crept into the Septuagint through the carelessness of some transcriber, who, inattentive to what he was about, inserted an antediluvian name (for such a person there was before the flood) among the postdiluvians, and having no numbers for his name, wrote the numbers belonging to Salah twice over.

Since therefore the Hebrew text, in all places where we find Noah's posterity enumerated, takes not the least notice of Cainan, but always declares Salah to be the immediate son and successor of Arphaxad;² we must either say that Moses did, or that he did not know of the birth of this pretended patriarch: if he did not, how came the LXX. interpreters by the knowledge of what Moses, who lived much nearer the time, was a diligent searcher into antiquity, and had the assistance of a Divine spirit in every thing he wrote, was confessedly ignorant of? If he did know it, what possible reason can be assigned for his concealing it, especially when his insertion or omission of it make such a remarkable variation in the account of time, from the flood to the call of Abraham, unless he was minded to impose upon us by a false or confused chronology, which his distinct observation of the series of the other generations, and his just assignment of the time which belonged to each, will not suffer us to think.

Rather, therefore, than impeach this servant of God (who has this testimony upon record, that⁴ 'he was faithful in all his house') either of ignorance or ill intent, we may affirm (with Bochart and his followers) that St Luke never put Cainan into his genealogy, (for as much as^a it is not to be found in some of the best manuscripts of the New Testament) but that some transcribers, finding it in the Septuagint, and not in St Luke, marked it down in the margin of their copies as an omission in the copies of St Luke; and so later copiers and editors, finding it thus in the margin, took it at last into the body of the text, as thinking, perhaps, that this augmentation of years might give a greater scope to the rise of kingdoms, which otherwise might be thought too sudden: whereas (if we will believe a very competent judge of this matter) "those who contend for the numbers of the Septuagint, must either reject, as some do, the concurrent testimony of the heathen Greeks, and the Christian fathers, concerning the ancient kingdoms of Assyria and Egypt, or must remove all those monarchies farther from the flood.

Nor must the testimony of Varro be overlooked, which tells us, that there were but 1600 years between the first flood and the Olympiads; whereas this number is exceeded seven or eight hundred years by the Septuagint's account. These, and several other considerations,' says he, "incline me to the Hebrew numbers of the patriarchs generating, rather than to the Septuagint's; because, by the numbers of the Septuagint, there must be about 900 years between the flood and the first year of Ninus, which certainly is too much distance between a grandfather and a grandchild's beginning to reign."

Thus it seems reasonable to suppose, that the interpolation of the name of Cainan in the Septuagint version, might be the work of some ignorant and pragmatical transcriber: and in like manner, the addition and subtraction of several hundred years, in the lives of the fathers beforementioned, might be effected by such another instrument,⁶ who, thinking perhaps that the years of the antediluvian lives were but lunar ones, and computing that at this rate the six fathers (whose lives are thus altered) must have had their children at five, six, seven, and eight years old, which could not but look incredible, might be induced to add the 100 years, in order to make them of a more probable age of manhood, at the birth of their respective children. Or, if he thought the years of their lives to be solar, yet still he might imagine, that infancy and childhood were proportionably longer in men, who were to live 7, 8, or 900 years, than they are in us; and that it was too early in their lives for them to be fathers at sixty, seventy, or eighty years of age; for which reason he might add the 100 years, to make their advance to manhood (which is commonly not till one fourth part of our days is near over), proportionable to what was to be the ultimate term of their lives.^b

⁶ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 1. b. v. ex Lud. Capelli, Chron. Sacra in Apparatu Walton ad Bibl. Polyglot.

^b This last observation respecting the proportion that the length of the period before puberty bears to the longevity of men and of all other animals, is well founded, has been already shown in the discussion concerning the antediluvian chronology of the Hebrew Scriptures; and it is almost needless to observe, that the Jews who corrupted the Hebrew chronology, had the very same reason for curtailing the period between the flood and the birth of Abraham, as for shortening the distance between the origin of the human race and the flood. Their object in both cases, was to prove by the authority of their own Scriptures, to which the Christians as well as they appealed, that Jesus of Nazareth had come into the world a thousand years earlier than the period decreed for the advent of the Messiah promised to their fathers. With this view, as they had sunk 600 years in the successive generations of the antediluvian patriarchs, they chose to sink 700 in the generations of those descendants of Shem, from whom had sprung Abraham, the founder of their own nation, and the ancestor as well of Jesus of Nazareth as of the promised Messiah.

Notwithstanding all that has been said in favour of the immaculate purity of the Hebrew Scriptures, the postdiluvian genealogy of those Scriptures in their present state, furnishes internal evidence of its own corruption more striking perhaps than even that by which the corruption of the antediluvian genealogy has been detected. In the antediluvian genealogy the sums total of the lives of the several patriarchs are uniformly given; but in the postdiluvian genealogy, they are all, except the life of Abraham, as uniformly omitted, though retained in the Samaritan copy. This cannot have been done but for some sinister purpose; and indeed the absurdity in which the editors of the present text have involved themselves in their genealogy of Terah and Abraham, shows how unsafe it would have been to persist in their short generations, and at the same time to give the ages of the several

¹ Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs, vol. 2. Essay 1.

² Shuckford's Connection, vol. 1. b. 2.

³ Heidegger's History of the Patriarchs, vol. 2. Essay 1.

⁴ Heb. iii. 2.

⁵ Bishop Cumberland's Origin. Antiquis. p. 177, &c.

^a The ancient manuscript of the Gospels and Acts, both in Greek and Latin, which Beza presented to the university of Cambridge, wants it; nor is it to be found in some manuscripts which Archbishop Usher, in his Chron. Sacr., p. 32, makes mention of.—*Millar's History of the Church*, ch. i. period 2.

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This seems to be the only method of reconciling the difference between the Septuagint version and the Hebrew text, in point of chronology; and now to proceed to what we find recorded in profane history, during this period.

After the dispersion of nations, the only form of government that was in use for some time, was paternal, when fathers of nations were as kings, and the eldest of families as princes; but as mankind increased, and their ambition grew higher, the dominion which was founded in nature, gave place to that which was acquired and established by power.

In early ages, a superiority of strength or stature was the most engaging qualification to raise men to be kings and rulers. The Ethiopians, ¹ as Aristotle informs us, made choice of the tallest persons to be their princes; and though Saul was made king of Israel by the special appointment of God, yet it appears to have been a circumstance not inconsiderable in the eyes of the people, ² 'that he was a choice young man, and goodly, and that there was not, among the children of Israel, a goodlier man than he:' but when experience came to convince men that other qualifications, besides stature and strength were necessary for the people's happiness, they then chose persons of the greatest wisdom and prudence for their governors. ³ Some wise and understanding men, who knew best how to till and cultivate the ground, to manage cattle, to prune and plant fruit trees, &c., took into their families, and promised

to provide for such as would become their servants, and submit to their directions: and thus, in continuance of time, heads of families became kings; their houses, together with the near habitations of their domestics, became cities; their servants, in their several occupations and employments, became wealthy and considerable subjects; and the inspectors and overseers of them, became ministers of state, and managers of the public affairs of the kingdom.

In the first beginning of political societies, almost every town (as we may suppose) had its own king, ⁴ who, more attentive to preserve his dominions than to extend them, restrained his ambition within the bounds of his native country; till disputes with neighbours (which were sometimes unavoidable) jealousy of a more powerful prince, an enterprising genius, or martial inclination, occasioned those wars which often ended in the absolute subjection of the vanquished; whose possessions, falling into the power of the conqueror, enlarged his dominions, and both encouraged and enabled him to push on his conquests by new enterprises.

Nimrod was the first man we meet with in Scripture, who made invasions upon the territories of others: for he dispossessed Ashur, the son of Shem, who had settled himself in Shinar, and obliged him to remove into Assyria, whilst himself seized on Babylon, and having repaired, and not a little enlarged it, made it the capital of his kingdom.

⁵ This city was situated on both sides of the river Euphrates, having streets running from north to south,

¹ Re Repub. b. 4. c. 4.

² 1 Sam. ix. 2.

³ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 6.

patriarchs at their respective deaths. The omission, however, it must be confessed, appears to have prevailed at an early period in the Hebrew text; for, as Dr Hales observes, it occurs also in the present copies of the Septuagint, and in all the other ancient versions.

"Still, however, the Septuagint furnishes evidence of the omission, by retaining the last words, found uniformly in the Samaritan text, *και εν τω εσθιω*—and he died, throughout the whole. There cannot, therefore, remain a doubt, that the total lives were originally inserted in the ancient Jewish Hebrew copies, as well as in the Samaritan; no less than the total lives of the antediluvian patriarchs, in both Hebrew texts, and in all the ancient versions. And the centenary addition to the generations of the first seven patriarchs after the flood, is now fully established, by the triple evidence of the Samaritan text, the Septuagint version, and Josephus."

The same learned chronologer has proved likewise that the short Hebrew computation is absurd in itself, and inconsistent with history sacred and profane. 1. Eusebius well remarks; "The error of the Jewish Hebrew text is evident from this; that it makes Abraham and Noah contemporaries; for since, according to that text, there are no more than 292 years from the flood to Abraham; and since, according to the same text, Noah survived the flood 350 years; it follows that he lived to the fifty-eighth year of Abraham, which is absurd. 2. Upon this supposition, idolatry must have begun and prevailed, and the patriarchal government have been overthrown by Nimrod and the builders of Babel, during the lifetime of the second founder of the human race, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth," which is surely in a high degree improbable. 3. "If Shem lived until the 110th year of Isaac, and the fiftieth of Jacob, why was not he included in the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham and his family?" Or, if this was not compatible with God's general scheme of revelation, "Why was Shem passed over without notice in the history of the most illustrious members of his own family, with whom he was contemporary?" 4. "How could the earth be so populous in Abraham's days, or the mighty kingdoms of Assyria and Egypt be so soon established after the deluge?"

⁴ Justin, b. i. c. 1.

⁵ Prideaux's Connection.

To this last question, our author produces a reply from Sir Isaac Newton's chronology, which is certainly not one of the most valuable of that immortal author's works. To prove that the world was but thinly peopled in the days of Abraham, Sir Isaac observes that four great kings with their armies were pursued and beaten by Abraham, though the whole force that he and the princes in alliance with him brought into the field amounted only to 318 men. But, answers our author, we learn from the joint testimony of Scripture and Josephus, that Abraham and his three friends defeated the enemy by stratagem; for they overtook them on the fifth night, and attacked them on two different sides of their camp, when they were oppressed by sleep and wine. Newton proceeds to say, that at the birth of Moses, Egypt was so thinly peopled, that Pharaoh said the Israelites were more numerous and mighty than the Egyptians, and therefore ordered their male children to be drowned as soon as born; but this is not what Pharaoh is, in Scripture, represented as having said of the Israelites. We are there told, that he said, 'Come let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply: and it come to pass, that when there falleth out war, they join themselves to our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land.' Here it is evident that Pharaoh did not then consider the Israelites as more or mightier than the Egyptians, or that he was even afraid of their ever becoming so without foreign aid; and the multitudes, with whom he pursued them when they afterwards actually got up out of the land under the command of the same Moses, furnish a complete proof that Egypt must have been, not only then, but for many generations, a populous and powerful kingdom.

The present Hebrew computation of time from the flood to the birth of Abraham is therefore undoubtedly erroneous; but the computation of the Septuagint is not to be followed implicitly. The insertion of Cainan between Arphaxad and Salah is unquestionably an interpolation; and it is not without other errors. The computation that comes nearest to the truth is that of Josephus as restored by Dr Hales; and on that account it has been inserted into the preceding table in addition to the Hebrew, Samaritan, and Septuagint computations published in all the former editions of this work.—Bp. Gleig.

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parallel with the river, and others from east to west. ^a The compass of the wall, which was surrounded with a vast ditch filled with water, was 480 furlongs, that is, about sixty miles; the height of it, 350 feet, and the breadth so vastly great, that carts and carriages might meet on the top of it, and pass one another without danger. Over the Euphrates (which cut the city into two equal parts, from north to south) there was a stately bridge, and at each end of the bridge, ^b a magnificent palace, the one of four and the other of eight miles' circumference; and belonging to the larger palace, were those hanging gardens, which had so celebrated a name among the Greeks. They were made in form of a square of 400 feet on every side, and were carried up aloft into the air, in the manner of several large terraces, one above another, till they came up to the height of the walls of the city. They were sustained by vast arches built upon arches, one above another, and strengthened by a wall on every side, that was twenty-two feet thick; and as they wanted no plants or flowers fit for a garden of pleasure, so there are said to have grown in them trees, which were no less than eight cubits thick in the body, and fifty feet in height. But this among other pompous things appertaining to this city, was the work of ages, subsequent to Nimrod, and built by Nebuchadnezzar, to gratify his wife Amytis, who, being the daughter of Astyages, king of Media, and much pleased with the mountainous and woody parts of her own country, was desirous of having something like it in Babylon.

From the Assyrians, this great and noble city came into the hands of the Persians, and from them into the hands of the Macedonians. Here it was that Alexander the Great died; but not long after his death the city began to decline apace, by the building of Selucia, about forty miles above it, by Seleucus Nicanor, who is said to have erected this new city in spleen to the Babylonians, and to have drawn out of Babylon 500,000 persons to people it; so that the ancient city was, in the time of Curtius the historian, lessened a fourth part; in the time of Pliny, reduced to desolation; in the days of St Jerom, turned into a park, wherein the kings of Persia used to hunt; and, according to the relation ^c of some late travellers, is now reduced to one

^a It must be observed, however, that all this compass of ground was not really built upon, for the houses stood at a considerable distance, with gardens and fields interspersed; so that it was a large city in scheme, rather than in reality.—*Prideaux's Connection*, part 1. b. 2.

^b The old palace (which was probably built by Nimrod) stood on the east side of the river, and the new one (which was built by Nebuchadnezzar) exactly over against it, on the west side.—*Ibid*.

^c Mr Ruewolf, who, in 1574, passed through the place where this once famous city stood, speaks of the ruins of it in the following manner:—"The village of Elugo is now situate where heretofore Babylon of Chaldea stood. The harbour, where people go ashore in order to proceed by land to the city of Bagdad, is a quarter of a league distant from it. The soil is so dry and barren, that they cannot till it; and so naked, that I could never have believed that this powerful city, once the most stately and renowned in all the world, and situated in the fruitful country of Shinar, could have stood there, had I not seen, by the situation of the place, by many antiquities of great beauty, which are to be seen round about, and especially by the old bridge over the Euphrates, whereof some piles and arches, of incredible strength are still remaining, that it certainly did stand there. The whole front of the village Elugo is the hill upon which the castle stood, and the

tower only, called the tower of Daniel, from whence may be seen all the ruins of this once vast and splendid city.

It can hardly be imagined that the first kings were able either to make or execute laws with that strictness and rigour which is necessary in a body of men so large as to afford numerous offenders: and for this reason it seems to have been a prudent institution in Nimrod, when his city of Babylon began to be too populous to be regulated by his inspection, or governed by his influence, to ^d lay the foundation of other cities; by which means he disposed of great numbers of his people, and, putting them under the direction of such deputies as he might appoint, brought their minds by degrees to a sense of government, until the beneficial use of it came to be experienced, and the force and power of laws settled and confirmed. He is supposed to have begun his reign A. M. 1757, to have reigned about 148 years, and to have died A. M. 1905. ^e

About the beginning of Nimrod's reign, Ashur, ^f one of the descendants of Shem, being driven from Babel, as most suppose, by the invasion of Nimrod, led his company on the Tigris, and so settling in Assyria, laid the first foundation of Nineveh, which in process of time exceeded even Babylon itself in size. For, whereas we observed of Babylon, that it was in circuit 488

ruins of its fortifications are still visible, though demolished. Behind, and some little way beyond, is the tower of Babylon, which is half a league diameter, but so ruinous, so low, and so full of venomous creatures, which lodge in the holes they make in the rubbish, that no one durst approach nearer to it than within half a league, except during two months in the winter, when these animals never stir out of their holes.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

^d The cities which he founded are said to be Erec, Accad, and Calne. Erec was the same that occurs in Ptolemy, under the name of Arecca, and which is placed by him at the last, or most southern turning of the common channel of the Tigris and Euphrates. Accad lay northward of Erec, and very probably at the common joining of the Tigris and Euphrates. And Calne (which is said to be the same with Ctesiphon) upon the Tigris, about three miles distant from Seleucia, and was for some time the capital city of the Parthians; for that it was the same with Ctesiphon, seems to be confirmed by the country which lies about it being called Chalontitis, which is evidently derived from Chalne, or Chaho, whereby we find it called in different parts of Scripture.—*Wells's Geography*, vol. 1. c. 5.

^e According to Dr Hales, Nimrod began his reign A. M. 2857, reigned about 98 years, and died A. M. 2955.—*Ed*.

^f Many authors have imagined that Nineveh was not built by Ashur, but by Nimrod himself, because they think it not likely that Moses should give an account of the settlement of one of the sons of Shem, where he is expressly discoursing of Ham's family; and therefore they interpret (as the marginal note directs) Gen. x. 11, 'out of that land went forth Ashur;' he, that is, Nimrod, went forth into Assyria, which is the explanation that I have in some measure followed; but others imagine that Moses is not so exactly methodical, but that, upon mentioning Nimrod and his people, he might hint at a colony which departed from under his government, though it happened to be led by a person of another family; that the land of Ashur and the land of Nimrod are mentioned as two distinct countries in Micah v. 6, and that if Nimrod had built Nineveh, and planted Assyria, Babylon and Assyria would have been but one empire, nor could the one be said to have conquered the other with any propriety: whereas we are expressly told by Diodorus, that the Assyrians conquered the Babylonians; and may thence infer, that before Ninus united them, Babylonia and Assyria were two distinct kingdoms, and not the plantation of one and the same founder.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 1. b. 4.

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furlongs,¹ the description which Diodorus gives us of Nineveh is, that it was 150 furlongs, that is, near nineteen miles in length; ninety furlongs, that is, somewhat above eleven miles in breadth; and 480 furlongs, that is, just sixty miles in circumference; and for this reason it is² called 'an exceeding great city of three days' journey,' according to the common estimation of twenty miles to a day's journey. And equal to the greatness was the strength of this city: for its walls were 100 feet high, and so very broad, that three carts might go abreast on the top of them; whereon were raised 1500 turrets, and each of them 200 feet high, and so very strong, that the place was deemed impregnable,³ till Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, having made an affinity with Astyages, king of Media, entered into a confederacy with him against the Assyrians, and hereupon joining their forces together, they besieged Nineveh, and after having taken the place, and slain the king thereof, to gratify the Medes, they utterly destroyed that ancient city, and from that time Babylon became the metropolis of the Assyrian empire.

Such was the rise and fall of this great city, where Ashur governed his subjects much in the same manner as Nimrod did his in Babylon; for as they increased he dispersed them in the country, and^a having built some other cities along the Tigris, he there settled them under the government of deputies or viceroys.

Whilst Nimrod and Ashur were settling their people in their respective countries, Mizraim, the second son of Ham,^b and who, by heathen writers, is constantly called

Menes, seated himself at first near the entrance of Egypt, and there perhaps built the city of Zoan, which was anciently the habitation of the kings of Egypt; but from Zoan he removed farther into the country, and took possession of those parts, which were afterwards called Thebais, where he built the city of Thebes, and, as Herodotus will have it, the city of Memphis likewise. He reigned sixty-two years, and died A. M. 1943.^c

Belus succeeded Nimrod, and was the second king of Babylon; but whether he was related to his predecessor or not, is a thing uncertain. It seems most likely, that as Nimrod, though a young man in comparison of many then alive, was advanced, for some merit or other, to the regal dignity; so when he died, Belus might appear to be the most proper person, and for that reason was appointed to succeed him: for he is represented a prince of study, the inventor of the Chaldean astronomy, and one who spent his time in cultivating his country and improving his people. He reigned sixty years, and died A. M. 1969.^d

Ashur, king of Nineveh, dying much about this time, Ninus became the second king of Assyria, and proved a man of an ambitious and enterprising spirit. Babylonia lay too near him not to become the object of his desire; and, therefore, making all military preparations for that purpose, he invaded it, and as its inhabitants had no great skill in war, soon vanquished them, and laid them under tribute. His success in this attempt made him begin to think of subjecting other nations; and, as one conquest paved the way for another, in a few years he overran many of the infant states of Asia, and so, by uniting kingdom to kingdom, made a great accession to the Assyrian empire. His last attempt was upon Oxyartes, or Zoroastres, king of Bactria, where he met with a brisker opposition than he had hitherto experienced; but at length, by the contrivance and conduct of Semiramis, the wife of one Memmon, a captain in his army, he took the capital, and reduced the kingdom; but being hereupon charmed with the spirit and bravery of the woman, he fell in love with her, and prevailed with her husband (by giving him his own daughter in lieu of Semiramis in marriage) to consent to his having her for his wife. By her he had a son named Ninvas; and after a reign of fifty-two years he died A. M. 2017.^e

Ninvas was but a minor when his father died; and therefore his mother, who all along had a great sway in the administration of public affairs during her husband's

¹ Wells' Geography.

² Jonah iii. 3.

³ Prideaux's Connection, vol. 1.

^a The cities which Ashur is said to have built were Rehoboth, Resen, and Calah. The word *Rehoboth*, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies streets; and the sacred historian seems to have added the word city, on purpose to show that it was here to be taken as a proper name. Now, as there are no footsteps of this name in these parts, but a town there is, by Ptolemy called BIRTHA, which in the Chaldee tongue denotes the same as does Rehoboth in the Hebrew, in an appellative or common acceptance; it is hence probably conjectured, that Rehoboth and BIRTHA are only two different names of one and the same city, which was seated on the Tigris, about the mouth of the river Lycus. Resen is supposed by most learned men to be the same city which Xenophon mentions under the name of Larissa, and that not only because the situation of this Larissa well enough agrees with the situation of Resen, as it is described by Moses, lying between Nineveh and Calah; but because Moses observes in the same text, that Resen was a great city; in like manner, as Xenophon tells us, that Larissa, though then ruined, had been a large city, of eight miles' circumference, with walls 100 feet high and twenty-five feet broad. And whereas Larissa is a Greek name, and in the days of Xenophon there were no Greek cities in Assyria; for this they account by supposing, that when the Greeks might ask, What city those were the ruins of? the Assyrians might answer Larezen, or of Resen, which Xenophon expressed by Larissa, a name not unlike several cities in Greece. And, lastly, as to Calah, or Calach, since we find in Strabo a country about the head of the river Lycus called Calachene, it is very probable that the said country took this name from Calach, which was one of the capital cities of it. Ptolemy makes mention likewise of a country called Calacine in these parts: and whereas Pliny mentions a people called Classite, through whose country the Lycus runs, there is some reason to suppose, that Classite is a corruption of Calachitæ. — *Wells' Geography*, vol. 1.

^b The person whom Moses calls Mizraim, is, by Diodorus and other heathen writers, commonly called Menes, by Syncellus, Mestram. Menes is supposed to be the first king of Egypt by Herodotus, b. 2. by Diodorus b. 1. by Eratosthenes and Afri-

canus from Manetho; by Eusebius and Syncellus in Chro. Euseb.; and the time of Menes coincides very well with those of Moses' Mizraim, as Sir John Marsham [in his *Can. Chron.* p. 2.] has pretty clearly evinced. — *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 1. b. 4.

^c According to Hales's chronology, Mizraim settled in Egypt A. M. 2798; but whether Mizraim the son of Noah was the same person with Menes, called by the Greek writers the first king of Egypt, is uncertain. According to the same chronologist, Menes began his reign, B. C. 2412; that is, A. M. 2999.

^d Dr Hales, and Bishop Gleig following him, think that Belus and Nimrod were the same person; this, however, is doubtful. See *Bell's Dissertation on the Origin of the Assyrian Empire*, Rollin, vol. 1. pp. 117—122.—Ed.

^e The Ninus of whom all this is said, was not the son of either Ashur or Nimrod, but Ninus II. who succeeded to the Assyrian throne B. C. 1252, and A. M. according to Hales's chronology, 4159.

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lifetime, continued in the government, with the ^a consent and approbation of her subjects. She removed her court from Nineveh to Babylon, which she encompassed with the wall we mentioned before, and adorned with many public and magnificent buildings; and, having thus finished the seat of her empire, and settled all the neighbouring kingdoms under her authority, she raised an army, with an intent to conquer India: but after a long and dangerous war, being tired out with defeats, she was obliged, with the small remainder of her forces, to return home, where, finding herself in disgrace with her people, she resigned the crown and authority to her son, after she had reigned forty-two years, and soon after died, A. M. 2059. ^b

Her son Ninyas began his reign full of a sense of the errors of his mother's administration, and engaged in none of the wars and dangerous expeditions wherein she had harassed and fatigued her people: but though he was not ambitious to enlarge his empire, ¹ yet he took all due care to regulate and settle upon a good foundation the extensive dominions which his parents had left him. By a wise contrivance of annual deputies over his provinces, he prevented many revolts of distant countries, which might otherwise have happened, and his taking up that state of being difficult of access (which was afterwards much improved by eastern monarchs) might perhaps procure him a greater veneration from his subjects. However this be, it is certain that most authors have represented him as a weak and effeminate prince, which might naturally arise, without any other foundation, from his succeeding a father and mother, who were rather too active to enlarge their dominions; as well as from the disposition in most writers to think a turbulent and warlike reign, if victorious, a glorious one, and to overlook an administration that is employed in the silent but more happy arts of peace and good government.

In Egypt, Mizraim had three sons, who, after his death, became the kings of the several parts thereof. Ananim, or rather Anan, was king of the Lower Egypt, or Delta; Naphtuhim, or Naph, of Middle Egypt, or the country about Memphis; and Pathrusim, or Patrus, of the Upper Egypt, or the country of Thebais; and agreeably hereunto, from these three kings did these several countries take their ancient denominations. Of the first of these, namely, Ananim, we have nothing remaining but

¹ Diodorus Siculus, b. 2.

^a Justin, in his history of this woman, informs us, that upon the death of her husband, she made use of the stratagem of personating her son to obtain the empire to herself; but Diodorus, with more probability, ascribes her advancement to her conduct, bravery, and magnanimous behaviour. When she took upon her to be queen, the public affairs were put in the hands to which Ninus, when alive, used generally to commit them; and it is not likely that the people should be uneasy at her governing, who had for several years together, by a series of actions, gained herself a great credit and ascendant over them; especially if we consider, that when she took up the sovereignty, she still pressed forward in a course of action which continually exceeded the expectations of her people, and left no room for any to be willing to dispute her authority.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 1. b. 4.

^b There is no reason to believe that the Semiramis, who enlarged and beautified the city of Babylon, was the wife of Ninus II. Ctesias and Justin, from whom this story is taken, are authors of no credit. It is probable that the great Semiramis was either the mother or the wife of Nabonassar, who really walled Babylon, about B. C. 747, as we learn from Herodotus. *Hales*, vol. 4. p. 51, second edition.

only his name and the time of his death: for after he had reigned sixty-three years, according to Syncellus, he died A. M. 2006.

Of the second, namely, Naphtuhim, we are told that he was the author of the architecture of those ages, had some useful knowledge of physic and anatomy, and taught his subjects (as he learned it from his brother Pathrusim) the use of letters; for to this Pathrusim (whom they call Thyoth) the Egyptians indeed ascribe the invention of all arts and sciences whatever. The Greeks called him Hermes, and the Latins, Mercurius; and while his father Mizraim lived, he is supposed to have been his secretary, and greatly assistant to him in all his undertakings. When his father died, he instructed his brothers in all the knowledge he was master of; and as for his own people, he made wholesome laws for their government; settled their religion and form of worship; and enriched their language by the addition of several words, to express several things which before they had no names for. ^c

This is the best account that we can give of the Babylonian or Assyrian empires, and of the kings that ruled Egypt, for some ages next after the dispersion of mankind. Other nations, no doubt, were settled into regular governments in these times: Canaan was inhabited rather sooner than Egypt; and, ² according to Moses, Hebron, in Canaan, was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt; but as none of those nations made any considerable figure in the first ages, their actions lie in obscurity, and must be buried in oblivion. The few men of extraordinary note that were then in the world lived in Egypt and Assyria; and for this reason we find little or no mention of any other countries until one of these two nations came to send out colonies, which by degrees polished the people they travelled to, and instructed them in such arts and sciences as made them appear with credit in their own age, and (as soon as the use of letters was made public) transmitted their names with honour to posterity.

The knowledge of letters cannot have been of any long standing among us Europeans, who are settled far from the first seats of mankind, and far from the places which the descendants of Noah first planted. "None of the ancient Thracians," ³ says Elian, "knew any thing of letters; nay, the Europeans in general thought it disreputable to learn them, though in Asia they were held in greater request." The Goths, according to the express testimony ⁴ of Socrates, had their letters and writings

² Numb. xiii. 11. ³ Universal History, b. 8. c. 6.

⁴ Hist. Eccles. b. 4. c. 33.

^c It is well observed by Dr Hales, that the Egyptian chronology, at this early period, is a labyrinth, in which the most eminent scholars and antiquaries have lost their way and misled their readers. Unquestionably the best account of it that has fallen in my way, is that which he has furnished himself; but to give, in a note on this work, any abridgment of the discussions by which he endeavours to render it consistent with the chronology of Scripture, or indeed with itself, is impossible. Suffice it to say here, that if Pathrusim be the same with Thoth or Thyoth, he was the son and minister, not of Mizraim the son of Ham, but of Menes, whom our laborious chronologer has proved to have begun his reign, B. C. 2412, and A. M. 2999; that is, at a period earlier, by 990 years, than that at which our author fixes the death of Pathrusim's elder brother. See *Hales' Analysis*, second edition, vol. 4. pp. 400 et seq. as quoted by Bishop Gleig.

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from Ulphilas their bishop, A. D. 370. The Sclavonians received theirs from Methodius, a philosopher, about A. D. 856. The people of Dalmatia had theirs not till St Jerom's, and those of Illyria, not till St Cyril's days, towards the end of the fourth century.

The Latins, who were more early, received their letters (as most authors agree) from the Greeks, and were taught the use of them, either from some of the followers of Pelasgus, who came into Italy about one hundred and fifty years after that Cadmus came into Greece, or from the Arcadians, whom Evander led into those parts about sixty years after Pelasgus.

Among the Greeks, the Ionians were the first who had any knowledge of letters; and they, in all probability, had them from the Phœnicians, who were the followers of Cadmus when he came into Greece; but from whom the Phœnicians had them, has been matter of some dispute. Many considerable writers have derived them directly from Egypt, and are generally agreed, that Thyoth, or Mercury, was the inventor of them. In the early ages, when mankind were but few, and these few employed in the several contrivances for life, it could be but here and there one that had leisure, or perhaps inclination, to study letters: the companies that removed from Babel were most of them rude and uncultivated people; they followed some persons of figure and eminence, who had gained an ascendant over them; and these persons, when they had settled them in distant places, and came to teach them such arts as they were masters of, had every thing they taught them imputed to their own invention, because the poor ignorant people knew no other person that was versed and skilled in them.

Though, therefore, the Egyptians had confessedly the use of letters very early among them, and though their Thyoth or Mercury might be the first who taught others their use, and for that reason be reputed the inventor of them; yet I cannot but think, that Noah and his sons, who had learned them in the old world, taught them to their posterity in the new. For, since mankind subsisted 1600 [probably 2256] years before the flood, it is not very probable that they lived all this while without the use of letters. If they did, how came we by the short annals which we have of the antediluvian ages? But if they did not, it is not unlikely that Noah, being well skilled in the knowledge and use of them, might teach them to his children; and if we pursue the inquiry, and ask from whence Noah attained his knowledge, the most proper reply will be, that he had it from the instruction of his parents, as his parents might have it in their several successions from Adam, and as Adam might have it from God.

And indeed if we consider the nature of letters, it cannot but appear something strange, that an invention so surprising as that of writing is, should be found out in an age, so near the beginning of the world. ¹ Nature may easily be supposed to have prompted men to speak, to try to express their minds to one another by sounds and noises; but that the wit of man should, among its first attempts, find out a way to express words in figures or letters, and to form a method by which they might expose to view all that can be said or thought, and that within the compass of 16, 20, or 24 characters, variously

placed, so as to form syllables and words; that the wit of man, I say, could immediately and directly fall upon a project of this nature, is what exceeds the most exalted notions we can possibly form of his capacity, and must therefore remit us to God (in whom are hid all the treasures of infinite wisdom) for the first invention and contrivance of it.

As soon as the use of letters, whether of divine or human invention, came generally to be known, it is reasonable to think, that all arts and sciences would from thence receive a powerful assistance, and in process of time begin to take root and flourish. But this was a period a little too early to bring them to any great perfection. ² For though Noah and his sons had doubtless some knowledge of the inventions of the antediluvians, and probably acquainted their descendants with such of them as were most obvious and useful in common life; yet it cannot be imagined that any of the more curious arts, or speculative sciences, were improved to any degree (supposing them to be known and invented) till some considerable time after the dispersion. On the contrary, one consequence of that event seems to have been this—that several inventions known to their ancestors were lost, and mankind gradually degenerated into ignorance and barbarity, till ease and plenty had given them leisure to polish their manners, and to apply themselves to such parts of knowledge as are seldom brought to perfection under other circumstances.

The inhabitants of Babylon indeed are supposed to have had a great knowledge in astronomical matters, much about this time; ³ for when Alexander the Great took possession of that city, Callisthenes the philosopher, who accompanied him, upon searching into the treasures of the Babylonian learning, found that the Chaldeans had a series of observations for 1903 years backwards from that time; that is, from the 1771st year of the world's creation forwards. But this is a notion that we have already confuted; as indeed the nature of the thing will teach us, that upon the first settlement in any country, a nation could not but find employment enough (at least for some ages) in cultivating their lands, and providing themselves houses and other necessities for their mutual comfort and subsistence.

Ninus and Semiramis are supposed to have improved vastly the arts of war and navigation about this period; for, ^a we read of armies consisting of some millions of

² Universal History, b. 1. c. 2.

³ Simplicius de Cælo, b. 2. com. 46.

^a The history of the Assyrian empire, as we have it in Diodorus Siculus, b. 2, c. 1—22, and in Justin, b. 1, c. 1, 2, is, in the substance of it, to this effect:—The first who extended this empire was Ninus, who being a warlike prince, and desiring to do great things, gathered together the stoutest men in the country, and having trained them up to the use of arms, entered into an alliance with Ariæus, king of Arabia, by whose assistance he subdued the Babylonians, and imposed a tribute on them, after he had taken their king captive, and killed him with his children. Then having entered Armenia with a great army, and destroyed several cities, he so terrified the rest, that king Barzanes submitted to him. After this he vanquished Pharnus king of Media in battle, crucified him and his wife, and seven children; and in the space of seventeen years overcame all Asia, except India and Bactria; but no author declares the particulars of his victories. Of the maritime provinces, he subdued, according to Ctesias, whom we follow, (says Diodorus,) Egypt, Phœnicia, the

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horse and foot; and of fleets and galleys with brazen beaks, to transport the forces over a river only, to the number of two thousand. But all that narration of Diodorus and Justin, as it is acknowledged to be taken from Ctesias (whom ^a all the best critics of antiquity look upon as an author deserving no credit) may very justly be accounted false and fabulous. And though it cannot be denied that the invention of shipping, which was not before the flood (for had it been before, more than Noah and his family might have saved themselves from the waters) is a great step towards the improvement of commerce; yet, as the dispersion of mankind made it more difficult to trade with nations who spoke a different language, so the method whereunto we may suppose they entered at

Lower Syria, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Lycia; and besides these, Caria, the Phrygias, Lydia, Mysia, Troas, together with the Propontis, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and all the barbarous nations, as far as the Tanais; with Persia, Susiana, Caspiana, and many other nations that we need not here enumerate. From this last expedition, as soon as he returned, he built a city which he called by his own name, Ninus, not far from the river Euphrates; and being afterwards enamoured with the beauty and valour of a woman of uncertain birth, named Semiramis, the wife of Menon, the prefect of Syria, he took her to wife, and by her advice and direction governed all things with success. For having gathered together an army of seventeen hundred thousand foot, and two hundred and ten thousand horse, and six hundred thousand armed chariots, (numbers incredible in those days,) with these he advanced against Oxyartes, king of Bactria, who met him with an army of four hundred thousand men; but the Bactrians being defeated, and their capital, by the valour and direction of Semiramis, taken, she was thereupon advanced by Ninus to the honour of being made queen, which occasioned her husband Menon, to hang himself. After Ninus had thus settled his affairs in Bactria, his wife Semiramis had a son whom he named Ninyas, and not long after died, leaving the administration of the kingdom in his wife's hands; who, to raise her own glory, built a stately monument for her deceased husband, built the city of Babylon, and other remarkable places; and then, having brought Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya, all the way to the temple of Jupiter Hammon, under her jurisdiction, returned into Asia; where she had not been long before, hearing that Staprobates or Staurobates, king of India, governed a rich country, she resolved to take it from him. To this purpose she prepared a great army and fleet; but being told what mighty elephants there were in India, in order to have something like them, she caused three hundred thousand hides of oxen to be dressed and stuffed with straw, under which there was a camel to bear the machine, and a man to guide it, which at a distance made a kind of resemblance of these vast creatures. Her army consisted of three millions of foot, one million of horse, and an hundred thousand chariots; of an hundred thousand of those that fought on camels; of two hundred thousand camels for the baggage, and two thousand galleys with brazen heads, to transport her army over the river Indus. But all this must be false and fabulous; because it is incredible to think, either that her own country should supply, or that the country wherinto she was marching, should be able to sustain such an immense number of men and other creatures as are here related. Besides that it is, false in fact, that the kings of Assyria ever governed all Asia, or stretched their conquests over Egypt and Libya.—*Millar's History of the Church*, c. 1, part 3.

^a This Ctesias was a native of Cnidus, and physician to Artaxerxes Mnemon. He wrote a Persian history in three and twenty books, of which there remain only a few fragments preserved by Photius. But very valuable authors, who have seen Ctesias when prefect, give him no commendable character. Plutarch (in Artaxerxes) calls him a fabulous vain man, and a great liar. A. Gellius (Noctes Attice, b. 9. c. 4.) reckons him among the fabulous writers; and Aristotle (in his *Historia Animalium*) says, that he was an author who deserves no credit; as indeed if we will judge either by the incredible things in his story, or by what he says of the Indian or Persian affairs, in his fragments that remain, we shall have reason to conclude that these great men have not given him this character without good grounds.—*Millar's History*, *ibid.*

first, extended no farther than this:—That the colonies who planted new countries, not only perceiving their own wants, from the conveniences they had left behind them, but finding likewise something useful in their settlements which were before unknown to them or their founders, fetched what they wanted from the parts where they formerly dwelt, and in exchange for that carried what they had discovered in their new plantations thither, and this seems to have given the first rise to traffic and foreign trade, whose gradual advances we may have occasion to take notice of hereafter. In the mean time, we shall conclude this book and this chapter together, with an account of the religion which at this time obtained in the most famous nations of the world, and observe withal by what means it came to degenerate into idolatry, and other wicked and superstitious practices.

Now, besides the common notion of a God, which men might either learn from tradition, or collect by their own reflection; the very history of the deluge, which had not so long ago befallen the world, could not but instruct and confirm the generations we are now treating of, in several articles of their religion. If they had the account of this remarkable judgment transmitted to them in all its circumstances, they could not but entertain these conceptions of God. That he takes cognizance of the things which are done here on earth; that he is a lover of virtue, and a severe punisher of vice; that he is infinite in power, by commanding the winds and rains, seas and elements, to execute his will; that he is likewise infinite in mercy, in forewarning the wicked of their ruin (as he did the old world) several years before its execution; and that therefore a being of such a nature and disposition was to be served, and worshipped, and feared, and obeyed. So that the sum of religion, in the ages subsequent to the flood, even to the promulgation of the law, must have consisted in the belief of a God, and his sacred attributes; in the devout worship of him, by the oblation of prayers and praises, and such sacrifices as he himself had instituted; and in the observance of those eternal rules of righteousness, of justice and mercy, of sobriety and temperance, &c., which, if not expressly delivered to the sons of Noah, were nevertheless deducible from the nature of things, and the relations wherein mankind stood toward one another.

And now, if we look into the principal nations which were at this time existing, we shall find, that ¹ the Persians, above all other people, were remarkable for having amongst them a true account of the creation of the world, and its destruction by water; which they strictly adhered to, and made the foundation of their religion; nor have we any reason to think but that they were for some time, very zealous professors of it, though by degrees, they came to corrupt it, by introducing novelties and fancies of their own into both their faith and practice: we shall find ² that many of the ancient Arabians preserved the true worship of God for several ages, whereof Job, who perhaps lived in the days now under consideration, was a memorable instance; as was likewise Jethro, the priest of Midian, in the days of Moses: we shall find, that the Canaanites of old were of the same religion with Abraham; for though he travelled up

¹ Hyde's *Relig. Vet. Persarum*, c. 3.

² Shuckford's *Connection*, vol. 1. b. 5.

A. M. 1597. A. C. 2007; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3318. A. C. 2003. GEN. CH. x. AND CH. xi. VER. 10. TO THE END.

and down many years in their country, yet was he respected by the inhabitants of it as a person in great favour with God; and Melchisedek, the king of Salem, who was the 'priest of the most high God,' and consequently of the same religion, received him with this address, ¹ 'Blessed be Abraham, servant of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:' we shall find from Abimelech's prayer, upon his receiving intimation that Sarah was Abraham's wife, that among the Philistines there were some true worshippers of the God of heaven, ² 'Lord, wilt thou slay a righteous nation? said he unto me, she is my sister; and she, even she herself, said, he is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this:' we shall find, that the Egyptians allowed no mortal creature to be a god; professed to worship nothing but their god Cneph, ³ whom they affirmed to be without beginning and without end; and though in the mythologic times, ⁴ they represented this deity by the figure of a serpent with the head of an hawk, in the middle of a circle, yet they affirmed at the same time, that the god whom they thus represented was the creator of all things,—a being incorruptible and eternal, with several other attributes becoming the Divine nature. In short, we shall find that all the nations then known in the world, not only worshipped the same God, whom they called the Maker and Creator of the universe, but worshipped him likewise in the same form and manner; that they had all the like sacrifices, either expiatory, to make atonement for their sins; precatory, to obtain favours from Almighty God; propitiatory, to avert his judgments; or eucharistical, to return thanks for his extraordinary mercies; and that all these sacrifices were every where offered upon altars, with some previous purifications, and other ceremonies to be observed by the offerer: so that religion in every nation, for some time after the flood, both in principle and practice, was the same, till some busy and pragmatial heads being minded to make some improvements (as they thought), added their own speculations to it, and so both destroyed its uniformity, and introduced its corruption.

When this corruption of religion was first introduced, is not so easy a matter to determine, because neither sacred nor profane history have taken any notice of it. Those, ⁵ who account idolatry one of the sins of the antediluvian world, suppose that Ham being married into the wicked race of Lamech, retained a strong inclination for such a false worship; and that, after he was cursed by his father Noah, and separated from the posterity of Shem, he soon set it up. Those ⁶ who imagine that the tower of Babel was a monument intended for the honour of the sun, which had dried up the waters from off the face of the earth, must suppose that the worship of that planet began when the remembrance of the deluge was fresh in men's minds; but those ⁷ who are of opinion that the difference of men's dialects, and the difference of their sentiments concerning God might not improperly commence together, must date the first institution

of idolatry not a great deal lower than the time of the dispersion.

⁸ The generality of Christian fathers, as well as oriental writers, are positive in their assertions, that the first appearance of idolatry was in the days of Serug: "Because as Enoch," say they, "was the seventh from Adam, in whose time the general impiety before the flood is said to have begun; so Serug, being in like manner the seventh from Noah, lived at a proper distance for such a corruption of religious worship to be introduced and grow." but this is a reason too trifling to be taken notice of. "Nor can I see," ⁹ says our learned Selden, "how they can be able to maintain their opinions, who determine so peremptorily concerning a matter of so distant and uncertain a nature."

But whatever the date of idolatry might be, it is certain that it had its first birth, not in Egypt, as some have maintained, but in Chaldea, as the most reverend author of the Treatise of Idolatry has evinced; ¹⁰ and that because in the days of Abraham we find all other nations and countries adhering to the true account of the creation and deluge, and worshipping the God of heaven according to what had been revealed to them; whereas the Chaldeans had so far departed from his worship, and were so zealous in their errors and corruptions, that upon Abraham's family refusing to join with them, they expelled them their country, and ¹¹ cast them out from the face of their gods."

The Chaldeans indeed, by reason of the plain and even situation of their country, which gave them a larger prospect of the heavenly bodies than those who inhabited mountainous places, had a great conveniency for astronomical observations, and accordingly were the first people who took any great pains to improve them. And as they were the first astrologers, ¹² so learned men have observed, that lying on the ground, or else on flat roofs all night, to make their observations, they fell in love with the lights of heaven, which in the clear firmament of those countries, appeared so often and with so much lustre; and perceiving the constant and regular order of their motions and revolutions, they thence began to imagine that they were animated with some superior souls, and therefore deserved their adoration; and as the sun excelled all the rest, so the generality of learned men have with good reason imagined, that this bright luminary was the first idol in the world.

Among the Egyptians, ¹³ Syphis king of Memphis was the first who began to speculate upon such subjects. He examined what influence the sun and moon had upon the terrestrial globe; how they nourished and gave life and vigour to all things; and thereupon, forgetting what his ancestors had taught him, namely, that 'in the beginning God created the heavens, as well as the earth,' the sun and moon, as well as the creatures of this lower world, he concluded that they were two great and mighty deities, and accordingly commanded them to be worshipped.

The Persians perhaps ¹⁴ were never so far corrupted as to lose entirely the knowledge of the Supreme God.

¹ Gen. xiv. 19.

² Gen. xx. 5.

³ Plutarch de Iside et Osiride, p. 359.

⁴ Eusebius's Præp. Evan. b. 1. c. 10.

⁵ Bedford's Scripture Chronology, b. 2. c. 6.

⁶ See Tennison on Idolatry.

⁷ Cyril Alex. contra Julian, b. 1.

⁸ Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 1.

⁹ De Diis Syris, proleg. 3.

¹⁰ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 1. b. 5.

¹¹ Judith v. 8.

¹² Tennison on Idolatry.

¹³ Diodorus, b. 1.

¹⁴ Hymn's Relig. Vet. Persarum, c. 1.

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They saw those celestial bodies running their courses, as they thought, day and night, over all the world, and reviving and invigorating all the parts and products of the earth; and though they kept themselves so far right, as not to mistake them for the true God, yet they imagined them to be his most glorious ministers; and not taking care to keep strictly to what their forefathers had taught them, they were led away by their own imaginations, to appoint an idolatrous worship for beings that had been created, and by nature were not gods.

What kind of idolatry was current among the Canaanites, Moses sufficiently intimates in the caution he gives the Israelites, just going to take possession of it, namely, that ¹ 'when they lifted up their eyes to heaven, and saw the sun and moon, and stars, even all the hosts of heaven,' they should not, as the inhabitants of the country were, be driven to worship and to serve them. And that this was the customary worship among the Arabians, the justification which Job makes of himself is a sufficient proof; ² 'If I beheld the sun, when it shined, or the moon, walking in brightness, and mine heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand,' that is, if with devotion of soul, or profession of outward respect, I have worshipped those heavenly bodies, which by their height, motion, and lustre, attract the eye and ravish the senses, 'this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for then I should have denied the God that is above.' And therefore the account ³ which the Greek historian gives us of the origin of this kind of idolatry is more than probable, namely, that the most ancient inhabitants of the earth, (meaning those who lived not long after the flood, and particularly the Egyptians,) 'contemplating on the world above them, and being astonished with high admiration at the nature of the universe, believed that they were eternal gods, and that the two principal of them were the sun and the moon, the former of which they called Osiris, and the latter Isis:' since, of later years, upon the discovery of America, though many different idols were found in different places, yet as for the sun, it was the universal deity both in Mexico and Peru.

But whatever the first idol might be, it soon multiplied into such a prodigious number as to fill both heaven and earth with its progeny; insomuch, that there are not three parts of the creation but what in one nation or other had their worshippers. ⁴ They worshipped universal nature, the soul of the world, angels, devils, and the souls of men departed, either separate and alone, or in union with some star or other body. They worshipped the heavens, and in them both luminaries and constellations; the atmosphere, and in it the meteors and fowls of the air; the earth, and in it beasts, birds, insects, plants, groves, and hills, together with divers fossils and terrestrial fire. They worshipped the water, and in it the sea and rivers, and in them fishes, serpents, and insects, together with such creatures as live in either element. They worshipped men both living and dead; and in them the faculties and endowments of the soul, as well as the several accidents and conditions of life. Nay, they worshipped the images of men; the images of animals, even

the most hateful, such as serpents, dragons, crocodiles, &c.; and descended at last so low, as to pay a religious regard to things inanimate, herbs and plants, and the most stinking vegetables.

How men came to part with the religion of their ancestors for such trash, and ⁵ 'to change the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things,' the apostle who remonstrates against the indignity, has in some measure supplied us with a reason, when he tells that this state of things, so gross and strange soever it was, was introduced under the pretences of wisdom, or by men professing to be wise.

It was the wise amongst them that formed the design; and, addressing the multitude with a grave appearance, prevailed (as we may conceive) by some such form of arguing as this, ⁶ 'We are all aware, ye sons of Noah, that religion is our chief concern, and therefore it well becomes us to improve and advance it as much as possible. We have indeed received appointments from God for the worship which he requires; but if these appointments may be altered for his greater glory, there is no doubt but that it will be a commendable piety so to alter them. Now our father Noah has instructed us in a religion which in truth is too simple, and too unaffecting. It directs us to the worship of God abstractly from all sense, and under a confused notion, under the formality of attributes, as power, goodness, justice, wisdom, eternity, and the like; an idea foreign to our affections, as well as our comprehensions; whereas in all reason we ought to worship God more pompously and more extensively, and not only to adore his personal and essential attributes, but likewise all the emanations of them, and all those creatures by which they are eminently represented. Nor can this be any derogation from his honour; since his honour is certainly more amply expressed when in this manner we acknowledge that not only himself, but all his creatures likewise are adorable. We ought therefore (if we will be wise) to worship the host of heaven, because they are eminent representations of his glory and eternity. We ought to worship the elements, because they represent his benignity and omnipresence. We ought to worship princes, because they sustain a divine character, and are the representatives of his power upon earth. We ought to worship men famous in their generation, even when they are dead, because their virtues are the distinguishing gifts and communications of God; nay, we ought to worship the ox and the sheep, and whatever creatures are most beneficial, because they are the symbols of his love and goodness; and with no less reason, the serpent, the crocodile, and other animals that are noxious, because they are symbols of his awful anger.

This seems to be a fair opening of the project, and by some such cunning harangue as this we may suppose it was that the first contrivers of idolatry drew in the ignorant and admiring multitude. And indeed, considering the natural habitude of vulgar minds, and the strong inclinations they have in matters of an abstruse consideration, to help themselves by sensible objects, it seems not so difficult a task to have drawn them in.

¹ Deut. iv. 19.

² Job xxxi. 26, 27.

³ Diodorus Sic. b. 3. c. 11.

⁴ Temison on Idolatry.

⁵ Rom. i. 22, 23.

⁶ Young's Sermons, vol. 2. Sermon 1.

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Those who worshipped universal nature, or the system of the material world, perceived first, that there was excellency in the several parts of it, and then (to make up the grandeur and perfection of the idea) they joined them altogether in one Divine Being. Those who laboured under a weakness and narrowness of imagination, distributed nature into its several parts, and worshipped that portion of it which was accounted of most general use and benefit. Usefulness was the common motive, but it was not the only motive which inclined the world to idolatry: for upon farther inquiry, we shall find, that whatever ravished with its transcendent beauty, whatever affrightened with its malignant power, whatever astonished with its uncommon greatness, whatever, in short, was beautiful, hurtful, or majestic, became a deity, as well as what was profitable for its use. ¹ The sun, men soon perceived, had all these powers and properties united in it: its beauty was glorious to behold, its motion wonderful to consider, its heat occasioned different effects, barrenness in some places, and fruitfulness in others; and the immense globe of its light appeared highly exalted, and riding in triumph, as it were, round the world. The moon, they saw, supplied the absence of the sun by night; gave a friendly light to the earth, and, besides the great variety of its phases, had a wonderful influence over the sea and other humid bodies. The stars they admired for their height and magnitude, the order of their positions, and celerity of their motions, and thence were persuaded either that some celestial vigour or other resided in them, or that the souls of their heroes and great men, were translated into them when they died; and upon these, and such like presumptions, they accounted all celestial bodies to be deities. ² The force of fire, the serenity of air, the usefulness of water, as well as the terror and dreadfulness of thunder and lightning, gave rise to the consecration of the meteors and elements. The sea, swelling with its proud surface, and roaring with its mighty billows, was such an awful sight, and the earth bedecked with all its plants, flowers, and fruits, such a lovely one, as might well affect a pagan's veneration; when for the like motives, namely, their beneficial, hurtful, delightful, or astonishing properties, beasts, birds, fishes, insects, and even vegetables themselves, came to be adored.^a

The pride and pomp of the great, and the low and abject spirits of the mean, occasioned first the flattery, and then the worship of kings and princes as gods upon earth. Men famous for their adventures and exploits, the founders of nations or cities, or the inventors of

useful arts and sciences, were revered while they lived, and after death canonized. The prevailing notion of the soul's immortality, made them imagine that the spirits of such excellent persons either immediately ascended up into heaven, and settled there in some orb or other, or that they hovered in the air, whence, by solemn invocations, and by making some statue or image resemblant of them, they might be prevailed with to come down and inhabit it.

Whether the idolatry of image worship was first begun in Chaldea or in Egypt, we have no grounds from history to determine: but wherever it had its origin, the design of making statues and images at first was certainly such as ³ the author of the book of Wisdom has represented it, namely, to commemorate an absent or deceased friend, or to do honour to some great man or sovereign prince; which (whether so intended or no at first) the ignorance and superstition of the people turned, in time, into an object of religious adoration; "the singular diligence of the artificer," as our author expresses it, "helping to set forward the ignorant to more superstition: For he, peradventure, willing to please one in authority, forced all his skill to make the resemblance of the best fashion; and so the multitude, allured by the grace of the work, took him now for a god, who, a little before, was but honoured as a man."

We cannot but observe, however, with what elegance and fine satire it is that the Scripture sets off the stupidity and gross infatuation both of the artificer and adorer. 'The carpenter heweth down cedars, and taketh the cypress, and the oak. He stretcheth out his rule, he marketh it out with a line, he fitteth it with planes, he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man.—He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire; and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image. He falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god; never considering in his heart, nor having knowledge or understanding to say, I have burnt part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof: I have roasted flesh, and eaten it; and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?' ⁴

That rational creatures should be capable of so wretched a degeneracy as this amounts to, may justly provoke our wonder and amazement: and yet we may remember, that these people (who may possibly be the object of our scorn and contempt) had the boasted light of nature to be their guide in matters of religion: nay, they had some advantages that we apparently want: they lived much nearer the beginning of the world; had the terrors of the Lord in the late judgment of the deluge, fresh in their minds; had the articles of their religion comprised in a small compass; and (what is no bad friend to reason and sober recollection) lived in more simplicity, and

¹ Tension on Idolatry.

² Herbert's Ancient Religion of the Gentiles.

^a The extent of idol worship, and the similarity of the system of idolatry in all the countries in which it has been practised, are truly amazing. From these circumstances, some learned writers have been led to trace it up to the plains of Shinar, and to maintain that it issued from thence, and accompanied the progress of the human race over the globe. Whatever truth there may be in this opinion, the history of mankind amply proves, that man, without the light of revelation, is prone to idolatry, and to give to the creature, or to the dedications of his own mind, the worship which is due to God. This proneness had widely shown itself so early as the time of Abraham, when it was necessary to separate that patriarch and his posterity, to preserve the knowledge of the living and true God.—See on the *Nature and History of Idolatry*, *Dewar's Moral Philosophy*, vol. 2. ch. vi.

³ Ch. xiv. 15, &c.

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less luxury than these later ages can pretend to; and yet, notwithstanding these advantages, so sadly, so shamefully did they miscarry, that the wit of man would be at a loss to devise a reason for their conduct, had not the divine wisdom informed us, that ¹ 'they alienated themselves from the life of God, and lightly regarded the counsels of the Most High; that they forsook the guide of their youth, and rejected those revelations, which at sundry times, and in divers manners,' were made to their forefathers, for the rule and measure of their faith and practice. We indeed, had we lived in those days, may be apt to think that we would not have been carried away with the common corruption; that the light of nature would have taught us better than to pay our devotions to brute beasts, or to look upon their images as our gods. But alas! we little consider, what the power of reason, of mere unassisted reason, is against the force of education and the prevalence of custom, engaged on the side of a false but flashy and popular religion. Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero, were, in after ages, some of the greatest reasoners that the world has produced, and yet we find them complying with the established worship of their country: what grounds have

we then to imagine, that, in case we had been contemporaries with them, we had acquitted ourselves any better? Our reason indeed now tells us that we should have died rather than submitted to these impious modes of worship: but then we are to remember, that reason is now assisted by the light and authority of a Divine revelation; that therefore we are not competent judges how we would act without this superior aid; but that, in all probability, ² taking away the direction and restraint of this, reason would relapse into the same extravagancies, the same impiety, the same folly and superstition which prevailed on it before. And therefore (to conclude in the words of our blessed Saviour, spoken indeed upon another, but very applicable upon this occasion), ³ 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see,' a full and perfect rule of faith and manners contained in that Holy Bible, which is in every one's hands; 'for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.'

² Roger's Necessity of a Divine Revelation.

³ Luke x. 23, 24.

¹ Eph. iv. 18.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK III.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THINGS FROM THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM TO THE ISRAELITES' DEPARTURE OUT OF EGYPT, IN ALL 430 YEARS.—ACCORDING TO DR HALES 1015 YEARS.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

ABRAHAM WAS born only two ^a years after the death of Noah, from whom he descended in the line of Seth. Of Abraham the sacred historian gives us little information till he was seventy-five years old, when the Lord called him to leave his father's house and his native country. Promises were added, for his encouragement, respecting his posterity, that from him should arise a numerous and powerful people; and respecting himself, that God would so highly honour him, as not only to make his name great, but also to render his life a general blessing to mankind.

In wisdom and in mercy God called Abraham, the person in whose family he intended to uphold the true religion, out of his own country, which was the land of Chaldaea, and from his kindred, to a far distant land, that his posterity might there remain, a people separate from the rest of mankind, that so the true religion might be maintained and preserved. A foundation was thus laid, and means were thus provided, for upholding the church of Christ in the world till he should come. For the world having become idolatrous, it was necessary that the people of God should be thus separated, that they might receive and preserve the types and prophecies that were to be given concerning Christ; that they might be the depositaries of the Oracles of God; and that, at the appointed time, the light of the gospel might shine forth from them to the rest of the world. As Abraham was the person in whom this foundation, as it were, was laid, he is represented in Scripture as though he were the father of all the church, the father of all them that believed,—the stem whence the visible church thenceforward through Christ rose, as a tree distinct from all other plants,—and from which, after

Christ came, the natural branches were broken off, and the Gentiles were grafted in their stead.

At this era there was given a more full and clear discovery of the plan of redemption than had previously been enjoyed by the church. There had been given, on two particular occasions, disclosures of the covenant of grace,—one to our first parents immediately after the fall—the other to Noah and his family soon after the flood. There is now a third, and a more particular revelation given of the provisions of that covenant, which, in due time, was to be sealed and ratified by the blood of Christ. It was now revealed, not only that Christ should come into the world, but that he should be of the seed of Abraham, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed.^b In the institution of circumcision, there was appointed a seal of the covenant of grace,—‘a seal of the righteousness of faith.’ This sacrament distinguished Abraham's seed from the world, and kept up a distinction and separation in future ages. It was in consequence of the clearer vision which was vouchsafed to this patriarch, that he rejoiced to see the day of Christ, and was glad.

Nor should we omit to notice, in our survey of the period on which we are now entering, the preservation of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, during their sojournings in the land of Canaan. For the inhabitants of that country were exceedingly wicked; so much so, that Abraham, when he was old, could not be content till he had made his servant swear that he would not take a wife for his son of the daughters of the land. When we consider that the lives of those holy men formed a continual reproof of the wickedness of the Canaanites, and that they were strangers and sojourners among them, we cannot but admire the remarkable dispensation of providence in their preservation.

In the course of this period, we have presented to our view an extraordinary and visible manifestation of God's displeasure against sin, in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain.

^a That is reckoning according to the common or Hebrew computation; but, according to Josephus and Dr Hales, Noah died B. C. 2805, and Abraham was born B. C. 2153; consequently, a period of 652 years intervened between the death of the former and birth of the latter.—ED.

^b See Dewar on the Atonement, p. 30.

A. M. 2083. A. C. 1921; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3333. A. C. 2078. GEN. CH. xii—xxv. 11.

The destruction of the world by the flood served to exhibit the terrors of the law, and manifest the wrath of God; and thus to make men sensible of the absolute necessity of redeeming mercy. But this was now, in a great measure, forgotten; and God was pleased again, in a most striking manner, to show his abhorrence of sin, and his determination to punish it; which tended to convince men of the necessity of redemption, and so to prepare the way for the accomplishment of that great work.

Bearing in mind that the sacred history is the history of the gradual and progressive unfolding of the plan of redemption, we shall not fail to mark, in our survey of this period, the renewal of the covenant of grace to Isaac and to Jacob. God said to Isaac,¹ 'And I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' This covenant was repeatedly confirmed to Jacob, more especially at Bethel, in his vision of the ladder that reached to heaven, which was a symbol of the way of salvation by Christ:—'Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'²

Besides these particulars, the reader will observe included in the section of the sacred history on which we are now entering, the preservation of the family from which Christ was to descend, by the instrumentality of Joseph, who was a type of the Great Deliverer; the remarkable prophecy respecting the coming of the Messiah, and the gathering of the people to him,³ and the upholding of the children of Israel, the visible church of God, in Egypt, notwithstanding the grinding oppression and deep affliction which they suffered.

SECT. I.

CHAP. I.—Of the Life of Abraham, from his Call to his Death.

A. M. 2083, A. C. 1921, or, according to Hales, A. M. 3333, A. C. 2078, from Gen. xii—xxv. 11.

THE HISTORY.

AFTER the death of his father Terah, Abram, who, by God's appointment, had not long before left Ur in Chaldea, was now ordered to leave Haran, and go into a country^a whereunto God would conduct him, and who, at the same time, gave him assurance, that he

would bless, protect, and multiply his posterity in an extraordinary manner, and that ^b 'in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.'

Abram was fully persuaded of the truth of all God's promises; and therefore, without any hesitation, taking his wife and family, and all his effects, together with his nephew Lot, and his substance with him, he pursued his journey, 'not knowing whither he should go,' until, by the divine guidance,^c he came into the land of Canaan; and being minded to make some survey of the country, proceeded^d to the famous Oak of Moreh, not far from

^b Some interpreters have imagined, that these words require no higher sense than this,—that all nations should see the prosperity of Abraham and his seed so evidently, that they should bless themselves; and others, in some such form as this:—"God make thee as great as Abraham and his seed." But, besides the incongruity of supposing that God's everlasting covenant, as he calls it, Gen. xvii. 19, was given only to produce a proverbial form of speech, it is plain matter of fact, that the posterity of Abraham, in the line of Isaac, was far from being the most prosperous, as to temporal affairs, of all the other branches of his family; and therefore this promise must of necessity be supposed to relate to some more spiritual and distant blessing, just as St Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, has explained it: 'Now to Abraham and to his seed were the promises made; he saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.' Gal. iii. 16.—See *Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy*.

^c The land of Canaan lies between the Mediterranean sea and the mountains of Arabia, and extends from Egypt to Phœnicia. It is bounded to the east by the mountains of Arabia; to the south by the wilderness of Paran, Idumea, and Egypt; to the west, by the Mediterranean, called in Hebrew the Great sea; and to the north, by the mountains of Libanus. Its length from the city of Dan (since called Cæsarea Philippi, or Paneadis, which stands at the foot of these mountains) to Beersheba, is about seventy leagues, and its breadth, from the Mediterranean sea to the eastern borders, is, in some places, thirty. It was first called the land of Canaan, from Cainan the son of Ham, whose posterity possessed it. It was afterwards called Palestine, from the people which the Hebrews call Philistines, and the Greeks and Romans corruptly Palestinians, who inhabited the sea coasts, and were first known to them. It likewise had the name of the Land of Promise, from the promise God made Abraham of giving it to him; that of the land of Israel, from the Israelites having made themselves masters of it; that of Judah, from the tribe of Judah, which was the most considerable of the twelve; and lastly, the happiness it had of being sanctified by the presence, actions, miracles, and death of Jesus Christ, has given it the name of the Holy Land, which it retains to this day.—*Lamy's Introduction*.

^d The city of Sichem, or Sechem, or Sychar (for it had all these names), was at this time so called by way of anticipation (for as yet it was not founded), and is a town of Samaria, in the borders of Ephraim, which stands in a narrow valley, between Gerazim on the south, and Ebal on the north, being built at the foot of the former. At present it is called Naplossa, and consists only of two streets, lying parallel under mount Gerazim, and is far from being in the flourishing condition it was once, though it is still full of people, and the seat of a bashaw. The true name, which was given it by Abram, was Moreh, or Allon Moreh, which our translation renders the plain of Moreh; by St Jerome, the illustrious vale; by the Jerusalem Targum, the Valley of Vision, because of God's appearing to Abraham here; and by others, the Oak of Moreh, or the Illustrious Oak, &c., though it seems very probable that there was in this place, not only one single tree, but a whole grove of them; and therefore it is called Allon, or Aulon, being a corruption from Elon, in Latin Esculetum, that is, an oaken grove, or forest of evergreen oaks. And since this was the place where Abraham, at his first coming into the country, built an altar, we have great reason to be of the same opinion with the learned and sagacious Mr Mede, namely, that this Allon Moreh was a place of divine worship, a *proseucha*, or open oratory, in imitation of which the Jewish *proseucha* (which were certain spaces of ground, with

¹ Gen. xxvi. 3, 4. ² Gen. xxvi; xxxv. 10., &c.³ Gen. xlix. 10.

^a It is very probable that this was done by some appearance or other of the Shekinah going before him, even as afterwards his posterity was conducted in the way thither; since, passing over rivers, climbing mountains, and travelling through a dangerous and vast desert, he had certainly need of an extraordinary divine direction, and of some sensible exhibition or token of it, while he had nothing but the promise of God to support him in so long and so hazardous a journey.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. I.

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the city of Sichem, then ^a inhabited by the Canaanites. Here he took up his abode for some time, and here built an altar, in order to pay his devotions to God; who, pleased with his behaviour, appeared to him again, as he had done at Haran before, and gave him fresh assurances of his favour, and a promise inviolable, that, in process of time, the whole land, where he then dwelt, should be the portion of his posterity.

From Sichem he removed ^b into the mountainous country, which lies between Bethel and Hai, where he likewise built an altar for a place of divine worship, (as he did in all other countries where he came), and from Bethel he was travelling farther to the south, when he was stopped by a famine, which grew grievous in the land, and obliged him to go down to ^c Egypt, the only place for provision in such like exigencies. But as he came to the confines of Egypt, he began to be not a little uneasy upon the account of his wife, who, though

she had passed the sixty-fifth year of her age, retained still beauty enough to endanger the man's life who should pass for her husband in that country. And therefore, after some deliberation, concluding, that the safest way would be for her to conceal her marriage, he took an opportunity to acquaint her with his fears, and, with a small entreaty, prevailed with her, in all places where they were to sojourn, to go under the notion of his sister.

They had not been long in Egypt before Abram's fears were found to be true. His wife's charms had captivated several, and her beauty was become the common topic of conversation; insomuch, that in a short time it reached the court, and the high commendations which every one gave the king of it, raised his curiosity to see this amiable stranger. Immediately therefore she was brought to court, and taken in to the king's apartment, as designed for one of his royal concubines; ^d while her pretended brother was treated with great civility for her sake, and loaded with many valuable presents from the king.

It is hardly to be imagined, what a sad distress both the patriarch and his consort must have been in, upon this occasion. She was a beautiful woman, in the power of a loose and vicious prince, and destitute of all protection but God's; and her lord not so much as daring to own her his wife, knowing how certain and sudden must be the destruction of an helpless man, that provokes passion and power, rage of lust, and security of gratifying it.

While matters were in this dangerous position, the providence of God interposed in her behalf, and to deter ^e Pharaoh and his nobles from any dishonourable attempts upon her virtue, ^f infested them with such plagues, as made them not insensible upon whose account it was that they suffered: even upon hers who, though she

an altar in the midst, encompassed with a wall, or some other enclosure, and open above, but shaded with trees) in after ages were set up.—See *Wells' Geography of the New Testament*, vol. 1, and *Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1. *Occasional Annotations*, 18; where the reader may meet with a particular enumeration, upon how many accounts more this place was in former times very famous.

^a The words in the text are, 'Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh, and the Canaanite was then in the land;' from whence some have raised an objection, that Moses could not be the author of this book of Genesis, because the words seem to import that the writer of them lived after that the Canaanites were driven out of the land, which was after Moses' death. But, in answer to this, it may be observed, that as by 'the land' here we are not obliged to understand the whole country, but only that part of it which lay about Sichem, so by 'the Canaanite' we need not mean the whole posterity of Canaan, or all the Canaanitish tribes, but only one particular tribe of them, as in the very next chapter, ver. 7, is more distinctly expressed. And the reason why this is taken notice of by the sacred historian, is best accounted for in that ancient tradition in Epiphanius (*Hæres*. 66. N. 84.), if we will allow it to be true, namely, that according to the original settlement and distribution among the sons of Noah, Palestine was not allotted to any of the sons of Ham, but was usurped by Canaan from the children of Shem, to whom it did of right belong; so that these words, 'the Canaanite was then in the land,' signify, that they had already invaded the land, before Abraham came thither; and therefore God's promising to give it him, was only in order to restore that to the posterity of Shem, which the children of Ham had wrongfully seized.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.

^b What our author here means is mount Ephraim, which lay between Bethel, a town not far from Jerusalem, northwards, and Hai, which is situate towards the west of Bethel.—*Wells' Geography*, vol. 1.—Bethel was situated, according to Eusebius, twelve miles north of Jerusalem, toward Sichem, on the confines of Ephraim and Benjamin. Hai, or Ai, lay a little east of Bethel; and Eusebius and Jerome tell us that, in their time, they were shown some small remains of its ruins. Masuis says that Ai was three leagues from Jericho, and Bethel one from Ai.—Ed.

^c Josephus tells us "that Abraham, understanding that there was a great plenty in Egypt, resolved upon a journey thither; not only to partake of their plenty, but also to consult the priests in their profession in divine matters, with an impartial desire and disposition to find out the truth, and either to give or receive satisfaction, according as the subject in question did require; that here he gained himself infinite credit, not only for the solidity of his judgment, and an admirable felicity of elocution, but for his instructive talent of informing and convincing his hearers at once; and that here he read lectures of astronomy and arithmetic, which the Egyptians understood nothing of until Abraham brought them with him out of Chaldee into Egypt, from whence they passed into Greece."—*Antiquities*, b. 1. c. 9.

^d When a woman was brought into the seraglio or harem of the eastern princes, she underwent for a considerable time certain purifications before she was brought into the king's presence. It was in this interim that God plagued Pharaoh and his house with plagues, so that Sarai was restored before she could be taken to the bed of the Egyptian king.—*Clarke's Commentary*.—Ed.

^e Pharaoh was the common name for all the Egyptian kings for above 3300 years (as Josephus tells us, *Antiquities*, b. 8. c. 2.), but what its proper etymology is, the learned are not so well agreed. Bochart thinks that the word Pharaoh signifies a crocodile, and that Ezekiel alludes to it in these words: 'Behold I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of the river,' Ezekiel xxix. 3. M. Le Clerc fancies that the Arabic word Pharaoh, to be raised on high, or to be superior to, is the true root of the name. Kircher does indeed derive the word from the same root, but will have it to signify to deliver, or to free; and that Pharaoh therefore signifies to be exempt from the jurisdiction of the laws. And, to name no more, the learned Renaudot thinks that *Pharaoh* is the same with the Egyptian *Pourro*, or *Pooro*, which signifies a king.—*Calmet on the word*.

^f Some of the Hebrew interpreters think that they had grievous ulcers in their secret parts, which made both him and them incapable of enjoying either her or any other woman; and in the punishment inflicted upon Abimelech and his people, upon the same account, Gen. xx. 18. they suppose that there were such swellings in their privy parts, as that the men could neither enjoy their wives, nor the women who were with child be delivered.—*Patrick's Commentary*.—Whatever the plagues were, it is evident they were understood by Pharaoh as proofs of the disapprobation of God; and consequently, even at this time, in Egypt there was some knowledge of the primitive and true religion.—*Clarke's Commentary*.—Ed.

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passed for a single, was in reality a married woman; so that the king, immediately calling for Abram, expostulated with him on the ill consequences that might have ensued from the method he had taken; and after some few exprobrations, returned him his wife, and gave orders that they might safely depart his kingdom, without any the least molestation, either to their persons or possessions.

Abram, after this, tarried not long in Egypt; for understanding that the famine was ceased in Canaan, he returned thither by the same way, and on the altar which he had built before, offered a sacrifice of thanks for his happy escape and safe return. Lot and Abram had hitherto lived together; but by this time their substance was so much increased, that they found it inconvenient to be any longer near one another. Their cattle mingled; ^a their herdsmen quarrelled; and their flocks, when together, required a larger tract of ground to feed and support them than they could take up, without interfering with the property of the inhabitants of the land wherein they sojourned. Upon these considerations, Abram resolved, in a friendly manner, to separate from Lot; and having given him his choice of the whole country that lay before him, Lot chose the fertile and pleasant plains of Sodom and Gomorrah,^b which he saw were well watered by the streams of Jordan, and so parted from

his uncle. Abram, continuing, for some time, in the place where Lot had left him, had a vision imparted to him, wherein God was pleased to renew the promise of enlarging his posterity; and bidding him cast his eyes round the horizon, confirmed the gift of all the land which he beheld to him and his posterity. Not long after this, he left Bethel, and went to dwell at the Oak of Mamre, which is not far from Hebron, where he built an altar unto the Lord, and in a short time contracted an acquaintance with three of the greatest men there, Mamre, Aner, and Escol; the first of whom communicated his name to all the country.

This alliance proved very serviceable to him, but more especially upon the following occasion. ^dChedorlaomer, king of Elam, had held five petty princes in a tributary subjection to him for some years, of which number the king of Sodom was one. At length they shook off their yoke, and confederated against him, which provoked him (in conjunction with three other kings, his allies) to march directly with a powerful army against them. The revolted kings, seeing the enemy drawing towards them, took the field with the resolution to try the fate of a pitched battle. The valley of Siddim was the place where the armies were to meet; and

^a The Jews here tell us, that the herdsmen of Abraham were commanded by their master not to go near the Canaanites, or the Perizzites, nor to come into the grounds which they had taken, either for culture or pasturage, so that they might not appear to do the least injury to any of them; and that, in obedience to his command, they took especial care to confine all their cattle, and to watch their flocks with a strict eye, so that none might go astray, and so trespass upon the natives; but that Lot's herdsmen were herein very negligent, and suffered their cattle to go beyond their bounds, and to feed in the fields which belonged to the Canaanites and Perizzites, who dwelt then in the land, and claimed the sovereignty of it.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.

^b The words in the text are these: 'The plain of Jordan was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (even like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt) as thou goest to Zoar.' The last clause, 'as thou goest to Zoar,' has much perplexed commentators, whilst they refer it to the land of Egypt in the clause immediately preceding; whereas, if what is said by way of comparison of the plain of Jordan to the garden of the Lord, that is, the garden of Eden, and to the land of Egypt, be understood as inserted by of parenthesis, the difficulty will be taken away, and the import of the last clause will be plain and easy; for then the meaning of the verse will amount to this,—'That before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, the plain of Jordan was well watered every where, as thou comest unto Zoar,' that is, in the parts where Sodom and Gomorrah stood, or in short, in the vale of Siddim. But there is another interpretation which supposes the word *Zoar* to be a false reading for *Zoan*, a city that was once the capital of Egypt, situate at the lower part of the river Nile, where it divides itself into several branches, and so waters the country more plentifully thereabouts than in any other part. According to which reading, the import of the verse will be this:—That the plain of Jordan was well watered every where about Sodom and Gomorrah, before the Lord destroyed them; yea, the plain was so well watered, that it was in this respect as the garden of Eden, or as the land of Egypt, and particularly as thou goest to Zoan, that is, in the parts about Zoan, where the Nile is divided into several branches.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1. The river Jordan, called by the Arabs El Sharia, which runs through this plain, is of so great note in the Sacred Writings that we must not pass it by without this observation,—that it derives its name (as some assert) from the Hebrew word *Jor*, which signifies a spring, and *Dan*, which is a small town near the source of this river. But the misfortune is, that the name of Dan is much more modern than that of Jordan. From its source, in Anti-Libanus, about

twelve miles north of Cæsarea Philippi, now Banias, it runs through a space of fifty leagues, till it discharges itself into the Dead Sea, otherwise called the Asphaltite lake, where Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain, that were destroyed with fire from heaven, once stood. About five or six leagues' distance from its spring it forms the lake Semechon, or waters of Merom, now Houle, and from thence it enters the lake Tiberias, or Gennesereth, passes quite through it, and is lost in the Dead Sea. Its water, in the summer time, is very shallow; but about the time of the barley-harvest, or the feast of the passover, it constantly overflows its banks, and greatly fructifies the plain.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

^c What we translate the plain should be rendered the *Oak of Mamre*; because the word *elan* signifies an oak, or tree of long duration. Sazemon tells us that this tree was still extant, and famous for pilgrimages and annual feasts, even in Constantine's time; that it was about six miles distant from Hebron; that some of the cottages which Abraham built were still standing near it; and that there was a well likewise of his digging, whereunto both Jews, and Christians, and Heathens, did at certain seasons resort, either out of devotion or for trade, because there was held a great mart. As for Hebron, or Chebron, it was accounted one of the most ancient cities in the world, having been built seven years before Tanis, the capital of Lower Egypt. It was situate on an eminence, twenty miles southward from Jerusalem, and twenty miles north from Beersheba, and had its name very probably from the word *Chavar*, to couple or join; because these married couples, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, were buried there.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, and *Universal History*, in the Notes, b. 1. c. 7.

^d We meet no where in profane history with the name of Chedorlaomer, nor with any of those names of the kings that were confederate with him; and the reason hereof is, that Ctesias, (from whom the profane historians took the names of these kings) did not use the original Assyrian names in his history, but rather such as he found in the Persian records. However, since the date of this transaction falls four years before the death of Ninias, there are good grounds to infer, that Ninias, who then lived in Persia, was the Chedorlaomer of Moses, at that time the head of the Assyrian monarchy; that Amraphel was his deputy at Babylon in Shinar; and Arioch and Tidal his deputies over some other adjacent countries: for it is remarkable that Ninias was the first who appointed under him such deputies; nor is there any absurdity in Moses to call them kings, since it is observable, from what Isaiah hinted afterwards, ch. x. 8, that the Assyrian boasted his deputy princes to be equal to royal governors, 'Are not my princes altogether kings?'—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. b. 6.

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as it was full of pits of bitumen, it might have made the engagement more difficult and dangerous to the enemy's horse: but so it was,^a that the five kings were put to the rout; one part of their army was cut in pieces, and the other fled to the neighbouring mountains, leaving their cities a prey to the conquerors. Lot, who at this time resided at Sodom, was involved in the calamity of the city; was plundered of all he had, and himself carried away among the rest of the captives. As soon as Abram had intelligence of this by an express messenger, he immediately sends to his three friends, desiring their assistance at this critical juncture; and putting himself at the head of three hundred and eighteen of his own domestics, all well prepared, and men of resolution, he began his pursuit, and after a march of almost seventy leagues, coming up with the enemy, and dividing his forces into small parties, he fell upon them by night, and charging them on all sides at once, put them in such a terror and consternation, that they took to their heels and fled, leaving all the booty and captives behind them, among whom he happily recovered Lot, and brought him back with all his substance to his former habitation.

The first person who came to congratulate Abram upon this victory, was the king of Sodom, (very probably the son of him¹ who perished in the slime-pits,) who, in thankful acknowledgment of the benefits he had received from his valour and assistance, offered him all the booty which he had retaken, and desired only his subjects, the prisoners, to be restored. But Abram was too generous to take the advantage of the misery of war; and, therefore, saving to his confederates such a proportion of the plunder as by the law of arms belonged to them, he returned all the rest, both prisoners and goods, to the king of Sodom; having before resolved to keep no part of them, that it might be said he undertook that enterprise, not for any private advantage, but purely for the public good, which every man of honour should have always primarily in his view.

The next who congratulated him upon this occasion, was Melchizedek king of Salem; who, upon his return from the battle, had provided plenty of all things necessary for his refreshment and his men's in their march; and as he was a priest, as well as a king, he both blessed Abram for being the instrument of so public a deliverance in the hands of God, and God himself, who had given such uncommon success to his arms; whereupon Abram, in return, presented him with the tenth part of the spoils which he had taken from the enemy in this expedition.

Abram's deportment, upon this occasion, was so very acceptable to God, that he was pleased to appear to him again in a vision, and to give him fresh assurances of his special favour, and of his intention to be his shield of defence in all dangers, and for all the good acts which he performed his exceeding great reward.

¹ Gen. xiv. 10.

^a As the text tells us, that the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fell into some of the slime pits, with which the valley of Siddim abounds, and takes no notice of their coming out of them, it is more rational to suppose that they perished there, than that Abraham staid to take them up, as the Jews vainly imagine; and that therefore the king of Sodom, who afterwards came out to congratulate Abraham, must have been the son of the deceased.

Hitherto, indeed, the patriarch had listened to God's promises without any expression of distrust; but upon this fresh assurance, he ventured, for the first time, to expostulate with him, not knowing how these things possibly could be accomplished whilst himself continued childless, and, to all appearance, must be obliged to leave the bulk of his substance to Eliezar, his household steward. This, indeed, was a modest way to try whether God designed to bless him with a child; and God did not leave him long in suspense. He told him, that not his servant, but a son of his own, begotten of his body, should be his heir, and should have a race descending from him as innumerable as the stars.

This was such joyful news, as gave Abram fresh courage, even to request of God some sensible and visible token, whereby he might be assured of this blessing; and accordingly God was pleased to comply with his request. That, therefore, they might enter into a formal covenant upon this occasion, he ordered him to take an heifer, a goat, and a ram, of three years old each, with a pigeon and a turtle-dove, and to offer them up. Abram did as he was ordered; and having killed the four-footed beasts, he^b cut them in two, and laid the halves at proper distances, directly opposite to each other, but the fowls he left whole; and so passing between the dissected bodies, (as the manner of covenanting then was,) he made his solemn vows of perpetual obedience to God; and then sitting down, in expectance of what God would do on his part, he took care to drive away all birds of prey from settling upon the sacrifice.

As soon as the sun began to set, a deep sleep,^c attended with an horrible darkness and dread of spirits, fell upon him; during which it was revealed to him that he was not to expect an immediate accomplishment of

^b The only place, besides this, where we have any intimation given us of this custom of making covenants, by dividing the beasts then to be sacrificed, and by the parties who covenanted passing between the parts of the beast so divided, is in Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19. 'I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of my covenant, which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof; the princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf; I will even give them into the hands of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life; and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and unto the beasts of the earth.' This certainly was a very ancient custom; and accordingly we find in Homer, that making a solemn covenant by oaths and sacrifices, literally, *cutting* faithful oaths, is a very common phrase, upon which his commentator Eustathius has this observation, "that in matters of great moment, oaths or covenants were generally made by dividing the animals, which upon such occasions were sacrificed;" and the design of this rite (as the learned Mede, in a discourse upon the subject, has expressed it) was as much as to say, 'Thus let me be divided, and cut in pieces, if I violate the oath which I have now made in the presence of God.' — *Patrick and Le Clerc's Commentary.*

^c That horror and dread of spirits do frequently seize on those who see visions, is evident from what Daniel tells us of himself, 'I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength' (chap. x. 8); but the description which we have in Job of this matter, is, in itself, very awful and affecting. 'In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice;' ch. iv. 13, &c.

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the divine promises; for though ^a himself was to die in peace, and in a good old age, yet his posterity were after that to sojourn, and be afflicted in a strange country ^b for the space of four hundred years; at the expiration of which God would punish their oppressors, and conduct them safe to the land which he had promised them. And for his confirmation in this, he caused the symbol of his divine presence, namely, ^c ‘a smoking furnace and a burning lamp,’ to pass between the divided pieces of the victims, and consume them, in ratification of his part of the covenant.

Ten years had Sarai expected the performance of God's promise, and judging now, by the course of nature, that her husband's issue must proceed from some other woman, and not from her own body, she prevailed with him to take her handmaid ^d Hagar to be his secondary

^a The expression in the text is, ‘Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace,’ which some will have to be no more than an oriental phrase for going to the grave; but since it cannot be said of Abraham that he did, in this sense, go to his fathers (forasmuch as his body was so far from being laid with them in the sepulchre, that it was deposited in a country that had no manner of communication with that of his fathers,) it must be allowed, that from this text an argument may justly be drawn for the separate existence of human souls. The expression, however, of ‘going to our fathers,’ seems to have been formed from some such notion as this,—That the souls of the deceased do go to a certain place, where those of the same family, or same nation at least, are supposed to live together, and in communion: which notion certainly arises from that natural desire, which all men, who think their better part immortal, have to see and converse with such of their relations or countrymen as have left behind them a great and lasting fame. “For if the soul of Socrates,” says one, “were permitted to go where it desired, it would certainly associate with the worthies of Greece, with Orpheus, Musæus, Homer, and those ancient demigods, who, in their several generations, were so renowned.”—See *Le Clerc's Commentary*; and *Biblioth. Biblica*, vol. 1. in locum.

^b Expositors have been very much divided in their opinions, how to make it out that Abraham's posterity was in a state of servitude and affliction for the space of four hundred years. It may be observed, however, that all this difficulty is removed, if we suppose that their state of affliction is to be reckoned from the time of Isaac's birth, which, to the deliverance out of the Egyptian bondage, was just four hundred and five years; but the five odd years are therefore not mentioned, because it is a common custom among all writers to take no notice of broken numbers (as they call them) when they name a round sum. And if there be supposed a farther difficulty, in that their sojourning is (in Exod. xii. 40) said to have continued four hundred and thirty years; in these years, the time of Abraham's sojourning (which was exactly twenty-five years from his coming into the land of Canaan to the birth of Isaac) may be comprehended, and then all the difficulty vanishes; because these twenty-five years, added to the four hundred and five before mentioned, exactly make up the four hundred and thirty.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c By this symbol God designed to represent to Abraham, either the future state of his posterity, the ‘smoking furnace’ signifying Israel's misery in the land of Egypt, and ‘the burning lamp’ their happy escape and deliverance; or (what seems more probable) to notify his own immediate presence, since both smoke and fire are, in several parts of Scripture, mentioned as emblems and representations of the divine appearance. And, therefore, as it was a thing customary, and especially in Chaldaea, (from whence Abraham came,) for persons covenanting together to pass between the pieces of the sacrifice; so God, who had no body to do it visibly for him, did it in this type and emblem.—*Pool's Annotations*; and *Bibliotheca Biblica*, in locum.

^d In concubinage, these secondary, or wives of a lower order, were accounted lawful and true wives; had an equal right to the marriage bed with the chief wife, and their issue was reputed as legitimate; but in all other respects they were inferior. And as they had no authority in the family, nor any share in household government; so, if they had been servants in the family before

wife, pleasing herself with the thoughts, that if her maid should conceive by her husband, the child would be reputed hers, and her house be established in the completion of the divine promise.

It was not long before Hagar accordingly did conceive; and forgetting now the former condition of her life, she began to value herself upon it, and to treat her mistress with insolence and ill-manners. Sarai, impatient to see herself insulted by a slave, could not forbear breaking out into bitter complaints against her to her husband; but he, willing to make her easy, and withal to discountenance any disrespectful carriage towards her, left her to treat her maid just as she pleased. This license gave Sarai an opportunity of expressing her resentment with too much severity, which the other not able to bear, she stole from her master's house, and was making the best of her way to her own country, which was Egypt; when, in her travels through the wilderness, meeting with a fountain, she tarried to rest and refresh herself there. As she was revolving her sorrows in her mind, an angel came to her, and, after some previous questions, advised her to return home, and be subject to her mistress, because it would not be long before she should be delivered of a son, (whom he ordered her to name ^e Ishmael,) whose posterity would be very numerous, a stout and warlike people, living upon plunder in the deserts, and apt to annoy others, though not easily vanquished themselves.^f

they came to be concubines, they continued in that state afterwards, and in the same subjection to their mistresses as before—*Howell's History of the Bible*.

^e *Ishmael* is compounded of the words *Jishmag* and *El*, the Lord hath, or the Lord will hear; and the reason of the name is immediately subjoined by the angel, namely, because the Lord hath heard her complaint.

^f Gen. xvi. 12. ‘His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.’ “The one is the natural, and almost necessary consequence of the other. Ishmael lived by prey and rapine in the wilderness; and his posterity have all along infested Arabia and the neighbouring countries with their robberies and incursions. They live in a state of continual war with the world, and are both robbers by land and pirates by sea. As they have been such enemies to mankind, it is no wonder that mankind have been such enemies to them again; that several attempts have been made to extirpate them; and even now as well as formerly, travellers are forced to go with arms, and in caravans or large companies, and to march and keep watch like a little army, to defend themselves from the assaults of these freebooters, who run about in troops, and rob and plunder all whom they can by any means subdue. These robberies they also justify, by alleging the hard usage of their father Ishmael, who being turned out of doors by Abraham, had the open plains and deserts given him by God for his patrimony, with permission to take whatever he could find there; and on this account they think they may, with a safe conscience, indemnify themselves, as well as they can, not only on the posterity of Isaac, but also on every body else; always supposing a kind of kindred between themselves and those they plunder; and in relating their adventures of this kind, they think it sufficient to change the expression, and instead of *I robbed a man of such and such a thing*, to say, *I gained it*.” *Sale's Preliminary Discourse*, 30.—*Newton on the Prophecies*, vol. 1. p. 42.

“The Arabs have never been entirely subdued, nor has any impression been made on them, except on their borders; where, indeed, the Phœnicians, Persians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, and in modern times, the Ottoman Tartars, have severally acquired settlements; but, with these exceptions, the natives of Hejaz and Yemen have preserved for ages the sole dominion of their deserts and pastures, their mountains and fertile valleys. Thus, apart from the rest of mankind, this extraordinary people have retained their primitive language and manners, features and characters, as

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Hagar, hearing this comfortable news, was soon persuaded to take the angel's advice, and in memory of this surprising vision, having called first the fountain where she sat, Beer-lahai-roi, which signifies 'the well of him that lives and sees me,'^a she made what haste she could home; and in a short time after her return, was delivered of a son, according to the angel's promise.

At the birth of Ishmael, Abram was eighty-six years old; and lest, in the excess of his joy, he should mistake this child for the heir of the promises which had been made to him, about thirteen years after, God renewed his covenant^b with him; instituted the rite of circumcision upon a severe penalty; changed^c his name from Abram to Abraham, and his wife's from Sarai to^d Sarah, (where the difference in sense is much more than in sound,) and

to complete his happiness, gave him a promise that his wife Sarah should bear him a son. This seemed a thing so strange, and almost impossible, that Abraham, falling on his face, began to intercede for the life and preservation of Ishmael, as thinking it unreasonable to ask, or wish for any thing more; but the Almighty soon assured him, that these great blessings were not designed for Ishmael, but for a son to be born of the once barren Sarah, (and therefore to be named^e Isaac,) which would certainly come to pass within the compass of a year. That he might not, however, seem wholly to neglect his request for Ishmael, he promised to make him a great nation, and the father of twelve princes, though the son begotten of Sarah should alone be entitled to the covenant and promise of 'making all the nations of the earth blessed.'^f This was the purport of the vision; and as soon as it was ended, Abraham delayed not (according to the divine command) to circumcise himself, his son, and all the males in his family; an ordinance which the Hebrews have ever since observed very religiously.

Abraham continued still to dwell at Mamre; and, as he was sitting one day at the door of his tent,^g he espied three persons, whom he took to be travellers, coming towards him.^h He therefore went out to meet them; and having, in a very civil and respectful manner, invited them to take a small refreshment with him, (which they consented to,) he immediately gave orders for anⁱ enter-

^e Isaac, or, according to the Hebrew, *Ischack*, signifies *he or she has, or shall laugh*; and this name Sarah gave him, because when the angel promised that she should become a mother, though she was not of an age to have children, she privately laughed at the prediction; and when the child was born, she said 'God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.' Gen. xxi. 6.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

^f Gen. xviii. 1. 'And he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day.' Those who lead a pastoral life in the east, at this day, frequently place themselves in a similar situation. At ten minutes after ten we had in view several fine bays, and a plain full of booths, with the Turcomans sitting by the doors, under sheds resembling porticoes; or by shady trees, surrounded by flocks of goats."—*Chandler's Travels in Asia Minor*, p. 180.—Ed.

^g Gen. xviii. 1—8. When a party belonging to Captain Cook (in his last voyage) went ashore on an island near that of Mangaea, in the South Seas, they were forcibly detained by the natives a considerable time, which much alarmed them. But this detention proceeded, as they afterwards found, from pure motives of hospitality; and continued only till such time as they had roasted a hog, and provided other necessities for their refreshment. "In reviewing this most curious transaction," says the writer of that voyage, "we cannot help calling to our memory the manners of the patriarchal times. It does not appear to us that these people had any intention in detaining us, different from those which actuated the patriarch in a similar transaction."—Ed.

^h The following quotations seem to illustrate the nature and manner of this entertainment:—Gen. xviii. 4, 'Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet.' One of the first rites of hospitality observed towards strangers amongst the ancients, was washing the feet: of this there are many instances in Homer. Gen. xviii. 6. 'And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. These instructions are quite similar to the manners of the place, which even at present are little if any thing altered from what they anciently were. Thus Dr Shaw relates, (*Travels*, p. 29.) "That in cities and villages, where there are public ovens, the bread is usually leavened; but among the Bedouens, as soon as the dough is kneaded, it is made into thin cakes, which are either immediately baked upon the coals, or else in a *tjxen*, a shallow earthen vessel like a frying pan."—2 Sam. xiii. 8. 1 Chron. xxiii. 29. Gen. xviii. 7. 'Abraham

long and as remarkably as the Hindoos themselves.—*Sir W. Jones's Discourse on the Arabs*, vol. 3. p. 49.—Ed.

^a Gen. xvi. 13. 'And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, *Thou God seest me*.' The religion of names was a matter of great consequence in Egypt. It was one of their essential superstitions: it was one of their native inventions, and the first of them which they communicated to the Greeks. Thus when Hagar, the handmaid of Sarai, who was an Egyptian woman, saw the angel of God in the wilderness, 'She called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, *ELROI*, the God of vision, or the visible God,' that is, according to the established custom of Egypt, she gave him a name of honour; not merely a name of distinction, for such all nations had (who worshipped local tutelary deities) before their communication with Egypt; but after that they decorated their gods with distinguished titles, indicative of their specific office and attributes. Zechariah (chap. xiv. 9.) evidently alluding to these nations, when he prophesies of the worship of the supreme God, unmixed with idolatry, says, 'in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name shall be one.' Out of indulgence, therefore, to this weakness, God was pleased to give himself a name. 'And the Lord said unto Moses, I am that I am. Exod. iii. 14.—*Warburton's Divine Legation*, b. 4. sec. 6.—Ed.

^b Gen. xvii. 10. 'This is my covenant.' Covenants were anciently made in the eastern countries by dipping their weapons in blood (as Xenophon tells us,) and by pricking the flesh, and sucking each other's blood, as we read in Tacitus; who observes (p. 1. *Annal*.) that when kings made a league, they took each other by the hand, and their thumbs being hard tied together, they pricked them, when the blood was forced to the extreme parts, and each party licked it. This was accounted a mysterious covenant, being made sacred by their mutual blood. How old this custom had been we do not know; but it is evident God's covenant with Abraham was solemnized on Abraham's part by his own and his son Isaac's blood, and so continued through all generations, by circumcision: whereby, as they were made the select people of God, so God, in conclusion, sent his own son, who by this very ceremony of circumcision, was consecrated to be their God and Redeemer.—*Patrick, in locum*.—Ed.

The ceremony of laying a knife or sword upon the altar, was the usual mode of ratifying grants before the invention of seals; and it appears that it was not entirely laid aside afterwards. King Stephen's last charter to the nuns at Barking, in Essex, was executed at the monastery by the ceremony of laying his knife upon the altar of the Virgin Mary and St Ethelburgh.—*Lysons' Environs of London*, vol. 3. p. 60.—Ed.

^c Abram is compounded of two Hebrew words, *Ab* and *Ram*, which signify *high father*; and *Abraham* is commonly derived from three, namely, *Ab-Ram-Hamon*, the father of a great multitude. But this is forced and ungrammatical, having nothing to support it but only the reason which God gives in the text, for changing Abram into Abraham, namely, because he was to make of him 'a father of many nations,' as indeed he was; for not only the twelve tribes, but the Ishmaelites, the Edomites, and all the posterity of Keturah, descended from his loins.

^d *Sarai* signifies *my princess*, or princess of my family only; but *Sarah*, the name now given her, denotes a *princess indefinitely*, and at large, according to the prediction concerning her, 'a mother (or princess) of many nations shall she be, and kings of people shall come of her.' Gen. xvii. 16.

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tainment to be made ready, ^a which accordingly was served in, and himself waited at the table, under the covert of a shady oak.

While they sat at table, ^b one of the guests, inquiring after Sarah, and being told that she was in the tent, he then addressed himself to Abraham, and assured him that he had still in remembrance the case of his wife Sarah, who, at the end of the year, should certainly have a son. Sarah, who was listening at the tent door, and thought herself far enough past child-bearing, ^c could not refrain from laughing within herself; and when the stranger asked the reason of it with such a serious air as struck her

ran into the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good.' Abraham appears to have taken a very active part in preparing to entertain the angels. But when it is said that 'he ran to the herd, and fetched a calf,' we must not understand him as descending to an office either menial or unbecoming his rank, since we are informed, that "the greatest of these countries is not ashamed to fetch a lamb from his herd, and kill it, whilst the princess is impatient till she hath prepared her fire and kettle to dress it."—*Shaw's Travels*, p. 501.

"As the Panther was, at two o'clock, too far off to give us any hope of dining on board, we applied to our friendly Dola, who readily undertook to give us the best the island could afford. A fine young kid was killed, and delivered to his wife, who performed the office of cook, in an inner room, where we were not permitted to enter. In about two hours the whole was served up in very clean bowls of wood; and instead of a table-cloth, we had new mats. The good lady had also made us some cakes with juwany and ghee: pepper and salt were laid beside them. It was excellently roasted; and I do not know that I ever enjoyed a dinner more."—*Lord Valentia's Travels*, vol. 2, p. 323.—Ed.

^a The Scripture informs us, Gen. xviii. 8, 'that Abraham took butter and milk, and the calf, (that is, the choicest parts of the calf) and set it before them, and they did eat;' where the eating of these angels must be understood according to the nature of the bodies we may suppose them to have assumed. If their bodies were aerial, their eating must have been in appearance only: if substantial, their eating might have been real; that is, they might have received the meat into their bodies, which afterwards, by a divine power, was consumed there.—*Poole's Annotations and Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^b It is very observable, that one of these angels (as the apostle to the Hebrews calls them, chap. xiii. 3) appeared more honourable and superior to the other two; and therefore Abraham makes his address to him as the chief, and the historian styles him Jehovah, which the generality both of Jews and Christians do look upon as the incommunicable name of God; and therefore it is believed by the far greatest part of the latter, that it was the Son of God who appeared in that form. There are others, however, (particularly some modern ones,) who maintain, that it was no more than an angel who spoke to him in the person of God: though it hardly seems probable, either that Moses should call an angel by that name, or that Abraham should intercede with him, as he does, when he saith, 'That be far from thee, to destroy the good with the wicked: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' Or that an angel should peremptorily say, 'If I find forty righteous men in the place, for their sakes I will not destroy it.' So that the most probable opinion is, that it was Christ himself, who is emphatically called 'the Judge of all the earth.'—*Universal History*. The Jews, however, have a maxim, that no angel performs two ministries, or is sent upon two messages at once; and therefore they think, that these three angels (as they suppose them) were dispatched for different purposes; one of them, who was the chief, to bring a confirmation of the birth of Isaac; another, to conduct Lot safe out of Sodom; and the third, to overthrow the cities of the plain: and therefore, when one of them had delivered his message to Abraham, there were but two that held on their course to Sodom.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c In the preceding chapter (ver. 17.) we read, that Abraham laughed upon the same occasion, and yet was not reproved; but the difference of their conduct might be this,—that Abraham laughed for joy upon hearing the glad tidings of a son, but Sarah's laughter proceeded from a spirit of distrust and infidelity. *Poole's Annotations*.

with terror, and she endeavoured to deny it, he dismissed her with this gentle reproof,—That it was highly wrong in her to mistrust what he had said unto her, since nothing was impossible with God.

Upon this the conversation ceased, and the three heavenly guests rising up to proceed on their journey, Abraham very courteously attended them some part of the way. Their way lay towards Sodom, whither two of the guests advanced with more haste, but the third, continuing with Abraham, began to reveal a most dreadful secret, namely, that the iniquity of Sodom, and the other neighbouring cities, was come to such a prodigious height, that he was now going down with an intent to destroy them, ^d if, upon inquiry, he found their abominations equal to the report of them. This condescension of God, in communicating his design to Abraham, gave him encouragement to make intercession for the wicked inhabitants of these cities, which, in six petitionary propositions, he managed so well, as, by a gradual decrease of the number every time, to bring him at last to a concession, that if even ten just persons were found in Sodom, he would not destroy it: and with this conditional promise he left Abraham.

In the mean time, the other two guests, (who as we said went before, and were indeed the ministering angels whom God had appointed to execute his judgments upon the Sodomites,) held on their course towards the city, where they arrived in the evening, when Lot was sitting in the gate. As soon as he saw them, he rose up to meet them, and, after proper salutations, ^e invited them

^d Here is a wonderful instance of God's patience and goodness, who, though he knew all without inquiry, yet would not condemn even the most flagitious, without good examination and trial. Before the flood, God proceeded against the old world upon ocular evidence. 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great,' Gen. vi. 5, 12. At the building of Babel, it is said that 'the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men had built,' Gen. xi. 5. And now again, before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, though the cry against them was great, because of the grievousness of their sin, yet the Lord would not proceed against them upon common fame: 'but I will go down,' saith he, 'and see, whether they have done according to the cry of it; and if not, I will know,' Gen. xviii. 21. And hereupon we may observe, that the appearing of gods in the manner of strangers, to punish or reward men, was a common tradition among the heathens.

^e In the eastern countries of late indeed, some few caravansaries have been set up; but in the time we are now speaking of, there was no such thing as inns for the accommodation of strangers; and therefore all travellers, when they came to a town, if they were not entertained in a private house, were forced to abide all night in the streets. It was therefore a customary thing for those of the better sort to receive such wayfaring men (whether they knew them or knew them not) into their houses, and there entertain them with great civility. And this is the reason why, both in sacred and profane authors, we meet with such large commendations of this act of hospitality, and particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (ch. xiii. 2,) have a precept to this effect, alluding to the very historical passage now before us. 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.'—*Le Clerc's Commentary*. Thus we read in Homer that Minerva, coming in the shape of Mentor, to make Telemachus a visit, descends in the realm of Ithaca, and stands in the portal of Ulysses, until he saw her, and thereupon went to her, and very kindly invited her in: thus, as Pope has it,

While his fond soul these fancied triumphs swell'd,
The stranger guest the royal youth beheld.
Grieved that the visitant so long should wait,
Unasked, unhonour'd, at a monarch's gate;
Instant he flew with hospitable haste,
And the new friend with courteous air embraced. *Odys. 2.*

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to his house to refresh and repose themselves that night; which at first they declined, but afterwards, on some importunity, complied with. ^a But before it was time to go to rest, the inhabitants of the city, both young and old, being informed that Lot had strangers with him, and in all probability tempted by the beautiful forms which the angels had assumed, encompassed the house, and demanded of him to deliver them up, ^b that they might abuse them.

Lot thinking by mild and soft words to appease his outrageous neighbours, steps out of the door, and shutting it after him, entreats them to offer no affront to his guests; nay, rather than have the laws of hospitality violated, he offers to give up his two virgin-daughters to their discretion. But all would not do; they threatened to use him worse than his guests, a pragmatical stranger that pretended to control them in any thing! and were pressing forward to break open the door, when the two angels, with more than human strength, forced their way out, took in their host again, and then shutting the door, ^c struck all that were round it with blindness, so that they were not able to find any more where it was.

Whilst they were thus groping about in vain, the two angels acquainted Lot with their commission; that their errand was to execute the divine vengeance upon that execrable place; and therefore they advised him, if he had any friends, for whose safety he was concerned, that he would immediately let them know their danger, and warn them to depart in time. Lot had no relations, but only ^d two sons-in-law, to whom his daughters were

contracted; but these, when he went to them early in the morning, desiring them to go along with him, and leave that accursed place, took the old man to be crazy, or beside himself, and made a banter and ridicule of all that he said.

In the morning, as soon as it was day, one of the angels observing Lot to linger, (possibly to pack up some of his most valuable goods,) took him, his wife, and his two daughters by the hand, and carried them in a manner forcibly out of the city, bidding them to fly for their lives; and, lest they should be involved in the common ruin, to make the best of their way to the mountains. Lot looking before him, and perceiving the mountains to be at a good distance, began to fear that he should not be able to reach them in time, and therefore entreated the angel, that he might be permitted to escape to a small city not far from Sodom, then called Bela, but afterwards Zoar, which he accordingly granted, and for his sake spared the city; but then he urged them to be expeditious, and to make all possible haste thither, because they could not begin to execute their commission until he was safely arrived.

What the angels enjoined them at their departure was, neither to tarry in the plain nor to look behind them. But before they got to Zoar, so it was, that Lot's wife, either out of forgetfulness of the prohibition, or out of love to the place of her habitation, looking back, was turned into a pillar of 'metallic salt,' a lasting monument of God's vengeance on obstinate and unbelieving offenders;^f and no sooner were the rest

^a Gen. xix. 1, 2. 'And there came two angels to Sodom at even, and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways.' The eastern people have always distinguished themselves by their great hospitality. Of very many instances the following is a truly characteristic one:—"We were not above a musket shot from Anna, when we met with a comely old man, who came up to me, and taking my horse by the bridle, 'friend,' said he, 'come and wash thy feet, and eat bread at my house. Thou art a stranger, and since I have met thee upon the road, never refuse me the favour which I desire of thee.' We could not choose but go along with him to his house, where he feasted us in the best manner he could, giving us, over and above, barley for our horses; and for us he killed a lamb and some hens."—*Tavernier's Travels*, p. 111. See also Gen. xviii. 6. Judges xvii. 7, Rom. xii. 13, 1 Tim. iii. 2, 1 Pet. iv. 9.—Ed.

^b That is, in an unnatural and preposterous manner, which was afterwards expressly forbidden in the law: Lev. xviii. 22, and thereby made capital, ch. xx. 13, which vile sin continued among the Gentiles even in the apostles' time, (as may be gathered from Rom. i. 27, and 1 Cor. vi. 9,) and was so generally practised among the people of Sodom, that from thence it took the name of Sodomy, and the practisers of it are called Sodomites, both in the Holy Scriptures and our English laws, which (as did the law of God of old) do still make the punishment of it to be death.—*Howell's History*.

^c It is a probable opinion, that these men were struck not with actual blindness, but with a dizziness, which disturbed their sight, and represented objects falsely, and in confusion, in the same manner as the Syrians were, when sent to take Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 18. And this was no hard matter for the angels to do, by making a small alteration either in their sight or in the air, whereby either the door might appear to them like the solid wall, or the several parts of the wall like so many doors.—*Poole's Annotations and Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^d Several translators, as well as some Rabbins, suppose that these

were the husbands of some other of Lot's daughters, who were actually married, and had left their father's house; which seems to be confirmed by the angels ordering him to take his wife, and his two daughters that were there present: but the original words, which in our version are rendered 'his sons-in-law which married his daughters,' may be translated, according to the interpretation of Onkelos 'his sons-in-law which were to marry,' &c., the contract having been passed, but the marriage not consummated by cohabitation.—*Universal History*, b. 1, c. 4.

^e It is not agreed by commentators what was the crime for which Lot's wife was so severely punished. Some are of opinion that she deserved it, merely for disobeying the commandment of the angel, and expressing too much concern for a people that deserved no compassion. Others say, that being anxiously solicitous for her daughters that were married there, and turning about to see whether they followed her, she saw the divine Shechinah, or majestic appearance of God, descending to destroy the place, which was the occasion of her metamorphosis. Others suppose that, being in confederacy with the Sodomites, she told them that her husband was distracted, and gave them notice, when any strangers came to lodge with him, by a sign of smoke by day, and of fire by night; whilst others again imagine, that the Scripture does not represent the fate which she met with as a punishment for any crime, but as a thing merely accidental.—*Universal History*, b. 1, c. 4. There is one circumstance, however, in the text, namely, that 'she looked from behind her husband,' whom she followed, which seems to be mentioned as the reason of this her presumption, because she could do it without her husband's observation or reproof; to which she seems to have had a greater regard, than to the all-seeing eye of God.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^f Gen. xix. 26. 'A pillar of salt;' or, as some understand it, 'an everlasting monument;' whence, perhaps, the Jews have given her the name of Adith (R. Elieser, chap. 25.), because she remained a perpetual testimony of God's just displeasure. For she standing still too long, some of that dreadful shower of brimstone and fire overtook her, and falling upon her, wrapped her body in a sheet of nitro-sulphureous matter, which congealed into a crust as hard as stone, and made her appear like a pillar of salt, her body being, as it were, candied in it. Kimchi calls

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arrived at Zoar, but the angry heavens began to pour down showers of liquid fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other wicked cities of the plain, which, within a short time, so totally consumed them, that when Abraham, the next morning, looked towards the country, he saw it all in a smoke, like the smoke of a large furnace.^a

The judgment indeed was so very terrible, that Lot, not thinking himself safe at Zoar, withdrew to the mountains, to which he was first directed, and for want of houses lived there, with his two daughters, in a cave.

it a heap of salt, which the Hebrews say continued for many ages. Their conjecture is not improbable who think the fable of Niobe was derived hence, who, the poets feign, was turned into a stone upon her excessive grief for the death of her children.—*Patrick, in locum*.—Ed.

a Gen. xix. 24. "The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire." These cities are said by Moses, on account of their abominable impurities, to have been overwhelmed with a torrent of liquid fire, rained down upon them from heaven. This narrative is equally confirmed by profane historians and by modern travellers. Diodorus Siculus mentions the peculiar nature of the lake which covered the country where these towns were formerly situated. "The water of it is bitter and fetid to the last degree, insomuch that neither fish nor any other aquatic animals are able to live in it." (*Biblical History*, b. xix. p. 734.) Tacitus relates that a tradition still prevailed in his days of certain powerful cities having been destroyed by thunder and lightning, and of the plain in which they were situated having been burned up. He adds, that evident traces of such a catastrophe remained. The earth was parched, and had lost all its natural powers of vegetation; and whatever sprung up, either spontaneously or in consequence of being planted, gradually withered away, and crumbled into dust. (*Tacit. Hist.* b. 5. c. 7.) Strabo, after describing the nature of the lake Asphaltis, adds, that the whole of its appearance gives an air of probability to the prevailing tradition, that thirteen cities, the chief of which was Sodom, were once destroyed and swallowed up by earthquakes, fire, and an inundation of boiling sulphureous water. (*Strab. Geog.* b. 16.) Maundrell visited the lake Asphaltis in the year 1697, and makes the following observations upon it:—"Being desirous to see the remains, if there were any, of those cities anciently situated in this place, and made so dreadful an example of the divine vengeance, I diligently surveyed the waters as far as my eye could reach; but neither could I discern any heaps of ruins, nor any smoke ascending above the surface of the water, as is usually described in the writings and maps of geographers. But yet I must not omit, what was confidently attested to me by the father-guardian and procurator of Jerusalem, both men in years, and seemingly not destitute either of sense or probity, that they had once actually seen one of these ruins; that it was so near the shore, and the waters so shallow at that time, that they went to it, and found there several pillars, and other fragments of buildings. The cause of our being deprived of this sight was, I suppose, the height of the water." (*Travels*, p. 85.) The account which Thevenot gives is much to the same purpose. "There is no sort of fish in this sea, by reason of the extraordinary saltiness of it, which burns like fire when one tastes of it. And when the fish of the water Jordan come down so low, they return back again against the stream; and such as are carried into it by the current of the water immediately die. The land within three leagues round is not cultivated, but is white, and mingled with salt and ashes. In short, we must think that there is a heavy curse of God upon that place, seeing it was heretofore so pleasant a country." (*Travels*, vol. 1. p. 194.) See also *Pococke's Travels*, vol. 2. p. 1. ch. 9. and *Shaw's Travels*, p. 346, 4to.—Ed.

The curious Wormius tells of the raining of brimstone, May 16, 1646. "Here, at Copenhagen, when the whole town was overflowed by a great fall of rain, so that the streets became impassable, the air was infected with a sulphureous smell; and when the waters were a little subsided, one might have collected in some places a sulphureous powder, of which I have preserved a part, and which, in colour and every other quality, appeared to be real sulphur."—*Mus. Worm.* b. 1. c. 2. sec. 1.—Ed.

His daughters had lost their espoused husbands in Sodom; and now despairing of having any other, they plotted together to deceive their father, and have issue by him. The elder was the forwarder of this wicked contrivance; and therefore representing to her sister the condition they were in, she proposed the expedient of making her father drunk with wine; and accordingly one evening they put their project in execution: for, having intoxicated the old man, they put him to bed, and the elder lying with him, without his privacy, obtained her end. The next night they employed the same artifice, and the younger had her turn; so that, in the event, they had each of them a son from this incestuous commerce, whereof the elder's was called Moab, and the younger's Ammon, from whom the Moabites and Ammonites, both bitter enemies in after times to Israel, were descended.^b But to return to Abraham.

After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, he removed from Mamre (probably to avoid the stench of the vale of Siddim), and came and dwelt not far from Gerar, a city of the Philistines, at a place named afterwards Beersheba, between Kadesh and Shur, where the same adventure happened to him which he had met with in Egypt. The king of Gerar, supposing Sarah to be no more than Abraham's sister (for here likewise she passed under that character), notwithstanding her advanced age, saw charms enough in her to invite her unto his bed; but God appeared to him in a dream, and

b Moab settled himself in the parts adjoining eastward to the Salt Sea, or Lacus Asphaltites, and in the neighbouring tract on the river Jordan eastward; for we plainly learn, that great part of the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites, did formerly belong to the Moabites, Numb. xxi. 21. Ammon seated himself in the parts adjoining to Moab; for it is evident from Scripture, that the Ammonites were formerly possessed of the parts on the east of Jordan, about the river Jabbok, or of the northern part of that which was afterwards the kingdom of Sihon. See Numb. xxi. 13.; Josh. xiii. 25.; and Judg. xi. 13, 23. But these things we shall have occasion to illustrate more fully, when we come to describe the course of the travels of the Israelites out of Egypt into the land of Canaan.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1.

c Gerar was a regal city, situate not far from the angle where the south and west sides of Palestine meet, twenty-five miles from Eleutheropolis, beyond Daroma, in the south of Juda; and the country, to which it gave the name, extended itself pretty far into Arabia Petrea. Beersheba signifies 'the well of the oath,' because here Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech king of Gerar, concerning a well which he had digged hard by. Here he likewise planted a grove, and instituted an oratory, or place of divine worship; and in process of time here was a city or considerable town built, which is taken notice of by heathen authors under the name of Berzimme or Bersaba. Kadesh was a city, lying on the edge of the land of Canaan, to the south of Hebron; Shur was the name of that part of Arabia Petrea which joins Egypt and the Red sea; and somewhere between these two was that well near which Abraham, when he left Mamre, fixed his habitation.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1.

d Sarah was now ninety years old when Abimelech took her into his family; whence it may seem very strange, that a woman of her age should look so very well, as to be desired by a king, who in those days might have commanded the most youthful beauties in his whole dominions. But, according to some interpreters, people of ninety then were as fresh and vigorous as those of forty now; and Sarah might, even in that respect, excel her coevals, by reason of her sterility, which is a great preserver of beauty; though others are of opinion, that God, having taken away her sterility, her beauty returned with her fruitfulness; for by this time it is computed that she had conceived her son.—*Howell's History*, b. 1.

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threatened him with immediate death, if he did not return her untouched to her husband. Whereupon Abimelech (for that was the common name in those days of all the kings of Palestine) calls for Abraham, and expostulates the matter with him, who, in excuse for the fiction, alleged his fears lest the beauty of his wife should have endangered his life; though it was not altogether a fiction, as he said, because she was so near a relation to him, especially by his father's side, as might properly enough be called a sister.^a This apology pacified the king; so that he not only restored him his wife, but giving her^b a thousand pieces of silver, desired her^c to buy a veil with the money, which might

^a Gen. xx. 12. 'And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother: and she became my wife.' This peculiar mode of contracting marriage appears, in after ages, to have become a common practice. It prevailed at Athens. It was lawful there to marry a sister by the same mother. Montesquieu (*Spirit of Laws*, vol. 1. p. 54.) says that this custom was originally owing to republics, whose spirit would not permit that two portions of land, and consequently two inheritances, should devolve on the same person. A man that married his sister only by his father's side, could inherit but one estate, that of his father; but by marrying his sister by the same mother, it might happen that this sister's father, having no male issue, might leave her his estate, and consequently the brother that married her might be possessed of two.

Among the Egyptians, it was lawful for the brother to marry the sister of either of the whole or the half blood, elder or younger; for sometimes brother and sister are born twins. And this license, in process of time, descended also to the Grecians. For the example, drawn from Isis, obtained among the Macedonians. To justify this incestuous use by yet more illustrious examples, the Grecians as well as the Latins say the gods themselves affected such marriages.—Ed.

^b The original word does not so properly mean pieces as weight, because money was then paid by weight; and may, therefore, be interpreted a thousand shekels of silver, that is, about fifty-seven pounds in the value of our present money.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 3. c. 4.

^c The words in the text, according to our translation, are these:—'And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given to thy brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and to all others: thus she was reproved.' Where we must observe, in the first place, that the word which we render *reprove*, does more properly signify to *instruct*, which must certainly be the right sense of the word here, considering that Abimelech had already accepted of Abraham's apology, and was so far from irritating either him or Sarah by reproaches, that, on the contrary, he was endeavouring to win their friendship with very considerable presents. But then, as to the covering of Sarah's eyes, this may be variously expounded, according as the words refer either to Abraham or to the pieces of silver. If they refer to Abraham, then the meaning of the king's words will be, 'Thou needest no other defence of chastity than he; nor hast thou any reason hereafter to say, he is thy brother; for so dear is he to God, that God will defend him, and he will defend thee; and not only him, but all that are with thee, and that even among strangers, without any such shifts and equivocations as you have hitherto thought fit to make use of.' But if the words refer to a present of a thousand pieces, then the sense must be, 'I have given him that sum of money to buy thee a veil, that all who converse with thee here, or in any other country where thou shalt come, may know thee to be a married woman.' This sense, indeed, is countenanced by the LXX.; but others have thought that it might better be rendered thus:—'This money, which I have paid thy husband as a mulct for my having endeavoured to take thee from him, will be a means to deter all others from having any concern with thee, when once they shall hear how much I have suffered upon that account.' The reader is left to his own option; but we should rather think that the last of these interpretations is preferable.—*Patrick and Le Clerc's Commentary*.

not only be a covering to her face, but in every country an indication likewise of her being a married woman, because he held it inconvenient for her any more to pass for her husband's sister. On her husband he bestowed, in like manner, plenty of other kind of wealth, and made him a free offer to live where he pleased in his dominions; which generous treatment engaged Abraham to intercede with God^d to remove the disability which he had inflicted on the king, in order to restrain him from Sarah; and to restore the queen and the other women of the nation to their wonted fertility, which for some time seems to have been obstructed.

A year was now passed, and the time appointed came when Sarah brought forth a son, whom Abraham, according to the divine direction, called Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day. They were now in the zenith of their happiness. Sarah suckled the child herself, and^e weaned him at the usual time; and Abraham upon this joyful occasion made a great feast: but in the midst of their festivity, Sarah perceiving that Ishmael treated her son with contempt and derision, was so enraged against him, that she never ceased importuning her husband to turn both mother and son out of doors. Abraham had the tenderness of a father to his child. He loved Ishmael, and was loth to part with him; and therefore applied himself to God, in this arduous juncture, for direction. But God confirming what Sarah had requested, and promising moreover to make of Ishmael (because he was his son) a populous nation, though his portion and inheritance was not to be in that land, which was all along designed for the descendants of Isaac, he was at last prevailed on to send him and his mother away.^f

Calling Hagar therefore, one morning to him, he ordered her to take her son, some water, and other provisions with her, to go into the neighbouring wilderness, and to tarry by the side of a certain fountain she would meet with there, until she should hear farther from him.

^d The text tells us, that 'God had fast closed up all the wombs' of the house of Abimelech; which phrase in Scripture does frequently denote barrenness; but that it cannot do so here, is pretty plain from hence, that the history of this transaction is of too short a continuance to give space for a discovery of this kind, namely, whether the women, by God's infliction, were become actually barren or not. And therefore the other opinion, noticed in note *f*, p. 144, is more probable.

^e It is not easy to guess how long it was that women gave suck in those days, because the ancient Hebrews are divided about it: some affirming that Isaac was weaned when he was two, some five, and others not till he was twelve years old. If however we will judge by what the young Maccabee's mother said to him, 'My son, remember I have suckled thee three years,' 2 Macch. vii. 27. that time will appear the most probable. For there is no reason to believe that Isaac was weaned before the usual term, for want of care or affection in his mother.—*Patrick's Commentaries*, and *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^f Gen. xxi. 10. 'Wherefore she said unto Abraham, cast out this bond woman and her son; for the son of this bond woman shall not be heir with my son.' The following extract will exhibit to the reader a striking similarity of practice with that to which the above cited passage alludes, and that amongst a race of people very remote, both as to local situation and time. 'The Algonquins make a great distinction between the wife to whom they give the appellation of the *entrance of the hut*, and those whom they term of the *middle of the hut*; these last are the servants of the other, and their children are considered as bastards, and of inferior rank to those which are born of the first and legitimate wife. Among the Caribs also, one wife possesses rank and distinction above the rest.'—*Babie's Travels among Savage Nations*, in *Universal Magazine*, for Feb. 1802, p. 84.—Ed.

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She did as she was ordered; but mistaking their way, and missing of the fountain, they had quite exhausted the little water they had, and her son being in a high fever, and ready to die with thirst, to shade him a little from the scorching heat, she placed him under a tree, whilst herself, despairing to find any succour in the place, and not bearing to see him expire before her eyes, withdrew a little, and began to bemoan her hard fate, while with earnest cries and tears, she was imploring the divine help and commiseration. The divine help was not long a coming; for suddenly an angel from heaven bids the weeping mother dry up her tears, and fear not; tells her, that God had heard the child's prayer, and would make of him a great nation; and, for their present relief, points to her a well of water, which she had not perceived before; and directs her how to cure her son. Refreshed with this water, and supported with other things which Abraham (very probably) from time to time might send them; instead of going into Egypt, as they first intended, they here took up their abode in the wilderness of Paran, where Ishmael, in a short time growing a very expert archer, was able to get provisions both for himself and his mother; and when he grew up unto man's estate, his mother, who was herself an Egyptian, married him to a woman of her own country, by whom he had twelve sons, who dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is, in several parts of Arabia Petræa, whereof the western part, towards Egypt, is in Scripture called Shur, and the eastern part towards the Persian gulf, Havilah.^a

Abraham, in the mean time, having accepted of Abimelech's offer, continued to live in the land of Palestine, and, as his riches and power every day increased, Abimelech, fearing lest, at some time or other, he might attempt something in prejudice of him, or his successors in the government, came with the general of his forces, whose name was Phicol, and made a solemn league of friendship with him.^b Some^c little difference had

^a The names of these sons are Nabajoth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jethur, Naphish, and Kedemah, 'twelve princes according to their nations,' Gen. xxv. 13, &c.; and as their descendants were, from their father, denominated by the common name of Ishmaelites, so from Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, they are also called Hagarens, or Hagarites, under which name we find some footsteps of them in heathen authors; but certain it is, that the Arabians do, to this very day, value themselves upon their being descended from Ishmael.—*Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1.

^b Gen. xxi. 23. 'Swear unto me here by God.' This kind of oath appears not only to have been generally in use in the time of Abraham, but also to have descended through many generations and ages in the east. When Mr Bruce was at Shekh Ammer, he entreated the protection of the governor in prosecuting his journey. Speaking of the people who were assembled together at this time in the house, he says, (*Travels*, vol. 1. p. 248.) "The great people among them came, and, after joining hands, repeated a kind of prayer, of about two minutes long, by which they declared themselves and their children accursed, if ever they lifted up their hands against me in the *tell*, or field in the desert; or in case that I, or mine, should fly to them for refuge, if they did not protect us at the risk of their lives, their families, and their fortunes, or, as they emphatically expressed it, to the death of the last male child among them."—See also Gen. xxvi. 28, 29.—Ed.

^c It will not seem strange that Abraham should look upon the losing of a well as a matter of such consequence, considering how ill furnished these eastern countries were with water; and it was highly prudent of him to complain of grievances now, before he entered into covenant with Abimelech, that they being once

arisen between Abimelech's servants and Abraham's, about a well which Abraham's servants had digged. But after a little expostulation, they quickly came to a good understanding. The well was restored to Abraham, and the place where they entered into this solemn covenant was thenceforth called Beersheba. Here Abraham, intending to end his days, unless God should otherwise dispose of him, planted a grove for a place of religious worship, and built an altar, and called on 'the name of the Lord, the everlasting God,' who was minded^d to make one trial more of his faith and fidelity, and a severe trial it was.

God had ordered him to send away Ishmael, and given him assurance, that the blessings promised to his posterity were not to take place in any part of that branch of his family, but that Isaac should be the son of the promise, and his descendants heirs of that happiness and prosperity which he had made over to him; and now he was pleased to require him with his own hands, to destroy this his son, his only son Isaac. A cruel injunction! But Abraham, we see, never stayed to expostulate about the severity or unlawfulness of it; but on the very next morning, without saying a word to any of his family, gets all things ready, and leaving it to God to make good his own promises, resolves to obey.^e

redressed, there might remain no occasion of quarrel afterwards.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.—Wells of water were of great consequence in those hot countries, especially where the flocks were numerous; because water was scarce, and digging to find it was attended with much expense of time and labour. In Arabia, the wells are generally dug in the rocks; their mouths are about six feet in diameter, and they are from nineteen to twenty feet in depth, (but many of them, says Niebuhr, are 160 to 170 feet deep.) Strife between the different villagers and the different herdsmen here, exists still, as in the days of Abraham and Lot; the country has often changed masters; but the habits of the natives both in this and other respects, have been nearly stationary.—*Dr Richardson's Travels*, vol. 2. p. 196.—Ed.

^d The words in the text are, 'that God did tempt Abraham;' but God is said to tempt no man; and therefore all that he could be supposed to do in this case, was only to make trial of him; and that too, not to inform himself of the sincerity and steadiness of his faith, but in order to the holy patriarch's own justification, and to make him an illustrious pattern of an entire dependence on the Almighty, to future saints and confessors. The Jews reckon up ten trials of Abraham, of which the last was the greatest. 1. God's command to him to leave his country. 2. The famine which forced him to go into Egypt. 3. Pharaoh's taking his wife from him. 4. His war with the four kings. 5. His despair of having Isaac by Sarah, and marrying Hagar on that account. 6. His circumcision in his old age. 7. His wife's being again taken from him by Abimelech. 8. The expulsion of Hagar when she was with child by him. 9. His expulsion of her and Ishmael. And 10. His oblation of his only son Isaac.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.

^e Gen. xxii. 3. 'Saddled his ass.' There is no ground for supposing that the ancient eastern saddles were like our modern ones. Such were not known to the Greeks and Romans till many ages after the Hebrew judges. "No nation of antiquity knew the use of either saddles or stirrups." (*Goguet's Origin of Laws*, vol. 3. p. 172. English Edit.) and even in our own times Hasselquist, when at Alexandria, says, "I procured an equipage which I had never used before; it was an ass with an Arabian saddle, which consisted only of a cushion on which I could sit, and a handsome bridle." (*Travels*, p. 52.) But even the cushion seems an improvement upon the ancient eastern saddles, which were probably nothing more than a kind of rug girdled to the beast.—*Parkhurst's Heb. Lex.* p. 213.

Instead of saddles the ancients used a kind of housing or horse cloth which the Greeks called *sagè* and the Latins *sagum*. This housing is to be seen upon the horses represented on Trajan's pillar, and in many other monuments of antiquity.—Ed.

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To that purpose, taking his son Isaac with him, and some servants, with provisions and instruments proper for the sacrifice, he sets out; and ^a in three days' time, came within sight of ^b mount Moriah, the place which God had appointed for that dreadful scene. Here, leaving his servants behind, that they might not disturb him with their intercessions or lamentations, he goes up to the mount without betraying any sign of grief or concern that might raise a suspicion in his son. His son, on the other hand, laden with the wood, and the other materials for a burnt-offering, but perceiving nothing proper for a victim, could not forbear asking his father, where it was? Such a question, at such a time, was enough to have staggered any heart less firm than Abraham's, who only answered calmly, 'That God would provide himself with one,' little thinking how prophetically he spake: for he had no sooner bound his son upon the wood, ^c and stretched out his hand to give the fatal blow, ^d but God was pleased to stop him short by a voice from heaven, forbidding him to do it, ^e and

^a The better to explain how Abraham came to know the place which God had appointed, the Jews have a tradition, that when God bade him go thither, and offer his son, he asked how he should know it? To which the answer was, that wheresoever he should see the glory of the Lord, that should be the place; and that accordingly, when he came within sight of mount Moriah, he beheld a pillar of fire, reaching from the earth to the heavens, whereby he knew that that was the place.—*Holtingeri Historia Orient.* p. 36.

^b This mountain whereon Abraham was ordered to offer his son Isaac, was certainly the same on which the temple was afterwards built by Solomon, and on part of which, namely, mount Calvary, Christ did afterwards actually offer himself unto God for the redemption of mankind: which offering of his, as it seems to have been designedly prefigured by the intentional offering of Isaac, so it might seem good to Divine reason to assign the same for the typical offering of Isaac, where in due time, the Antitype, our Redeemer, was to be offered. But instead of Moriah, the Samaritans read Moreh, and pretend that God sent Abraham towards Sechem, where certainly was Moreh (Gen. xii. 6; and Deut. xi. 30.); and that it was upon mount Gerizim that Isaac was brought in order to be sacrificed. But this, in all probability, is no more than a contrivance to enhance the glory of their temple.—*Wells's Geography; and Calmet's History.*

^c The words of God are, 'Lay not thy hand on the child, neither do thou anything unto him,' Gen. xxii. 12; and yet in Heb. xi. 17, we are told, 'that Abraham offered up Isaac when he was tried.' But this is easily reconciled, if we do but remember that God always takes that for done (whether in the commission of sin, or performance of duty) where there is a will and intention to do it, supposing the person to have an opportunity.—*Street's dividing the Hoof.*

^d Gen. xxii. 9. 'And bound Isaac his son.' Both his hands and his feet, as it is explained in R. Elieser, c. 31. When the Gentiles offered human sacrifices, they tied both their hands behind their backs.—*Ovid. l. 3. De Pont. Eleg. 2. Patrick, in locum.*—Ed.

^e The words in the beginning of the chapter are, 'that God tempted Abraham,' bidding him to go and sacrifice his son; but in ver. 11. it is said, that the angel of the Lord forbade him to do it: from whence some may infer, that Abraham obeyed the angel, who bade him spare his son, against the command of God, who bade him slay him. But to solve this difficulty, (if it be thought any,) we must observe, that whenever the Holy Scriptures tell us, that God said any thing, or that an angel spake, we are always to understand both of them to have been present; for the angels ever attend upon the Divine Majesty, and, being his ministers, do nothing but by his order: so that when he is said to speak, it is by them; and when they are said to speak, it is from him. It is the Lord, therefore, that speaks, whosoever be the minister.—*Patrick's Commentary.* And the speech which God makes to Abraham, upon this weighty occasion, the Jewish historian comments upon in this manner: "Hold thy

declaring a satisfaction in this last test of his obedience. Surprised at the voice, Abraham turns about to see whence it came, and spies a ram caught by the horns in a thick bush, which he immediately took, and offered up for a burnt-offering instead of his son; and, in memory of the whole transaction, called the place where it was done Jehovah-jireh, in allusion to the answer which he gave to his son's question, 'God will provide himself a lamb.'

Thus having performed an act of such perfect and heroic obedience as engaged God to renew his promise with great amplifications, and to confirm it to him with an oath, he went and rejoined his servants; and returning to Beersheba, was no sooner arrived, but he was welcomed with the joyful news of the increase of his family, namely, that Milcah, his brother Nahor's wife, ^f had born him a numerous issue, which ^g determined him, at a proper time, to send thither for a wife for his son Isaac; but ^h before he did that, it happened that his own wife Sarah died, in the 127th year of her age, at Kirjatharba, afterwards called Hebron, in the country of Canaan.

ⁱ Abraham was then probably at Beersheba; but being informed of her death, he came to Hebron, there to mourn, and perform his last offices for her; but what he wanted was a convenient burying-place. He therefore addressed himself to the people, assembled in a body ^j at

hand, and spare thy son, for I did not require it of thee, out of any delight I take in human blood, or that I would make a father the assassin of the very child which I myself have given him; but to see how far thou wouldst submit to thy God in a self-denial to thine own inclination and nature: but now, since I find thy piety to be proof against all temptations, I do here confirm over again to thee all my former promises," &c.—*Joseph. Antiq. b. l. c. 14.*

^f The children of Nahor by Milcah were Huz, Buz, Kemuel, Chezed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel, who begat Rebecca, the wife of Isaac; and by his concubine, whose name was Reumah, he had Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah, from whom the city of Maachah, or Abel-Beth-Maachah, whose territories are supposed to have been situate between the two Lebanons, might probably receive its name, Gen. xxii. 20, &c.

^g Nahor very probably either removed with his father Terah, as Abraham did, from Ur in Chaldea, and settled at Haran in Mesopotamia, or not long after followed them thither; because, after that the family left Ur, the first news that we hear of him is, that he was settled at Haran, and there had got a numerous family; and it is upon the account of his brother's residing there, as well as that himself had once lived there, that Abraham calls it his 'own country,' and the place 'where his kindred dwelt,' Gen. xxiv. 4.

^h Some of the Arabian writers tell us, that when Sarah heard that Abraham had taken her only son unto the mountain, to sacrifice to God, she fell into a very great agony, which brought on a fit of sickness whereof she died. *Eutychii Annales*, p. 74. Josephus, indeed, informs us that she died soon after this event; but if (as he says) Isaac was five and twenty years old when his father would have sacrificed him, Sarah was ninety years old when she bore him, and 127 when she died, she must (according to his own calculation) have lived eleven or twelve years after it, and this our learned Usher makes the difference between his sacrifice and her death.—*Calmet's Dictionary.*

ⁱ There is something of obscurity in this passage of the history. Sarah is said to have died at Hebron; and yet we have no notice of Abraham removing from Beersheba to that place; so that, upon some occasion or other, we must suppose them to have been parted, and that Sarah went to Hebron, while Abraham kept still in his own habitation: for to say that Abraham came from his own tent to that of his wife, to make lamentation for her, is not consistent with the sequel of the text.

^j The gates of the cities in these days, and for many ages after,

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the gate of the city, entreating them to allow him the liberty of burying his wife among them; for as he was a stranger in the country, and had no land then of his own, he could pretend to no right of giving honourable interment to his dead in the sepulchres of the country, without the consent of the proprietors. He therefore desired Ephron, one of the principal inhabitants,^a to sell him the field called Machpelah,^b with the cave and sepulchre belonging to it. The purchase was made before all the people of Hebron,^c at the price of 400 shekels of silver, that is, about sixty pounds sterling;^d and there he buried Sarah, after that he had mourned for her,^e according to the custom of the country.

were the places of judicature, and common resort. Here the governors and elders of the city met to hear complaints, administer justice, and make conveyances of titles and estates, and, in short, to transact all the public affairs of the place. And from hence is that passage in the Psalmist, 'They shall not be ashamed when they speak to their enemies in the gate,' Ps. cxxvii. ver. ult. that is, when they are accused by them before the court of magistrates. It is probable that the room or hall where these magistrates sat was over the gate, because Boaz is said to go up to the gate; and the reason of having it built there, seems to have been for the conveniency of the inhabitants, who being all husbandmen, and forced to pass and repass every morning and evening, as they went and came from their labour, might be more easily called as they went by, whenever they wanted to appear in any business. So that from the whole it appears that Abraham could not have made his purchase from Ephron, without his having recourse to the city gates.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^a It is an observation of all those who have written about the sepulture of the ancients, that their dormitories or burying-places were never in cities, much less in temples or churches, but always in the fields or gardens. The use of grottos or vaults is certainly very ancient.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.

^b The word in Hebrew signifies *double*, whence it is supposed by some, that there was one cave within another, or two or more contiguous to each other, in one of which Sarah was buried, and afterwards Abraham in another. But those who derive it from the Arabic tell us, that in that language it signifies *shut up*, or *walled up*, which, in eastern countries, was a common way of making their tombs, to prevent thieves from harbouring in them, or to hinder them from being in any manner violated or profaned. And if this be the right derivation, then may the *cave of Machpelah* be translated the *cave that was shut up*.—*Calmel's Dictionary*.

^c Gen. xxiii. 11. 'In the presence of the sons of my people.' Contracts, or grants, were usually made before all the people, or their representatives, till writings were invented.—*Patrick, in locum*.—Ed.

^d Gen. xxiii. 16. 'And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver.' Ancient nations have discovered a singular coincidence in the management of their money. The Jews appear to have used silver in lumps, perhaps of various dimensions and weights; and certainly, on some occasions at least, impressed with a particular stamp. The Chinese also do the same. For "there is no silver coin in China, notwithstanding payments are made with that metal, in masses of about ten ounces, having the form of the crucibles they were refined in, with the stamp of a single character upon them, denoting their weight."—*Macartney*, p. 290, vol. 2. p. 266, 8vo edition.—Ed.

^e What the rites of mourning for the dead in those days were, it is hard to determine, because we have as yet no particulars of it recorded in Scripture. From the subsequent practice, however, we may infer, that they shut themselves up from company, neglected the care of their bodies, and abstained from their ordinary food. They fasted, and lay upon the ground; they wept, tore their clothes, smote their breasts, went barefoot, and pulled off their hair and beards. The time of mourning was usually for seven days; but it was commonly lengthened or shortened, according to the state or circumstances wherein they found themselves; and, during this period, they did not dress themselves, nor make their beds, nor cover their heads, nor shave themselves, nor cut their nails, nor go into the bath, nor salute any body, nay, nor so

By this time Abraham was well advanced in years; and being desirous to see his son Isaac married, and settled in the world before he died, he called Eliezer, the steward of his household, and *f* having taking an oath of him *g* (in case he died first) to procure his son a wife of his own kindred,^h and not of the Canaanites, he sent him into Mesopotamia, with full instructions and authority to conclude the marriage, and with a train suitable to such an embassy.

Eliezer, in coming to Haran, the place where his master's relations dwelt, stopped at the public well (whither it was customary for the young women of the place to come every morning and evening for water) to rest, and refresh his camels;ⁱ and being pensive and solicitous how to perform his message to his master's satisfaction,

much as read the book of the law, or say their usual prayers.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Calmel's Dictionary*, under the word *Mourning*.

^f The form in which Eliezer took his oath was, we are told, by putting his hand under his master's thigh. This is the first time we read of that ceremony, which was afterwards used by Jacob and Joseph when they were a dying, and the oddness of it has inclined some judicious authors to think, that it implies a more solemn mystery than men are aware of. Some suppose that it was swearing by the Messias, (who was to come out of Abraham's loins or thigh, Gen. lvi. 26.) others, by the covenant of circumcision, the part circumcised being near the thigh. But the most probable conjecture is, that as it could not well be done but in a kneeling posture, so it was a token of subjection and homage from a servant to his lord, he sitting, and his servant putting his hand under him; and thereby implicitly declaring, I am under your power, and ready to do whatever you shall think fit to command me. The custom, however, afterwards, in swearing, was 'to lift up the hand to heaven,' Gen. xiv. 22, and upon account of both these ceremonies, the Greek word *ἀρκος*, which signifies an oath, is supposed to be derived from the Hebrew *jereck*, a *thigh*, as the word *ῥαίνω*, to swear, is supposed to come from the Hebrew *janin*, which is the right hand.—*Ainsworth's Annotations*.

^g Gen. xxiv. 2, 3. 'And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and I will make thee swear by the Lord.' The present mode of swearing among the Mohammedan Arabs, that live in tents as the patriarchs did, according to De la Roque—(*Voy. dans la Pal.* p. 152)—is by laying their hands on the Koran. They cause those who swear to wash their hands before they give them the book; they put their left hand underneath, and the right over it. Whether, among the patriarchs one hand was under, and the other upon the thigh, is not certain; possibly Abraham's servant might swear, with one hand under his master's thigh, and the other stretched out to heaven. As the posterity of the patriarchs are described as coming out of the thigh, it has been supposed this ceremony had some relation to their believing the promise of God, to bless all the nations of the earth, by means of one that was to descend from Abraham.—*Harner*, vol. 4. p. 477.—Ed.

^h Not but that Laban and his family were idolaters, as well as the Canaanites, but then he was much better than they, because he still retained the worship of the true God, as appears from the sequel of the history, (ch. xxiv. 37,) though blended and corrupted with very gross mixtures and additions of his own; whereas the Canaanites had utterly revolted from it.—*Grot. Par.*

ⁱ Gen. xxiv. 11. 'At the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.' Homer mentions the same custom of women being employed in drawing water among the Phæaciens and Laestrygonians.—(*Odys.* vii. 20, et x. 105.; *Iliad*, vi. 459.)—Dr Shaw, speaking of the occupation of the Moorish women in Barbary, says, "To finish the day, at the time of the evening, even at the time that the women go out to draw water, they are still to fit themselves with a pitcher or goat skin, and their sucking children behind them, trudge it in this manner two or three miles to fetch water."—(*Travels*, p. 421.)—Mr Forbes (*Oriental Memoirs*, vol. 1. p. 79) likewise mentions the practice of women drawing water, and tending cattle to the lakes and rivers.—Ed.

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he made a mental prayer to God, that he would be pleased to give this token of the successfulness of his journey, namely, That the person designed for his young master's wife might discover it by some token of courtesy to him. In the mean time ^a Rebecca came to the well; ^b and when Eliezer desired her to give him a draught of her water, she offered her service, not only to draw for him, but for his camels likewise, which (being the very sign he requested of God) he permitted her to do, for his fuller conviction. ^c

While he saw her thus employed, he took notice that the damsel was exceeding beautiful; and having inquired into her relations and family, he found that she was his master's brother's grand-daughter: whereupon he immediately took out a pair of gold ear-rings, to the weight of two shekels, and a pair of bracelets, which weighed about ten, with which he presented her, desiring, at the same time, that if they had any room at her house he might be permitted to lodge there that night. ^d Her answer was, that that he might do very conveniently; and so accepting of the presents, she made haste home to acquaint the family with this adventure, leaving Eliezer full of contemplations and acknowledgments to the divine favour, for this happy, surprisingly happy incident.

^a Great were the simplicity and humility of those early days, when persons of the best rank, and of the female sex too, did not disdain to be employed in such servile offices. Thus, in the following age, Jacob found his cousin Rachel watering her father's sheep; and several ages after that, the seven daughters of Jethro, who was a prince, as well as a priest of Midian, kept their father's flocks, and used to draw water for the cattle. So well has our author expressed that simplicity of manners, which we may observe in Homer, or Hesiod, or any of the most ancient writers.—*Howell's History*, b. 1.

^b Gen. xxiv. 15. 'Rebecca came out, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.' The same custom prevailed in ancient Greece. Homer represents Minerva meeting Ulysses as the sun was going down, under the form of a Phæacian virgin, carrying a pitcher of water, that being the time when the maidens went out to draw water.

"When near the fam'd Phæacian walls he drew,
The beautiful city, opening to his view,
His step a virgin met, and stood before;
A polished urn the seeming virgin bore."

Odyssey, b. vii. 25, Pope.

See also *Odyssey*, b. x. 105.

A similar custom prevailed also in Armenia, as may be seen in *Xenophon's Anabasis*, b. iv.—Ed.

^c Gen. xxiv. 20. 'And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough.' In some places where there are wells, there are no conveniences to draw water with. But in other places the wells are furnished with troughs, and suitable contrivances for watering cattle. The M. S. Chardin tells us, that "there are wells in Persia and Arabia in the driest places, and, above all, in the Indies, with troughs and basins of stone by the side of them." Gen. xvi. 14. Exod. ii. 16.—*Harmer*, vol. 1. p. 431.—Ed.

^d Gen. xxiv. 22. 'And it came to pass as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ear-ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight, of gold.' The weight of the ornaments put upon Rebecca appears extraordinary. But Chardin assures us, that even heavier were worn by the women of the east when he was there. He says that the women wear rings and bracelets of as great weight as this, through all Asia, and even heavier. They are rather manacles than bracelets. There are some as large as the finger. The women wear several of them, one above the other, in such a manner as sometimes to leave the arm covered with them from the wrist to the elbow. Poor people wear as many of glass or horn. They hardly ever take them off. They are their riches.—*Harmer*, vol. 2. p. 500.—Ed.

As soon as Laban had heard what his sister had to tell him, he went immediately, and inviting the stranger into his house, ordered all proper provision to be made for the civil reception both of himself and his retinue. At his first introduction, Eliezer opened to the family the occasion of his coming; acquainted them with the success that had attended him in his journey; and gave them a full account of the circumstances of his master's family; of the wealth and prosperity wherewith God had blessed him; of the son and heir which he had given him in his old age; and of the large expectancies which this his heir had, not only from the prerogative of his birth, but from the donation and entail of all his father's possessions. And, having in this manner delivered his credentials, he demanded immediately, even before he did either eat or drink with them, their positive answer.

^e Laban and Bethuel were both of opinion, that the divine providence was very visible in this whole affair; and therefore concluding, that it would be mighty wrong to refuse Rebecca upon this occasion, they consented that he should carry her to her intended husband as soon as he pleased: so that matters being thus far agreed on, he thought it now proper to present her with the jewels of silver and gold, and fine raiment which he had brought for her; ^f and he having at the same time made some considerable presents to her mother, and brethren, the remainder of the day they devoted to feasting and mirth. In the morning Eliezer, who began to think the time long till his master was acquainted with the good success of his negotiation, desired to be dismissed. The request a little startled them. They promised themselves, that at least he would stay ten days longer: but he persisting

^e This Bethuel could not be her father, because, had he been so, it would have been improper to have had Laban, either named before him, or giving answer to Abraham's messenger when his father was by; and, therefore, since Josephus makes the damsel tell Eliezer that her father had been dead long ago, and that she was left to the care of her brother Laban, this Bethuel, who is here named after Laban, and is never more taken notice of during the whole transaction, must have been some younger brother of the family.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^f Gen. xxiv. 53. 'Jewels of gold and raiment.' Among the several female ornaments which Abraham sent by his servant, whom he employed to search out a wife for his son Isaac, were 'jewels of silver, and jewels of gold,' exclusive of raiment, which probably was very rich and valuable for the age in which Abraham lived. Rich and splendid apparel, especially such as was adorned with gold, was very general in the eastern nations from the earliest ages; and as the fashions and customs of the Orientals are not subject to much variation, so we find that this propensity to golden ornaments prevails, even in the present age, among the females in the countries bordering on Judea. Thus Mungo Park, in the account of his travels in Africa, mentions the following singular circumstance, respecting the ornamental part of the dress of an African lady: "It is evident from the account of the process by which negroes obtain gold in Manding, that the country contains a considerable portion of this precious metal. A great part is converted into ornaments for the women: and, when a lady of consequence is in full dress, the gold about her person may be worth, altogether, from fifty to eighty pounds sterling."

We find also that the same disposition for rich ornamental apparel prevailed in the times of the Apostles; for St Peter cautioned the females of quality in the first ages of Christianity, when they adorned themselves, not to have it consist, 'in the outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on apparel.' 1 Pet. iii. 3. See also Psalm xlv. 9, 13. 'Upon thy right hand did stand the queen, in gold of Ophir. Her clothing is of wrought gold.'—Ed.

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in his resolution, the thing was referred to Rebecca, who consented to go with him as soon as he pleased: so that all things being presently made ready, and having ^a the bridal blessing bestowed upon her, she took her leave and departed, with her nurse, ^b (whose name was Deborah,) and other servants appointed to attend her.

Whilst Eliezer was conveying his fair charge to his master's house, Providence had so ordered the matter, that Isaac, taking a solitary walk in the fields that evening, happened to espy his servants and camels upon the road, and thereupon went forwards to meet them. As soon as Rebecca was informed who he was, she alighted, and ^c throwing her veil over her face (as the manner of women then was) she waited to receive his first compliments. ^d Isaac, with great respect, addressed himself to her, and conducted her into his mother's tent, which was fitted up for her apartment. Not long after they were married together, and Isaac grew so fond of her, that the love he had for his wife helped to alleviate

^a The blessing is comprised in these words: 'Be thou a mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them;' which was afterwards made a solemn form of benediction in leading the bride to the bridegroom.

Gen. xxiv. 60. 'And they blessed Rebecca.' Nuptial benedictions were used both by the Jews, Greeks, and Romans. That of the Jews was in this form—"Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast created man and woman, and created marriage," &c. This was repeated every day during the marriage week, provided there were new guests.—Ed.

^b Gen. xxiv. 59. 'And they sent away Rebecca their sister, and her nurse.' Nurses were formerly held in very high esteem, and considered as being entitled to constant and lasting regard. "The nurse in an eastern family is always an important personage. Modern travellers inform us, that in Syria she is considered as a sort of second parent, whether she has been foster-mother or otherwise. She always accompanies the bride to her husband's house, and ever remains there, an honoured character. Thus it was in ancient Greece."—*Siege of Acre*, b. 2. p. 35, note.

In Hindostan the nurse "is not looked upon as a stranger, but becomes one of the family, and passes the remainder of her life in the midst of the children she has suckled, by whom she is honoured and cherished as a second mother."—*Forbes's Oriental Memoirs*, vol. 3. p. 134.

"In many parts of Hindostan are mosques and mausoleums, built by the Mahomedan princes, near the sepulchres of their nurses. They are excited by a grateful affection to erect these structures, in memory of those who, with maternal anxiety, watched over their helpless infancy; thus it has been from time immemorial. How interesting is the interview which Homer has described between Ulysses and Euryclæa."—*Ib.* 3. p. 141.—Ed.

^c The use of the veil was the universal practice among all nations, as far as history can inform us, except the Spartans, who are reported to have been singular, in that their virgins were permitted to appear without a veil, but after they were married, they were never to be seen in public without it. It was from this practice of veiling the bride, when she was brought to the bridegroom, in token both of modesty and subjection, that the presents which he made her upon this occasion, were by the Greeks called ἀνακαλυπτήρια: and thus the poets, in celebrating the marriage of Proserpine to Pluto, have this fiction.—That, upon unveiling his bride, he presented her with the island of Sicily, in lieu of her veil, which he took from her.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.

^d It may seem a little strange, that upon so singular an occasion no mention should be made of Abraham, who was a principal party concerned herein; but for this some account by supposing that Abraham, before this, had married Keturah (though, not to break in with the account of his son's marriage, the history relates it later) and resigned his estate, and the government of his family, into the hands of Isaac, choosing to live the remainder of his days in retirement with his new consort.

the grief he had long conceived for the loss of his mother.

After this happy marriage of his son, Abraham still finding himself strong enough to make a new addition to his family, took another wife, ^e whose name was Keturah, by whom he ^f had six sons: but lest they should interfere with Isaac in his inheritance of Canaan, as they grew up, he portioned them off, and sent them away towards the east, where, settling in Arabia and Syria, they became in time heads of different nations; whereof we have footsteps both in sacred and profane history.

This is the substance of what the sacred history relates concerning the great patriarch Abraham. ^g At length, laden with honours and outworn with age, after he had lived the space of an hundred and seventy-five years, he took leave of this world; and by his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, was buried in the cave of Machpelah (where, above forty years before, he had reposed the remains of his beloved wife Sarah), leaving a name famous to all posterity behind him.

^e Keturah is supposed, by some Jewish interpreters, to be the same with Hagar, whom Abraham, after his wife's death, sent for again, and by her had all the six sons here mentioned: but, besides that Hagar must by this time have been above eighty years of age, and consequently too old to bear so many children, the text itself seems to be against this supposition; for it informs us, that Abraham added, or proceeded to take another wife, which is a different thing to his recalling the old one. The more probable opinion therefore is, that this Keturah was a domestic of his own, a Canaanite perhaps, whom he had converted to the true religion; but then the difficulty is, how Abraham could dispose of so many sons, in so short a space as that which intervened between his wife's and his own death. To solve this, some have supposed that this Keturah became his wife, that is, wife of the second order, long before the death of Sarah, even immediately after he parted with Hagar; but then this supposition is contrary to the sense of the original; and therefore, if we are minded to adhere to that, we must say, that Abraham's living almost forty years after Sarah's death gave him time enough to dispose of the sons begotten of Keturah, as the renovation of his strength, which was certainly miraculous, (for forty years before he is said to have been dead to all such purposes, Rom. vi. 19.) enabled him to beget them.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, *Ainsworth's Annotations*, and *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^f His sons were, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah, whereof Jokshan had Sheba and Dedan; Dedan had Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim; and Midian had Ephah, Ephraim, Hanoah, Abidah, and Eldaah, Gen. xxv. 2, &c. And the footsteps we find of these in history, according to the best conjectures, are such as follow. From Zimran, in all probability, were descended the Zamarens, a people mentioned by Pliny (*Natural History*, b. 6. c. 28.) From Sheba, the Sabæans, mentioned in Job i. 15. From Dedan, the Dedanims, mentioned in Isaiah xxi. 13. From Midian, the Midianites, mentioned in several places. From Shuah, the Shuities, mentioned in Job ii. 11. From Ephah, was a town of the same name, mentioned by Isaiah lx. 6. From Hanoah, a country called Canaana, mentioned by Pliny (*Natural History*, b. 6. c. 28.) And, to name no more, from Medan, a country called Mediana, in which is the famous city of Mecca, where Mahomet was born.—*Bulford's Chronology*, b. 3. c. 4. and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1.

^g This account of Abraham's death is given by way of anticipation; for when the text has recited his sons and their settlement, it brings him and Ishmael to their graves; not that they died before the birth of his two grandsons, Jacob and Esau, as the text has placed things (for Abraham lived till they were fifteen years old, and Ishmael till they were sixty-three), but having no more to say of the father and the son, Moses here concludes their history at once.—*Lightfoot*.

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CHAP. II.—*Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.*

BUT we certainly judge wrong of the merits of any author, when we suffer our prejudice to blind our understanding, and to hinder it from attending to its chief drift and design. The great end which Moses had in writing this part of his history was, to instruct the Jews in their rise and original, their election and separation from the rest of mankind; and therefore fit it was, when he entered upon the history of their great founder Abraham, in whom they became a peculiar people, a chosen generation, and a royal priesthood, as the apostle¹ styles them, that he should lay aside his usual conciseness, and endeavour to expatiate a little upon so useful and so agreeable a subject.

The Spirit of God very well foresaw that Abraham's character would become renowned in future generations; that not only the Jews, but several other nations, would lay claim to him as their progenitor; that not only the saints and prophets in the Old Testament would make him the chief pattern of faith and obedience to God's commands, but that, even under the New, his example would be propounded for our imitation, and ² 'his bosom' be made the happy receptacle of the souls of the righteous between their death and their resurrection; and therefore it is no wonder that he led the holy penman into a longer recital of the life and adventures of a person who is styled 'the friend of God,' and 'father of the faithful';^a who was the great founder of the very nation he was now writing to; whose sons were to be kings and princes in their several distant countries, and 'in whose seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.'

We must observe, however, that one great error in those that have undertaken to vindicate the Holy Scrip-

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 9.² Matt. viii. 11.

^a The Jewish writers tell us that Abraham was bred up in the religion of the Zabii, who in those early times made images or representations of the sun, moon, and stars to worship, and that his father Terah was a maker and seller of these images; that Abraham, being well skilled in the astronomy of those times, learned from thence that the celestial bodies could neither make nor move themselves by their own power, but that there was one only God, who created, preserved, and governed all other things, and that therefore they ought to worship him alone; that his father Terah going from home about particular business, and leaving Abraham in the shop to sell the images, he in his absence broke them all, except the largest of them; that upon this Terah, being angry, brought Abraham before the chief king of the Assyrian monarchy, to be punished for this crime; that the king, being one of the Magi, commanded Abraham to worship the fire; and upon his refusal, ordered him to be thrown into a hot burning furnace; but that Abraham came out unhurt, in the presence, and to the admiration of them all. *Maimonides in Mor. Nevoc.* b. 2. c. 29; *Jad. Chaz. de Idolatria*, c. 1.; *Shalsheleth*, p. 8.; *Inchasin*, part 9. fol. 1.—But some think that this whole story rose from taking the word *Ur* to signify the fire, as it is in the Hebrew, and thence interpreting the saying of God to Abraham in this manner:—'I am the Lord, that brought thee out of the fire of the Chaldeans, to give thee this land to inherit it.' Since it is expressly said, however, (Gen. xi. 31.) that Terah, Lot, Abraham, and Sarah his wife, came all forth together out of Ur of the Chaldees, it may therefore very properly be taken for a city dedicated to the fire, which was there principally worshipped, and from thence it might take its name.

tures is, their unwillingness to suppose any faults in the lives of the ancient patriarchs; and therefore they study to apologize for every thing they did, and sometimes labour even to consecrate their very vices. Their opinion is, that the Holy Spirit has prescribed them as patterns every way worthy of our imitation; and therefore they think it a disparagement to the Scriptures themselves if any blemish or defect should occur in these men's characters, whereas the Scriptures have no manner of concern in any such thing. Their purpose is to represent mankind as they are, clothed with infirmities, and beset with temptations to sin; and it is a glorious instance of their truth and veracity, when we find the faults and failings of some of their greatest worthies related as they really happened, and set in a true light, without extenuation or excuse. "The most celebrated of the saints of God,"³ says St Austin, "are not impeccable; and from their faults there is no arguing to the prejudice of the book in which, as we find them recorded as matter of history, so we find them condemned as matter of morality. God has informed us," says he, "of what passed, but not authorized it, and set the example before us, not for a pattern, but for a warning."

Abraham, in the age wherein he lived, was certainly accounted a man of great piety and worth. ⁴ We have the testimony of several heathen authors in his favour;⁵ and Berosus in particular;⁶ as he is quoted by Josephus, gives us this character of him, namely, that in the tenth generation after the flood there was a man among the Chaldeans who was very just, and great, and sought after heavenly things. But notwithstanding this, it must be acknowledged, that in this instance of denying his wife Sarah, he was guilty at least of a manifest dissimulation.

It is in vain to say, ⁶ that she was really his sister by another wife, whom his father Terah might marry after the death of his mother; for this brings upon him the charge of incest. It is in vain to say, ⁷ that as he was a prophet, he was directed by the Holy Spirit to make use of this subterfuge, in order to preserve his life; for this is making God the author of sin. It is in vain to say, ⁸ that what he declared was truth, though not the whole truth; that he concealed what was proper, and told nothing that was false; because his declaring her to be his sister was in effect denying her to be his wife, which was a direct falsehood. Men certainly have a right to conceal their sentiments, upon several occasions, by a prudent silence; but whenever they make

³ Faustus, b. 22. c. 41.⁴ See Grot. de Verit. b. 3. s. 16.⁵ B. 1. c. 8.⁶ Calmet's Dictionary under the word *Sarah*.⁷ See Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2, Essay 4.⁸ Waterland's Scripture Vindication, part 1.

^b Profane authors, if possible, say more in the praise and commendation of Abraham than do the sacred; but there is reason enough to believe that their accounts are loaded with fictions. Some have averred that he reigned at Damascus; others, that he dwelt a long time in Egypt, and taught the Egyptians astronomy and arithmetic. Some say that he invented letters and the Hebrew language; that he was author of several works, and, among others, of a famous book entitled "Jezira," or "the Creation;" and among the Persians, so great a man was he accounted, that the Magi, or worshippers of fire, believe Zoroastres, who was their prophet, to be the same with the patriarch Abraham.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

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use of words, and pretend thereby to discover their thoughts, they impose upon their hearers, if they do not really express what they pretend; and in this the very formality of lying does consist, namely, in a settled intention to deceive others. ¹ "For whatever is said, whether in itself it be true or false, whether it agrees with the thoughts of the speaker or not, yet if it plainly tends to deceive the hearer; if he who says it perceives the tendency, and accordingly uses it to this end, however disguised it is, under whatever forms it is expressed, it is, to all intents and purposes, a lie."

It is in vain, then, to pretend to assail the patriarch from the imputation of lying or dissimulation in this case; but then this may be said in extenuation of his fault, that it proceeded from a weakness of faith, and a prevalency of fear, which are sometimes found to be incident to the best of men. He considered himself as a stranger among a licentious sort of people, and exposed to the power of an arbitrary government; and, from a principle of worldly caution, both to preserve his own life and his wife's modesty, he concluded that this would be the best expedient; but much more wisely had he done, had he committed the whole matter to God's management, in reliance on his promises, and in confidence of his protection.

It cannot, however, with any tolerable construction be charged upon him, that he went about to betray his wife's chastity, since, according to his present sentiments, he took the most effectual method to prevent it. ² For, in declaring her to be his sister, he made it known that she was committed to his care and disposal; and from hence he supposed it would come to pass, that if any of the country was minded to make his addresses to the sister, he would, of course, come and apply himself to the brother. The first motions of love he knew were most impetuous, and apt to hurry men into violence and outrage; and therefore he thought with himself, that if he should pass for her husband, such as were in love with her would have no other way of accomplishing their desires but at the expense of his life; whereas, if he passed for her brother, time might be gained, the treaty of marriage prolonged, and several unforeseen accidents happen, that might give the divine providence a seasonable opportunity to interpose in his favour, as we find it did.

Nor can the presents which both Pharaoh and Abimelech gave Abraham, upon the delivery of his wife, with any justice, be imputed to his management; since they were voluntary acknowledgments for his interceding for them; oblations of gratitude for their recovery from the sore plagues wherewith God had afflicted them; and a kind of commutation for the injury and affront they had put upon persons so highly favoured by God, that ³ "at what time they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people, he suffered no man to do them wrong, but reprov'd even kings for their sakes."

Hagar, according to the opinion of some of the rabbins, who love to magnify every matter, was one of the daughters of Pharaoh king of Egypt, whom he sent along

with Abraham, when he dismissed him so honourably. She was an Egyptian indeed, very probably one of those servants that were given to Abraham, and was employed about Sarah's person as her waiting-maid: but we have no grounds to think, that a woman of her extraction (had she been Pharaoh's daughter) would have condescended to serve in any capacity. However this be, Sarah seeing herself now grown old and barren, and knowing that God had promised a numerous posterity to Abraham, believed that, in order to contribute to the accomplishment of these promises, she ought to give her servant to him for a wife; and accordingly she is introduced as making the first offer: "Behold now the Lord hath restrained me from bearing, I pray thee go in unto my maid; it may be, that I may obtain children by her." This proposal (as St Chrysostom ⁵ observes,) and the soft manner of making it, discovered a very uncommon love and respect to her husband; that she herself should persuade and urge him to this expedient, in order to make him easy in that particular, which gave him so much disturbance, the want of issue, the default of which she supposed to be owing to herself: ⁶ and it was purely in compliance to this solicitation of hers, that he took Hagar to his bed. Sarah, undoubtedly, was by far the more beautiful woman, at least if so good judges as the king of Egypt and his subjects may be depended on. Abraham had now lived many years, without giving any occasion to have his modesty and continence suspected. Hagar too was no more than his wife's servant, and inferior to her in person as much as in condition. In a short time after, when, upon her conception, she grew undutiful to her mistress, Abraham never interposed in her favour, but left her entirely to her lady's discretion: from all which circumstances it appears that his taking Hagar to be his concubinary wife, was not from any motive of sensuality, but from a true principle of conjugal affection to Sarah.

⁶ God had indeed promised him the land of Canaan, and a numerous issue to succeed him; but whether the son, from whom that issue was to spring, was properly to be his own, or only adoptive; or if his own, whether begotten of Sarah or of some other woman, was not revealed to him. Seeing, therefore, he had no children of his own, and yet stedfastly believed the promises of God, the only way that he could devise whereby to have these promises accomplished, was by way of adoption; and therefore he says, ⁷ "Lo! one born in my house is my heir;" upon which God clears the first of these doubts to him, namely, whether his seed was to be natural or adoptive; ⁸ "This shall not be thine heir, but one that

⁴ Gen. xvi. 2.⁵ In Locum, Hom. 38.⁶ Augustinus contra Faustum, b. 22. c. 32.⁷ Gen. xv. 3.⁸ Gen. xv. 4.

^a The words of St Austin upon this occasion are very nervous and very significant. — "Abraham used Hagar to rear an offspring for him, not to gratify his lust: he did not insult but rather complied with the wishes of his wife, who believed that it would be a comfort for her barrenness, if he should go in unto her maid, since she herself was incapacitated by old age. There is here no desire of wantonness—no disgraceful criminality; for the sake of offspring the maid is given by the wife to the husband, and for the same reason, is she received by him."—*De Civit. Dei*, b. 16. c. 25; where he concludes with these exclamatory words, "O virum viriliter utentem feminis, conjugē temperanter, ancilla obtemperanter, nulla intemperanter."

¹ Bishop Smalridge's Sermon on Lying.² Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 4.³ Psalm cv. 13, 14.

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shall come forth out of thine own bowels, shall be thine heir:’ but still the second doubt remained, whether he was to be his heir by Sarah, or by some other woman, which, for the farther trial of his patience, God thought proper to conceal. No wonder then if Abraham, (having no longer hope of issue by his wife, finding her indeed as impatient for a child as himself, and desirous to have such a child as she might account her own, being begotten by her husband and her maid,) yielded to her importunity, not so much to please himself as to gratify her desire. And this seems to be the reason why Sarah made choice of a slave (as Hagar is called in the text) rather than a free woman, to bring to her husband’s bed, namely, ¹ that the child which the former might happen to bear, might, imputatively at least, be accounted hers; whereas one conceived by a woman that was free, would properly belong to the mother herself.

Whether polygamy, in the age of the patriarchs, was innocent or no, is a question that has much employed the pens of the learned. ^a Most of the ancient fathers of the church maintain its lawfulness, and ² some of our latter divines can hardly persuade themselves, that a practice which the most holy and venerable men ordinarily engaged in, and during that engagement continued an intimate conversation and familiarity with God; a practice which God never blamed in them, even when he sharply reprov’d other vices, and for which they themselves never shov’d the least remorse or tokens of repentance, should be detestable in the sight of God. Our blessed Saviour, who has restored matrimony to its primitive institution, has certainly declared it to be criminal; but whether it was so, under a less perfect dispensation, is not so well agreed. At present, if we suppose it only tolerated by God in the time of the patriarchs, we shall soon perceive another inducement for Abraham’s complying with his wife’s request; and that is, namely, the passionate desire for a numerous progeny, which, in those days, was very prevalent; so very prevalent that we find men accounting of their children as their riches, their strength, their glory, and several families reckoning them up with a sort of pride, and placing the chief of their renown in the multitude of them; ³ ‘For children, and the fruit of the womb, are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord; like as arrows in the hand of a giant, so are young children. Happy is the man that has a quiver full of them; he shall not be ashamed when he speaketh with enemies in the gate.’

¹ Heidegger’s Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 6.

² See Saurin in Dissertation 19. ³ Ps. cxvii. 3, &c.

^a The words of St Ambrose, b. 1. c. 4, concerning the patriarch Abraham, are very remarkable, and comprehending indeed the sentiments of most of the rest:—“Let us consider, in the first place, that before the existence of the law of Moses and the gospel, no interdict was laid on adultery. The punishment of a crime begins with the promulgation of a law prohibiting that crime. It is not before but after the existence of a law, that there is any condemnation of a culprit. Therefore Abraham did not sin against a law, he only anticipated it. Although the Almighty applauded the married state in paradise, yet he did not condemn adultery.” Durandus, Tostatus, Selden, Grotius, and others, are clearly of opinion, that before the promulgation of the law, polygamy was no sin; but as their error turns upon this, that the first institution of marriage between one pair in paradise was not designed by God for a law, so have they received an ample confutation from the learned Heidegger, in his *Historia Patriar.* vol. 1. Essay 1, and Essay 7. and vol. 2. Essay 6.

Thus the desire of a numerous issue, the entreaty of a beloved wife, and the supposed innocence of concubinage in that age, may, in some measure, plead Abraham’s excuse in assuming Hagar to his bed. But then, what shall we say for his turning her away so abruptly, and in a starving condition, after she had lived so long with him in the capacity of a wife, and had borne him a son? To clear up this matter, we must inquire a little into the time and occasion, as well as the manner and consequence of this her dismissal.

The whole account of this transaction is thus related by the sacred historian. ⁴ ‘And the child (meaning the child Isaac) grew, and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking; wherefore she said unto Abraham, cast out this bond-woman and her son, for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight, because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight, because of the lad, and because of thy bond-woman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called: and also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar (putting it on her shoulder) and the child, and sent her away, and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.’

What the manner of celebrating this weaning feast, or feast of initiation was, we can only conjecture from certain circumstances, and some parallel passages and customs. There are no more than the weaning of Isaac, and the weaning of Samuel, (two very extraordinary persons, both foretold by the spirit of prophecy, and both miraculously born,) which are taken notice of in the sacred history. And (if we may be allowed to suppose a parallel between them) as the feast at the weaning of Samuel was a sacred feast, and kept ⁵ before the Lord, (for the child was brought by his mother to the sanctuary, there presented, and there initiated, or dedicated by the high-priest, whereupon a sacrifice first, and then a feast did ensue); so we may suppose, ⁶ 1. That at the weaning feast of Isaac, there was a burnt sacrifice, which Abraham, as priest and prophet, might early in the morning offer, in order to sanctify both the feast and those that were to communicate in it: 2. That there were changes of raiment given to all the guests, and to all the servants, to keep the feast in, and that, without the festival robes, no one was allowed to sit down at the table: 3. That a new sort of vesture was given to Isaac, as an habit of distinction, by which he was declared heir of the family, and the most honourable, next to his father: 4. That there was a dedication of the child, or an holy initiation of him, in a very religious and solemn manner, performed by both the parents: 5. That there was probably a commemoration of the entertainment of angels in pilgrim’s habit, and of the joyful message then brought, together with the killing of the fatted calf, and other provisions made for them: and, 6. That upon this occa-

⁴ Gen. xxi. 8, &c.

⁵ 1 Sam. i. 24.

⁶ *Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1. Occasional Annotations, 24.

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sion, there was certainly a sumptuous entertainment made for their guests, suitable to the character of the master of the feast, who was a prince as well as a prophet, and answerable to the end and design of it, which was to commemorate the highest divine blessing that could be given, not to one family only, but to all the generations of the world.

On this festival occasion, it was very probable, that Sarah perceived Ishmael treating her son with contempt and derision. The initiation of Isaac, and his father's declaration concerning him, which Ishmael, who thought he had a prior right, was not able to bear, was enough to exasperate his rough nature to commit such rudeness, as could not but break the merriment of the feast, and thereupon provoke Sarah to exert her authority, by showing the difference between the son of a bond-woman, and the heir apparent of the family. I say, to exert her authority; ¹ for as Hagar was Sarah's dotal maid-servant, she was entirely at her disposal. Abraham had no cognisance of her; from his jurisdiction she was exempt, and by marriage-articles (as we call it) reserved to her mistress in property; and therefore we find God interposing in the affair, and advising Abraham, in all that 'Sarah should say unto him, ² to hearken to her voice.'

The expulsion of Hagar and her son is represented indeed, by our translation, under circumstances somewhat dolorous; but if we inquire into particulars, we shall find them not near so full of distress as this representation seems to make them. Abraham is said to have sent them away early in the morning; but this might be done on purpose to prevent what might pass between them, at so sorrowful a parting, from being observed by too many eyes. He is said to have 'given them bread and a bottle of water;' but as bread and water include eatables and drinkables of all kinds; so there is no doubt to be made but that Ishmael was able enough to carry a handsome competency of provision for a few days, or that his mother might very well carry a large bottle of water, or other liquid, to support them for a week or so, while they were travelling through the wilderness. Their whole misfortune was, in mistaking their way, and wandering about in the desert until their water was consumed; but this was a mere accident, wherein Abraham had not the least concern.

Ishmael indeed is, in several places, called a child, and from thence we may suppose, that he was a burden and incumbrance to his mother: but if we look into his age, we shall find that when Isaac was born, he was fourteen; and therefore, allowing two years between Isaac's birth and his weaning, he could not be less than sixteen when Abraham sent him and his mother away, and was consequently a youth capable of being a support and assistance to her. ³ For the circumstances of the world we may observe, at this time, were such, that it was an easy matter for any person to find a sufficient and comfortable livelihood in it. Mankind were so few, that there was in every country ground to spare; so that any one who had flocks or a family might be permitted to settle any where to feed and maintain them, and so grow, and increase, and become wealthy; or creatures

in the world were so numerous, that a person who had no flocks or herds might, in the wilderness and uncultivated grounds (as Ishmael we find became an archer) find game enough of all sorts whereby to maintain himself and his dependants, without doing any injury, or being molested for so doing.

Ishmael indeed had for sixteen years continued in Abraham's family, and at first perhaps it might be disputed, whether he or his brother Isaac should succeed to their father's inheritance: but after that this point was determined, and God himself had declared in the favour of Isaac, he must of course have become Isaac's bond-man or servant, had he continued in Abraham's family. So that it was both kindly and prudently done of his father, to take occasion, from Sarah's disgust against him, to emancipate and set him free, by sending him abroad to acquire an independent settlement, which was all the provision that parents in those days could make for their younger children. It was the same provision that his father Abraham made for the sons which he afterwards had by his wife Keturah; for so we are told, that ⁴ 'he gave all that he had unto Isaac, but unto the sons of his concubines he gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, eastward, unto the east country.' Nay, it was the same provision which Isaac made for his son Jacob, though he was the heir of the blessing. When he went from his father's house to Padan-Aram, we read of no servants or equipage attending him, nor any accommodations prepared for his journey. He was sent (as we call it now-a-days) to seek his fortune, ⁵ only instructed to seek it among his kinsfolk and relations, and he went to seek it upon so uncertain a foundation, that we find him most earnestly praying to God to be with him in the way he was to go, not to suffer him to want the necessaries of life, but to 'give him bread to eat, and raiment to put on;' and yet we see, that by becoming an hired servant to Laban, ⁶ he both married his daughters, and in a few years became master of a very considerable substance.

It is our mistake, in the customs of the times therefore, that makes us imagine that Hagar and Ishmael had any hard usage in their ejection. Whatever the nature of their offence might be, or whatever grounds Sarah might have for her indignation against them, there is no reason to accuse Abraham's conduct in this affair, since what he did was pursuant to a divine direction, which he durst not disobey; was agreeable to the practice of the times wherein he lived; and no more than what all other fathers, in those days, imposed upon their younger sons: since the hardships they suffered were accidental, but the benefits which accrued to them were designed: since Abraham, by this means, rescued them from a state of servitude for ever; and, according to the divine prediction, was persuaded that this would be the only expedient to make of Ishmael a flourishing nation.

Abraham's great readiness to sacrifice his son, upon the first signification of the divine pleasure, is an instance of duty and obedience, not to be equalled in all the records of history. Sanchoniatho indeed, (as he is quoted by ⁷ Eusebius) tells us of one Chronus, king of Phœnicia, who, in a time of great distress, and extreme

¹ Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 1. Occasional Annotations, 32. See also the note at the end of the Objection, c. iii. of this book.

² Gen. xxi. 12.

³ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 7.

⁴ Gen. xxv. 6.

⁵ Gen. xviii.

⁶ Gen. xxx. 43.

⁷ Præp. Evan. b. 1. c. 10.

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peril of war, took his son Jeud (which, according to the Phœnician language, means only-begotten,) and with his own hand, sacrificed him on an altar of his own erecting. But as ^a this action was certainly subsequent to the times we are now speaking of, there are good reasons to believe, that the whole account of it is no more than a relation of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac, bating some additions and mistakes. ¹ For whereas it is said of this Chronus, that he was the son of a father who had three children; that himself had one son only by his wife, but more by other women; that he circumcised himself and his family; and that he sacrificed his only son with his own hands; all these circumstances concur in the case of Abraham: the chief difference is, that Chronus is by the Phœnicians called Israel, which was properly the name of Abraham's grandson; but this is a small mistake, considering that most of the heathen writers had a general notion, that Israel was the name of some one famous ancestor of the Israelites, but were not exact in fixing it upon the right person.

² The only instance which seems any way to come near the case before us, is that of Agamemnon's consenting that his daughter Iphigenia should be sacrificed; but the disparity soon appears, if we consider that Agamemnon, in all probability, had other children, and a queen neither barren nor old, and yet, sore against his will, did he comply, and perhaps for fear of provoking his subjects in arms; nor could he bear the sight of his daughter's last minutes, though he attained thereby his end, namely, the gratification of his ambitious views in the war wherein he was embarked. Whereas Abraham had no other, nor could expect any other children by his wife, but this son, who was a pledge from heaven of all the glorious blessings that God had promised him; and yet, upon this harsh command, we find him in no uneasiness or confusion, but perfectly composed and easy, fixed and resolved to put it in execution, and waving the weapon in his own arm, stretched out to take away his own child's life; though he could not but foresee, that by such an inhuman act, he would not only exasperate his own family against him, but expose himself likewise to the hatred and indignation of all the nations round about him.

The truth is, several examples there have been, especially of persons of a public character, who have sacrificed themselves, or their nearest relations: but what has it been to? even to desperation, or the apprehension of human force and power; to a wicked and superstitious custom; to pride and vainglory; or to the hopes of preventing or stopping some dreadful and public calamity; but the case of Abraham is so singularly circumstantiated, that none of all these can be imputed to it: the only motive we can possibly imagine, must have been

his earnest desire to testify his obedience to God in all, even his most arduous commands.

How he could certainly know that such a command came from God will best appear, by inquiring a little ^b into the several ways wherein we find God revealing himself to this beloved patriarch. And to this purpose we must observe, that at first he left his own country and kindred by the express command of God, and went into a strange land which God had promised to give his posterity. We are not told, indeed, in what manner God appeared to him, when he gave him this command; but we can hardly think that a person of his gravity and years would incline to seek unnecessary adventures; nor can we imagine why his aged father should accompany him in them, unless there was a manifest conviction that the call was from God.

After he had been for some time settled in Haran, long enough to have his family and fortune increased in it, and probably long enough to like it, and be contented with it, God commands him thence into another strange country, in all appearance no better than that where he then was, and consequently none of his own option; and there he appeared to him the second time, and renewed his former promise of giving him the land whereunto he had thus conducted him.³

After this, when he was driven by famine into Egypt, God sufficiently manifested his signal protection of him,

² Revelation Examined, vol. 2. Dissertation 8.

^b The usual ways recorded in the Old Testament, of God's revealing himself to his servants, were by dreams, by voices, and by apparitions. 1. Dreams are, in some places, called visions, and visions of the night; because persons, under this form of revelation, saw things, and heard voices, as plainly, to all imagination, as if they had been awake: but what sort of ideas and images affected their minds at such a time, and how they distinguished divine dreams from such as were purely natural, we are nowhere told; only, if we may be allowed to conjecture, 1st, Such dreams as were divine had none of those confused and idle phantoms which are found in other dreams, but distinctly represented to their minds whatever things or beings God was pleased to send, without any mixture of foreign images or words: 2dly, They were more lively than any other dreams; their images were strong and vigorous, and fixed deeply in the soul; and, 3dly, They were either attended with the voices of God, or angels speaking distinctly to them, or had some particular instinct always accompanying them. 2. Voices were frequently heard, without any appearance or representation, and proceeded sometimes from the clouds, from out of the fire, out of the whirlwind, &c., in which cases, to judge of the veracity of a revelation, it was generally thought that when the voice was greater than any human voice, (as it was on the top of the mountain when God delivered the law,) or proceeded from a place where no human creature was, (as in the instance before,) that it came either from God himself, or from some messenger sent from heaven. 3. At other times, a figure, or resemblance has appeared to persons awake, talked with them, and done several things in their company, as if it had been a human creature; and yet the event has shown, that it was either God himself, or an angel concealed in human shape. And in this case, the way of discerning them seems to have been, either by the air and majesty of their looks, (as in the angel that appeared to Manoah's wife,) or by some miraculous actions that were above the power of human performance (as in that which appeared to Gideon.) In any of these methods of revelation, where these several circumstances concurred, it was always presumed, that the dream, or voice, or vision, was from God; since it is not to be supposed that He, who sees and hears all things, and himself is a lover of truth, would ever suffer those that love and fear him, to be imposed upon by evil spirits, or even perplexed by the fantastical operations of nature itself.—See my *Body of Divinity*, part 2. c. 3.—ED.

¹ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 6.

² Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 1. Occas. Annot. 28.

^a A learned author, in his 'Connection of Sacred and Profane History,' having by two different ways of computation, proved that Abraham was older than Chronus, subjoins these words: "And thus, by both these accounts, Chronus cannot be more ancient than Abraham, rather Abraham appears to be more ancient than he: and this must be allowed to be more evidently true, if we consider that it was not Chronus the son of Ouranus, who made this sacrifice of his only son, but rather Chronus who was called Israel, and was the son of Chronus called Illus; and therefore still later by one generation."—Vol. 2. b. 6.

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by plaguing Pharaoh and his house upon his account. Upon his return to Canaan, he renewed his assurance of giving him the promised land; and then it is said, that 'the word of the Lord came to him in a vision,' wherein the promise of an heir, and a numerous posterity, is added to that of Canaan; and as Abraham requested a sign in confirmation of all this, so God was pleased to comply with his request; and accordingly again he appears to him in a vision, repeats again the promise to him, supports the promise by a miracle, and confirms a covenant by fire from heaven, to consume the sacrifice which he had commanded him to offer.

Again, when Abraham was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to him; and that his appearance was in some visible form or figure, is sufficiently clear from the text; which tells us, 'that Abraham fell upon his face while God conversed with him.' Here Isaac is promised, and circumcision instituted, a painful, hazardous rite, which the patriarch would never have complied with, but from a full conviction of a divine command.

After this he appeared unto him under the tree of Mamre, in the shape of a pilgrim; and by his whole conversation with him, concerning the fate and iniquity of Sodom, discovered himself to be God, or (to speak more properly) the Messiah in human shape. Soon after this he appeared to Abimelech in Abraham's behalf, and inflicted a distemper upon his whole house, which was removed upon Abraham's prayer; and, soon after this, God's promise of an heir was fulfilled, in the birth of a son from a barren woman, which was a proof equivalent to a thousand miracles.

Once more, God commanded Abraham to comply with his wife's request, in casting out Hagar and her son, though the text implies that he loved them both very tenderly. This was a command so seemingly cruel and severe, that nothing but a full conviction of its coming from God could have exacted Abraham's submission to it: and now, after all these manifestations of himself to the patriarch, God commands him to offer up his son Isaac; and will any one say that Abraham, by this time, had not sufficient evidence that this command was of the same original with the rest? God had, some way or other, appeared and manifested himself to him nine times before this command. Twice in vision, twice in miracle, twice under some sensible appearance, thrice in some manner not explained. He had given him three preceding commands, which no man in his senses could obey, without full assurance that they were enjoined from above. He had often before this time called to him, spoken to him, conversed with him, and, on one occasion, very familiarly and long; and, as we may reasonably suppose, that he always spoke with the same voice, there is no doubt to be made, but that he certainly knew that it was God who spake to him upon this occasion. For why should Abraham suspect that God Almighty would suffer an evil spirit to delude him into the greatest and most irretrievable calamity, acting in the honesty and sincerity of his heart, and from a principle of the most exalted obedience to the divine will? In so long a succession of miracles, discourses, and appearances, he must have acquired as certain and perfect a knowledge of the Deity, whenever he vouchsafed to reveal himself to him, as another man has of his friend, when he

hears his voice, and converses in his presence. And if Abraham was fully satisfied in this, his obedience could not fail of being built upon a good foundation.

It is allowed, indeed, that there is something shocking, at first sight, in the idea of a parent's taking away the life of his own child; but then an express command from a competent authority alters the case, and makes that, which otherwise would be a sin, become a duty. It may justly be said, that he is a barbarous parent, who commands his children to be beat to death with rods before his eyes.—This position is undoubtedly true in the general; but does it follow, from hence, that the first Brutus was either a bad man or a bad parent, for commanding his sons to be served in this manner, when the duty he owed to his country required it? And did Abraham owe less duty to God than Brutus owed to his country? A captain, who would command his valiant and victorious son to be put to death, for exerting his prowess upon the enemies of his country, must surely be a monster among men. This position, laid down without any limitation, is undeniably true: but will it therefore follow, that Manlius was a monster, though he put his son to death for killing Geminus, general of the Latins, contrary to the discipline of the war? And yet it would badly become us to say, that the discipline of war is a stronger obligation than an express, positive, unerring command, from the great Ruler of the world, the sovereign Arbitrer of life and death.

So good a man as Abraham is represented could not but antecedently be satisfied, that a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness could give no command that would ultimately terminate in calamity upon innocence and obedience; and, therefore, when a command of an intricate and mysterious nature was given him, what had he to do but to obey? He knew this son whom God now demanded was given him in an extraordinary manner, and why might he not be taken away in a manner as extraordinary? And when he was taken away, he very well knew that God could again restore him in a manner yet more extraordinary; and that raising him from the grave had no more difficulty with infinite power than raising him from the womb of a woman barren at first, and now, by the course of nature, long past the power of conception; which makes St Paul's reflection a lively comment upon the principles of Abraham's obedience on this occasion: ¹ 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.'

And this, by the bye, suggests a reason why the holy patriarch, who, in other cases, was charitable enough to intercede for the wicked, does not so much as offer up one petition for the life of his innocent son. He had that true sense of the power and veracity of God, that he was fully persuaded, that the fate of his child, and the tenor of God's promises, would, one way or other, be made consistent; and, therefore, he left it upon his infinite wisdom to find out the means of unravelling this intricate affair, without ever once murmuring, or making the least remonstrance. But, supposing that Abraham

¹ Heb. xi. 17, &c.

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had taken upon him to expostulate with God upon this hard injunction; yet¹ what could he have urged, but that the person whom he ordered him to slay was his son, his only son, his son whom he tenderly loved, and that he could not, without the greatest force upon paternal affection, lay violent hands upon him. But now, all pleas of this kind were fully anticipated by the divine command, 'Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of;' that is, "notwithstanding he is thy son, thine only son, and a son thou hast set thine heart upon, yet must thou sacrifice him unto me."

In the case of Sodom, Almighty God is represented as deliberating and undetermined; and there Abraham's humanity and the rectitude of his mind were at liberty, nay, were engaged to interpose; but in the case of his own son, God appeared fixed and determined, and there his humility, and the deference due to his God, forbade him to expostulate. Not to say, that if he erred in the first case, he knew it was the error of an upright, a humane, and a generous spirit; but an error in the latter would be the effect of partiality and self-interest; and Abraham's heart was too honest, and too enlarged, to allow him in a conduct that could any way fall under the suspicion of such mean and sordid principles. This seems to vindicate the conduct of Abraham in paying a ready obedience to the divine command; but then, what shall we say to the goodness and justice of God in imposing it?

God indeed governs himself by the eternal rules of reason; and can give no command in contradiction to them; but then common sense tells us, that these are rules not of human reason, but divine; and consequently such rules as must result from the relation which the whole universe, and all the parts thereof, have to one another; an immense compass and variety of things, which nothing but infinite wisdom can comprehend! And therefore we take quite wrong measures, when we estimate the nature and perfections of God from what we find in ourselves; for 'as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts higher than our thoughts.'

Upon the supposition, however, that God really intended that Abraham should have taken away his son's life, there could have been no injustice in the injunction; since God, who is the author and giver of life, has an undoubted right to resume it, when, and in what manner he thinks fit; and his infinite wisdom and goodness secure us from all suspicion of his taking it away arbitrarily or unlawfully: so that had the command been actually executed, we must have supposed it to have been wise, just, and good; because a divine command necessarily implies wisdom, and justice, and goodness, in the highest degree, though the reason of that command should not not appear to such limited, short-sighted creatures as we are.

But this was not the case. God never intended that this command should be put in execution. His only purpose was, to make a trial of Abraham's obedience, not to inform himself, in any thing, who was omniscient, and knew beforehand, both what was in Abraham's heart, and how he would acquit himself in this important

juncture; but to make him more perfect by suffering, and his example more conspicuous,² 'that the trial of his faith,' as the apostle words it, 'being much more precious than of gold, that perisheth, (though it be tried by fire,) might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory;' and that all future generations, reading the history of his patience and perseverance, his courage and constancy, his faith and hope, and magnanimity, might glorify God in him, and look upon his example as a shining light, which the hand of Providence has set up in the firmament of his church, to guide succeeding saints in the intricate and arduous paths of their duty.

Those who would gladly find any flaw in our patriarch's character, are apt to suggest, that his desiring of God a sign concerning the land of Canaan, which had been so lately promised to him, (³ 'whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?') proceeded from a defect of faith, for which, as some pretend, he was so renowned. But without straining any point to get over this difficulty, we may fairly own, that Abraham is here doing no more than what many worthies of old are known to have done after him, when they were put upon any difficult services; namely, requesting of God some outward token or representation, to strengthen and confirm his faith concerning the divine promises, which is an argument of modesty, not of any diffidence in the divine veracity; and therefore the words are very properly paraphrased by St Chrysostom: "I firmly believe, that what thou hast promised shall come to pass; and therefore I ask no questions out of distrust; but I shall be glad to be favoured with some such token or anticipation of it, as may strongly affect my senses, and raise my poor weak ideas and imaginations about it."

Those that are disposed to find faults are always provided with an handle; otherwise one would wonder that Abraham's making groves the constant place of divine worship, should be ever brought as an accusation against him, merely because, in after ages, they came to be perverted into scenes of the grossest superstition and idolatry: or that, because his intention to offer up his son gave umbrage to human sacrifices afterwards, he should be thought chargeable with the event. The groves of Moreh and Mamre, which were the principal ones that he planted, were⁴ (as we hinted before) certain oratories or sanctuaries, exposed to the open air,⁵ but planted with trees for the benefit of their shade, and for the more solemn composure of the mind, and recollection of the thoughts for heavenly contemplation. Before the institution of more commodious receptacles for divine worship, these, and such like places, were usually frequented for that purpose; and therefore they had sometimes the name given of 'the houses of God,' 'the courts of God,' and their trees were called 'the trees of God.' In these places it was that Abraham offered up his morning and evening sacrifice with acceptance; and if, in after ages, they came to be applied to abominable purposes, he is no more to be blamed for that abuse, than Moses was for setting up a brazen serpent in the wilderness, which was afterwards perverted to idolatry, though in its primary intendment, it was sanative and medicinal.

And in like manner, if the custom of sacrificing chil-

¹ Revelation Examined, vol. 2. Dissertation 8.

² 1 Pet. i. 7. ³ Gen. xv. 8. ⁴ See p. 143, in the notes.

⁵ Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 1. Occasional Annotations, 20.

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dren took its origin from some tradition founded on the history of Isaac's being offered, wherein, I pray, is either Abraham to be blamed, or God, for appointing him to this office; since, whether the custom was prior or subsequent to this transaction, God has herein taken an effectual care to discountenance it?

¹ For if, as some imagine, this impious and abominable rite obtained at this time, it is evident that nothing could be better calculated to abolish it than this command to Abraham, which was a plain document to the whole world, that human sacrifices were not acceptable to God: for if they could be acceptable from any hand, they must certainly have been so from his, who, of all men in the world, stood highest in the favour of Almighty God. And therefore, when it appears in the event, that this command was only in trial of obedience; and that when it came to the point of execution, Abraham was expressly forbid to execute it by a voice from heaven; and (to show God's aversion to human sacrifices) by his appointment, a brute animal was substituted in the place of Isaac; when all this is considered, I say, we can hardly think of a clearer monition to mankind upon this head, than God's own prohibition of that practice by a command from heaven, and a miraculous interposition of a vicarious oblation.

On the other hand, if this impious custom had not yet obtained, but God, in his great knowledge, foresaw that superstition would soon introduce it; what could be a more effectual means, either to prevent or repress it, than the attestation of all Abraham's dispersed servants and descendants, vouching every where with one voice, that God himself had prohibited their master from practising it. And it is not improbable (from the fable of the goddess Diana's substituting a deer in the room of Iphigenia, who was to be offered,) that the memory of God's prohibiting all human sacrifices was handed down to late posterity.

Thus we have endeavoured to vindicate some passages in Abraham's life which seemed most liable to exception; and come now to inquire into the obnoxious part of the conduct of his nephew Lot.

² It is not to be doubted, but that Lot, who, by the assistance of his uncle Abraham, had done such signal services to the Sodomites, was by this time become a person of some eminence among them; had probably married a woman of a principal family, and was admitted into some considerable post of honour and authority. The Jewish doctors will needs persuade us, that he was now one of the judges in Sodom, and, as such, sat at the gate of the city, where the courts of judicature were usually held. His sitting at the gate, however, seems rather to have been (according to the hospitality of those days) with an intent to invite strangers into his house, the better to secure them from the libidinous outrage of his neighbours.

Two strangers (who afterwards proved two angels) he had now under his roof, when the inhabitants, from all parts of the city, flocking together, stormed the house, and demanded the two strangers to be brought out to them, that they might abuse their bodies: whereupon Lot, deeply concerned lest the right of hospitality should

be violated, is resolved to expose both himself and his, to the utmost peril, rather than those whom he had taken under his protection should come to any harm. Upon this principle he ventures out of doors alone among this lewd, licentious rabble, that he might calmly expostulate the matter with some of the chief of them, and divert them, if possible, from the violence they intended against his guests.

The offer which he made them upon this occasion, namely, to give up his two daughters to their lust, seems to be a strange one; but then we are to consider, that as it was made in the utmost perplexity of mind, and out of a vehement desire to secure his guests; so may it, after all, imply no more than this,—“God forbid, my friends, that you should make yourselves guilty of a crime of so high a nature, as to offer the least indignity to these noble strangers whom I have received into my house, and whom I therefore cannot put in your power upon any terms whatever. Much rather had I part even with my own dear daughters, who are in my power, and who are also marriageable, than with those whom I am not authorized to dispose of. Wherefore, I beseech you, brethren, deal not so foolishly in this matter, but consider what you are now going to do; and since, of two evils, it is better to commit the less than the greater, are there not women among you whom ye may choose for the satisfying the desires of your flesh, and not sin against the order of nature? But if there are none found that can please you, and you will nevertheless persist, I protest to you, sirs, I will sooner lose my own children, with all that I have in the world, than even once consent to depart from my word, which I have given to these worthy persons. Therefore do as you please with me and mine, seeing that I am in your hand; only touch not these.”^a This seems to be, in a great measure, the purport of Lot's proposal to the men of Sodom; and yet, with all this mollification, it has not unjustly incurred the censure of ³ St Austin. “We must not consider,” says he, “the offer which Lot made to the inhabitants of Sodom, as proceeding from a wise, sober, and a premeditated design, but rather as a speech which dropped from a man struck with horror at the thoughts of the abominable sin they were going to commit, and who, by the surprise and trouble that he was in, had lost the use of his reason and discretion. For if once we lay it down for a rule, that there may be a compensation of sin (as he calls it,) that is, that we may commit less sins, in order to prevent others from running into greater, we shall in a short time lay waste all bounds, and see every manner of wickedness come rushing in upon us without control.”

³ In Gen. vol. 4. Quest. 46; et contra Mendacium, c. 9. et c. 7.

^a Le Clerc, in his commentaries upon the place, assigns another reason why Lot might, with better courage, make an offer of his daughters to the Sodomites. For, supposing him to be a considerable man in the city, and his daughters both betrothed (as we find they were betrothed, Gen. xix. 14.) to two young gentlemen of eminence, he might safely propose the thing, as knowing very well that they neither durst, nor would accept of it. That they durst not, for fear of punishment from persons of their rank and authority; and that they would not, because brothers in iniquity (however outrageous they may be against others) affect always to maintain some form of decency between themselves. But it is hard to say what persons of their complexion would either have been afraid, or ashamed to do, had the bent of their inclination tended that way.

¹ Revelation Examined, vol. 2. Dissertation 8.

² Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 1. Occasional Annotations, 21.

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After the destruction of Sodom, and Lot's departure from Zoar, he retired, we are told, into a cave, where his two daughters betrayed him into the double sin of drunkenness and incest; and with what design they did it, ¹the authors who would fain apologize for their conduct do generally run into this strain, namely, that these two maids having some notions of a general conflagration of the world, and seeing their own city and country consumed by fire, were fully persuaded that the divine indignation, which had consumed the Sodomites, had fallen over the face of the whole earth, and that their father was the only man left from whose body mankind was to be repropagated. They were young and inexperienced, say they, and might therefore very well be ignorant that several parts of the earth were inhabited, as well as the plain of Sodom had been. As far as their eye would reach, they saw nothing but sulphureous flames, and a wide theatre of perdition; and this they looked upon as the final catastrophe which, as they had been told, was to put a period to nature. They had unaccountably lost their mother too; so that they concluded that they and their father were the only survivors of human nature (as Noah and his family had been after the flood), and that therefore it was their duty to take care to prevent the extinction of the species. And though they knew it to be a very grievous sin in itself, to betray their own father into a carnal knowledge of themselves; yet they thought they should be more inexcusable, if they should rate the chasteness of their bodies so high, as not to part with it rather than mankind should be no more.

But all this is no more than a plausible fiction, without any foundation to support it. They had lately left Zoar, and knew that it was well inhabited; and were therefore convinced that they and their father were not the only three persons left alive in the world: but this they knew very well, ²that there was not so much as one of all their kindred left, by whom they could raise up seed or successors to their father; those of their father's side being at a vast distance from them; and those of their mother's, every one destroyed in the conflagration of Sodom.

Now, it was at that time an universal law, which became afterwards a particular one of the Jews, that marriages should be contracted within the family, to preserve inheritances, and to avoid the mixture of seeds; so that the two sisters here argued very justly upon the principles then universally admitted, that is, upon the general law of nations. For seeing they had no brother to keep up their name and family, and their father had lost their mother, by whom he might have had other children, and they themselves their husbands, before consummation, in the common destruction, there was no apparent possibility of preserving their father's family from utter extinction after their three lives, or of averting the sad curse of excision, but by the very method which at last they concerted between them. So that they had the plea of necessity on their side, to excuse, if not to justify them; and that they were not led by any spirit of uncleanness to this action, we have these

presumptions to believe;—that in the midst of all the impurities of the most wicked city under heaven, they had preserved their innocence and virginity; that they unanimously joined together in the same contrivance, whereas vicious intrigues are seldom communicated, and whenever they are, always occasion quarrels; that which they did once they never repeated, and so cannot be suspected of having been incited by brutal lust; and, lastly, that they were so far from being conscious to themselves of having acted upon any base and sinful inducement, that in the names of their children they took care to perpetuate the memory of it to posterity, which they never would have done had they thought it a reproach to their father's name.

Their father too, in the matter of incest, may in some measure be excused, forasmuch as he offered no violence to his daughters, but was altogether passive, and imposed upon by them; but then, it must be considered, that had he not allowed himself to drink to excess, it had not been in the power of his daughters to deceive him. The daughters indeed, without this expedient, could not have attained their end; but then the unjustifiableness of the means desecrates the end, even though it were good and laudable before. The short is, both father and daughters, in this whole transaction, were not without sin: and therefore, whatever may be said in mitigation of their faults, we mistake the matter widely if we think that the sacred history, in barely relating them, means either to approve or commend them.

It cannot be denied, indeed, but that sundry difficulties occur in the character of Melchizedek, as he is described in the Holy Scriptures; but there is certainly no incongruity in his being both king and priest in one person. For if we cast our eye into any ancient writer, we shall find that, before the institution of a separate order of men, the regal and sacerdotal offices both went together; and that he who was appointed to govern the affairs of the state, had always a right to minister about holy things. This is an observation that the writings of Homer will verify in almost innumerable instances; but (to mention but one out of each of his poems) after Agamemnon was constituted the head of the Grecian army,³ we find him every where in the public sacrifices performing the priest's office, and the other Grecian kings and heroes bearing their parts under him in the administration: and ⁴when Nestor made a sacrifice to Minerva, Stratius and the noble Echephron led the bull to the altar; Aretus brought the water and canisters of corn; Perseus brought the vessel to receive the blood; Thrasymedes, son of Nestor, knocked down the ox; but Nestor himself acted as priest, and performed the rest of the ceremony.

If we look into some of the best historians, we shall find this point more confirmed. For among the Lacedæmonians, whenever they went to battle, the king, according to ⁵Plutarch, always performed the sacrifice; and in the army, as Xenophon⁶ informs us, his chief business was, to have the supreme command of the forces, and to be their priest in the offices of religion. In the time of the heroes, says Aristotle,⁷ the custom was for one and the same person to be general

¹ Origen's Hom. 5. p. 15. col. 2.; St Ambrose de Abrahamâ, b. 1.; and St Chrysostom's Hom. in locum.

² Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 1.; Occasional Annotations, 23.

³ Iliad 3. Iliad 8. et in aliis locis.

⁵ In Lycurgo. ⁶ De Repub. Lacedæm.

⁴ Odys. 3.

⁷ Polit. b. 1.

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of the forces, judge, and high priest, according to that known verse in ¹ Virgil, "Anius, both king of men and priest of Apollo." So that, in short, from any thing that appears in history, we have no reason to think that until some ages after Homer, mankind had any other public ministers in religion but those who were the kings and governors of the state.

There were indeed, in ancient times, many little islands and small tracts of land where civil government was not set up in form; but the inhabitants lived together in peace and quiet, under the direction of some eminent person, who ruled them by wise admonitions, and by instructing them in the great principles of religion; and the governors of these countries affected ^a to be called priests rather than kings. But if, at any time, they and their people came to form a political society, upon more express terms and conditions, then we find these sort of persons called both priests and kings. These small states, indeed, could have but little power to support themselves against the encroachment of their neighbours. Their religion was their greatest strength: and therefore it was their happiest circumstance that their kings or governors were reputed sacred by their neighbours, and so highly favoured by God for their great and singular piety, that it was thought a dangerous thing to violate their rights, or injure the people under their protection.

Such a king as this was the great Melchizedek, who came out to congratulate the patriarch Abraham; and it is no bad conjecture of some, that he was called the king of Salem, not so much upon account of Salem's being the proper name of any determinate place, the seat of his dominion, as that in general it signified peace; and that therefore Melchizedek was 'the king of peace,' or 'the peaceable king;' because the sacredness of his character secured him from being invaded by his neighbours, and his wise administration kept all things in good order, so that he was never molested by his subjects.

This, however, is no more than a conjecture; because it is certain that there were two places in Palestine which went under that name; the one, the same with that which was afterwards called Jerusalem, and the other, a town lying upon the banks of the river Jordan, not far from the place ² where John (our Saviour's forerunner) is said to have baptized. Here formerly were seen the ruins of the palace of this Melchizedek, which in the time of St Jerome, as he tells us, discovered the magnificence of its structure; and, upon that father's authority, several modern authors have gone into the opinion that this place was the metropolis of that prince. But since that city, even according to the testimony of the same St Jerome, was quite demolished by Abimelech, it is hardly conceivable how such remarkable remains should be of so long continuance, and yet escape the observation of Josephus, who was no undiligent inquirer into the antiquities of the Jewish nation;

and yet his express declaration is, that Melchizedek ³ was king of Solyma, which is now called Jerusalem.

It is the much more probable opinion, therefore, ⁴ that this palace was built by Jeroboam, when he repaired Salem, and that the inhabitants (possibly the Samaritans) in after ages, either devised or promoted a false tradition, that it originally belonged to Melchizedek. For the general consent of the ancients give it clearly for Jerusalem, as duly considering that Abraham's route, in returning from the territories of Damascus to Hebron, was directly through its coasts, (whereas the other Salem lay devious to the north,) and that there was a kind of propriety in the mystery, and what the analogy of the thing seemed to require, that Melchizedek should be king of that very place in which the true Prince of Peace (whereof he was a type and representation) was in future ages to make his appearance.

Who this Melchizedek was, is still an hard question that has puzzled most interpreters. The author to the Hebrews indeed has recorded a description of him; but this is so far from giving us any light, that it has, in a great measure, been the occasion of leading some into a persuasion, ⁵ that the person here called Melchizedek was an angel; others, that he was the Son of God; and others, that he was the Holy Ghost, in the shape and appearance of man; because they cannot conceive how the qualities ascribed to this excellent personage can comport with any human creature. The phrase, however, made use of by the apostle, ἀγενεαλόγητος, *without descent*, or *without genealogy*, explains what the apostle means by, 'without father, and without mother,' that is, ⁶ without any father or mother mentioned in the genealogies of Moses, where the parents of all pious worthies are generally set down with great exactness; ⁷ so that there being no genealogy at all of Melchizedek recorded in Scripture, he is introduced at once; even like a man dropped down from heaven, for so the description goes on, 'having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,' that is, in the history of Moses, which (contrary to its common usage when it makes mention of great men) takes no notice at all of the time either of his birth or death; and herein 'he is made like unto the Son of God,' that is, by the history of Moses, which mentions him appearing and acting upon the stage, without either entrance or exit, as if, like the Son of God, he had abode a priest continually.

This is the common, and ^c the best approved interpre-

³ Antiquities, b. 1. c. 11.

⁴ Heidegger's Hist. Patriarch. vol. 1. Essay 2.

⁵ See Calmet's and Saurin's Dissert. on Melchizedek. Heidegger's Hist. Patriarch. vol. 2.

⁶ From the times of Epiphanius there were names invented for the father and mother of Melchizedek. To his father was given the name of Heraclas, or Heracles; to his mother that of Astaroth, or Astaria.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

⁷ Scott's Christian Life, part 2. c. 7.

^c The learned Heidegger, in my opinion, has taken the right method to explain this difficult passage of St Paul to the Hebrews. He supposes (as there really is) a twofold Melchizedek, the one historical, whereof Moses gives us an account in the 14th chapter of Genesis, as that he was the king as well as priest of Jerusalem; the other allegorical, whom St Paul describes in the words now under consideration, and this allegorical person is Christ. The word *Melchizedek*, simply considered, means *the king of righteousness*; and from this sense of the word, in its applicative acceptance, and the remembrance of this person's being a priest

¹ Æn. iii. v. 80.

² John iii. 22.

^a Thus Jethro is called by Moses, not the king, but the priest of Midian; and thus Chryses, the priest of Apollo at Chrysa, and not the king of Chrysa, though both he and Jethro were the governors of the countries where they lived.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. b. 6.

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tation of the apostle's words; but still the question returns upon us, to whom can this character, even with this comment, belong.

The Jews are generally of opinion, and herein are followed by some Christians, that Melchizedek was the same with Shem, one of the sons of Noah, whom they suppose alive in the days of Abraham, the only person upon earth, say they, who could, with justice, be called his superior, and whom the description of the apostle could, in any tolerable manner, befit, as being a person of many singularities, born before the deluge, having no ancestors then alive, and whose life had been of an immense duration in comparison of those who came after him. But not to dispute the fact, whether Shem was at that time alive or no,¹ it seems very incongruous to think that Moses, who all along mentions him in his proper name, should, upon this occasion, disguise his sense with a fictitious one; and very incompatible it is with what we know of Shem, that he should be said to be 'without father,' and 'without mother,' when his family is so plainly recorded in Scripture, and all his progenitors may, in a moment, be traced to their fountain-head in Adam. Besides, had Melchizedek and Shem been the same person, the apostle would hardly have made him of a family different from Abraham, much less would he have set him in such an eminence above the patriarch, or thereupon broke out into this exclamation concerning him:—'Consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of his spoils!'

These arguments seem to evince, that Melchizedek and Shem were different persons; and much more reason have we to suppose that he and Ham, that wicked son of Noah, were so. For who, upon deliberate thoughts, can believe, that this cursed person was the priest of the most high God, from whom Abraham so joyfully received the sacerdotal benediction, that he returned it with the

payment of his tithes? And much less can we believe, that one of his ill character was the type of the blessed Jesus. Jesus, indeed, himself, if he be taken for Melchizedek, appearing to Abraham in an human shape, (as he is often supposed to do in Scripture,) will answer all the character which the apostle gives of this extraordinary person: but then the wonder is, that the historian should never give us the least intimation of this; that Abraham should express no manner of surprise upon such an interview; and (what is more) how the type and the antitype can possibly be represented the same.² For this is the case: here Melchizedek was a representative of our Saviour, according to that of the apostle, 'Jesus was a priest after the order of Melchizedek,' which he explains in another place, 'after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest;' as much as to say, Melchizedek and Christ were like one another in several things, and thereupon one was designed to be a fit type of the other; but as it is unreasonable and absurd to say, that a person is like himself, so we cannot rationally imagine that Christ, who, as St Paul says, was 'after the similitude of Melchizedek,' was in reality the same person with him.

Thus we have looked into ^a some of the chief conjectures concerning this great man, which seem to have any plausibility in them; and after all must content ourselves with what the Scriptures nakedly report of him, namely, that this Melchizedek was both a king and a priest (for these two offices were anciently united) in the land of Palestine, in the city of Jerusalem, descended, not improbably, ^b from wicked and idolatrous parents, but

² Edward's Survey of Religion, vol. 1.

^a The sole question concerning the person of Melchizedek would supply matter for a whole volume, even though one should do no more than recite the catalogue of the different opinions to which it has given rise, and the reason upon which each conjecturer has endeavoured to establish his own. The Melchizedekians, a sect in the early times of the church, maintained that he was a certain divine power superior to Christ; Hieraxes the Egyptian, that he was the Holy Ghost, because compared to the Son of God; the Samaritans, and many Jews, that he was Shem, the son of Noah; M. Jurieu, (in his *Hist. Critique des Dogmes*, &c. b. 1.) of late, that he was Ham, another son of his; Origen, that he was an angel; Athanasius, that he was the son of Melchi, the grandson of Salaad; Patricides, that he was the son of Phaleg; Irenaeus, that he was king of Jerusalem; St Jerome, that he was king of Salem in Scythopolis; and a certain anonymous author, that he was a man immediately created by God, as was Adam. And because he is said to have had no relations, some have given out, that the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them all up; whilst others, because he is said to have no end of life, suppose that he was translated, and is now with Enoch and Elias, in a state of paradise.—*Heidegger's Hist. Patriar.* vol. 2. Essay 2. But all these opinions are at present reduced to these two: whether this Melchizedek was a mere mortal man, or the Son of God in human shape; which the reader may find supported with arguments on both sides, in both Saurin's and Calmet's dissertations upon this subject.

^b Those who make him to be the son of Melchi, an idolatrous king, and of a queen named Salem, have an ancient tradition, that Melchi, having resolved to offer a sacrifice to his gods, sent his son Melchizedek to fetch him seven calves, that he might sacrifice them; but that, as he was going, he was enlightened by God, and immediately returned to his father to remonstrate to him the vanity of idols. His father in wrath sent him back to fetch the victims, and while he was gone, offered up to his gods his own son, who was the elder brother of Melchizedek, with a great number of other children. Melchizedek returning, and conceiving a great horror at this butchery, retired to mount

¹ Bochart's Phaleg. b. 2. c. 1.

as well as a king, the apostle took occasion to draw the comparison between him and Christ, in order to show the pre-eminence of the Christian above the Aaronical priesthood; and what he ascribes to the historical Melchizedek, upon this account, is only to be understood in an imperfect and improper sense, that is really and literally true only in the person of Christ. The apostle was minded, in short, to illustrate his argument with some comparison; and writing at this time to the Jews, (who were well acquainted with this allegorical way of arguing,) he could meet with none, in the whole compass of their law, so commodious for this purpose, as this Melchizedek; and therefore as Christ, the heavenly Melchizedek, was 'without father, without mother, without descent' here on earth, in respect of his divinity, 'having neither beginning of days, nor end of life;' so the like properties may, in some measure, be applied to the earthly Melchizedek; forasmuch as, in the book of Genesis, wherein all great men's genealogies are supposed to be recorded, there is no mention made, either of his birth, family, or death; only he was invested with a royal priesthood, which assimilates him to Christ. He had a father and mother, no doubt, and was born, and died like other men; but because these things are not related by Moses, the apostle looks upon them as though they had never been: so that the whole hinge of comparison turns upon the silence of the sacred historian, who, in a book (wherein it might be expected otherwise) makes no manner of mention, either of the beginning or ending of Melchizedek's life or priesthood; and it is for this reason, that he who wrote by the guidance of the blessed Spirit was directed to conceal these matters; that, in this situation, this same Melchizedek might be a more proper type of so sublime a thing as that of the priesthood of Jesus Christ.—*Hist. Patriar.* vol. 2. Essay 2.

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himself a person of singular virtue and piety, 'the priest of the most high God,' but perhaps the first and the last of his race who was so, which might give occasion to the apostle to describe him under such ambiguous terms: for the whole of these (according to the judgment of a learned author)^a may not improperly be reduced to this single proposition,¹ that Melchizedek was the most illustrious of his family, and had neither predecessor nor successor in his employ.

We readily grant indeed, that there is something very strange and uncommon in the prophecy relating to Ishmael; but the question is not concerning the singularity, but the reality rather, of the matters contained in it. If these are explicable in themselves, and upon examination found to be true, then is the prophecy so far from losing its credit upon the account of its strangeness, that for this very reason it demonstrates its divine origin; because nothing but an omniscient mind could foresee things so strange and unaccountable; and nothing but an almighty power and providence could bring these things to pass, and make the event exactly agree with the prediction.

Now, in order to explain the prophecy itself, and thence to observe how perfectly it has all along been fulfilled, it must be remembered, that (according to the known style of the Old Testament) what is here said of Ishmael must be chiefly understood of his descendants, in the same manner² as what Jacob predicts of Judah and the rest of his sons, was to relate to their posterity, and be indeed the characteristic of their several tribes. And therefore (to take notice of two of the most odd and

unaccountable branches of his character) 'he will be a wild man,' or a man like 'a wild ass;' this (from the known properties of that creature) several interpreters have resolved into these qualities,—fierce and cruel, loving solitude, and hating confinement of any kind.

How far this part of the character was verified in Ishmael, who lived in the wilderness, and became an expert archer, his very condition of life shows us; and how properly it belongs to his posterity, the Arabians, who in every nation have very justly obtained the appellation of wild, a small inspection into history will inform us.

To this very day (as³ modern travellers inform us) great numbers of them live in the deserts, and wander about from place to place, without any certain habitation. They neither plough the ground, nor apply themselves to any kind of husbandry, though there are several fruitful places in the wilderness that would repay their pains. Their whole occupation (besides spoiling their neighbours) lies in hunting and killing wild beasts, in which there are but few that make use of fire-arms. The much greater part of them make use of the bow, and do herein imitate their great progenitor, that they are the most exquisite archers in the world.

Before the introduction of Mahometanism, they were as vagrant in their lust, and as little restrained in the use of females, as the brutal herd: and even now, they take as many wives as do the Turks, that is, as many as they can keep, whom they purchase of their parents, use with indifference, and dismiss at pleasure. They rove about like the fiercest beasts of prey, seeking continually whom they may devour; insomuch that the governor of Grand Cairo is forced to keep a guard of four thousand horsemen every night on the side of the city next the wilderness, to secure it against their incursions. Nor is the wilderness only the scene of their depredations. They rove all over the southern and eastern seas, visit every creek, and coast, and island, and (as the⁴ historian compares them) come sousing like a hawk, with incredible swiftness, upon their prey, and are gone again in an instant. And as they have always thus preyed upon mankind, the necessary consequence is, that they have always been at variance and hostility with them; and therein have made good the other branch of Ishmael's character, 'His hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him.'

There is not the least hint in Scripture, nor any manner of reason to believe, that Ishmael dwelt in a personal state of hostility with his brethren; nor is it conceivable how he could have maintained himself against their united forces, had he so done; and therefore this prediction can not otherwise be understood, than as it relates to his posterity, the Arabians. Now, that any one nation should be of so singular and perverse a character, as to set themselves in open opposition to the rest of the world, and live in perpetual professed enmity with all mankind; and that they should continue to do so, not for one age or two only, but for four thousand years together, is surely the strangest and most astonishing prediction that ever was read or heard of. And yet, if we attend a little to the history of these people, (as soon as history takes

¹ Outram de Sacrificiis.

² Gen. xlix.

Tabor, where he lived for seven years without clothes, and without any other food but wild fruits, or any other drink but the dew that he sucked up from the plants; till at length Abraham, by the direction of God, went up to the mount, found out Melchizedek, clothed him, and brought him down with him. But those who would have him be the son of Phaleg, relate a still stranger story, namely, that Noah, upon his deathbed, charged his son Seth to take Melchizedek, the son of Phaleg, with him, and go to a place which the angel of the Lord should show them, and there bury the body of Adam, which he had preserved in the ark during the flood: that in that place Melchizedek should fix his habitation, lead a single life, and entirely addict himself to the practice of piety, because God had made choice of him for his priest, but allowed him not to shed the blood of any animal, nor to offer any other oblation to him, but that of bread and wine only; that Seth and Melchizedek did as Noah had enjoined them, and buried Adam in the place which the angel pointed out; that upon their parting, Melchizedek betook himself to the monastic course of life which Noah had prescribed him; but that twelve neighbouring kings, hearing of his fame, and desirous of his acquaintance, consulted together, and built a city, whereof they constituted him king and governor, and, in honour to his merit, called it Jerusalem.—See *Selden de Jure Nat. b. 3. c. 2.*; and *Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay.*

^a The same learned author, who makes the Melchizedek spoken of in Scripture, in one sense to be historical, and in another allegorical, defines the historical in these words. "He was a real and mere man, descended from Adam and Noah, by his son Ham and grandson Canaan—a king of Jerusalem, priest of the true God, regenerated and sanctified by the grace common to all the faithful—scaled up both to a happy resurrection and an eternal life." And the allegorical in these of St Paul,—"Who was king of righteousness and peace, without father, without mother, without descent, a priest abiding continually and having a testimony of no end of life. All which kings as we have affirmed, says he, agree with Melchizedek in a more minute and allegorical sense, but more emphatically and really correspond with Christ."—*Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 2.*

³ See Raawolf's Travels, part 2. c. 3. Bruce's Travels, Clark's, Lord Valentia's, &c.

⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus.

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notice of them,) we shall find, in several instances, a full accomplishment of it.

When Alexander and his victorious army overran a great part of the east, the Arabians, (as we are told by Arrian and Strabo,) of all the Asiatics, were the only people who sent him no ambassador, nor made any submission to him; which indignity he intended to have revenged in a particular expedition against them, but was prevented by death.

¹ What Alexander intended, Antigonus, the greatest of his successors, attempted; but he was repulsed with disgrace, and the loss of above 8000 men; and when enraged at this repulse, he made a second attempt upon them with a number of select men, under the command of his valiant son Demetrius, the resistance he met with was so obstinate, that he was forced to compound the matter, and leave them in the quiet possession of their liberty and peace.

When the Romans and Parthians were rivals for the empire of the east, the Arabians joined, and opposed each nation as they thought fit, but were never entirely devoted to either; for their character always was, that they were fickle, if not faithless friends, and fierce enemies, who might be repulsed, and repressed for a season, but could never be totally vanquished or subdued.

Men of this character soon became the objects of the Roman enmity and ambition, which could endure nothing that was free and independent; and accordingly several attempts were set on foot by Pompey, Crassus, and other great generals, in order to enslave them; but all proved successful: and though they are sometimes said to have been defeated, yet is there no account that we can properly depend on, until we come to the expedition which Trajan is known to have made against them.

² Trajan was certainly a long experienced and successful warrior. He had subdued the German, humbled the Parthian, and reduced already one part of Arabia into a province; and yet, ³ when he came to besiege the city of the Hagarenes, upon every assault ^a his soldiers were so annoyed with whirlwinds and hail, and so frightened with thunder and lightning, and other apparitions in the air, (whilst their meat was spoiled and corrupted with flies, even as they were eating it,) that he was forced to give over the siege, and was not long after seized with a disease, whereof he died.

About eight years after this, the emperor Severus, a very valiant and prosperous warrior, whom Herodian makes no scruple to prefer even before Cæsar, Marius, and Sylla, disdaining, as Trajan had done, that the

Hagarenes should stand out still against the Romans, when all the rest about them had yielded, besieged their city, though it was but a small one, twice, and was twice repulsed with shame and great slaughter of his men. In the second assault, indeed, he beat down some of their city wall, and thereupon sounded a retreat, in hopes that they would have capitulated, and surrendered up the hidden treasure, supposed to be consecrated to the sun. But when they continued resolute a whole day, without giving any intimations of a treaty for a peace, on the morning following the Roman army was quite intimidated. The Europeans, who were gallant men before, refused to enter the breach; and the Syrians, who were forced to undertake that service, had a grievous repulse. Whereupon the emperor, ^b without making any fresh attack, decamped from before the city, and departed to Palestine. Thus God delivered the city, says Dio, recalling the soldiers by Severus, when they might have entered, and restraining Severus the second day by the soldiers' backwardness.

There are only these two things more, which we may observe from our historian, worthy our notice upon this occasion. The first is, that the Arabians stood single, in this their extremity, against the whole Roman power; for none of their neighbours would assist them. The other thing is, that the emperor had soldiers of all nations in his army; for "whereas other emperors," ⁴ says our author, "were contented with guards of four different European countries, Severus filled the city with a mixed multitude of soldiers of all kinds, savage to look on, frightful to hear, and rude and wild to converse with." So that, considering all things, I think we may fairly conclude, that every man's hand was at this time against Ishmael, and his hand, his only hand, against every man; and yet he dwelt, and still dwelleth, in the presence of all his brethren: for, not long after this, it is very well known that the Ishmaelites joined the Goths against the Romans, and having afterwards overcome both, ^c under the name of Saracens, they erected a vast empire upon their ruins; and thus Ishmael, in the full extent of the prophecy, 'became a great nation.'

⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus.

^b The historian tells us farther, that after the breach was made, the conquest of the city was deemed so easy, that a certain captain of the army undertook to do it himself, if he might have but 550 European soldiers assigned him. But where shall we find so many soldiers? says the emperor, meaning it of the disobedience of the army, to which he imputed his not carrying that place. But now, how a commander, who was at once beloved and revered, almost to adoration, by his soldiers, could not, with all his authority, influence them to assault, when they were in a manner at his mercy, this can be nowise reconciled, without the supposition of that mighty Being occasioning it, 'who poureth,' when he pleases, 'contempt upon princes, and bringeth their counsels to nought.'

^c The Ishmaelites, as some imagine, upon the reproaches of the Jews, who upbraided them with bastardy, became ashamed of their old names, derived from Hagar and Ishmael, which carried an odium in the sound, and took upon them the name of Saracens, desiring to be accounted as the descendants of Abraham by his wife Sarah; but what destroys this etymology is this, that the ancients called them *Sara kenoï*, and not *Sara-noï*, as they must have been called, if their name had been derived from Sarah; and therefore the learned Scaliger supposes the word to come from the Arabic word *sarack*, which signifies to steal or plunder.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

¹ See Dr Jackson on the Creed. ² Dio, Hist. b. 68.

³ Revelation Examined, vol. 2. Dissertation 4.

^a The above recited author, from whom I have compiled this account, assures his reader, that he had, with all the care he could, examined all the accounts of Arabia that came in his way, to see whether the phenomena and calamities here mentioned by Dio to have distressed the Roman army were frequent in that region, and that he had never been able to meet with any instance of one of them, except sometimes storms of wind. If hail, frightful appearances in the air, and food infested with flies, were ordinary calamities in this region, all the accounts of the caravans that travel through the deserts would necessarily be full of them; whereas it is notorious, that the best writers who have left us faithful diaries of these affairs, do not so much as mention any of them; and therefore they must certainly have proceeded from a divine interposition in favour of the Hagarenes, in accomplishment of the prediction concerning Ishmael and his posterity.

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Circumcision is the cutting off the foreskin of the member which in every male is the instrument of generation; and whoever considers the nature of this operation, painful if not indecent in those of maturity, and to such as live in hot countries highly inconvenient, if not dangerous;^a an operation wherein we can perceive no footsteps of human invention, as having no foundation either in reason, or nature, or necessity, or the interest of any particular set of men, we must needs conclude, that mankind could never have put such a severity upon themselves, unless they had been enjoined and directed to it by a divine command. Nay, this single instance of Abraham, who, at the advanced age of ninety-nine, underwent this hazardous operation, and the very indecency of it in a man of his years and dignity; these two considerations are in the place of ten thousand proofs, that it was forced upon him; but nothing but the irresistible authority of God could be a force sufficient, in those circumstances. So that the strangeness and singularity of this ordinance is so far from being an argument against it, that it is an evident proof of its divine institution; and what was originally instituted by God cannot, in strictness, be accounted immodest, though we perhaps may have some such conception of it, since¹ 'unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.'

The Egyptians indeed, as² Herodotus informs us, pretended to practise this rite, from no other principle but that of cleanliness; and possibly, at that time, they might so far have lost the memorial of its true origin as not to retain any other reason for their observation of it. But since it is evident, to a demonstration, that they might, to all intents and purposes, be as clean without this rite as with it, it is absurd to suppose that any man of common sense should undergo pain, and hazard himself, and force the same inconveniences upon his posterity,

¹ Tit. i. 15.² B. 2.

^a The manner of this ceremony's being performed, whether in the public synagogue or in private houses, is this:—The person who is appointed to be the godfather sits down upon a seat, with a silk cushion provided for that purpose, and settles the child in a proper posture on his knees, when he who is to circumcise him (which, by the bye, is accounted a great honour among the Jews) opens the blankets. Some make use of silver tweezers, to take up so much of the prepuce as they design to cut off, but others take it up with their fingers. Then he who circumcises the child, holding the razor in his hand, says, "Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast commanded us to be circumcised;" and while he is saying this, cuts off the thick skin of the prepuce, and then, with his thumb nails, tears off a finer skin still remaining. After this he sucks the blood, which flows plentifully upon this occasion, and spits it out into a cup full of wine; then he puts some dragon's blood upon the wound, some coral powder, and other things to stop the bleeding, and so covers up the part affected. When this is done, he takes up the cup wherein he had spit the blood, moistens his lips therewith, and then blessing both that and the child, gives him the name which his father had appointed, and at the same time pronounces these words of Ezekiel, 'I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live,' Ezek. xvi. 6.; after which the whole congregation repeats the 128th Psalm, 'Blessed is every man that feareth the Lord,' &c.; and so the ceremony concludes. Only we must observe, that besides the seat appointed for the godfather, there is always another left empty, and is designed, some say, for the prophet Elias, who, as they imagine, is invisibly present at all circumcisions.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Circumcision*.

merely for the attainment of an end which could as fully and perfectly have been accomplished without it.

There is a passage, indeed, in the same Herodotus, wherein he tells us, "That the Colchians, the Egyptians, and the Ethiopians, were the only nations that circumcised from the beginning, and that the Syrians and Phœnicians, who lived in Palestine, acknowledged they borrowed that rite from them." But here the historian is less to be blamed for having run into this error, since the Egyptians were a people naturally so vain and conceited of their antiquity, that they chose rather to impose upon him by a false information (for all this account he had but from information) than confess that they received circumcision from any other people. In the other part of the story, it is manifest that they did impose upon him, when they told him that the inhabitants of Palestine, whom he calls Syrians and Phœnicians, confessed that they received circumcision from them; whereas there were no inhabitants in Palestine circumcised but the Jews, and these always professed to have received it directly from Abraham.

³ Herodotus, indeed, in all his writings, has shown that he was a great stranger to the affairs of the Jews, and much more to the history of the patriarchs, who so long preceded the institution of their republic. What he tells us of the origin of circumcision, namely, that it was among the Egyptians from the beginning, is in a loose and vagrant expression accidentally dropt from him, or rather contrived on purpose to conceal his ignorance of the matter: whereas Moses, who was long before him, knew the history of the patriarchs, and particularly that of Abraham; and therefore he does not content himself with popular or fabulous reports, or endeavour to conceal his meaning under indefinite and general expressions, but marks out the particular period, and gives us a plain and full account both of the causes and circumstances of the whole institution. The truth is, there is no comparison between the two historians in this particular; and therefore, if we will credit the sacred penman, in a point wherein his knowledge could hardly be defective, so far were the Egyptians from prescribing to the Hebrews, in the rite of circumcision, that when Abraham was in Egypt, there was no such custom then in use.

It was twenty years after his return from that country that God enjoined him the rite of circumcision; and then it is said, that⁴ 'Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin.' Now it is evident, that when he came out of Egypt he brought men-servants and maid-servants with him in abundance; and therefore, unless we can suppose that all these Egyptian men-servants died within twenty years, when the ordinary period of life was at least an hundred; or that, when they died, none of them left any male issue behind them; we cannot but conclude, that circumcision was not known in Egypt in Abraham's time, because it is expressly said, that 'every male among the men of Abraham's house was circumcised' at the same time that he was, which could never have been, had they undergone that operation before.

³ Basnage's History of the Jews.⁴ Gen. xvii. 11, 25, 27.

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At what time the rite of circumcision obtained in Egypt, is not so easy a matter to determine: there is a passage, however, in the prophet Jeremiah, which, if taken in a literal sense, is far from encouraging any high pretensions to antiquity: ¹ ‘Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them that are circumcised with the uncircumcised; Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, &c., for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in their heart’—the plain sense of which word is this,—that God would visit the house of Israel like strange nations; because, as the latter were uncircumcised in the flesh, so the former were in the heart. Not but that, in the days of Jeremiah, the rite of circumcision was known and practised among the Egyptians, as well as among other nations; but then it was not so common and general, nor was it at all used any where till long after Abraham’s days.

One probable opinion therefore is, that the Arabians received it from the Ishmaelites; that the Egyptians received it from the Arabians, or perhaps from Abraham’s children by Keturah; and that from the Egyptians the people of Colchis, knowing themselves to be of Egyptian extract, embraced it, in imitation of their illustrious ancestors. But even suppose that this custom was not established in Egypt by the posterity either of Hagar or Keturah; yet why might not Joseph, in the course of a most absolute ministry for fourscore years together, be able to introduce it? ² It is the practice, we know, nay, it is the pride of slaves, to imitate their master’s manners, especially if he seems solicitous to have them do so; and therefore we need not doubt, but that, upon the least intimation of his pleasure, the Egyptians would readily embrace the religious rites of so great, so wise, so powerful a minister, who had preserved every one of their lives, who had saved the whole kingdom from ruin, and was himself so visibly and so remarkably guided by the Spirit of God. But whensoever, or from whomsoever it was, that the Egyptians learned this rite, it is certain, that the reason of its institution was not with them the same that it was among the Jews; and therefore the circumcision itself must not be accounted the same.

Whoever looks into the life of Abraham, will soon perceive, that God did all along design him for a pattern of faith and perfect obedience to all succeeding generations. ³ The more his faith was tried, the more illustrious it became, and the more obstacles there were raised in the accomplishment of the divine promises, the more the good patriarch showed (in surmounting these obstacles) the high conception he had entertained of him from whom these promises came. For after a promise of a numerous posterity, why was it so long before he gave him any son at all? After the birth of Ishmael, why so long before the promise of an heir by his wife Sarah? And after that promise was given, who so long, even till the thing was impossible, in the ordinary course of nature, before the promise was accomplished, and the child sent? All this was to exercise his faith, and to give him an opportunity of showing to the world, how fully he was convinced, that, notwithstanding all these impediments and

delays, God would certainly, by one means or other, effectually make good his promises. The like may be said of the command of circumcision. God did not only defer, for the space of twenty whole years, the birth of that son, who was so solemnly promised, and so impatiently desired, but even when that time was expired, and Abraham might now justly hope to see the promise accomplished, and his faith crowned, God was pleased to cross it again, by requiring of him the performance of an act, which, in all appearance, would be a total defeat to all his hopes. For this injunction, ‘My covenant shall be in your flesh,’ to a man of advanced age, seems as opposite to the promise of having a son, as that other of ‘taking his son, his only son Isaac, and offering him up for a burnt-sacrifice,’ was to the promise of his being the father of a numerous posterity.

But Abraham’s faith triumphed over this, as well as all other obstacles. He immediately performed the operation, notwithstanding its oddness, its danger, its seeming indecency, and the apparent opposition it had to the divine promises; and it is to preserve the remembrance of the faith of their great ancestor, who, in so many discouraging circumstances, ‘waited patiently on God, and against hope believed in hope,’ (as the apostle expresses it,) that God prescribed to the Jewish nation the sacrament of circumcision. For this was a farther end of its institution, not only to be a mark of distinction between the posterity of Abraham and all other nations, but a token likewise of God’s covenant made with him, and his posterity, and a note of commemoration to put those who bore it continually in mind whose offspring they were, and what advantages entitled to upon that account, provided they took care not to degenerate from the glories of that stock from whence they sprang.

And indeed, considering that Abraham was the first we read of whom God rescued from the general corruption of faith and manners, which the world had now a second time relapsed into; and considering, withal, that this person and his posterity were singled out for a chosen generation, the repository of truth, and the receptacle of God incarnate; there was reason in abundance, why this remembrance should be very grateful to them; and apt enough, it is plain, upon all occasions, they were to value themselves, and despise others, upon the account of so particular an honour. ⁴ But the misfortune was, the most useful part of the reflection, namely, the eminent faith and ready obedience of so renowned an ancestor, and the noble emulation of his virtues, which such a pattern ought to have inspired; this they were too apt to overlook, though any considering man (as the apostle ⁵ excellently argues) could not but perceive that the only valuable relation to Abraham is not that of consanguinity and natural descent, but the resemblance of his virtues, and claiming under him as the ‘father of the faithful.’

And this suggests another, and indeed none of the least considerable ends for which circumcision was instituted, namely, to be a sign of inward virtue, and to figure out to us some particular dispositions of mind which bore resemblance to the outward ceremony, and were required to render it effectual; for which reason it

¹ Jer. ix. 25, 26.

² Revelation Examined, vol. 2. Dissertation 4.

³ Saurin’s Dissertation 15.

⁴ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels.

⁵ Rom. iv. 11.

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is that we read so much in the old law ¹ of circumcising the foreskin of the heart,² and hear the apostle so frequently telling us in the new, ³ of putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;⁴ ⁵ for he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.⁶

It may seem a little strange at first, perhaps, that Abraham, whose course of life was retired and philosophical, should all on a sudden commence so great a warrior, as to be able to defeat four kings at once, and their victorious armies, with a small number of his domestics, and some assistance that was given him by his neighbours. His own men were 318; and what force his confederates, the three Phœnician princes, brought to his assistance, we do not find mentioned. We may probably enough suppose, that they did not exceed his own domestics; but then we are not obliged to affirm, that he fell upon the whole body of the Assyrian army with this small retinue. This certainly would have been too bold an attempt for the little company which he commanded; and therefore the more likely supposition is, that coming up with them by night, he divided his men into two or three parties, the better to make a diversion, and conceal his strength; that with one party himself might attack the headquarters of king Chedorlaomer, where the chief feasting and revelling was kept for joy of their late victories; that with another he might fall upon those who were appointed to guard the captives and the spoil; and with a third might be beating up other quarters; so that the Assyrians, being fatigued in their late battle, surprised at finding a new enemy, and not knowing what their number or strength might be, or where their principal attack was to begin, might endeavour to save themselves by flight; which Abraham perceiving, might take the advantage of their fright, and pursue them, until he had made himself master of the prisoners and the spoil, and then retire himself, so not thinking it advisable to follow them until the daylight might discover the weakness of his forces.

All this might well enough be done by a common stratagem in war, without any miraculous interposition of providence: but it is much more likely, that the same God, ⁴ who in after ages instructed one of his posterity, even with such another little handful of men, not only to break an army of about 200,000 or 300,000, but to kill of them upon the spot, no fewer than 120,000; to disperse at least as many more; to vanquish after this a party of 15,000 that had retired in a body; and at last to take all the four kings, who were the leaders of this numerous, or rather numberless army; ⁵ it is much more likely, I say, that the God of Abraham would not be wanting to his servant in his counsels and suggestions upon this important occasion; and if a party of 300 men, under the conduct of a person every way inferior to Abraham, was by a stratagem in the night, and by the help of a sudden panic which God injected, enabled to defeat four mighty princes, and to make such a prodigious

slaughter in their camp; I cannot see, why a person of that consummate wisdom, and so highly favoured by God with extraordinary monitions upon all remarkable emergencies, as Abraham was, might not, by God's advice, make use of some such stratagem as Gideon did, though the Scripture is herein silent, that the success might be imputed to the operation of faith in him, and not to the agency of second causes, or what some call the chance of war.

Of what age Isaac was, when Abraham was ordered to offer him up, is nowhere declared in Scripture. The opinion of some learned Jews, that he was but twelve years old, is ridiculous; since at that age, it would have been impossible for him to have carried such a load of wood, as was requisite upon that occasion; and others run into a contrary extreme, by supposing that he was then seven and thirty years of age, which must have been the year wherein his mother died; and yet she is said to have been alive when this transaction happened. Josephus indeed makes him five and twenty, and some Christian (both ancient and modern) commentators suppose that he was past thirty; but whatever his age might be, it is acknowledged, that he was capable of making resistance, and would certainly have done it, had he not been very well satisfied that the command came from God. To this purpose the ^a Jewish historian introduces Abraham as making a very tender and pathetic speech to his son; inspiring him with a just contempt of life; and exhorting him to a due submission to the divine order and decree; to all which Isaac attended, says our author, with a constancy and resignation becoming the son of such a father: and upon this their mutual behaviour, ⁶ a very elegant father of the Greek church has made this beautiful reflection:—"All the strength of reluctant love could not withhold the father's hands; and all the horror of a dissolution could not tempt the son to move for his own preservation. Which of the two, shall we say, deserves the precedence in our wonder and veneration? For there seems to be a religious emulation or contest between them, which should most remarkably signalize himself; the father, in loving God more than

^a Gregor. Nyss. De Deitate Fil. et Spirit. Sanct. p. 908.

^a The words wherein Josephus makes Abraham address his son upon this occasion are these:—"My dear son, thou hast been the child of my prayers to me, and since thy coming into the world, I have spared for nothing in thy nurture and education. There is not any happiness I have more wished for, than to see thee settled in a consummated state of age and reason; and whenever God shall take me to himself, to leave thee in possession of my authority and dominions. But since it has been the will of God, first to bestow thee upon me, and now to call thee back again, my dear son, acquit thyself generously under so pious a necessity. It is to God that thou art dedicated and delivered up on this occasion, and it is the same God that now requires thee of me, in return for all the blessings and favours he hath showered down upon us, both in war and peace. It is agreeable to the law of nature, for every one that is born, to die; and a more glorious end than canst never have, than to fall by the hand of thy own father, a sacrifice to the God and Father of the universe, who hath rather chosen to receive thy soul into a blessed eternity, upon the wings of prayer and ardent ejaculations, than to suffer thee to be taken away in sickness, war, passion, or any other of the common chances of mankind. Consider it well, and thou wilt find, that in that heavenly station, to which thou art now called, thou mayest make thyself the support of thy aged father, and that instead of my son Isaac, I shall have God himself for my guardian."—*Antiquities*, b. 1. c. 14.

¹ Deut. x. 16. ² Col. ii. 11. ³ Rom. ii. 28, 29.

⁴ Judges, at the 7th and 8th chapters.

⁵ Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 1. Occasional Annotations, 19.

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his own child, and the son, in the love of duty above his own life.”

This is a gallant instance of a profound submission to the divine will; and yet (not to detract from the merit of it) if we consider the matter coolly, it was no more than what many martyrs, even under the Jewish economy, equally have performed. They have given themselves up, in testimony of their love to God, to deaths as cruel as terrible, as this which Isaac was to suffer: ¹ They were stoned, were sawed asunder, were tortured; and yet they accepted not deliverance, that they might inherit a joyful resurrection.²

The metamorphosis of Lot's wife is one of the most wonderful events in Scripture; and therefore those who are unwilling, as they say, to multiply miracles without a cause, from the different senses which the words in the text are capable of, have endeavoured to affix another interpretation to them. Thus the word which we render *pillar*, or *statue*, besides its obvious signification, may, in a metaphorical sense, be applied to denote any thing that, like a pillar or stone, is immovable and hard; and according to this acceptance, these interpreters suppose that Moses might intend no more than that Lot's wife was struck dead with fear or surprise, or any other cause, and so remain motionless, like a stone.

In like manner, ³ the word which we render *salt*, besides its common signification, does sometimes denote a dry and barren soil, such as is found about the asphaltic lake; and thus the sense of the words, applied to Lot's wife, intimates, that the place of her death was in a barren country, or in a land of salt. At other times it signifies a long space, or continuance of time, because ⁴ we find an everlasting covenant called a covenant of salt, (salt being therefore an emblem of eternity, because the things that are seasoned therewith continue incorrupt for many years,) and in this sense Lot's wife may be said to become an everlasting monument of the divine displeasure, without any consideration either of the form or matter whereinto she was changed; and from these significations of the words, they draw this explication of the passage:—“That Lot's wife, either looking back upon the city when she saw it all in smoke, and fire from heaven pouring down upon it, was struck dead with the frightful sight, in a country that was afterwards barren and unfruitful: or that, not only stopping, but returning towards the city, (when the angel was gone,) she was suffocated by some poisonous vapour, and perished in the common conflagration.” And this, as they say, saves a miracle, and answers the end of providence full as well as if the woman had actually been turned into a pillar of salt, which never was, and never will be proved by any authentic testimony.

All this is plausible enough; and yet those who adhere to the literal sense of the words, have this to say in their vindication—That the vale of Siddim, where Sodom, and the other cities stood; was originally a very fruitful soil, (as most bituminous countries are,) which induced Lot to make choice of it for the pasturage of his cattle; but is at present the very reverse, a poor barren land, full of sulphur and salt-pits: and hence they infer, that all the sulphureous and saline matter,

which is found in this tract of ground now, was the effect of divine vengeance, and showered down upon it, when God destroyed Sodom, and its neighbouring cities. They therefore suppose, that the woman standing still too long to behold the destruction of her country, some of that dreadful shower, in the manner of great flakes of snow, fell upon her, and clinging to her body, wrapped it all over, as it were in a sheet of nitrosulphureous matter, which congealed into a crust as hard as a stone, and made her appear like a statue or pillar of a metallic salt, having her body enclosed, and, as it were, candied all over with it. And to maintain this their hypothesis, they assert, that all indurated bodies (as chemists well know) are, as they speak, highly saturated with a saline principle, and all coagulations and concretions, in the mixture of bodies, are effected by this means: so that it was not possible to express such a transmutation as Lot's wife underwent, whether it was simply by incrustation, or by a total penetration, more properly than Moses has done. They produce instances from the best historians of several petrifications, both of men and cattle, (almost as wonderful as this of Lot's wife,) standing in the very same posture wherein they were found at the instant of their transmutation, for several generations afterwards; and, for the confirmation of this in particular, they vouch the testimony of the author of the book of Wisdom, who makes mention of a standing pillar of salt, as a monument of an unbelieving soul, and the authority of the Seventy interpreters, who expressly render it so. Among Jewish writers, they cite the words ⁵ of Josephus, who tells us, that Lot's wife, casting her eye perpetually back upon the city, and being too much concerned about it, contrary to what God had forbidden her, was turned into a pillar of salt, which I myself (as he tells us) have seen. They cite the words of Philo, who frequently takes notice of this metamorphosis, and, in his allegories of the law more particularly, declares, that for the love of Sodom, Lot's wife was turned into a stone. And among Christian writers, they produce that passage of Clemens, in his epistle to the Corinthians; ‘Lot's wife went along with him, but being of a different spirit, and not persisting in concord with him, she was therefore placed for a sign, and continues a statue of salt to this very day;’ together with the testimony of Irenæus, and several other fathers of the church.

The accounts which modern historians and travellers give us of this matter are so very different and uncertain, that we cannot so well tell where to fix our belief. Bochart, in his description of the Holy Land, tells us, that he gave himself the fatigue of a very troublesome journey to behold this statue, but was not so happy as

⁵ Antiq. b. 1. c. 12.

^a Most of the interpreters have observed to us, that we must not take the salt here mentioned for common salt, which water soon dissolves, and could not possibly continue long, being exposed to the wind and rain; but for metallic salt, which was hewn out of the rock like marble, and made use of in building houses, according to the testimony of several authors. Watsius, Miscell. vol. 1. and Pliny, b. 31. c. 7, tell us, that in Africa, not far from Utica, there are vast heaps of salt, like mountains, which, when once hardened by the sun and moon, cannot be dissolved with rain or any other liquor, nor penetrated with any kind of instrument made with iron.—Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 8.

¹ Heb. xi. 35, 37.

² See Le Clerc's Dissert. in locum.

³ Numb. xviii. 19.

⁴ Deut. xxix. 23.

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to satisfy his curiosity; for the inhabitants assured him the place was inaccessible, and could not be visited without apparent danger of death, because of the prodigious beasts and serpents that abounded there, but more especially, because of the Biduini, a very savage and inhuman sort of people, that dwelt near it; and yet, if we will believe other writers of this kind, they will tell us expressly, that there is some part of it remaining, and to be seen between Engaddi and the Dead Sea.

We will suppose however for once, that the long duration of this monument is an imposition of the inhabitants upon the credulity of strangers; yet it will not therefore follow, that there never was any such thing in being, unless we can think it inconsistent with the nature of God to work a miracle for the punishment of a wicked woman. Miracles indeed are not to be multiplied, unless there be occasion for them; but when the plain sense of the words leads us to such a construction, it is a niceness, I think, no way commendable, to endeavour to find out another, merely for the sake of avoiding the miraculousness of the fact; as if the Scriptures were more valuable for containing nothing but obvious matters, and the majesty of God any way magnified by seeming to exert as little of its omnipotent power as possible.

The short of the matter is this,—We have a clear account in a book full of wonders, of a woman confessedly guilty of disobedience and ingratitude, struck dead by the hand of God, and turned into a statue of salt, for a monument of terror to future generations. And is there any thing in this so repugnant to reason, or so incongruous for God to do, that we must immediately fly to another interpretation, and to make the matter easy, resolutely maintain that the whole purport of the thing is only this,—That the poor woman either suddenly died of a fright, or indiscreetly fell into the fire? God certainly may work a miracle when he pleases, and punish any wicked person in what manner he thinks fit; nor is there any more wonder in the metamorphosis of Lot's wife, than there was in changing the rod of Moses into a serpent. The same power might do both; and since the same history has recorded both, there is the same reason for the credibility of both. Nay, of the two, the transformation of Lot's wife seems more familiar to our conceptions,^a since we want not instances, as I said before,

^a Bisselius (in his *Argon. Americ.* b. 14. c. 2.) has a very remarkable story to this purpose. He tells us, that Badius Almagus, who was the first man that ever marched an army over the mountains between Peru and Chili, by the extremity of the cold, and unwholesomeness of the air, lost in that expedition a great many men. Being obliged, however, some few months after, to return the same way, what the historian tells us upon this occasion is very wonderful. The horsemen and infantry, who five months ago were frozen to death, were still standing untouched, uncorrupted, in the same condition and shape that they were in when they were laid hold of by the sudden grasp of death, one lay flat with his face on the ground, another stood erect, a third seemed to shake the bridle, which he still retained in his hand. In a word, he found them exactly as he left them; they had no fulsome odour, and their colour was altogether different from that of corpses. In fine, unless that the soul had been long ago in another world, they were in other respects more like the living than the dead. To the like purpose it is related by Aventinus (*Annot. Bavar.* b. 7.), a credible historian, that in his time above fifty country people, with their cows and calves, in Carinthia, were all destroyed at once by a strong suffocating exhalation, which immediately after an earthquake (in the year 1348) ascended out of the earth, and reduced them to saline

of persons struck with lightning, and killed with cold vapours, that have immediately petrified in the same manner.

Why she was turned into a body of salt rather than any other substance, is only resolvable into the good pleasure of God. The conjectures of Jewish writers upon this head, we acknowledge, are trifling; nor are we responsible for the reveries of such Christian commentators as would crowd in a multitude of palpable absurdities, merely to make the miracle more portentous: but why God exacted so severe a penalty for an offence so seemingly small, is not so hard to be resolved; because, according to the light wherein we are to consider this woman, her disobedience to the divine command had in it all the malignity of an obstinate and perverse mind, unthankful to God for his preservation of her, and too closely attached, if not to the wicked customs, at least to the persons and things which she had left behind her in that sink of sin and sensuality.

But there is another observation which we may draw¹ from our Saviour's application of this story, as well as² the angel's expression to Lot, namely, that she loitered by the way, if not returned to the city; and if so, it is no wonder that she suffered when she was found within the compass of the sulphureous streams from heaven; nor can God be blamed for his exemplary punishment of her, unless we think it reasonable for his providence, in this case, to have interposed, and wrought a miracle for her preservation, who had so little deserved it, and had run herself voluntarily into the jaws of destruction.

Thus we have endeavoured to vindicate the character of the patriarch Abraham, and to account for several transactions and passages in Scripture, which seem to give umbrage to infidelity during the compass of his life. And for the confirmation of all this, we might now produce the testimony of profane authors, and make it appear, that Abraham's fame for a just, virtuous, and religious man, is spoken of by Berosus in a fragment preserved³ by Josephus: that his being born in Ur of the Chaldees, his removal into Canaan, and afterwards sojourning in Egypt, is related by Eupolemus, as he is quoted⁴ by Eusebius: that the captivity of his nephew Lot, his victory over the four kings, and honourable reception by Melchizedek, king of the sacred city of Argarize, and priest of God, are recorded by the same author: that his marrying two wives, one an Egyptian, by whom he had a son, who was the father of twelve kings in Arabia, and the other a woman of his own kindred, by whom he had likewise one son, whose name in Greek was *Ἰσαακ*, which answers exactly to the Hebrew word *Isaac*; and that this Isaac he was commanded to sacrifice, but when he was going to kill him, was stopped by an angel, and offered a ram in his stead; all this is related by Antiphanus, as he is quoted⁵ by the same Eusebius: that the ancient custom of circumcision is taken notice of⁶ by Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, and others: that the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, and

¹ Luke xvii. 31, 32.² Gen. xix. 22.³ Antiq. b. 1. c. 8.⁴ Prepar. Evang. b. 9. c. 17.⁵ Prepar. Evang. b. 9. c. 18.⁶ Hug. Grot. de Veritate

statues, such as that of Lot's wife, which he tells us were seen both by himself and by the chancellor of Austria.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1. Occasional Annotations, 22.

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the strange waste it has made in a once most beautiful country, is described¹ by Strabo, Tacitus, and Solinus: that² Isaac's being born to a father when old, and to a mother incapable of conception, gave occasion of the story of the miraculous birth of Orion, by the help of the gods, even when his father Hyreus had no wife at all: that Lot's kind reception of the two angels in Sodom, his protecting them from the insults of the people, and escaping thereupon the destruction that befell them, are all well delineated in the common fable of Baucis and Philemon: and (to mention no more) that the fate of his wife, for her looking back upon Sodom, and her being thereupon changed into a statue of metallic salt, gave rise to the poet's fiction of the loss of Eurydice, and her remission into hell for her husband's turning to look upon her, and of Niobe's being changed into a stone for resenting the death of her children. So well has infinite wisdom provided, that the sacred truths of divine revelation should not only be supported by the attestation of all ancient history, but preserved likewise even in the vanity and extravagance of fables; for even 'they, O Lord, shew the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; that thy power, thy glory, and the mightiness of thy kingdom, might be known unto men.'

CHAP. II.—Of the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

OF all God's judgments upon the wicked, next to that of the universal deluge, the destruction of Sodom, and the neighbouring cities in the plain of Jordan, seems to be one of the most remarkable, and the most dreadful interpositions of providence; and may therefore in this place deserve a particular consideration.

That this catastrophe (as³ the apostle calls it) did really happen, according to the account which Moses gives us of it, we have the concurring testimony of all historians, both ancient and modern, to convince us.⁴ Diodorus Siculus, after having given us a description of the lake Asphaltites, (which now fills the place where these cities once stood,) acquaints us, that the adjacent country was then on fire, and sent forth a grievous smell, to which he imputes the sickly and short lives of the neighbouring inhabitants.⁵ Strabo, having made mention of the same lake, pursues his account, and tells us, that the craggy and burnt rocks, the caverns broken in, and the soil all about it adust, and turned to ashes, give credit to a report among the people, that formerly several cities stood there, (whereof Sodom was the chief,) but that by earthquakes, and fire breaking out, there were some of them entirely swallowed up, and others forsaken by the inhabitants that could make their escape.⁶ Tacitus describes the lake much in the same manner with these other historians; and then adds, that not far from it are fields, now barren, which were reported formerly to have been very fruitful, adorned with large cities which were burned by lightning, and do still retain the traces of their destruction.⁷ Solinus is clearly of opinion, that the

blackness of the soil, and its being turned into dust and ashes, is a sure token of its having suffered by fire from heaven; and if we may believe the report, of⁸ a late traveller, according to the account which he had from the inhabitants themselves, some of the ruins of these ancient cities do still appear whenever the water is low and shallow.

What the number of these cities were, is a matter wherein we can have no absolute certainty. Moses, in the text, makes no mention but of two, Sodom and Gomorrah; but in another place he enumerates four, and gives this description of their dreadful punishment.⁹ 'When the generations to come shall see the plague of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it, and that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, (which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath,) even all the nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done this unto the land? Nay, if we will believe¹⁰ the historian above cited, and who perhaps might have an account of the thing from some Phœnician writer, the number of the cities which at this time were destroyed were thirteen; and to this there is a passage in the prophet, which seems to give some countenance, though not as to the precise number of them.¹¹ 'As I live,' saith the Lord God to Jerusalem, 'Sodom, thy sister, has not done, she nor her daughters' (that is, the cities which were built round it, and were tributary to it) 'have not done, as thou and thy daughters have done. But whatever the number of the cities might be, it will be proper for us, before we come to inquire in what manner they were destroyed, to give some account of their situation.

¹² The plain of Jordan includes the greatest part of the flat country, through which the river Jordan runs, from its coming out of the sea of Galilee, to its falling into the Asphaltite lake, or Salt Sea. But we are not to imagine, that this plain was once a continued level, without any risings or descents. The greatest part of it indeed was champaign country, (and for this reason was commonly called 'the great field,') but therein we read¹³ of the valley of Jericho, and¹⁴ of the vale of Siddim; in the latter of which these cities stood, in a situation so very advantageous, that we find it compared¹⁵ to the land of Egypt, even to the garden of paradise, upon account of its being so well watered. And well it might, seeing it had (as the Lacus Asphaltites has to this day) not only the streams of the river Jordan running quite through it, but¹⁶ the river Arnon from the east,¹⁷ the brook Zered, and the¹⁸ famous fountain Callirrhoe from the south, falling into it. Now, since all this water had no direct passage into the sea, it must necessarily follow, either that it was conveyed away by some subterraneous passage, or was swallowed up in the sands, that every where encompassed it; which might the more easily be done, because the inhabitants of those hot countries used to divide their rivers into several small branches, for the benefit of watering their fields.

And as this plenty of water gave great riches to the

⁸ Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.

⁹ Deut. xxix. 22, 23, 24. ¹⁰ Strabo, b. 16. ¹¹ Ezek. xvi. 48.

¹² Wells' Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 1. ¹³ Deut. xxxiv. 3.

¹⁴ Gen. xiv. 3. ¹⁵ Gen. xiii. 10. See page 145, in the notes.

¹⁶ Josephus Antiq. b. 4. c. 4. ¹⁷ Num. xxi. 12. ¹⁸ Pliny, b. 5. c. 16.

¹ Hug. Grot. de Veritate.

² Huet. Quest. Alnetan. b. 2.

³ 2 Pet. ii. 6.

⁴ B. 19.

⁵ B. 10.

⁶ B. 5.

⁷ C. 35.

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soil, and fertility to the country, so wealth and abundance of all things (as mankind are too apt to abuse God's gifts) made Sodom and the neighbouring cities very infamous for their wickedness and impiety. The prophet Ezekiel gives us a description of them: ¹ 'Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness, was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy, but was haughty, and committed abomination before me;' which ² Josephus might have in his eye when he gave us this account of them. "The Sodomites (says he) waxed proud, and, by reason of their riches and wealth, grew contumelious towards men, and impious towards God; so that they were wholly unmindful of the favours they received from him. They were inhospitable to strangers, and too proud and arrogant to be rebuked. They burned in unnatural lusts towards one another, and took pleasure in none but such as ran to the same excess of riot with themselves."

These, and other abominable enormities, provoked the Divine Ruler of the world to destroy their cities, whose cry was now grown great for vengeance; and the manner wherein it was effected, Moses has recorded in these words: ³ 'Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and he overthrew the cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground;' and for the better understanding of this, we must observe, 1st, ⁴ That in the vale of Siddim (the tract of ground which was now destroyed) there were a great many pits of bitumen, which being a very combustible matter, ⁵ is in some places liquid, in others solid; and not only found near the surface of the earth, but lies sometimes very deep, and is dug from the very bowels of it. 2dly, We must observe, that the brimstone and fire which the Lord is said to rain upon Sodom and Gomorrah, means brimstone inflamed; that, in the Hebrew style, brimstone inflamed signifies lightning; and that the reason why lightning is thus described, no one can be ignorant of, that has either smelt the places which have been struck with thunder, or ^a read what learned men have wrote upon the subject. 3dly, We must observe further, that God is not only said to have 'rained down brimstone and fire,' but brimstone and fire from the Lord; where the addition of 'from the Lord,' which at first sight may appear to be superfluous, or to denote a plurality of persons in the Deity, (as most Christian interpreters would have it,) does more particularly describe the thunderbolt, ^b which by the Hebrews, as well as other

nations, is frequently called the fire of God, the fire from God, &c.; and the reason is,—Because, men having no power over this kind of meteor, and it being impossible for them, by any kind of contrivance, to ascend up to the clouds, God is therefore supposed to dwell there, and to cast down his bolts from thence.

Now, from these observations put together, we may, in some measure, form a notion to ourselves, how this destruction came to be effected. For though Moses does not inform us, after what manner the lightning and thunderbolts from above subverted these cities and their adjacent territories; yet, since he plainly makes mention of them, we cannot comprehend how it could happen any otherwise than that the lightning and thunderbolts, falling in great abundance upon some pits of bitumen, ^c the veins of that combustible matter took fire immediately, and as the fire penetrated into the lowermost bowels of the bituminous soil, these wicked cities were subverted by a dreadful earthquake, which was followed with a subsiding of the ground; and that, ^d as soon as the earth was sunk, it would unavoidably fall out, that the waters running to this place in so great an abundance, and mixing with the bitumen, which they found in great plenty, would make a lake of what was a valley before, and a lake of the same quality with what ^e the Scripture calls the *Salt Sea*.

This lake, according to the account we have of it, is enclosed to the east and west with exceedingly high mountains; on the north it is bounded by the plain of Jericho, on which side it receives the waters of Jordan;

uses the same expression, ch. lxvi. 16. 'He shall be punished with the fire of the Lord;' to which the passage in the Latin poet exactly agrees:—'He, swifter than the bolt of Jove and the speed of falling stars, leaped from the dreary banks,' Stat. Theb. b. 1. Some however have remarked it, as a peculiar elegance in the Hebrew tongue, that it very often makes use of the antecedent instead of the relative, or the noun instead of the pronoun, especially when it means to express a thing with great vehemence, or to denote any action to be supernatural or miraculous.—*Heidegger's Hist. Patriar.* vol. 2. Essay 8.

^c In Lycia, the Hephæstian mountains, says Pliny (b. 2. c. 106) if you do but touch them with a lighted torch, immediately take fire; nay, the very stones in the rivers and sands in the waters burn. If you take a stick out of these waters, and draw furrows upon the ground with it (according to the common report) a tract of fire follows it.—*Le Clerc's Dissertation*.

^d Strabo in his first, and Pliny in his second book, will furnish us with several examples of this kind. Strabo, out of Posidonius, tells us, (p. 40.) that "in Phœnicia, a certain city situated above Sidon, was absorbed by an earthquake; and out of Demetrius Scephius, that several earthquakes have happened in Asia Minor, by which whole towns have been devoured, the mountain Siphylis overthrown, and the marshes turned into standing lakes;" and Pliny (b. 2. c. 88) testifies, that "by a fire which suddenly broke out of it, the mountain Epœus was levelled to the ground, and a town buried in the deep; for the arch that supported the ground, breaking in, the matter underneath being wholly consumed, the soil above must of necessity sink and be swallowed up in these caverns, if they were of any large extent.—*Le Clerc's Dissertation*.

^e The account given in the text of the Salt or Dead Sea differs somewhat, though not much, from the descriptions of modern travellers. According to the analysis of Dr Marceet, the specific gravity of the water is 1.211, that of fresh water being 1000. Thus it is able to support bodies that would sink elsewhere. It is impregnated with mineral substances, and a fetid air often exhales from the water. Recent travellers may have found a few shellfish on the shore, or seen a few birds cross its waves; but these form only exceptions to the general absence of animal life. Every thing around bears that dreary and fearful character that marks the malediction of Heaven.

¹ C. xvi. 49, 50. ² Antiq. b. 1. c. 12. ³ Gen. xix. 24, 25.

⁴ Le Clerc's Commentary. ⁵ Pliny's Natural History, b. 25. c. 15.

^a Thus thunder and lightning, says Pliny, (b. 25. c. 15.) have the smell of brimstone, and the very light and flame of them is sulphureous. And Seneca (Quæst. Nat. b. 2. c. 21.) tells us, that all things which are struck by lightning have a sulphureous smell; as indeed our natural philosophers have plainly demonstrated, that what we call the thunderbolt, is nothing else but a sulphureous exhalation. Persius, in his second satire, calls it *sulphur sacrum*.—"When it thunders, the oak is not more rapidly rent asunder by the sacred sulphury flame than you and your house." And for this reason the Greeks, in their language, call brimstone divine, because the thunderbolt, which it assimilates, is supposed to come from God.—*Le Clerc's Dissertation*.

^b Thus, in the second book of Kings, "THE FIRE OF GOD came down from heaven and devoured them," ch. i. 12. And Isaiah

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on the south it is open, and extends beyond the reach of the eye, being twenty-four leagues long, and six or seven broad. Its water is extremely deep and heavy; so heavy, that a man cannot, without difficulty, sink in it; but of so nauseous a taste, and noisome smell, that neither fish nor fowl, unaccustomed to the water, can live in it. It is full of bitumen, which at uncertain seasons boils up from the bottom in bubbles, at which time the superficies of the lake swells, and resembles the rising of a hill. Adjoining to the lake are fields, which formerly (as we showed from Tacitus) were fruitful, but are now so parched, and burned up, that they have lost their fertility, insomuch, that every thing, whether it grow spontaneously, or be planted by man, whether it be herb, fruit, or flower,^a as soon as it is compressed, moulders away immediately into dust; and to this¹ the author of the book of Wisdom seems to allude, when he tells us, that ‘of the wickedness of those cities, the waste land that smoketh to this day is a testimony, and the plants bearing fruit, that never come to ripeness.’

“The cinders, brimstone, and smoke,”² says Philo, “and a certain obscure flame, as it were of a fire burning, still perceivable in some parts of the country, are memorials of the perpetual evil which happened to it:” and, as³ Josephus adds, “the things that are said of Sodom are confirmed by ocular inspection, there being some relics of the fire, which came down from heaven, and some resemblance of the five cities, still to be seen.” And it is the duration of these monuments of divine wrath perhaps, which gave occasion to St Jude to say, that the wicked inhabitants of these cities were ‘set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of an eternal fire,’ that is, of a fire, whose marks were to be perpetuated unto the end of the world; ^b for it is a common thing in Scripture, to express a great and irreparable vastation, whose effects and signs shall be permanent to the latest ages, by the word αἰώνιος, which we here render eternal.

Thus, in all probability, were the cities of the plain of Jordan overthrown; nor is there any doubt to be made but that the miraculous hand of God was employed in

sending down this heavy judgment. For ‘though in a soil impregnated with bitumen, the cities which are built thereupon may be shaken with an earthquake, and swallowed up by a sudden hiatus; though thunderbolts may fall, and set the veins of sulphur and bitumen on fire, which afterwards breaking out, and mingling with the water, may, in a low valley, easily cause a lake, full of asphaltus: though these things, I say, in process of time might have come to pass in an ordinary course of nature; yet, if they were done before their natural causes were in a disposition to produce them; if they would not have been done that instant, unless it had been for some extraordinary interposition of God or his blessed angels; it ought to be reputed no less a miracle than if every particular in the transaction had plainly surpassed the usual operations of nature. And that the judgment now before us happened in this manner,’⁴ the two angels despatched by Almighty God, upon this important occasion, ⁵ God’s foretelling Abraham his design, the angel’s acquainting Lot with the errand about which they came, and their urging and instigating him to be gone,⁷ to make haste and ‘escape to Zoar, because they could do nothing until he was come thither,’⁶ are arguments sufficiently convincing, that the thunder and lightning, or (as⁸ others will have it), the showers of liquid fire, or rather⁹ storms of nitre and sulphur, mingled with fire, which fell upon these wicked places, were immediately sent down by the appointment of God, and by the ministry of his angels, who, knowing all the meteors of the air, and their repugnant qualities, did collect, commix, and employ them, as they thought fit, in the execution of God’s just judgment upon a people devoted to destruction.

Thus we have considered the manner of the destruction of the cities of the plain, how far natural causes might be concerned, and wherein the miraculous hand of God did intervene. Whether a deluge or a conflagration be the more formidable judgment of the two, we cannot tell; our imaginations will hardly reach the dreadfulness of either; and to enter into the comparison, is a task too shocking. As the history, however, of those who suffered these punishments, is recorded in Scripture for our admonition, ¹⁰ ‘that we should not lust after evil things even as they lusted;’ so the apostle has set both their examples before us, and laid it down for a sure proposition,—That ¹¹ ‘if God spared not the old world, but brought in a flood upon the ungodly, and if he, turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow,’ or (according to ¹² St Jude) condemned them to ‘the vengeance of eternal fire;’ we need not doubt, but that, as he is in all ages the same, a God of justice, as well as mercy, no iniquity can ultimately escape. For though, upon every occasion, he does not lay bare his vindictive arm, though ¹³ ‘he is strong and patient, so that he seldom whetteth his sword, and prepareth the instruments of death;’ yet a few of these remarkable, these monumental instances of his severity against sin, are enough to convince us, that ‘he hath reserved the unjust (however they may escape now) unto the day of judgment to be punished.’

¹ Chap. x. 7.² In Vita Mosis, b. 2.³ De Bello Jud. b. 5. c. 27.

^a Whether there be any truth in this part of the account of Tacitus, it is hard to tell. As for the apples of Sodom (to which he seems to allude) Mr Maundrell tells us, that he never saw nor heard of any thereabouts, nor was there any tree to be seen near the lake from which one might expect such kind of fruit; and therefore he supposes the being, as well as the beauty of that fruit, a mere fiction, and only kept up because it served for a good allusion, and now and then helped poets to a pat similitude.—*Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.*

^b Thus God threatens to make the people of Israel ‘a perpetual desolation,’ Ezek. xxxv. 9; ‘a perpetual hissing,’ Jer. xviii. 16; and ‘an everlasting reproach,’ Jer. xxiii. 40; and this more especially is threatened where the destruction of a city or nation is compared to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; ‘it shall never be inhabited,’ Isa. xlii. 20. Whether Sodom really underwent this fate or sometime after was rebuilt, is a question that has exercised the learned. It is certain, that in the Notitia, express mention is made of Sodom, as an episcopal city; and among the bishops of Arabia, there is found one Severus, a bishop of Sodom, who subscribed to the first council of Nice; Mr Reland, however, cannot persuade himself that this impious place was ever rebuilt; and therefore he believes that the word Sodom, which is read among the subscriptions of that council, must be a fault of the copiers.—*Calmet’s Dictionary* on the word Sodom.

⁴ Le Clerc’s Commentary in locum.⁵ Gen. xvii. 22.⁶ Ver. 17.⁷ Gen. xix. 22.⁸ Howell’s History.⁹ Patrick’s Commentary.¹⁰ 1 Cor. x. 6.¹¹ 2 Pet. ii. 5.¹² Ver. 7.¹³ Ps. vii. 12, &c.

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SECT. II.

CHAP. I.—Of the Life of Isaac from his Marriage to his Death.

THE HISTORY.

ISAAC was forty years old ^a when he married Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel; but his mother Sarah's misfortune attended his wife, namely, that she was without issue for almost twenty years together, till God at last was pleased to hear ^b his earnest prayers, and grant him the blessing he so much longed for. Rebecca, however, had not many months conceived before the struggles of the two children (for she had twins) in her womb, gave her such pain and uneasiness, that she began, in a manner, to wish herself not with child again; and when she went ^c to consult the divine oracle, what the meaning of this uncommon conflict might be, she had it returned for answer, that the two children which she then bore, were

^a How old Rebecca was when she was married to Isaac, the Scripture does nowhere inform us; but the conjectures of most of the Jewish commentators make her to be extremely young. The oldest that they will allow her to be, is not above fourteen, which was a thing hardly customary in those days; and yet, considering her absolute management of all affairs, even when Isaac was alive, we cannot but suppose, that although she lived not so long, she was a considerable deal younger than he.—*Heidegger's Hist. Patriar.* vol. 2. Essay 11.

^b The word in the original signifies to pray with constancy, vehemence, and importunity; and the Jews hereupon have a traditional explication, which is preserved in Jonathan's Targum, namely, that he carried his wife to the place of the altar, upon mount Moriah, where he himself was once bound to be sacrificed, and there made a most solemn invocation, by the faith of his father Abraham, and by the oath of God, that she, though barren by nature, might conceive by virtue of the covenant and supernatural blessing; and accordingly he prevailed with God to grant him his request. What we render 'for his wife,' may likewise signify in the presence of his wife: and so the import of the words will be, that besides their more private devotions, they did oftentimes, in a more solemn manner, and with united force, pray for the mercy wherein they were equally concerned: nor could there be any presumption in their thus petitioning what at present was denied them, because they knew very well, that God's purpose and promise did not exclude, but rather require the use of all convenient means for their accomplishment.—*Poole's Annotations, and Bibliotheca Biblica in locum.*

^c The most early and common method of inquiring of the Lord, was, by going to some one of his prophets, and consulting him; but then the question is, who the prophet was whom Rebecca, upon this occasion, consulted? Some of the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that she went to the school, or oratory of Shem, (whom they suppose then alive,) or to some other person, constituted by him, and called of God to that ministration. Some Christian commentators imagine, it was Melchizedek 'the priest of the Most High God' whom she consulted; but if it were any priest or prophet, that then she applied to, her father-in-law, Abraham, who was certainly then alive, and is expressly called 'a prophet,' Gen. xx. 7, seems to have been the most proper person, not only because he was highly interested in her concerns, but had likewise the Shechinah, or Divine appearance (as most imagine) continually resident with him. But as there was another manner besides that of answering by prophets, customary in those days, namely, by dreams and visions, their opinion seems to be most probable, who suppose, that Rebecca retired into some secret place, and there having poured out her soul before God in ardent prayers, received an answer, not long after, either in a dream or vision, by a voice from heaven, or by the information of an angel sent for that purpose.—See *Le Clerc's Commentary, Bibliotheca Biblica in locum, and Heidegger's Hist. Patriar.* vol. 2. Essay 11.

to be the heads of two different nations, should long contest it for superiority, but that at length the younger should get the dominion over the elder.

When the appointed time for their birth was come, the child which Rebecca was first delivered of, was all covered over with red hair, for which reason his parents ^d called him Esau; and the other came after him so very close, that he took hold of his heel with his hand, and was therefore called Jacob, to denote (what he afterwards proved) the supplanter of his brother; and as they advanced in years, their tempers and occupations were quite different. Esau was a strong and active person, who delighted much in hunting, and thereby supplying his father with venison very frequently, won his particular affection; while Jacob, who was of a more gentle and courteous disposition, by staying at home in the tent, and employing himself in family offices, became his mother's darling.

One day, when Jacob had made him some lentil pottage, Esau, returning from his sport, quite spent with hunger and fatigue, was so taken with the looks of it, that he earnestly desired his brother ^e to let him eat with him: but his brother, it seems, being well instructed by his mother, refused to do it, unless he would make him an immediate dedition of his birthright. Esau, considering to what a multitude of dangers his manner of life, in encountering wild beasts, did daily expose him, made no great esteem of what Jacob required; and Jacob, perceiving his disposition to comply, (that he might have the right more firmly conveyed to him) ^f proposed his doing it by way of oath, which the other never scrupled, and after the bargain was made, fell to eating very greedily, never once reflecting on what a vile and scandalous thing it needs must be, to sell his birthright, and ^g all the great privileges thereunto belonging, for a mess of pottage.

^d The meaning of the word Esau is somewhat obscure, unless we derive it from *Hassch*, to make or be perfect; because he was of a stronger constitution than ordinary infants, as having hair all over him, which is an indication of manhood, whereas other children are born with hair only on their heads: and as for Jacob, it is derived from an Hebrew word, which signifieth *supplant*, and by the addition of the letter *Jod*, one of the formatives of nouns, it denotes a *supplanter*, or one that *taketh hold of*, and *trippeth up* his brother's heels.—*Poole's Annotations, and Universal History*, c. 7.

^e Lentils were a kind of pulse, somewhat like our vetches, or coarser sort of pease. St Austin, upon Psalm lxxvi. says, that these were Egyptian lentils, which were in great esteem, and very probably gave the pottage a red tincture.—The inhabitants of Barbary still make use of lentils boiled and stewed with oil and garlic, a pottage of a chocolate colour: this was the red pottage for which Esau, from thence called Edom, sold his birthright.—*Shaw's Travels*, p. 140.—Ed.

^f Some imagine that Esau did not know what this lentil soup was, and therefore he only called it by its colour, 'give me of that red, that same red,' as it is in the Hebrew; for which reason he was likewise called Edom, which signifies *red*. But there is no occasion to suppose, that he was ignorant of what lentils were, only his repeating the word red, without adding the name of a thing, denoted his great hunger, and eagerness of appetite, which was probably still more irritated by the colour of the soup.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*.

^g The birthright, or right of primogeniture, had many privileges annexed to it. The first-born was consecrated to the Lord, Exod. xxii. 29; had a double portion of the estate allotted him, Deut. xxi. 17; had a dignity and authority over his brethren, Gen. xlix. 3; succeeded in the government of the family or kingdom, 2 Chron. xxi. 3; and as some with good reason

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In Abraham's time the famine was so severe in Canaan, that he was forced to remove into Egypt; and upon the same account his son Isaac had now left his habitation, near the well Lahairoi, and was come as far as Gerar, where Abimelech at this time was king, in order to proceed in his journey; but while he was deliberating what to do, God admonished him in a dream not go down into Egypt, but to tarry in the country where he then was; and at the same time assured him, that he would not only secure him from the danger of the famine, but, in performance of the oath which he had sworn to his father Abraham, his faithful and obedient servant, would cause his family (to which he would give the whole land of Canaan in possession, and from which the Messias, the desire of all nations, should descend) to multiply exceedingly.

Isaac, according to the divine direction, went no farther than Gerar; and here it was that he fell into the same weakness that his father had formerly done in the same place, namely, his making his wife pass for his sister, for fear that some wicked man or other might be tempted to destroy him, in order to enjoy her. But so it was, that the king, from his window, observing some familiarities pass between them that did not so well comport with the character of a brother, sent for him immediately, complained of his dissimulation, charged him with being married, and (not unmindful, very probably, of what had befallen the nation upon the account of Sarah) with a design of entailing guilt, and therewith a judgment of God upon his subjects, in case any attempt had been made upon her virtue. Fear of death, and the desire of self-preservation, were the only apology that Isaac made for his conduct; which Abimelech was pleased to accept, and accordingly issued out an edict that none, upon pain of death, should dare to offer any injury, either to Isaac or his wife.

The great accession of wealth, however, wherewith God had blessed him during his stay in Gerar, raised the envy and indignation of the Philistines. That very year wherein he thought of going down into Egypt for fear of the famine, he sowed a piece of ground, and to the great surprise of his neighbours, received *b* an hundredfold

imagine, succeeded to the priesthood, or chief government in matters ecclesiastical. He had a right to challenge the particular blessing of his dying parent. He had the covenant which God made with Abraham, that from his loins Christ should come, consigned to him. And, what is more, these prerogatives were not confined to his person only, but descended to his latest posterity, in case they comported themselves so as to deserve them. —*Poole's Annotations, and Le Clerc's Commentary.*

a It is not unlikely that this Abimelech might be the son of that Abimelech, king of Gerar, with whom Abraham had formerly made a covenant, supposing Abimelech to be here the proper name of a man. But it is much more probable, that at this time it was a common name for the king of the Philistines, as Cæsar was for the Roman emperors, and Pharaoh for the kings of Egypt.

b This hundredfold increase in one year was given by God unto Isaac for a sign of his purpose to fulfil the covenant made with his father, and lately renewed to him; particularly for the confirmation of the truth and reason of the warning against his going down to Egypt, as he was inclined, according to the natural prospect of things. Such an increase was at this time a singular blessing of God, after there had been a considerable dearth; and the soil perhaps that afforded so large a crop not so rich; otherwise we may learn from Varro (*De Re Rustica*, b. 1. c. 44.) that in Syria, near Gadera, and in Africa, about Byzacium, they

produce from it; so that Abimelech's subjects began all to malign him, and, to oblige him to depart the country, filled up the wells which his father's servants had digged.^c Nay, the very king himself, to satisfy the resentment of his people, desired of him to leave the city of Gerar, and to find him out another habitation; for that, in his opinion,^d he had improved his fortune sufficiently while he had been among them: so that, to secure himself, as well as make the king easy, he retired into the valley of Gerar, where his father had formerly fed his cattle, and there began to open the wells which his father had caused to be dug, but the Philistines had filled up, and called them by their ancient names. But the people of the country, thinking him too well situated there, quarrelled with his shepherds, took away their wells, and put him to many inconveniences; so that being quite tired with their repeated insults, he removed farther from them, and went and lived in the most distant parts of their country.

Here it was that he dug another well; and meeting with no opposition, called it Rehoboth, that is, room, or enlargement, because God had now delivered him from the straits and difficulties he had lately been in, by reason

reaped an hundred bushels from one; nay, Bochart (in *Canaan*, b. 1. c. 25.) shows from several good authors, that some places in Africa are so very fruitful, that they produce two or three hundred fold, which makes this account of Moses far from being incredible. (*Bibliotheca Biblica, and Patrick's Commentary.*) The author of the history of the piratical state of Barbary observes, that the Moors of that country are divided into tribes like the Arabians, and like them dwell in tents, formed into itinerant villages: that "these wanderers farm lands of the inhabitants of the towns, sow and cultivate them, paying their rent with the produce, such as fruits, corn, wax, &c. They are very skilful in choosing the most advantageous soils for every season, and very careful to avoid the Turkish troops, the violence of the one little suiting the simplicity of the other," p. 44. It is natural to suppose that Isaac possessed the like sagacity when he sowed in the land of Gerar, and received that year a hundredfold. His lands appear to have been hired of the fixed inhabitants of the country. On this account the king of the country might, after the reaping of the crop, refuse his permission a second time, and desire him to depart.—*Harmer*, vol. 1. p. 85.—Ed.

c The same mode of taking vengeance which is here mentioned, has been practised in ages subsequent to the time here referred to. Niebuhr (*Travels*, p. 302.) tells us, that the Turkish emperors pretend to a right to that part of Arabia that lies between Mecca and the countries of Syria and Egypt, but that their power amounts to very little. That they have, however, garrisons in divers little citadels built in that desert, near the wells that are made on the old road from Egypt and Syria to Mecca, which are intended for the greater safety of their caravans. But in a following page (p. 330) he gives us to understand, that these princes have made it a custom to give annually to every Arab tribe which is near that road, a certain sum of money and a certain number of vestments, to keep them from destroying the wells that lie in that route.—*Harmer*, vol. 4. p. 247.—Ed.

d The words of Abimelech, according to our translation, are these, 'Thou art much mightier than we;' but certainly he could not mean that Isaac was more powerful than the whole people of Palestine, or that he had a larger family or more numerous attendants than himself had, and consequently was in a condition, if he had been so minded, to disturb the government. This we can by no means conceive to be possible; and therefore the words in the original (*gignatzampta minennu*) do not mean, 'because thou art mightier than we,' but 'because thou art increased, and multiplied from us, or by us,' that is, thou hast got a great deal by us; while thou hast continued amongst us, thou hast made a great accession to thy substance, and we do not care to let thee get any more; so that the Philistines did not fear him, but envy him; they grudged that he should get so much among them, and therefore desired him to absent their country.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. b. 8.

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of a scarceness of water, and not long after settled his constant abode at Beersheba; where he had no sooner arrived, but that very night God appeared to him in a vision, promising him his favour and protection, and that he would bless him, and multiply his seed for his servant Abraham's sake: so that Isaac, intending to continue here, built him an altar and place of religious worship, and cleared out the well ^a which his father had formerly dug.

Nor had he been long here before Abimelech, conscious of the peculiar manner wherein God had blessed him, sensible of the ill usage he had received from his subjects, and apprehensive, perhaps, that in time he might think of revenging the injuries he had suffered, came attended with ^b the chief of his nobility, and with the captain-general of his forces, either to renew the old league which had formerly been made with his father Abraham, or to enter into a new one.

It was but proper that Isaac, upon this occasion, should in some measure resent the indignities that were offered him: and therefore at first he expostulates the matter with them, and seems to wonder why they came to visit him whom they had so lately expelled their country. Abimelech made the best excuse for their behaviour that the nature of the thing would bear; told him, that he had all along perceived that the divine favour attended him in all his undertakings, and that therefore, that he might not be thought to oppose God, he was come to renew the covenant depending between his people and Abraham's posterity, and was ready to engage in the same conditions and obligations. This speech, so full of submission and acknowledgments, soon pacified Isaac, who was naturally of a quiet and easy disposition; so that, having entertained the king and his attendants in a very respectful and generous manner that night, the next morning ^c they confirmed the league with the usual ceremonies, and Abimelech took leave and returned home: but before he departed, Isaac's servants brought him word, that in the well which they had been clearing out,

^a The reasons that induced Isaac to open the old wells, rather than dig new ones, might be, 1. Because he was sure to find a spring there, which he could not be certain of in other places; 2. Because it was easier, and less liable to censure and envy; 3. Because he had a right to them, as they were his father's purchase and property; and 4. Because he was minded to preserve and do honour to his father's memory, for which reason he called them by the same names that his father had done before him.—*Bibliotheca Biblica, in locum.*

^b The two that are mentioned here are Phicol and Ahazzah. Phicol is of the same name, and bore the same office which he had who is mentioned ch. xxi. 22; but we must not suppose that he was the same man, any more than Abimelech was the same king. The word properly signifies face or head; and as the captain-general is head of the forces he commands, so some have imagined that it is the appellative name (like that of tribune, or dictator, among the Romans) for every one among them that were advanced to that dignity. And in like manner, though the Septuagint seem to make Ahazzah a proper name, and call him the para-nymph, or bride-man, to Abimelech, which was always accounted a post of the first honour; yet I shall rather choose, with Onkelos, to make the word signify 'a train, or great number of nobility which came in attendance on Abimelech, and to do the patriarch the greater honour upon this occasion.—*Le Clerc's Commentary, and Howell's History.*

^c The articles were agreed upon over night, and, by a mutual oath, ratified in the morning. And the reason why men took public oaths in the morning fasting, seems to have been *ob reverentiam juramenti*, as the Jews call it, because they looked upon them as very solemn and sacred things.—*Bibliotheca Biblica.*

and which Abraham in former times had bought of the king of Gerar, they had happily found a spring of water, for which reason, in the hearing of Abimelech and all the company, he called it again by the name of Beersheba, the well of the oath, "that is, the well wherein water was discovered on the day that Abimelech and I entered into a treaty of peace, and ratified the same with the solemnity of oaths."

By this time Isaac's two sons were arrived at the age of forty; and Esau, who had contracted an acquaintance with the people of the land, had married two wives, Judith, the daughter of Beeri, and Bethshemath, the daughter of Elon, both Hittites, which was no small affliction to his parents. This in a manner quite alienated his mother's heart from him; but as for his father, his affections continued the same. And therefore, finding himself grow old and feeble, and his eyes quite dim with age, and apprehending his death to be nearer than really it was, he called him one day, and declared to him his purpose of giving him his paternal benediction before he died; but wished him withal to take his hunting instruments, and go into the fields, and kill him a little venison, and dress it to his palate, that when he had eaten thereof, and refreshed nature, he might bless him with a more tender affection, as well as a more becoming pathos.

Rebecca overheard all this discourse; and as soon as Esau was well gone, she called Jacob, and acquainted him with what was transacting; that his father was going to bestow a benediction, which was final and irrevocable, upon his brother; but that, if he would listen to her, and do what she ordered him, she had an expedient, by substituting him in his room, to turn aside the blessing where she desired it. Jacob was willing enough to comply with his mother's request; but if he was to personate his brother, the difference of his skin and voice made him apprehensive that his father might discover the imposture, and thereupon be provoked, instead of his prayers and best wishes, to load him with imprecations. But so confident was his mother of success in this matter, that she took all the curses upon herself, and encouraged him to follow her directions. Hereupon Jacob hastened to the fold, and brought two fat kids from thence, which his mother immediately took, and dressed the choice pieces of them with savoury sauce, like venison; and so having covered his neck and his hands with the skins of the kids, ^d and arrayed him with Esau's best robes, ^e she sent him in trembling with the dish to his father.

^d Gen. xxvii. 16, 'Put the skin of the kids of the goats.' It is observed by Bochart, that in the eastern countries goat's hair was very like to that of men; so that Isaac might very easily be deceived, when his eyes were dim, and his feeling no less decayed than his sight.

^e The Jews have a fancy, that it was the robe of Adam, which had been transmitted down from father to son, in the line of blessing, as they call it, till it came to Abraham, who left it to Isaac, and he designing Esau, as his eldest, for his successor, gave it to him. Some of them imagine, that it was a sacerdotal habit, wherein Esau, in his father's illness, was supposed to officiate, and for this reason it might be kept in Isaac's tent, near to which, very likely, was the place of religious worship. In all probability it was a vestment of some distinction, which the heir of the family, upon some solemn occasions, was used to put on; and Jacob being at this time to personate his brother, there was a necessity for him to have it. But how his mother should come by it, or why she should have the keeping of it, when Esau had wives of his own, is a question that Musculus raises, and then

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His father was lying upon the bed when Jacob entered the room, and upon his demanding who he was, he roundly answered, that he was his elder son Esau, who had brought him some venison to eat. Surprised at the great expedition he had made, and not knowing indeed what to think, the old man put several times the question to him, whether he was in reality his son Esau or no? to which he as often answered in the affirmative and desired him, in short, to arise, and taste of what he had prepared for him, since God, who knew his zeal to obey his father, had brought it into his hands much sooner than he could otherwise have expected.

The difference between Jacob's and Esau's voice was so remarkable, that Isaac could not but suspect some delusion in the case; and therefore he desired him to draw nearer, that he might be the better satisfied; and when he had felt the hairy skin on his hands and neck, he owned that 'the hands were the hands of Esau, though the voice was the voice of Jacob.'

Thus satisfied, or rather thus deluded, he arose, and ate heartily of his son's pretended venison; and as soon as he had dined, and drank ^a a cup or two of wine, he bid him draw near, that he might now bestow upon him his promised blessing. The smell of Jacob's garments contributed not a little to Isaac's cheerfulness. He smelled and praised them. In a kind of ecstasy of pleasure, he embraced and kissed his pretended first-born; and after having ^b wished him all heavenly and earthly blessings, he at length dismissed him.

Jacob was scarce got out of the tent, when Esau, having returned from hunting, and just made ready his venison, came and invited his father, in the same dutiful manner that his brother had done. Surprised at this address, his father asked who he was? and, when he understood that it was his elder son Esau, he was quite in a maze, and began to inquire who, and where that person was, who had been there before, and taken away the blessing which he neither could nor would revoke. Esau, too well perceiving that it must have been Jacob who had thus

supplanted him, complains of his double perfidy; first, in extorting his birthright from him, and now in robbing him of his father's blessing; and then seems to wonder very much that his father's store should be so far exhausted, as (since he would not revoke the other) not to have reserved one blessing for him.

Isaac was willing enough to gratify his son's request; and it grieved him, no doubt, to hear his bitter lamentations; but what could he do? all the choicest of his blessings he had bestowed upon Jacob; and as they were gone he could not recall them. However, that he might in some measure pacify Esau, by the same prophetic spirit he acquaints him, "That though ^c his posterity should not enjoy a very plentiful country, yet they should become a great people, and mighty warriors, who should live by the dint of their sword; and though they should sometimes become subject to the descendants of Jacob, yet, in process of time, they would ^d shake off their yoke and erect a dominion of their own.

Esau was now become so sensible of what he had lost by the fraud and deceptions of his brother, that he was resolved, at a proper season, to be revenged on him. His regard to his father would not permit him to express his resentment in any violent act as yet; but as he supposed that he could not live long, he was determined to kill his brother, as soon as his father was dead. Some speeches of this kind had accidentally dropped from him, which were brought to his mother's ears. Whereupon she acquainted her favourite son with the bloody design his brother had conceived against him; told him that the wisest way would be for him to withdraw somewhere,

^c The words in our translation carry a sense quite different to what we have here suggested; 'Behold thy dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven.' But besides that this makes the blessing the same with that which was given to Jacob, ver. 28, which Isaac professes himself incapable of doing; it is manifest, that Idumea, where the descendants of Esau dwelt, was far from being a fat and fruitful country. Had it been so, there had not been that reason for the subsequent words, 'by thy sword thou shalt live;' for a rich and plentiful country would have secured them from living by spoil and plunder, as it is manifest the people of that country did, if we can credit the character which Josephus, both in his history of the Antiquities, b. 13, and of the Wars of the Jews, b. 4, gives us of them.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*; and *Universal History*.

^d The Edomites, or Idumeans, who were the posterity of Esau, for a considerable time were a people of much more power and authority than the Israelites, till, in the days of David, they were entirely conquered, 2 Sam. viii. 14; they were thereupon governed by deputies or viceroys appointed by the kings of Judah: and whenever they attempted to rebel, were for a long time crushed, and kept under by the Jews. In the days of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, they expelled their viceroy, and set up a king of their own, 2 Kings viii. 20; and though they were reduced at that time, yet for some generations after this, they seemed to have lived independent on the Jews; and when the Babylonians invaded Judea, they not only took part with them, but violently oppressed them, even when the enemy was withdrawn; so that, remembering what they had suffered under Jobab in the days of David, they entered into the like cruel measures against the Jews, and threatened to lay Jerusalem level with the ground. Their animosity against the posterity of Jacob seems indeed to be hereditary; nor did they ever cease, for any considerable time, from broils and contentions, until they were conquered by Hyrcanus, and reduced to the necessity of embracing the Jewish religion, or quitting their country. Hereupon, consenting to the former, they were incorporated with the Jews, and became one nation; so that in the first century after Christ, the name of Idumean was lost, and quite disused.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 4.

answers it, by saying,—That because Esau had married these wives without the consent of his parents, especially his mother, she, for this reason, refused to give it him, and perhaps reserved it for this very occasion. But, in my opinion, there seems to be no necessity for this supposition, since it was sufficient for her purpose, that she knew where it was in Esau's apartment.—*Bibliotheca Biblica, in locum*.

^a There is a tradition among the Jews, that Jacob having omitted to bring wine for his father, an angel prepared it and brought it into his apartment; that he gave it into Jacob's hands, and Jacob poured it out for his father; that the wine was the same with the wine of paradise, which had been laid up from the beginning; and that his father, having drank of it, kissed him, and blessed him, as one now filled with the Spirit, even with the Spirit of prophecy and blessing. But the custom of the Jewish doctors is to magnify every little matter.

^b The prayer which Josephus makes Isaac offer up to God upon this occasion is in words to this effect. "Eternal God, the Creator of all things that are made; thou hast been so gracious and bountiful to my father, to myself, and to our offspring, promising, and possessing us of all things, and giving us assurances of greater blessings to come: Lord, make thy words good to us by effects, and do not despise thy servant for his present infirmities, which make him the more sensible of his need of thy support. Preserve this child from all evil in thy mercy and infinite goodness: give him a long and happy life: bless him with all worldly enjoyments that may be for his good: and make him a terror to his enemies, and an honour and comfort to his friends."—*Antiq. b. 2. c. 18*.

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until his fury was assuaged : and the properest place for that purpose would be his uncle Laban's, in Mesopotamia ; that thither he might retire a little while, and as soon as his brother's passion was over, she would not fail to recall him ; that to part with him indeed was no small affliction to her, but nothing comparable to the misery that would ensue, if in one day she should be bereaved of them both ; of him by the hand of his brother, and of his brother, by the hand of justice.

Jacob, who was of a mild, if not of a timorous temper, readily complied with his mother's proposal ; but then his father's consent was to be had ; and this Rebecca undertook to obtain by artful insinuations to her husband, that Esau's Hittite wives were a perpetual grief and trouble to her ; that the whole comfort of her life would be lost, if Jacob should chance to marry in the like unhappy manner ; and therefore, to prevent this disaster, she thought it not amiss, if she might have but his approbation therein, that he should go to her brother Laban's in Mesopotamia, and there see if he could fancy any one of his daughters for a wife.

Isaac was unacquainted with the main drift of her discourse ; but being himself a pious man, and knowing that the promise made to Abraham, and renewed in him, was to be completed in the issue of Jacob, called him to him, and upon his blessing, gave him a strict charge not to marry with any Canaanitish woman, but to go to Padan-Aram, to the house of his uncle Laban, and there provide himself with a wife ; which if he did, " God would bless him," he said, " and raise him up a numerous posterity, and give that posterity the possession of that very country, where now they were no more than sojourners, according to the promise which he had made to his grandfather Abraham."

With these words he dismissed Jacob to go to his uncle's in Mesopotamia ; and of the patriarch Isaac we read no more, only that he was alive at his son's return, and lived three and twenty years longer still ; that he had removed from Beersheba, where his son left him, and dwelt now at Manire, not far from Hebron ; where, at the age of 189 years, he died, and was buried in the same sepulchre with his father Abraham, by his two sons Esau and Jacob.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties obviated, and Objections answered.*

Nothing can be more obvious, than that the promises which God was pleased to make to the patriarchs, were not to be accomplished in their persons, but in their posterity. Abraham had but one son by his primary wife, and Isaac but two ; and therefore the blessing of a numerous offspring could not be verified in them ; but in Jacob it began to operate. He had twelve sons ; and these, when in Egypt, notwithstanding all lets and impediments to the contrary, mightily increased ; and upon their return from thence, made up an army sufficient to expel the old inhabitants, and to take possession of the land of promise, for thus it is that Moses bespeaks the people : ¹ ' Thy fathers went down into Egypt, with

threescore and ten persons, and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude : ' wherein he alludes to the very words in which the promise, the original promise was made.

If then the numerous posterity with which God blessed the Jewish patriarchs, did, in a due course of years, though not immediately ensue, there is no foundation for our calling in question his truth and veracity ; but then his wisdom and almighty power are much more conspicuous in raising so large an increase from so small a beginning. For besides that the long sterility of these holy matrons gave a proper occasion for the exercise of faith, and patience, and reliance on God, ² it tended not a little to illustrate the nobility of the Jewish extraction, when it came to be considered, that their progenitors were descended from women that were complexionally unfruitful, and brought into the world at no less an expense than that of a miracle. It showed plainly, that the multiplication of the promised seed was not effected by any natural succession, but by the divine favour and benediction. It prepared the way for the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and, as St Chrysostom ³ expresses it, predisposed the world to the belief of the miraculous conception of the Virgin Mary. It administered comfort to such married women as were childless, giving them encouragement still to hope on, and restraining them from murmuring, or being impatient at any retardation ; and therefore we find the angel, in his address to the blessed virgin, (both to enforce the credibility of the message he brought her, and to revive the hope of such as were destitute of children,) expressing himself in this manner ; ⁴ ' Behold thy cousin Elizabeth, who was called barren, she also hath conceived a son in her old age, for with God nothing shall be impossible ; ' and it is a glorious demonstration of the sovereign power of God, when (according to the apostle's manner of expression) ⁵ ' he causes the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty, the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, yea and the things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.'

The same apostle, in relation to the subject we are now upon, has, by a familiar similitude, evinced the right which the great Ruler of the world has to make a discrimination (as to the temporalities I mean only) between man and man ; for ' hath not the potter power over the clay,' says he, ' of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour ? ' He who has a present intuition of all things future, knows how every person when born into the world, will comport himself ; and therefore, as he has the right, so he is the only being that is duly qualified to allot men their different stations in life ; but it is their different stations in life that God thus determines, and not any necessity of their happy or unhappy condition in the next.

Esau and Jacob were both in the womb, when God thought fit to declare his choice of the one, rather than the other, to be the founder of the Jewish nation, and of ' whom, according to the flesh, Christ should come : ' and as this was a favour of a temporary consideration only, and no way affected their eternal state, I know

¹ Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 8.

² In Gen. ch. xlix.

³ Luke i. 36, 37.

⁴ 1 Cor. i. 27.

¹ Deut. x. 22

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of no attribute of God that could restrain him in this option. Loving and hating are terms of a strong signification sometimes; but that here they can bear no more than a bare preference of one before another, is plain from the whole tenor of the apostle's discourse. The truth is, ¹ his words, as well as those of Moses, relate, (as we said before) not to the persons, but to the posterity of Jacob and Esau, or not to them personally, but nationally considered. As to their persons, it was never true, that the elder did serve the younger, but only as to their posterity, when the ² Edomites became tributary to David: and therefore the apostle cannot be supposed here to discourse of any personal election to eternal life, or any absolute love or hatred of these two brothers, with respect to their interest in another world, but only of the election of one seed or nation before another, to be accounted and treated as the seed of Abraham, which is all that the apostle's argument drives at.

In a word, the case of these two patriarchs has nothing to do with the election, or reprobation of particular persons. It shows us indeed, that God may make choice of one nation rather than another, to be his peculiar people; but to apply this to particular persons, or to suppose that the condition of men's souls, even before they come into the world, is determined by an irrevocable decree, is foreign to the apostle's meaning, and abhorrent to his word, who has so plainly declared himself to be ³ 'no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, shall be accepted of him.'

⁴ Some are of opinion, that the chief prerogative of the primogeniture was nothing else but a double portion of the father's estate, and that this was all that Esau parted with to his brother: but had this been so, we cannot see wherein he is so mightily to blame, or why the apostle, who certainly understood the meaning of the birthright, as well as any modern commentator, should give him the hard name of a 'profane person,' merely for selling the reversion of a temporal estate, to save his life, in a time of the greatest exigence. Had the birthright, I say, consisted chiefly in this, we cannot see how Jacob could have been reduced to such straits as we afterwards find him in, or Esau, as to his outward fortune, have flourished more prosperously than his brother did. When his father Isaac died, and he came from mount Seir, to assist in his funeral, upon his departure from his brother, he is said to have ⁵ 'carried away with him all the substance which he had gotten in the land of Canaan.' ⁶ Now it is plain, that he had no substance in the land of Canaan of his own getting, for he lived at Seir in the land of Edom, beyond the borders of Canaan; and therefore the substance which was gotten in the land of Canaan, must be the substance which Isaac died possessed of, and which Esau, as his heir, took along with him. So that, after the birthright was sold, he was still heir to his father's substance; and therefore a right to this was not the thing which Jacob purchased of him. Others are of opinion, that the birthright was the blessing promised to the seed of Abraham; and this the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems, in some measure, to favour;

'Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who, for a morsel of meat, sold his birthright. For we know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: 'where, 'not inheriting the blessing,' seems to have been connected with his 'having sold his birthright; as if, having parted with the one, he could not possibly obtain the other: but it is much to be questioned, whether this be the true sense of the passage. Esau himself, when he sold his birthright, did not imagine that he had sold, at the same time, his right to the blessing; for when his father told him, that his brother had come with subtlety, and taken away the blessing, his answer was, 'Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he hath supplanted me these two times; he took away my birthright, and behold now he hath taken away my blessing?' Had he apprehended that the blessing and birthright were things inseparable, having sold the one, he would never have laid any claim to the other; whereas the defrauding him of his blessing is another hardship he complains of, distinct and different and independent on the former: and therefore Esau's birthright was most probably his right of being priest, or sacrificer for his brethren; and parting with this he is justly termed profane, because he hereby showed himself not to have a due value and esteem, for the religious employment that belonged to him.

But though this employment might better comport with Jacob, yet we cannot pretend to justify him in his method of obtaining it. ⁷ Moses, who records the story, does not commend him for it; and therefore we are left at our liberty to pass what censure upon it we think reasonable. God indeed, before he was born, designed and promised this privilege to him; but ⁸ then he should have waited until the divine wisdom had found out the means of executing his promise in his own way, as David did, till God gave him possession of Saul's kingdom, and not have anticipated God, and snatched it by an irregular act of his own. In the whole affair, indeed, Jacob acted with a subtlety not at all becoming an honest man. He knew that delays were dangerous, and that his brother's consideration, or second thoughts, might possibly spoil his bargain; and therefore he required haste, both in the sale and in his oath, and thereby incurred another sin, in hurrying his brother into an oath, by precipitation, which he neither should have taken, nor Jacob have advised him to take, without mature advice and deliberation.

And in like manner, as to his interception of the blessing, which his father designed for his brother Esau; it is in vain to have recourse to ^a forced constructions,

⁷ Bedford's Scripture Chronology. ⁸ Poole's Annotations.

^a Upon Jacob's answering his father, that he was Esau his first-born, the rabbins are put to great perplexity, how to assail the patriarch from the sin of lying; and therefore some of them paraphrase the words thus:—"I am, that is, he, who brings thee something to eat, but Esau is thy eldest son;" while others understand them in this manner rather:—"I am Esau, that is, I am in his stead, because he has sold me his birthright;" for by this sale, as they tell us, a proper permutation being made of persons and titles, the first became really last, and the last first; the elder became the younger, and the younger the elder, as to the style, and all the privileges of eldership; so that Jacob was in reality as much the heir and successor of Isaac, as if Esau had been actually dead. And though Esau was still alive, and had the name of Esau, yet Jacob was properly, what his brother

¹ Whitby on Rom. ix. ² 2 Sam. viii. 14. ³ Acts x. 34, 35.

⁴ Bibliotheca Biblica. ⁵ Gen. xxxvi. 6.

⁶ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 1. b. 7.

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or to plead the lawfulness of mental reservations, in order to excuse him in the lying and dissimulation, wherein he was certainly culpable. The best way is, upon this occasion, to lament the infirmity of human nature, which cannot always stand upright, and to admire the impartiality of the sacred writings, in which the very blemishes and transgressions of such as are designed to make the top-figure therein are not forgotten to be recorded.

¹ It cannot be denied indeed, but that both Jacob and his mother were justly to be praised for having a due esteem of the paternal benediction, and for their endeavouring to attain it; since this could proceed from no other motive than a full persuasion of the truth of God's promises and covenant with Abraham. For as the paternal blessing was thought to be a means instituted by God for the conveyance of this covenant, it could not but deserve their care and assiduity. It cannot be denied farther, but that, if this blessing was, as some imagine, an appendage to the birthright, Jacob, in purchasing the one, had acquired a lawful title to the other, a title established not only upon the express designation of God, but by a deed of sale likewise, executed and ratified by a most solemn and sacred oath. It cannot be denied likewise, but that, pursuant to this divine designation, Isaac was obliged to have conferred his blessing upon Jacob; and therefore his wife, perceiving that he was going to promise the blessing of Abraham where his affection led him to wish it, and not where she knew that God had designed to bestow it, laid a scheme which induced her husband to do that unwittingly which God had pre-ordained was to be done, but what she knew her husband would not do willingly without some uneasiness. Nay, it cannot be denied, once more, but that ² when her artifice had succeeded, and Jacob was accordingly blessed, Isaac was so far from being displeased with his wife, or angry with Jacob for imposing upon him, that we find him fully satisfied in what he had

done: ³ 'I have blessed him,' says he, 'yea, and he shall be blessed.' Which sudden change of mind can be imputed to nothing else but some divine inspiration, which at that time opened his understanding, and convinced him that he had given the blessing to the right person.

Thus, from the consideration of Jacob's right and Isaac's duty, the goodness of the end, the pre-ordination of God, and his approbation of the thing when done, may be drawn some arguments to alleviate their crime; but still we must ingenuously own, ⁴ that Rebecca was guilty of a fault, in suggesting such dangerous advice to her son; that Jacob committed another, in suffering himself to be seduced by so bad a guide; and that both of them presumed to limit the power of God, by thinking that a complication of frauds was necessary for the accomplishment of a divine prophecy. ⁵ Had Rebecca, indeed, put her husband in remembrance of this prophecy, and shown how Esau had forfeited the blessing by selling his birthright, and by marrying strange wives, this had been a much more honourable proceeding; but therefore she was left to pursue her own indiscreet method, that God might have the honour of serving his own purposes by the follies of men.

But how culpable soever Rebecca may be thought, in this instance, yet there is not the like imputation upon her in hiding from her husband the true reason of her sending away Jacob. ⁶ It is certainly a point of great prudence to conceal truth, when the discovery of it will occasion more harm than good; and therefore, that she might not afflict her husband's old age with the unwelcome news of his son Esau's wicked intent against his brother, and thereby provoke his indignation against him, she covered the dismissal of Jacob with a reason that was true indeed, but not that chief and latent one which gave her the most uneasiness; and which, if communicated to her husband, might have been a means of 'bringing his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.' So that, in the whole, and according to the proverbs of the wise man, she acted the part both of a careful and a prudent woman; for ⁷ 'the tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright;' and she ⁸ 'that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.'

When Abraham sent his servant into Mesopotamia to negotiate a marriage for his son Isaac, he had an equipage appointed him suitable to the dignity of his master, that God might be more honoured by so fine an appearance, and his veracity publicly justified in the advancement of that Abraham who had quitted all to follow him; but we shall soon perceive, that there was not the like reason for Isaac's sending away his son Jacob with such an honourable retinue, if we do but consider, ⁹ that the family of Nahor was already sufficiently apprized of the divine blessing which had attended Abraham and his family; that as Rebecca was sister to Laban, the head of the family, there was no need of any farther recommendation than that of a letter to her brother; that in this affair it was prudence to make Jacob appear as

¹ Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 14.

² Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 7.

had been, his first-born Esau, since Esau was reduced to the station of a younger brother only. St Austin (Ad Consentium de Mendacio, c. 10.) pretends, that Jacob's words have a figure in them much in the same nature with that in the gospel, where John the Baptist is called 'the Elias that shall come;' but the misfortune is, that there was a great similitude between Elias and the Baptist, as to their spirit and office; but between Jacob and Esau there was none at all; and therefore some other fathers, seeing the impossibility of explaining the words by any of these subtleties, have boldly asserted that there was no iniquity in the lies which Jacob told, because they did not proceed from any malevolent intent, but from a design of promoting the greatest good; for which end it was as lawful for a wise man to employ officious lies, as it is to make use of physic for the preservation of health. And from such dangerous positions as these the jesuitical doctrine of equivocation and mental reservation has, in a great measure, proceeded. "What shall we do with men of a description so base," says our author, "that they are not afraid to give full scope to all sort of lying and deceit? there will be an end to all fidelity in contracts and treaties, even to the bonds of all human society. And if the holy patriarch should awake from his rest, he would undoubtedly resist, and strongly condemn, the impiety of these most audacious men,—so far is he from making himself an accomplice in their blasphemous foolishness. Though Jacob stumbled, it was through human weakness; and he never in the least employed that artful, affected, and jesuitical kind of lying."—Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2, Essay 14.

³ Gen. xxvii. 33.

⁴ Saurin's Dissertation 25.

⁵ Millar's History of the Church, c. 1. period 3.

⁶ Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 14.

⁷ Prov. xv. 2.

⁸ Prov. xi. 13.

⁹ Bibliotheca Biblica, in Gen. xxviii. 5.

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little as might be, in order to give the less umbrage to his brother, and if possible to appease his resentment; that it was highly expedient for Jacob to tread in the steps of his grandfather Abraham, whose heir he was now become, and should therefore depart from his father's house, and cast himself entirely upon the providence of God for his subsistence, even as he had done; and that it was necessary for him to give a demonstration that it was not merely, as some suppose, an earthly inheritance which he had purchased, or a secular blessing which he had acquired, but that there was something far greater, though not discernible by every common eye, which he had in view in this acquisition: for ¹ his confessing in this manner, 'that he was a stranger and pilgrim on earth,' notwithstanding the right of primogeniture in him, declared plainly that, as heir of the promise with Abraham and Isaac, he was seeking a better country than either that from which he departed, or that whereunto he was sent, that is, an heavenly.

From these, and such like considerations, and not from any family poverty, it was, that Jacob was sent into Mesopotamia all alone, and without any attendance. And, in like manner, when Esau, upon his return from hunting, complains of his extreme hunger, we can scarcely suppose that he found nothing at home to eat, except the pottage which his brother had made. Frugality, indeed, was a virtue of much more esteem among the ancients than it is among us; but it is hard to imagine how Isaac, who was a man confessedly of a plentiful estate, and had doubtless a large family to maintain, should keep a house utterly destitute of all manner of eatables. Provision there was, no doubt, enough; but Esau's fancy ran upon something else. He longed, greedily longed, for the soup, and the soup he would have, whatever it cost. Its flavour and colour had enticed him, and every thing he resolved to part with, rather than not gratify the present cravings of an intemperate appetite. And accordingly we may observe, ² that his reasoning upon this occasion was not, that he was ready to die for famine, and therefore would part with his birthright; but that, according to his course of life, and the perils which he every day ran in hunting, in all probability he would not survive his father, and his birthright of consequence would avail him nothing; and therefore, having but a slender opinion of what was to come hereafter, he made his conclusion much in the same form with the epicurean in the prophet, ³ 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'

Whoever considers the chronology of that transaction, will find that ⁴ Isaac lived about forty years after his parting with his prophetic blessing; and consequently, ⁵ that it was not old age, but some sickness and indisposition of body, that at this time had seized him, and made him apprehensive of his approaching death. In this condition it is no uncommon thing, we know, for men's thoughts to run upon one kind of meat rather than another, and when the stomach is depraved, or anywise out of order, generally to long for such things as are of a savoury taste: and if venison in those countries was more particularly adapted to that purpose, wherein, I

pray, is Isaac to be blamed, for loving a son who took such pains, and exposed himself to such dangers, that he might show his respect to his aged father, and procure him now and then some little thing to please his palate, and humour his sickly appetite? Those who think proper to blame the patriarch's kind resentment of such assiduity, seem to have forgot the workings of human nature, and how apt the very wisest of parents are to have their affections won every day more and more, by the sedulity and officiousness of their children.

The dressing of this venison is represented indeed as a province which Esau himself took upon him; and to have the eldest son and heir of a family stand cook, as we call it, seems to portend no great wealth or magnificence in it; but when we urge this, we forget the simplicity of the times wherein Moses wrote, and wherein it was customary for men of the first rank to submit to offices much meaner than this. Herein then do the truth and authority of the sacred history most eminently appear, that all its accounts and descriptions of things agree with the sense of the most ancient writers, and are found conformable to the manners and customs that then prevailed.

And in like manner, we may say, that ⁶ it is our ignorance of the patriarchal manner of living which makes us think it unaccountable to hear, in those early days, of so many contests about wells. For were we to take a nearer inspection into the thing, we should soon find, that in those hot countries, where water was so very scarce, a well or fountain of living water was a possession of inestimable value; and for this reason we find Moses, in magnifying the divine bounty to the children of Israel, among other parts of the inventory, reckoning up, not only ⁷ 'great and goodly cities which they built not, but wells likewise digged which they digged not.'

⁸ Nor was it only for the benefit of the water that these wells were held in so high esteem, but for the memory of the events and transactions likewise which were known to have happened near them. For at these wells angels had appeared, miracles had been wrought, religious assemblies held, treaties transacted, marriages celebrated, and towns and cities built; and therefore no wonder that the ancients, looking upon them as sacred, as well as profitable places, should be so ready to contest their right to them, or that frequent notice should be taken of them in so compendious an history as that of the patriarchs.

The truth is, these, and perhaps some other occurrences in the life of this patriarch, though to us they may seem strange and incongruous, do not argue any want or poverty, but are exactly agreeable to that temperance and simplicity of living, which, in his days, were in vogue. He was in a manner sole heir of his father Abraham, (who was ^a a king in the opinion of some, but in all accounts a person of great affluence of fortune,) and who himself had made additions to it, enough to be

⁶ Bibliotheca Biblica, Occasional Annotations.

⁷ Deut. vi. 11. ⁸ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 7.

^a The words of Nicholas Damascenus, (as they are quoted by Josephus) are these,—'Abraham reigned in Damascus, being a stranger, who came out of the land of Chaldaea, beyond Babylon. His name is at this day famous about the country of Damascus, and they show us the town, which from him is called Abraham's dwelling.'—*Grotius de Verit.* b. 1. sect. 16.

¹ Heb. xi. 9, 10.

² Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 12. ³ Isa. xxii. 13.

⁴ Gen. xxxv. 28, 29.

⁵ Le Clerc's Annotations.

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envied even by neighbouring princes, could not possibly want any necessary accommodation of life, nor would he concern himself with things of a trifling consideration. But what we call trifles, might, in those times, be matter of the last importance; and what we account indications of poverty, might proceed from no other cause but that of frugality and parsimony,^a which, in the primitive ages, were in high repute, before they came to be discountenanced by the present schemes of expense and studied luxury. And therefore, when we find,¹ in ancient history, the Arcadians feeding upon acorns; the Argives upon apples; the Athenians upon figs, &c.; when we find^b a set of the most renowned heroes in the Grecian army, even in the great Achilles' tent, dining upon a loin of mutton, and an hock of bacon; and the godlike man Patroclus lighting the fire, while the master of the feast was spitting the meat; our wonder may cease, if, in ages before this, we meet with such an homely dish as lentil pottage in a patriarch's house, and the two sons of the family condescending to cook their own victuals. This we must own is not the practice among us; but it is a much more consistent and credible account of things than if Moses had represented Isaac's tent like a royal palace, and every thing served up there in the same splendid manner as when the king and his family dine in public.

CHAP. III.—Of Isaac's Blessing to Jacob.

THE HISTORY.

FROM the time that God made the covenant with Abraham, and promised blessings extraordinary to his seed, it was customary for the father of each family, some time before he died, to call together his children, and to inform them, according to the knowledge which it pleased God then to give him, how, and in what manner the blessing of Abraham was to descend among them. Whence this custom had its original, whether from the immediate appointment of God, or from some secret impulse, wherewith the patriarchs, upon the approach of their departure, found themselves affected, the silence of Scripture will not suffer us to determine; but this we may safely infer,² that this benediction was different from those private blessings which the patriarchs gave their children upon sundry occasions, and different likewise from those public blessings which the priests, and others in authority, were wont to distribute among

¹ Elian de Varia Historia, b. 3.

² Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 7.

^a The manner of living in the early ages of the world seems to be very well expressed by the Roman satirist. "When Saturn was king, I believe that chastity dwelt on earth, and was seen for a long time; when the cold grotto gave to men a home, a hearth and place for their household god; when one common shade enclosed both the cattle and their owners, and when the unsophisticated wife stroved for her husband, a woodland couch of leaves and straw and skins of wild beasts."—*Juvenal*, Sat. 6.

^b When the Grecians sent an embassy to Achilles, desiring him to be reconciled to Agamemnon, and to return to the camp, the deputies appointed for this purpose were Phœnix, Ajax, and Ulysses: and the simple entertainment which Achilles upon this occasion gave them, is by Homer beautifully described.

the people. It proceeded from an extraordinary illumination, and had the prospect of futurity (so far as was necessary for its purpose) submitted to its inspection. The persons upon whom it came had for that time the spirit of divination, and what they uttered under its influence was deemed a prophetic oracle, denoting infallible events, and extending to the utmost period of time.

The Jews indeed have a proverbial saying, that the spirit of prophecy does not fall upon the melancholic; and thence they suppose, that as good eating and drinking are known to exhilarate the spirits, the patriarch, by sending his son to take venison, was minded to make use of that expedient, that he might be the better disposed to receive the divine inspiration, and to pronounce the prophetic benediction with cheerfulness, and with a warmth and emotion sufficient to excite that attention which the prophecy he was about to deliver did require.

³ But as no one in his senses can imagine, that a person when perfectly sober, is not as capable of the spirit of prophecy as he that has plentifully dined; others, from the phrase, 'that I may bless thee before the Lord,' suppose⁴ that Isaac's eating, in order to receive the spirit of benediction, was by him designed to be sacramental, and accompanied with some religious rites and solemn invocations, though they happen not to be here mentioned. But this supposition being as precarious as the other, the safest way is to resolve the whole matter into the providence of God,⁵ who put Isaac into the head of sending out Esau for venison, neither to refresh his spirits by eating, nor to perform any religious act, but merely, by his absence, to give Jacob an advantageous opportunity of appropriating the blessing to himself.

Isaac, indeed, meant not this, neither was it in his heart to bless Jacob; and therefore, if we suppose that Rebecca had acquainted him with the prophecy which directed him to transfer the blessing upon Jacob, we must suppose withal,⁶ that he had now forgot it, or never rightly understood it, or apprehended that it was to be accomplished, not in the persons of Esau and Jacob, but in their posterity,⁷ for it is much better to charge the patriarch with want of attention or understanding, than with disobedience and prevarication.

However this be, the blessing which he pronounces over Jacob by mistake, is conceived in these words:—'God give thee of the dew of heaven,' (because, in hot countries, where showers were less frequent, the morning and evening dews were a great refreshment to the earth, and productive of much plenty,) 'and the fatness of the earth,' (because Canaan, the lot of his inheritance, was a fruitful, and therefore⁸ by the prophet called 'a fat land,') 'and plenty of corn and wine,' (abundance of every product of the earth.) 'Let people serve thee,' (that is, the Idumeans, who shall descend from thy brother Esau, as they did in the days of David,) 'and nations bow down unto thee,' (the kingdoms of Arabia and Syria, who are sprung from Hagar and Keturah:) 'be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's son bow down unto thee,' (have thou the dominion and prerogative in thine own family.) 'Cursed be every one that

³ Le Clerc's Commentary.

⁴ Poole's Annotations.

⁵ Saurin's Dissertations.

⁶ Bibliotheca Biblica.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Neh. ix. 25.

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curseth thee, and blessed be every one that blesseth thee ;' for God shall so far interest himself in thy cause, as to esteem those his friends or foes, who shall behave themselves as such to thee. So that the blessing consists properly of three branches : in the first is contained worldly plenty and prosperity ; in the second, dominion and empire ; and in the third, family pre-eminence, as well as the divine protection : but then the question is, in what sense is all this to be understood, and to what branch may the peculiar blessing of Abraham, which is doubtless comprised herein, be supposed to belong ?

If we look back ¹ to the call of Abraham, and the promises which attended it, there we shall find, ² that after enumerating the temporal blessings which were to descend from Abraham to his posterity, one blessing is added, in which all the world has an interest, and which was conveyed to them through Abraham and his seed. ' In thee,' says God, ' shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'

If we proceed to the blessing which he was pleased to give to his son Isaac, we shall find a recital of the same kinds of temporal prosperity ; a numerous progeny promised ; the grant of the land of Canaan renewed ; the oath given unto Abraham confirmed ; and then follows the great and distinguishing promise, ³ ' in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' And in like manner we cannot but imagine, that in this great and solemn blessing which Isaac is giving his son Jacob, there must be something of a spiritual nature comprised, though couched under terms which seem to denote worldly felicity only.

The author of the Hebrews tells us, that ⁴ ' by faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come ;' and what we are to understand ' by faith,' he instructs us in the conclusion of his discourse ; ' and these all' (meaning the patriarchs he had mentioned before) ' having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better things for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect.' So that this faith did chiefly relate to the blessed seed which was promised in the beginning, and from continued tradition and divine revelation, in every succeeding age, embraced by the faithful ; and therefore we can hardly suppose, but that, in this great prophetic benediction, there must be something concerning this seed implied at least, if not expressed.

Whoever takes but a cursory view of some of the chief passages of Jacob's life, will soon perceive that had his father's blessing consisted of worldly advantages only, it was in a manner quite lost upon him, since few men enjoyed a less share of that than he, who was forced from his home, into a far country, for fear of his brother ; deceived and oppressed by his uncle ; and ⁵ after a servitude of above twenty years, compelled to flee from him ; while, at the same time, he was in imminent danger, either of being pursued and brought back by Laban, or fallen upon, and murdered by Esau. These fears were no sooner over, but the baseness of his eldest son, in defiling his couch ; the treachery and cruelty of the two next in relation to the Shechemites ; the loss of his

beloved wife, and the supposed untimely death of his son Joseph ; to say nothing of his being compelled by famine to go down into Egypt, and there die : these, and many more instances, are proofs sufficient, that his father's blessing was of a different nature. For supposing it to relate to temporal prosperity and dominion only, wherein can we say that Jacob had the pre-eminence above his brother ? ⁶ If Jacob was ' blessed with the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth,' Esau's blessing (at least according to our translation) in this respect, is not inferior : ' Thy dwelling,' says his father, ' shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.' If ' nations were to bow down to Jacob,' Esau likewise ' was to live and prevail by his sword.' If Jacob's brethren were to ' bow down to him ;' yet the time would come, when ' Esau should have dominion, and break even this yoke from off his neck.' Thus, if we interpret the whole blessing of temporal prosperity only, the two brothers seem to stand upon an equality, and yet it is evident, from the whole story, that the chief blessing which their father had to bestow, was fallen upon Jacob ; and therefore he tells Esau, when he pressed him for a blessing upon himself likewise, ' Behold I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given unto him for servants, and with corn and wine have I sustained him, and what shall I do now unto thee, my son ?' And when Esau still urges his father, and his father thereupon blesses him, we may observe, that of corn and wine, and temporal power, he gives him a full and an equal share ; but then there is this limitation in the blessing, ' Thou shalt serve thy brother : ' so that whatever was peculiarly given to Jacob, was contained in the grant of ' being lord over his brethren ;' and yet the history of the two brothers will not allow us to expound it of any temporal dominion ; for if we should, see how the case will stand. ⁷ ' Jacob is to rule over Esau ;' and yet no sooner is the blessing given, but he flies his country for fear of Esau ; he lives abroad for many years ; and when he returns, the fear and dread of his brother returns with him ; so that his only refuge, in this his distress, was to God ; ⁸ ' Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau.' When he sends a message to him, he styles himself, ⁹ ' Thy servant Jacob : ' when he meets him, ¹⁰ ' he bows himself to the ground seven times, until he comes near to Esau ;' when he speaks to him, he calls him ' lord ;' and when he is kindly received by him, he says, ¹¹ ' I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wert pleased with me.' What is there in all this that shows any rule and dominion given to Jacob over his brother Esau ?

And, in like manner, if we imagine the prophecy relates to temporal dominion only, and yet was fulfilled in the posterity of these two brothers, the question will be, how the case, upon this supposition, stands ? ¹² The family of Esau was settled in power and dominion many years before Jacob's family had any certain dwelling-place. The dukes and kings of Esau's house are reckoned up ; and the historian tells us, that ¹³ ' these are

⁶ Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy, Discourse 5.

⁷ Ibid. ⁸ Gen. xxxii. 11.

⁹ Gen. xxxiii. 20.

¹⁰ Gen. xxxiii. 3.

¹¹ Gen. xxxiii. 10.

¹² Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy, Discourse 5.

¹³ Gen. xxxvi. 31.

¹ Gen. xii. ² Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy.

³ Gen. xxvi. 4.

⁴ Heb. xi. 20.

⁵ Universal History, b. 1. c. 7.

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the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.' When the appointed time was come for establishing the house of Israel, and giving them the land and possessions of their enemies, the family of Esau were, by a particular decree, exempted from the dominion of Israel; for so the Lord commanded Moses, ¹ 'Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren, the children of Esau. Take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore; meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land; no, not so much as a foot-breadth.' In the time of David, indeed, ² 'they of Edom became his servants;' but in the days of Jehoram they recovered again, ³ and made a king over themselves; and in the time of Ahaz they revenged the affront, ⁴ 'by smiting Judah, and leading them away captives.' So that this variety of fortune, between the children of Jacob and Esau, could never be the thing intended or meant to be described, when the promise was given to Jacob, 'that his mother's children should bow down unto him.'

What then is the hidden purpose of the words, and in what sense are they to be taken? Why it seems pretty evident, that the blessing given to Jacob, and expressed in words implying *a rule over his brethren*, was a conveyance of his birthright to him, in the family of Abraham; that the birthright in Abraham's family, besides the promise of the land of Canaan, respected the special blessing given to Abraham by God, and that this special blessing denoted no other than that person in whom all families of the earth were to be blessed, and that is Christ. For ⁵ that the regard of all nations to the seed, in which they were all to be blessed, should be expressed by their 'bowing down to him,' is no hard figure of speech; and that the superiority of Jacob's family should one day be broken (as the promise to Esau sets forth) when Jews and Gentiles should equally become the people of God, and all nations be equally blessed, is no more than what the original covenant contains. Upon the whole, then, we may observe, that this prediction had its full accomplishment, neither in the person of Jacob, nor in his posterity in general, but only in one, who, as to his human nature, in the fulness of time, descended from him, and ⁶ 'who being in the form of God,' as the apostle acquaints us with both his natures, 'and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus ever knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue shall confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

Since this part of the blessing, then, which Isaac bestowed upon Jacob, was of such high import, as to refer ultimately to the person of our blessed Saviour, and his exaltation into glory; this may suggest a reason to us,

why, though it was certainly obtained by guile, it was not afterwards revoked, but ratified rather and confirmed, even when his father came to understand the imposture. For if ⁷ 'prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' ⁸ then is Isaac, in this action to be considered only as the instrumental, and God as the principal cause; the efficacy of the blessing therefore must be supposed to depend, not on his will and intention, but on God's ordination and appointment; and consequently Isaac could have no right or authority to disannul the blessing, had he been minded so to do. ⁹ But it is much more likely, that the remembrance of the prophecy concerning the two children, which Rebecca had vouchsafed her, before they were born, might at this time come to strike him; and seeing he had in his blessing, though not designedly, confirmed the same, he might very well impute it to an overruling providence, and so be concluded by the divine determination; in which sense that passage relating to Esau, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, is most proper to be applied: ¹⁰ 'We know, how that afterwards, when he would have inherited a blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.' But how was 'Esau rejected from inheriting a blessing,' when we find, that upon his importunity with his father, he obtained one? He obtained a blessing indeed, but not that which, by hereditary right, belonged to the first-born, and abounded with blessings both spiritual and temporal. This his brother Jacob had supplanted him of; and yet he could not prevail with his father to revoke it. He could not bring him to change his mind, (as it is in the margin,) and repent of the blessing he had given to Jacob, (for, ¹¹ it is Isaac's repentance, not Esau's, that is here under consideration,) although he sought it with tears; and the reason is,—because his father knew, both by the conduct of providence in this whole affair, and by a particular inspiration at that time, that the peculiar blessings promised to Abraham and his seed, did not belong to him, but, by the divine appointment, were now consigned to his brother and his posterity; and therefore, to silence all further clamour, he tells him with a more than ordinary emphasis and inflexibility, ¹² 'I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed.'

SECT. III.

CHAP. I.—Of the Life of Jacob, from his going into Mesopotamia, to his return.

THE HISTORY.

As soon as Jacob had received his father's charge and blessing, he departed privately from Beersheba, and ^a made the best of his way to Haran; but after his first

⁷ 2 Pet. i. 21. ⁸ Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 14.

⁹ Le Clerc's Commentary.

¹⁰ Heb. xii. 17.

¹¹ Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 14. ¹² Gen. xxvii. 33.

^a The Jews tell of several miracles, which they suppose to have been wrought on the very day that Jacob set out from Beersheba; but one more especially, namely, that God shortened the

¹ Deut. ii. 4, 5.

² 2 Sam. xviii. 14.

³ 2 Kings viii. 20.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxviii. 17.

⁵ Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy, Dis. 5.

⁶ Phil. ii. 6, &c.

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day's journey, ^a happening to be benighted, he was forced to take up his lodging in the open air, with the spangled sky to be his canopy, and an hard stone his pillow. However, while he slept, he thought he saw a ladder fixed upon the earth, and reaching up unto heaven, with angels ascending and descending on it; and from the top of this ladder he heard God speaking unto him, and promising him, even as he had done his forefathers, the land of Canaan for his inheritance; a large and numerous posterity; the Messias to descend from his family; a safe return to his native country; and the divine protection and preservation every where to attend him.

This, in all probability, was the first vouchsafement of the kind which Jacob ever had; and his dream had made such impression upon him, that as soon as he awaked, he paid an awful reverence to the place, and after a short contemplation of what had passed, broke out into this rapture of wonder and admiration:—"How venerable is this place, over which are vertically the palace of God, and the gate of heaven, through which the holy angels are continually issuing out, to execute the divine commands!" And when he arose, he erected the stone whereon he slept, and, as the custom of those times was, ^b poured oil upon it, and then in pious commemoration of the heavenly vision, called the place, which before was called Luz, by the name of Bethel, that is, the house of God. ^c But before he went from

hours, by causing the sun to go down before its time; and yet we are told, that from Beersheba to Luz, where he lodged the first night, were about 48 English miles, which was no inconsiderable day's journey. If there be any meaning therefore in this fiction of theirs, it must consist in this:—That Jacob was sent away with his father's blessing, and, in virtue of that, was filled with a certain divine power, which supported and carried him on with pleasure, so that the day might thence seem shorter to him; and though his father sent no friend or domestic along with him, yet there is no doubt to be made, but that there was a companion and guardian of a far nobler order assigned him, who led him by the hand, as it were, and kept him in all his ways.—*Bibliotheca Biblica, in locum.*

^a The place where Jacob took up his lodging, was near Luz, which signifies an almond, and might very likely have its name from the many groves of almond-trees which were thereabouts; and under some of which it is not unlikely that Jacob might take up his lodging, because the largeness of their leaves, in that country, would afford no incommodious shelter from the weather. Jacob, upon account of the vision which he had in this place, called it Bethel; and the Israelites, when they conquered Canaan, in remembrance of the same, continued the name. It lay to the west of Hai, about eight miles to the north of Jerusalem, in the confines of the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin. So that upon the revolt of the ten tribes, it belonged to the kingdom of Israel, and was therefore one of the cities where Jeroboam set up his golden calves, whence the prophet Hosea (ch. iv. 15) alluding to the name given to it by Jacob, calls it Bethaniam, instead of Bethel, that is 'the house of vanity or idols,' instead of 'the house of God.'—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1.

^b Hence it seems evident, that Jacob did not leave his father's house, without being first provided for his journey; for it cannot be thought, that if he wanted other necessities, he would have carried oil along with him, and that in such plenty, as to pour it out, in such a seemingly profuse manner, upon an inanimate subject.—*Bibliotheca Biblica.*

^c Gen. xxviii. 18. "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had set up for his pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel." This passage evinces of how great antiquity is the custom of considering stones in a sacred light, as well as the anointing them with consecrated oil. From this conduct of Jacob, and this Hebrew appellation, the learned Bochart, with

thence, he made a ^d solemn vow to God, "That if he would protect and prosper him in his journey, provide him with ^e common necessities in his absence, and grant him an happy return to his father's house; to him alone would he direct his religious worship; in that very place where the pillar stood, upon his return, would he make his devout acknowledgments, and offer unto him ^f the tenth of whatever he should gain in the land of Mesopotamia."

great ingenuity and reason, insists that the name and veneration of the sacred stones, called *baetyli*, so celebrated in all pagan antiquity, were derived. These *baetyli* were stones of a round form; they were supposed to be animated with a portion of the Deity: they were consulted on occasions of great and pressing emergency, as a kind of divine oracles. Thus, the setting up of a stone by this holy person, in grateful memory of the celestial vision, probably became the occasion of the idolatry in succeeding ages, to these shapeless masses of unknown stone, of which so many astonishing remains are scattered up and down the Asiatic and the European world.—*Maurice's Indian Antiquities*, vol. 2. p. 355.

^d Several annotators have observed, that this is the first vow that we read of in Scripture; but this is no reason for our supposing that Jacob was the first who worshipped in this manner, but rather, that in this, he did no more than what his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, had done before him, and as they had instructed him both by example and precept. And as for Abraham, though there be no mention made expressly of a vow, yet very certain it is, that in effect he did the same thing. For when the Lord is said to have made a covenant with him, Abraham, on his part, must be supposed to express his consent and acceptance of it, and not only so, but to vow and promise to perform the conditions, in order to attain the benefit of it. And in like manner, when Isaac is said to have entreated the Lord for his wife, it is highly probable, that he vowed a vow to God, that upon his performance of the promise of multiplying his seed, &c., he would, on his part, as an acknowledgment of it, make some or other suitable return; for the word which we render *entreat*, in its original, has a much stronger signification, and denotes a soliciting of favours, whether from God or man, by gifts, vows, or promises. So that we may justly conclude, that his son did not do this of his own head, or an immediate revelation commanding him so to do, but that he was before taught and instructed by his father in this solemnity, as a part of both natural and positive religion.—*Bibliotheca Biblica.*

^e Jacob's words upon this occasion are, 'If God will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,' which two articles comprise all the necessities of life, and therefore we find them, in the writings of the philosophers, always put together. For these are the bounds, says Seneca, (*Ep.* 4.) which nature has set us, that we should not hunger, nor thirst, nor be cold. For our diet and dress, says Tully, should contribute to our health and strength, not to luxury or pleasure (*De Offic.* b. 1. c. 13.) We may observe, however, farther, that by the patriarch's covenanting here with God only for food and raiment, does appear the gross mistake of those who pretend that he supplanted his brother for covetous ends; as if his father's estate, and the possession of a rich country for himself and his heirs, were the things which he had only in view.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Biblica, in locum.*

^f This is the second mention of tithes or tenths, and the first dedication of them to God; and from this place we may fairly conclude, that Jacob, the grandchild of Abraham, vowing the tenth of all, (as Abraham had given the tenth of the spoil), was induced to do it by the custom which then prevailed among religious people. How they came to pitch upon this portion, rather than a fifth, a sixth, or any other quantity, is not so easy to be resolved; but they seem to speak with much reason, who observe, that in this number *ten*, all nations in a manner do end their account, and then begin again with compound numbers, or, as others phrase it, that this is the end of less numbers, and the beginning of the greater, for which reason it was looked on as the most perfect of all other, and accordingly had in great regard; but after all, it seems most likely, that they had some divine precept and direction for it. At this time it is certain that the order of priesthood was not instituted; and therefore the only purposes to

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Having thus performed his devotions, he ^a proceeded in his journey, and, after some weeks, arrived at Haran. As he came near the town, he saw some shepherds with their flocks, not far from a well which was covered with a large stone; and while he was inquiring of them concerning Laban and his family, he was given to understand, that they were all well, and that it would not be long before his daughter ^b Rachel would be there with her flock. Nor had this discourse long passed before she came; whereupon Jacob, having very obligingly rolled away the stone, and watered her sheep for her, took occasion to let her know who he was; and as he proceeded to salute his cousin, was in a manner ready to weep for joy; while she made what haste she could home, in order to inform her father of what had passed. He immediately came to meet his nephew, and received him with all the kindness, and all the tenderness imaginable, whilst he related to him ^c the occasion of his leaving his father's family, and what adventures he had met with in the way.

Jacob had not been long in his uncle's house before he applied himself to business; and having now served him for the space of a month in the capacity of a shepherd, his uncle one day took an occasion to discourse

which Jacob could appropriate the tithes he gave, were either for the maintenance of burnt-sacrifices, and other pious uses, or perhaps for the relief of the poor. But how, and when, he actually performed his vow, does nowhere appear in Scripture, unless it was upon his return from Padan-Aram, (Gen. xxxv. 7—14.) 'when he built an altar at El Bethel, and set up a pillar in the place where God had talked with him, and poured a drink-offering and oil thereon.'—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^a The words in the text are, 'And came into the land of the people of the east,' Gen. xxix. 1.; which makes some imagine that he travelled eastward. But this is a mistake, because Mesopotamia, and particularly Haran, lay northward from Bethel. Babylon, however, lay eastward from both places; and therefore Mesopotamia being part of the Babylonish dominions, the Babylonians might well be called 'the people of the east,' and Jacob is only said to have gone into a country of which they were lords and masters.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 3. c. 4.

^b Rachel, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies a sheep: nor need we wonder at her being called so, since it was a common thing among the ancients to give names, not only to particular persons, but even to considerable families, (as the words Porcius, Ovilus, Caprilus, Equilius, &c., mentioned by Varro, *De Re Rustica*, l. 2. c. 1. sufficiently shows,) from cattle, both great and small. Much less reason have we to wonder, that we find her keeping her father's sheep, since that employment, in those early days, was accounted very honourable, as from Homer and other ancient writings is sufficiently evident. We need not suppose, however, that the whole drudgery of the work lay upon her; she had those under her who took this off her hands, and her business was only, as the chief shepherdess, to inspect over them.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c The things which Jacob informed his uncle Laban of at this time, may be supposed to be such as related to the occasion of his journey; as particularly all that had passed between his brother and him as to the right of primogeniture; the purchase which he had made of it, and what ensued; their two different manners of living; the design of his father with respect to them; the management of the mother, to procure him the blessing; the resentment of his brother at his disappointment; the prudent dismissal of himself thereupon, both by father and mother; the displeasure they had conceived at his brother's matching himself into strange families; and the strict orders they had therefore given him to take a wife out of his own kindred, and of the house of his mother's father, which was the reason of his coming thither; and, lastly, the wonderful occurrences he had met with on his journey, more especially as to the whole affair of Bethel, and the happy meeting of his daughter at the well, to his great and surprising satisfaction.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*.

him, and to let him know, that he neither expected, nor thought it reasonable, to have his labour for nothing, and therefore desired him to name what wages he would have. The lovely shepherdess had already captivated Jacob's heart; and therefore he names her for the reward ^d of his seven years' service, which her father readily consented to, and he as readily entered upon, because the love which he had to his Rachel made him account the longest time short. ^e

Laban, we must know, had another daughter, named Leah, older than Rachel, but not so beautiful, having some blemish or soreness in her eyes; and when the time of Jacob's servitude was expired, and he demanded his wife, his father-in-law seemed to solemnize the

^d It was a custom which had prevailed almost in all ages, that in contracting marriages, as the wife brought a portion to the husband, so the husband should be likewise obliged to give her parents money or presents, (which sometimes in Scripture are called the dowry,) in lieu of this portion. But Jacob being destitute of money, offers his uncle seven years' service, which must needs have been equivalent to a large sum; and being so, it is more to be wondered at, that he did not send over to his parents for a supply upon this occasion, rather than bind himself a servant for so long a term. But, from the custom in use among us, there is no judgment to be made what the custom and practice was then.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^e Dr Hales states the age of Jacob when he went to Charran at 77 years, which he collects from Scripture thus: When Jacob had been 14 years in Charran, Joseph was born, Gen. xxx. 25; Joseph was 30 years old when made regent of Egypt, Gen. xli. 46; and in the ninth year of his regency, brought his father and family to settle in Egypt, Gen. xli. 53, 54. xlv. 6; the amount of these sums, 14+30+9=53 years from the time Jacob went to Charran; which being subtracted from 130 years, his age when he stood before Pharaoh, Gen. xlvii. 9, leaves 77 years for his age when he went to Charran. And this confirms the account of Abulfaragi and Demetrius. Dr Hales farther agrees with Usher, Lloyd, Clayton, &c., in supposing that Jacob's marriage with Leah took place about a month after his arrival in Charran, at the beginning of the seven years, and his marriage with Rachel the week after, and thinks that Jacob's demand, Gen. xxix. 21, 'Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled,' relates to the days of *courtship*, which by a decorous usage were a *month*, during which a bride, though betrothed, might put off the consummation of her marriage, a privilege which was afterwards extended by the Mosaic law even to a female captive, who was granted this respite to bewail "her father and mother," Deut. xxxi. 13. And further, considering the advanced age of Jacob when he went to Charran, as stated above, it is not probable that he would have waited patiently seven years before he married; and the selfish policy of Laban would prompt him to secure his attachment and services by a speedy connexion with his family. That he married at the beginning of the first seven years, is further demonstrated by Abulfaragi, who dates the birth of his son Levi, in his eighty-second year, or in the fifth year of his service. On this hypothesis, Dr Hales gives the following table of the birth of Jacob's children by his wives and concubines.

The first date is Jacob's age, the second the year before Christ

	Y.	B. C.
1 Reuben,.....	78	1915
2 Simeon,.....	80	1913
3 Levi,.....Leah.	82	1911
4 Judah,.....	83	1910
5 Dan,.....Bilhah,	84	1909
6 Naphtali,.....	85	1908
7 Gad,.....Zilpah,	86	1907
8 Asher,.....	87	1906
9 Issachar,.....	88	1905
10 Zebulun,.....Leah,	89	1904
11 Dinah,.....	90	1903
12 Joseph,.....Rachel,	91	1902
13 Benjamin,.....	104	1889

—*Hales' Analysis of Chronology*, vol. 2. pp. 132, 135—137, second edition.—Ed.

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nuptials with great magnificence, but in the evening he put an unfair trick upon him; for instead of the beautiful Rachel, he ^a brought the blear-eyed ^b Leah to his bed; which when Jacob perceived next morning, and thereupon made just remonstrances, the father had his answer ready, and in a magisterial tone told him,—‘That it was an unprecedented thing in that country, and would have been deemed an injury to her sister, to marry the younger before the elder; but (continued he, in a milder tone) if you will ^c fulfil the nuptial week with your wife, and consent to serve another seven years for her sister, I am content to take your word for it, and to give Rachel to you as soon as the seven days are ended.’ Jacob could not but be troubled at such unfair procedure, but he loved Rachel too well not to obtain her at any price; and therefore he consented to these hard conditions, and, at the week’s end, was married to Rachel likewise.

But though he preferred Rachel much before Leah, yet God put quite another difference between them, by making the latter the mother of four sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, before her sister had one. ^d This was so great a trouble to Rachel, that she came one day, in a fit of melancholy, and told her husband,

^a The modesty of those times made them bring the bride to her husband’s bed veiled, and without lights, which gave Laban an opportunity to impose upon Jacob, and made it a thing almost impossible for him to discern the deception until next morning.—*Howell’s History*, and *Patrick’s Commentary*.

^b Dr Clarke thinks that the word רבבה *raccoth*, rendered ‘tender-eyed’ in the common version, means *soft, delicate, lovely*; and that the meaning is just the reverse of the signification usually given to it. The design of the inspired writer is to compare both sisters together, that the balance may appear to be greatly in the favour of Rachel. The chief recommendation of Leah was her *soft and beautiful eyes*; but Rachel was יפת תואר *yephath toar*, beautiful in her shape, person, mien, and gait, and יפת מראה *yephath moreh*, beautiful in her countenance. The words plainly signify a fine shape and fine features, all that can be considered as essential to personal beauty.—*Clarke’s Commentary* on Gen. xxxix. 17.—Ed.

^c Some are of opinion, that by ‘her week’ (as it is in the text) we are to understand a week of years, or seven years, and consequently, that to ‘fulfil her week’ was as much as to say, that Jacob was to serve other seven years for Rachel, before he was to marry her. Some old English versions render it thus: but the order of the story seems to gainsay it. For though Jacob lived with Laban twenty years, it is plain, that at the end of the fourteenth year, he proposed to part, and return home; and yet we may observe, that Rachel (though she had been a good while barren) had born Joseph before that time, which could not have been, had not she been married before the end of his second seven years’ service. Since Laban then (as we read Gen. xxix. 22.) had invited a great deal of company, and the custom in those days was to devote a whole week to the nuptial solemnities, the plain sense of his words to Jacob (according to Selden’s short comment on them, *De Jure Nat.* b. 5. c. 5.) is this,—“Since marriages are to be celebrated, according to custom, by a seven days’ feast, complete this marriage thou hast begun with Leah, and then upon condition of another seven years’ service, thou shalt marry Rachel also, and keep her wedding feast seven days.” And the reason why Laban was so desirous of this, was, that a week’s cohabitation with Leah might be a means, either to knit Jacob’s affection to her, or at least to confirm the marriage so, that it should not be in his power to disannul it.—*Le Clerc’s* and *Patrick’s Commentaries*, *Howell’s History* and *Poole’s Annotations*.

^d Gen. xxix. 32. ‘And Leah conceived and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben.’ It seems probable that in common the mother gave the name to a child, and this both among the Jews and the Greeks, though perhaps not without the concurrence of the father. In the age of Aristophanes, the giving of a

that unless he gave her children also, she should certainly die with grief. Which speech seeming to lay the blame of her sterility upon him, so provoked him, that he sharply rebuked, and told her, “That it was not in his power to work miracles; that God, who had shut up her womb, was alone able to open it; but that such uneasy and discontented behaviour was the way to prevent, rather than obtain such a favour.” This mortifying answer made her bethink herself of supplying the defect of nature by her grandmother Sarah’s expedient, and therefore she desired her husband to take her handmaid Bilhah for a concubinary wife, and by that means to try to make her a mother; which he consenting to, had by her a son, whom Rachel named Dan, and, in a proper space of time, another, whom she called Naphtali. After which Leah, supposing herself to have left off child-bearing, and willing to imitate her sister’s policy, gave her maid Zilpah to her husband, by whom she had likewise two sons, Gad and Ashur.

About this time it so fell out, that Reuben, Jacob’s eldest son, going into the fields about the time of wheat harvest, chanced to meet with some mandrakes, which he gathered, and carried to his mother Leah. Rachel no sooner saw them, but desiring to have some of them, received from Leah a forbidding answer; “That having robbed her of her husband’s affections, she could not expect to have any part in her son’s present.” It was ^e Rachel’s turn that night to have her husband’s company; and therefore, to compromise the matter, she tells her sister, that in case she would oblige her with some of her son’s mandrakes, she would waive her pretensions, and consign the right of his bed to her. Upon Jacob’s coming home, Leah calls upon him to confirm the bargain, which accordingly he did, and the consequence was, that she conceived again, and had a fifth son, whom she called Issachar; after him another named Zebulun; and last of all, a daughter, whose name was Dinah, the feminine of Dan.

Rachel had hitherto no issue of her own body; but now it pleased God to remember her, and to bless her with a son, whom she called ^f Joseph. And it was not long after his birth, that his father Jacob, having now served out his last seven years, began to entertain thoughts of returning into his own country, and accordingly desired of his uncle to dismiss him and his family. But Laban, who had found by experience no small advan-

name to the child seems to have been a divided prerogative between the father and the mother. Homer ascribes it to the mother:—

Him or, his mother’s knees, when babe he lay,
She nam’d Arnæus on his natal day.

Odyssey, xviii. 6. *Pope*.

^e The custom of those countries, where polygamy was allowed, was for the husband to take his wives by turns. The kings of Persia (if we believe Herodotus) were not exempt from that rule: which makes it more probable that Rachel sold her turn to her sister for that night, than that she directed her husband which of the four he should lie with.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^f Joseph signifies *increase*; and the reason why Rachel named him so, is said to be, because God ‘had taken away her reproach;’ for to be barren was formerly reckoned a disgrace, for these three reasons. 1. Because fruitfulness proceeded from the blessing of God, who said, ‘increase and multiply.’ 2. Because barren people seem to be excluded from the promises of God made to Abraham concerning the vast multiplication of his seed. And, 3. Because the Messias could not proceed from them.—*Poole’s Annotations*.

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tage by having such a servant, begged him to stay with him a little longer; and promised him upon that condition, to give him whatever wages he should think fit to name. Hereupon Jacob took an occasion of reminding him how much his substance had increased since it was put under his care, but that it was now high time for him to make some provision for his own family; and that therefore he was resolved to return to Canaan, unless he could show him some way of improving his fortune in Mesopotamia. Laban could not bear the thoughts of parting; and therefore he pressed him to stay, and offered him his own terms, which at last were resolved into this agreement,—That in the whole flock, both of sheep and goats, a separation should be made between the speckled and the white; that the spotted cattle should be given to Laban's sons to keep, and that Jacob should have the care of the white; and that whatever ^aspotted or brown sheep or goats should, from that time forward, be produced out of the white flock, which he was to keep, should be accounted his hire. Laban was very well satisfied with these conditions. Accordingly the flocks were parted; the spotted cattle were delivered to Laban's sons; the remainder that were white, were given to Jacob; and, that there might be no possibility of intermixing, they were sent three days' journey apart.

Whether it was from his own observation of the power of fancy in the time of conception, or (what seems more likely) from some private suggestion of the divine wisdom, that the project proceeded; but so it was, that by Jacob's taking twigs of green wood, peeling off the rinds in slips, and so laying them in the watering places, when the flocks came to drink ^b about coupling time, these speckled twigs struck the eyes of the females, and so made them conceive and bring forth party-coloured young ones. But it was not to all the flock that Jacob did this, only to such as were the ablest and strongest; for those that were weak and languid he left to their natural course, that his artifice might be the less suspected, when it appeared that the number of his father-in-law's cattle was not too much diminished.

His father-in-law, however, envying his prosperity, repented of his bargain, and several times altered the agreement, which God, as many times, turned to Jacob's advantage; till at length, observing in his carriage a coldness and indifference, and overhearing, at a certain time, his sons grudging and complaining, that he had raised himself an estate out of their fortunes, he began

^a The sacred historian makes use of four different words to denote the cattle which should properly belong to Jacob. The first is *nakod*, which we translate *speckled*; for the word signifies little points or pricks, which the Greeks call *στίγματα*. The second is *talú*, which signifies such broader and larger spots as we frequently see in cattle. The next is *akod*, which signifies spotted with *divers colours*, or rather with rings or circles about the feet or legs. And the last is *barud*, which signifies *whitish spots* like hail; which seems to take in all the kinds of variegation.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b Several ancient commentators are of opinion, that Jacob laid these streaked rods before the cattle only in spring time, when the sun was ascending, and the cattle lusty and vigorous, but let them alone when the cattle came to couple in September, or the decline of the year. But as there is no certainty in this, our moderns have thought it more reasonable to suppose, that he laid the rods before the young and lusty sheep and goats, but left the old and weak to take their chance, by which means the best lambs and kids came to his share, and the worst to Laban's.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7. and *Patrick's Commentary*.

to form a resolution of retiring into his own country with his family and effects, which God in a vision confirmed him in: but before he put it in execution, he thought it proper to advise with his two principal wives, and to endeavour to gain their consent. To this purpose he sent for them into the field, that he might have an opportunity of discoursing the matter with more freedom and privacy; and then told them that for some time he had observed that their father's carriage had been altered, but for what reason he could not devise. He appealed to them concerning his fidelity and diligence, and their father's unworthy requital of him; reminded them of God's goodness in defeating his ^c contrivances against him, and converting them to his great advantage and increase; acquainted them, that the same God who had thus blessed him, had appeared to him, as he did at Bethel, in his passage from Canaan thither, and commanded him to return to his native country, which command he was resolved to obey. They heard him with a willing mind, declared their opinion concerning their father, in the same manner as he had done, and professed themselves ready to attend him, when he pleased to set out. Jacob, therefore, preparing all things for the journey, mounting his wives and children upon camels, and taking the advantage of his father-in-law's absence (which gave Rachel an opportunity likewise of stealing away his gods), himself went along with the cattle, and all the other substance which he had acquired at Haran: he had now passed ^d the Euphrates, and gained ^e the mountains of Gilead, as they were afterward called, before Laban had intelligence of his flight, and was able to overtake him. Laban, no doubt, at his first setting out after Jacob, pursued him with a mind whetted with revenge; but God, who appeared to him that night in a dream, was pleased to avert it, by threatening him severely, if he committed any hostility or violence against him: so that the next morning, when he and the relations he had with him came to

^c In the complaint which Jacob makes to his wives, there is one particular article against their father, namely, that he ^c had changed his wages ten times, Gen. xxxi. 7, and yet he lived in contract with him only six years. But to solve this difficulty, we are to observe, that the cattle in Mesopotamia bred twice every year; and therefore, supposing that for the first year Laban stood to his bargain, but seeing his son-in-law thrive exceedingly, altered the form of it the next, and so continued to do every half year, till the sixth year came about, when Jacob thought proper to leave him, the several times wherein he changed his wages will be exactly ten; though there is no necessity for this exact calculation, when it is so common a figure of speech, to put a certain for an uncertain number.—*Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary*.

^d Though the text does not say what river he passed, yet it is plain it could be no other than the Euphrates, which the Scripture sometimes calls the river Perah, sometimes the Great River, and sometimes emphatically *the river*; either because that and the Nile were the only two considerable ones the Israelites knew, or because it was one of the four rivers of paradise; or, lastly, because it was the boundary of the promised land.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^e The heap of stones which Laban and Jacob raised in memory of their agreement and covenant was called Gilead, that is, *an heap of witnesses*; and in after ages gave the name to the whole country therabouts, which lies on the east of the sea of Galilee, being part of that ridge of mountains which ran from mount Lebanon southward on the east of the Holy Land, and included the mountainous region, called in the New Testament Trachonitis.—*Wells's Geography*, vol. 1. c. 13.

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speaking with Jacob, he only expostulated with him, that he had stolen away, without giving him an opportunity to take his leave of his children and grandchildren, or to send them home with an equipage suitable to their rank, or with the usual ceremonies of music and dancing. Jacob, on the other hand, was not without his complaints. The cheat which Laban had put upon him, in making him serve so long for a woman he did not love; the changing his salary so many times, and his late strange behaviour towards him and his family; all these, and many more, he answered him, were but ill requitals for his care and diligence, as well as the blessings which God had heaped upon him for his sake.

Laban had yet another thing to lay to his charge, namely, the stealing of his gods: but Jacob, who knew nothing of Rachel's theft, desired him to make the most diligent search for them throughout his family; assuring him withal, that the person on whom they were found should immediately be put to death. Hereupon Laban went and searched every place; but as he entered into Rachel's tent (who had hid them under the camel's furniture, and set herself down upon them), she kept her sitting, and alleged in excuse that the condition she was in allowed her sex to be excused from the usual ceremonies. Laban, not suspecting the fallacy which his daughter had put upon him, in point of modesty, desisted from any farther search, and so went and acquainted his son-in-law with his bad success; whereupon Jacob, appealing to his very friends, sharply upbraided him with his unjust suspicion; and then, recounting the long servitude he had held him in, and the many hardships he had made him undergo, both day and night, together with the cruel and unequal terms he had all along put upon him, he concluded with these words, 'Except the God of my father had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away empty.'

This charge of Jacob's was so just, that Laban could make no defence for himself; and therefore he thought it best to let fall the debate, and to enter upon a more agreeable subject, which was to make an alliance between them, and to erect a ^a monument as a standing witness of it to all future ages. At the same time, they took mutual oaths that neither of them should, at any time, invade the other; and Jacob in particular, that he would use his wives and children with all becoming tenderness and affection.

When this ceremony was over, and a sacrifice in confirmation of it offered, Jacob feasted the whole company for the rest of the day; ^b and in the morning, Laban

^a This monument Jacob seems to have erected after the same manner as he did that at Bethel. It must not be supposed to have been a heap of loose stones; for then it could not have continued long in the same position, nor given a name to the country around it. It was, doubtless, a regular and permanent building; but then, what the form and figure of it was, it is not so easy to determine. Had it been only for a memorial to posterity, and not for some present transaction also, the figure either of a column or pyramid would have been very proper: but we find that the present use of it was, to eat and sacrifice upon; and therefore we may imagine that it was made in the figure of a table, and have some authority to think of a round table, because the name which Jacob calls it by is taken from a verb which signifies to turn round, as the word *Gilal* is properly the circumference of a circle.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*.

^b Gen. xxxi. 46. 'And Jacob said unto his brethren, gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap, and

having embraced and blessed the whole family, returned home to Padan-Aram.

Jacob had no sooner parted with his father-in-law, but the remembrance of his brother's ancient grudge against him began to give him fresh uneasiness; but the vision of a great number of angels, sent from heaven to protect him, which he had in his way to Canaan (at a place which he therefore called ^d Mahanaim, that is, *two camps*, namely, one of the angels, and the other of his own retinue), did dissipate his anxiety for a while. As he approached to his brother's country, however, his fears and uneasiness returned upon him; and therefore he thought it advisable, before he advanced any farther, to send him a submissive message, in order to discover at least how he stood affected to him. Esau, when Jacob was gone to Haran, understanding how strictly his father had charged his brother not to marry a Canaanitish woman, began to be dissatisfied with his own marriages; and therefore went to Ishmael, and having married one of his daughters, settled in mount ^e Seir, in the land of Edom. Hither it was that Jacob sent some of his ^f chief servants, with instructions to

they did eat there upon the heap.' It might be thought to tend more strongly to impress the mind, when this feast of reconciliation was eaten upon that very heap that was designed to be the lasting memorial of this renewed friendship.—Ed.

^c Interpreters are generally of opinion that these were two hosts or armies of angels, whereof one was that of the guardian angel of Mesopotamia, who, with his company, conducted Jacob safe to the confines of Canaan, where the guardian angel of Canaan, with his company, received him into their care; and this is inferred from the necessity of such protection, by Jacob's being exposed to the treachery of Laban, and the cruelty of Esau, which made providence more particularly careful of him to whom the promises were made. But it is sufficient to the purpose of giving the patriarch comfort and encouragement under his uneasy apprehensions, that besides his own family, which was pitched here in order like a camp, a certain number of angels were represented to him, as drawn up like another army, ready and prepared for his defence.—*Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

^d This place was situated between mount Gilead and the river Jabbok, not far from the banks of the latter, and very near the confines of Gad, and half tribe of Manasseh, which was on the east of Jordan. It became in time a city of great strength, and for this reason was made choice of by Abner for the seat-royal of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, when he made war against David, and for a retiring place by David himself, during the rebellion of his son Absalom.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1. c. 13.

^e The mountains of Seir lay on the east and south of the Dead sea, and the country extended itself from thence to the Arabian gulf. It is certain from Gen. xxxvi. 21, 22, that in Abraham's days the Horites, who were the descendants of Seir, had the possession of this region; and therefore we may suppose, that after the departure of Jacob, Esau, who, according to the prediction concerning him, was to 'live by his sword,' expelled the old inhabitants, and made himself prince thereof, before his brother returned from Mesopotamia. From Gen. xxxii. 13, xxxiii. 4, xxxvi. 8, 9, and Deut. ii. 12, we may learn that Esau made war with these people with great success, though we have of it no particulars in the writings of Moses.—*Calmel's Dictionary*, under the word *Seir*.

^f Several commentators have taken notice of Jacob's great wisdom and prudence, in the order and disposition of this his embassy to his brother. He sent his servants, and not his sons, though that would have been doing a great deal more honour; but then it would have been running too great a risk. In the present which he sent, he put a space between drove and drove, that the more time was taken up in their passing by Esau, his passion might still grow cooler and cooler; that the present itself might make so much the greater appearance; and that if the

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acquaint his brother, that after a stay of twenty years in Mesopotamia, and the acquisition of all manner of wealth there, he was now upon his return to his native country; but that he could not pass over Jordan, without notifying his arrival to him, and imploring his favour and friendship.

The messengers went, and soon returned again, but with this melancholy news, that his brother was coming to meet him at the head of four hundred men; which made him to conclude, that this must be with an hostile intent, and in order to destroy both him and all that belonged to him. In this situation what could he do? To fight he was not able, and to fly, his retinue was too cumbersome. At length he came to this resolution, to divide his company into two bands, that if Esau should fall upon one, he might have a possibility of escaping with the other. And having done this, he addressed himself to God in a very humble and submissive prayer; acknowledging "his great mercies to him, and his own unworthiness of them; imploring his future protection against his brother's sword; and that he would be so gracious as to fulfil all his former promises to him."

Jacob had acquainted his brother how God had enriched him: that therefore his first message might not look like an empty piece of formality, he ordered a present of the choice of his flocks and herds to be sent before, in several droves, and charged the drivers, whenever they met his brother, they should tell him, that they were presents sent by Jacob to his lord Esau, in hopes of obtaining his favour and good-will; and after this he sent his wives, and children, and all his substance, over the brook^a Jabbok, early next morning, before it was day, whilst himself, all alone,^b tarried behind for some time. And here it was that an angel, in the shape of a man, appeared to him, and began to wrestle with him. The contest was certainly unequal; but so it was, that the angel did not overcome him; but, to show how easily he might have done it, at one touch he put his thigh out of joint. He then told him the symbolical intent of his wrestling with him; and after he had blessed him, gave him^c the additional name of Israel, which signifies, 'a

droves which went first were not well accepted by him, those who came later might be at distance enough to hasten back to their master, and give him intelligence of what he was to expect. In the form of address, he ordered them all to make use of the same words; first, that the repetition of them might strike the deeper, and make the stronger impression upon Esau; secondly, that they might not spoil the compliment, or not speak so properly, if left to their own expression; and, thirdly, that Esau might know, by the very turn and elegance of them, that the words of the message came from Jacob. (*Masculus, Ainsworth, Patrick, &c.*) The appellation he gives his brother, of being his lord, and himself his servant, we shall take notice of hereafter.

^a This is a small river, which is by all agreed to flow from the adjacent mountains of Gilead; but some make it run into the sea of Galilee, others into the river Jordan, below, or south of that sea.—*Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1. c. 1.

^b Though the reason which made the patriarch, after he had forded the river, to try if it was passable for his family, return back again, and not go along with them, be not expressed by Moses, it is very natural to suppose, that he stayed some time behind his family in the place of vision, which he afterwards called Peniel, to recommend himself and them in prayer, as the danger approached nearer and nearer, to the protection of Almighty God.—*Masculus, Patrick, and Bibliotheca Biblica.*

^c The words in the text, according to our translation, are,

man that has prevailed with God; and this occasioned Jacob to call the place where this transaction happened *Peniel*, or *the face of God*, because he concluded that it was God, or some of his angels, who had had this conflict with him.

As soon as the angel was gone, Jacob, though lame, made what haste he could to join his company; and it was not long before he saw his brother afar off, coming towards him with a large retinue, which made him betray some fresh tokens of distrust: and therefore, to prepare for the worst, he divided his family into three companies, and placed them at equal distances; the two maids, and their sons went first; Leah and her children next; and Rachel and Joseph, who was then about six years old, as farthest from danger, were the last; whilst himself marched in the front of all, and, as he approached his brother, bowed himself to the ground seven times.

Whatever apprehensions Jacob might conceive of Esau's resentments, he had the happiness to meet him in a much better temper than he expected. At first sight he ran to meet him; he embraced him with the greatest tenderness; he wept over him with tears of joy; and seeing his wives and children prostrate themselves before him one after another, and in the same order wherein Jacob had disposed them, he returned their civilities with the same tenderness that he had his brother's. The presents indeed which Jacob had sent him he kindly acknowledged, but desired to be excused from accepting of them, because they were superfluous to him, who had enough of every thing; but Jacob pressed him so earnestly, that at length he prevailed: and therefore to make him a recompense, Esau invited him to Seir, and proffered his services to accompany him thither. Jacob, however, had no design to accept of the invitation, and yet was afraid directly to refuse it; and therefore he represented the tenderness of his children and flocks, and that they could not travel with expedition. He begged that they might not confine him to their slow movements, but that he would return home at his own pace; and promised withal, that they would follow as fast as they could conveniently. Esau then offered to leave him a sufficient number of his men, that might guard and conduct him into his territories; but this compliment likewise Jacob, in an handsome manner, evaded, and so they^d parted; Esau went to Seir, and expected his

'Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel;' and yet it is certain, that this patriarch was very frequently, nay, in the very next verse but one, is called Jacob; and therefore this seeming contradiction may be amended, by rendering the words, instead of *no more, not only; or, not so much Jacob as Israel*: because it is certain, that in his posterity at least (who were called Israelites, but never Jacobites) the latter name abolished the former. *Israel* is certainly derived from the word *Sar*, which, as St Jerome observes, signifies *a prince*, with the Jod, which is the common note of a proper name; but there is some obscurity in our translation, as to the latter part of the verse, 'as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed;' which should rather be translated, 'Thou hast been a prevailer with God, and with men thou shalt also powerfully prevail.' This is the literal version of the words; is consonant to the vulgar Latin, Onkelos, and the Septuagint; and very justly expresses the true sense of the place.—*Patrick's Commentary, and Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. b. 7. c. 7.

^d After this, Moses gives us no farther account of Esau and his family, only that he was assisting at his father's funeral, and had three wives, whereof it is proper to take notice, that when he lastly mentions these wives, (as in Gen. xxvi. 34. and Gen. xxviii. 9.) he

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brother to follow him; but his brother turned another way, and, by easy journeys, came to Succoth, which in Hebrew signifies *booths*, and there, intending to settle for some time, he built a house for his family, and proper conveniences for the reception of his cattle. But in a short time he removed from hence, and *a* safely arrived at Shechem, where having purchased a piece of ground of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred *b* pieces

gives them quite other names than what he does when he comes to speak of the posterity which Esau had by them, Gen. xxxvi.; which may lead an unwary reader to think that he had more than three, especially when the fathers of the two first are likewise called by different names. Thus his first wife Judith, the daughter of Beer, is afterwards called Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite; the second, namely, Bathshema, the daughter of Elon, is again called Aholi Bamah, the daughter of Ana, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; and the last, called in one place Mahalah, is now called Bathshemah; but what shows these two latter names mean the same person, and that the same thing may be supposed of the other two, is, that in both places she is called 'the daughter of Ishmael, the sister of Nabajoth.' All the account that can therefore be given of this difference is, that they had two names, and that it was usual to call them sometimes by one and sometimes by another; in the like manner, as we find the mother of Abijam, king of Judah, in one place called Maacah, the daughter of Abishalom, (1 Kings xv. 2.) and in another, Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah, (2 Chron. xiii. 2.) with many more instances of the like nature. After having taken this notice of Esau's wives, Moses enumerates his children, and some of their descendants, the princes of the tribes of the Edomites; the kings that succeeded them, and the chiefs who governed after the kings; but as to the order of succession, wherein they are to be placed, there is some dispute among the learned. One remark more that we shall make before we part with Esau, is, that, all things considered, he was not that very bad man which some would make him. His generous and open temper appears in his affectionate deportment towards his brother, and his speedy and utter oblivion of the slights and perfidies he had received from him; and, though St Paul calls him a profane person, and says that he was hated of God, yet all that he means by the word hatred, is no more than a bare postponing. For the apostle's purpose is to show, that God had all along bestowed the favours which lead to the Messiah on whom he pleased: on Abraham, not on Lot; on Jacob, not on Esau; on the Jews, not on the Gentiles. And he therefore calls him profane, not because he was more wicked than other men of his age, but because he seems not to have been so mindful of the promises made to his family as Jacob was, and consequently was not so fit to be the heir of the mercies peculiar to it.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 4. and *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. c. 7.

a The words in our translation are, that 'Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem;' but, besides that there was no such place as Shalem in the confines of Shechem, (which seems itself, at this time, to have been but a small town, without any dependant villages,) since the word Shalem is so frequently taken adjectively, to denote any thing safe and sound, as we call it, and as Onkelos, and some of the best Jewish interpreters have it, it may very properly be rendered so here. And this soundness, as some imagine, may have reference to Jacob's halting, which was perfectly cured before he reached Shechem; as his safety has respect either to his having escaped all danger, at his interview with his brother, or rather to his having met with no evil accident of any sort, since he left Laban: and this observation Moses might the rather be induced to make, because he was just going to relate a sad disaster, that not long after his arrival at Shechem, befell his family. Shechem, by the by, otherwise called Sichar, was a city of Samaria, situate among the mountains belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, ten miles from Shiloh, forty from Jerusalem, and fifty-two from Jericho, near which was Jacob's well or fountain, where our blessed Saviour entered into conversation with the Samaritan woman, John iv. 7.—*Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentary*, *Calmet's Dictionary*, and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*.

b The word *kesitah*, which is here rendered 'a piece of money,' signifies likewise a lamb, from whence the Septuagint, Vulgate, Oleaster, and others, have translated it 'an hundred lambs;' but

of money, he pitched his tents in the place, and there built an altar to the Lord, whom he called 'El Elohe-Israel,' or 'the mighty God of Israel.'

Here Jacob might have lived peaceably and happily, being beloved by all the people, had not *c* Dinah's curiosity of visiting the women of the city proved the cause of much mischief, and obliged her father to withdraw. Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, who was prince of that country, saw her, fell in love with

since, long before this, money was in use, and made the instrument of traffic, (Gen. xxiii. 16.) which must of course destroy the method of exchanging one commodity for another, it is much more probable, that it was some sort of coin, though of what value it is uncertain, which had a lamb stamped upon it, and was called by that name, as we do call an angel, from the stamp it bears of one. (*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7. and *Patrick's Commentary in locum*.)—There is great reason to believe, that the earliest coins struck, were used both as weights and money; and indeed this circumstance is in part proved by the very names of certain of the Greek and Roman coins. Thus the Attic mina and the Roman libra, equally signify a pound: and the stater of the Greeks, so called from weighing, is decisive as to this point. The Jewish shekel was also a weight as well as a coin: 3000 shekels, according to Arbuthnot, being equal in weight and value to one talent. This is the oldest coin of which we any where read, for it occurs, Gen. xxiii. 16, and exhibits direct evidence against those who date the first coinage of money so low as the time of Croesus or Darius, it being there expressly said that 'Abraham weighed to Ephron four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.' With respect to the stamp or impression which the first money bore, the primitive race of men being shepherds, and their wealth consisting in their cattle, in which Abraham is said to have been rich, for greater convenience, metals were substituted for the commodity itself. It was natural for the representative sign to bear impressed the object which it represented; and thus accordingly the earliest coins were stamped with the figure of an ox or a sheep. For proof that they actually did thus impress them, we can again appeal to the high authority of Scripture: for there we are informed that Jacob bought a parcel of a field for an hundred pieces of money. The original Hebrew, translated 'pieces of money,' is *kesitoh*, which signifies *lambs*, with the figure of which the metal was doubtless stamped. (*Maur. Ind. Antiq.* vol. vii. p. 470.) It is certain that in many countries the coin has had its name from the image it bore; so, among our ancestors, a coin was called an angel because it bore the image of an angel; hence, also, a Jacobus, a Carolus, a Louis (Louis d'or), a Joe, a Napoleon, because certain coins in England, Spain, France, and Portugal, bore on one side the image of the kings of those countries; James, Charles, Louis, Joseph, Napoleon. The Athenians had a coin called *boas*, an ox, because it was stamped with the figure of an ox. Hence the saying in *Æschylus* Agam. v. 36, "I must be silent concerning other matters; a great ox has come upon my tongue," to signify a person who had received a bribe for secrecy, that is, a sum of money on each piece of which an ox was stamped. The word *opes*, riches, is a corruption of *oves*, sheep, because, these animals, in ancient times, constituted the principal riches of their owners; but when other cattle were added, the word *pecunia*, (from *pecus*, cattle,) which we translate money, and from which we still have our English term pecuniary, appears to have been substituted for *oves*, because *pecus*, *pecoris*, and *pecus*, *pecudis*, were used to signify all kinds of cattle, large and small. Among our British and Saxon ancestors we find coins stamped with the figure of an ox, horse, hog, goat, &c., and this custom arose in all probability, both among them and other nations, from this circumstance, that in primitive times the coin was the ordinary value of the animal whose image it bore.—*Clarke's Comment.* Gen. xxxiii. 19.—Ed.

c At what time this misfortune happened to Dinah, the Scriptures give us no account: it is presumed, however, from the bold exploit of her two brothers to avenge her dishonour, (which implies that they were men grown,) that she could not be less than fifteen or sixteen years of age; and the occasion of her running herself into this premunire, Josephus tells us, was a great festival then held at Shechem, which she, desirous to see the fine sights and fashions of the place, adventured to go to.—*Antiquities*, b. 1. c. 21.

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her, and having gained a secure opportunity, ravished her. But notwithstanding this dishonourable act, his soul was so enamoured with her charms, that he desired nothing more earnestly than to marry her; and to this purpose prevailed with his father, to enter upon a treaty with her friends. Jacob soon heard of the rape committed upon his daughter, but concealed the matter until his sons were come home; and when he had made them acquainted with it, their resentment grew to such an height, that they vowed severely to revenge the dishonour done unto their family. In the mean time, Shechem having prevailed with his father to obtain him the damsel, they both went together to make the proposal to her father; promising to give her as large a ^a dowry, and her relations as costly presents as he should desire; and alleging withal, that if his family were to intermarry with the Shechemites, it would prove the most effectual means to make them both live together in perfect harmony and friendship. This was a fair offer; but the treacherous sons of Jacob, who meditated nothing but the most bloody revenge, made them this reply: "That it was not lawful for them to contract an affinity with any uncircumcised nation, but that, if he and his people would consent to be circumcised, as they were, they would then come into his proposal."

Hamor and Shechem agreed very readily to this condition; and when they returned to the city, and had convened the inhabitants: "They commended the Israelites highly for a peaceable and good-natured people, from whom they might reap many great advantages, and in process of time make all their substance (which was very considerable) their own, if they were to intermarry with them; but that this would not be done without a general consent to be circumcised." How averse soever the people might be to such an operation at first, yet the thirst of gain, joined with the powerful interest which Shechem had among them, soon won their consent, inasmuch, that on that very day, every male of them was circumcised. But ^b three days after this, when their wounds had made them incapable of making any resistance, Simeon and Levi entered the city, and having put all the men to the sword, made search in Shechem's house, where they found their sister Dinah, and brought her away. After which they re-entered the town, plundered the houses, took both women and children captives,

^a This shows more fully, that the custom of those times was, as we noted before, for men to give money for their wives, and to give it generally to their parents. The money, or presents so given, were by the Greeks called *ἑδῶα*; for so we find Vulcan, when he had caught his wife Venus in an act of incontinency, telling her and her paramour, that he would not let them go "until the mother shall have given him back the whole of the bridal gifts presented by him for the impudent damsel." But there was a great reason for a dowry now, and a large one too, that he might make compensation for the wrong he had done. There is to be observed, however, a natural equity in the subsequent law of Moses, (Exod. xxii. 16. and Deut. xxii. 28.) by which a man was bound to make satisfaction to the father, if, either by enticement or violence, he had abused his daughter.—*Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary.*

^b The third day, as physicians take notice, was the time when fevers generally attend circumcision, occasioned by the inflammation of the wound, which was generally more painful then, as the Hebrews observe, than at any time else; and for this reason, the sons of Jacob took the opportunity of falling upon the Shechemites, when they were least of all in a condition to defend themselves.—*Howell's History.*

and carried away all the cattle that they found in the neighbouring places.

Jacob was much concerned at the furious proceedings of his sons, for which he justly reproved them. He was apprehensive indeed, that the inhabitants of the land would unite against him, and destroy his family for this violent outrage; but Simeon and Levi, who were the chief actors in the tragedy, were so warmed with the thoughts of the dishonour done to their sister and family, that they did not think they had carried their resentment in the least too far for so base an injury. Jacob, however, thought it advisable, for his own security, to tarry no longer there, but to shift into some other part of the country. And accordingly, having received particular directions from God to remove to Bethel, and there to build an altar, (whereon to perform the vow which he made when he fled from his brother Esau,) he set his resolution to go thither: but before he did that, being willing to carry nothing that might be offensive to God, to so sacred a place, he found it necessary to make a reformation in his family. To this purpose he commanded all that proposed to go along with him, to bring out their idols; which they not only did, but gave up their ^c ear-rings likewise, which they were used to wear as spells or amulets against sickness, and other misfortunes. These he took and buried privately in a deep hole, which he caused to be dug under an oak, near Shechem; and so having purified ^d themselves, even to

^c It was a custom in several countries, for the men as well as the women, and for the meaner as well as the better sort, to wear ear-rings, and therefore we find Plautus in his play called *Pœnulum*, Act v., taking this notice of some Carthaginian slaves,—"That their hands should be without fingers, one would think, because they wore their rings in their ears." But, besides the rings designed for ornament, it was a common thing for idolatrous nations to wear others for superstitious uses. These, as some say, were made in form of a semicircle, and reached over the forehead from ear to ear. They had astronomical characters and signatures engraven upon them, and to them they imputed a thousand supernatural virtues. They were always dedicated to some false deity; and therefore St Austin, in several places, exerts himself with a becoming zeal, against such impious *fooleries*, and tells his countrymen, the Africans, (among whom this custom had got some footing,) that in this execrable superstition, as he calls it, they did not design to dress themselves out to please men, so much as to serve and please devils. And therefore Jacob was highly to be commended for destroying these relics of idolatry, which his haste to be gone, both according to God's command, and his own apprehensions of danger, made him bury under ground, rather than stay to melt them down.—*Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary; Heidegger's Hist. Patriar.* vol. 2. Essay 13; and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Rings*.

^d The manner wherein Jacob required of his domestics to purify themselves, was by washing their whole bodies, and putting on clean and fresh apparel: and that this was a custom among other nations as well as the Jews, when they set about any solemn and religious office, is plain from that passage in Euripides where Alceestis, being to perform some holy rites in behalf of her children, "In the waters of the stream she lav'd their filly skin, and drench'd the cedar-wood halls, bringing beautiful apparel, she gaily bedecked them,—then, standing before the shrine, she pray'd." But of all other nations, the Egyptians, (as Herodotus tells us, b. I. c. 37,) and more especially their priests, were most remarkable for this sort of cleanliness. "They shaved their bodies all over every third day; they bathed themselves in cold water twice a day, and twice a night; and wore constantly nothing but linen vestments, and shoes made of papyrus; for this reason I suppose, because they were the most proper to be washed." Not that we are to suppose that God respects a worshipper for his spume appearance, so long as his conscience is polluted within. In

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the washing and changing of their garments, they set forward to Bethel, and arrived there safe, and without any disturbance, because God had struck such a terror into the cities round about them, that, notwithstanding the late provocation in the matter of Shechem, nobody offered to molest or pursue them.

As soon as Jacob came to Bethel, where ^a Deborah, his mother's nurse, happened to die, he erected an altar, as God had commanded him, whereupon he performed his vow; and not long after, God appeared to him again, confirming the change of his name, and giving him fresh assurances of his design to multiply his posterity, and to give him the inheritance of the land of Canaan; which induced him to erect a pillar of stone, whereon he poured a drink-offering and oil, as a lasting monument of his gratitude and devotion.

The desire which Jacob had to visit his aged father made his stay in Bethel not long; and therefore, removing from thence, he intended to have reached ^b Ephrah, which was not far distant, that night, but was prevented by Rachel's falling in labour of her second and last child, for of him she died as soon as she was delivered,

sordidness indeed there is something distasteful, and it is an unseemly thing to appear before a great man in dirty apparel: but the principal design of God's appointing this outward cleanliness, was to be a sign and memorandum to the person approaching his presence, what the inward temper and complexion of his mind should be; and therefore we find the royal Psalmist, in allusion to this very custom, declaring his pious purpose, 'I will wash my hands in innocency, and so will I go to thy altar,' Ps. xxvi. 6.—*Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary.*

^a In Gen. xxiv. 59, we read that Deborah went along with her mistress Rebecca, when Isaac's steward was sent to conduct her out of Mesopotamia; how is it, then, that we find her here in Jacob's retinue so long afterwards, and when he was returning from the same place? The Jewish doctors tell us, that Rebecca, having promised her son at his departure that she would send for him again, as soon as she found him out of danger, did now send Deborah to fetch him back. But, besides that a younger messenger would have been much more proper, we do not find that Jacob was sent for, but that he left the country, by God's appointment, and upon the bad usage of his father-in-law. Some Christian commentators are, therefore, of opinion, that after she had brought her mistress Rebecca to her marriage, and seen her well settled in her family, she went back to Haran again, and there dwelt in Laban's house, till, upon Jacob's returning home, she, having a desire to see her old mistress once more, put herself under his convoy. Others again suppose, that Jacob had been at his father's house before this time; or that, after Rebecca's death, Deborah hearing of his return into Canaan, might be desirous to spend the remainder of her life with his wives, who were her countrywomen. Any of these conjectures may be sufficient to solve the difficulty of her being found in Jacob's family; and the reason why Moses takes notice of her death is, not so much because it was a circumstance of moment enough to be preserved in history, as that it was of use to assign the reason why the oak near which she was buried, and which perhaps was still standing in his days, came by its name. But what will in some measure serve, both to vindicate the sacred historian, and to show, at the same time, how much these nurses and women, who had the care and education of persons of birth and quality, were honoured and esteemed in those early days, is this passage, upon the like occasion, in the poet Virgil:—"Thou Caieta, nurse of Æneas, hast also conferred eternal renown on our shores; even still the memory of thy tomb exists, and thy name points out thy grave in the great Hesperia!"—*Æneid*, b. 7.

^b This place was afterwards called Bethlehem, a city about two leagues distant from Jerusalem, famous for the birth of David, king of Israel, but infinitely more so for the birth of Christ, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world.—*Calmel's Dictionary.*

and had just time to name him Benoni, that is, 'the son of sorrow;' but his father, unwilling to perpetuate the remembrance of so melancholy a subject, called him ^c Benjamin, which signifies 'the son of my right hand, or 'my strength.' She was buried in the way to Ephrah, where her husband built ^d a monument of stone over her grave, which the sacred historian tells us was extant in his days. But this was not the only misfortune which attended Jacob in this place: his eldest son Reuben, having taken a liking to Bilhah, the concubinary wife which Rachel had given him, made no scruple to commit incest with her; which thing grieved his father so, that, though he forbore taking any present notice of it, yet he could not but ¹ resent it at his dying hour. Soon after this Jacob left this melancholy place, and came at length to Mamre, the place of his father's abode, who was doubtless not a little overjoyed at the return of his son, after so long an absence.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.*

THE worst accusation against our patriarch is that of his purloining, as some may call it, or appropriating to himself a considerable part of Laban's substance; and shame light on him who pretends to apologize for this, in order to give countenance to any trick or collusion in matters of commerce. The Scripture only relates the fact, without either censure or approbation; and we read it to wrong purpose if, because we find a thing recorded of a patriarch, and yet not censured by the holy penman, we therefore immediately conclude it to be right.² Men will be men, full of imperfections, and governed by their passions, so long as they live in this world: nor are the examples propounded in Scripture to beget in us humility and watchfulness, upon every remembrance of human frailty, but the laws contained

¹ Gen. xlix. 4.

² Scripture Vindicated.

^c From the different names which the father and mother gave this son of theirs, some have observed, that names are oftentimes strangely adapted to things, and the presages of parents have anciently been observed to be fulfilled: "Alas, the auguries of parents are never unfulfilled!" Which was certainly nowhere more than in the fate of Benjamin's posterity, since no tribe in Israel was more valorous, and yet none more subject to disasters, than his; since it was almost quite extirpated in the time of the Judges, ch. xx., and yet, before the conclusion of that age, became so powerful as to have the first king of Israel chosen out of it.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^d The learned Bochart is of opinion that this monument of Rachel's, which is the first that we read of in Scripture, was a pyramid, curiously wrought, and raised upon a basis of twelve large stones, whereby Jacob intended to intimate the number of his sons. It was certainly standing in the time when Moses wrote, ver. 20, and just before Saul was anointed king there is some mention made of it, 1 Sam. x. 2. But that the present monument cannot be the same which Jacob erected, is very manifest from its being a modern and Turkish structure. Mr Le Brun, who was at the place, and took a draught of it, says that the tomb is cut into the cavity of a rock, and covered with a dome, supported by four pillars, on fragments of a wall, which open to the sepulchre. The work is rude enough, and without any ornament; but the whole is as entire as if it had been but just made, which makes it hard to imagine that it had subsisted ever since Jacob's time.—*Maunderell's Travels, and Calmet's Dictionary.*

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therein, which are true and righteous altogether, to be the rule and measure of our conduct. We readily grant, therefore, that this action of Jacob's, considered in itself, according to the rules of strict justice, can hardly be vindicated; but then we are to remember, that there was a much superior agent, even the great Proprietor of the world, and who has an undoubted right to transfer possessions where he pleases, by whose direction it was done.

For suppose we allow (what some great men, both physicians and philosophers, are wont to maintain) that the fancy of the dam, in the time of conception, is of power sufficient to influence the form, and shape, and colour of the young, and to produce the effect which it had upon Laban's cattle; yet we cannot imagine that Jacob knew anything of this secret. Men had not as yet inquired into the powers of nature, and observations of this kind were not much regarded. ¹ Religion and the worship of God was, in these days, the wisdom of the world; and a simplicity of life, and integrity of manners, more studied than any curious and philosophical speculations. If study and philosophy had helped men to this knowledge, how came Laban and his sons to be utter strangers to it? And yet, had they not been strangers, they could not but apprehend that Jacob might by art variegate the cattle as he pleased, and would not therefore have made so weak a bargain with him. They certainly, therefore, had no notion that any such thing could be done, neither had Jacob any intelligence of it when he made the contract with Laban; but being resolved to be contented with what the divine providence should allot him, he made choice of the speckled cattle merely to put an end to all cavils about wages, as not doubting but that God would so order matters that in the event he should have enough: and therefore his words, 'So shall my righteousness answer for me in the time to come,' are just as if he had said, ² "I may be thought to have acted imprudently in naming this hire, as if it were impossible for cattle that are all white to bring forth any but such as are like themselves; but in the result it will appear that God had respect to my just dealing, and this you will plainly see when you come to pay me my wages."

But though Jacob at first might be ignorant of the secret, yet we cannot deny but that, after the bargain was made, God might give him some intimation of it, and perhaps might enjoin him to put it in execution; and yet, after all, he might not apprehend any natural efficacy in the thing. Instances there are, more than enough, in Scripture, of God's requiring persons to perform such actions as might testify their faith and reliance on his promises, in order to receive such blessings as he intended for them. Thus Naaman the Syrian, when he came to beg of God a cure of his leprosy, was directed ³ 'to wash seven times in Jordan.' Washing in Jordan was to be an evidence of his believing that God would heal him, and upon his giving this evidence he was cured; which was the case of Jacob here before us. God had told him that ⁴ 'he had seen all that Laban had done unto him,' but that he would take care

that he 'should not hurt him;' that all Laban's contrivances to defraud him of his wages he would turn so much to his advantage, as that they should tend to the increase of his prosperity; and then, very probably, as a token of his belief and dependance on him, he commanded him to take peeled rods, and use them as he directed. Jacob believed, and did as he was commanded: but all this while he might no more think that the peeling of rods of green boughs, and laying them in the watering places where the flocks were to drink, was a natural way to cause them to bring forth spotted and speckled young ones, than Naaman did, that washing in a river was a cure for a leprosy. But even suppose the case, that Jacob had the notion that party-coloured rods might be a natural means to produce party-coloured cattle; yet if he used them in obedience to the divine command, and not merely as a means to enrich himself at the expense of another, we cannot perceive wherein he was culpable. God Almighty determined to punish Laban for his injustice, and to reward Jacob for his fidelity. He revealed to Jacob the manner in which he designed to bless him, and ordered him to do an action as a token of his reliance on him, for the performance of his promise. Jacob faithfully observed the orders that were given him, and the event proved accordingly.

Here was no trick, no circumvention in the matter; though it must be allowed, that had it been lawful for any private person to make reprisals, the injurious treatment he had received from Laban, both in imposing a wife upon him, and prolonging his servitude without wages, was enough to give Jacob both the provocation and privilege so to do. God Almighty, however, was pleased to take the determination of the whole matter into his own hands; and therefore the true conclusion is, what Jacob himself expresses in his speech to his two wives, 'Ye know, that with all my power, I have served your father, and your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me. If he said thus, the speckled shall be thy wages, then all the cattle bare speckled; and if he said thus, the ring-streaked shall be thine hire, then bare all the cattle ring-streaked. Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and hath given them to me.'

A man so highly favoured by God, and so sensible of his peculiar goodness, can scarce be supposed capable of making any vow with a mercenary view, or of neglecting to perform it, when made. The vow which the patriarch made upon his journey into Mesopotamia, is conceived in these terms. ⁵ 'If God will he be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God;' that is, I will religiously worship and serve him: but it is an unfair construction to say, that unless God did bring him home in peace, he would not worship him. The right which God has to the service and homage of his creatures, is absolute and unalienable: his dominion, his power, his goodness, covenant, and promises, do all require this of us; and therefore the words must mean, either that besides God's natural property in him, he should have also a farther demand of duty upon him, in

¹ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 7.

² Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 1.

³ 2 Kings v. 10.

⁴ Gen. xxxi. 12.

⁵ Gen. xxviii. 20, &c.

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consequence of this vow; or ¹ that he would perform some signal service to him, and worship him with a more than ordinary devotion, consecrating (as it follows) the place where he then stood to his honour; offering him sacrifices, and giving him the tenth of all he had, to maintain this worship.

Such is the sense of the vow; and the conditions relating to it seem to denote the secret wish and desire of his soul, and not any express stipulation with God. Man certainly cannot insist on terms with his Maker, but he may desire and humbly hope for a supply of his wants. More than this the patriarch does not expect; and less than this God never intended to give. 'Our heavenly Father knows that we have need of food to eat, and raiment to put on,' and it is a renunciation of our dependance upon his providential goodness not to ask them. To serve God for no consideration, but that of his own glory, is a notion that may well enough comport with our future exalted state, when we shall 'hunger no more, neither thirst any more,' and where our service will always be attended with vision; but while we are invested with these weak and frail bodies, they and their concerns will tenderly affect us, and God, who considers whereof we are made, expects no other than that they should.

Considering then the circumstances that Jacob was in, leaving now his own, and going into a strange country, we need not much wonder that we find him solicitous for his daily bread. With his staff he passed over Jordan; and when he returned with a great retinue, the grateful acknowledgment which he makes upon that occasion, he expresses in these words: ² 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant;' and a temper like this would never have neglected to pay its vows unto the Most High, had not the patriarch either met with obstructions, that made it not safe for him to go, or waited till God, who had all along conducted him hitherto, should direct him to go to the place appointed for such oblation.

Before he came to that place indeed, we are told that he ³ 'commanded his household, and all that were with him, to put away the strange gods that were among them.' And from hence it may be presumed, that there were several of his family (and possibly Rachel herself) addicted to idolatry, which he might connive at; but this is a mistake, which arises purely from the faultiness of our translation. There the word *strange* is supposed to refer to *gods*, and to be another name for idols: whereas the words (*Elohei-han-necar*) do properly signify 'the gods of the stranger that was among them,' that is, the gods of the Shechemites, whom they had taken captive, and brought into Jacob's family. This alters the sense of the words quite, and throws the charge of idolatry, not upon Jacob's household, but upon the strangers that were in it. The captives of Shechem, which his sons had taken, were now to be incorporated into his family, and put under new restrictions. Whatever singularities were in their dress or ornaments, or in the rites and usages of religion they had been accustomed to, these he intended to abrogate, and to reduce them all to the same purity of worship, and simplicity of life and manners, which he designed to keep up among them. And this is

so far from being a stain upon his conduct, as if he were a tame conniver at impiety, that we find him undertake the reformation even of strangers, as soon as they were come under his roof, with a spirit and resolution not unlike that of holy David: ⁴ 'Mine eyes look unto such as are faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me, and whoso leadeth a godly life, he shall be my servant.'⁵

Some writers have made it a question, how Jacob, upon his return home, should know where his brother Esau dwelt, and why he should send him so humble and submissive a message: but ⁵ we can hardly imagine that Jacob should be so imprudent as to carry his wives, children, and substance into Canaan, without knowing whether he might safely venture thither. It is presumable, therefore, that while he rested at Gilead, he sent messengers to inquire, whether his father was alive; what condition he was in; how the people of the land were affected to him; and whether he might come and live with security near him. From these messengers he might learn the place of his brother's habitation; and when he found that he should meet with no obstruction, if he could but reconcile Esau to him, he very prudently sent to him likewise, with an intent if he found him inexorable, to bend his course another way. And indeed, if we consider what had passed between Esau and Jacob, before the latter went from home, we shall soon find reason enough why Jacob should send to him, before he adventured to come, and sit down with his substance near his father. Esau still expected to be his father's heir, especially as to his temporalities; and therefore if Jacob had returned home without Esau's knowledge, this, at their father's death, would have laid the foundation of a greater misunderstanding than ever: for Esau would then have thought, that his brother had been inveigling his father, and drawing a great part of his substance from him. He could never have imagined, that any person, in a state of servitude, could have acquired so large a fortune; and therefore when he came to see all that wealth, which he knew nothing of before, he must have concluded that he had defrauded him.

It was not from pride or vanity, therefore, or to gratify an ostentatious humour, that Jacob sent his brother an account of his prosperous circumstances, but partly to recognise the goodness of providence, which had so prospered him, and partly to let him know, that he was not come to raise any contributions, either upon him, or the family; that he had brought his substance with him from Haran, and was not going into Canaan to do him any wrong.

The whole design of this interview with Esau was to procure a firm reconciliation with him; and therefore it is no wonder that Jacob should make use of such terms as were most likely to ingratiate. He knew his brother's rugged and haughty temper, and considered him as a person, who, by his valour and conduct, had raised himself to a principality and dominion, whilst himself, for twenty years together, had lived in no better capacity than that of a servant; and therefore he might justly think, that this difference of appellations did not misbecome their different conditions of life.

By the divine direction indeed, he was constituted Esau's lord; nor did he forego that prerogative by

¹ Patrick's Commentary. ² Gen. xxxii. 10. ³ Gen. xxxv. 2.⁴ Ps. ci. 8, 9.⁵ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 8.

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calling himself Esau's servant. Lord and servant were no more then, than (what they are now) certain modes of civility, which passed between persons of good breeding, without ever adhering to their strict acceptation; and therefore Jacob might make his addresses to Esau in this manner, without any derogation to his spiritual pre-eminence, and confining himself to the bounds of nature, might reverence him as his elder brother.

But how jealous soever we may be of Jacob's honour, it is certain, that the Almighty approved of his conduct, by himself interposing to bring about the desired reconciliation. Before this interview with his brother, and while he lay under terrible apprehensions of his displeasure, ¹ the 'angels,' we are told, met him. They met him, that is, they showed themselves to him, to assure him of their custody; and by and by we see what followed; ² his brother Esau, contrary to his natural roughness, and avowed revenge, comes and treats him in a most friendly manner; which sudden change in Esau, we may reasonably suppose, was occasioned by one of those angels who appeared; and who, working upon his humours and fancy, sweetened him into a particular benignity of temper, so that Jacob, by his humble and submissive behaviour, gained his end.

There is this peculiar hardship upon Jacob, that in the matter of Leah, he was perfectly imposed upon; that he had no design of having any communion with her; was contracted to her sister; and in all probability, had he enjoyed her first, would never have had concern with any other. But the misfortune was, that, in the other's nuptial night, he had carnal knowledge of her, and thereupon was induced to think, that he could not honestly leave her. Her sister Rachel was all this while (bating consummation) his lawful wife to whom he was contracted, to whom he was solemnly married; and therefore he could not in justice relinquish her neither. In this dilemma he was in a manner under a necessity of adhering to both; and as polygamy was not at that time interdicted, he thought he might do it without any violation of the laws of God. The only question is, whether he did not incur the sin of incest in so doing? And to this some Jewish doctors answer, that the prohibition of marriages, within such degrees of consanguinity, was restrained to the land of Canaan only; and that therefore it was not unlawful for Jacob in Haran to take two sisters, nor for Amram in Egypt to take his father's sister: and to this purpose they observe farther, that in the Mosaic law itself, and particularly in the 20th chapter of Leviticus, where the sentence of excision is pronounced against incestuous marriages, there is no punishment assigned to him who shall marry two sisters; which, as they will have it, was, for the honour of Jacob, omitted. However this be, it is certain that there is no such toleration under the Christian dispensation; and therefore he who pretends to pronounce any thing upon a case so singular as this of our patriarch's is, should consider the different state of things, before the promulgation of the law, during the obligation of it, and since the commencement of the gospel; which undoubtedly prohibits both a plurality in wives, and consanguinity in marriages, and requires of its votaries the strictest chastity, from a consideration and motive which neither the law of nature, nor the law

of Moses, knew any thing of: ³ 'Ye are not your own, for you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.'

Of all the adventures which happened to Jacob, that of his wrestling is deservedly reckoned one of the strangest, and has therefore been made a matter of doubt, whether it was a real event, or a vision only. ⁴ Maimonides, and some other Hebrew, as well as Christian interpreters, are of opinion, that all this was transacted only in Jacob's imagination. They suppose, that the patriarch, being strongly possessed with the sense of the danger he was going to encounter, saw, in a vision, a man coming to him, and who, after some altercations, began to wrestle with him; that the conflict between them continued till break of day, when his antagonist, not able to get the better, desired to be gone, &c.; and that, as a proof that this vision was more than an ordinary dream, it seemed to him, that the angel touched his thigh; and in effect, as soon as he awoke, he found himself lame, probably by the force of his imagination.

If this explication be admitted, the whole difficulty is at an end. It is natural, perhaps, for a man, under the apprehensions of a dreadful foe, to dream of fighting; and to dream, at the same time, that he comes off victorious, might be accounted an happy omen. But it must be confessed, that the analogy of the story, and more especially Jacob's lameness, which was consequent upon his conflict, will not suffer us to think that all this was only in a dream. The more general therefore, and indeed the more rational opinion is, that this wrestling was real, and that Jacob was actually awake, when engaged in it; but then the question is, who the person was that did encounter him?

Origen, I think, is a little singular, and no ways to be justified in his conceit, when he tells us, that the person with whom Jacob wrestled, was an evil angel, in allusion to which he thinks that the apostle grounds his exhortation: ⁵ 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' But that Jacob, who at this time was so immediately under the divine protection, should be submitted to the assault of a wicked angel; that he should merit the name of Israel, that is, the conqueror of God, for overcoming such an one, or call the place of combat *Peniel*, that is, *the face of God*, in commemoration of his conflict with such an one, is very absurd, if not an impious suggestion. Those who espouse this opinion, may possibly be led into it from a thought, that the person here contending with Jacob, was an enemy, and come with a malevolent intent against him; whereas nothing can be more evident, (especially by his blessing him before they parted,) that he came with a quite contrary design. ⁶ Among the people of the East, from whence the Grecians came, and brought along with them several of their customs, wrestling was an exercise in great vogue, as highly conducive to the health and strength; and a common thing it was for two

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.⁴ See Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 17. and Le Clerc's Commentary, and Calmet's Dictionary.⁵ Eph. vi. 10, 11, 12.⁶ Le Clerc's Commentary in locum¹ Gen. xxxii. 1. ² Young's Sermons, vol. 2. Sermon 6.

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friends, when they met together, to amuse and recreate themselves in this way. The Jewish doctors, therefore, seem to be much in the right, when they maintain, that the person who contended with Jacob was a good angel; and as their settled notion is, that those heavenly spirits sing every morning the praises of God, at the approach of day; so the request which his antagonist makes,¹ 'Let me go, for the day breaketh,' shows him to be one of the angelic host, who had stayed his prefixed time, and was now in haste to be gone, in order to join the heavenly choir: for the prophet Hosea, I think, has determined the matter very plainly, when speaking of Jacob he tells us, that² 'he took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God, yea he had power over the angel, and prevailed.'

How Jacob, who was an hundred years old, could be enabled to do all this, must be imputed to some invisible power that assisted him.³ An angel is here, in an extraordinary manner, sent to encounter him, and he, in an extraordinary manner, is enabled to withstand him. The whole scene is contrived to cure him of his uneasy fears; and a proper medium to do this was to let him see, that an old man might contest it even with an angel, and yet not be foiled; and the power, he might reasonably conclude, which assisted him in this (if the matter were to come to blows with his brother Esau) would so invigorate his little army of domestics, as to make them prevail and become victorious.

It was a common custom among eastern nations, as appears from several passages in Scripture, to convey the knowledge of things by actions as well as words. To this purpose we find Zedekiah⁴ 'making him horns of iron,' thereby to portend victory to Ahab; and Elias, ordering Joash⁵ 'to strike the ground with arrows,' thence to presignify his triumph over the Syrians. Nay, even Hannibal himself, (as the historian⁶ tells us,) perceiving that his soldiers were not to be encouraged with words, made a public show for them, not so much to entertain their sight, as to give them an image and representation of their own condition. In like manner, we may suppose, that God made use of this expedient to cure Jacob of his dejection; and though Moses (who cannot be supposed to insert every thing) says nothing of the angels giving him this intimation, yet we find it⁷ in Josephus, that no sooner was the wrestling ended, but a voice called out to him, and said, "Comfort thyself in what thou hast done, for it is not a common adversary that thou hast foiled, but an angel of the Lord: take it for a presage, therefore, that thy posterity shall never fail, and that thou thyself shalt never be overcome."

'O Lord God of my father Simeon, to whom thou gavest a sword to take vengeance of the strangers, who loosened the girdle of a maid to defile her, and polluted her virginity to her reproach: Therefore thou gavest their rulers to be slain, so that they dyed their bed in blood, being deceived. Thou gavest their wives for a prey, and their daughters to be captives, and all their spoils to be divided among thy dear children, who were moved with thy zeal, and abhorred the pollution of their

blood, and called upon thee for aid.'⁸ This is the preface to the prayer which Judith makes to God, in the apocryphal book that goes under her name. And indeed were there no other arguments to prove this book spurious, this one passage is enough, where we find the most abominable massacre called a divine work, and perfidy, murder, and rapine, gilded over with the specious names of zeal for God, and indignation against vice. The abhorrence which Jacob expressed of the cruelty of his sons, the sharpness of the reproach uttered against them, the remembrance of it even to the end of his life, and the care he took to recapitulate it upon his death-bed, give us a much juster idea of it, than the writings of some⁹ of the rabbins, who have undertaken, not only to excuse, but even to commend it. As to the probability of the fact, however, we are not to suppose, that because Simeon and Levi are only mentioned, they therefore were the only persons who had any hand in this wicked exploit. They indeed are only mentioned, because being own brothers to Dinah, both by father and mother, and consequently more concerned to resent the injury done to her honour, they are made the chief contrivers and conductors of it; but it is reasonable to think, that the rest of Jacob's sons, who were old enough to bear arms, as well as the greatest part of the domestics, were engaged in the execution of it: because it is scarcely conceivable, how two men alone should be able to master a whole city, to slay all the men in it, and take all the women captives, who, upon this occasion, may be supposed more than sufficient to have overpowered them.

Nothing is more known and common in history, than to ascribe an action (especially in military affairs) to the chief commanders in it, how many under agents soever they may think proper to employ: and we should deny Moses the common privilege of an historian, if we should account that a fault and omission in him, which, in other writers of the like nature (especially where they study brevity), is reputed a great beauty and perfection. Moses however is far from pleading his privilege in this respect; for having made mention of Simeon and Levi, as the principal leaders in the action, he then proceeds and tells us, that¹⁰ 'the sons of Jacob,' meaning the rest of his sons who were of competent age (and with them very reasonably their attendants) 'came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.'

It is very remarkable of the Jewish historian Josephus, that he gives us no manner of account of Reuben's incest, for fear that his recording so vile an action might leave some blot of infamy upon that patriarch and his posterity. But Moses has given us a better proof of his truth and integrity, in that he not only mentions this abomination once, but even in the benediction which his father gives Reuben, makes a remembrance and recital of it. And this he did, that he might give us a true account, why the right of inheritance, which was originally in him, came to be conferred on Joseph; and the kingdom, or right of dominion, which was forfeited by his transgression, came to be translated to the tribe of Judah. This he did, that he might furnish his countrymen with matter sufficient for their humiliation, who by this and many more instances of the like nature, are given to under-

¹ Gen. xxxii. 26.² Hosea xii. 3, 4.³ Le Clerc's Commentary. ⁴ 1 Kings xxii. 11.⁵ 2 Kings xiii. 18. ⁶ Livy, b. 21. ⁷ Antiq. b. 1. c. 20.⁸ Judith ix. 2, &c.⁹ Selden de Jur. Nat. b. 7. c. 5.¹⁰ Gen. xxxiv. 27.

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stand, that it was not their merit, but purely God's mercy, which advanced him to the honour of being his peculiar people; and this he did, that he might acquaint us all, how God was pleased to make these great, these elect heads and fathers, instances of human frailty and sin, in order to show, that there is nothing, even nothing in man, unless God by grace be with him; that ¹ ' of ourselves (as the apostle words it) we are not sufficient to do any thing, as of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is from God.'

For the same reason, we may imagine it was, that Moses makes mention of Rachel's stealing away her father's gods, as a probable intimation, that she was not entirely cured of the idolatrous superstition of the country from whence she came.

The Jewish doctors are generally agreed, that the word *teraphim*, which we render *gods*, is not of Hebrew extraction. The Septuagint translates it sometimes an oracle, and sometimes vain idols; and several commentators will have it to be a word borrowed from the Egyptians, and to import the very same with their *Serapis*. ² The Jews indeed pretend, that this idol was the head of a first-born son, plucked off from the neck, and embalmed; under the tongue of which was fastened a golden plate, with the name of some false deity engraven upon it, which being placed in a niche, with lighted candles before it, gave vocal answers to such as came to consult it: but others rather think, that it was the same with what the Persians call *telephim*, more generally known by the name of *talismans*, that is, images in human form of different sizes, and different metals, cast under certain constellations, with the figures of some planets and magical characters engraven upon them; whereas others are of opinion, that the teraphim which Rachel stole were the *dii penates*, or *household gods* of her father Laban, namely, the images of Noah, the restorer of mankind, and of Shem, the head of his family; and therefore they observe, that Laban, by way of distinction, calls them his gods, that is, the gods of his family. That these teraphim were statues, or images of a human shape and figure, is manifest from ³ Michal's putting one of them into her husband's bed, when she favoured his escape: that at their first institution, their intent was innocent, to be emblems or representations only of some renowned ancestor, whose memory the family was desirous to perpetuate; but that, in process of time, they came to be looked upon as the *lares* or *dii tutelares* of the house, were made objects of religious adoration, and at length perverted to all the vile purposes of necromancy, a learned author, ⁴ who has examined this matter to the full, has proved beyond exception.

But whatever men or fictitious deities these figures were made to represent, it is certain, that the use they were chiefly applied to, was to foretel future events, and discover what was hid or lost; and for this purpose were consulted and prayed to as oracles, at certain times, and under some particular aspects of the planets. Among other reasons, therefore, for Rachel's stealing away her father's teraphim, this is generally supposed to be one,

—That he might not, by inquiring of them, gain intelligence which way it was that Jacob had taken his flight.

The truth is, there seems to have been in Laban an odd mixture of religion. In his conversation with Abraham's steward, when he came to negotiate a match for Isaac, he seems to express a very devout sense of the being and providence of God; and yet, at his first coming up with Jacob, he seems to be chiefly solicitous for the loss of his gods, as he calls them, which were but dumb and senseless idols. In the treaty which he makes with Jacob, he invokes the God of Abraham, which is allowed to be the great God of heaven and earth; and yet we can hardly forbear thinking, that he must have believed a plurality of gods, in subordination to the supreme, by reason of his anxious concern for these images. Jacob, no doubt, during his abode with him, used all the interest he had in the family, to rectify his notions, and convince him of his error; but he was not able to prevail; and therefore some imagine, that Rachel stole away his idols, that she might remove the occasion of his superstitious worship, and hinder him from going on in his impiety.

These idols, we may presume, were made of gold, or some very valuable substance; and therefore it may be supposed that she took them along with her, not only to destroy them, but to make herself a reparation likewise for the wrongs she had received from him; and whereof we find both the sisters making this complaint: ⁵ 'Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.'

But even supposing the worst of the case, that Rachel did take with her these idols, because she still retained an hankering after the religion of her ancestors; yet Jacob is not to be discommended for marrying one of his own family, who adhered to the true worship of God, though mixed with some superstitious customs, which he might easily reclaim in time, rather than any of the Canaanitish line, which was every day sinking more and more into idolatry; and for that idolatry, and other flagitious practices, were in process of time to undergo an utter excision: especially considering, that when he came into the land of Canaan, where he had full liberty of acting as he pleased, he made a thorough reformation in his family, and had all these little emblems of her former superstition taken from her and destroyed.

The word *dudaim*, which we render ^a mandrakes, is

¹ Gen. xxxi. 14, 15.

^a Calmet in his Dictionary, gives us a description of this plant, as it is found in the French king's gardens.—Its root is white, and somewhat rough; is two or three times as big again as its stem, and always grows taper. Generally, at some distance from its upper part, it divides into two branches, which is the reason that this root has something of the figure of a man, whose two thighs are represented by the two branches. From the sides of the root proceed a great number of small fibres, in several places, which serve to imbibe the juice of the earth, for the nourishment of the plant. From the root there rises a round and smooth stem, of a pretty deep red; and at the top of the stem grow four branches, which spread at equal distances from each other. Every branch has five leaves, which are indented, of a dark green, and terminate in a point. From the centre of these branches proceeds another very straight and smooth stem, at the extremity of which grows a knob of about twenty-four fruits, round, and of a beautiful red; and within this fruit is a kind of nut, much of the figure with a lentil. This nut includes in it the seed of the

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 5. ² Calmet's Dictionary and Commentary;

³ Jurieu, Histoire des Cultes et des Dogmes.

⁴ 1 Sam. xix. 13. ⁵ Jurieu, Histoire des Cultes et des Dogmes.

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one of those terms, whose true signification the Jews, at this time, pretend not to understand. There is but one place more in Scripture, wherein it occurs, and that is in the 7th chapter of Canticles, wherein the bridegroom invites his spouse to go with him into the fields: 'Come, my beloved, let us get up early to the vineyard, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grapes appear, and the pomegranates bud forth. The mandrakes give a smell; and at our gates are all manner of fruits, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.' Here we find it placed among the most delicious and pleasant fruits, the grape, the pomegranate, &c., and represented as very fragrant and odoriferous in its smell; but the mandrake, say some, is a stinking and ill scented fruit, of a bad taste, and a cold narcotic quality; and therefore they have rendered the word 'fine and lovely flowers;' and some of them will have it to be the violet or jessamine, (which suit very well with the season of the year here mentioned;) whilst others contend very strongly for the lily, which, in Syria, grew in the fields, and was of a most agreeable beauty and smell.

That passage in Solomon's Song, however, will not suffer us to doubt but that it was a fruit, of some kind or other; and Ludolf,¹ in his History of Ethiopia, will needs have it to be what the Syrians call *mauz*, a fruit much about as big as a small cucumber, that hangs in clusters, sometimes to the number of forty upon the same stalk, and is, in figure and taste, not unlike the Indian fig.

It is not to be doubted, indeed, but that the mandrake in Palestine is of a different kind to what we have in these climates. St Austin, who thought it a great curiosity to see one, tells us that it was very beautiful to the eye, and of a fragrant smell, but utterly insipid; so that he wonders what should make Rachel set so high a value upon it, unless it were its scarceness and rich scent. In the province of Pekin in China, we are informed, that there is a kind of mandrake so valuable, and when mixed in any liquor makes so rich a cordial, that a pound of its root (for in the root lies all the virtue) is worth thrice its weight in silver.

It was a general opinion among the ancients, that there was a certain quality in the juice of mandrakes to excite amorous inclinations; and therefore they called them the apples of love, as the Hebrew word *dod*, from whence comes *dodaim*, is frequently set to signify love. Thus, whether we consider this fruit as pleasant to the

eye, smell, or taste, or as a restorative to nature, and helpful to conception, any of these reasons are sufficient why Rachel should take such a fancy to them: and why she purchased them at so strange a rate, was chiefly occasioned by Leah's sullen reply, that she had 'taken away her husband's affections from her,' which provoked the other, who, according to the established order of succeeding to his bed, had certainly the property in him that night, to resign him to her.

Moses, however, only mentions this circumstance to let his reader know upon what occasion it was that Leah, after she had done child-bearing, as she thought, came to conceive again. ² It had been below the dignity of such a sacred historian as he is to take notice of such trivial matters, had there not been something of great consideration in them; and what could that be, but chiefly the birth of the 'blessed seed,' which was the object of the hopes of all pious people in these days? It is evident, from the conduct both of Rachel and her sister, that it was children they desired, and not merely the company of their husband; nor would their husband have ever been determined by their blind bargains, had it not been matter of pure indifference to him whether of their embraces he went to, so long as his family was but increased and multiplied.

That it was a very ancient custom, not only among the Hebrews, but with many other nations, and particularly the Greeks and Romans, in the marriages both of their sons and daughters, and especially of the latter, for the parents to give with the bride and bridegroom, as part of the portion or dowry, a servant, to abide in their power and property, is a matter so plain, ^a from sundry examples, that it needs no contesting. The great difficulty is, for what reason it was that these matrons of old were so very desirous that their husbands should have commerce with these their dotal maids, in case they had no children of their own: and for the solution of this we must observe, that according to the principles of the oldest philosophy, *spirit* is the universal, efficient cause in nature, but especially in generation, and in human generation most of all; so that a spiritual conception must, of necessity, precede and direct every bodily one, insomuch that there can be no corporeal conception without a spiritual one; but a spiritual there may be without a corporeal one, that is, when the matter or medium is not adapted to that purpose. Now, this position being laid down, it may be observed farther,

¹ B. I. c. 17.

plant, which dies and grows again every year, and has nothing valuable in it but the root, whose virtues are wonderful. Of this plant (as Dioscorides informs us) there are two sorts: one is black, and called the female mandrake, having leaves not unlike lettuce, though less and narrower, which spread upon the ground, and are of a very disagreeable scent. It bears something like services, which are pale, and of a strong smell, with kernels within, like those of a pea. It has two or three very large roots, twisted together, black without, but white within, and covered with a thick rind. The other sort, or the male mandrake, produces berries as big again as those of the female, of a good scent, and a colour not much unlike saffron. Its leaves are large, white, broad, and smooth, like the leaves of a beech tree, and its root resembles that of the female, but is much thicker and bigger, and the quality of them both is to stupify and make sleepy those that take them—B. 6. c. 61. (This plant, though once in great repute in medicine, is now deservedly deemed of none,—it is of no use in cases of barrenness, and is even dangerous to be eaten.)

² Patrick's Commentary.

^a In the tragedy of Euripides, which is called Iphigenia in Aulis, Clytemnestra is brought in, as preparing and hastening all things for the nuptials of her daughter, who, unknown to her, was devoted for a sacrifice, and addressing herself in this manner:—"I the bridemaid am come, but away ye and bring from the chariots those gifts which I am about to present with the girl; with expedition fetch them to the hall." Old Demanetus, in the Asinaria of Plautus, is told by his slave, "Thy spouse, who had more in her hand than you, brought a slave as a marriage gift." These servants among the Greeks were called *φίενοι*, from whence is derived the Latin *vena*; and by the Romans, *doteles*, *receptitii*, or *receptilia*. They had likewise the name of *λάτρεις* given them, and their service was expressed by the word *λατρεία*, which signifies the service due from man to Almighty God; which is wout to be distinguished from any other sort of service, and denotes that such persons were entirely at their mistresses' devotion.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. I. Annotation 32.

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that these matrons very probably were not ignorant that the mother contributes nothing, of herself, towards the formation of the fetus, and much less to its inspiration with life, but merely the bearing it in the womb; and hence they might infer, that the bearing it in the womb was not sufficient of itself to confer a right to the fruit of it, which came thither they knew not how, which they had no hand in the fashioning of, and which they were no more able to quicken, than they were to enliven a dead body. It being, therefore, no strange thing, in these days, for one man to raise up seed for another, or to propagate by another, by parity of reason they might conclude, that one woman might as well do the same for another, or bear in her stead, under such and such circumstances, by the union and co-operation of their wills, and strong attraction of the imagination in two consociating into one. And this was the consideration which moved them to press this matter so very earnestly as they did: when finding that, after they had spiritually conceived of their husbands, by taking them into an ideal image for elaboration, there was wanting strength in them to bear, and to work out what they had received, they could afterwards have no greater pleasure than to appoint one who should faithfully supply that part, wherein they themselves were defective, and thereby be able, not only to remedy the reproach of their barrenness, but to establish a stronger interest in the family for themselves, and for all that they could call their own.

¹ 'The bearing upon the knees,' therefore, as the expression is in Moses, must certainly denote something more than that Rachel designed to make herself a nurse to her maid, or set a child upon her knees, as her own, in which she had no part or portion; but that her servant should conceive, and become with child through her, as in her presence, and as it were 'upon her knees,' to the end that her mistress might be made a mother, by her instrumentality, and might have children, whom she could call her own, though not born of her body. And accordingly we may observe, that Rachel herself had this notion of the matter; for upon the birth of her first son, born to her by her substitute, she expressly declares that God had given her a son, and, as the custom for mothers then was, herself imposed on him a name, as a mark of her thinking him really to be hers.

Thus have we endeavoured to silence some of those cavils, which may be made against particular passages in the Mosaic history, during this period of time; and for the farther confirmation of its truth and authority, we might produce the testimony of several heathen writers, ² such as Sanchoniatho, Berossus, Hecataeus, Eupolemus, and others, as they are quoted by Eusebius in his *Præparatio Evangelica*. The fiction of Jupiter's chain in Homer, reaching from heaven to earth, as it relates to the divine providence, had its original from Jacob's ladder. The memory of his wrestling with an angel has been preserved, ever since, by a whole nation's abstaining from a particular part of the thigh, which, without that supposition, cannot be accounted for. Jacob's living with his uncle Laban in the capacity of a servant, gave rise to the story of Apollo's being

reduced, when expelled from his father's house, to the necessity of turning Admetus's shepherd. The fable of the Bethleams, which ³ Eusebius takes out of Philo Biblius, came undoubtedly from the altar of Bethel; and, to name no more, the whole business of Jacob's arrival at Shechem upon his return from Mesopotamia, of his daughter Dinah's rape by the prince of the country, and of the terrible revenge which her brothers took for that indignity, is related by Alexander Polyhistor, as he is quoted by the same father, much in the same order, and with the very same circumstances, that we find it recorded in the works of Moses.

CHAP. III.—Of Jacob's Ladder and Pillar.

To judge of the occasion of Jacob's vision, wherein this emblematical ladder was represented to him, we must imagine that we saw the heir of a powerful family taking his leave of his aged parents, and for fear of an angry brother departing from his father's house; beginning a journey of 450 miles, into a strange country, all alone, on foot, and without any servant to attend him; travelling all the day with a pensive heart, and forced at night to take up his lodging in the open air, and with nothing better than an hard stone to be his pillow: if we suppose Jacob in this condition, I say, we shall soon perceive the reason why God thought it convenient, at this time, to give him comfort and consolation in the way of a dream.

That dreams, or nocturnal visions, were a common way of God's revealing himself to mankind of old, is evident from instances almost innumerable; and the reason of his making choice of this method might be, either ⁴ to convince them of his omnipresence, that 'he was about their bed, and about their paths, and spied out all their ways;' or to convince them of his constant care, and that he was not unmindful of them, even when they little thought of him, and were most absent from themselves; or to convince them of his unlimited power over their souls, when even sleep itself could not hinder his access to them; or because that the mind, in the dead and silence of the night, was fitter to receive divine impressions, when nature was hush, and the passions asleep, and no variety of thoughts to distract its attention.

But whatever God's reasons might be for conveying things by dreams, it is certain that the vision of the ladder, and the comfortable words which he spoke from the top of it, made such a lively impression upon Jacob, that he proceeded in his journey with cheerfulness and alacrity: ⁵ 'Behold I am with thee, and I will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.' These are the verbal assurances which God gives Jacob; and therefore we may presume that the representation of the ladder had something analogous in it.

This ladder, according to the sense of the ⁶ best

¹ Prep. Evan. b. 9. c. 21.

² Walsii Miscell. Sacra de Samitis, vol. I.

³ Gen. xxviii. 15.

⁴ Maimonides More Nevoe.

⁵ Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. I; Occasional Annotations 23.

⁶ See Grot. de Verit. b. I.

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interpreters, is an emblem of the divine providence, which governs all things. Its being 'set upon the earth' denotes the steadiness of providence, which nothing is able to unsettle; its 'reaching up to heaven' signifies its universality, or that it extends to all things; the 'several steps of the ladder' are the motions and actions of providence; the 'angels going up and down' show, that they are the great ministers of providence, never idle, but always employed in the preservation of the just; 'their ascending' means their going up to receive the divine orders and commands; and 'their descending,' their coming down upon earth to put them in execution. So that, in this hieroglyphic, God signified to Jacob, now full of care and uneasy apprehensions, that the man who was under the custody and protection of divine providence wanted not company in a wilderness; wanted not security in the midst of dangers; wanted not direction in the most difficult undertakings; since there were so many ministering spirits holding correspondence between earth and heaven, and daily and hourly 'sent forth' from God's presence 'to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation.'

Other interpretations there are in great numbers, but too 'a full of fancies and conceits to be here taken notice of. One, however, seems a little more solid, and may not undeserve our observation. ² The promise, we may remember, which God is introduced as making to Jacob from the top of the ladder, does chiefly relate to his covenant with Abraham, which was principally founded in Christ, that chosen seed, 'in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed:' and the analogy of the thing may induce us to believe that this ladder was designed for a type and emblem of the covenant of grace, which was in force from the time of man's first apostasy, but began to be put in execution at the incarnation of our Saviour Christ, that only Mediator, who opened an intercourse between earth and heaven; by whose intercession, plenty of all spiritual blessings descend to us, and by whose merits and doctrines our natures are sanctified, and so become meet to be 'partakers with the saints in light,' or to ascend into heaven. And to this mystical meaning of the ladder

¹ Heb. i. 14.² Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 16.

^a The rabbins, having given us long chimerical descriptions of this ladder, will have it represent almost every thing that comes into their fancies. Some pretend that the ascending angels were those who had the care of Jacob in his going; the descending, those whose business it was to secure him in his returning from Mesopotamia. Another (Jarchi on Gen. xxviii. 12.) is of opinion, that God designed hereby to point out the place where he would have the temple built one day; and to reconcile this opinion to geography, he affirms that God at this time transported to Luz the hill of Sion, upon which the temple at Jerusalem was afterwards built. Philo, who certainly believed a *metempsychosis*, tells us, that the angels which Jacob saw are emblems of souls, whereof some descend to animate bodies, whilst others ascend, having quitted the bodies which they once animated. St Austin will have this ladder to represent the cross of Christ; and some of the mystical divines, making it an emblem of a contemplative life, do maintain, that the angels ascending the ladder are those believers whom they call perfect, as having the faculty of causing their affections to soar up to the highest heavens, and that the descending represented those mean and abject souls whose centre is the earth, and whose delight consists in fleshly things. — *Saurin's Dissertations*.

our Saviour himself may be thought to allude, when he tells us, that ³ 'Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man;' which 'a learned commentator has in this manner paraphrased:—'Ye have heard, no doubt, of those of old, that several things relating to the Messias have been represented by Jacob's ladder; and ye are to know, that they are all now to be accomplished in me, and shall every day be more and more accomplished, until the time of my assumption into heaven. Ye shall know that heaven, which by the sin and corruption of mankind was shut in Adam, shall by my dispensation and doctrine be opened again; and that God, being reconciled to the world by me, shall continue in covenant with them for ever. Ye shall know, that I am that ladder and way to heaven, by which ye may gain admittance to the Father; for I am he that unites heaven and earth together, so that from henceforward the angels shall continually be passing from the one to the other. In short, ye shall know, that I am the Lord, not only of the visible creation, but the Prince likewise of angels and all invisible spirits, even the true God. This, I say, ye shall henceforth more fully know, by my doctrine, my miracles, my death, my glorious resurrection, and triumphant ascension into heaven.'

Thus, according to the declaration which God makes from the top of the ladder, it seems reasonable to imagine, that he might have a twofold design in making this representation to Jacob, namely, by a proper type, to prefigure the incarnation of his Son, which, like this ladder, joined heaven and earth, the divine and human natures, together; and by a proper emblem of the angels ascending and descending upon it, to give him an evidence of the watchful providence of God that attended him. The former of these designs might perhaps be a little too abstruse for Jacob's comprehension at present, but the latter he immediately understood; and therefore we find him, as soon as he arose, out of a grateful sense of the divine goodness in sending him a vision so full of consolation, erecting and consecrating a pillar, in order to perpetuate the memory of so momentous an event.

It is the opinion of some commentators, indeed, that to preserve the memory of this heavenly vision, Jacob took the stone whereon his head lay, and wherein they discern nothing extraordinary, and set it up for a monument or pillar upon the top of some other stones, which he had gathered and heaped together: but, besides that the fancy of an heap of stones seems unworthy of the Holy Scriptures, and betrays us into a low and trifling idea of this great affair, there is not the least ground from the text itself, nor from this symbolical way of transmitting facts to future generations, to suppose that there was any more than one single stone.

The word *matzebah*, which our interpreters render a pillar, is by the Septuagint translated Στήλη, by the vulgar Latin, *titulus*; and from hence several, both ancients and moderns, have supposed that there was an inscription upon this pillar. The manner of consecrating this pillar was by pouring oil upon it, which Jacob might have by him, without a miracle, considering how

³ John i. 51.⁴ Bullinger's Commentary.

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common the use of oil was in these hot countries, to refresh the limbs when weary with travelling, and how necessary, upon that account, it was to carry some with him in his journey: nor is there any reason to suppose, that Jacob made use of this form of consecration in compliance with the custom of the country where he then was. It is uncertain whether this custom was established in Jacob's time; but if it was, it is hardly credible that a pious man, as he is represented, would have adopted a superstitious ceremony into the worship of the true God. ¹ The much more probable opinion, therefore, is, that as the rites of sacrificing and circumcision were instituted before the promulgation of the law, so this manner of consecrating things, by way of unction or libation, was at first enjoined the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac by God, and either by precept or tradition from them, came afterwards to be practised by Jacob. Nor is it unlikely but that Jacob's practice in this particular, and the great veneration which was afterwards paid to his monumental pillar, might give occasion ^a to the worshipping such erected stones in future ages, and, upon such abuse, of God's so strictly prohibiting any to be set up: ² 'Ye shall not make ye any idols or graven image, neither shall ye rear up any matzebah,' statue or pillar, 'to bow down unto it, for I am the Lord your God.'

In the religious sense of the word, then, *matzebah* may properly signify a large consecrated stone, erected pillarwise, before which prostrations and adorations were made, and upon which oblations and libations, but not any bloody sacrifices, were presented: but then the question is, how Jacob could think to secure this monument from being thrown down by the natives or passengers; or how he could impose a new name upon it, and establish that name in future ages, when the place had a name before, and no person was present to bear testimony of what he did. This, indeed, the Scripture gives us no manner of account of; and therefore, if we do it but modestly, we are left at liberty to make our own conjectures.

According to the ancient versions of the word, we may suppose that there was upon this stone some legible and intelligible title or inscription; nor is it improbable that the title should be, what the patriarch in a sort of ecstasy called it, 'Bethel,' or 'the house of God.' How Jacob might be provided with an iron pen, or style, for the purpose of engraving this title, can be no difficult thing to imagine, if we do but consider that the style was the common instrument of writing in those days, which every scholar used to carry about with him, and which Jacob, ^b having led a studious and contemplative

life under his father and grandfather, and, as some suppose, under Melchizedek likewise, was not unqualified to make use of; and that the very ancient, if not universal custom of erecting, anointing, and consecrating such like stones, with an inscription, either literal or hieroglyphical, and sometimes both, could hardly have any other foundation than this practice of his.

But besides the bare inscription of the name and title of the stone, there might probably be yet something more to attract the eyes of the traveller, and to raise a veneration for the place. And, therefore, admitting the stone to be square, we find that there were two oaths, as it were, taken upon it, by the covenanting parties, that is, the oath of God to Jacob, repeating the substance of what he had sworn to his fathers, and limiting it to him and his seed; and the oath of Jacob to God, obliging himself and his posterity to such a constant homage as is therein specified; and hereupon we may infer, that for the better preservation of the memory of this great league, there might be written, on one side, the obligation of God, exactly in the terms of the 13th, 14th, and 15th verses; and on the opposite, the obligation of Jacob, as expressed by him in the three last verses of the 28th chapter of Genesis. And, because it was necessary that the name of the person who erected and consecrated the stone should be preserved, we may further suppose, that as God's signing this covenant on his part might be in this form, ANI JEHOVAH, ELOHE ABRAHAM, ELOHE ISAAC, *I the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac*; by parity of reason, Jacob's signing might run thus, ANI JACOB, BEN ISAAC, BEN ABRAHAM, *I Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham*.

On the vacant sides of the stone, we may suppose again, that the other awful sentences which Jacob upon this occasion pronounced, ³ 'How dreadful is this place! This is the gate of heaven, and verily the Lord is in this place!' were engraven. And because a very early custom of crowning such public pillars with garlands might very likely take its rise from Jacob's practice at this time, we may therefore be allowed to make one conjecture more, namely, that as Luz, near which this transaction happened, had its name from a grove of almond-trees, not far distant from it; so Jacob might think it very decent, in memory of the divine favours there received, to crown and adorn the top of this titular stone, with a garland of almond branches taken from thence. All this, we allow, is no more than supposition and conjecture; but, without some such contrivance as this, how could this stone have been an instrument to perpetuate the memory of an event? How a means of Jacob's imposing a new name upon a place that was entirely in the possession of others? Well might the natives or proprietors ask, by what authority this was

¹ Heidegger's Hist. Patriar.

² Lev. xxvi. 1.

^a From Jacob's pouring oil upon the stone of Bethel did arise the superstition of the ancients for their *betuli*, which were stones anointed and consecrated to the memory of great men after their death. Sanchoniatho, or rather Porphyry, the author of the fragment which Eusebius has preserved under the name of Sanchoniatho, attributes the invention of these *betuli* to Saturn; but the best account that can be given of this absurd practice is from hence, and a sufficient demonstration it is how the best and noblest acts of piety may be perverted, and degenerate into mere stupidity, by a fond, superstitious imitation.—*Calmel's Dictionary*, under the word *Bethel*; and *Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.; *Occasional Annotations*, 30.

^b That Jacob was a man of learning, and of an extraordinary

³ Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

genius, is not only a general tradition of the Jews, but supported likewise by some lines in the character which the pen of Moses gives us of him. He had certainly great advantages under his father and grandfather, who justly deserved a name among the eldest oriental philosophers; and therefore he is described, in the eastern style, as 'a man dwelling in tents,' as much as to say, one who leads a philosophical and contemplative life, or a minister or student of the house of learning, as the Targums truly interpret the phrase.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.; *Occasional Annotations*, 35.

A. M. 2149. A. C. 1855; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3495. A. C. 1916. GEN. CH. xxviii. 10—xxxvii.

done? And since Jacob was not there to give them an answer, his only way could be to leave the history and occasion of it engraven upon the very stone.

And indeed, without some such supposition, why should this stone, even by different nations, be accounted such a valuable piece of antiquity? Why should the Jews be so fond to have it thought that they had it in the sanctuary of their second temple, and that upon it the ark of the covenant was placed? Since the destruction of their temple, why should it be their custom, one day in a year, with great lamentation, to go and anoint this stone, in remembrance of their father Jacob, and the covenant made with him? And why should the Mahometans pretend, that they have this stone (though by mistake of one patriarch for another, they call it the stone of Abraham) set up at their temple at Mecca, which they make their common Kibla, or point of worship, and before which the pilgrims pay their solemn devotions?

These, we allow, may be no more than false pretences; but still they are an evidence, that this pillar was once held in high veneration, which it could hardly have been, but must very soon have been buried in oblivion and rubbish, had it been no more than a large ragged stone, without any thing to distinguish it, that is, without any sculpture or inscription on it. And therefore, notwithstanding the silence of Scripture, we have sufficient reason to conclude, that this pillar was erected in order to preserve the remembrance of the heavenly vision which God in this place vouchsafed Jacob; that to this purpose it was engraven with such inscriptions as might give posterity sufficient intelligence upon what occasion it was erected; that by means of such inscriptions, it came to be recognised as Jacob's pillar, and held in great esteem in future generations; that this pillar thus engraven, as it was the first of its kind that we have upon record, gave probably the origin to the invention of stylography, or the ancient manner of writing upon stone, ever after; and that the consecration of this stone, and the imposition of a new name upon the place where it stood, is enough to justify the practice of sanctifying places appointed for religious worship, by some solemn form of separation; of calling them 'the house of God,' and imputing to them a relative holiness; in Christian countries, of dedicating them to the memory of departed saints and martyrs; and every where, of observing that wholesome and devout advice of the preacher: 'Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God, for he is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.'

SECT. IV.

CHAP. I.—Of the Life of Joseph,^a which includes the rest of Jacob's.

THE HISTORY.

JACOB had not been long with his father before there befell him another sad disaster. Joseph was his beloved

child, as being the son of his dear departed Rachel, and^b a youth of a very promising and extraordinary genius. As a mark of his peculiar love, the fond father gave him clothes richer than he did the rest, and among others, c one coat more especially, which was made of a changeable or party-coloured stuff. This made his other brothers envy him not a little; and what gained him no good-will among them, was their looking upon him as a spy, because he had told his father some things wherein the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah,^d with whom he was chiefly conversant, e had grossly misbehaved, which made them

prolix in relating the adventures of Joseph than of any other of Jacob's children: both because his life is a bright example of piety, chastity, meekness, and prudence; and because it was by the means of Joseph that Jacob went down into Egypt: and as his going down gave occasion to the wonderful departure of the children of Israel from thence, so the history of the Jews would have been sadly imperfect, and indeed altogether unintelligible, without a longer account than ordinary of Joseph's life and transactions there.—*Heidegger's Hist. Patriar.* vol. 2. Essay 20.

^b Most versions, as well as ours, have made Jacob to love Joseph, because he was the son of his old age; whereas had this been the cause of his affection, he must have loved Zebulun, as much as Joseph, because he was of the same age, and Benjamin much more, because he was above fifteen years younger [only thirteen years, according to Dr Hales' table given before.] It seems, therefore, as if they had confounded the words *Ben-Zekenim*, the son of senators, or elders, as he is called here, with *Ben-Ziknah*, the son of old age; whereas the former has a signification quite different. According to the Hebrew idiom, it signifies 'the son, or disciple of senators,' that is, one endued with an extraordinary wisdom and prudence; accordingly the Samaritan, Arabic, and Persian versions have rendered it, 'because he was a wise and prudent son,' though even this comes short of the energy of the idiom, and might more properly be rendered, 'because he was as wise and prudent as a senator.' And this justifies the reason of Jacob's extraordinary love to Joseph, because it is natural for parents, especially for fathers, to admire those children who show any degree of wisdom above their years; whereas, to be fond of a child begotten in one's old age, and for no other reason, is no more than a piece of dotage, which Moses would hardly have thought worth recording.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7, and *Howell's History*, b. 1.

^c The coat whereby Jacob distinguished his son Joseph from the rest of his brothers, is generally thought to signify a garment that was wrought with threads of divers colours, or made up of pieces of silk or stuff, which had much variety in them; but the word *passim*, which is here made use of, according to some learned annotators, does properly signify a long garment, down to the heels or ankles, with long sleeves down to the wrists, which had a border at the bottom, and a facing, as we call it, at the hands, of a colour different from the garment, which was accounted noble, as well as beautiful, in ancient times.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d He chose the sons of his father's concubines, rather than those of his wife Leah, to be his companions, on purpose, perhaps, to avoid the ill consequences of the latter's envy and emulation against him. For it is not unlikely that Leah's sons, considering the excessive love which their father had for him, might be ready to suspect, that he designed to bequeath the right of primogeniture to him, which each of them thinking they had a better title to, might thereupon be tempted to malign and maltreat him: whereas, among the sons descended from concubines, as having not the like ambition, he might find better quarter, and to their company the rather resort, out of a principle of humility and condescension, and to discountenance the haughty behaviour of the sons of Leah towards the sons of the concubines.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Biblica in locum*.

^e The Hebrew and the Alexandrian Septuagint have it, 'they brought upon their father an evil report,' or 'grievous complaints against Joseph,' that is, they began their base and barbarous treatment of him with lies and calumnies. However, Aquila, Symmachus, and the Syriac, make Joseph the accuser; but of what crime it was, that he accused them to his father, and whether it consisted in deeds or words only, is a subject that has

¹ Eccles. v. 1, 2.

^a Two reasons are generally assigned, why Moses is more

A. M. 2276. A. C. 1728; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3526. A. C. 1885. GEN. CH. xxxvii. TO THE END.

treat him so very surly, that whenever he spake to them, they would scarce give him a civil answer. But that which completed their envy and resentment, or rather turned them into an irreconcilable hatred, was his innocently telling them some of his dreams, which seemed to portend his advancement in the world above them.

He told them that one night he dreamed, that as he and they were binding sheaves together in the field, his sheaf stood upright, while theirs fell prostrate before it, as if they had been doing obeisance; and that another time, he fancied himself mounted on high, and the sun, moon, and eleven stars, doing him the like homage. This raised the indignation of the rest, as thinking it a disparagement to have a younger brother their superior: which their father perceiving, in hopes of mitigating their resentment, ^a thought fit to discountenance him in the interpretation of his dreams, by telling him, that they were vain and chimerical, and what could never come to pass; though, in himself, he could not but think, that there was something extraordinary and ominous in them. His brothers, however, instead of abating their hatred, grew every day more and more exasperated; so that they resolved at last to cut him off, and only waited for a convenient opportunity.

It happened, at this time, that Joseph's ten brethren (for Benjamin was as yet too young for any business) were keeping their flocks not far from Shechem, when their father not having heard from them for some time, and ^b being not a little anxious for their welfare, sent Joseph to find them out, and know how they did. As he drew near to Shechem, he was informed by a person whom he met with by accident, that they had removed from thence, and were gone about twenty miles farther north to a place called ^c Dothan. Thither Joseph went

occasioned a great variety of conjectures among critics and commentators. Some will have it, that Joseph told of their unkindness and asperity to him; others, of their quarrelling and contentious way of living. Some, of their committing sodomy or bestiality; while those who confine it to words only, suppose it to be passionate and undutiful reflections they might make upon their father, for loving Joseph more than themselves. But whatever it was, it may be gathered, from their propense malice to him, that it was no small crime, because that for his telling it, and which he might do with no other intent, but only that his father's rebukes and admonitions might reform them,) they hated him even unto death.—*Bibliotheca Biblica* and *Howell's History*.

^a St Chrysostom, in his homily upon the place, has given us this farther reason.—“Besides,” says he, “he might think it convenient to give this calm check to a spirit so much elated, as this young man must be, by those great and certain expectations which God was pleased, in so extraordinary a manner, to set before him. The foreknowledge of all that greatness and glory, which was one day infallibly to be his portion, might have put him upon a wrong bias of behaviour; might have tempted him to antedate his superiority; and fail, or waver, more or less in his duty to his elder brethren, if not to his father himself; and this seems to be the meaning of Jacob's mentioning his mother, who was dead, and did not so well comport with his dream. But at the same time, that in prudence he was willing to prevent any vain aspiring conceits, or tumours in his son, in faith he was persuaded, that the fact would prove such as it was foretold.”

^b The reason of Jacob's uneasiness, and of sending his son Joseph upon this errand, will be very obvious, if it be remembered, that the sons of Jacob had so incensed the neighbouring places by the massacre of the Shechemites, that Jacob was obliged immediately to quit the country, for fear of a general insurrection upon him, as we read, Gen. xxiv. 30.

^c It was a town about twelve miles to the north of the city of Samaria, as Eusebius informs us;—*Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1.

after them; and no sooner did they see him approaching, but their old malice revived, and immediately they resolved to make away with this master-dreamer, as they called him, and to persuade their father that some wild beast had devoured him.

This resolution, barbarous as it was, had certainly been put in execution, ^d had not Reuben, who was the eldest, interposed, and, dissuading them from imbruing their hands in his blood, advised rather to throw him into the next pit, with a design himself to draw him out privately, and convey him safe home to his father. Reuben's advice was liked; and therefore, as soon as Joseph came up to them, they immediately seized him, pulled off his fine coat, and threw him into a pit, which, at that time, chanced to be dry; whereupon Reuben withdrew, to contrive some means for rescuing his brother, whilst the others, as if they had done some glorious act, sat down to eat, and drink, and regale themselves.

In the mean time ^e a caravan of Ishmaelites, who were travelling from Mount Gilead into Egypt with spices and other merchandise, appeared in sight, which put Judah in the thought of taking their brother out of the pit, and selling him to these merchants, which would every whit answer their purpose as well, or better. The proposal was no sooner made, than it was approved: Joseph was taken out of the pit, was sold to the merchants, and the merchants sold him again to Potiphar, one of the king's chief officers, and captain of his guards. Reuben being absent while this was done, came to the pit not long after, in order to rescue his brother; but finding him not there, he began to bewail and lament himself to such a degree, that his brethren, to pacify his

^d He either thought himself most concerned to save his brother, as being the first-born, and therefore like to be the first in the blame; or he might hope, by thus piously and compassionately preserving the favourite Joseph, to recover that place in his father's affection, which he had lost by his incest with Bilhah, his concubinary wife. The speech which Josephus introduces him as making upon this occasion, is very moving and very rhetorical. “It were an abominable wickedness,” says he, “to take away the life, even of a stranger, but to destroy a kinsman and a brother, and, in that brother, a father and a mother too, with grief for the loss of so good, and so hopeful a son. Bethink yourselves, if any thing can be more diabolical. Consider that there is an all-seeing God, who will be the avenger, as well as witness of this horrid murder. Bethink yourselves, I say, and repent of your barbarous purpose. You must never expect to commit this flagitious villany, and the divine vengeance not overtake you; for God's providence is every where, in the wilderness, as well as in the city, and the horrors of a guilty conscience will pursue you wherever you go. But, put the case, your brother had done you some wrong; yet is it not our duty to pass over the slips of our friends? When the simplicity of his youth may justly plead his excuse, his brothers certainly, of all men living, should be his friends and guardians, rather than his murderers; especially when the ground of all your quarrel is this, that God loves your brother, and your brother loves God.”—*Josephus*, b. 2. c. 3.

^e Though we name the Ishmaelites only, yet here seem to be two, if not three sorts of merchants mentioned in this passage. the Ishmaelites, the Midianites, and Medanites, (as they are called in the Hebrew, Gen. xxxvii. 36.) who were a distinct people from the Midianites, as descended from Medan, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah, and brother to Midian, Gen. xxv. 2. But as they and the Midianites lived near together in Arabia, not far from the Ishmaelites, they all joined together in this caravan, as one society of merchants; as it is the custom even to this day, in those eastern countries, for merchants and others to travel through the deserts in large companies, for fear of wild beasts or robbers.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

A. M. 2275. A. C. 1728; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3525. A. C. 1885. GEN. CH. xxxvii. TO THE END.

grief, were forced to tell him in what manner they had disposed of him; whereupon Reuben, finding it impossible now to recover him, joined with them in contriving how to manage the matter with their father, so as to take off from themselves all manner of suspicion.

To this purpose they killed a kid, and dipping Joseph's coat in the blood of it, ^a sent it to their father, as if they had found it in the field, and were fearful that it was their brother. Their father soon perceived whose coat it was; and supposing that some wild beast or other had slain his son, ^b he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth, and began to mourn for his death. In vain did the rest of his children endeavour to comfort him; his grief would admit of no remedy; his resolution was to ^c lament his loss to the hour of his death; nor did he ever cease this disconsolate way of life, until he was told the surprising news of Joseph's advancement in Egypt.

From the time that Joseph had admission into Potiphar's family, he showed such diligence and fidelity, and proved so successful in every thing he undertook, that his master soon took notice of him, and in some time, having made him his steward, ^d put all his affairs under his management.

In this condition Joseph might have lived very happy,

^a In one and the same verse it is said, that 'they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father:' but this seeming solecism is easily resolved, only by saying, that they sent it by the hands of persons who brought it to their father; or that they sent it by a messenger, as being afraid to be present at the first gust of their father's passion, and afterwards brought or produced it, when one of them, as Judah is supposed to have been their spokesman, related the tale which follows: by which artifice they seemed to give themselves an air of compassion, since it was no uncommon thing afterwards (as in the case of Julius Cæsar, and Julia his daughter, the wife of Pompey), on mournful occasions, to produce such affecting relics and remains.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*.

^b Rending the clothes was an eastern way of expressing either grief for calamity or horror for sin. Reuben was the first we read of, who, to denote his exceeding sorrow, rent his clothes; and as Jacob we find does the like, we may well suppose that it was an usual manner of expressing all grief and uneasiness of mind in those days; and by putting on sackcloth, which Jacob is here the first precedent of doing, but was afterwards commonly used upon all mournful occasions, he seemed to signify, that since he had lost his beloved son, he looked upon himself as reduced to the meanest and lowest condition of life.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, *Howell's History*, and *Burder's Oriental Customs*.

^c Jacob expresses his sorrow in these words, 'I will go down unto the grave unto my son.' But if by the grave we are here to understand a place of sepulture, how could Jacob say that he would go down thither to his son, when he presumes here that he was not buried, but torn to pieces by wild beasts. To solve this difficulty, some imagine that the particle *el* should not, in this place, be rendered to, but, as it sometimes means, *for*, or *in the stead of*; and so the sense is, 'I will go down to the grave instead of my son,' who, unhappy child as he was, had no burial: but since the word *scholach*, in Greek *zōns*, in Latin *infernum*, signifies very frequently the state of the dead in general, the much clearer sense of the words will be, 'I will not cease mourning until I die, and be laid in my grave.'—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^d The words in the text are, 'he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat;' which is one of the highest expressions of confidence that we can imagine: for it signifies, that he was utterly careless about any thing that concerned his estate, not minding what his expense or receipts were; but taking his ease, left all to Joseph's honesty. In short, he thought of nothing, but only to enjoy what he had, without care or trouble.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

had it not been for an adventure of a nature somewhat singular. He was now in the bloom of his youth, and of a beauty and comeliness so extraordinary, that his master's wife could not forbear conceiving an irregular passion for him. Upon several occasions, she had given him indications enough of her ardent desire to draw him into a wanton familiarity with her, but he was blind to her signs, and deaf to her soft speeches; so that she was at last resolved to break through the rules of her sex, and court him in plain terms. But how great was her surprise when, instead of a ready compliance, as she probably expected, she found herself not only denied, but severely reprimanded likewise for her disloyal passion! Being willing, however, to hope that another opportunity would prove more favourable, after several fruitless attempts, she at last laid hold on one, when all the family was abroad, and ^e accosted him in so violent and passionate a manner, that she would not hear any farther denial. In vain it was for him ^{to}

^e Joseph at this time was about seven and twenty years old. For he was seventeen when he was sold to Potiphar, Gen. xxxvii. 2, and he was committed to prison immediately upon his noncompliance with his mistress's temptation; where, as far as it appears, he had not been long before he interpreted the dreams of the two disgraced courtiers; and two years after that he was released and promoted, namely, when he was thirty years old: so that we may reasonably conclude that this temptation befell him about three years before his release, that is, in the twenty-seventh year of his age. At this time it is supposable that he was a comely person enough, and the saying is, that "a comely person is a silent recommendation;" but the stories relating to his excessive beauty, as they are recorded by the Talmudists, are ridiculous, and not much better than what Mahomet, in his history of the patriarch, tells us, namely, that his mistress having invited the ladies of the town to a splendid entertainment, ordered Joseph to be called for, but that, as soon as he appeared, they were amazed at his beauty, and so confounded, that they knew not what they did, but instead of eating their meat they ate their fingers, and said among themselves, "This is not a man, but an angel."—*Bibliotheca Biblica in locum*, and *Alcoran*, chap. of Joseph.

^f Josephus tells us, that Potiphar's wife took the opportunity of a certain festival, when all the people were gone a merry-making, to tempt Joseph; that, feigning herself sick, she decoyed him by that means into her apartment, and then addressed herself to him in words to this effect:—"It had been much better for you," says she, "had you complied with my first request; if for no other consideration, in regard at least to the dignity of the person who is become your petitioner, and to the excess of my passion. Besides, it would have saved me the shame of condescending to some words and expressions, which I am still out of countenance when I think of. You might perhaps make some doubt before, whether I was in earnest; but this is to satisfy you that I mean no ill by my persisting in the same mind. Take, therefore, your choice now, whether you will improve this opportunity of present satisfaction, in the embraces of a creature that loves you dearly, and from whom you may expect still greater things; or stand the shock of my hatred and revenge, if you will presume to value yourself upon the vain conceit of your chastity more than my favour," &c.—*Antiquities*, b. 2. c. 4.

^g Josephus, however, brings in his namesake expostulating the matter with his mistress, and reminding her of her duty to herself and her husband, to piety, and common fame. "What signifies," says he, "a momentary pleasure, with a certain repentance immediately to ensue; an heaviness of heart for a thing once done, and an utter impossibility of recalling and undoing it, together with perpetual fears of discovery and disgrace? What does all this signify, I say, in balance of the most substantial comforts, and the most necessary duties of human life? Whereas, in a conjugal state, the selfsame delights are all free, safe, innocent, and warrantable, both before God and man. Consider again, how it would lessen your authority, ^{to}

A. M. 2276. A. C. 1728; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3526. A. C. 1885. GEN. CH. xxxvii. TO THE END.

expostulate the heinousness of the crime: her appetite was eager and impatient; and therefore she caught him by the cloak, and pressed him to lie with her; and he having no other way to escape, left his cloak in her hand, and fled.

Whether it was that she feared, by his manner and behaviour, that he might accuse her to her husband, or that she was enraged at the slight put upon her proffered love; but so it was, that she resolved his immediate ruin: and accordingly she began with ^a setting up a most horrid outcry, which immediately brought in all that were within hearing, and then showing them Joseph's cloak, which she pretended he put off in order to lie with her, she told them that he had made so furious an attempt upon her virtue, that nothing but her loud cries could have saved her.

By the time that her husband came home, ^b she had dressed up her story so well, and expressed the pretended indignity put upon her with such an air of resentment, that her credulous husband, little suspecting his wife's treachery, was so prepossessed with the circumstance of the cloak, that, without any farther inquiry, ^c he

make your servant your equal, by a shameful participation in one common crime; and pray, is it not better to trust to a good conscience, that fears no light, than to commit wickedness in the dark, and then live all your days in a restless dread of being detected," &c.—*Antiquities*, b. 2. c. 4.

^a There is something not unlike this revengeful artifice in Potiphar's wife, in the representation which the poet makes of Phædra, when, in an affair of the like nature, she finds herself rejected by her son-in-law Hippolytus:—"I myself will retort the crime, and spontaneously accuse him of an illicit love; favour me, ye faithful band of servants, lend me thine aid, thou, &c. Lo, rapidly he fled, and in his consternation left behind his sword; still yet we hold the token of his crime."—*Seneca, Hippol.*

^b Upon Potiphar's coming home, Josephus makes his wife break out into these words:—"You will never deserve to live, husband, unless you make an example of that perfidious wretch, your man. He has forgotten what he was when you took him into your house, how kindly and respectfully he has been treated here, to a degree beyond his very hope, as well as his desert. The charge of your whole family is committed to him, the command of the rest of your servants, and the trust of all you have. What will you think of this fellow now, who, in requital of all your bounty and good offices, could have the impudence to attempt the violation of your bed, and to take the opportunity of this festival day, when you were out of the way, to break in upon my privacy, and press the enjoyment of his beastly ends. You have made him, in effect, master of all things under your roof; and would nothing serve him, but he must have your wife likewise? Here is the ungrateful villain's cloak, which, in his fright, he left behind him, when I cried out, as he was going to force me."—*Antiquities*, b. 2. c. 4.

^c It is somewhat wonderful, that if Potiphar believed his wife's story, he did not immediately put him to death; but there is one thing which might check the violence of his passion, and that was, the great opinion he had for some time been confirmed in, of Joseph's virtue and integrity. Joseph, he saw, was young and beautiful, and therefore he might think it a thing not impossible for a lady of distinction to be in love with him, and upon a disappointment to be exasperated: as therefore he would not inflict any capital or corporal punishment on him, so he thought it prudent to hurry him away to prison unheard, lest, being allowed to speak in his own vindication, he might clear himself, and thereby bring discredit upon his family. It must not be denied, however, what St Chrysostom has observed, that here again was a special, and as it were a miraculous intervention of the divine power, which preserved his life as it did before, when he was cast into the pit. The superior influence which softened the heart of Reuben, restrained the hand of Potiphar, in order to make our patriarch a more glorious example, and to complete these events

hurried poor Joseph away, and clapped him up in the king's prison; where we shall leave him for a while, to take a view of what passed in his father's family.

^a Before the time that Joseph was sold into Egypt, Judah, his father's son by Leah, had married ^e a Canaanitish woman name Shuah, by whom he had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. Er being cut off for his wickedness before he had any children by his wife Thamar, Judah ordered his second son Onan, according to the custom of the country, to marry her, and ^f to raise a posterity to his brother. Onan seemingly obeyed his father, but not brooking the thought that any of his children should inherit his brother's name who was dead, he took such a wicked and unnatural way to prevent having any, that God was provoked to punish him with sudden death likewise. His third son Shelah was not yet fit for marriage; and therefore Judah desired his daughter-in-law to retire to her father's house, and there live a widow, until he became adult, and then he would make him her husband. Thamar did so, and waited till Shelah was come to man's estate; but finding no performance of Judah's promise, (as indeed he never heartily intended any,) she was resolved to make herself amends some other way, which she did by the following stratagem.

Judah had lately buried his wife; and as soon as the usual days of mourning were over, he took a particular friend with him, and went to Timnah, to divert himself a

in the course of his life, which God had predetermined and foretold.—*Chrys. Hom. in locum.*

^d Though the latter part of Judah's story, relating to the incest with his daughter Thamar, was acted after Joseph was sold, and while he was in Egypt; yet the former part of it relating to his marriage, and the birth of his three sons, must needs fall out before Joseph was sold. For since there were but two and twenty, or at the most, but three and twenty years between Joseph's being sold into Egypt, and Jacob's going down thither, it could no ways be, that in so short a space of time, Judah could marry a wife, have three sons at three several times by her, marry two of her sons successively to one woman; defer the marriage of the third son to the same woman, beyond the due time; afterwards himself have sons by the same woman his daughter-in-law; and one of these sons, Pharez, beget two sons, Hezron and Hamul, Gen. xli. 12. It can no ways be, I say, that all these transactions should be comprised in so short a time. And therefore we must suppose, that the business of his being married, and having children, was prior to Joseph's being sold; but that Moses, not willing to intermingle the story of the two brothers too much, brings all he had to say concerning Judah into the compass of one chapter, and so concludes his adventures, before he proceeds to those of Joseph.—*Howell's History*, b. 1; *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7; and *Bibliotheca Biblica in locum.*

^e It was not so bad for a man circumcised to marry the daughter of one uncircumcised, as it was for an Israelite to give a daughter in marriage to an uncircumcised husband, Gen. xxxiv. 14; for an uncircumcised man was accounted unclean, though he had renounced idolatry; but a woman, born of uncircumcised parents, if she embraced the true religion, was not so accounted. And such an one we may suppose Judah's wife to have been; otherwise he had offended his father, as much as Esau did Isaac, by marrying the daughter of Heth.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^f This is the first mention we have of this custom, which nevertheless seems to have been a very common one, and well understood even by young Onan; for he knew that the first-born child was not to be accounted his, but his deceased brother's, was to be called by his name, and inherit his estate. For this, say the Hebrew doctors, was an ancient custom in force before the law of Moses, that when a man died without issue, his brother should marry his wife, and that the first son, upon such marriage, was to be reputed her deceased husband's heir.—*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentary*.

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little at the shearing feast. Tamar had intelligence of this; and therefore, putting off her widow's weed, and dressing herself like a courtesan, she threw a veil over her face, and planted herself between two ways, where she knew her father-in-law, in his way to Timnah was obliged to pass.

Judah no sooner saw her, but taking her to be what she appeared, he began to make his addresses to her. What she insisted on was only a reward for her compliance, which he readily agreed to, and promised to send her a kid; but she having a farther design upon him, demanded a pledge for the performance of his promise, which was his signet, his bracelet, and his staff; and so, being agreed, they went together, had their enjoyment, and she proved with child.

Judah, according to his promise, sent by his friend Hiram (for that was his name) a kid to redeem his pledge; but when Hiram came to the place, the woman was gone, nor could he find, upon his best inquiry, that any such person as he described had ever been there: so that Judah, when he told him his ill success, thought it the wisest way to let her go off with the pledges, rather than run the hazard of his reputation, by making any farther search.

About three months after this, word was brought him, that his daughter-in-law had played the harlot, and was certainly with child. Judah, though glad perhaps at the news, because her death would free him from the promise of giving his son Shelah to her, pretended however to be highly enraged at her incontinency, and ordering her to be brought forth,^a condemned her to be burnt according to the laws of the country. Tamar, instead of being surprised at this dreadful sentence pronounced against her, only sent the pledges to Judah, with this message, That the owner of these things was the person by whom she was with child: whereupon, struck with confusion, and reflecting on the injury he had done her, in withholding his son, he acknowledged her^b less culpable in

the whole affair than himself, and from that moment took her home to his house; but had never any more communion with her.

When the time of her delivery was come, she was brought to bed of twins, but the manner of their birth was somewhat surprising; for though one of them put forth his hand, about which the midwife tied a scarlet thread, to distinguish him for the first-born; yet as he withdrew it, his brother got before him, and so came first into the world; which occasioned his name to be *Pharez*, that is, one *breaking forth*, as the other with the thread on his hand was called *Zarah*.

To return to Joseph. He had not been long in prison, before his virtuous and obliging deportment gained him the favour of the keeper, insomuch that he was intrusted with the management of the affairs belonging to the prison, and with the custody of the prisoners themselves.

At this time there were two persons of note, the king's cupbearer, and his chief baker, for some offence or other, committed to the same prison where Joseph was, and by the head-keeper, intrusted to his care and attendance. To this purpose, Joseph coming to their apartment one morning, and finding them both pensive and melancholy upon the account of a dream which each of them had had the night before, and under more concern still, because in that place, they could have no person to interpret for them; to allay their superstitious humour, in trusting to diviners and soothsayers, he told them, in the first place, that the interpretation of dreams did not depend upon rules of art, but if there were any certainty in it, it must proceed from a divine inspiration, and then desired to know what it was that they dreamed.

The cupbearer began, and told him that in his sleep he fancied he saw a vine, with three branches, which all on a sudden budded, then blossomed, and so bore ripe grapes; and that he had in his hand the king's cup, into which having squeezed the juice of the grapes, he gave it to the king, and the king drank it from his hand as usual. To this Joseph replied, that as the three branches denoted three days, it would not exceed the compass of that time, before the king,^c having made an inquiry into

^a Among eastern nations, as well as elsewhere, women, who were guilty of adultery, were more severely punished than the men: whether it was that the injury done the husband was reputed to be more heinous, or that the men, having the power of making laws, took care to enact them in favour of themselves. Thus God is said, 'for the hardness of their hearts,' to have indulged the Jews in the matter of divorcing their wives; but the wives had not the like privilege over their husbands. In many places a man might have as many wives as he could maintain, but the women were to be content with one husband. And in like manner, here Judah, we find, condemns Tamar, though a widow, for her crime, to be burnt; whilst himself, in the same state of widowhood, thought fornication a very pardonable crime. It is questioned, however, by what right and authority he could pass this sentence upon her: and to answer this, it is supposed, that every master was judge and chief magistrate in his own family; and that therefore Tamar, though she was a Canaanite, yet being married into Judah's family, and having brought disgrace upon it, was properly under his cognizance. His cognizance, however, according to the opinion of some, did not extend so far as to have her burnt at the stake, as we call it, but only branded in the forehead for a whore; though others deny that his authority extended even so far: for being in a strange place, it can hardly be thought, that the power of life and death, or indeed of any other penalty, was lodged in him: and therefore they think that the words mean no more than this,—That she should be brought before a court of judicature, and sentenced according to the laws of the country.—*Selden de Jure Nat. b. 7. c. 5, Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary, Howell's and Universal History.*

^b The words in the text are, 'She hath been more righteous

than I:' not more virtuous or chaste, for she knowingly committed adultery and incest when he designedly did neither; but more just, in that he, by withholding Shelah from her, had provoked her to lay this trap for him. So that, though Tamar was wicked in the sight of God, yet she may be said to be juster before Judah, or to have done no more in drawing him into this scrape, than what he justly deserved.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^c The expression which Joseph here makes use of concerning the king's cupbearer and baker, 'Pharaoh shall lift up thy head,' seems somewhat too literally translated, since the words in the original mean no more, than that Pharaoh would have them brought forth and examined. The ancients, we are to know, in keeping their reckonings or accounts of time, or their list of domestic officers or servants, made use of tables with holes bored in them, in which they put a sort of pegs or nails with broad heads, exhibiting the particulars, either number or name, or whatever it was. These nails or pegs the Jews call heads, and the sockets of the heads they call bases. The meaning therefore of 'Pharaoh's lifting up his head' is, that Pharaoh would take out the peg which had the cupbearer's name on the top of it to read it; that is, would sit in judgment, and make examination into his accounts. For it seems very probable, that both he and the baker, had been either suspected or accused of having cheated the king, and that, when their accounts were examined and cast up, the one was acquitted, while the other was found guilty. And though Joseph uses the same expression in both cases, yet we may observe,

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the conduct of his servants, would restore him to his favour and his post again. Only he desired, that if his interpretation proved true, he would, in his prosperity, ^a be pleased to remember him, and to recommend his case to the king; since the truth was that he had been fraudulently taken ^b from his own country and cast into prison without any fault or offence of his.

^c Hearing so happy an interpretation of this dream, the baker was the readier to propose his, which was to this effect:—That while, as he thought, he had on his head three wicker baskets, in the uppermost of which were several kinds of baked meats for the king's table, the birds came and ate them out of the basket. To which Joseph immediately replied, that the three baskets, even as the three branches had done, signified three days; but that in the space of that time, the king having made scrutiny into his behaviour, and found him guilty, would order him to be hanged upon a gibbet, for the fowls of the air to devour his flesh. And as Joseph foretold, so it came to pass: for three days after this, the cupbearer was restored and the baker hanged. The cupbearer, however, when himself had got into prosperity again, thought little of Joseph, till, in about two years after this, an accident happened which forced him in a manner to call him to remembrance.

that speaking to the baker, he adds, that 'Pharaoh shall lift up thy head from off thee,' that is, shall order thy name to be struck out of the list of his servants by taking the peg out of the socket.—*Bibliotheca Biblica in locum.*

^a There is nothing of a distrust of God's goodness, justice, or power, in making use of human means. The release of the king's cupbearer appeared to Joseph to be a good opportunity, pointed out by providence, for him to lay hold on, and he would have been wanting to his own preservation, had he not employed it. Though therefore it may be thought, that his asking this court-officer to represent his case to the king, might be in reward or compensation for his prediction; yet even herein he may be justified by apostolical authority, which in cases of this nature instructs, (1 Cor. ix. 4. and Gal. vi. 6.) that temporal advantages may very lawfully be both asked and received. In the cupbearer's not remembering him, however, we may observe something that seems providentially to have turned to his advantage, since had he been discharged before Pharaoh's dream, he might many ways have missed of that prodigious favour and advancement, which by this means he attained.—*Bibliotheca Biblica in locum.*

^b The words in the text are, 'from the land of the Hebrews,' which some men suppose were added by Joshua, or some other writer, after the death of Moses; because in Moses' days, and much less in Joseph's, Canaan was not known by that name. It is not the whole land of Canaan, however, that Joseph here means, but only that part of it which lay about Hebron, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had for a long while lived; (Gen. xxii. 1, 2. xxxv. 27. xxxvii. 14.) It is said indeed, that they were strangers and sojourners in the country; but then they were strangers of great note and high renown, who were treated as princes, lived by their own laws, and made leagues not only with private men, but with cities and with kings; (Gen. xxiii. 6. xxi. 22. xxvi. 28. xxxiv. 6.) the fame of whose deeds could not but be spread abroad, both by the victory which Abraham got in a battle over several kings, and by the sacking of Shechem, which their neighbours durst not revenge; all which might very well make that part of the country wherein they, for three generations, had resided, not improperly be called 'the land of the Hebrews.'—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^c As flush as the chief baker was with hopes, there is this obvious difference between his and the cupbearer's presage, namely, that he was not an agent, but a sufferer in his dream; for he did not give a cake or a confection to the king as the other did the cup, but the fowls of the air descended upon his basket, and fed off with the dainties that were in it.—*Patrick's Comment.*

The king his master had, in one night, two very portentous dreams, which gave him the more uneasiness, because none of the ^d Egyptian Magi could give him the least light into their meaning. Seeing the king therefore in this perplexity, the cupbearer could not forbear telling him, that while he and the chief baker were under his majesty's displeasure in prison, each of them, in the same night, had a dream, which a young man, an Hebrew, then in prison with them, interpreted exactly, and as the event happened; and that, in his opinion, he had a talent that way much superior to any that had hitherto been consulted.

Pleased with this discovery, and eager to have his dream explained, the king gave orders immediately for Joseph to be sent for; who, after he had shaved and dressed himself, was introduced into his presence, where he had not been long, before the king related his dream to him, namely, "That as he was walking on the banks of the river Nile," as he thought, "he saw seven fat kine, which fed in the meadows. And soon after that, seven others, exceeding lean, and frightful to behold, which came and ate up the fat ones, and yet looked not a bit the better; and that, after this he dreamed again, and fancied that he saw seven full ears of corn, proceeding all from the same stalk, which were in like manner devoured by seven others, that were blasted and withered."

As soon as the king had ended, Joseph, giving him first to understand that it ^e was by the assistance of God alone that he was enabled to be an interpreter of dreams, told him, that the seven kine, and seven ears of corn, signified the same thing, and the repetition of the dream

^d The Chaldeans of old were the most famous people in the world for divination of all kinds; and therefore it is very probable that the word *Ihartounim*, which we render *magicians*, is not of Hebrew, but Chaldee origin. The roots, however, from whence it springs (if it be a compound word, as probably it is) are not so visible; and therefore commentators are perplexed to know by what method men of this profession proceeded in their inquiry into secret things; whether they pretended to expound dreams, and descry future events, by natural observations, by the art of astrology, which came much in request in future ages, by such rules as are now found in the books of oneirocritics; or by certain characters, images, pictures, and figures, which were engraved with magical rites and ceremonies. It is not to be doubted indeed but that the magicians, whom Pharaoh consulted for the interpretation of his dreams, made use of some at least, if not all these arts; and the Jewish doctors would make us believe, that after several attempts of divers kinds, they came at last to this exposition, that Pharaoh's daughters (for they supposed him to have seven) should die, and that he should have seven others born to him in their stead; but this being not at all satisfactory to their master, put the cupbearer in mind of Joseph's great abilities that way.—*Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary.*

^e The words wherein Joseph prefaces his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, are much of the same kind with what we find Daniel addressing Nebuchadnezzar upon the like occasion:—'The secret, which the king hath demanded, cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven, who revealeth secrets and maketh known unto the king what shall be in the latter days.'—(Dan. ii. 27, 28.) Both these holy men insinuate, that the interests of princes are more especially the care of divine providence, and that therefore, for their admonition, he frequently sends dreams and visions upon them. And this declaration, previous to the exposition, was perfectly proper, and of mighty force to bespeak the king's attention and regard, at the same time that Joseph was asserting the being and interposition of Almighty God in the guidance of human affairs.—*Le Clerc's Commentary, and Bibliotheca Biblica in locum.*

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only denoted the certainty of the event; that therefore, as the lean kine seemed to eat up the fat, and the withered ears to consume the full and flourishing, so, after seven years of great plenty, other seven years of extreme famine should succeed, which would lay waste all the country, and leave no signs of the former plenty: and therefore, since it had pleased God thus to inform the king what seasons he intended to bring upon the earth, he hoped he would make a right use of the information, by appointing a wise and prudent man over his whole kingdom, who should take care to build granaries, and appoint officers under him in every province, who should collect and lay up ^a a fifth part of each plentiful year's product against the succeeding years of famine.

^b This interpretation, and the good advice given upon it, made the king conceive so great an opinion of Joseph's wisdom, that he thought no one could be so fit to manage the office of collecting the corn in the years of plenty as he who had suggested a scheme so very beneficial. He, therefore, in a short time, made him his deputy over the land of Egypt, and to that purpose invested him with the usual ensigns of that station; gave him his own signet from off his finger; caused him to be clothed in a robe of fine linen, and put a golden chain about his neck; ordered him to ride in a chariot next to his own; and wherever he went, heralds to go before, and, in token that the viceroy was coming, to proclaim to the people, ^c

^a Since there were to be as many years of scarceness as of plenty, some have made it a question why Joseph advised no more than a fifth part of the corn, in plentiful years, to be laid up: but to this it may be replied, that the greater and richer sort were used, in time of plenty, to fill their storehouses with provision against a scarcer year, which sometimes happened; that in the times of famine, men were wont to live more frugally and parsimoniously, as the Egyptians at this time, according to Josephus, were obliged to do by Pharaoh's special command; that, even in the years of famine, tillage went on, and the harvest might be something, (though not mentioned by reason that the product was comparatively inconsiderable,) especially in the lands lying near the Nile; and that, as the tenth part was an ordinary tribute due to the kings of Egypt, in the years of extraordinary plenty, (when the fifth was no more than the tenth in other years,) Pharaoh might think it proper to double this charge, or, what is rather to be supposed from a good king and a good counsellor, to buy as much more as was his tribute, which he might do at an easy rate, when such a vast plenty made corn extremely cheap.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b Here we may observe again, that Joseph directs Pharaoh to look up to God as the author of all these events, and that not in an ordinary, but extraordinary manner, since such fertility and such famine did not proceed from mere natural causes, but from an overruling providence, which made the river Nile overflow its banks so largely for seven years together, and so occasion a great plenty; and then, for the next seven years, overflow very little, if at all, and so produce a very sore and long famine. Nor can it be objected to Joseph that he was guilty of presumption or boldness in giving his advice to Pharaoh concerning the provision that was to be made against the ensuing scarceness, since he was conscious to himself that he was best able to give such advice, and would have been guilty of the sin of omission, had he neglected to do it, in so great and so general a concern.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Biblica in locum*.

^c Annotators are much at a loss to determine of what original the word *abrech* is, some pretending that it is altogether Hebrew, while others make it a compound of Hebrew and Syriac, and others contend, at the same time, that it is purely Egyptian. Those who pretend that it is Hebrew, besides the signification of bowing the knee, which it very well bears, by dividing it into two words, make it import a *tender father*, and suppose that Joseph might very properly be called a father in point of his consummate wisdom, and young or tender in regard to his

'bow the knee.' Nor was this all: for to attach him still closer to his service, and make him forget the very thoughts of ever returning to his own country, ^d he changed his name to that of *Zaphnah-paaneah*, which signifies a *prime minister*, and matched him into a noble family, to Asenah, the daughter of ^e Potipherah, priest or prince of On; by whom he had two sons, the former of whom he called Manasseh, intimating that God made him forget all his toils; and the other Ephraim, because he had made him fruitful in the land of his affliction.

In the mean time, Joseph being now about thirty years old when he was raised to this height of power, took a progress through the whole kingdom; built granaries, appointed proper officers in every place, and, in short, ordered all things with such prudence and

years. Those who make it a mixture of Hebrew and Syriac, divide it, in like manner, into two words, and suppose that as *ab*, in the Hebrew, is *father*, so *rech* or *rach*, in the Syrian tongue, is *king*, in the same sense that Joseph says of himself, and perhaps with allusion to this very name, 'God has made me a father unto Pharaoh,' (Gen. xlv. 8.) that is, in giving him wholesome counsel, even as a father does his children: but those who contend for its being purely Egyptian, do freely confess, that at this distance of time, and under such obsolescence of that language, it is next to impossible to find out the genuine signification of an honorary term, as this very probably was; and therefore they observe, that as the Jewish historian makes no mention of this circumstance in Joseph's story, he might be induced to that omission by reason of his not understanding this word of exotic growth. In this uncertainty of opinions, therefore, we have thought it the best way to follow that translation which some of the best Hebrew interpreters, the Septuagint and Vulgate versions have approved.—*Heidegger's Hist. Patriar.*, vol. 2. Essay 20.

^d It was an ancient custom among eastern princes, upon their promotion of any favourite, to give him a new name. Nebuchadnezzar, we read, (Dan. i. 7.) imposed new names upon Daniel and his companions in Babylon; and it was the custom of the Mogul never to advance a man, but he gave him a new name, and that significative of something belonging to him: but here the question is, what the meaning of the name which Pharaoh gave Joseph is? In the Hebrew text it is *Zaphnah-paaneah*, but in the Egyptian and Greek Pentateuch it is *Pson-thon-phanech*. The oriental versions, however, are pretty unanimous in rendering it—a *revealer of secrets*, but there are some reasons why this should not be its true interpretation. For the time when Pharaoh gave the patriarch this name, was when he advanced him from the condition of an imprisoned slave to that of a 'ruler throughout all the land of Egypt;' and, therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that he gave it in commemoration of such promotion, rather than of his expounding dreams; because to have called him an interpreter of dreams only, had been degrading him to the level of magicians. Now if Pharaoh gave him this name in memory of his promotion, it is very likely that this name was strictly and properly Egyptian, otherwise the common people could not have understood it, though Moses, in his recording it, might endeavour to accommodate it to the Hebrew idiom; and if it was Egyptian, the word in that language signifies what we call a *prime minister*; or strictly the *first*, or *prince of the lords*.—*Bibliotheca Biblica, Occasional Annotations*, 41.

^e The reader must remember not to confound this name with Potiphar, who bought Joseph of the Ishmaelites, because their names in Hebrew are not differently written. The one, however, is called the captain of the guards, the other the prince or priest of On; so that the former must have had his residence in the capital, to be always about the king; but the latter lived at On or Heliopolis, about twenty miles distant from Memphis, the metropolis of the kingdom: nor can we suppose that Joseph would ever have married his master's daughter, lest she should have proved not unlike her mother, for whose incontinence he had so severely smarted.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7

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application, that before the seven years of plenty were expired, he had amassed together an immense quantity of corn, enough to supply both Egypt and the neighbouring countries; so that when the years of famine came on, and the people applied themselves to Pharaoh, he remitted them to Joseph, who, when he saw it fit, opened his stores, and sold provision to all that came.

In the second year of the famine, Jacob, who was not exempt from the common calamity, hearing that there was corn to be bought in Egypt, sent ten of his sons thither to buy some, who, upon their arrival, were directed to apply to Joseph for an order, and as soon as they saw him, prostrated themselves before him, and begged that they might be supplied with corn.

Joseph, at first sight, knew his brethren, but being minded to terrify them a little, would not, as yet, discover himself to them; and therefore, choosing to speak by an interpreter, with a severe look and angry tone, he asked them whence they came, and upon their answering from the land of Canaan, he charged them with being ^a spies who were come to discover the weakness of the country. To which they replying, that they came with no other intent, than purely to buy corn for their numerous family, being all the ^b sons of one man, who once indeed had twelve, but that the youngest was left at home, and the next to him dead: he immediately caught at their words, and put their honesty upon this probation:—That since, as they said, they had a younger brother,

^a These words, 'Ye are spies,' are not to be looked upon as a lie, because they are not spoken by way of affirmation, but of probation only, in the manner that judges speak, when they examine suspected persons, or inquire into a crime, of which men are accused; and have therefore the force of an interrogation, 'Are ye not spies?' or I must take you to be such, until you prove the contrary. This, though it was but a pretensive charge of Joseph, had yet the better colour, because Egypt was defenceless and liable to incursions only on that side from whence his brethren came; for what with the interposition of large deserts, and shallow seas, it was pretty well secured on all other quarters. (*Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries in locum*).—To conceive the full force and heinousness of this charge, says Dr Hales, it is necessary to state briefly the situation of Egypt at the time. In the reign of Timaeus, or Thamuz, about B. C. 2159, Egypt had been invaded and subdued by a tribe of Cushite shepherds, from Arabia, who cruelly enslaved the whole country, under a dynasty of six kings, until, at length, the native princes, weary of their tyranny, rebelled, and after a long war of thirty years, shook off the yoke, and expelled the shepherds to Palestine, where they became the *Philistines*, (from *Palesthan*, "the shepherd land," in the Sanscrit, or primitive Syriac,) about B. C. 1899, or twenty-seven years before Joseph's administration. But the memory of their tyranny was still fresh in the minds of the Egyptians, so that 'any shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians,' Gen. xlv. 34; and ^c they could not endure to eat bread with the Hebrews, because they were shepherds, and came from the neighbourhood of Palestine. And they were greatly apprehensive, that the Philistines, who were a warlike people, might attempt to regain a footing in Egypt, weakened as it had been by so long a war; and when the land of Goshen, which had been their principal settlement, the best pasture land in Egypt, was now in a great measure waste. (*Hales' Analysis*, vol. 2. p. 141, second edition.) This circumstance most probably, at a subsequent period, gave rise to the dread of the Hebrews becoming more powerful than them, and again enslaving them.—Ed.

^b By this they suggested the impossibility of their being spies, since no man, in his wits, would send so many and all his own sons, upon so dangerous and capital an enterprise; nor, was it probable that one man could have a design upon Egypt, but all the great men in Canaan must have joined in it, and then they would have sent men of different families, and not all of one only.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

some one of them should be dispatched to bring him, whilst the rest were kept in custody; otherwise he should look upon them (and there he spake with a seeming earnestness) as no other than spies and enemies; and so ordered them all to prison, until they should come to a resolution.

After three days' confinement, however, he sent for them again, and then, with a milder air, told them that as himself feared God, and was willing to act justly by them, he was loath that their family should want provision, or that they themselves should suffer, if innocent; he therefore propounded this expedient to them:—"That one of them should be confined, as an hostage for the rest, while they returned with corn for the family; and that when they came again, and brought their youngest brother with them, the confined should be released, and all of them reputed honest men."

For persons in their circumstances there was no expostulating with one who had them at his mercy; and therefore they consented to do whatever he required. But in the interpreter's absence, they supposing that no one else understood their language, began to bewail their unrelenting cruelty to poor Joseph, and to condemn themselves severely for it; while Reuben, who was not so culpable in the matter, put them in mind, that all this mischief might have been prevented, had they listened to his counsel, and not acted so inhumanly to their innocent brother, for whose sake, it was no more than what they might expect, that vengeance at one time or other would certainly overtake them.

Their discourse, in short, was so very dolorous and affecting, that Joseph could no longer contain himself, and was therefore forced to withdraw a little to give his tears vent, and then coming in again, commanded ^c Simeon to be bound and sent to prison: but setting the rest at liberty, he ordered the officer who distributed the corn to supply them with what they wanted, and at the same time, as a fresh matter for their surprise, ^d to put each man's money into the mouth of his sack. His orders were accordingly obeyed; and therefore, when they came to bait, and to give their beasts provender, ^e they were

^c It may be supposed, perhaps, that because Reuben was the eldest, he, upon this occasion, had been the properest hostage; but Reuben, we may observe, had showed himself averse to those lengths of wickedness and inhumanity, in which most of the other brothers were agreed, against Joseph. Reuben, in short, resolved to save him; and as Judah was inclined to favour him, had Simeon joined with them, their authority might have prevailed for his deliverance; but Simeon was the person who was most exasperated against him. He was the eldest of those who had proposed to murder him, and was therefore a fit proxy for the rest; the man, as the Hebrews say, who put Joseph in the pit, and was now very justly to be served in his kind: though they who tell us this, have a tradition, that as soon as his brothers were gone, Joseph had him unbound, and ordered him what provisions and conveniences he pleased, during his confinement.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Biblica in locum*.

^d This Joseph might do, without defrauding Pharaoh: for he might either supply them out of that stock of provisions which belonged properly to himself; or if the provisions were the king's, he might pay for them out of his own purse. Nor is there any occasion to conceive, that a person so entirely in favour and confidence with his prince as Joseph was, had his hands tied up from disposing, at his own discretion and pleasure, of so small a boon as this to his friends, for their relief and comfort.—*Musculus*.

^e If it should be made a question, why Joseph's brethren made

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not a little frightened to find their money returned; nor failed they to make all the dismal reflections hereupon that their fears could suggest, concluding that the haughty viceroy had done this, that he might have a pretence to make them his slaves at their next coming down.

As soon as they were got home, they acquainted their father with all these adventures; they told him the treatment they had received from the king's prime minister, and how he suspected them of being spies, of which they had no way to clear themselves, but by leaving Simeon bound in prison, as a pledge, till they should bring Benjamin, to show that what they told him of their family was true. These were sad tidings, indeed, and what made their poor afflicted father break out into this melancholy complaint:—"That one way or other, him they had deprived of his children; that Joseph was dead, Simeon was left in Egypt, and now they were going to take Benjamin from him likewise, which were things too heavy for him to bear."

In vain it was for Reuben, in order to prevail with his father to comply, to offer, as he did, that if he did not return him safe, he might take his two sons, and kill them if he pleased: the death of a grandson was no compensation for the loss of a child; and therefore, instead of assuaging, this did but augment his grief, and make him absolutely resolve not to trust Benjamin with them: for "his brother is dead," says he, "and he is left alone; if any mischief should befall him by the way, then will ye bring my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

In such debates as these they spent the time, till the famine every day increasing, and their stock of provision being well nigh gone, necessity put them in the thoughts of going down again into Egypt. This their father likewise reminded them of, but without taking any notice of their obligation to the viceroy to bring their younger brother with them; which, when Judah suggested to him, and set before him withal the utter impossibility of their going into Egypt, without his complying with that condition, he began to complain again, that he thought himself hardly used in their telling the viceroy any thing of the state of his family, or that they had another brother; which Judah endeavoured to excuse, by assuring his father, that what was said upon that head, proceeded from the simplicity of their hearts, and in answer to the interrogatories which the viceroy put to them, without ever dreaming that he intended to make such a cruel handle of it; and then perceiving his father to waver a little in his resolution, ^a he reiterates the necessity of

use of their own stocks, and especially in a time of so great scarcity, in a public inn? the answer is obvious.—That the inns, or resting-places in those parts of the world, neither were, nor are as yet, such as we meet with in England, and some other parts of Europe. They afforded no accommodation of any kind, but barely house-room. The passengers who travelled in those countries, carried most, if not all of their provisions with them; nor did they make any other use of these public houses, but only to repose themselves in at the end of their stages. (*Musculus*).—The khan or caravansara is seldom more than four bare walls, open at top, and perfectly exposed; if there are cells, nothing is found but bare walls, dust, and sometimes scorpions, the only refreshment being the water generally found in the vicinity; nor are even these empty mansions always to be met with.

^a In the text, the words wherein Judah delivers himself to his father, are these,—"If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food; but if thou wilt not send him,

their going again, and presses him to consent, with this solemn promise, that at the hazard of his own life, he would take care and return him safe: 'Of my hand shalt thou require him,' says he; 'if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.'

But it was not so much his son's importunity, as the necessity of affairs, which induced Jacob to comply; and therefore, perceiving that there was now no remedy, he delivered up Benjamin; but before they departed, instructed them what to do, namely, to take a double quantity of money with them, for fear that there was some mistake made in the other that was returned, ^b and some such presents as the country afforded, and what they imagined would be most acceptable to the viceroy: and so having entreated Heaven for their success, he sent them away, with an aching heart, but a resolved acquiescence in God's good providence, let the event be what it would.

As soon as they arrived at Egypt, they went directly to the king's granaries, and presented themselves before Joseph, who seeing their brother Benjamin with them, gave orders to his steward to conduct them to his house, where he designed they should dine that day. Here again they began to fear, lest this might be a contrivance against them upon account of the money which was returned in their sacks; and therefore, before they entered the house, they acquainted the steward with the whole affair, and to demonstrate their honesty, told him,

¹ Gen. xliii. 9.

we will not go down,' Gen. xliii. 4, 5; which, at first view, seem to have an air of undutifulness in them, but upon a nearer inspection, will admit of this apology, namely, that this was not the first proposal made to Jacob by his sons, to have Benjamin go with them into Egypt. Reuben had once before offered his two sons for pledges, and received a repulse. Upon Jacob's renewing his orders therefore for them to go, Judah only had courage to engage in this fresh remonstrance. He reminds his father, first of the solemnity and earnestness with which Joseph had pretended, that without Benjamin, 'they should not see his face:' then he offers to go very willingly in obedience to his father's command, but desires to insist upon the condition of Benjamin's going with them, as finally, indispensably, and absolutely necessary. For the words, compared with those of Gen. xliv. 26, do plainly denote as much, 'We will not go down,' that is, it is impossible, impracticable, unallowable for us to go. For the future tense, according to the Hebrew idiom, will bear this signification, and consequently will acquit Judah from all suspicion of rebellion or undutifulness towards his father.—*Bibliotheca Biblica, on Gen. Annotation 45.*

^b The present which Jacob ordered his sons to carry down to Joseph is thus particularized in our translation; 'a little balm, a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts and almonds,' Gen. xliii. 11. But there is reason to suspect, that some of these are not the real things which the original words intend. Balm, indeed, which we may suppose was that of Gilead, was of great price all the world over, and a small quantity of it was a present worth acceptance; but unless the honey in Canaan was better than ordinary, there doubtless was no want of it in Egypt: and therefore, it is much more likely that this part of the present consisted of dates, since the Hebrew expresses both by the same name; and in Judea, especially about Jericho, as both Josephus and Pliny tell us, there was a great plenty of them. The word *nekoth*, which is rendered *spices*, should rather signify *storax*, which is an aromatic gum put into all precious spicy ointments. And the word *loth*, which is translated *myrrh*, would come nearer the original if it were called *laudamum*. *Botnim*, which we read *nuts*, are what we call *pistachios*, which were highly esteemed by the ancients as a delicious food; and with these almonds might not improperly be joined together.—*Universal History, and Patrick's Commentary.*

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that besides the money which they found returned, they had brought more along with them, to buy a fresh quantity of provisions.

The steward, on the other hand, being let into the secret, and perceiving the concern they were in, bade them dismiss all uneasy apprehensions; told them, that what they found in their sacks they ought to look upon as a treasure sent them from heaven; owned that he himself had fairly received their money; and gave them assurance that they should never hear any more of it; and, that they might believe his words to be true, he went and brought Simeon unbound to them; acquainted them that they were to dine with his lord that day; and showed them, in the mean while, all the tokens of civility that were fitting for welcome guests.

Joseph was to return by noon, and therefore his brothers took care to have their present in readiness; and when he was come, introduced it in the handsomest and most submissive manner they could. He received them all with a friendly countenance; inquired much concerning the health and welfare of their aged father; and then turning to Benjamin, asked them, if he was the younger brother they had mentioned to him; and without staying for their answer, saluted him in these words, 'God be gracious to thee, my son.' But finding his affections begin to work, and fearing lest he should discover himself too soon, he retired into his chamber, and there vented his passion in a flood of tears; which when he had done, he washed his face, and returned to the company, and ordered the dinner to be served up.

Three tables were spread in a large dining-room; one for himself alone, by reason of his dignity; another for his Egyptian guests, ^a who hate to eat with people of a different nation; and a third for his brethren, who were amazed to find themselves placed in exact order, according to their seniority, and did not a little wonder what this unexpected civility might end in.

Joseph, however, during the whole entertainment, behaved very courteously. From his own table ^b he

sent dishes to every one of his brothers, but to Benjamin he sent five dishes for each of their one; which was another mystery they could not unriddle; however, for the present, they were very cheerful and merry.

After they had ate and drank very plentifully, they began to think of taking their leave, and of going about the affair for which they came: but Joseph had one fright more in reserve for them; and therefore he ordered his steward, when he filled their sacks with corn, to return their money, as he had done before, but into Benjamin's sack, not only to put his money, but the silver cup likewise, wherein he himself used to drink, and after they were gone a little way out of town, to go and overtake them, and charge them with felony.

The steward did as he was commanded: and, when he came up with Joseph's brethren, upbraided them with ingratitude, in so badly requiting his lord's civility, as to steal away his cup. ^c Conscious of their own innocence, and disdainful of so vile a charge, they put the matter upon this short issue:—That whoever, upon search, should be found to have the cup, should be given up to suffer death, and themselves become all his lord's bond slaves. So said, so done: the beasts were unloaded—the sacks were searched—and to their great astonishment and surprise, the cup was found in Benjamin's. To no purpose it was for the poor youth to say any thing in his own defence: upon such a demonstration none would believe him: and yet, being all concerned in the disgrace, they loaded their asses again, and in a mournful manner returned to the city.

Joseph was at home expecting their return, and when they came before him, reprimanded them very sharply, while they lay prostrate at his feet, and ^d acknowledged

lous and astonishing to them, if what Herodotus tells us be true, b. vi. c. 27., namely, "that the distinction in this case, even to Egyptian kings themselves, in all public feasts and banquets, was no more than a double mess."—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Biblica*.

^c Gen. xlv. 5. 'Whereby indeed he divineth.' Grotius thinks that Joseph meant by this speech, that he used this cup in his drink-offerings, when he sacrificed to prepare himself to receive divine presages; but I think we had better say, there was a kind of divination by cups, though we know not what it was, as we are certain there was by many other things among the Greeks, who borrowed much of their religion from the Egyptians. Such vessels as were used in divine service were not used in their own, being held sacred, and therefore separated from common use, and kept so safe, no doubt, that it was not easy to steal them. He speaks, therefore, of some divination that was used at their meals, which doth not signify that Joseph practised it. But the words are still capable of a more simple interpretation, for *machash* sometimes signifies no more than to make an experiment, as in the words of Laban, Gen. xxx. 27, and so the meaning may be, "Might you not have considered that thy master made a trial, by laying this in your way, whether you were honest men or filchers."—*Patrick's Commentary on Genesis*.

^d Judah, in behalf of himself and his brethren, might very well have pleaded in defence, that they received their sacks from the officer tied up as they were, without ever once opening them; and that the same hand which now, for these two times, had returned their money, was the most likely to have conveyed the cup into them: but since there was a manifest juggler in the thing, he was fearful of irritating the governor if he should go about to detect it; and therefore he thought that the best way for him and his brethren to escape was to acknowledge the crime, though they were innocent of it, and, as if they had no perception of the trick that was put upon them, to implore his pity and compassion, by arguments taken from other topics.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

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their guilt; but, in the conclusion of his speech, he assured them, that the person only who was detected in the theft should remain a slave; the rest might return home when they pleased to their father.

Judah, who had taken Benjamin under his care, being by this time recovered from his surprise, drew near, and addressed Joseph in the most submissive and pathetic terms. He acquainted him with the whole case between them and their father, in relation to their bringing Benjamin into Egypt, to take away the suspicion of their being spies. He described very passionately their father's melancholy condition for the loss of his son Joseph; the extreme fondness he had for his son Benjamin; the difficulty they were under to prevail with him to trust him with them, so that he himself was forced to become security for his safe return; and that, if he should go home without him, his father's life was so wrapt up in the child, that he would certainly die with grief. Rather therefore than see this grief of his aged father, and his grey hairs with sorrow descending to the grave, he offered himself an equivalent for his brother: 'Now, therefore, I beseech thee, my lord, let me, thy servant, abide here a slave, instead of the lad, and let him go up with his brethren; for how shall I see my father without him?' This moving speech, and generous offer, were what Joseph's soul could not withstand; and therefore, being able to contain himself no longer, he ordered all the company to leave the room, that he might have a more affectionate freedom in discovering himself to his brethren.

But no sooner had he told them that he was Joseph their brother, which was all that his full heart would let him utter, than, reflecting upon what they had once done to him, they were all struck with such a surprise and confusion, that for a long time they could make him no answer.

As soon, however, as he had recovered himself, he desired them to draw near unto him: he embraced them all round with an unfeigned tenderness; and to dispel all farther apprehensions, told them, that their selling him into Egypt was directed by an unforeseen providence; that therefore, they had no reason to be angry with themselves for doing it, since they were no more than the instruments in God's hand to bring about what his eternal purpose had determined; that he had no reason to resent it, since by that means he had been advanced to the honour and dignity of being governor of all Egypt; nor his father or any of his family to murmur at it, since God had appointed this method for the preservation of their lives. For five years more, he told them, there were to be of the famine; and, therefore, he bid them hasten into Canaan, and tell his father of all his glory and greatness, and desire him to come down, that he might take care of him, and feed him in this time of dearth, and provide him with a country, even the land of Goshen, not far distant from him, and very commodious for such as led a pastoral life. All this, he owned, would be strange and surprising for them to tell; but their father would hardly doubt the testimony of so many eye-witnesses; above all, he would not fail to believe what his favourite Benjamin told him: and with that, he threw himself upon Benjamin's neck, kissed

him, and wept over him for joy; and having treated all the rest in the same kind manner, and as a person that was perfectly reconciled to them, they began to take courage, and conversed more familiarly with him.

A rumour, in the mean time, was spread through the court, that Joseph's brethren were come to buy corn; which, when Pharaoh heard, he sent for him, and told him, that since his father's family was so numerous, and the famine as yet not half over, his best way would be to send for them, and place them in what part of the country he thought fit; for that they should never want provisions or any other favour that he could show them. He put him in mind likewise to send them a fresh supply of corn, and whatever else he thought would be necessary in their journey, with chariots and wagons to bring down their wives and children, and the best of their moveables.

Joseph gladly obeyed the king's command: and, besides the chariots and provisions, sent to his father ten asses, laden with the choicest commodities of Egypt; to his brethren he gave each of them changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave five, with three hundred pieces of silver; and so dismissed them with this kind charge, that they should not 'fall out by the way.' With hearts full of joy they proceeded in their journey to Canaan, and were gladly received by their good old father, especially upon the return of his two sons, Simeon and Benjamin, whom he scarce expected to have seen any more. But when they informed him that his son Joseph was likewise alive, and in what pomp and splendour he lived; that he was the very man, the king's prime minister and governor of Egypt, who had put them into so many deadly frights, being not able to bear so much good news at once, he fainted away in their arms: but when he came to himself again, and they showed him the presents which Joseph had sent, and the chariots and carriages which were come to take him and his goods away, his spirits revived, his doubts and his fears vanished, and in an ecstasy of joy, he cried out, 'It is enough! Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die.'

To see so dear a son, for whom he had mourned so long, in all his Egyptian state and glory, was enough to make him hasten his journey; but as his gratitude to God for all his late mercies vouchsafed unto him, and his farther want of the divine protection to accompany him into Egypt, required some fresh act of religion from him, he chose to go to Beersheba, and there offer some sacrifices, both because it was the place where Abraham and Isaac had lived so long, and because it was in the way to Egypt, as being the utmost boundary of Canaan towards the south.

Here it was that God appeared to him again in a vision; bid him ^a not fear to go down into Egypt, since

^{*} Gen. xlv. 28.

^a It is not unlikely, that the good old man had promised himself the comfort of spending the remainder of his days in the land which God had been pleased to promise him; and therefore, after so much labour of life, and change of place, when he thought himself at the end of his pilgrimage, and perhaps depended upon the patriarchal line being put in possession before his death, to be obliged to leave his land, and to go into a foreign one, was not a little discouraging, especially if he retained in his mind the melancholy prediction to his grandfather, Gen. xv 13,

¹ Gen. xlv. 33, 34.

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he would be with him, and protect him, and in due time bring his posterity out of it again to enter into the possession of the promised land; and that, as to his own particular, he should live near his beloved Joseph, die in his arms, ^a and have his eyes closed by his hand. So that, encouraged by this divine promise, Jacob left Beersheba, and cheerfully pursued his journey into Egypt, where, when he arrived, ^b he and his family made up in all just ^c the complement of seventy persons.

As soon as he came within the borders of Egypt, not far from the land of Goshen, he sent Judah before to acquaint his son Joseph with his arrival; who instantly took his chariot, with a retinue suitable to his high station,

'Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, four hundred years, and shall serve them.'—*Bibliotheca Biblica in locum.*

^a Gen. xlv. 4.—This appears to have been a very ancient and general custom, as there are evidences of its existence among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans. Homer describes Ulysses thus expressing himself on the death of Socus:—

Ah, wretch! no father shall thy corpse compose,
Thy dying eyes no tender mother close. *Il. xi.—Pope.*

There seems to be something of a reason in nature why such a particular regard should be had at death to the eyes, and that is, because they are in life so eminently serviceable both to body and mind. We close the eyes of the dead, because no part of the body looks so ghastly after death, whereas nothing was so sprightly and beautiful before: and the reason why the nearest in blood or friendship should have this office is too obvious to need any explication.—"I entreat that the gods may ordain that when I am doomed to pay the debt of nature, he may be there to close my eyes and thine."—*Penel. ad Ulyss. de Telemach.*

^b The whole account of Jacob's sons and grandsons, who went along with him into Egypt, stands thus:—By Leah 32; by Zilpah 16; by Rachel 11; by Bilhah 7: in all 66, exclusive of Jacob himself, and of Joseph, and his two sons, which make up the 70: and it was necessary indeed that these genealogies should be exactly registered, not only to distinguish each tribe, and thereby discover the Messias when he came, but, as it is in the case before us, to make it apparent, that the increase of Israel, even under oppression, should bear a fair proportion to the promise made to Abraham, namely, 'That his seed should be even as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore for multitude.'—*Universal History, and Bibliotheca Biblica.*

^c There are three different accounts in Scripture of the number of Jacob's family, when they came down into Egypt. In Gen. xlv. 26, it is said, that 'all the souls which came with Jacob into Egypt, were threescore and six:' in the very next verse, and in Deut. x. 22, it is said, that 'they were threescore and ten;' and yet St Stephen, in Acts vii. 14, tells us expressly that they were seventy-five. Now, in order to reconcile these seeming contradictions, we must observe, that in each place there is a different manner of computation. In the first catalogue, Moses speaks of those persons only who came out of Jacob's loins, that is, his children and grandchildren that went into Egypt with him; and these exclusive of Jacob himself, and Joseph and his two sons, who were in Egypt before, were exactly sixty-six: whereas, including Jacob himself, together with Joseph and his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who, though they were in Egypt before, yet living there as strangers only, and having their original from the land of Canaan, may be reckoned as if they had come into Egypt with Jacob, the number is exactly seventy. The difference between Moses and St Stephen is a little more difficult to reconcile; and yet, if we suppose that St Stephen follows the first number of Moses, namely, sixty-six, out of which he excludes Jacob, Joseph, and his two sons, and to which he adds only nine of his sons' wives, for Judah's wife was already dead, and Benjamin is supposed to be still unmarried, and Joseph's wife out of the case, these nine wives, I say, which though out of Jacob's blood, yet belonged to his family, and to Joseph's kindred, which is the very expression St Stephen makes use of, added to the number of sixty-six other persons, will amount exactly to seventy-five.—*Patrick's Commentary, Universal and Howell's Histories.*

and with infinite satisfaction, congratulated his arrival at a place where he had it in his power to make his life happy and comfortable. What the expressions of filial duty, and paternal affection were upon this occasion, words cannot describe: tears of joy flowed from both sides; and while the son was contemplating the goodness of God, in bringing him to the sight of his aged father, the father, on the other hand, thought all his happiness upon earth completed in this interview; and therefore, ¹ 'Now let me die,' says he to his son, 'since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.'

As soon as these tender greetings, and the solemn rejoicings which followed upon them, were over, Joseph proposed to his father and brethren, to go and acquaint Pharaoh with their arrival: and as he supposed that the king would have a curiosity to see some of them, he gave them in charge, that in case he should ask them what occupation they were of, their answer should be, that they were shepherds, as their ancestors, for many generations, had been before them; by which means he might ² secure for them the land of Goshen, which would be a separate habitation, and a happy retreat from the insults of the Egyptians, who were known ^e to have an utter detestation to shepherds.

¹ Gen. xlv. 30.

^d By the general consent of ancient geographers, the land of Goshen is situate in the eastern part of Egypt, between the Red Sea and the river Nile, upon the borders of Canaan. It was a fruitful spot of ground, very fit for pasturage; and therefore Josephus tells us that Pharaoh's own cattle were kept there, and accordingly we find him ordering Joseph to make one of his brothers the inspector-general over them. The country was separate from Egypt: and for this reason the Israelites inhabiting it, might keep themselves in a body, without endangering their religion or manners, by intermixing with the Egyptians, and without incurring their envy or odium, as they would have done, had they lived among them, and shared any power or profit in the government. They came down into Egypt upon a particular exigency, and were to return again to take possession of the promised land; and therefore a country, that lay in a manner contiguous to it, was the most convenient for their abode, that they might be in readiness to remove whenever God should order them to leave it, which they would not have found so easy a thing to do, had they been settled in the heart of Egypt.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^e The country of Egypt, as Diodorus tells us, b. I., was divided into three parts, whereof the priests had one, the king a second, and the soldiery a third; but under these there were three other ranks of men, shepherds, husbandmen, and artificers. The husbandmen served the king, and the other two orders, in tilling the ground for very small wages, and so did the shepherds, in their capacities; for the Egyptians, we must remember, had sheep and oxen, as well as horses and asses, which they sold unto Joseph, in the time of the famine. It cannot be thought, therefore, that they abominated all shepherds in general, but only such shepherds as were foreigners, and for what reason it was that they did this, is not so easy a matter to resolve. Some are of opinion, that shepherds were held in detestation, because they were a people in those days addicted to robbery, which made them very odious to the Egyptians: but others imagine, that theft among the Egyptians was not reputed so abominable a crime; and therefore they think, that the most probable reason for this aversion to shepherds, and to the Hebrews, as such, was the great oppression and tyranny under which they had lately groaned, when the Phœnician shepherds penetrated Egypt, wasted their cities, burnt their temples, murdered the inhabitants, and seated themselves for a considerable while in the possession of it. (See note, page 215.) But upon whatever account it was, that the Egyptians had this aversion to shepherds, it certainly was an instance of Joseph's great modesty and love of truth, that he was not ashamed of an employment, so mean in itself, and so vile in the eyes of the Egyptians. Had he been minded to make the most of the matter, he might have

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With this caution he took five of his brothers along with him; and having informed Pharaoh that his father and family were come as far as Goshen, he presented his brothers to the king, who for his sake received them very graciously; and when he asked them what profession they were of, they told him that they were shepherds, as their family for many generations had been; that want of pasture for their cattle, and of sustenance for themselves, had made them leave Canaan; but that since, as they understood, his majesty had been so hospitable, as to give them reception in his dominions, they humbly prayed, that they might be allowed to settle in Goshen, as a country most convenient for their purpose: which he readily granted, and offered moreover to make any one of them, whom Joseph should appoint, his royal shepherd.

Not long after this, Joseph, in like manner, presented his father to Pharaoh, who seeing him look very hale and hearty, and desiring to know of what age he might be, was informed by Jacob, that he was ^a an hundred and thirty; which, when the king seemed to wonder at, he told him moreover, that his life was not as yet, near so long as that of some of his ancestors, because his fate had been to have too large a share of troubles and fatigues to harass and wear him out; and so, wishing his majesty abundance of health and prosperity, he returned to Goshen, where Joseph took care to supply him, and all his family, with such a plentiful provision of corn, and other necessities, from the king's storehouses, as in the time of the greatest scarceness made him insensible of any want.

But while Jacob and his family lived in plenty, the Egyptians found the sad effects of the famine, which increased daily upon them, and Joseph holding up his corn at a high rate, in a short time brought all their money into the king's coffers; and when their money was gone, they were all, except the priests, who were furnished from the king's stores, obliged to part with

instructed his brothers to have concealed their way or business of life; or if he was aware that they would follow the same in Egypt that they had done in Canaan, he might nevertheless have put into their mouths the high dignity of their descent, and the wonderful history of their family, namely, that Abraham was their great-grandfather, a prince renowned for his defeat of four confederate monarchs; that Isaac was their grandfather, whose amity and alliance had been courted by kings; and that Israel was their father, who once gained a victory even over a mighty prince of the celestial host; all great men in their generations, and dignified with the conversation of God himself. This, and a great deal more, had Joseph been minded to serve the purposes of vanity, he might have suggested to his brethren; but by this open declaration, we may perceive, that his pleasure and ambition was, that the wonderful chain of the divine measures and counsels, in bringing him from an humble condition of life, to such a sublimity of power and figure, might be as conspicuous as possible.—*Poole's Annotations, Patrick's Commentary, and Bibliotheca Biblica in locum.*

^a Pharaoh's question to Jacob, and Jacob's answer, we may suppose, were not all the discourse that passed between them, but only what most deserved to be mentioned; because as the learned Pererius observes this answer of Jacob's is the very hinge upon which the whole chronology of the patriarchal times turns. The same excellent commentator remarks, that though Jacob lived seventeen years after this, yet, even at last, he did not attain 'to the days of the years of the life of his father,' since his father Isaac lived an hundred and fourscore years, and his grandfather Abraham to an hundred and seventy-five.—*Bibliotheca Biblica.*

their cattle, their houses, their lands, and ^b at length, their very selves, for provisions. All these Joseph purchased of the people in the king's name, and for the king's use; and to let them see that the purchase was in earnest, and that their liberties and properties were now become the king's, he transplanted them from their former places of abode, into distant and different parts of the kingdom, that they might in time lose the very remembrance of their ancient possessions. ^c

This, in another person, might have been thought an immoderate zeal for an absolute power in the king, and an advantage unjustly taken of the necessities of the subject; but Joseph so managed the matter as to gain the commendation of both prince and people; for when the seventh and last year of famine was come, he acquainted them that they might now expect a crop against next year; that the Nile would overflow, and the earth would bring forth her fruits as usual. Hereupon he distributed fresh lands, cattle and corn to them, that they might return to their tillage as before; but upon this condition he did it, that from thenceforth the fifth part of all the product of their lands should go to the king, and the rest be theirs. To these conditions the people willingly consented, as imputing the preservation of their lives entirely to Joseph's care; and from that time it passed into a law, that the fifth part of the product of the land of Egypt should always belong to the crown.

While Joseph was enjoying the fruits of his great success and policy, his family at Goshen, which he failed not frequently to visit, became very wealthy, and very numerous, till at length his father Jacob, finding himself grow old and feeble, and perceiving that his latter end was near approaching, sent for him, and to this purpose addressed himself to him: "Though the desire of seeing a son, so dear to me as you are, raised to the height of Egyptian glory, joined to the raging famine which then visited our land, made me willingly come down into this strange country; yet Canaan being the inheritance which God promised to Abraham and his posterity, and where he lies interred with my father Isaac, and some others of our family, in the ground which he purchased of the inhabitants for that purpose; my last, and dying request to you is, ^d that you will not suffer me to be

^b When the Egyptians were driven to this last extremity, in our translation it is said to be in the 'second year;' but this must not be understood to be the second year of the seven years of famine, but the second after that last mentioned, wherein they had sold their cattle, which was in reality the last year of the famine; because he now gave them corn for seed, as well as for food; whereas in the first years, there was neither sowing nor reaping. Gen. xlv. 6.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^c See note on this subject in the following chapter.—Ed.

^d Though there be something of a natural desire in most men to be buried in the places where their ancestors lie; yet Jacob's aversion to have his remains deposited in Egypt seems to be more earnest than ordinary, or otherwise he would never have imposed an oath upon his sons, and charged them all with his dying breath, not to suffer it to be done. For he very well knew, that had his body been buried in Egypt, his posterity, upon that very account, would have been too much wedded to the country, ever to attempt the acquisition of the promised land; and therefore, to wean them from the thoughts of continuing in Egypt, and fix their minds and affections in Canaan, he ordered his body to be carried thither beforehand, in testimony that he died in full persuasion of the truth of the promises which were given to him and his ancestors; nor was it inconvenient,

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buried here, but swear to see me carried to Machpelah, and there deposited with my ancestors. Your great power with the king will easily obtain that favour, which is the last I have to ask." Joseph was not long before he gave his father a satisfactory answer. He promised, and he swore to him, that he would fulfil his desire, which pleased the good old man to that degree, that ^a he bowed, and made his acknowledgment for this kind assurance.

Joseph, who could not be long absent from court, took his leave of his father, but not without giving strict charge to some of the family, that upon the very first appearance of danger, they should immediately send for him. Accordingly, as soon as word was brought him, that his father was a dying, he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim with him, and went to visit him; who when he heard that his favourite son was come, summoned all his spirits together, and was so far revived as to be able to sit up in his bed.

Here he began with recapitulating all the glorious promises which God had formerly made him, concerning his numerous posterity's inhabiting the land of Canaan, and concluded ^b with the death of his dear Rachel.

that future generations, after their return to Canaan, should have before their eyes the sepulchre of their forefathers, for a record of their virtues, and an incitement to the imitation of them. But the strongest motive of all for Jacob's desiring to be buried in Canaan, supposing that he foreknew that our Saviour Christ was to live and die, and with some others, rise again in that country, was, that he might be one of that blessed number; as it was indeed an ancient tradition in the church, that among those who came out of their graves after our Lord's resurrection, Math. xxvii. 53, the patriarch Jacob was one.—*Poole's Annotations, and Bibliotheca Biblica.*

^a The words in our translation are, 'he bowed himself upon the bed's head,' (Gen. xlvii. 31,) where some expositors, presuming, that his bowing was a religious action, will by no means have it directed to Joseph, but to God only, for the assurance which Joseph had given him, that he should be buried according to his desire. But if the word must be translated 'bowed,' there is no necessity to make it an act of adoration, but only a common form of civility, wherewith the father might comply, without any diminution to his superiority over his son. What led these expositors into this conception, was the version of the Septuagint, and the words of the apostle to the Hebrews, where Jacob is said, in allusion, as they suppose, to this passage, to have 'worshipped on the top of his staff,' Heb. xi. 21. But the plain truth is, that the apostle here speaks of another thing, not of what Jacob did now, when Joseph swore unto him, but of what he did when he blessed his other children. In the former case, he seems to have kept his bed; but in the latter, to have received fresh spirits, and sat upon it, though leaning perhaps 'upon his staff.' So that the apostle's words are not taken from those of Moses, but are a reflection of his own, whereby he signifies the strength of Jacob's faith, even when he was so weak as not to be able to bow himself and worship, without the help of his staff. This clearly removes the difficulty, and reconciles Moses and the apostle very perfectly. But there seems to be a more compendious way of doing this; for since the word *Shacah*, which signifies to bow the body, may, in like manner, be rendered to lie or fall down, the most easy translation seems to be, *he laid himself down upon his pillow*, as weak men are wont to do, after they have sat up a while, to despatch some business.—*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentary.*

^b Since Jacob had so strictly insisted upon his being buried with his fathers, and bound Joseph with an oath to see it done, it was proper for him to explain and clear himself, as to what might be secretly objected to his not interring Rachel, Joseph's own mother, and his best beloved consort, in that burying-place, where he so earnestly desired to lie himself; and for his excuse in this respect he had two things to offer: 1st, That he was then upon his journey, and in his return from Padan; and, 2dly, That he had erected a monumental pillar upon her grave, in a very public

"How tenderly I loved her," continued he, "all my family can testify; but this farther proof I design to give you of my affection to her. You have two sons born in a foreign country, and who, according to the usual order of inheritance, should have only the portion of grandchildren, in the division of the promised land; but from this day forward, they shall be called by my name, be esteemed my sons, and as heads of two distinct tribes (for they shall not be called the tribe of Joseph, but the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh) receive a double portion in that allotment. But it must not be so with the other sons which you beget after these: they come in only for the portion of grandchildren: and to you in particular, I bequeath that tract of ground, which, by force of arms, I took from the Amorites, that it may descend to your tribe for ever."

All this while Jacob, whose sight was very much decayed, talked to his son concerning his children, as if they had been absent; but when he perceived that they were in the room, he rejoiced not a little, and ordered them to be brought near him. Joseph placed them in a position according to the order of their age, to receive his father's blessing; but Jacob, crossing his hands, laid his right, which carried with it the preference, upon the younger, and his left upon the elder of them; ^c which

and frequented place: to which a right reverend commentator has added a further apology,—That, as she died in childhood, and Jacob in his travels might not have all things necessary to preserve her body long, he was constrained to bury her sooner perhaps than otherwise he would have done.—*Patrick's Commentary, and Bibliotheca Biblica in locum.*

^c Gen. xlviii. 14. 'And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head.' Imposition of hands was a Jewish ceremony, introduced, not by any divine authority, but by custom: it being the practice among these people, whenever they prayed to God for any person, to lay their hand on his head. Our Saviour observed the same custom, both when he conferred his blessing on children, and when he healed the sick, adding prayer to the ceremony. The apostles likewise laid hands upon those upon whom they bestowed the Holy Ghost. The priests observed the same custom when any one was received into their body. And the apostles themselves underwent the imposition of hands afresh every time they entered upon any new design. In the ancient church imposition of hands was even practised upon persons when they married, which custom the Abyssinians still observe. The ceremony of the imposition of hands on the head of the victim, has been usually considered, in the case of peculiar sacrifices, as a symbolical translation of the sins of the offender upon the head of the sacrifice; and as a mode of deprecating the evil due to his transgressions. So we find it represented by Abarimel, in the introduction to his commentary on Leviticus, (*De Viel*, p. 301,) and so the ceremony of the scape-goat, in Levit. xvi. 21, seems directly to assert. And it is certain that the practice of imprecating on the head of the victim, the evils which the sacrificer wished to avert from himself, was usual amongst the heathen, as appears particularly from Herodotus, (b. ii. c. 39.) who relates this of the Egyptians, and at the same time asserts that no Egyptian would so much as taste the head of any animal, but under the influence of this religious custom, flung it into the river. Confession of sin was always connected with peculiar sacrifices. (Levit. v. 5.; xvi. 21.; Numb. v. 7.) The particular forms of confession used in the different kinds of peculiar sacrifices are handed down to us by the Jewish writers, and are given by Outram, (*De Sacr.* b. l. c. 15, 10, 11.) The form prescribed for the individual presenting his own sacrifice, seems particularly significant. "O God, I have sinned, I have done perversely, I have transgressed before thee, and have done so and so. Lo, now I repent, and am truly sorry for my misdeeds. Let then this victim be my expiation." These last words were accompanied by the action of laying hands on the victim; and were considered by the Jews as equivalent to this, "Let the evils which in justice should have fallen on my head, light upon two

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Joseph supposing to proceed from a mistake, he was going to rectify, but was told by his father, that what he did was by divine direction, and so made Ephraim not only the first in nomination, but gave him a blessing much more extensive than what he gave his brother.

By this time Jacob, finding himself grow faint, and the hour of his departure near approaching, called the rest of his sons together, to take his farewell of them, and distribute his blessing, or rather to foretell what should befall them and their posterity in future ages: and so directing his speech to them severally, he began with Reuben the eldest, and told him,—That for the crime of incest, in polluting his father's bed, he and his tribe were degraded ^a from the privileges of his birthright. He told Simeon and Levi, whom he joined together upon this occasion, that for their impious massacre of Hamor and his people, ^b their tribes should for ever be separated and dispersed among the other; but then turning to Judah, he prophesied of him, that to his tribe should the sovereignty belong, ^c and they be ^d situated in a very fruitful country; that from his name

head of this victim."—See *Outram De Sacr.* b. 1. c. 22. 5, 6, 9. *Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice*, vol. 1. p. 341.

^a The prerogatives of the birthright consisted chiefly in the honour of the priesthood, in the rule and government of the family, and in a double portion of the inheritance, which at this time were all taken away from Reuben, and divided severally; since it appears, in the sequel of the history, that the tribe of Reuben continued all along in obscurity, while the priesthood was conferred on Levi, the government on Judah, and the double portion on Joseph, to descend to their respective tribes.—*Howell's History of the Bible*.

^b Jacob's words, in this place, may imply a double dispersion, namely, of the two tribes from each other: and of their being interspersed among the rest: and accordingly that of Levi had no inheritance among his brethren in the land of Canaan, but only a certain number of cities assigned to them in every tribe. And as for that of Simeon, they had properly no more than a portion of Judah's inheritance, (Josh. xix. 1.) if we except some few places which they got upon mount Seir, and in the wilds of the valley of Gedor, 1 Chron. vi. 39, &c.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^c Gen. xlix. 8. 'Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies.' This expression denotes triumph over an enemy, and that Judah should subdue his adversaries. This was fulfilled in the person of David, and acknowledged by him. 'Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me,' Ps. xviii. 40. Treading on the neck of a vanquished foe has been a very common practice. Amongst the Franks it was usual to put the arm round the neck as a mark of superiority on the part of him that did it. When Chrodin, declining the office of mayor of the palace, chose a young nobleman, named Gogen, to fill that place, he immediately took the arm of that young man, and put it round his own neck, as a mark of his dependance on him, and that he acknowledged him for his general and chief. "When a debtor became insolvent, he gave himself up to his creditor as his slave, till he had paid all his debt: and to confirm his engagement, he took the arm of his patron, and put it round his own neck. This ceremony invested as it were, his creditor in his person."—*Stockdale's Manners of the Ancient Nations*, vol. 1. p. 356. See Gen. xxvii. 40. Deut. xxviii. 48. Isa. x. 27. Jer. xxvii. 8. Josh. x. 24. Lam. v. 5.

^d The country which the tribe of Judah was to inhabit is thus described by Jacob: 'Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes,' (Gen. xlix. 11,) which are expressions somewhat hyperbolical: for they imply, that vines in this country should be as common as thorns in other places; and wine as plentiful as water; but were, in a great measure, answered in that fertile land which fell to the tribe of Judah's share. For here was the valley of Escol, a bunch of whose grapes was brought by the spies as a specimen of the fruitfulness of the land, Numb. xiii. 23. Here was a brook or torrent of the same name,

should the whole nation of the Jews derive their appellation; and that the form of government which he then instituted, should endure among them until the Messiah came. ^e Of Zebulun ^f he foretold that his tribe should be planted near the sea-coasts; and of ^g Issachar, that his should prove a pusillanimous people, and be lovers of inglorious ease, more than of liberty and renown.

From Leah's sons the patriarch passes to those of his two concubinary wives; and ^h of Dan's posterity he foretells, that though they were descended from an hand-maid, yet they should have the same privileges with the other tribes, should become a politic people, and greatly versed in the stratagems of war; of ⁱ Gad's, that they should be frequently infested with robbers, but overcome them at last; of Asher's, that they should be situated in a fruitful and exuberantly rich soil; and ^k of Naphtali's, that they should spread their branches like an oak, and multiply exceedingly.

along whose banks were the most delicious pasture-grounds for cattle; and, as modern travellers tell us, here are very large grapes still to be met with, especially in the valley of Hebron, which in all probability is that through which this torrent runs.—*Poole's Annotations*, *Bibliotheca Biblica*, and *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^e Gen. xlix. 10. 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah.' Sceptres, or staves of some kind or other, have been among almost all nations the ensigns of civil authority, as they are to this day, being in themselves very proper emblems of power extended, or acting at a distance from the person. Achilles, who was the chief of a Grecian tribe or clan, is described in Homer as holding a sceptre or staff, which

The delegates of Jove, dispensing laws,
Bear in their hands.

This remarkable prophecy fixes the date of the Saviour's coming, which was not to exceed the time that the descendants of Judah were to continue an united people,—that a king should rule over them—that they should be governed by their own laws, and that their judges were to be from among their brethren.—Ed.

^f Had Jacob been present at the division of the land of Canaan he could hardly have given a more exact description of Zebulun's lot than we find him doing two hundred and fifty years before it happened. For it extended from the Mediterranean sea on the west, to the lake of Genezareth on the east, and lay therefore very commodiously for trade and navigation. The foretelling so precisely and distinctly the situation and employment of this tribe, though, at first appearance, it may seem a matter of no great moment, yet will be found to be quite otherwise, when it is considered, that such particularities as these could not but be very convincing to the Israelites that it was not chance, nor power, nor policy, that put them in possession of the land of Canaan, but 'God's right hand and his arm, and the light of his countenance, because he had a favour unto them.'

^g No less remarkable is the description of Issachar's tribe, since, though they were a very laborious people in all rural employments, yet they had no great inclination to war; and were therefore frequently infested and subjected by strangers, especially in the time of the judges.

^h The Jews think, that the prophecy of Dan's destroying his enemies by craft was more particularly fulfilled when Sampson, who was of that tribe, pulled down the temple, which crushed himself and the Philistines to death.

ⁱ Gad's lot happened on the other side of Jordan, where they were continually exposed to the incursions of the bordering Arabs; but, by their watchfulness and bravery, they not only prevented them, but several times caught, and plundered them in their turns, insomuch that, in one battle, they took from them fifty thousand camels, two hundred and fifty thousand sheep, besides an hundred thousand men prisoners.—Deut. xxxiii. 22., &c.

^k The words in our translation, 'Naphtali is a hind let loose, he giveth goodly words,' are very obscure, and scarce intelligible. For though the former part of the prediction is commonly applied to Barak's overcoming Sisera, and the latter to that noble canticle

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Jacob had reserved the sons of his beloved Rachel to the last; and therefore turning to "Joseph at the same time that he recollects his past troubles, and sets forth the future greatness of his tribe, he pours down upon him, and in him, upon his posterity, benedictions of all kinds. "The Lord, even the God of thy father," says he, "shall bless thee 'with the dew of heaven,' and with the 'fatness of the earth,' with the 'fruit of the womb,' that is, with a numerous posterity, and with the 'fruit of the breast,' with plenty of all sorts of cattle. May all the blessings promised to me and my forefathers be doubled upon Joseph's royal head; may they out-top and outstretch the everlasting mountains, and prove to him more fruitful and more lasting than they."

Whether Jacob might foresee no merit nor happiness extraordinary in the tribe of Benjamin, or that its being afterwards blended with the tribe of Judah might make it partake of the same blessing; but so it was, that he contented himself with describing its *b* fierce and warlike disposition, which, like a ravenous 'wolf, would shed the blood of its enemies, and in the evening divide their spoil.'

Thus the good old patriarch having given his *c* bless-

which Deborah made upon that occasion; yet the exposition which the learned Bochart gives us of this passage, 'He shall be like a tree that shooteth out pleasant branches,' is both more agreeable to the original, and more answerable to the event; since no tribe multiplied so wonderfully as this of Naphtali, who had but four sons when he came into Egypt, and yet could muster upwards of fifty-three thousand men fit to bear arms, when he came out of it, that is, in less than 220 years.—*Essay towards a New Translation.*

a In the benediction which Jacob gives his favourite Joseph, there are two remarkable titles which he confers upon him. 1st, 'That he was the shepherd, and the stone of Israel,' which seems to be a thankful recognition of Joseph's kindness to his father and family, in keeping and feeding them, even as a shepherd does his sheep; by which means he became the foundation or basis, as it were, of the house of Jacob, by preserving them from perishing by famine, and continuing them settled in the best part of the Egyptian kingdom, for a considerable time: though some refer it rather to his virtuous resisting the temptations of his mistress, and patiently enduring the master's severity, to both of which he remained as immovable as a stone. 2d, The other title is, that he was 'separate from his brethren,' where, though the word *nazir* signifies *separate*, as Joseph was certainly separated from his brethren, when he was sold into Egypt, yet, as it is hardly supposable, that Jacob would couch so cruel an action in so soft a term, it is rather to be thought that he used the word *nazir*, which signifies *crowned*, in allusion to the superintendents of the king's household in all the eastern countries, who were called *nazirs*, and were probably some kind of diadem about their heads, by way of distinction and grandeur. And as for the fruitfulness promised to Joseph, this was exemplified in the large extent of his twofold tribe, Ephraim and Manasseh, which, at their first numbering, yielded seventy-two thousand seven hundred, Num. i., and at their second, eighty-five thousand and two hundred men, all able to go out to war. Num. xxvi.

b How brave and warlike a body of men, and how very expert in feats of arms, this tribe became, we may conceive from what we are told of them, namely, that 'there were seven hundred chosen men among them, left-handed, every one of whom could sling stones at an hair's breadth, and not miss.' (Judges xx. 16.) And how pertinacious they were in their undertakings of this kind is manifest, both from the fierce battles which they fought against all the other tribes, though in a very bad cause, (Judges, xix.) wherein they twice came off conquerors; and from the long opposition which the house of Saul, descended from this tribe, made against the accession of David to the throne, and which could not be suppressed until Abner, the general of their forces, forsook them. Judges and 1 Sam. *passim*.

c Besides these prophecies of Jacob, which were sufficiently

ing to his children, according to the divine direction, and not according to his own inclination, reminded them all, but Joseph more especially, to bury him among his ancestors, *d* in the cave of Machpelah; and so laying himself down in his bed again, in a short time expired, after he had lived 147 years in all, and seventeen of these in Egypt.

The loss of so good a father was doubtless lamented by all his family, but by none with more sincere expressions of filial sorrow than by Joseph. At length, remembering his dying charge, he ordered his physicians, *e* according to the custom of the country, to

verified by their events, the Jews ascribe some other works to him, namely, a treatise entitled The Ladder to Heaven, and another called Jacob's Testament, which Pope Gelasius reckons among the Apocrypha; together with some forms of prayer, which the Jews use every night, and pretend that they were composed by him. As to the commendations which they so plentifully bestow upon this patriarch, these, in a great measure, are justified by the character which the author of Ecclesiasticus gives him, chap. xlv. 23. And as the Mahometans allow him not only to be a prophet, but the father likewise of all the prophets, except Job, Jethro, and Mahomet; so they believe, that the royal dignity did not depart from his posterity, until the times of John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ; and that from him the twelve tribes of the Jews did spring, even as their own twelve did from Ishmael.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Jacob*.

d Gen. xlix. 29. 'And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers.' Princes and persons of quality, who died in foreign parts, were usually carried into their own country, to be buried with their fathers. That this was practised in the patriarchal times, appears from the injunction which Jacob laid upon his children respecting his interment. It was also the custom of the Greeks. Homer represents Juno as thus speaking concerning Sarpedon:—

Give the bold chief a glorious fate in fight;
And when th' ascending soul has wing'd her flight,
Let sleep and death convey, by thy command,
The breathless body to his native land.

For this reason, such as died in foreign countries had usually their ashes brought home, and interred in the sepulchres of their ancestors, or at least in some part of their native country; it being thought that the same mother which gave them life and birth was only fit to receive their remains, and afford them a peaceful habitation after death. Hence ancient authors afford us innumerable instances of bodies conveyed, sometimes by the command of oracles, sometimes by the good-will of their friends, from foreign countries to the sepulchres of their fathers, and with great solemnity deposited there. Thus Theseus was removed from Scyros to Athens, Orestes from Tegea, and his son Tisamenus from Helice to Sparta, and Aristomenes from Rhodes to Messene.—*Ed.*

e Gen. 1. 2. 'And Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father.' Concerning the practice of physic in Egypt, Herodotus says that it was divided amongst the faculty in this manner:—"Every distinct distemper hath its own physician, who confines himself to the study and cure of that alone, and meddles with no other: so that all places are crowded with physicians; for one class hath the cure of the eyes, another of the head, another of the teeth, another of the region of the belly, and another of occult distempers," (b. 2. c. 84.) After this we shall not think it strange that Joseph's physicians are represented as a number. A body of these domestics would now appear an extravagant piece of state, even in a first minister. But then it could not be otherwise, where each distemper had its proper physician; so that every great family, as well as city, must needs, as Herodotus expresses it, swarm with the faculty. There is a remarkable passage in Jeremiah (chap. xli. 11.), where, foretelling the overthrow of Pharaoh's army at the Euphrates, he describes Egypt by this characteristic of her skill in medicine, 'Go up into Gilead, and take balm,' (or balsam.) 'O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines, for thou shalt not be cured.'—*Warburton's Divine Legation*, b. 4. sec. 3.

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^a embalm his father's body, and all preparations for his funeral to be made. For the space of seventy days they continued their mourning for him; in which time it being improper for Joseph to appear at court, he desired some of the officers about the king, to acquaint his majesty, that his father, before his death, had obliged him, upon oath, to bury him in a sepulchre belonging to their family, in the land of Canaan; and that therefore he begged leave to go and fulfil his last commands, and would, without delay, return again. ^b The king readily consented to his request, and ordered moreover the chief officers of his household, and some of the principal nobility of the kingdom, to attend the funeral, who, joined with his own and his father's whole family, some in chariots, and some on horseback, made ^c a very large and pompous procession.

^a The manner of embalming among the Egyptians according to Herodotus, Diodorus, and others, was as follows. When a man died, his body was carried to the artificers, whose business it was to make coffins. The upper part of the coffin represented the person who was to be put in it, whether man or woman; and, if a person of distinction, was generally adorned with such paintings and embellishments as were suitable to its quality. When the body was brought home again, they agreed with the embalmers; but according to the quality of the person, the prices were different. The highest was a talent, that is, about three hundred pounds sterling: twenty minæ was a moderate one; and the lowest a very small matter. As the body lay extended, one of them, whom they called the designer, marked out the place on the left side where it was to be opened, and then a dissector, with a very sharp Egyptian stone, made the incision, through which they drew all the intestines, except the heart and kidneys, and then washed them with palm wine, and other strong and binding drugs. The brains they drew through the nostrils, with an hooked piece of iron, made particularly for that purpose, and filled the skull with astringent drugs. The whole body they anointed with oil of cedar, with myrrh, cinnamon, and other drugs, for about thirty days; by which means it was preserved entire, without so much as losing its hair, and sweet, without any signs of putrefaction. After this it was put into salt about forty days; and therefore when Moses says, that forty days were employed in embalming Jacob, (Gen. 1. 3.) he must mean the forty days of his continuing in the salt of nitre, without including the thirty days that were spent in the other operations above mentioned; so that, in the whole, they mourned seventy days in Egypt, as Moses likewise observes. Last of all, the body was taken out of this salt, washed, and wrapped up in linen swaddling bands dipped in myrrh, and rubbed with a certain gum, which the Egyptians used instead of glue, and so returned to the relations, who put it into the coffin, and kept it in some repository in their houses, or in tombs, made particularly for that purpose.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Embalm*, and *Warburton's Divine Legation*, vol. 2. b. 3.

^b It was against rule for any person, how great soever, in mourning apparel, to appear in public, and especially in the royal presence, because in that state they were looked upon as defiled; and therefore Joseph does not go himself, but desires some of the courtiers to carry his request to the king; and this request he was the rather bound to make, because the retinue and guard which the pomp of the funeral, and the danger of molestation from enemies, made necessary, could not be obtained without the king's leave.—*Musculus*.

^c The splendour and magnificence of our patriarch's funeral seems to be without a parallel in history. What hitherto has most affected me in the comparison, were indeed the noble obsequies of Marcellus, as Virgil has described them, but how do even these, with all their parade of poetry about them, fall short of the plain and simple narrative before us? For what are the six hundred beds for which the Roman solemnities on this occasion were so famous, in comparison of that national itinerant multitude, which swelled like a flood, and moved like a river, to all Pharaoh's servants, to the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, that is, to the officers of his household, and deputies of his provinces, with all the house of Joseph, and his

As soon as they were entered into the land of Canaan, they made an halt at ^d the thrashing-floor of Atad, and there continued mourning, and lamenting the death of their friend and father seven days; which made the Canaanites, perceiving that the company came from Egypt, call the place *Abel-mizraim*, or *the mourning of the Egyptians*, ever after. They thence continued their march till they came to the field of Machpelah, where ^e they deposited Jacob in the cave with his ancestors, and so returned to Egypt again.

As soon as their father was buried, Joseph's brethren began to reflect on the wrongs they had formerly done him, and were not a little apprehensive, that as he certainly had it in his power, he might now have it in his intention, to avenge himself of them: and therefore they consulted together, and framed this message,—That it was his father's earnest request, that he should forget all past injuries, and continue them under his protection, as formerly. This, when Joseph heard, such was his compassionate temper, that he could not refrain from weeping; and therefore, to remove their fears, he sent immediately for them, and receiving them with the same kind affection as when their father was alive, excused the actions committed against him, in such an obliging manner, and gave them such assurances of his future love, and adherence to them upon all occasions, as made them return to their families full of joy and satisfaction.

^f The sacred history gives us no further account of

brethren, and his father's house, conducting their solemn sorrow for near three hundred miles into a distant country.—*Bibliotheca Biblica, Occasional Annotations*, 46.

^d The words in the text are,—‘And they came to the thrashing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan,’ Gen. 1. 10. Where this place was, we cannot determine from any account in Scripture; but it is very probable, that it lay not far from the place where Jacob was buried, and so not far from Hebron. For since it is absurd to suppose, that the corpse of Jacob was carried to the cave of Machpelah such a round about way as the Israelites went afterwards into the land of Canaan, namely, through Arabia Petræa, quite on the eastern side of Jordan, it remains to suppose, that these places are said to be beyond Jordan, not in respect of Egypt, from whence Jacob's corpse was brought, but in respect of the place where Moses was, when he wrote the history, that is, in a country on the east of Jordan; and consequently the places beyond Jordan must be such as lay on the west of Jordan; but why they made the thrashing-floor of Atad, rather than the place of interment, the scene of their lamentations, is not so easy to resolve. Perhaps it was a place more convenient to stay in for seven days, than the field of Machpelah; or perhaps it might be the custom, at the very entrance of the country, where they carried the corpse to be buried, to fall into lamentations, which they might repeat at the grave again, though no mention be made of it here.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1.; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

^e The Jewish doctors have a tradition of a bloody fight which Joseph had at his father's funeral, with one Tzephro, the son of Eliphaz, who would have opposed his burying him in the cave of Machpelah, as disputing his title to the ground, but that Joseph, and his men, having overcome him, carried him away with them into Egypt, and kept him there prisoner as long as Joseph lived; however, as soon as he was dead, Tzephro found means to escape into Italy.—*Universal History*, in the notes, b. 1. c. 7.

^f The author of Ecclesiasticus has given us an encomium of the patriarch Joseph in these words, ‘Of Jacob was this man of mercy born, who found favour in the eyes of all flesh. He was born to be the prince of his brethren, and the support of his family; to be the head of his kinsmen, and the firm support of his people. His bones were visited, and prophesied after his death,’ (xlix. 15.) His meaning is, that his bones were removed out of Egypt, and that this fell out as a consequence of his prophecy, that God would visit the Hebrews, and bring them into

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any particulars in Joseph's life, though he lived fifty-four years after his father's death. It informs us, that he lived to see himself the happy parent of a numerous offspring in his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, even to the third generation; and all this while we may presume, that he continued in high favour with his prince, and in weighty employments under him. But when he grew old, and found his death approaching, he sent for his brethren, and with the like prophetic spirit, that his father Jacob had done, told them, that God, according to his promise, would not fail to bring their posterity out of Egypt into the land of Canaan; and therefore he made them swear to him, as he had done to his father, that when it should please God thus to visit them, they would not forget to ^a carry his body along with them: and to this purpose, as soon as he was dead, which was in the hundred and tenth year of his age, they had his body embalmed, and ^b kept in a coffin, ^c until the time their deliverance should come.

the promised land. The Jewish rabbins have taken a great latitude in ascribing several particulars to this great man, which have not the least foundation in Scripture. They make him the inventor of all the arts and sciences, for which the Egyptians afterwards became so famous; and attribute to him the composition of several books, such as Joseph's Prayer, Joseph's Mirror, &c. which do not so much redound to his credit. Mahomet, in his Coran, (Surat. 12.) relates his history at length, but blends it with many fabulous circumstances, which have been much improved by the eastern people; for they made him in a manner greater than the Jewish doctors do. They tell us equally that he taught the Egyptians the most sublime sciences, and particularly geometry, which was highly necessary in their division of the land. They suppose, that all the wells, and baths, and granaries, which go under his name, nay, that all the ancient pyramids and obelisks, though they do not, were of his erection; and they believe, that he had all along upon his shoulder a point of light, like a star, which was an indelible mark of the gift of prophecy; with many more fictions of the like nature.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Joseph*.

^a There are several reasons which might induce Joseph not to have his dead body immediately carried into Canaan, and buried, as his father was. 1st, Because his brethren, after his decease, might not have interest enough at court to provide themselves with such things as were necessary to set off the pomp and solemnity of a funeral befitting so great a personage. 2dly, Because he might foresee, that the Egyptians, in all probability, as long as their veneration for his memory was warm, would hardly have suffered his remains to have been carried into another country. 3dly, Because the continuance of his remains among them, might be a means to preserve the remembrance of the services he had done them, and thereby an inducement to them to treat the relations he had left behind him with more kindness. 4thly, And chiefly, because the presence of his body with the Israelites might be a pledge to assure them, and a means to strengthen and confirm their faith and hope in God's promises to their progenitors, that he would infallibly put their posterity in possession of the land of Canaan: and accordingly, when Moses delivered them out of Egypt, he carried Joseph's body along with him, (Exod. xiii. 19.) and committed it to the care of the tribe of Ephraim, who buried it near Shechem, (Josh. xxiv. 32.) in the field which Jacob, a little before his death, gave to Joseph, as his peculiar property.—*Pererius' and Patrick's Commentary; Poole's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

^b The Jewish rabbins have a story, that the Egyptian magicians came and told Pharaoh, that if he had a mind to keep the Hebrews in his dominions, he must hide Joseph's body in some certain place where they should never find it, because it would be impossible for them to go out of Egypt without it; that thereupon his body was put into a chest of 6000 lb. weight, which was sunk in the mud of one of the branches of the river Nile; and that Moses was forced to work a miracle to get it out, and carry it away.—*Calmet, ibid.*

^c Gen. 1. 26. 'So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years

CHAP. II.—Difficulties obviated, and Objections answered.

THE most material objection we have placed last; and because it relates to a passage in Scripture, which is known to have its difficulties, it may not be improper, in order to give it a clear solution, first to cite the passage itself, and then to explain the terms contained in it: 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.'

1. Now the word *shevet*, which we render sceptre, has both a literal and a figurative signification. In its literal, it denotes a rod, a wand, a sceptre, a shepherd's crook, &c., and in its figurative, it either implies the correction and punishment, whereof the rod, or the authority and power, whereof the sceptre is the ensign. It cannot be doubted, I think, but that the word is to be taken in a figurative sense here; and yet it cannot be supposed to signify punishment, because the tribe of Judah was so far from being in a state of affliction, that it always flourished exceedingly, and even in the time of its captivity, enjoyed its own form of government. The word must therefore, in this place, be put for that power and dominion whereof the sceptre, in ancient times, was thought a fitter representation than either the crown or diadem.

2. The word *mechokek*, which we translate lawgiver, is not synonymous with the former, but has two distinct significations. It sometimes signifies, not a person who has power to make laws himself, but only to teach and instruct others in those laws that are already made: and in this sense it differs very little from the scribes, and doctors, and teachers of the law, whereof there is so much mention made in our Saviour's days. At other times, it denotes a person invested with power and authority even to make laws, but then this authority of his is inferior to that of a king; so that properly he may be called an inferior magistrate or governor set over a people by the license of some monarch, and, by his commission appointed to rule: and in this sense the word should rather be taken here, because there were such governors and deputies set over the Jews, after their return from the Babylonish captivity.

¹ Gen. xlix. 10.

old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.' When Joseph died he was not only embalmed, but 'put into a coffin.' This was an honour appropriated to persons of distinction, coffins not being universally used in Egypt. Maillet, speaking of the Egyptian repositories of the dead, having given an account of several niches that are found there, says, 'it must not be imagined, that the bodies deposited in these gloomy apartments were all enclosed in chests, and placed in niches: the greatest part were simply embalmed, and swathed after that manner that every one hath some notion of; after which they laid them one by the side of another, without any ceremony: some were even put into those tombs without any embalming at all, or such a slight one, that there remains nothing of them in the linen in which they were wrapped but the bones, and those half rotten,' (Letter vii. p. 281.) Antique coffins of stone, and sycamore wood, are still to be seen in Egypt. It is said that some were formerly made of a kind of pasteboard, formed by folding and gluing cloth together, a great number of times; these were curiously plastered and painted with hieroglyphics.—*Theravenot*, part 1. p. 137.

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3. The phrase which we render 'between his feet,' according to the modesty of the Scripture expression, means nothing else, but of his seed or posterity; and so the intendment of this part of the prediction must be, that 'the tribe of Judah shall have lawgivers of their own to the very last times.'

4. From whatever radix it is that the word *Shiloh* is derived, both Jews and Christians are agreed in this, that by the person to whom this title is applied, the patriarch intended the great Saviour of the world, who is called the Messiah, or Christ.

5. By Judah here, there is not an absolute necessity to understand the people of that tribe only, but all those likewise who were afterwards called Jews. And,

6. Whether we refer the gathering of the people to the tribe of Judah, as they did in the times of the captivity, or to Shiloh, when he should come, as to the main of the prophecy, there is not a great deal of difference; since the main of the prophecy is,—'That the Messiah shall come, before the Jewish government would totally cease.' And therefore the question is, whether there was any form of government subsisting among the Jews, and particularly in the tribe of Judah, at the time when Christ was born?

The form of government which Jacob, upon his death-bed instituted, was that of dividing his family into tribes, and making his own, and the two sons of Joseph, heads over their respective houses. This government was properly aristocratical; but in times of some extraordinary exigence, all authority was devolved in the hands of a judge, who, when the end for which he was appointed was effected, in the same manner as the Roman dictator did, resigned up his power, and became no more than 'one of the princes of the tribes of his fathers.'

The abuse of this judicial power, however, in the hands of Samuel's sons, made the people desirous of a regal government; and in that form it continued, from the time it came into David's hands, who was of the tribe of Judah, for the space of 470 years. The division of the kingdom made a great alteration in the fortunes of the people; for the Assyrian captivity was the ruin of the ten tribes. They lost their government, and from that time never recovered it; but it was not so with the kingdom of Judah, in the Babylonish captivity. ¹ For if we consider that the Jews were carried to Babylon, not to be slaves, but were transplanted as a colony, to people that large city; that they were commanded therefore, ² by the prophet, to 'build houses,' and 'plant gardens,' and to seek the 'peace of the city' in which they were captives; and that, upon the expiration of their seventy years' captivity, many of them were so well settled in ease and plenty, that they refused to return to their own country again. If we consider farther, that the Jews lived at Babylon as a distinct people, and were governed, in their own affairs, by their own elders; that they appointed feasts and fasts, and ordered all other matters relating to their civil and ecclesiastical state among themselves; and that, upon their return from Babylon, they were thought a people considerable enough to be complained of to Artaxerxes; we cannot but con-

clude, that they made all along a figure far from comporting with the condition of mere slaves, subjected entirely to a foreign yoke, without any law or government of their own.

After the time of this captivity, indeed, the Jews were never so free a people as they had been before. They lived under the subjection of the Persian monarch, and under the empire of the Greeks and Romans, to their last destruction; but still they lived as a distinct people, governed by their own laws; and the authority of the Persian, and other kings over them, destroyed not that rule, which, in all the vicissitudes that befell them, they still possessed.

How the case stood in the time of the Asmonean princes, may be collected from several passages in the Maccabees: and that the like government subsisted, to the very death of Christ, may in like manner be evinced from many instances in the gospel; but one or two of these will be enough to illustrate the thing.

When our Saviour tells the Jews, ³ 'The truth shall make you free,' and they reply, 'We are Abraham's children, and were never in bondage to any man,' surely they had not forgot their captivity in Babylon, much less could they be ignorant of the power of the Romans over them at that time; and yet they accounted themselves free; and so they were, because they lived by their own laws, and executed judgment among themselves. When our Saviour foretells his disciples, that they ⁴ 'should be delivered up to councils, and scourged in the synagogues,' he shows, at the same time, what power and authority were exercised in the councils and synagogues of the Jews: and, to mention but one instance more, when Pilate, willing to deliver Jesus, says to the Jews, ⁵ 'Take ye him, and crucify him;' and again, ⁶ 'Take ye him, and judge him according to your own law;' he likewise shows, that the Jews lived under their own law, and had the exercise of judicial authority among themselves.

By this deduction, it appears evidently that the sceptre, placed in the hand of Judah by his father Jacob just before his death, continued in his posterity till the very death of Christ. From that time all things began to work towards the destruction of the Jewish polity, and within a few years, their city, temple, and government, were utterly ruined, and the Jews not carried into a gentle captivity, to enjoy their laws, and live as a distinct people, in a foreign country; but were sold like beasts in a market, became slaves in the strictest sense, and from that day to this, have neither prince nor lawgiver among them: so that, upon the whole, ⁷ the sense of Jacob's prophecy, with relation to Judah, as it is now fulfilled, may not improperly be summed up in this paraphrase:—

"The power and authority which shall be established in the posterity of Judah, shall not be taken from them, or at least they shall not be destitute of rulers and governors, (no, not when they are in their declining condition,) until the coming of the Messiah. But when he is come, there shall be no difference between the Jews and Gentiles, who shall be all obedient to the Messiah; and after that, the posterity of Judah shall have neither king nor ruler of their own, but their whole common-

¹ Bishop Sherlock's third dissertation, annexed to his Use and Intent of Prophecy.

² Jer. xxix. 5, 7.

³ John viii. 32, 33.

⁴ Mat. x. 17.

⁵ John xix. 6.

⁶ John xviii. 31.

⁷ Patrick's Commentary in locum.

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wealth shall quite lose all form, and never recover it again."

The bequest which Jacob makes to his son Joseph, runs into this form:—¹ 'Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite, with my sword, and with my bow.' But when did we ever read of Jacob's being a military man? His sons indeed invaded Shechem, and took, not from the Amorites, but the Hivites, the adjacent country, as we may suppose; but so far is he from approving of what they did, that to his very dying hour, we find him severely remonstrating against it, and must therefore be supposed too conscientious, either to retain himself, or to consign to his beloved son, a portion of land acquired by such wicked and sanguinary means.

The tract of ground, therefore, which he mentions, must certainly be that ² which he purchased of Hamor, the father of Shechem; which he gave Joseph for a burying-place, and where Joseph, in consequence of that donation, ³ was afterwards buried, and not in the field of Machpelah, the common repository of most of his ancestors. And to resolve the difficulty of his saying, that he took it from the Amorite by force of arms, when it is manifest that he bought it of Hamor the Hivite, for an hundred pieces of silver, we may observe, that the persons who are called Hivites in one place, may, without any impropriety, be called Amorites in another, forasmuch as the Amorites, being the chief of all the seven nations in Canaan, might give denomination to all the rest, in like manner as all the people of the United Provinces are, from the pre-eminence of that one, commonly called Hollanders: and then, if we can but suppose, that after Jacob's departure from Shechem, for fear of the neighbouring nations, some straggling Amorites came, and seized on the lands which he had purchased, and that he was forced to have recourse to arms to expel the invaders and maintain his right, all the difficulty or seeming repugnance of the passage vanishes.

⁴ Jacob, we allow, was a man of peace, but his sons were warriors; and to them he might the rather give permission to recover the possession of what he had bought, because he looked upon it as an earnest of his posterity's future possession of the whole land. ⁵ And though we read nothing in the foregoing history, either of the Amorites invading Jacob's property, or of his expelling them thence; yet this is far from being the only instance of things being said to be done in Scripture, ⁶ whose circumstances of time, place, and persons, we find nowhere recorded; and a much easier supposition it is, than to make, as some have done, the sword and the bow, here mentioned, to signify the money wherewith he purchased this small territory.

Jacob is the first, that we read of, who particularly declared the future state of every one of his sons, when he left the world; but it has been an ancient opinion, that the souls of excellent men, the nearer they approach to their departure hence, the more divine they grew, had a clearer prospect of things to come, and (as ⁷ Xenophon

makes Cyrus speak) at the point of death became prophetic. Though, therefore, the last words which we find our patriarch uttering to his sons, may be rather accounted prophecies than benedictions; yet since the text assures us, that ⁸ 'he blessed every one with a separate blessing,' we may fairly infer, that though he found reason to rebuke the three eldest very sharply; yet if his rebukes, and the punishment pronounced against them, had the good effect to bring them to a due sense of their transgressions, it was a blessing to them, though not a temporal one; though, even in this last sense, it cannot be said but that he blessed them likewise, since he assigned each of them a lot in the inheritance of the promised land, which it was in his power to have deprived them of.

However this be, ⁹ it is certain that all impartial critics have observed, that the style of these blessings or prophecies, call them which we will, is much more lofty than what we meet with in the other parts of this book; and therefore some have imagined, that Jacob did not deliver these very words, but that Moses put the sense of what he said into such poetical expressions. But to me it seems more reasonable to think, that the spirit of prophecy, now coming upon the good old patriarch, raised his diction, as well as sentiments; even as Moses himself is found to have delivered ¹⁰ his benedictions in a strain more sublime than what occurs in his other writings.

It is true, indeed, that in the predictions of the patriarch, as well as in the benedictions of Moses, several comparisons do occur, which are taken from brute animals. Thus Judah is compared to a lion, Issachar to an ass, Dan to a serpent, Benjamin to a wolf, and Naphtali to an hind let loose. But this is so far from being a disparagement to the prophetic spirit, that it is a commendation of it; since, if the lion be a proper emblem of power and strength; if the ass be an image of labour and patience; if the serpent, an hieroglyphic of guile and subtlety; if the wolf, a symbol of violence and outrage; and if a hind let loose be no bad representation of a people loving liberty and freedom; then were these qualities, which nothing but a Divine Spirit could foresee, abundantly specified, as their respective histories show, in the posterity of the several heads of tribes to which they are applied.

And as these comparisons are a kind of testimony of the divine inspiration of the holy patriarch upon this occasion, so are they far from being any diminution of the dignity of the subject he was then treating of; since a man must be a stranger to all compositions of this kind, who is not persuaded, that comparisons taken from the animal world, are, as it were, the sinews and support of what we call the sublime; and who finds not himself less inclined to cavil at Jacob's manner of expression, when he perceives the lofty Homer comparing his heroes so frequently to a lion, a wolf, an ass, a torrent, or a tree, according to the circumstances he places them in, or the different point of light wherein he thinks proper to take them. And I mention it as an argument of the truth and excellency of the Mosaic history, that we find its author adhering to the original simplicity, and pursuing that very method of writing, which was certainly

¹ Gen. xlviii. 22.

² Gen. xxxiii. 19, compared with Joshua xxiv. 32

³ Josh. xxiv. 32.

⁴ Poole's Annotations.

⁵ Patrick's Commentary.

⁶ To this purpose, see Gen.

xxviii. 22. Deut. ii. 9, 10, 11. Josh. xxiv. 11.

⁷ B 8.

⁸ Gen. xlix. 28.

⁹ Patrick's Commentary.

¹⁰ Deut. xxxiii.

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in vogue, when the most ancient books that we know any thing of were composed.

Moses' method of writing, as we have had occasion more than once to take notice, is very succinct; and therefore when he tells us, that upon Joseph's coming into Egypt, and being sold to Potiphar, captain of the guard, he commenced steward of his household, we must not suppose, that there did not a sufficient space of time intervene to qualify him for that office. What therefore some of the Jewish doctors tell us, seems not improbable, namely, that his master, as soon as he bought him, sent him to school, and had him instructed, not in the language only, but in all the learning of the Egyptians. However this be, it is certain that there is no small affinity between the Hebrew and Egyptian tongue; so that a person of good natural parts, and of an age the fittest that could be for learning any thing, might, with a little diligence and application, make himself master of it in a very short time.

Joseph, indeed, as we may observe, talked to his brethren by an interpreter; and that he might do, though the difference between the two tongues was not very great. ¹ A Frenchman, we see, is not understood at first by an Italian or Spaniard, though all the three languages are derived from the same original; but when once he is let into the knowledge of this, and comes to perceive their different formations and constructions, what was foreign to him before, soon becomes familiar. And in like manner, Joseph, with a small matter of instruction, and some observation of his own, might be let into the secret of the Egyptian language, the nature of their accounts, and the customs of the country, and so become every way qualified to give the content, we find he did, in the place to which he was advanced.

² The notion that we have of an eunuch, is a person who has lost his virility; and therefore to assign him a wife, as we find Potiphar had a very naughty one, may seem a manifest incongruity; but for this there is an easy solution to be given. The word *Saris* indeed denotes equally an 'eunuch,' and any 'court minister;' and the reason of this ambiguity is,—That, as eastern kings, for their greater security, were wont to have slaves, who were castrated, to attend the chambers of their wives and concubines, and upon the proof of their fidelity, did frequently advance them to the other court employments, such as being privy-counsellors, high-chamberlains, captains of their guards, &c., it hence came to pass, that the title of eunuch was conferred on any who were promoted to those posts of honour and trust, even though they were not emasculated. And indeed, when we read, in the books of Kings and Chronicles, so frequent mention made of eunuchs about the person of David, and other Jewish princes, we must be far from supposing, that these were all eunuchs in reality, since it was unlawful, ³ according to their historian, in that nation, to castrate even a domestic animal; and according to the institution of their law, an express prohibition it was, that ⁴ 'he who had his privy members cut off, should not enter into the congregation of the Lord.'

Both the Arabic version, and the Targum of Onkelos,

are therefore very right in rendering the word, a *prince* or *minister* of Pharaoh: for if we compare the several parts of his history, we shall find, ⁵ that Potiphar had the chief command of the forces that guarded the person and palace-royal; that as such he presided in all courts and causes that had a more immediate relation to these; that he had power under the king, of judging and deciding all cases within those walls, of imprisoning and releasing, of life and death, and of hastening or suspending the execution of capital punishments.

And if Potiphar was a person invested with all this authority, it may seem a little strange, why he did not immediately put Joseph to death; since, had his wife's accusation been true, his crime deserved no less a punishment. But whether it was that Joseph had found means to vindicate himself, by the mediation of the keeper of the prison, who was Potiphar's deputy, though there is no account of it in Scripture; or God, in behalf of the righteous, might interpose to mollify the heart of this great man, and restrain his hand from doing violence, the issue of the matter shows, that he was in a short time convinced of his innocence, or otherwise it cannot be believed that he would have suffered him to be made so easy, and to be invested with so much power in the prison; though at the same time, he might not think proper to release him, for fear, that so public an acquitment might bring disreputation both to his wife and himself.

Joseph could not but foresee, that to live in the palaces of kings, and to accept of high posts and honours, would be very hazardous to his virtue. ⁶ But when he perceived the hand of providence so visible in raising him, by ways and means so very extraordinary, to eminence, and an office wherein he would have it in his power to be beneficial to so very many, he could not refuse the offers which the king made him, without being rebellious to the will and destination of God. To him therefore who had secured him hitherto, he might in this case commit the custody of his innocence, and accept of the usual ensigns of honour, without incurring the censure of vanity or ostentation.

And though, in after ages, all marriages with infidels were certainly prohibited, yet there seems to be at this time a certain dispensation current, forasmuch as Judah to be sure, if not more of Joseph's brethren, had done the same: besides that, in Joseph's case, there was something peculiar. ⁷ For as he was in a strange country, he had not an opportunity of making his addresses to any of the daughters of the seed of Abraham; as the match was of the king's making, he was not at liberty to decline it, without forfeiting his pretensions to the royal favour, and consequently to the means of doing so much good; and as it is not improbable that he might be advised to it by a particular revelation, so it is highly reasonable to believe that he converted his wife, at least to the worship of the true God, before he espoused her: even though there should be nothing in that opinion of the rabbins, that he made a proselyte likewise of her father, the priest of On, who could not but be desirous to purchase at any rate so advantageous

¹ Le Clerc's Commentary in Gen. xlii. 23.

² Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 20.

³ Joseph. Antiq. b. 4. c. 8. ⁴ Deut. xxiii. 1.

⁵ Bibliotheca Biblica on Gen. vol. 2. Occasional Annotations, 39.

⁶ Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 20. ⁷ Ibid.

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an alliance, and took this occasion to establish the rite of circumcision, if not in all Egypt, at least among persons of the sacred order, who, according to the account of those who wrote the history of that country, in very early days certainly were not without it.

Some may imagine, that the better to personate an Egyptian lord, and thereby conceal himself from his brethren, or rather to comply with the language of the court, in this particular, 'Joseph swore by the life of Pharaoh,' in the same manner as the Romans, in adulation to their emperor, were wont to swear by his genius. It must be acknowledged indeed, that, as every oath is a solemn appeal to God, to swear by any creature whatever must needs be an impious and idolatrous act; and therefore the proper solution of this matter is,—not that oaths of this kind were allowable before the institution of Christianity, but that Joseph, in making use of these words, did not swear at all. ¹ For since every oath implies in it either an invocation of some witness, or a postulation of some revenge, as our great Sanderson terms it, to say that Joseph appealed to the life of Pharaoh as a witness is ridiculous; and without a very forced construction indeed, the words can never be supposed to include in them a curse, and therefore their most easy signification must be, what we call indicative: 'By the life of Pharaoh,' that is, as sure and certain as Pharaoh liveth, 'ye are spies;' just as we say, 'By the sun that shines, I speak truth,' that is, as sure as the sun shines; neither of which can with any propriety be called oaths, but only vehement asseverations.

The words which Joseph's steward, sent to apprehend his brethren, makes use of, are, ² 'Is not this the cup in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth?' and the words wherein Joseph accosts them, when they are brought before him, are, ³ 'What deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye not, that such a man as I can certainly divine?' And from hence ⁴ some have imagined, that Joseph was a person addicted to magical arts, and by virtue of this single cup, could discover strange and wonderful things. But in answer to this, others have observed, ⁵ that the word *nashah*, which we render *to divine*, was formerly of an indefinite sense, and meant in general *to discover*, or *make a trial of*; and accordingly they have devised a double acception of the steward's words, as if he should say,—By this cup (viz: left in a careless and negligent manner) my master was minded to make an experiment, whether you were thieves, or honest men; or say,—By this cup, wherein he drinketh, my ^a master discovers and finds out the temper and dispositions of men, when they are in liquor. But both of these senses seem a little too much forced, and are far from agreeing with the other words of Joseph.

It must be acknowledged, therefore, that as magical arts of divers kinds were in use among the Egyptians, many years before Joseph's time of coming thither; and that as Joseph, by his wonderful skill of interpreting

dreams, had gained a great reputation for knowledge, and perhaps among the populace, might pass for a diviner, he took an occasion from hence, in order to carry on his design, to assume a character that did not belong to him. There is no reason, however, to infer from the words, that ^b the art of divining by the cup, as it came afterwards to be practised, was then in use in Egypt; ^c because the words before us, according to the sense of the best interpreters, do not relate to this cup as the instrument, but as the subject of divination; not as the thing with which, but as the thing concerning which this magical inquiry was to be made. And so the sense of the steward's words will be, 'How could you think, but that my lord, who is so great a man at divination, would use the best of his skill to find out the persons who had robbed him of the cup, which he so much prizes?' And this tallies exactly with the subsequent words of Joseph, 'Wot ye not that such a man as I,' 'I, who have raised myself to this eminence, by my interpretation of dreams, and may therefore well be accounted an adept in all other sciences, should not be long at a loss to know who the persons were that had taken away my cup?' This seems to be the natural sense of the words; the only one, indeed, that they will fairly bear: ^d and though they do not imply that Joseph was actually a magician, yet they seem to justify the notions of those men who think, that he carried his dissimulation to his brethren so far, as to make them believe that he really had some knowledge that way.

The royal psalmist, in his description of the sufferings of Joseph, ^e tells us, that he was not only sold to be a 'bond-servant,' but that 'his feet were hurt in the stocks, and iron entered into his soul,' which signifies at least that he endured very hard usage, before 'the time came that his cause was known,' and his innocence discovered; and of all this his brethren, when they sold him into slavery, were properly the occasions. So that, could we conceive, that any angry resentments could harbour in a breast so fully satisfied of a divine providence in all this dispensation, we might have imagined that Joseph took this opportunity to retaliate the injuries which were formerly done to him; but this he did not. He desired indeed to be informed in the circumstances of their family, without asking any direct question; and therefore he mentions his suspicion of their being spies, merely to fish out of them, as we call it, whether his aged

¹ Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. vol. 2. Essay 20.

² Saurin's Dissertations. ³ Ps. cv. 17, 18.

^b Julius Serenus tells us, that the method of divining by the cup, among the Assyrians, Chaldees, and Egyptians, was to fill it first with water, then to throw into it thin plates of gold and silver, together with some precious stones, wherein were engraven certain characters; and after that, the persons who came to consult the oracle, used certain forms of incantation, and so calling upon the devil, were wont to receive their answers several ways: sometimes by articulate sounds; sometimes by the characters which were in the cup rising upon the surface of the water, and by their arrangement forming the answer; and many times by the visible appearing of the persons themselves, about whom the oracle was consulted. Cornelius Agrippa, (De Occult. Philos. b. 1. c. 57.) tells us likewise, that the manner of some was, to pour melted wax into the cup, wherein was water, which wax would range itself in order, and so form answers, according to the questions proposed.—Saurin's Dissertation 38; and Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Essay 20.

¹ Sanderson's Prælec. 5. sect. 7. ² Gen. xlv. 5.

³ Gen. xlv. 15. ⁴ See Saurin's Dissertation 38.

⁵ Poole's Annotations, and Patrick's Commentary.

^a What may seem to give some small sanction to this sense, is that known passage in Horace:—"Kings are said to have supplied liberal potations to him whom they wished to scrutinize, if he was worthy of their friendship."

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father, and his younger brother were yet alive. For upon their return, we may perceive, especially considering that it is the first minister of a mighty state that speaks to a company of poor indigent shepherds, a wonderful tenderness in his expressions: ¹ 'Is your father well; the old man of whom you spake, is he still alive?' besides the instructions which he plainly gave his steward to bid them be 'of good cheer.' When he understood that his father and brother were both alive, and as yet had not matters prepared for the removal of his father and family, the eagerness of his affections may perhaps be thought to have carried him a little too far, in demanding his brother to be brought to him; but we are not to doubt but that Joseph, by the Divine Spirit wherewith he was endowed, did certainly foresee what would happen,² and that his father's grieving a little time for Benjamin, would be so far from endangering his health, that it would only increase his joy, when he saw him again, and dispose him the better for the reception of the welcome news of his own advancement in Egypt; which, had it come all upon him at once, and on a sudden, might have been enough to have bereaved him of his senses, if not of his life itself, by a surfeit of joy.

Upon their second dismissal, after a very kind entertainment, it may be thought perhaps a piece of cruelty in Joseph, to have his cup conveyed, of all others, into Benjamin's sack, and thereupon to threaten to make him a bond-slave for a pretended felony: but herein was Joseph's great policy and nicety of judgment. He himself had been severely treated by the rest when he was young, and therefore was minded to make an experiment, in what manner they would now behave towards his brother; whether they would forsake him in his distress, and give him up to be a bond-slave, as they had sold him for one; or whether they would stand by him in all events, make intercession for his release, or adventure to share his fate.

This, perhaps, may be thought, was carrying the matter a little too far: but, without this conduct, Joseph could not have known whether his brethren rightly deserved the favour and protection which he might then design, and afterwards granted them. Without this conduct we had not had perhaps the most lively images that are to be met with in Scripture, of injured innocence, of meekness and forbearance, and the triumphs of a good conscience in him; and of the fears and terrors, the convictions and self-condemnations of long concealed guilt in them. Without this conduct, we had not had this lovely portraiture of paternal tenderness, as well as brotherly affection; we had never had those solemn, sad, and melting words of Jacob, ³ 'If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved,' enough to pierce a tender parent's heart; or those words, ⁴ 'Joseph is yet alive, I will see him before I die,' enough to raise it into joy and exultation again. In a word, without this conduct, we had never had that courteous, that moving, that pleasingly mournful speech, wherein Moses makes Judah address Joseph, in behalf of his poor brother Benjamin, which exceeds all the compositions of human invention, and ^a flows indeed from such natural passions, as art can

never imitate. So that, upon a review of his whole conduct, Joseph is far from deserving blame, that all this seeming rigour and imperiousness of his did eventually produce a great deal of good; and was in reality no more than the heightening the distress, or thickening the plot, as we call it in a play, to make the discovery, or future felicity he intended his family, more conspicuous and agreeable.

It must be acknowledged, indeed, that Moses has done justice to the history of Joseph, and employed most of the tender passions of human nature to give it a better grace; but we must not therefore infer, either that he hath transcended truth or committed an error, in recording the quality of the persons employed to embalm his father. What has led some into a great mistake concerning the origin of physic, and that it was of no vogue in the world until the days of Hippocrates, was the great superiority of skill and genius which he demonstrated both in his practice and writings. The truth is, the divine old man, as ⁵ one expresses it, did so totally eclipse all who went before him, that as posterity esteemed his works the canon, so did it look upon him as the great father of medicine. But if we will credit the testimony of ⁶ Galen, who, though a late writer, was a very competent judge, we shall find, that he was far from being the first of his profession, even among the Greeks.

Homer, indeed, in his poem of the Trojan war, seems to have cut out more work for surgeons than physicians; and therefore we find the chief of the faculty only employed in healing wounds, extracting arrows, preparing anodynes, and other such like external operations; but if we look into his other work, which is of a more pacific strain, we shall soon discern the use of internal applications, when we find Helen brought in as giving Telemachus a preparation of opium, which, as the poet informs us, she had from Polydamna, the wife of Thon, an Egyptian physician of great note. And well might the physicians of Egypt be held in great esteem, "when (as Herodotus relates the matter) every distinct distemper had its proper physician, who confined himself to the study and cure of that only; so that one sort having the cure of the eyes, another of the head, another of the teeth, another of the belly, and another of occult diseases, we need not wonder, that all places were crowded with men of this profession, or that the physicians of Joseph's household should be represented as a large number." True it is indeed, that these physicians, and the very

⁵ Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses, vol. 2. b. 4. sect. 3.

⁶ Meth. Medic. b. 1.

worth our notice and serious consideration "Since such passages are related by men, who affect no art, and who lived long after the parties who first uttered them, we cannot conceive how all particulars could be so naturally and fully recorded, unless they had been suggested by his Spirit, who gives mouth and speech to man; who, being alike present to all successions, is able to communicate the secret thoughts of forefathers to their children, and put the very words of the deceased, never registered before, into the mouths or pens of their successors, for many generations after, and that as exactly and distinctly as if they had been caught, in characters of steel or brass, as they issued out of their mouths: for it is plain every circumstance is here related, with such natural specifications, as he terms it, as if Moses had heard them talk; and therefore could not have been thus represented to us, unless they had been written by his divine direction, who knows all things, as well forepast, as present, or to come."—*Dr Jackson on the Creed*, b. 1. c. 4.

¹ Gen. xliii. 7.

² Universal History, b. 1. c. 7.

³ Gen. xliii. 14.

⁴ Gen. xlv. 28.

^a The observation of a learned author upon the dialogue between Jacob and his sons, as well as the speech of Judah is well

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best of them, were employed in embalming the dead; but then there was a wise designation in this,¹ namely, not only to improve them in the knowledge of anatomy, but to enable them likewise to discover the causes of such disorders as were a baffle to their art. And therefore it was the custom of the kings of Egypt, as Pliny informs us, to cause dead bodies to be dissected, on purpose to find out the origin and nature of all diseases. Thus it appears from the concurring testimony of other historians, that the practice of physic was a common thing in Egypt, as early as the days of Joseph; that the multitude of its professors makes it no strange thing his having a number of them in his family; and that the nature of the thing, as well as the order of the state, obliged the very best of them to become dissectors and embalmers.

This may serve for a vindication of what the sacred historian has related of our patriarch in his private life, and we come now to consider him in his public capacity. As soon as he had foretold the king the long famine that was to befall Egypt, he gave him advice to have the fifth part of the product of the country laid up in store against the ensuing want. The tenth part, according to the constitution of the nation, belonged to the king already, and to advise him to purchase as much more, for seven succeeding years, was to consider him as the public father of his people, for whose support and welfare he was concerned to provide. When himself was appointed to the office of gathering in the corn, he took care, no doubt, to have his granaries in fortified places, and as the scarceness increased, to have them secured by a guard of the king's forces, to prevent insurrections and depredations. When he came to open his store-houses, he sold to the poor and to the rich; and was it not highly reasonable, that he who bought the corn, should likewise sell it? or that the money, which by the king's commission and order, had been laid out for such a stock of provisions against the approaching necessities of his subjects, should return to the king's coffers again, to answer his occasions? When their money was gone, they brought him their cattle; but this they did of their own accord, without any compulsion or circumvention; and might he not as legally exchange corn for cattle, as he did it for money before? His corn he kept up perhaps at a high rate; but had he sold it cheap, or given it gratis, the people, very likely, would have been profuse and wanton in the consumption of it; whereas his great care and concern was, to make it hold out the whole time of the famine. He obliged the inhabitants of one city and district to remove, or make room for those of another; but this he might do, not so much to show their subjection to Pharaoh, as to secure the public peace, by disabling them in this way from entering into any seditious measures and combinations.

It cannot be imagined, indeed, but that, in a time of such general want and calamity, men's minds would be ripe for rapine, violence, and mutiny; and yet we meet with no one commotion, during the whole period of his critical ministry; which bespeaks the skill of the mariner, when he is found able to steer steady in the midst of so tumultuous a sea. In fine, after he had a long while executed his high trust, and the years of famine were

come to a conclusion, he gave the people back their liberties and estates, reserving to the king no more than a double tenth out of the produce of their lands, as a tribute of their vassalage; which, considering the richness of the soil, and the little pains required in cultivating it, was an imposition far from being burdensome to the subject, or vastly disproportionate to the benefit they had received.^a

There is but one thing more that I find objected to Joseph, in this public station,¹ and that is, his favour and indulgence to the priests, and priests that were idolaters, in sparing their lands, and laying no tax upon them.

The Jewish doctors have a tradition, that when Joseph was in prison, and his master had bad designs against him, it was by the interest of the priests that he was set free, and that, consequently, in gratitude, he could not do less than indulge them with some particular marks of his favour, when he came into such a compass of power. But there is no occasion for any such fiction as this.² The priests of Egypt were taken out of the chief families of the nation; they were persons of the first quality;

^a Lord Shaftesbury's Characteristics, vol. 3. Miscel. 3.

² Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 7.

^a This is rather a feeble attempt to vindicate the conduct of Joseph as viceroy of Egypt; but fortunately that conduct stands in need of no other vindication, than to be fairly stated. If credit be due to Diodorus Siculus, all the land of Egypt was, prior to this period, divided, in equal shares, among the king, the priesthood, and army. The people therefore must have been, from the beginning, *adscriptitii glebæ*; and they were not likely to suffer by being transferred with the soil, which they cultivated, from the vassalage in which they had hitherto been held by a fierce soldiery to the common sovereign and father of his people. But let us suppose, that Diodorus was mistaken, and that not the army but the people at large, shared the soil in equal portions with the king and the priests. Even on this supposition they were gainers by the new regulation of Joseph; for they henceforth enjoyed four-fifths of two-thirds of the produce of the whole kingdom, instead of one-third as formerly. Indeed whatever was the state of the Egyptians before this famine, it was happy for them that the minister, whom they acknowledged to have saved their lives, was not on that occasion influenced by modern notions of civil and political liberty.—“By the policy of Joseph, the whole of the land of Egypt, not occupied by the priests, became the property of the sovereign, and the people with their children his slaves; an event, which, however unpropitious it might be in any other country, was necessary there, where every harvest depended on the Nile, and where the equal distribution of its waters could alone produce a general cultivation. When the lands of Egypt were private property, would it be possible to induce individuals to sacrifice their own possessions, that they might be turned into canals for the public benefit? or, when the canals were constructed, would it be possible to prevent the inhabitants of the upper provinces from drawing off more water than was requisite for their own use, and thereby injuring the cultivators lower down? But when the whole belonged to one man, the necessary canals would be constructed; the distribution of water would be guided by prudence; each district would receive its necessary proportion; and the collateral branches would then, as they are now, be opened only when the height of the river justified such a measure for the public benefit.” (*Lord Valentia's Travels*, vol. 3, p. 348.)—Our author's supposition, that the people who had sold their lands to preserve their lives, were transplanted into cities far from their former places of abode, that they might, in time, lose the remembrance of their ancient possessions, is a groundless dream. Granaries were formed, and cities and villages built in every district of the kingdom; and when cultivation ceased, the people were transplanted, for the easiness of distribution, from the country into such of those cities as were nearest to them; and when the famine ceased, they were sent back, with seed to sow their former fields.

¹ Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses, b. 4. sect. 3.

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were consulted upon all affairs of consequence; and, upon a vacancy, generally some one of them succeeded to the crown. It was not likely, therefore, that persons of their high rank and station wanted Joseph's assistance to strengthen their interest, for the obtaining of any immunities; nor is it apparent that they had it. On the contrary, it seems evident from the text, that whatever peculiar favours they were vouchsafed, proceeded all, not from Joseph's good-will, but from the king's immediate direction and appointment; for the 'land of the priests bought he not,' says Moses, (*ci chok le cohanim meeth Pharaoh*) because Pharaoh had made a decree expressly against it, or, in analogy to our translation, 'because there was an appointment for the priests, even from Pharaoh; and the portion, which he gave them, they did eat, and therefore sold not their lands.'

Why Pharaoh, when he thought fit to lessen the property of his common subjects, did not, at the same time, attempt to reduce the exorbitant riches of the priests, we may in some measure account for, if we consider, that according to the constitution of the kingdom, the Egyptian priests were obliged to provide all sacrifices, and to bear all the charges of the national religion, which, in those days, was not a little expensive; so very expensive, that we find, in those countries where the soil was not fruitful, and consequently the people poor, men did not well know how to bear the burden of religion; and therefore Lycurgus, when he reformed the Lacedemonian state, instituted sacrifices, the meanest and cheapest that he could think of. But Egypt, we know, was a rich and fertile country, and therefore, in all probability, the king and people being desirous that religion should appear with a suitable splendour, made settlements upon the priests from the very first institution of government among them, answerable to the charges of their function. Add to this, that the priests of Egypt were the whole body of the nobility of the land; that they were the king's counsellors and assistants in all the affairs which concerned the public; ¹ were joint agents with him in some things, and in others, his directors and instructors. Add again, that they were the professors and cultivators of astronomy, geometry, and other useful sciences; that they were the keepers of the public registers, memoirs, and chronicles of the kingdom; and, in a word, that, under the king, they were the supreme magistrates, and filled all prime offices of honour and trust: and considering them under these views, we may possibly allow, that Pharaoh might think that they had not too much to support the station they were to act in, and for that reason, ordered that no tax should be raised upon them.

Thus we have endeavoured to clear the sacred history from all imputations of improbability or absurdity, as well as Joseph's conduct, both private and public, from all unjust censure, during this period of time; and may now produce the testimony of several heathen writers, in confirmation of many particulars related herein.

¹ Diodorus Siculus, b. 1.

^a It is the opinion of some, that Mizraim, the founder of the Egyptian monarchy, might, in memory of some Noachical tradition, set apart, at the very first, a maintenance for the priesthood, however degenerate and corrupt. Be this as it will, it is certain, that, in process of time, their allotment increased to such a degree, that they became possessors of one-third part of the whole land, according to Diodorus, b. 1.

That the memory of Joseph, and of the wonderful benefits he did, during the time of his administration, was preserved among the Egyptians, under the worship of Apis, Serapis, and Osiris; that the Egyptian manner of interpreting dreams was taken from what occurs in his history; and that the Charistia, mentioned by ² Valerius and ³ Ovid, namely, festival entertainments, either for confirming friendship, or renewing it when broken, were transcripts of the feast which Joseph made for his brethren, is the general opinion of such learned men as have made the deepest inquiry into these matters.

That the patriarch Jacob went down with his whole family into Egypt, where he found his son Joseph in great power and prosperity, is reported by several pagan writers, who are cited ⁴ by Eusebius; that the Egyptians, according to what Moses tells of them, had an unaccountable antipathy to shepherds, especially foreigners, is related ⁵ by Herodotus; that the priests in that country enjoyed several high privileges, and were exempted from paying all taxes and public imposts, is every where apparent ⁶ from Diodorus; and that Joseph was just such a person as Moses has represented him, the testimony ⁷ of Justin, with which we conclude the patriarch's story, is enough to convince us. "Joseph, the youngest of his brethren," says he, "had a superiority of genius, which made them fear him, and sell him to foreign merchants, who carried him into Egypt, where he practised the magic art with such success as rendered him very dear to the king. He had a great sagacity in the explanation of prodigies and dreams; nor was there any thing so abstruse, either in divine or human knowledge, that he did not readily attain. He foretold a great dearth, several years before it happened, and prevented a famine's falling upon Egypt, by advising the king to publish a decree, requiring the people to make provision for divers years. His knowledge, in short, was so great, that the Egyptians listened to the prophecies coming from his mouth, as if they had proceeded, not from man, but from God himself."

CHAP. III.—Of the Person and Book of Job.

THAT Job was a real person, and not a fictitious character, and his story matter of fact, and not a parabolical representation, ^b is manifest from all those places in Scripture where mention is made of him; and, there-

² Diodorus Siculus, b. 2. c. 1. ³ De Fast. b. 2. ⁴ Prep. Evan. b. 9. ⁵ Ib. b. 2. c. 47. ⁶ Ib. b. 1. ⁷ Ib. b. 36. c. 2.

^b Nay, upon the supposition that the whole book were a dramatic composition, this would not invalidate the proofs which we have from Scripture, of the real existence of this holy patriarch, or the truth of his exemplary story. On the contrary, it much confirms them; seeing it was the general practice of dramatic writers, of the serious kind, to choose any illustrious character, and well known story, in order to give the piece its due dignity and efficacy; and yet, what is very surprising, the writers on both sides, as well those who hold the book of Job to be dramatical, as those who hold it to be historical, have fallen into this paralogism, that, if dramatical, then the person and history of Job is fictitious: which nothing but their inattention to the nature of a dramatic work, and to the practice of dramatic writers, could have occasioned.—*Warburton's Divine Legation*, vol. 3. b. 6.

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fore when, in the Old Testament, we find Job put in company with Noah and Daniel, and equally distinguished for his righteousness, as in the New he is commended for his patience, we cannot well suppose that the Spirit of God, in both these places, intended to delude us with a phantom, instead of presenting us with a real man.

Whether we allow that the book of Job is of divine revelation or not, we cannot but perceive, that it has in it all the lineaments of a real history; since the name, the quality, the country of the man, the number of his children, the bulk of his substance, and the pedigree of his friends, together with the names and situations of several regions, can give us the idea of nothing else; though it must not be dissembled, that in the introduction more especially, there is an allegorical turn given to some matters, which, as they relate to spiritual beings, would not otherwise so easily affect the imagination of the vulgar.

¹ Job, according to the fairest probability, was in a direct line, ^a descended from Abraham, by his wife Keturah: for by Keturah, the patriarch had several sons, whom he, being resolved to reserve the chief patrimony entire for Isaac, portioned out, as we call it, and sent them into the east to seek their fortunes, so that most of them settled in Arabia; and for this reason perhaps it is, that the author of his history records of Job, that before his calamities came upon him, ² 'he was the greatest of all the men of the east.'

The character which God himself gives of Abraham is this, ³ 'I know him that, he will command his children, and his household after him, and that they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment;' which may well afford another argument for Job's being descended from the house of Abraham, since we find dispersed everywhere in his speeches, ⁴ such noble sentiments of creation and providence, of the nature of angels and the fall of man, of punishments for sin and justification by grace, of a redemption, resurrection, and final judgment,—notions which he could never have struck out from the light of nature, but must have had

them originally from the instruction of his parents, as they successively derived them from the first 'father of the faithful,' who had them immediately from God. But, what is an undoubted matter of fact, by his wife Keturah, ⁵ Abraham had a son, whose name was Shuah; and therefore when we read of ⁶ Bildad the Shuhite, we may well suppose, that he was a descendant from that family; who living in the neighbourhood perhaps, might think himself obliged by the ties of consanguinity, to go and visit his kinsman, in such sad circumstances of distress.

In what part of the world the land of Uz lay, various opinions have been started, according to the several families from whence Job is made to descend; but, upon supposition that he sprung from one of Keturah's sons, his habitation is most properly placed in that part of Arabia Deserta which has to the north, Mesopotamia and the river Euphrates; to the west, Syria, Palestine, and Idumea; and to the south, the mountains of the Happy Arabia. And this description receives some farther confirmation from the mention which the history makes of the Chaldeans and Sabæans plundering his estate, who were certainly inhabitants in these parts.

In what age of the world this great exemplar of suffering lived, the difference of opinions is not small, even though there be some criterions to direct our judgment in this matter. ⁷ That Job lived in the world much earlier than has been imagined, is, in some measure, evident from his mentioning with abhorrence, that ancient kind of idolatry, the adoration of the sun and moon, and yet passing by in silence the Egyptian bondage, which, upon one occasion or other, could have hardly escaped the notice either of him or his friends, had it not been subsequent to their times. That he lived in the days of the patriarchs therefore is very probable, from the long duration of his life, which, continuing an hundred and forty years after his restoration, could hardly be less in all than two hundred; a longer period than either Abraham or Isaac reached. That he lived before the law, may be gathered from his making not so much as one allusion to it through the whole course of his life, and from his offering, even with God's order and acceptance, such sacrifices in his own country as were not allowable after the promulgation of the law, to be offered in any other place, but that ⁸ 'which the Lord had chosen in one of the tribes of Israel;' and that he lived after Jacob may be inferred from the character given him by God, namely, 'like unto him upon the earth,' which large commendation could not be allowed to any whilst Jacob, God's favourite servant, was alive; nor can we suppose it proper to be given to any, even while Joseph lived, who, in moral virtues and other excellencies, made as bright a figure as any in his time. ⁹

¹ Spanheim's History of Job, c. 5.

² Job, 1. 3.

³ Gen. xviii. 19.

⁴ Spanheim's History of Job, c. 10.

^a At the end of the Greek, the Arabic, and Vulgate versions of Job, we have this account of his genealogy, which is said to have been taken from the ancient Syriac:—"Job dwelt in Ausitis, upon the confines of Idumea and Arabia. His name at first was Jobab. He married an Arabian woman, by whom he had a son called Ennon. For his part, he was the son of Zerah, of the posterity of Esau, and a native of Bozrah; so that he was the fifth from Abraham. He reigned in Edom, and the kings before him reigned in this order:—Balak, the son of Beor, in the city of Dinhabah; and after him, Job, otherwise called Jobab. Job was succeeded by Husham, prince of Teman; after him reigned Hadad, the son of Bedad, who defeated the Midianites in the field of Moab. Job's friends, who came to visit him, were Eliphaz, of the posterity of Esau, king of Teman; Bildad, king of the Shuhites; and Zophar, king of the Naamathites." According to this account, Job must be contemporary with Moses, and the three friends who came to see him must be kings. But the learned Spanheim, who has examined this matter to the bottom, finds reason to think, that Job was a distinct person from Jobab; was sprung from Abraham by his wife Keturah; and lived several years before the time of Moses.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, on the word Job; and *Spanheim's Life of him*.

⁵ Gen. xxv. 2.

⁶ Job ii. 11.

⁷ Spanheim, c. 3.

⁸ Deut. xii. 13, 14.

⁹ The Rev. Dr Hales, from a variety of historical and astronomical deductions, calculates the time of Job's trial as happening B. C. 2337, or 818 years after the deluge, 184 years before the birth of Abraham, 474 years before the settlement of Jacob's family in Egypt, and 689 years before their departure from that country. Taking this view of the era of Job—and it is the best supported of any yet advanced—the deduction in the text from the words, 'and there was none like unto him upon the earth,'

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Thus may the computation be reduced to a very narrow compass; and though it be extremely difficult to point out the precise time, yet the general opinion is, that he lived in the time of the children of Israel's bondage, and therefore his birth is placed in the very same year wherein Jacob went down into Egypt, and the beginning of his trial in the year when Joseph died; ¹ though it might probably be less liable to exception, if his birth were set a little lower, much about the time of Jacob's death; and then Joseph, who survived his father about four and fifty years, will be dead about sixteen years, at which time Job might justly deserve the extraordinary character which God gave him, and have no man then alive, in virtue and integrity, able to compare with him.

How considerable a figure Job made in the world, both in temporal and spiritual blessings, the vastness of his stock, which was the wealth of that age, consisting of seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yokes of oxen, and five hundred she-asses; the largeness of his family, consisting of seven sons and three daughters; and the excellency of the character which God was pleased to give him, together with the greatness of his sentiments, and the firmness and constancy of his mind in all he suffered, are a sufficient demonstration: and yet we see, that as soon as God submitted him to the assaults of his spiritual enemy, what a sad catastrophe did befall him. The Sabaeans ran away with his asses; the Chaldeans plundered him of his camels; a fire from heaven consumed his sheep and servants; a wind overwhelmed all his children; and while the sense of these losses lay heavy upon his spirits, his body was smitten with a sore disease, insomuch that he who but a few hours before, was the greatest man in the country, in whose 'presence the young men were afraid to appear, and before whom the aged stood up,' to whom princes paid the most awful reverence, and whom nobles, in humble silence, admired; divested of all honour, sits mourning on a bed of ashes, and instead of royal apparel, has ² 'his flesh clothed,' as himself expresses it, 'with worms and clods of earth,' and is all overspread with sores and ulcers.

According to the symptoms which Job gives us of himself, his distemper seems to have been a leprosy, but a leprosy of a more malignant kind, as it always is in hot countries, than our climate, blessed be God, is acquainted with; and those who would have it to be a malady of a more opprobrious name, lose all the sting

of the sarcasm, when they are told, that this distemper, be it what it will, was not of Job's contraction, but of Satan's infliction, not the effect or consequence of his vice, but the means appointed for the trial of his virtue.

Their opinion, however, seems to be well founded, who make this distemper of Job not one simple malady, but a complication of many. For since the great enemy of mankind, saving his life, had a full license to try his patience to the uttermost, it is not to be questioned but that he played all his batteries upon him; and accordingly we may observe, that ³ besides the blains pustulated to afflict his body, the devil not only instigated his wife ^a to grieve his mind, but disturbed his imagination likewise to terrify his conscience. For when the holy man complains, ⁴ 'Thou scarest me with dreams, and terriest me with visions,' the analogy of the history will not suffer us to interpret, that God himself did inject these affrightening dreams, but that the devil, to whose temptations he had submitted him, did raise gloomy thoughts, and frame horrid and ghastly objects in his imagination, thereby to urge him to melancholy and despair.

How long this load of various calamity lay upon him, is nowhere mentioned in Scripture; and therefore since it is submitted to conjecture, they who, to magnify the sufferings, prolong the duration of them to a year, and, as some do, to seven, ⁵ seem to be regardless of the tender mercies of the Lord; especially when there are some circumstances in the story, which certainly do countenance a much shorter time. The news of the misfortunes which attended his goods and family, came close upon the heels of one another, and we cannot suppose a long space before he was afflicted in his body. ^b His three friends seem to have been his near neighbours; and they came to visit him, as soon as they heard of the ill news, which usually flies apace. When they saw his misery, seven days they sat with him in silence; after this, they entered into a discourse with him, and at the end of this discourse, which could not well last above another week, God healed his sores before his friends who being men of eminence in their country, may be supposed to have business at home, as soon as this melancholy occasion was over) were parted from him.

³ Young's Sermons, vol. 2.⁴ Job vii. 14.⁵ Bedford's Scripture Chronology, b. 3. c. 4.

^a Some of the Jewish doctors imagine, that Dinah, the daughter of Leah, was this wife of Job's; but this seems to be a mere fiction. The moroseness and impiety of the woman, as well as the place of her habitation, do no ways suit with Jacob's daughter; and therefore the more probable opinion is, that his wife was an Arabian by birth, and that though the words which we render 'curse God and die,' may equally bear a quite contrary signification, yet are they not here to be taken in the most favourable sense, because they drew from her meek and patient husband so severe an imprecation, 'Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' (Job ii. 10.)—*Spanheim's History of Job*, c. 6.

^b Eliphaz, the Temanite, was the grandson of Esau, and son of Teman, who dwelt in a city of the same name in Idumea, not far from the confines of Arabia Deserta. Bildad, the Shuhite, was descended from Shuah, the son of Abraham and Keturah. It is almost impossible to find out who Zophar the Naamathite was, though some will have him descended from Esau; but as for Elihu, who comes in afterwards, he was the grandson of Buz, the son of Nahor; lived in the southern parts of Mesopotamia; and upon the supposition of Job's being sprung from Abraham, was his distant relation.—*Spanheim's Life of Job*, c. 11.

¹ Howell's History of the Bible.² Job vii. 5.

that he must have lived *after* Jacob, because such "large commendation could not be allowed to any whilst Jacob, God's favourite servant, was alive," cannot hold, but must rather be applied to prove, that he lived *before* Jacob, or any of the patriarchs of Israel. It may be observed, however, that, according to scripture idiom, the passage may be construed to signify merely, that there was none like Job *in the land of Uz*. Among other reasons for assigning to Job the high antiquity given him by Dr Hales, may be mentioned the following: He is silent respecting the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which cities lay near Idumea, where the scene of his sufferings is laid. He lived to a patriarchal age, surviving his trial 140 years, while he must have been old when that took place. The manners and customs described correspond critically with all that is known of that early period. But, above all, the astronomical allusions of Job have enabled astronomers to determine his era (as given above) by calculating the precession of the equinoxes.—ED.

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Now, since all this may be included in the space of a month, and a month may be thought time enough for God to have made trial of his faithful servant; when once such trial was made, we have reason to believe, that he would withdraw his heavy hand, because his character in Scripture is, that ¹ 'he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.'

The unaccountable greatness of Job's calamities had led his friends into a misconception of him, and made them surmise, that it must be the vindictive hand of God, either for some deep hypocrisy, or some secret enormity, that fell so heavy upon him; and therefore Eliphaz, in three orations, Bildad in as many, and Zophar in two, argue from common topics, that such afflictions as his could come from no hand but God's; and that it was inconsistent with his infinite justice to afflict without a cause, or punish without guilt; and thereupon charging Job with being either a grievous sinner, or a great hypocrite, they endeavoured by all means to extort a confession from him. But Job, conscious of his sincerity to God, and innocence to man, confidently maintains his integrity; and in speeches returned to every one of theirs, refutes their wicked suggestions, and reproves their injustice and want of charity; but always observes a submissive style and reverence when he comes to speak of God, of whose secret end, in permitting this trial to come upon him, being ignorant, he often begs a release from life, lest the continuance of his afflictions should drive him into impatience.

During these arguments between Job and his friends, there was present a young man, named Elihu, who having heard the debates on both sides, and disliking both their censoriousness, and Job's justification of himself, undertakes to convince them both, by arguments drawn from God's unlimited sovereignty and unsearchable wisdom, that it was not inconsistent with his justice to lay his afflictions upon the best and most righteous of the sons of men; and that therefore, when any such thing came upon them, their duty was to bear it without murmuring, and to acknowledge the divine goodness in every dispensation.

When every one had spoken what he thought proper, and there was now a general silence in the company, the Lord himself took up the matter, and out of a whirlwind directed his speech to Job; wherein with the highest amplifications, describing his omnipotence in the formation and disposition of the works of the creation, he so effectually convinced him of his inability to understand the ways and designs of God, that with the profoundest humility he breaks out into this confession and acknowledgment: 'Behold, ² I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea twice, but I will proceed no farther.' This acknowledgment pleased God so well, that he declared himself in favour of Job against his injurious friends, and hereupon putting an end to his sufferings, ^a cured him of all his grievances, and reward-

ed his faith and piety, with a portion of earthly felicity, double to what he had before, and with the prolongation of his life, beyond the common extent of those times.

This is a brief analysis of the book of Job: and whoever looks into it with a little more attention, will soon perceive, that the author of it, whoever he was, ³ has put in practice all the beauties of his art, to make the four persons, whom he brings upon the stage, keep up each his proper character, and maintain the opinions which they were engaged to defend; will soon perceive, that for its loftiness of style, and sublimeness of thoughts, for its liveliness and energy of expression, for the variety of its characters, the fineness of its descriptions, and the grandeur of its imagery, there is hardly such another composition to be found in all the records of antiquity, which has raised the curiosity of all ages to find out the person who might possibly be the author of it.

Some have imagined, that as it has been no uncommon thing in all ages, for persons of distinction to write their own memoirs, Job himself, or some of his friends at least, who bore a part in the series of this history, might set about the inditing it, if not for any other reason, at least in compliance to his request. ⁴ 'Oh that my words were now written, that they were printed in a book!' But though some family records may possibly be kept of events so remarkable as those that occur in Job's life, ^b yet the poetical turn which is given to the latter part of the book more especially, seems to savour of a more modern composition than suits with the era wherein we suppose Job to have lived.

Others therefore suppose, that the story of Job was at first a plain narrative, written in the Arabian tongue, but that Solomon, or some other poetical genius like him, gave it a dramatic cast; and in order to make the subject more moving, introduced a set of persons speaking alternately, and always in character. But though this was certainly the mode of writing then in vogue, yet how there came so much of the Arabian and Syrian dialect to creep into a book that was composed at a time when the Hebrew tongue was in its very height of perfection, we cannot conceive; nor can we be persuaded, but that, in

² Universal History, b. 1. c. 7.

⁴ Job xix. 23.

perfectly cured, and restored to health again.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Job*.

^b St Jerome, in his preface to the book of Job, informs us, that the verse, in which it is chiefly composed, is heroic. From the beginning of the book, to the third chapter, he says, it is prose; but from Job's words, 'Let the day perish wherein I was born, &c., (chap. iii. 3.) unto these words, 'Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes,' (chap. xlii. 6.) the verses are hexameter, consisting of dactyls and spondee, like the Greek verses of Homer, and the Latin of Virgil. Marianus Victorius, in his note upon this passage of St Jerome, says, that he has examined the book of Job, and finds St Jerome's observation to be true. Only we must observe, that the several sentences directing us to the several speakers, such as these, 'Moreover, the Lord answered Job and said,' (chap. xl. 1.) 'Elihu also proceeded and said,' (chap. xxxvi. 1.) 'Elihu spake moreover and said,' (chap. xxxv. 1., &c.) are in prose and not in verse. St Jerome makes this farther remark, that the verses in the book of Job do not always consist of dactyls and spondee, but that other feet do frequently occur instead of them; that we often meet in them a word of four syllables, instead of a dactyl and spondee; and that the measure of the verses frequently differs in the number of the syllables of the several feet, but allowing two short syllables to be equal to one long, the sums of the measure of the verses are always the same.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. b. 9.

¹ Lam. iii. 33.

² Job xl. 4, 5.

^a The eastern people have a tradition, that upon God's proposing to make no farther trial of Job, the angel Gabriel descended from heaven, took him by the hand, raised him from the place where he was, struck the ground with his foot, and caused a fountain of the purest water to spring out of it, where Job having washed his body, and drank a cup or two of it, found himself

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reading the whole, we taste an antiquity superior to that of David or Solomon's time. And yet, this notwithstanding, ¹ some have endeavoured to bring down the author of the book of Job to the times of the Babylonish captivity, and suppose the book to have been written for the consolation of the captives in distress. But if we suppose it written for the sake of the Jews, is it not strange, that in a discourse of such a kind, there should not be one single word of the law of Moses, nor so much as one distant allusion to any rite or ceremony of it, or to any of the forms of idolatry, for which the Jews suffered in the time of their captivity? The Jews, I say, certainly suffered for their iniquity; but the example of Job is the example of an innocent man, suffering for no demerit of his own. Now apply this to the Jews in their captivity, and the book contradicts all the prophets before, and at the time of their captivity, and seems to be calculated, as it were, to harden the Jews in their sufferings, and to reproach the providence of God for bringing them upon them. Without troubling ourselves therefore to examine, whether the conjectures of these, ² who carry the date of this book even lower than the captivity, and impute it ³ to Ezra, that ready scribe in the law of Moses, as he is styled, have any good foundation to support them, we may sit down contented with what is the common, and as far as I can see, as probable an opinion as any, namely, that ⁴ Moses, as soon as God put it in his heart to visit his people, either while he continued in Egypt, or while he lived in exile in Midian, either translated this book from Arabic, in which some suppose it was originally, or wrote it entirely by a divine inspiration for the support and consolation of his countrymen the Jews, groaning under the pressure of the Egyptian bondage; that by a proper example, he might represent the design of providence in afflicting them, and at the same time give them assurance of a release and restoration in due time.

This is what most of the Jews, and several Christian writers have affirmed, and believed, concerning the book of Job; but the author from whom I have compiled a great part of this dissertation, has by several arguments, hardly surmountable, gone a great way to destroy the received opinion, and left nothing to depend on but this, —That the writer of this book was a Jew, and assisted therein by the Spirit of God; that it has always been esteemed of canonical authority; is fraught with excellent instructions; and, above all, is singularly adapted to administer comfort in the day of adversity. Not to quit therefore this subject without an exhortation to this purpose, ⁵ 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job,' says the apostle, 'and have seen the end of the Lord:' and, therefore, ⁶ when we find our spirits begin to flag under the sense of any affliction, or bodily pain; when our patience begins to be tired with sufferings, which are greater than we can bear, and our trust in God to be shaken, because he pours down his judgments upon us; let us enliven our fainting courage, by setting before us such noble patterns as this; and let us be ashamed to

sink under our burdens, in their weight far disproportionate to those, which a man made of the same flesh and blood as we are, and supported by no other helps than are afforded us, without murmuring against God, without lessening his confidence in him, without impeaching his justice, and without desponding of his goodness, both patiently endured, and triumphantly overcame.

SECT. V.

CHAP. I.—*The sufferings of the Israelites, and the means of their Deliverance out of Egypt.*

THE HISTORY.

Nor long after the death of Joseph, there happened a revolution in Egypt, and a new king, who had no knowledge of the great services which Joseph had done the crown, perceiving the vast increase of the Israelites, began to fear, that in case of an invasion, they possibly might side with the enemy, and depose him; and therefore he called a council, wherein it was resolved, not only to ^a impose heavy taxes upon the people, but to confine them likewise to the hard labour of bearing burdens, and digging clay, making bricks, and ^b building strong cities

^a The original words, *sare massim*, which we translate *task-masters*, do properly signify *tax-gatherers*, and the burdens are afterwards mentioned as distinct things, under another name; so that the resolution in council was, both to lay heavy tributes upon them to impoverish, and heavy burdens to weaken them. Philo, in his life of Moses, tells us, that they were made to carry burdens above their strength, and to work night and day, that they were forced at the same time to be workers and servers both; that they were employed in brick-making, digging, and building; and that if any of them dropped down dead under their burdens, they were not suffered to be buried. Josephus in his Jewish Antiquities, (b. 2. c. 9.) tells us in like manner, that they were compelled to learn several laborious trades, to build walls round cities, to dig trenches and ditches, to drain rivers into channels, and cast up dykes and banks to prevent inundations. And not only so, but that they were likewise put upon the erection of fantastical pyramids, which were vast piles of building, raised by the kings of Egypt in testimony of their splendour and magnificence, and to be repositories of their bodies when dead. Thus, by three several ways, the Egyptians endeavoured to bring the Israelites under; by exacting a tribute of them, to lessen their wealth; by laying heavy burdens upon them, to weaken their bodies; and by preventing, by this means, as they imagined, their generating and increasing.

^b The two cities here mentioned, namely, Pithom and Raameses, are said, in our translation, to be treasure-cities, but not places where the king reposed his riches, but rather his grain or corn; for such repositories seem to have been much in use among the Egyptians ever since the introduction of them by Joseph. Considering, however, the name and situation of these two cities, that Pithom, according to Sir John Marsham, was the same with Pelusium, the most ancient fortified place in Egypt, called by Ezekiel, (xxx. 15.) 'the strength of Egypt;' and by Suidas, long after him, 'the key of Egypt,' as being the inlet from Syria; and that Raameses, in all probability, was a frontier town which lay in the entrance of Egypt from Arabia, or some of the neighbouring countries; it seems hardly consistent with good policy to have granaries, or store cities in any other than the inland parts of a country; and therefore, as these were situated in the out parts of Egypt, it is much more likely that they were fortified places, surrounded with walls, and towers, and deep ditches, which would cost the Hebrews an infinite deal of labour in building, than that they were repositories, either for corn or treasure.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

¹ Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy, Dissertation 2.

² Warburton's Divine Legation, vol. 3. b. 6; et Sentimens de quelques Theol. de Hol. p. 183, &c.

³ Ezra vii. 6.

⁴ Spanheim's Life of Job, c. 13.

⁵ James v. 11. ⁶ Bishop Smalridge's Sermon of Trust in God

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for the king; thereby to impoverish their spirits, as well as wear out and enfeeble their bodies.

This resolution of council was soon put in execution, and task-masters accordingly set over the people, who should keep them to drudgery, and use them with cruelty, and do all they could, in short, to make their lives miserable; but such was the goodness of God to them, that the more they were oppressed, the ^a more they multiplied; inasmuch that the king, finding that this expedient would not do, sent for two of the most eminent of their midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, and gave them strict charge, that whenever they were called to do their office to any Hebrew woman, they should privately strangle the child, ^b if it was a male, and leave only the ^c females alive. But they abhorring such a cruel and impious practice, had no regard to the king's command,

^a Commentators observe, that in this passage of Scripture, where Moses describes the vast increase of the Israelites, he employs a great variety of words in expressing it; and because the words he makes use of are six in all, some of the Hebrew expositors have thence concluded, that the women brought forth six children at a birth, Aristotle, indeed, in his history of animals, (b. 7. c. 4.) tells us that the country of Egypt, where the Hebrew women bred so plentifully, was so strangely prolific, that some of their women, at four times, brought twenty children. But without having recourse to such prodigious births as happened but seldom, we need but suppose, that the Israelites, both men and women, were very fruitful; that they began soon, and continued long in begetting; and then there will be no impossibility for 70 males, in the compass of 215 years, to have multiplied to the number specified, even at the rate of one child every year. For according to Simler's computation, 70 persons, if they beget a child every year, will, in 30 years' time, have above 2000 children; of which, admit that one third part only did come to procreate, in 30 years more, they will amount to 9000. The third of them will, in 30 years more, be multiplied to 55,000; and, according to this calculation, in 210 years, the whole amount will be at least 2,760,000. So that, if there was any thing miraculous or extraordinary in all this, it was, that they should be able to multiply at that rate, notwithstanding their hard labour and cruel bondage.—*Patrick's Commentary, and Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^b Josephus tells us, that there was a certain scribe, as they called him, a man of great credit for his predictions, who told the king, that there was a Hebrew child to be born about that time, who would be a scourge to the Egyptians, and advance the glory of his own nation, and if he lived to grow up, would be a man eminent for virtue and courage, and make his name famous to posterity; and that by the counsel and instigation of this scribe it was, that Pharaoh gave the midwives orders to put all the Hebrew male children to death.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 2. c. 9.

^c For this distinction in his barbarity the king might have several reasons. As, 1. To have destroyed the females with the males had been an unnecessary provocation and cruelty, because there was no fear of the 'women's joining to the king's enemies, and fighting against him.' 2. The daughters of Israel exceeded very much their own women in beauty, and all advantages of person; and therefore their project might be to have them preserved for the gratification of their lust. Philo tells us, that they were preserved to be married to the slaves of the Egyptian lords and gentry, that the children descended from them might be slaves even by birth. But suppose they were married to freemen, they could have no children but such as would be half Egyptians, and in time be wholly ingrafted into that nation. But, 3. Admitting they married not at all, yet as the female sex, among the Hebrews, made a very considerable figure in Egypt for their sense and knowledge, the care of their families, and application to business, and for their skill and dexterity in many accomplishments that were much to be valued for the use and ornament of life, such as the distaff and the loom, dyeing, painting, embroidering, &c., such women as these would make excellent servants and domestics for the Egyptian ladies, who had no relish of spending their time any other way than in idleness and pleasure.—*Bibliotheca Biblica in locum*.

but saved male and female alike; and when the king sent for them, and reprimanded them for their disobedience, they had this answer in readiness:—^d That the Hebrew women being of a much stronger constitution than the Egyptian, were generally delivered before they came.

This was a piece of service not unacceptable to God, but to Pharaoh it seemed no more than a mere evasion; and therefore resolving upon a more effectual method to extirpate the Hebrews, he published an edict, wherein he commanded all their male children to be thrown into the river; and that they might be more subject to the inspection of his searchers, ^e he built them houses, and obliged them to live in settled habitations.

Some years before this edict, Amram, who was of the

^d It is generally supposed that the midwives, upon this occasion, told a lie; but there is no reason for such a supposition, though possibly they might conceal some part of the truth, which is not unlawful, but highly commendable, when it is to preserve the innocent; for many of the Hebrew women might be such as are here described, though not every one of them. The answer of the midwives therefore is so far from being a sneaking lie to save their lives, that it is a bold confession of their faith and piety, to the hazard of them, namely, that they saw so plain an evidence of the wonderful hand of God, in that extraordinary vigour in the travail of the women, that do what Pharaoh would, they durst not, would not, strive against it, because they would 'not strive against God.'—*Lightfoot's Sermon on 2 Sam. xix. 29*.

^e The 'making the midwives houses,' is, by most interpreters, ascribed to God, and the thing is supposed to have been done in a metaphorical sense, that is, God gave them a numerous offspring or family, and a very lasting succession or posterity. For there are five things, say they, which go to complete the greatness or eminence of a family, as such; its largeness, its wealth, its honours, its power, and its duration. And therefore, since the midwives hazarded their own lives to save those of the Hebrew children, and to preserve the Israelites a numerous progeny and posterity, the God of Israel, in return, not only made their own lives long and prosperous, but gave them very numerous families, and an enduring posterity, in whom they might be said to live after death, even from generation to generation. But all this is a very forced construction, and what the original words will by no means bear. We should therefore rather think, these houses were built, not for the midwives but for the Israelites, and that it was not God, but Pharaoh, who built them. The case seems to be this:—Pharaoh had charged the midwives to kill the male children that were born of the Hebrew women; the midwives feared God, and omitted to do what the king had commanded them, pretending in excuse for their omission, that the Hebrew women were generally delivered before they could get to them. Pharaoh hereupon resolving to prevent their increase, gave charge to his people to have all the male children of the Hebrews thrown into the river; but his command could not be strictly executed, whilst the Israelites lived up and down the fields in tents, which was their ancient and customary way of living; for they would shift here and there, and lodge the women in childbed out of the way, to save their children. Pharaoh therefore built them houses, and obliged them to a more settled habitation, that the people whom he had set over them might know where to find every family, and to take an account of all the children that should be born. So that this was a very cunning contrivance of Pharaoh, in order to have his charge more strictly and effectually executed than it could otherwise have been done; and was a particular too remarkable not to be inserted in Moses' account of this affair. The only seeming difficulty is, to reconcile the words in the text to what has been here advanced; but this will be none at all, if the words be rightly translated, and the verses rightly distinguished in this manner:—Exod. i. 20. 'And God dwelt with the midwives, and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty, and this happened' (or was so, or came to pass,) 'because the midwives feared God.' Ver. 21, 22. 'And Pharaoh built them' (that is, the Israelites,) 'houses, and charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born, ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.'—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. b. 7.

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house of Levi, had married a woman named ^a Jochebed, of the same tribe, and by her had a daughter, whose name was Miriam, and four years after that, a son whom they called Aaron; and in the time of this cruel persecution, his wife was again delivered of a fine lovely boy, whom she was very desirous to preserve. For three months therefore she ^b kept him concealed; but fearing at length a discovery, she resolved to commit him to the providence of God: and accordingly having made a little basket or boat of rushes, she plastered it within and without with bitumen or pitch, to make it keep out the water. Into this she put the poor infant; and leaving it among the flags, by the bank of the river, she placed his sister at a proper distance to observe the event.

As Providence ordered it, Pharaoh's daughter attended with her maids of honour, in a short time after, came to the river to bathe herself; and spying the basket at some distance, she ordered one of the company to go and fetch it out; which when she had uncovered, the surprising beauty of the infant, weeping and making its little moan, so moved her heart with compassion, that she immediately declared her intention to have it brought up, notwithstanding she perceived it was certainly one of those children whom her father, in his edict, had ordered to be drowned.

By this time Miriam, the child's sister, had conveyed herself into the company; and ^c hearing the princess

^a Jochebed was not only of the same tribe, but own aunt likewise to Amram. For the Septuagint, Vulgate, and, after them, many learned expositors, both papists and protestants, have thought that she was no more than his uncle Kohath's daughter, and consequently his cousin-german, because the marriage of an aunt was afterwards forbidden in the Levitical law; yet the plain matter of fact is repugnant to all this. In Exod. vi. 18, it is said expressly, that Kohath, the father of Amram, was the son of Levi. In Num. xxxvi. 59, it is said, that Jochebed was Levi's daughter, and born in Egypt; and here again, in Exod. vi. 20, it is said, that Amram 'took him Jochebed, his father's sister, to wife: and therefore, without subverting the natural sense of these texts, we cannot but conclude, that the nephew married his aunt. For the prohibitions made upon the degrees of consanguinity, do not flow from the law of nature, but only oblige by virtue of the command of God; and therefore, before the command took place, relations of a nearer affinity were allowed to be joined together. Nor can the supposed difference of their age be any argument to the contrary, since Levi might have her when he was an hundred years old, and she, consequently, be very little, if any at all, older than her nephew.—*Saurin's Dissertation*, 43.

^b Josephus tells us this story:—That Amram finding his wife with child, and being solicitous about the king's edict, prayed earnestly to God to put an end to that dreadful persecution; and that God appeared to him, and told him, that he would in due time free his people from it; and that the son who shortly would be born unto him, should prove the happy instrument of their glorious deliverance, and eternize his own name thereby:—That this made him conceal him as long as he could; but fearing a discovery, he resolved to trust him to the care of providence, arguing in this manner,—That if the child could be concealed, as it was very difficult to do it, and hazardous to attempt it, they must be in danger every moment; but as to the power and veracity of God, he did not doubt of it, but was assured, that whatever he had promised he would certainly make good; and with this trust and persuasion, he was resolved to expose him.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 2. c. 9.

^c The princess is called by Josephus *Thermuthis*; by Artapanes, as he is cited by Eusebius, (Præp. b. 9 c. 4.) *Mercis*; and in the Alexandrian Chronicle, *Myrrina*. But Josephus adds farther, that Thermuthis having sent for several wet nurses, one

inquire for a nurse, offered her service to go and fetch one out of the neighbourhood; which when she was ordered to do, she hastened to her mother, who came with all speed, and took the child from the princess, who promised to see her well paid for her care in nursing it.

When the child was of an age fit to be weaned, his mother carried him to court, to show him to the princess; who ^d soon grew so fond of him, that she adopted him for her own, and in remembrance of his being taken out of the river, gave him the ^e Egyptian name of Moses. But his father and mother, ^f who brought him up in his

after another, the child turned its head scornfully from their breasts, and would not suck: whereupon Miriam told the princess, that if the nurse and child were of different nations, her milk would never agree with it, but that if an Hebrew woman was fetched, he would probably take the breast from her; and that, upon this, she was bid to go for one, and immediately brought her own and the child's mother, whom he fell a sucking very greedily, to the admiration of all the by-standers.—B. 2. c. 9.

^d And well might the princess be fond of the child, who, according to Josephus, had charms enough to engage any one's affections. "For, as he grew up, he showed a pregnancy of understanding much above those of his years, and did every thing with such a grace, as gave the world to understand what they might in time expect from him. After three years of age, he was such a miracle of a child for beauty and comeliness of stature, that people would stop and stand gazing on him with delight and admiration wherever they saw him, and his carriage and behaviour was so very obliging, that he won upon the most morose and unsocial sort of men. Thermuthis herself," continues our author, "being as much delighted as any, wanting issue of her own, and having resolved to adopt him for her son, brought him one day to her father, and in merriment told him, that she came to present him with a successor, in case he wanted one. The king received him with an affectionate tenderness, and to gratify his daughter, took off his crown and placed it upon the child's head; but so far was he from being pleased with it, that he threw it upon the ground, and trampled upon it with his feet. This action was looked upon as an ill omen to the king and his government, inasmuch that the scribe we mentioned before, being then in the company, cried out to have the child killed: 'For this is the child,' says he to the king, 'which I foretold your majesty would be the destruction of Egypt, and he hath now confirmed the prophecy, by the affront he hath put upon your government, in treading the crown under his feet. In short this is he by whose death alone you may promise yourself to be secure. For take him but out of the way, the Hebrews shall have nothing more to hope for, and the Egyptians nothing more to fear.' This speech gave some uneasiness to Thermuthis; and therefore she immediately took the child away, without any opposition from the king, whose heart God had disposed not to take any notice of what the scribe had said."—B. 2. ibid.

^e Both Philo, Josephus, and Clemens Alexandrinus, will have the word *Moses* to be derived from the Egyptian *mo*, which, according to them, signifies *water*, and *ises* or *yases*, which means *preserved*, as much as to say, *saved from the waters*, or *preserved from drowning*. It is very likely indeed that the princess should give the child a name from no other language than her own; but then it is to be considered, that the Hebrew word *moshah*, from whence the name naturally flows, and to which the princess herself owns she alludes, might have the same signification in her tongue as it has in the Hebrew, where it always signifies *a drawing out of the water*, (2 Sam. xxii. 17; Ps. xviii. 16; and Isa. xliii. 2.) It cannot be doubted but that Moses had another name given him by his own parents at the time of his circumcision; but what that name was, we have no certainty, nor can we tell from what authority it is that Clemens informs us that it was Joachim.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^f Besides the education which his own parents gave him, Philo acquaints us, that from his Egyptian masters, he was taught arithmetic, geometry, physic, music, and hieroglyphics, otherwise called enigmatical philosophy; that from the Chaldeans he learned astronomy; from the Assyrians their character or manner of writing; and from the Grecians all their liberal arts and sciences. But that was not a time for the Egyptians, who excelled the rest

A. M. 2433. A. C. 1571; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3683. A. C. 1728. EXOD. CH. i.-xiii.

infancy, had taken care to instruct him in such things as related to the religion and history of his ancestors; and therefore when he arrived to maturity, he left the court, and coming to live among his brethren, was himself an eye-witness at what a merciless rate the Egyptian task-masters treated them.

This raised his resentment and indignation to such a degree, that seeing one day an Egyptian abuse a Hebrew in a very gross manner, he stepped in to his assistance, and perceiving nobody near, slew the Egyptian, and buried his body in the sand.

The next day, as he walked out again, he found two Hebrews in contest with one another; whereupon he admonished them to consider that they were brethren, and would have decided the quarrel between them: but he who was the aggressor, rejected his arbitration with contempt, and upbraided him with the murder of the Egyptian the day before. This gave Moses some uneasy apprehensions, that as the thing was now blown, it might not be long before it reached Pharaoh's ear, and endanger his life; so that he thought it the "best way to leave

of the world in all sorts of learning, to send for masters from Greece, which rather stood in need of Egyptian teachers; for to 'be learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,' as St Stephen asserts of Moses, (Acts vii. 22.) was to have the best and most liberal education that the whole world could at that time afford.

a Josephus, who has given us several particulars of Moses' life, which in modesty perhaps he might not think proper to record of himself, has assigned a farther reason for his leaving Egypt, of which it may not be improper, in this place, to give the reader this short abstract. "When Moses was grown to man's estate, he had an opportunity offered him of showing his courage and conduct. The Ethiopians, who inhabited the upper land on the south side of Egypt, had made many dreadful incursions, plundered and ravaged all the neighbouring parts of the country, beat the Egyptian army in a set battle, and were become so elated with their success, that they began to march towards the capital of Egypt. In this distress, the Egyptians had recourse to the oracle, which answered, that they should make choice of an Hebrew for their general. As none was more promising than Moses, the king desired his daughter to consent that he should go, and head his army; but she, after having first expostulated with her father, how mean a thing it was for the Egyptians to implore the assistance of a man whose death they had been committing, would not agree to it, until she had obtained a solemn promise upon oath, that no practices or attempts should be made upon his life. When Moses, by the princess's persuasion, had at last accepted the commission, he made it his first care to come up with the enemy before they were aware of him; and to this purpose, instead of marching up the Nile as the custom was before, he chose to cross the country, though the passage was very dangerous, by reason of the poisonous flying serpents which infested those parts: but for this he had a new expedient. The bird ibis, though very friendly to every other creature, is a mortal enemy to all serpents; and therefore having got a sufficient number of these, he carried them along with him in cages, and as soon as they came into any dangerous places, he let them loose upon the serpents, and by their means and protection, proceeded without any harm or molestation. He entered the enemy's country, took several of their cities, and obliged them at last to retreat into Saba, the metropolis of Ethiopia. Moses sat down before it; but as it was situated in an island, with strong fortifications about it, in all probability it would have cost him a longer time to carry it, had not Tharbis, the king of Ethiopia's daughter, who had the fortune once to see him from the walls behaving himself with the utmost gallantry, fallen in love with him. Whereupon she sent privately to let him know, that the city should be surrendered to him upon condition that he would marry her immediately after. Moses agreed to the proposal; and having taken possession of the place, and of the princess, returned with his victorious army to Egypt. Here, instead of reaping the fruits of his great achievement, the Egyptians accused him of murder to the king, who having already taken some umbrage at his valour and great

Egypt, and to secure himself by flying into the country of Midian beyond the Red Sea.

In the plains of Midian, there is a well, common to all the natives of the place: here it was that Moses had stopped to refresh himself, when seven of the daughters of Jethro, ^b the chief man of the country, came to draw water for their flocks; but when they had filled their troughs, a parcel of rude shepherds, being minded to serve their own turn first, seized on their water, and frightened the damsels away; which Moses perceiving went to their assistance, and forcing the shepherds to retire, drew the young virgins more water, and gave it to their flocks.

Hereupon taking their leaves, they made haste home; and while their father was wondering at their speedy return, they informed him how civil a certain stranger had been, both in watering their flocks, and protecting them from the insults of the rustics; which made Jethro send and invite him to his house, and treat him in a manner suitable to the civility he had shown to his daughters; insomuch that Moses, after he had tarried there some time, was so pleased with his courteous reception, that he expressed a willingness to take up his abode with him, ^c and become his shepherd. This pro-

reputation, was resolved to rid himself of him; but Moses having some suspicion of it made his escape, and not daring to go by the common roads, for fear of being stopped by the king's guards, was forced to pass through a great desert to reach the land of Midian."

^b The word *cohen* signifies indifferently either *priest* or *prince*; and accordingly, in these early ages, both these offices were frequently united in one and the same person. It seems, however, that Jethro was scarce a prince in that country; for then one would think that the shepherds would not have dared to have been so insolent to his daughters; and yet if he was a priest, it is made a matter of some contest between two famous rabbins, whether he was an idolater, or a worshipper of the true God. Aben Ezra is of opinion, that as he was descended from Midian, the son of Abraham, by Keturah, in all probability he professed the true religion; nor can he suppose that Moses would have married his daughter, had he been bred up in a false one: whereas Moses, it is plain, not only owns his alliance with his family, but, upon his arrival in the camp of Israel, invites him to offer sacrifices to the Lord, (Exod. xviii. 11, 12.) as one who adored the same God with the Israelites. Kimchi, however, on the other hand, affirms, that at first he was an idolatrous priest, but afterwards, when he came to Moses in the wilderness, and was particularly informed of all those great and wonderful things which God had wrought in Egypt for the deliverance of the Hebrews, he became a convert to the worship of the true God; and for this he produces a passage in the same chapter, ver. 11, 'Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.' But besides this, there is a farther difficulty in relation to this Jethro. In Exod. iii. 1. he is expressly called 'the father-in-law of Moses'; and yet the father of the young women, whom Moses defended at the well, and whereof he certainly married one, is said to be Reuel, (ii. 18,) and not Jethro: either therefore this Reuel must be their grandfather, who, being head of the family, might, in a larger sense, be called father, as we find instances of the like nature in Gen. xxxi. 43; 2 Kings xiv. 14, &c.: or, as others will have it, this Reuel, or Jethro, was one and the same person, under different denominations. Upon supposition, therefore, that he was descended from the family of Cush, it is imagined, that while he continued in Idumaea, his name might be Reuel, but upon his removal into Midian, to avoid the wars and tumults in his own country, he came to be called Jethro, as being the only remainder (for so the word signifies) of the Cushites in that country.—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 3. c. 4.

^c It can hardly be supposed, but that a person of Moses' education would, in the space of forty years, which he abode in Midian

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posal Jethro very readily embraced; and to attach him the more to his interest, gave him his ^a daughter Zipporah in marriage, by whom he had two sons, whereof the elder he named *Gershom*, which signifies *a stranger*, alluding to his own condition in that country; and the younger *Eliezer*, importing, *God my help*, in grateful acknowledgment of God's having delivered him from the hands of Pharaoh, who sought his life.

While Moses lived in the family of Jethro, the king, who was upon the Egyptian throne when he left the country, died; but his successor, who was no less a tyrant, and oppressor of the Israelites, laid such heavy burdens upon them, as made their lives extremely miserable, till at length their complaints reached heaven; and as the time of their deliverance grew near, God remembering the covenant which he had made with their forefathers, began to look upon them with an eye of pity and compassion.

Moses was to be his instrument in bringing about their deliverance: and therefore, while he was feeding his father-in-law's flock, and as they wandered in their feeding, followed them as far into the desert as ^b Mount

find some other employment for himself than keeping sheep; and therefore some have imagined, that in this time he wrote the book of Job, as we mentioned before, to comfort the Israelites, by the example of his admirable patience, under their heavy oppression in Egypt, and the book of Genesis likewise, that they might the better understand what promises had been made to their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that the time for their accomplishment was approaching. Nor can we suppose, but that the several arts and sciences, which he had been taught in his youth, he took care, in this place of happy retirement, to cultivate and improve.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^a It may be made a standing observation, that divine authors do not relate all the passages of a story, as other authors delight to do, but such only as are most material. We may therefore suppose, that a great many things intervened between Moses' entrance into Jethro's family, and his marriage to his daughter; especially considering that his children were so young at the time of his return into Egypt. The observation of Philo, however, is not altogether to be neglected, namely, "That men of a great genius quickly show themselves, and are not made known by length of time;" and therefore he thinks, "That Jethro, being first struck with admiration of his goodly aspect, and then of his wise discourse, immediately gave him the most beautiful of all his daughters to be his wife, not staying to inquire of any body who he was, because his own most excellent qualities sufficiently recommended him to his affection."—*De Vita Mosis*, b. 1.

^b Horeb is a mountain in Arabia Petræa, at so small a distance from Mount Sinai, that they seem to be no more than two tops belonging to the same mountain. Sinai lies to the east, and Horeb to the west; but we find them frequently in Scripture used promiscuously. For, whereas the author of the Hebrews several times asserts, that God gave his law to the Israelites at Horeb, though other places expressly say, that it was at Sinai, this is easily agreed, by observing, that they both made but as it were one mountain with two tops, whereof that of Sinai is much the higher, though that of Horeb exceeds it in fruitfulness and pleasure. It is not for that reason, however, no nor yet for its vast height, that it obtained the title of the *mount of God*. Josephus indeed tells us, (b. 2. c. 12.) that the people of the country had a tradition, that God, in a more particular manner, dwelt there; and that therefore, in reverence to the place, they always declined feeding their flocks upon it: but the true reason of its being so called is, that, in after ages, it became famous for sundry events, and at this time received its name by way of anticipation. For here it was, 1. That God appeared to Moses in the bush; 2. That he manifested his glory at the delivery of the law; 3. That Moses, with his rod, brought water out of the rock; 4. That by lifting up his hands, he made Joshua prevail against the Amalekites; 5. That here he fasted twice forty days

and forty nights; 6. That from hence he brought the two tables of the law; and, 7. That here Elijah was vouchsafed a noble vision; with some others of the like nature.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7, and *Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

^c Exod. iii. 2. 'And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire.' The traditional notion of a miraculous light or fire being the token of a divine presence, prevailed among the Greeks in the time of Homer; for after relating that the goddess Minerva attended on Ulysses with her golden lamp, or rather torch, and afforded him a refulgent light, he makes Telemachus cry out to his father in rapture,

What miracle thus dazzles with surprise?

Distinct in rows the radiant columns rise.

The walls, where'er my wondering sight I turn,

And roofs, amidst a blaze of glory burn:

Some visitant of pure ethereal race

With his bright presence deigns the dome to grace.—*Æd.*

^d In the text it is said, that 'the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of the bush,' Exod. iii. 2. But whether it was a created angel, speaking in the person of God, or God himself, or, as the most received opinion is, Christ the Son of God, has been matter of some controversy among the learned. Those who suppose it no more than an angel, seem to imply, that it would be a diminution of the majesty of God to appear upon every occasion, especially when he has such a number of celestial ministers, who may do the business as well. But considering that God is present everywhere, the notification of his presence, by some outward sign, in one determinate place, which is all we mean by his appearance, is, in our conception, less laborious (if any thing laborious could be conceived of God) than a delegation of angels, upon every turn, from heaven, and seems in the main to illustrate, rather than debase, the glory of his nature and existence. But however this be, it is plain, that the angel here spoken of was no created being, from the whole context, and especially from his saying, 'I am the Lord God, the Jehovah,' &c., since this is not the language of angels, who are always known to express themselves in such humble terms as these, 'I am sent from God, I am thy fellow servant,' &c. It is a vain pretence to say, that an angel, as God's ambassador, may speak in God's name and person; for what ambassador of any prince ever yet said, 'I am the king?' Since therefore no angel, without the guilt of blasphemy, could assume these titles, and since neither God the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, are ever called by the name of an angel, that is, a messenger, or person sent, whereas God the Son is called by the prophet Malachi, chap. iii. 1, 'the angel of the covenant,' it hence seems to follow, that this angel of the Lord was God the Son, who might very properly be called an angel; because, in the fulness of time, he was sent into the world in our flesh, as a messenger from God, and might therefore make his temporary apparitions, presages, and forerunners, as it were, of his more solemn mission.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^e Justin Martyr, in his second apology, is of opinion, that the custom of putting off the shoes, both among the Jews and Gentiles, before they began to officiate in holy things, took its rise from this precept given to Moses; but our learned Mr Mede seems to be of a different opinion, namely, that Moses did not give the first occasion to this rite, but that it was derived from the patriarchs before him, and transmitted to future ages from that ancient general tradition. It is certain that Pythagoras, who took his institutes chiefly from the Egyptians, delivers it as a rule in his Rubric, "he who sacrifices, should put off his shoes, and so approach to the holy ordinance;" and therefore God, in compliance to an ancient custom, then in practice among the Egyptians, might speak to Moses, who was a person well acquainted with their ceremonies, to decalecate, as very well knowing, that it would be a means to create in him a greater

A. M. 2433. A. C. 1571; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3723 A. C. 1688. EXOD. CH. i—xiii.

because the ground whereon he stood was holy. Moses obeyed; and while the voice went on to declare itself the God, who had all along been kind to his ancestors, and had now with compassion seen the afflictions of his brethren, and was come down to deliver them from their oppressors, he fell down upon the ground, and covered his face with his garment, as being unable to sustain the refulgency of the divine presence.

Moses, by this time, had entirely laid aside all thoughts of rescuing his brethren, the Israelites, from their thralldom; nor had he any opinion of his own abilities, if he should make the attempt, to succeed in so difficult an undertaking; and therefore, when God proposed the thing to him, and opened the whole manner and method in which he would have it executed, he began to excuse himself, by urging his meanness and insufficiency to take upon him the character of a divine ambassador. This difficulty God endeavoured to remove, by assuring him that he would be with him, and assist him in every step he took; that he would enable him to accomplish the thing, though never so perplexed and arduous; and for a token of his veracity herein, that within a small compass of time, he should see that very people, who now were in slavery, set free, and worshipping him on that very mountain.

Moses, still unwilling to undertake the thing, desired to know what he was to say to the people, and by what name he was to call the person who sent him upon this message. To which request God was pleased to reply,—That he who sent him was an eternal, independent, self-existent being, ^a the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by which name he gloried to be called; and therefore he required him, first to assemble the elders of Israel together, and acquaint them with his design, and then to go directly to the king, and demand of him a dismissal of the Israelites, at least for three days' journey into the wilderness, in order to sacrifice to their God; which, though at the first he knew he would be far from granting, yet in the end, would be glad to consent to, when he should see the divine power exerted upon sundry occasions, and so many miracles wrought before his eyes as would compel him to let them go.

Such a solemn assurance as this from the mouth of God himself, was enough, one would think, to have gained a ready compliance; but Moses still demurs to the thing, and makes it an objection, that the people, when he came to them, might possibly question his credentials; and therefore, to obviate this, God promises to enable him to work miracles for their conviction. And for a specimen of this, when he bade him throw the

rod that was in his hand upon the ground, it instantly became a serpent terrible to behold; but when he ordered him to take it up, it resumed its former shape; when he put his hand into his bosom, ^b upon pulling it out, it was all over leprous, but upon putting it in, and pulling it out again, it became as clean as before; and, as if this were not enough, to gain him a further credit among the people, he gave him a standing power to convert water into blood, whenever there was occasion.

But the promise of all this miraculous power could not prevail with Moses to accept of this office. He alleged in excuse, his want of eloquence, and ^c the natural impediment he had in his speech. But this

^b It is no improbable conjecture, that as God commanded Moses to work all his wonders before Pharaoh, this miracle of the leprosy gave occasion to the fabulous story, which was invented in after ages, namely, That Moses was a leper, and the Israelites a scabby race, whom the Egyptians were forced to drive out of their country, for fear of the infection. This defamation is first met with in Manetho's Egyptian History; from Manetho it descended to Apion, the Greek historian; and from him Justin and Tacitus, two noted Roman authors, undoubtedly took it. But as Manetho might not at first maliciously devise it out of his own head, so those writers from whom he compiled his history, might derive it from this passage of Moses' appearing with a leprous hand before Pharaoh, which was presently noised about the country, without the other part of his being immediately cured. For, according to the argument of Josephus, "there needs no other proof of his being no leper, than what arises from his own words, namely, that no lepers should be admitted into any towns or villages, but live apart in a distinct habit by themselves; that whoever touched a leper, or lodged under the same roof with him, should be reputed unclean; and that whoever should come to be cured of that disease, should pass through certain purifications, wash himself with fountain water, shave off all his hair, and offer such and such sacrifices, before he should be received into the holy city. Now if Moses," says he, "had been afflicted with this distemper himself, it is incongruous to think, that he would ever have been so severe upon others for it." The leprosy indeed was a distemper in a manner peculiar to the Egyptians. "The leprosy is a disease which arises by the banks of the Nile in Middle Egypt, and no where else," as both Lucretius (b. 6.) and Plutarch tell us; and if it was so in Moses' time, he may be presumed to have made laws more strict against it, with an intention to excite the people's carefulness to avoid a distemper which they had already seen so much of, but had now, together with the other calamities of their bondage, happily escaped. For that the people, at this time, were in good health, is evident from the long journey they undertook, and which on all hands is agreed, they did perform; and that they were not expelled by the Egyptians, but went away from them sore against their will, their pursuit of them to the Red Sea, and losing all their lives with a purpose of retaking them, facts that are attested by several heathen authors, are an abundant demonstration.—*Joseph. contra Apion, Plutarch's Quest. Nat., Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 2. Essay 4. and Patrick's Commentary.*

^c Moses here tells us of himself, that he was slow of speech, which most interpret to be a stammerer, or stutrer; and yet St Stephen (Acts vii. 22.) declares of him, that 'he was mighty in words as well as deeds;' but this admits of an easy reconciliation, if we do but suppose, that the sense of what he spake was great and weighty, though his pronunciation was not answerable to it. As God, however, tells him, (Exod. iv. 11.) that he it was who made the mouth, and could consequently give to any man what faculties he thought convenient, or remove any impediment he might have, it seems not improbable, that either by use and exercise, or else by God's immediate cure of his defect, Moses had acquired a better facility in delivering his mind, since we find him making several speeches to the people, especially that excellent discourse before his death, in the beginning of Deuteronomy; as he has likewise, where his song occurs towards the latter end, given an ample demonstration, that he wanted not eloquent words when he pleased to employ them.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

reverence to the divine presence, and a more awful attention to what he was going to say.—*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

^a A God no doubt was the God of Noah, and of all the holy patriarchs, who lived before these three were born; but for a peculiar reason is he called their God, because of his covenant, and the promise made to each of them, that the blessed seed should spring from their loins, in opposition to the pretensions of other neighbouring people, who, as the learned Dr Alix observes, were their rivals in that hope. And so the word will denote, as much as if he had said, the God of Abraham, and not of Lot, as the Ammonites and Moabites pretended; the God of Isaac, and not of Ishmael, as his posterity pretended; and the God of Jacob, and not of Esau, as the Edomites boasted.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

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defect likewise God promises to supply in an extraordinary manner; and as he was the great author of human nature, to give him all the faculties that were necessary for the business he put him upon. So that, driven from all his subterfuges, Moses was at last compelled to declare downright, that he had no inclination to the office; and therefore desired of God to let him alone, and find out some other that was fitter for his purpose.

So blunt a refusal was not so pleasing to God, and might have been resented with indignation; but instead of that, he resumed the objection, and told Moses, that as to his defect of utterance, this his brother Aaron, who would be fond of the office, and was already set out from home to meet him, would be sufficiently capable of supplying. To him, therefore, he bid him impart the whole affair, and to make use of him as his orator, but to reserve the chief conduct of it to himself, and not to forget ^a to take along with him his rod, wherewith he would enable him to work all miracles.

By these persuasions, and demonstrations of a miraculous power to assist him, Moses, at last, was prevailed on to accept the commission, and accordingly went to his father-in-law, and, ^b without telling him the occasion, requested leave to go and visit his brethren who were in Egypt. His father-in-law readily consented to it; so that, taking his wife and children along with him, he was proceeding on his journey, when, to his great surprise,

^a Wonderful are the stories which the Hebrew doctors tell us of this rod, namely, that it originally grew in paradise, was brought away by Adam, from him passed to Noah, and so through a succession of patriarchs, till it came to be transplanted into Jethro's garden, and there took root again, God knows how; that it was called *Zaphir*, whence Zipporah his daughter had her name, and had the *Tetragrammaton* written upon it; that when Zipporah fell in love with Moses, her father consented that she should have him, if he could pluck up this Zaphir-rod, at the same time published a proclamation, that whoever did it first should marry his daughter; that hereupon several lusty young men came, and tried their strength in vain; but that Moses, by being acquainted with the true pronunciation of the name of God, in virtue thereof, did it with ease, and so not only obtained his daughter, but this rod into the bargain, with which he wrought afterwards all his wonders in Egypt. But how fictitious soever all this may be, it is certain that in Exod. iv. 20. this staff is called 'the rod of God;' and that partly because it was appropriated to God's special service, to be the instrument of all his glorious works, and partly to show that whatever was done by that rod, was not done by any virtue in it, or in the hand of Moses, but merely by the power of God, who was pleased, for the greater confusion of his enemies, to use so mean an instrument. Nor is it an improbable conjecture, that the wands which great ministers are wont to carry in their hands, in token of their power and office, were originally derived from this of Moses.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7. and *Poole's Annotations*.

^b He was, both in justice and decency, obliged to acquaint his father-in-law with his intention to leave Midian, and go into Egypt, because he had bound himself by an oath to live with him, and was resolved now to take his wife and children, as being well assured of a speedy return. But he thought fit to conceal from him the errand upon which God sent him, lest he should endeavour to hinder or discourage him from so difficult and dangerous an enterprise. So that Moses, in this instance, has given us a rare example of piety and prudence, in that he took care to avoid all occasions and temptations to disobedience to the divine commands; as well as of a singular modesty and humility, in that such glorious and familiar converse with God, and the high commission with which he had honoured him, made him neither forget the civility and duty which he owed to his father, nor break out into any public and vainglorious ostentation of such a privilege.—*Poole's Annotations*.

an angel appeared to him in the inn where he lodged, and, with a stern countenance, and flaming sword in his hand, threatened to kill him, because, by the persuasions of his wife, or his own indulgence, he had neglected to circumcise his younger son; which when his wife perceived, she immediately took a knife, made of a sharp flint, and therewith circumcising the child, pronounced over him the usual form of admission into the pale of the church; ^d which when she had done, the angry vision disappeared, and gave signs that God was appeased.

While Moses was on his way to Egypt, Aaron, by a divine revelation, was informed thereof, and ordered to go and meet him in the wilderness. Not far from the mount of Horeb they met; and, after mutual embraces and endearments, Moses began to open unto him the purport of his commission, the instructions he had received from God, and the miraculous works he was empowered to show: and thus proceeding to Egypt, the two brothers called an assembly of the chief elders of the people, wherein Aaron declared unto them the message which God had sent by Moses, while Moses, to confirm the truth of his divine mission, wrought the several miracles which God had appointed him, before their eyes; insomuch that they were all fully convinced that he was a true prophet, come from the God of their fathers, who had at length commiserated their afflictions, and sent now to deliver them from their bondage: and with this persuasion, they kneeled down upon their knees, and worshipped God.

Not many days after, Moses and Aaron went to court, and having obtained admission to the king, requested of him that he would give the Israelites leave to go three days' journey into the wilderness, in order to perform a solemn service to the Lord their God. But Pharaoh was so far from complying with their request, that, know-

^c Whether it was required that the instrument made use of in the circumcision of children, was to be of stone or flint, and whether the Hebrews never used any other, is a question very learnedly discussed by Pererius, in his disputation on this place. That the heathens performed such sort of abscisions with sharp flints or stones, is evident from several authors; and though Pererius determines against the constant use of the flint among the Hebrews in circumcision, and against its being prescribed or enjoined in the institution, yet there is great reason to presume, that this operation was never done with any other kind of instrument, before that of Joshua's circumcising the Israelites in the wilderness.—*Bibliotheca Biblica in locum*.

^d Exod. iv. 25, 'A bloody husband art thou to me.' The learned Joseph Mede, (*Dissertation* xiv. p. 52,) has given to these words of Zipporah the following singular interpretation. He says that it was a custom among the Jews to name the child that was circumcised, by a Hebrew word, signifying a husband. He builds his opinion upon the testimony of some rabbins. He apprehends that she applied to the child, and not to Moses, as most interpreters think, the words above mentioned. *Chaton*, which is the term in the original, is never used to denote the relation between husband and wife, but that which is between a man and the father or mother of the person to whom he is married: it signifies a son-in-law, and not a husband. A person thus related is a son initiated into a family by alliance. It is in this view of initiated, that Zipporah says to her son, 'a bloody husband art thou to me;' that is to say, it is I who have initiated thee into the church by the bloody sacrament of circumcision. He endeavours to justify his criticism upon the word *chaton*, by the idea which the Arabians affix to the verb from whence this noun is derived. The Chaldee Paraphrast also annexes the same notion to the words of Zipporah. Saurin, (*Dissertation on Old Test.* vol. 1. p. 371,) does not seem altogether satisfied with this interpretation of the passage; whether it be just or not, must be left to the decision of the learned reader.—*Ed.*

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ing no being superior to himself, he profanely questioned the existence of their God; or if there was such a thing, he could not see why they might not serve him in Egypt, as well as elsewhere; and therefore he positively refused to let them go.

The truth is, he suspected that they had a design of revolting from his service, and had been laying schemes to get out of his dominions. This to him was an argument that they had too much leisure; and an effectual way to check their indulging themselves in such contrivances, was to take care to leave them fewer vacant hours; and therefore he ordered greater tasks, and more work to be laid upon them. ^a He reprimanded Moses and Aaron for going among the people, and interrupting them in their employments. He gave their taskmasters charge, not to allow them any more ^b straw, and yet to

exact the same tale of bricks from them without abatement.

This charge the taskmasters, who were Egyptians, communicated to their under officers, who were Hebrews. And when the people, being forced, for want of straw, to wander all the country over to pick up stubble, had not time to make as many bricks as were exacted, these Hebrew officers were called to an account, and beaten. They, however, not well knowing from whence this unreasonable severity proceeded, whether from the royal edict, or the rigour of the taskmasters, addressed the king himself, and laid their grievances before him in the most humble manner. But so far were they from receiving any redress, that the answer returned them was, "That the king would have his edict executed, be it never so severe; and would exact from them their full number of bricks, though he was resolved to allow them no straw."

^a The words of Pharaoh are, 'Why do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? Get ye to your burdens.' Which words seem to be directed, not so much to the elders of Israel, who might possibly go along with them, as to Moses and Aaron themselves; and so the sense of the reproof will be:—"So far am I from granting the liberty which you desire for the people, that, as a just punishment upon you for your seditious attempt, I command you also to go with the rest, to take your share in their burdens, and to perform the task which shall be required of you." And that so cruel a tyrant did not proceed farther against them, must be ascribed to the mighty power of God, who governs the spirits, and restrains the hands of the greatest kings, when he pleases. This seems to be a better account than what some of the Jewish fictions give us of it, namely, that when Moses and Aaron came into Pharaoh's presence, they were raised to a taller stature than they had before; had a splendour in their countenances, like that of the sun; and appeared with such majesty, as quite struck him with terror and astonishment.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

^b What the use of straw was in making bricks, is variously conjectured. Some think it was of no other use than to heat the kilns wherein they were burnt; others, who will have it that they were never burnt at all, imagine that it served only to cover them from the too intense heat of the sun, and that they might be baked gradually; but as it is evident that they were burnt in kilns, the most probable opinion is, that straw was mixed with the clay, to make them more solid. For, according to a passage in Lucilius, mentioned by Nonius Marcellus, straw was anciently employed to this purpose. "For what forms the side is made up of nothing more than common clay, mixed with straw, and mud mixed with chaff."

On this subject take the following accounts of modern travellers:—"The use of the chopt straw and stubble in making bricks," (Exod. v.) "was not as fuel to burn or bake them with, for which purpose surely neither of these is proper, but to mix with the clay, in order to make the bricks, which were dried, or baked in the sun, cohere." So Philo, who was himself of Alexandria in Egypt, expressly informs us, in *Vit. Moisis*. And from Dr Shaw, (*Travels*, p. 136.) we learn, that "some of the Egyptian pyramids are made of bricks, the composition whereof is only a mixture of clay, mud, and straw, slightly blended and kneaded together, and afterwards baked in the sun. The straw which keeps these bricks together, and still preserves its original colour, seems to be a proof that these bricks were never burnt or made in kilns." And as to the Egyptian manner of building in modern times, Mr Baumgarten, in his *Travels*, c. 18, speaking of Cairo in Egypt, says, "The houses for the most part are of brick that are only hardened by the heat of the sun, and mixed with straw to make them firm." (*Collection of Voyages and Travels*, 4 vols. folio, vol. 1. p. 443. See also, *Complete System of Geography*, vol. 2. p. 177, col. 1.; *Hasseltius's Travels*, p. 100.) It is said that the unburnt bricks of Egypt formerly were, and still are, made of clay mixed with straw. The Egyptian pyramid of unburnt bricks, Dr Pococke (*Observations on Egypt*, p. 53.) says, seems to be made of the earth brought by the Nile, being a sandy black earth, with some pebbles and shells in it: it is mixed up with chopped straw, in order to bind the

This answer was enough to run them to the utmost despair: and therefore, as they returned from the king, meeting Moses and Aaron, they discharged their grief and anger, though very unjustly, upon them; telling them, "That they had taken care to infuse an odium into the king against them, and given him a plausible handle to destroy them, which they wished in God might fall upon their own heads." These bitter expressions afflicted Moses to that degree, that he expostulated the matter with God, for suffering Pharaoh to be so exasperated against his people, and for having not in the least mitigated their afflictions, since the time that he first went to him.

His concern for the oppression of his brethren made him certainly forget the promise which God had given him, and the perverseness of Pharaoh, which he had foretold him: but, notwithstanding this, God was pleased to give him fresh assurances, that now the time was come, wherein he would manifest his almighty power, and exert the full force of the ^c name which he had taken

clay together. The Chinese have great occasion for straw in making bricks, as they put thin layers of straw between them, without which they would, as they dried, run or adhere together.—*Macartney's Emb.*, p. 269.—Ed.

^c The words of God upon this occasion are,—'I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of EL-SHADDAI, the Almighty God; but by my name JEHOVAH I was not known to them,' (Exod. vi. 3.) But how can this be, when long before Moses' time, God is so frequently called by that name? For did not the sons of Seth 'call themselves by the name of Jehovah,' Gen. iv. 26? 'Did not Abraham swear, and lift up his hands to Jehovah,' Gen. xiv. 22? Did not he call the place where he went to offer Isaac, 'Jehovah-jireh,' Gen. xxii. 14? Did not the Lord say unto him, 'I am the God Jehovah, that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees,' Gen. xv. 7? And when, in a vision, Jacob saw him stand before him, did not he say, 'I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac,' Gen. xxxviii. 13? These passages make it impossible for God not to be known to the patriarchs under that name; and therefore several learned writers upon this text have deprehended a fault in our translation, and would have the latter part of the verse to be taken interrogatively, thus, 'By my name Jehovah was I not known unto them?' If we take the sentence interrogatively, say they, every one will see, that it plainly intimates, that the Lord had revealed himself unto them by this name, which is agreeable to the scripture account of the patriarchs' knowledge and worship of him; but to take the words without the interrogation, and suppose them to intend, that the Lord who appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was not known to them by his name Jehovah, cannot be reconciled to some very express passages in the book of Genesis; unless we can suppose,

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upon himself, in the deliverance of his people from their bondage, and in the performance of the promises made to their forefathers, by giving them the land, the rich and plentiful land of Canaan in possession. With this God appointed Moses to acquaint the children of Israel, and to promise them, moreover, that he would make them his peculiar people, and take them under his immediate protection; so that in the event they should plainly see, that their deliverance and admission to the inheritance he had spoken of, was effected by that God who is always faithful to his promises. But though Moses failed not to carry these tidings to the people, yet such was their affliction of mind, upon the increase of their servitude, that they gave little or no attention to him.

God, however, pursuing the ends of his providence, commanded Moses to go again to the king, and demand the release of his people; and when he endeavoured to decline the office, upon pretence of the ^a impediment in

that as Genesis was not written when God revealed this his name to Moses, Moses makes use of it by way of anticipation, because at the time when he wrote, the Jews commonly used it, though in the days when the patriarchs, whose lives he was giving some account of, lived, it was a thing utterly unknown. There is another way, however, of expounding these words, if, by the name Jehovah, we understand not the letters or syllables, but what is properly the import of it, namely, not only God's eternal existence, but his omnipotent power likewise, and unchangeable truth, which give being, as we may say, to his promises by the actual performance of them. That this is the sense of the word Jehovah, is apparent from several passages in this very book of Exodus. Thus, chap. vii. 5, 17, 'And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah; for behold, I will strike with the rod, that is in thine hand, upon the rivers, and they shall be turned into blood:' so that the meaning of the whole passage will fairly be,—'That though God gave Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, such demonstrations of his power as could not but convince them that he would certainly perform his promises; yet they did not live to see the accomplishment of them, which he was now going to set before the Israelites. They believed in these things, but they did not experimentally know them. They had dreams and visions indeed, but Moses was the first that wrought miracles and prodigies. By these he made the name of the Lord known unto the world.' And therefore Maimonides well concludes from this place, that the prophetic spirit of Moses was more excellent than that which had been upon any before his time. (*Poole's Annotations, Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries, and More Nevoch*: part 2. c. 35).—See an elaborate dissertation on this subject, by Mr Bell, in his edition of *Rollin*, vol. 2. p. 524, et seq.—Ed.

^a The phrase in the text is, 'uncircumcised in lips;' for as among the Jews, circumcision of any part denoted its perfection, so uncircumcision was set to signify its defectiveness, or ineptitude to the purposes for which it was designed. Thus the prophet says of the Jews, that 'their ear was uncircumcised,' and adds an explanation of it, because 'they cannot hearken,' Jer. vi. 10. Again he tells us, that 'the house of Israel were uncircumcised in the heart,' that is, would not understand and learn their duty, Jer. ix. 26. And in like manner here, 'uncircumcised lips' must mean a person that was a bad speaker, and wanted eloquence; and what might possibly induce Moses to make use of this metaphor, rather than any other, might be the consideration of his having so lately neglected to circumcise his son. Some are of opinion, that the word circumcision carries in it an idea of something superfluous in the part, and that therefore Moses' tongue might be either too long, or too big for his mouth, and that this might occasion either an inelegance or hesitation in his speech: but the more probable opinion is, that he was what we call tongue-tied, which his parents, either in their fright might not perceive, or in the general hurry and destruction of the children, might not dare to send for a proper person to remedy, until it was too late. However this be, it is certain, that as circumcision was the first and greatest sacrament among the Jews, so uncircumcision was esteemed by them the greatest scandal and disgrace; and therefore Moses perhaps thought it some disparage-

his speech, which he might possibly think was the reason why his own countrymen did not hearken unto him, and how then could he expect that Pharaoh should do it, in a matter so much to his loss? God, to remove this objection, told him,—^b That there was no occasion for himself to speak unto Pharaoh, seeing he had constituted Aaron to be his interpreter; that he must not be discouraged at some few repulses; that Pharaoh, he knew, was a man of so obstinate a temper, that the more he was punished, the less he would relent, but that the less he relented, the more would his wonders be shown on him and his people; that to this purpose, he had invested him with the power of working miracles, which would make him justly terrible; and that therefore, when they came into Pharaoh's presence, and he demanded a proof of the truth of his mission, he should direct Aaron to cast his rod upon the ground, and it should immediately become a serpent.

With these instructions, Moses and Aaron came again to the king, and repeated the demand of his dismissing the Israelites; whereupon, when the king desired them to show him some miracle, thereby to induce him to believe, that the God whom they spake so much of, had really sent them, Aaron threw down his rod, which was instantly changed into a serpent; but, to confront this miracle, the king sent for the magicians and sorcerers of Egypt, and ordered them to try, if by their magical arts, they could cause the like transmutation. They attempted, and succeeded; they changed their rods into serpents, as the other had done, but with this remarkable difference, that Aaron's rod swallowed up all the rods of the magicians, which was enough to have convinced the proud monarch of the superior power of the God of Israel, had not his heart been so averse to the thoughts of parting with the Hebrews, that he did not let this circumstance make any due impression upon his mind.

Some time after this, Moses and Aaron put themselves

ment to him, that he was not able himself to deliver his mind in an handsome manner to Pharaoh; and therefore made mention of this again, to engage the divine majesty to circumcise his lips, as they term it, to remove this impediment in his speech, as we have some reason to believe that he did.—*Pererius, Patrick's, and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

^b God, to silence the objection which Moses had more than once made of his defectiveness in speech, tells him, 'I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron shall be thy prophet,' Exod. vii. 1; by which he does not only mean, that he had invested him with an authority to require of Pharaoh an obedience to his commands, and upon his refusal, to inflict such punishments on him, as none but God could inflict; but that in executing the commission he was putting him upon, there was no occasion for him to speak to Pharaoh himself. That he had appointed Aaron to do; and therefore he might keep himself upon the reserve, and Pharaoh at an awful distance, just as God delivers his oracles to the people by the mediation of his prophets. Only there is one objection against the passage itself, which some imagine cannot be genuine, because Moses makes use of the word *nabi*, for a prophet, which in his days, must have been expressed by another: for so in 1 Sam. ix. 9. it is said that he who was now called *nabi*, a prophet, was before that time called *roeh*, a seer; which seems to imply, that *nabi* was not a word in use till Samuel's days. But this is very far from Samuel's meaning, whose plain sense is this,—That he who foretold things to come, or discovered secrets, was anciently called a seer, not a prophet; for a prophet heretofore signified only, an interpreter of the divine will; but that now, in Samuel's days, they began to apply the word *nabi*, or prophet, to those who could reveal any secret, or foresee things to come.—*Poole's Annotations, Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary.*

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in the way of Pharaoh, as he was walking out to the ^a river Nile, and urging again the demand they had made for the departure of their brethren, as a farther sign that God had really sent them, upon Aaron's stretching out his hand, and touching the waters of the river with his rod, all the waters of the land of Egypt were turned into blood, and continued so for seven days; so that ^b the fish died, and the inhabitants had no water to drink, but were forced to dig in new places for some to allay their thirst. But Pharaoh, finding that his magicians did turn

water into blood likewise, and supposing the thing on both sides to be equally performed by magical skill, was not convinced by the miracle, and so refused to let the Israelites depart.

When the seven days were expired, Moses and Aaron came again unto him, requiring the dismission of the people, and withal assuring him, that if he did not grant their request, they should bring a plague of ^c frogs upon all the land; and when the king seemed to set them at defiance, Moses ordered Aaron to stretch his rod again over the waters; upon doing of which there came up abundance of frogs, so as to cover the whole land of Egypt, and to swarm in their houses, their chambers, their beds, and the very places where their victuals were dressed; but here it also happened, that the magicians likewise performed the same, so that Pharaoh was not much influenced by this miracle. Only, as his magicians could not remove the frogs, he was forced to apply himself to Moses for relief, who, upon his address to God, had them all destroyed the next day, according to the time that he had prefixed; but when they were gathered into heaps, their number was so great, that before they could well be disposed of, they infected the air, and made the whole land stink.

There were several other miracles wrought by Moses and Aaron in the like manner. The swarms of ^d lice which the magicians could not imitate; the murrain, or mortality among their cattle, wherein the Israelites were exempted; ^e the plague of flies; the boils inflicted upon

^a The river Nile has its fountain-head in Upper Ethiopia, and flows through Nubia and Egypt. Below Cairo, where it is 1000 yards wide, it divides into two main branches, which again separate into several arms, the extreme eastern and western of which give to the lower part of Egypt the form of a delta. There were anciently reckoned seven principal mouths by which its waters were poured into the Mediterranean; only those of Damietta and Rosetta are at present navigable; the others have been choked up. The name Nile, according to Spineto (*Lectures on Hieroglyphics*), is Greek; the Egyptians calling it merely Iaro, which means river. The true Nile is formed by the confluence of the Bahr-el-Abiad (white river) and the Bahr-el-Azrek (blue river), in lat. 15° 40' N. The former, rising in Abyssinia, to the south-west of lake Dembea, comes from the south-east, and was considered by Bruce as the Nile. The latter, however, which comes from the south-west, and is supposed to rise in the Mountains of the Moon, brings down the greatest mass of water, and is considered by Cailliaud as the true Nile. This is a mere dispute about words. In lat. 17° 40', it receives the Tacazze from the east, enters Egypt in 24°, following nearly a northern course, and below Cairo (30° 15' N.) divides into the two main arms above-mentioned, the Damietta, or the eastern, and the Rosetta, or western branch. The distance from the confluence of its two head branches to the sea is about 1500 miles; from its highest sources, probably not far from 2500 miles. The cataracts so much celebrated by the ancients, modern discoveries have shown to be insignificant; they appear to be hardly any thing more than what, in America, are called rapids. In Upper Egypt, it is confined between two ranges of mountains, which leave only a narrow strip each side of the river. Near Cairo, the river valley widens, and the level nature of the country below allows it to spread itself over a wide plain. In Upper and Middle Egypt, there are great numbers of canals on the left bank of the river, which serve to irrigate the country: the principal, called the canal of Joseph, communicates with lake Mœris. This is the only river in Egypt, and contains all the water the inhabitants have to drink, which made the turning it into blood an heavy judgment upon the people. The overflowing of the river, which most impute to the great rains which fall, and melt the snow in the mountains of Ethiopia, is the cause of all the plenty and fruitfulness of the whole country; and therefore Plutarch and several others tell us, that nothing was had in so much veneration among the Egyptians; that they adored and invoked it as the greatest of gods, not only under the name of Osiris, but of Orus and Jupiter likewise, and instituted in its honour the most solemn of their feasts: and therefore their conjecture, who think that Pharaoh went to pay his morning devotions to the river Nile, is much more plausible, than that of the Chaldee Paraphrast, namely, that he went to observe divination upon the water as a magician, when in all probability his business was no more than to bathe himself, as the custom among the Egyptians was to do almost every day.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, *Wells' and Moll's Geographies*, and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 3. c. 4.

^b Diodorus Siculus, in his description of Egypt, (b. 1. p. 32.) informs us, that the river Nile abounded with all manner of fish, though later travellers tell us, that there are not at present many in it, whether this be attributed to the muddiness of its water, or to the havoc which the crocodiles and other monsters of this river may be supposed to make in it. But whether ancient or modern geographers are right in this particular, it is certain, that this putrefaction of the water, and slaying the fish, was a heavy judgment upon the Egyptians, who abstained from the eating of most animals, whose liquor was generally water, and whose constant food was the fruits of the earth, and the fish of this river.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

^c The river Nile naturally produces frogs; but so great an abundance appearing on a sudden, filling the country, and leaving the rivers and fields, to go into the cities and houses, was really miraculous. How they got into the cities and houses is not so hard a matter to conceive; for if expert generals, according to both ancient and modern history, have sometimes surprised an enemy by entering cities through the common sewers, with much less difficulty might the frogs, these armies of the divine vengeance, find a conveyance into the cities, which stood all upon the banks of the river, by aqueducts and subterraneous communications; and being got into the cities, they might find apertures in the walls of the houses, which the inhabitants never perceived before.—*Bibliotheca Biblica in locum*.

^d Some would have the word *cinnim*, which we render *lice*, to signify *gnats*. The Septuagint calls them *Κνίσεις*; but what kind of creatures these were, is not so certainly known. Others would have them to be a new species of animals, called analogically by an old name; or if they were lice, that they were such as had wings, and cruelly stung and ulcerated the Egyptians. But upon the supposition that they were no worse than common lice, this was plague enough to the Egyptians, who affected neatness to such a degree, that they bathed themselves every day, and some of them frequently shaved their bodies all over, for fear of such vermin. Those who pretend that these lice were a new species, make this a reason why the magicians could not counterfeited this miracle, because, though they could easily provide the serpents, the blood, and the frogs, yet this sort of animal was now nowhere to be had; and therefore, as the organs of sight are more liable to be imposed upon than those of feeling, the magicians might impose upon the king, and the other spectators, with fantastical blood and frogs, but visionary lice could not vex and torment the body: so that now it was time for the enchanters to desist, and to own their inability to mimic Moses any farther. But supposing, that what the magicians did, in the three former miracles, was not illusion and imposition upon the senses, but reality, the true reason why they could proceed no farther was, that God Almighty had laid his restraint and prohibition upon the evil spirits, who had hitherto been subservient to them, that they might not assist them any longer.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Biblica in locum*.

^e The word arab, which we render *fly* in general, is by the Septuagint called *Κουσία*, that is, *dog-fly*, from its biting; for it

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the magicians themselves; ^a the terrible thunder and lightning, ^b rain and hail, which destroyed the fruits of

the earth; the plague of the ^c locusts, or grasshoppers, which devoured what escaped from the hail; and that of thick ^d darkness, which covered all Egypt for three days,

fastens its teeth so deep in the flesh, and sticks so very close, that it oftentimes makes cattle run mad; and the congruity of this plague seems to be greater, because one of the Egyptian deities, which they call Anubis, bore the head of a dog. The Psalmist indeed tells us, that 'God sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them,' Ps. lxxviii. 45. So that, according to him, it was not one particular kind, but all sorts of flies mingled together in one prodigious swarm or conflux. Some translate it, a mixture of beasts, which they suppose went into Egypt to infest and destroy the country: but this is not so probable a construction, because the punishments hitherto inflicted were nauseous and troublesome, rather than mortal; though this plague of infinite numbers of small tormentors, is so great a one, that God calls it 'his army,' Joel ii. 25; and the Greeks thought fit (as Pliny, l. 20. c. 28, tells us) to have a god to deliver them from it, under the style of Myiagros, or Myiodes, even as Beelzebub signifies the lord or god of flies.—Bochart, Hier. part 2.

^a The Hebrew word *shechin* properly signifies an inflammation, which first makes a tumour or boil, as we translate it, and thence turns a grievous ulcer. Dr Lightfoot indeed observes, that, in the book of Job, chap. ii. 7, 8, where the same word occurs, it signifies only a burning itch, or an inflamed scab; an intolerable dry itch, which Job could not scratch off with his nails, and was therefore forced to make use of a potsherd; but then he confesses that this *shechin* here spoken of, was more rancorous than that, having blains and ulcers that broke out with it, which Job's had not. So that the Egyptians, according to this, must have been vexed with a triple punishment at once, a punishment fitly calculated for the mortification of a delicate and voluptuous people, aching boils, nauseous ulcers, and a burning itch: and to this that commination of Moses to the people, in case they proved disobedient, does, without all peradventure, allude, 'The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed,' Deut. xxviii. 27.

Exod. ix. 8. 'And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven, in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt.' "It is said, that when this evil was to be brought upon the Egyptians, Aaron and Moses were ordered to take ashes of the furnace, and Moses was to scatter them up towards heaven, that they might be wafted over the face of the country. This mandate was very determinate, and to the last degree significant. The ashes were to be taken from that fiery furnace, which in the scriptures was used as a type of the Israelites' slavery, and of all the cruelty which they experienced in Egypt. The process was still a farther allusion to an idolatrous and cruel rite, which was common among the Egyptians, and to which it is opposed as a contrast. They had several cities styled Typhonium, such as Heliopolis, Idithyia, Abarei, and Busiris; in these, at particular seasons, they sacrificed men. The objects thus destined were persons of bright hair, and a particular complexion, such as were seldom to be found amongst the native Egyptians. Hence we may infer that they were foreigners; and it is probable, that while the Israelites resided in Egypt, they were chosen from their body. They were burnt alive upon an high altar, and thus sacrificed for the good of the people. At the close of the sacrifice, the priests gathered together the ashes of their victims, and scattered them upwards in the air, I pre-sume with this view, that where any atom of this dust was wafted, a blessing might be entailed. The like was done by Moses with the ashes of the fiery furnace, but with a different intention; they were scattered abroad, that where any the smallest portion alighted, it might prove a plague and a curse to this ungrateful, cruel, and infatuated people. Thus, there was a designed contrast in these workings of providence—an apparent opposition to the superstition of the times."—Bryant on the Plagues of Egypt, p. 116. *Magee on Atonement and Sacrifices*, Diss. 5.—Ed.

^b This infliction was the more terrible in Egypt, because, according to the account of Herodotus, (b. 3. c. 10,) a very rare thing it was to see any rain, and much more, any hail, in that

climate: and accordingly he mentions it as a kind of prodigy, that in the reign of Psammenitus, there happened to be a shower in Thebes, which was never known before in the memory of man, nor ever after, to the age wherein our author wrote. The psalmist has given us a very poetic description of this judgment: 'he destroyed the vines with hail, and the sycamore trees with frost; he gave up the cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts,' Ps. lxxviii. 47, 48. And from the plain account of Moses, where he mixes thunder, hail, and fire together, (Exod. ix. 23,) the observation is obvious, that here were no less than three of the elements in confederacy against Pharaoh's obstinacy; the air in the thunder; the water in the hail; and the fire in the lightning, all jointly demonstrating and proclaiming, that the God of Israel was the God of nature.

^c This is the creature which we properly call the grasshopper; and wonderful is the account which several authors give of them. Thevenot, in his Travels, tells us, "That in that part of Scythia which the Cossacks now inhabit, there are infinite numbers of them, especially in dry seasons, which the north-east wind brings over from Tartary, Circassia, and Mingrelia, which are seldom or never free from them; that they fly in the air all compact together, like a vast cloud, sometimes 15 or 18 miles long, and about 10 or 12 miles broad; so that they quite darken the sky, and make the brightest day obscure; and that wherever they light, they devour all the corn in less than two hours' time, and frequently make a famine in the country. 'These insects,' says he, "live not above six months; and when they are dead, the stench of them so corrupts and infects the air, that it very often breeds dreadful pestilences." God, as we hinted before, calls the locust, 'the canker-worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm, his great army,' which he sends amongst a wicked and rebellious people, (Joel ii. 25.) And how proper the expression is, in relation to the locust in particular, will appear from the account which Aldrovandus and Pincelius give us of these animals, namely, "that in the year of our Lord 852, an infinite number of them was seen to fly over twenty miles in Germany in one day, in the manner of a formed army, divided in several squadrons, and having their quarters apart when they rested; that the captains marched a day's journey before the rest, and chose the most opportune places for their camp; that they never removed until sunrising, at which time they went away in as much order as an army of men could do: that at last, having done great mischief wherever they passed, after prayers made to God, they were driven by a violent wind into the Belgic ocean, and there drowned; but that, being cast by the sea upon the shore, they covered 140 acres of land, and caused a great pestilence in the country;" which is enough to show how dreadful a punishment this was, especially considering, that these locusts were such as were never known before.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^d The Septuagint, and most translations, render it, 'a darkness which might be felt,' that is, consisting of black vapours and exhalations, so condensed, that they might be perceived by the organs of touch. But some commentators think, that this is carrying the sense too far, since, in such a medium as this, mankind could not live an hour, much less for the space of three days, as the Egyptians are said to have done; and therefore they imagine, that instead of a darkness that may be felt, the Hebrew phrase may signify a darkness wherein men were groping and feeling about for every thing they wanted. And in this sense the author of the life of Moses certainly takes it. "For in this darkness," says he, "they who were in bed durst not get up; and such as their natural occasions compelled to get up, went feeling about by the walls, or any other thing they could lay hold on, as if they had been blind." What it was that occasioned this darkness, whether it was in the air, or in their eyes; whether it was a suspension of light from the sun in that country, or a black and thick vapour, which totally intercepted it; there is reason to think, that the description which the author of the book of Wisdom gives us of their inward terrors and consternation is not altogether conjectural, namely, "That they were not only prisoners of darkness, and fettered with the bonds of a long night, but were horribly astonished likewise, and troubled with strange apparitions: for while over them was spread an heavy night, they

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while the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was enlightened as usual. All these miracles, performed by the word of Moses, did not a little perplex the king. He found that all the power and learning of the magicians could not equal them. Upon attempting one of them, they themselves confessed that it was done by the finger of God; and in the case of another, they were equally sufferers in the common calamity: so that the king's heart was several times almost overcome. He offered the Israelites leave to perform their religious offices to their God, provided they would do it in Egypt; but their religion, as Moses told him, was so very different from the Egyptian, that were they to do what God required of them in Egypt, the inhabitants would ^a rise up against them, and stone them. The king, after this, offered that they might go out of the kingdom, provided adult persons only would go, and leave their children behind, as pledges for their return; but to this Moses peremptorily replied, that none should be left behind, the young and the old should go together; which enraged Pharaoh so, that with some severe menaces, he ordered him to depart from his presence. However, as he found the plagues increase upon him, he came to a farther concession, and was willing that the people should go, but only that their flocks and their herds should be stayed, as rightly supposing, that this might be a means to accelerate their return: but Moses positively insisted, that all their substance should be taken with them, and not one hoof be left behind; whereupon Pharaoh grew so exceedingly angry, that he charged him to be gone from his presence, and never attempt to see him more, for that, if he did, he would certainly put him to death.

Moses, however, by the divine command, went once more to Pharaoh, with the severest message he had ever brought him, and represented to him, that at midnight God would strike dead the first-born of every family throughout all the land of Egypt, and that thereupon there should be such a dread, and terror among the Egyptians, that they would come to him in the most submissive manner, and beg of him to lead the people out of the land; and after that, said he, I shall go: which put Pharaoh into such a rage, that Moses, having no intention to incense and provoke him farther, turned away, and left him.

Four days before this, God had instructed Moses and Aaron to direct the people to prepare the passover, which was to be a feast in commemoration of their departure out of Egypt; because the night before they left it, the destroying angel, who slew the first-born of the Egyptians, passed over the houses of the Israelites, without doing them any harm, they being marked with

the blood of the lamb, which was killed the evening before. And the injunction which Moses gave the people, was to this effect:—That ^b every family of Israel, or if the family was too little, two neighbouring families joining together, should on the tenth day of the month, take a lamb or a kid, ^c and shut it up until the fourteenth day, and then kill it; that the lamb was to be a male, not above a year old, and without any manner of blemish; that when they killed it, they should catch its blood in a vessel, and with a bunch of hyssop dipped in it, sprinkle the lintel and side posts of the outer door, and so not stir out of the house until next morning; that in the mean time, they were to eat the lamb or kid, dressed whole, and without breaking a bone of it, neither raw nor sodden, but roasted with unleavened bread, and bitter herbs; that if there was more than they could dispense with, no stranger was to eat of it, and therefore they

^d Some learned men are of opinion, that God, in the institution of the passover, had respect to these impious rites, which either then did prevail, or in a short time were to prevail, among the Egyptians, and other nations where the Israelites were to dwell. Thus they tell us, "That God appointed a lamb to be slain, and eaten, and the month Nisan or March to be the particular time of eating it, in contempt of the Egyptians, who at that time, when the sun first entered into Aries, began their solemn worship and adoration of this creature, and that celestial sign; that he forbade the people to eat the flesh of the paschal lamb raw, or sodden, to break its bones, or leave any fragment of it, because, in the profane feasts of Bacchus, it was a custom to eat the raw flesh of the victims, which they offered to that god, and to break all their bones; and in the adoration of the *Æææ*, whom the Egyptians, and from them the Athenians, reputed goddesses, they boiled all their sacrifices, and carried constantly some part of them home, as a good preservative against misfortunes." But there is no need, one would think, for such elaborate explanations, when, considering the situation the Israelites were in, sorely oppressed by the Egyptians, and shortly to be released, and sent away with all speed, the nature and quality of the paschal sacrifice, as well as the manner of dressing and manner of eating it, may perfectly be accounted for. Thus, it was to be a male, because a more excellent species than the female; 'without blemish,' to render it acceptable to God; 'under a year old,' otherwise it could not properly be called 'a lamb;' and 'set apart from the rest of the flock,' that it might be in readiness when the people came in haste to offer it. 'Roasted it was to be, and not boiled,' because roasting was the speedier way of dressing it; but 'roasted thoroughly,' because the whole was to be eaten; and 'the whole was to be eaten,' that none might be left for the Egyptians to profane. It was to be eaten 'standing, and in haste,' and with other circumstances of men every moment expecting to begin their journey; 'with bitter herbs,' to put them in mind of their cruel servitude; and 'unleavened bread,' in memory of their deliverance from it, so suddenly, that they had not even time to leaven their bread for their journey; which is all that the Israelites understood, and all perhaps that God at that time intended they should understand by the directions which he gave them concerning this remarkable ordinance.—*Spencer de Rit. Heb. Tom. 1. b. 2. c. 4.*

^e Exod. xii. 3. 'In the tenth day of this month, they shall take to themselves every man a lamb;' ver. 6. 'and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month.' From hence it appears that the lamb was to be taken from the flock four days before it was killed. For this the rabbis assign the following reasons: that the providing of it might not, through a hurry of business, especially at the time of their departure from Egypt, be neglected till it was too late: that by having it before their eyes so considerable a time, they might be more effectually reminded of the mercy of their deliverance out of Egypt; and likewise to prepare them for so great a solemnity as the approaching feast. On these accounts, some of the rabbis inform us, it was customary to have the lamb tied these four days to their bed posts: a rite which they make to be necessary and essential to the passover in all ages.—*Jennings' Jewish Ant. vol. 2. p. 187.—Ed.*

were to themselves more grievous than darkness.—*Wisdom*, xvii. 2, 3, 21; *Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Philo's Life of Moses*.

^a The words in the text are, 'Lo, shall we sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians before their eyes, and shall they not stone us?' Exod. viii. 26. Where the interrogation, having in it the full force of an affirmation, makes the sense of the words to be this: "If we should offer those creatures which the Egyptians worship for gods, as the ox and the sheep, they doubtless will be affronted to see us sacrifice their gods to our God." For that the Egyptians did look upon several animals with a sacred veneration, is evident from that known passage in the satirist:—"The fleece-bearing animals are served up on no table; and it is a crime to butcher their young."—*Juven. sat. 15.*

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were to burn it; and, lastly, that the posture in which they were to eat it, was to be in a hurry, with their clothes on, and their staves in their hands, as if they were just upon the point of going. ^a

When every thing was thus in readiness for their departure, God, in the middle of the night, by his destroying angel, ^b slew the first-born of every house in

^a Exod. xii. 15. 'Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread.'

As by the law of Moses, no leaven of any kind was to be kept in the houses of the Israelites for seven or eight days, it might have been productive of great inconvenience, had they not been able by other means to supply the want of it. The MS. Chardin informs us, that they use no kind of leaven whatever in the east, but dough kept till it is grown sour, which they preserve from one day to another. In wine countries, they use the lees of wine as we do yeast. If, therefore, there should be no leaven in all the country for several days, yet in twenty-four hours, some would be produced, and they would return to their preceding state. (*Harmer*, vol. 1. p. 253.)—'The first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses.' Concerning this matter the modern Jews are superstitiously exact and scrupulous. The master of the family makes a diligent search into every hole and crevice throughout the house, lest any crumb of unleavened bread should remain in it; and that not by the light of the sun or moon, but of a candle. And in order that this exactness may not appear altogether superfluous and ridiculous, care is taken to conceal some scraps of unleavened bread in some corner or other, the discovery of which occasions mighty joy. This search, nevertheless, strict as it is, does not give him entire satisfaction. After all, he beseeches God, that all the unleavened bread that is in the house, as well as what he has found, may become like the dust of the earth, and be reduced to nothing. They are also very exact and scrupulous in making their bread for the feast, lest there should be anything like leaven mixed with it. The corn, of which it is made, must not be carried to the mill on the horse's bare back, lest the heat of the sun should make it ferment. The sack in which it is put, must be carefully examined, lest there should be any remainder of old meal in it; the dough must be made in a place not exposed to the sun, and must be put into the oven immediately after it is made, lest it should ferment itself.—*Jennings's Jewish Ant.* vol. 2. p. 211.—Ed.

^b The word *Bekor*, signifies sometimes a *person of some eminence* or excellence, as well as the first-born; and therefore it may not be an unreasonable supposition, that where a family had no first-born, the principal or most eminent person was smitten with death; which is certainly better than to imagine, with some, both Jewish and Christian interpreters, that the words of Moses are only applicable to an house that had a first-born, or with St Austin, that Providence did so order it at this time, that every house had a first-born. Since this, however, is the concluding judgment which God sent upon the Egyptians, it may not be improper here to inquire a little how long Moses was in working all these miracles. According to Archbishop Usher, then, who has included them all within the space of one month, we may suppose, that about the 18th of the sixth month, was sent the plague of the 'waters turned into blood,' which ended seven days after. On the 25th came the second plague of frogs, which was removed the day following, and on the 27th, that of the lice. About the 28th, Moses threatened the fourth plague of flies, and inflicted them on the 29th. On the 1st of the next month, which was afterwards made the first month of the year, he foretold the plague of the murrain, and inflicted it the next; and on the 3d, the sixth plague of boils, which fell upon the magicians themselves. About the 4th day, he foretold the seventh plague of thunder and hail, and on the 5th inflicted it. On the 7th, he threatened the eighth plague of locusts, and having sent them the day following, removed them on the 9th. On the 10th, he instituted the feast of the passover, and brought upon Egypt the ninth plague of darkness, which lasted for three days; and on the 14th he foretold the tenth, namely, the destruction of all their first-born, which came to pass the night following. This seems to be a reasonable period of time; and the gradual increase of these judgments are somewhat remarkable. The four first plagues were loathsome, rather than fatal to the Egyptians; but after that of the flies, came the murrain, which chiefly spent its rage upon the cattle; the boils and blains

Egypt, from the prince who sat upon the throne, to the meanest slave; but among the Israelites none was hurt, because the bloody mark upon the door-posts, was a token for the angel not to strike there. At midnight there was a sudden outcry and confusion among the Egyptians: the dying groans of their children awoke them; and when they perceived that in every family, without exception, the first-born, both of man and beast, were dead, they came immediately to Moses, in a great fright, and terror, and desired him to get the people together, and to take their flocks, and their herds, and all that belonged to them, and be gone, because they could not tell where such dreadful judgments would end. Moses, had beforehand, according to God's order, directed the Israelites to borrow of the Egyptians silver and gold vessels to a great value; and God had, at this time, disposed the hearts of the Egyptians to lend them every thing they asked for. The truth is, they were in a manner frightened out of their wits, and so urgent were they to have the Israelites gone, that they would not let them stay, so much as to bake their bread, but obliged them to take the dough, raw as it was, along with them, and bake it, as well as they could, upon the road. ^c From whence it came to be a law, that during the whole eight days of the passover, no other bread than what was unleavened, was to be eaten. ^d

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.*

To account, in some measure, for the occasion of the sufferings of the Israelites in the land of Egypt, we must

reached both man and beast, though there was still a reserve for life. The hail and locusts extended, in a great measure, even to life itself; the first by an immediate stroke, and both consequently by destroying the fruits of the earth. That of darkness added consternation to their minds, and lashes to their consciences; and when all this would not reclaim, at length came the decisive blow; first the excision of the first-born, and then the drowning of the incorrigible tyrant and all his host: 'Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!'—Rev. xv. 3.

^c Exod. xii. 34. 'And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.' The vessels which the Arabs make use of for their kneading the unleavened cakes which they prepare are only small wooden bowls. (*Shaw's Travels*, p. 231.) On these they afterwards serve up their provisions, when cooked. It is not certain that these wooden bowls were the kneading-troughs of the Israelites; but it is incontestable that they must have been comparatively small and light, to be so easily carried away. The original word may denote a kind of *leathern utensil*, such as the Arabs still use, when spread out for a tablecloth, and which, when contracted like a bag, serves them to carry the remnants of their victuals, and particularly sometimes their meal made into dough. (See *Harmer's Observations*, vol. 2. p. 447, &c.) So Niebuhr, speaking of the manner in which the Bedoween Arabs near mount Sinai live, says, "a round piece of leather serves them for a tablecloth, and they keep in it the remains of their victuals."—Ed.

^d Exod. xii. 26, 27. 'Your children shall say unto you, what mean ye by this service?' A custom obtained among the Jews, that a child should ask the meaning of the passover, and that the person who presided, should then give an account of its intent and origin, that so the remembrance of God's mercy, might be transmitted to their latest posterity. This was called the *declaration*, or *showing forth*.—Ed.

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observe, that in the fifth year of Concharis, (whom Josephus, from Manetho, calls Timeus, and who, according to Syncellus, was the twenty-fifth king of the land of Tanis, or Lower Egypt,) there came a numerous army of unknown people, and invaded Egypt on a sudden. They overran both the Upper and Lower Egypt; burned the cities, killed the inhabitants, and, having in a little time subdued all before them, made one of their leaders, whose name was Salatis, their king; who, as soon as he was settled on a throne, laid the land under tribute, made its ancient inhabitants his slaves; and gave the possession of their estates to his own people. Who this Salatis and his followers, who called themselves pastors or shepherds, were, is not so easy a matter to discover. The most probable conjecture is, that they were some of the Horites, whom the children of Esau drove out of Seir, a country which lay to the east and south of the Dead Sea, because the Horites were a people who lived by pasture, and happened to be expelled their own country much about this time. Egypt indeed was a very flourishing kingdom, but so far from being famous for war, that we read of none of their exploits of this kind from the time of their first establishment to this very day. They consumed their time in ease and wealth, and luxury; and therefore the Horites, if they were the Horites, might easily conquer them, and gain themselves a settlement in their kingdom, even as the Arcadians did in Thrace, and the Pelasgi, and afterwards the Trojans, in Italy.

However this be, the government of Egypt being by this means subverted, the protection and happiness which the Israelites enjoyed perished with it. This newking, as the Scripture calls him, knew nothing of Joseph, nor did he regard any establishment which he had made. He had forced his way into Egypt with his sword, and settled his people by conquest, in such a manner and upon such terms as he thought fit: only as the Hebrews were a great and increasing people, inhabiting those parts which he most suspected, and fearing lest, if any invasion should happen from the east, or any insurrection among the ancient inhabitants, they possibly might join with them, and so endanger his new acquisition, he thought it a point of good policy to use all proper means to keep them effectually under.

One of the great mysteries in the dispensations of providence is, God's making choice of the children of Israel for his peculiar people, when it is so manifest, as Moses roundly tells them, that they were a stiff-necked nation, and ¹ 'had been rebellious from the very first day that he knew them.' ² 'God will be gracious to whom he will be gracious, and will shew mercy to whom he will shew mercy.' but upon supposition that the children of Israel did not behave so well during their abode in Egypt, that they neglected the worship of the true God, and complied too much with the idolatrous customs of the country, this will afford us reason enough, why God might suffer their sorrows to be multiplied, 'and their enemies to ride over their backs.' ³ 'He does not,' indeed, 'afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;' and therefore we may presume, that this severe chastisement of his rod was to make them smart for some great and national defection; was to remind them of their sad

degeneracy from the virtue of their ancestors; and so, in the phrase of the prophet, ⁴ 'to look unto the rock whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged; to look unto Abraham their father, and unto Sarah that bore them.'

But even putting the case that they had not been thus culpable; yet, since ⁵ 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,' who can say, but that God might justly permit such calamities to befall a people whom he had adopted for his own, the more to exercise their virtue and patience, and resignation to the divine will; ⁶ the more to keep up a distinction between them and the Egyptians, which a friendly usage might have destroyed; the more to prepare and make them willing to leave Egypt, whenever God should send them an order to depart; and the more to heighten the relish of their future deliverance, and to make them more thankful, more obedient to him, and his injunctions, upon every remembrance of that house of bondage, wherein they had suffered so much, and been so long detained?

Of all the writers of the histories of their own times, there is none to be compared to Moses in this regard, that he reveals his own faults and blemishes, which he might have easily concealed, and conceals many things recorded in other authors, which might have redounded to his own immortal honour. He might have concealed the near consanguinity between his father and mother, which, in after ages, made marriages unlawful, though then perhaps it might be dispensed with. He might have concealed his murder of the Egyptian, and, for fear of apprehension, his escape into Midian. He might have concealed his aversion to the office of rescuing his brethren from their bondage; the many frivolous excuses he made, and the flat denial he gave God at last, till God was in a manner forced to obtrude it upon him. He might have concealed his neglect in not circumcising his son, which drew God's angry resentment against him, so that he met him and would have slain him. He might have concealed some peevish remonstrances he made to God when Pharaoh proved obstinate, and refused to comply. Above all, he might have concealed the whole story of the magicians, their working three miracles equally with him, and every other circumstance that seemed to eclipse his glory: but instead of this, we may observe, that as he makes a large chasm in his life, from his childhood to his being forty years old, and from forty to fourscore; so he has left us nothing of the incomparable beauty and comeliness of his person; nothing of the excellency of his natural parts, and politeness of his education; nothing of his Ethiopian expedition, the conquests he made there, and the posts of honour which he held in the Egyptian court; nothing indeed of all his transactions of the preceding part of his life, but what the author to the Hebrews has taken care to transmit, namely, ⁷ 'that when he came to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' So that here we have a signal evidence of the truth and honesty of our historian, that in the passages of his own life, he conceals such as

¹ Deut. ix. 24.² Exod. xxxiii. 19.³ Lam. iii. 33.⁴ Isa. li. 1, 2.⁵ Heb. xii. 6.⁶ Sherlock on Providence.⁷ Heb. xi. 24, 25.

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an impostor, would be found to emblazon, and discovers others which any man of art and design would be glad to conceal; though even some of these passages, which at first sight may seem to deserve some blame, upon a farther inquiry, may be found to be excusable at least, if not to be justified.

Whoever was the author of the book of Job, it is certain, that he was a writer of great antiquity, and yet he makes it a part of the character of that righteous man, that he ¹ ‘delivered the poor, when he cried, and the fatherless, and him that had no helper;’ that ‘he brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.’ If this may be thought to relate to Job, as a public magistrate only, there is a direction in the Proverbs of Solomon, which seems to be of a more general concernment; ² ‘If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his works?’ If this be thought again not to affect Moses at all, as being at this time an inhabitant of Egypt; there was in Egypt likewise a law, ³ which perhaps at this time was in force, and obligatory upon all, namely, ‘That whoever saw his fellow creature either killed by another, or violently assaulted, and did not either apprehend the murderer, or rescue the oppressed if he could; or if he could not, made not an information thereof to the magistrate, himself should be put to death.’ Now the history tells us, that ⁴ ‘when Moses went out unto his brethren, he looked on their burdens, and spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew.’ So that it is but supposing, that this Egyptian was one of the taskmasters, as the burdens here mentioned seem to denote, who so barbarously treated the Hebrews, and was now going to beat one of them to death; and according to the law of the land, which seems indeed to be the law of all nations, then in being, he was obliged to interpose; and if, upon his interposition, the Egyptian turned upon him, and assaulted him briskly, which is no hard matter to imagine, he was obliged, in his own defence, to slay him.

⁵ To complain to the magistrate in this case, and implore the assistance of the law, was to no manner of purpose. The whole civil power was lodged in such hands as had secret instructions from court to vex and ill treat the Israelites; and when matters were come to this crisis, that oppression ruled, and the government was turned into a mere latrocity, private force upon any proper occasion, must be deemed lawful in all, but in Moses much more so, since he was either moved and animated thereunto by a divine impulse, or invested before it happened, (as ⁶ St Stephen’s comment upon the place gives us reason to think he was so invested,) with the title and office of deliverer of the people of God.

That the names both of persons and things were of the greatest importance to be rightly understood, in order to attain the truest knowledge that could be had of their natures, was the opinion both of Jews and heathens; and some of the earliest writers of the Christian church

have speculated upon this subject, with so much philosophical subtlety, as to build thereon many foolish fancies and ridiculous errors. It cannot be denied, indeed, but that God, in giving some names that are recorded in Scripture, had respect to the nature and circumstances of the persons to whom they belonged; and that, in imitation of him, men endeavoured, even from the beginning, to give names as expressive of the properties of the things named, as human wisdom could direct them; and therefore, without troubling ourselves with what the ancients have offered concerning the science of names, we may from hence deduce the true reason why Moses desired to be informed, at this time more especially, what the name of God was.

If we consider the small advances which philosophy had made, we cannot imagine that men at this time had a sufficient knowledge of the works of the creation, to be able thereby to demonstrate the attributes of God; nor could they by speculation form proper and just notions of his nature. Some of them, indeed, the philosophers of that age, thought themselves wise enough to attempt these subjects; but what was the success? ⁷ ‘professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God.’ After they had speculated never so long on any element, the fire, air, or water, the convex of the firmament, the circle of the stars, or the lights of heaven, not forming true notions of their natures, they were either delighted with their beauty, or astonished with their power, and so framing very high, but false estimates of them, they lost the knowledge of the work-master, and took the parts of his workmanship to be God.

Moses, indeed, might be a man of excellent parts; but we carry our compliment too far, if we think him not liable to have fallen into these, or perhaps more dangerous errors, had he endeavoured to form his notions of God, either from the Egyptian, or any other learning that was then extant in the world. Faith, or a belief of what God had revealed, was the only principle upon which he could hope rightly to know God; and this was the principle which Moses here desires to go upon. For as the revelation which God had hitherto made of himself was but short and imperfect; so Moses, by desiring to know God’s name, desired that he might have some revelation of his nature and attributes vouchsafed him; for that the name of God does frequently signify the divine nature and attributes, is evident from several passages in Scripture.

When Moses desired to see God’s glory, he obtained, that the name of the Lord should be proclaimed before him, and the proclamation was, ⁸ ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.’ And in like manner, Isaiah, prophesying what the Messiah should be, declares his name to be, ⁹ ‘Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.’ In both these places, and many more that might be produced to the same purpose, the name denotes the nature of God; and therefore the design of Moses, in asking God’s name, was to obtain an information of the divine attributes, in order to carry an report of them to

¹ Job xxix. 12, 17.² Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.³ Diodorus Siculus, b. 1. p. 69.⁴ Exod. ii. 1.⁵ Le Clerc’s Commentary in locum.⁶ Acts vii. 25.⁷ Rom. i. 22, 23.⁸ Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.⁹ Isa. ix. 6.

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his brethren. And indeed, considering that Moses was the first that ever carried a message from God to man, it was natural for the Israelites to ask him by what name or peculiar attribute, he had made himself known unto him, so as to authorize him to speak to them in such a manner as no man before had ever done; which question he could not pretend to answer, unless God by revelation thought fit to enable him; and therefore he desired to be confirmed, as far as the divine goodness would be pleased to discover, what name he would be called by, as knowing very well, that, by obtaining this, he might form proper notions of his nature and perfections.

And accordingly we may observe, that this great appellation which God is here pleased to give of himself, expresses his incomprehensible nature in such open and proper character, that St Hilary, as he tells us of himself, lighting on these words before he was a Christian, and as he was musing about God and religion, was struck with admiration, because he could think of nothing so proper and essential to God, as *to be*. God himself, however, chooses to express the word in the future tense, on purpose, as some imagine, to show that he is the only being that can truly say, "I shall, or will be, what I am;" forasmuch as all other beings derive their existence from him, and may be deprived of that existence whenever he pleases.

What knowledge the wisest of the heathen world might have of this incommunicable name of God, without the help of revelation, is a matter of great uncertainty. It is more than probable that Plato's definition of a God, namely, "a being that is always, and had no beginning;" was borrowed from these words of Moses: but there is a passage in Plutarch, which mentions an inscription in the temple of Delphos, consisting of these letters EI, a contraction, as some imagine, of EIMI, *I am*, which (according to the opinion of ¹ a great judge in those days) was one of the most perfect names and titles of the Deity, seeing it imported, that "though our being is uncertain, precarious, temporary, and subject to change, so that no man can say of himself, in a strict and absolute sense, *I am*; yet we may with great propriety give the Deity this appellation, because God is independent, immutable, eternal, always and everywhere the same:" for, ² 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.'

But all this would not work upon Moses to undertake the office to which God called him; and yet when we come to consider his case, we cannot altogether accuse him of perverseness or obstinacy. About forty years before, he had felt some extraordinary motion in himself, and as he was then in the fervour of his youth, he took it for a certain indication that God intended to make use of him as an instrument for his people's deliverance; but then he was a far greater man than now. The princess (if alive) who had adopted him for her son, supported his interest at court; or if dead, had in all probability left him a fortune sufficient to procure himself one. But now age had made him cool and considerate. The loss of his patroness had quashed all aspiring thoughts. A long habitude had perfectly reconciled him to an obscure course of life: and therefore, as one loath to be roused

from his solitude, ³ 'Who am I,' says he, 'that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?'

He had already experimentally known the ingratitude and disingenuity of the Hebrews: ⁴ 'When he supposed they would have understood, that God, by his hand, would have delivered them,' he voluntarily offered his service; but their rejection of him, when in the height of his power, upon so great an alteration in his circumstances, took away all hopes of success in so difficult an enterprise. So that the principal error which Moses incurred upon this occasion, was no more than a distemper incident to the generality of mankind, namely, the measuring of God by himself, and judging of events from the probabilities or improbabilities of second causes.

But there is another reason not to be dissembled, which might possibly deter Moses from returning into Egypt, and that was the blood of the man for which he had fled into Midian, and his certain knowledge of the laws of that land, namely, ⁵ that "whoever killed another, whether he was bond or free, was not to escape with his own life." Just before God appeared to him in the bush, and had this discourse with him, we read, that ⁶ the king of Egypt died, that king, to wit, in whose reign he had slain the Egyptian, and who sought to apprehend him, that he might put him to death. But as Moses kept no manner of correspondence with Egypt, the news of this king's death might not have reached his ears, or if it had, he might reasonably think, that some surviving relation of the slain man might enter a process against him for the murder. So that here he fell into a passion, which is hardly separable from human nature, namely, the love of life and dread of punishment; and which in him was the more excusable, because God as yet had not cleared his mind from the fear and suspicion it lay under.

It must not be denied then, but that there were some tokens of human frailty in Moses' last refusal of the commission which was offered him; but then there is this to say in excuse, that the most excellent persons are the least forward to embrace the offers of great preferment. For if no authority (according ⁷ to Plato) is designed for the benefit of him that governs, but of those that are governed, no wise and considerate man will voluntarily take upon him the government of a people, but must either be hired or compelled to it; and therefore Moses, considering the great weight of the employment, out of a due sense of his own infirmities, declined it as long as he could. And though mention is made in the Scripture of the ⁸ 'Lord's being angry with him,' yet this anger could amount to no more than such a displeasure as a father conceives at his child, when, notwithstanding all that can be said and done to create in him a just confidence, he still continues bashful and diffident of himself.

It may be thought perhaps by some a farther excuse for Moses' backwardness, or at least no great encouragement to his undertaking, that God makes the sign wherewith he would seem to ratify his promise, of a date subsequent to his commission: ⁹ 'I will certainly be with thee, and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of

³ Exod. iii. 11.⁴ Acts vii. 25.⁵ Diodorus Siculus, b. 1. p. 70.⁶ Exod. ii. 23.⁷ De Repub. b. 1.⁸ Exod. iv. 14.⁹ Exod. iii. 12.¹ Ammonius.² Rev. i. 8, 11.

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Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.' For how can a future event serve for a sign of the accomplishments of a present promise? The common solution of this difficulty is,—That God designed this for a token to Moses, in order to root out of his heart all remains of infidelity, which might perhaps be found in him, even after he had delivered the Israelites out of bondage; but this is a sense by no means allowable. For how can we suppose, that after God had brought out his people with an high hand, and a stretched out arm, by making himself justly terrible to Pharaoh and all his court; by turning rivers of water into blood; by changing the day into night; by slaying all the first-born in Egypt; and by causing the king and his whole army to be swallowed up in the same waves of the sea, which 'were a wall on the right hand and on the left,' and opened a way for his own people to pass; how can we suppose, I say, that this faithful servant of his should have the least doubt whether this mighty deliverance was to be ascribed to providence or chance? Or, if there was any further occasion for tokens, why should a smaller than any of the foregoing be proposed? Or, when proposed, why should it be presumed sufficient to produce an effect which others, much more considerable, were found incompetent to do?

To evade these questions, some of the Jewish doctors have devised a new partition of the words; and when God says to Moses, 'This shall be a token unto thee,' they think he means it of the bush, from whence he spake, all on flames without consuming, which was, questionless, token enough that God had sent him; and thereupon, they make the subsequent words the beginning of a fresh sentence, and declarative of a farther purpose, for which God would bring forth his people out of Egypt, even that from that mountain he might give them a law, which was to be the rule and directory of their religious worship and service. But there is no necessity for this subterfuge, when the difficulty may be fairly resolved, by distinguishing the promises of God into two kinds; those that depend on certain conditions, and those that have no conditions at all.

To be the messenger of the former kind of promises, is exercising a glorious ministry; but then it is a ministry attended with danger. He upon whom God confers it, may live in perpetual fear of promising something without effect; because they to whom the promise is made, may forfeit it by not performing the requisite condition: but nothing can discourage the man to whom God has given a commission of the latter kind; because the infallibility of the event supports him against all the obstacles that can possibly arise.

Now to apply this to the case in hand. When God promises Moses a deliverance of his people, Moses might fear that their impiety or unbelief might be a bar and obstruction to their deliverance; and therefore God, in order to cure him of this fear, endeavours to make him sensible that the promise he now gives him, was not indefinite and general, like those which depended on certain conditions; but that it was one of those whose accomplishment was decreed in the Divine councils, independent on any event, or any condition: and therefore he not only promises, but foretels, and particularizes

the nicest and minutest circumstances. He not only acquaints him, that his people shall be delivered, but he describes to him the exact place where, after they found themselves set at liberty, they were to pay their homage to their deliverer: and this detail is the token that God gives him of the certainty of the event.

To illustrate this by a parallel instance. When the armies of Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem, Hezekiah began to fear that they would take it: to secure him against that fear, Isaiah promises him an approaching deliverance. Hezekiah is afraid lest the sins of the people should stand between him and the Divine goodness: to secure him against this apprehension likewise, and to convince him that the resolution God had taken to deliver his people was irrespective and infallible; ² 'This shall be a sign unto thee,' says he, 'ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves; and in the second year, that which springeth of the same; and in the third year, sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.' To return to Moses.

Had this promise indeed been the only sign which God had given him, it might have administered some umbrage of suspicion; but when it was attended with several other signs and mighty wonders, it could not but be of great use for the confirmation of his faith in his present undertaking, since he knew it was as certain as if it had already been effected; because it proceeded from the mouth of the Almighty, whose promises, when absolute and unconditional, are always 'yea and amen.'

I know of few passages more difficult to be understood, than that which contains the adventure of Moses' family in the inn, ³ 'where the Lord met him, and sought to kill him, until Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, surely a bloody husband art thou to me.' Zipporah is commonly represented as a perverse and forward woman, who looked upon circumcision as a cruel and unnecessary ordinance; and therefore prevailed with her husband, who, perhaps, might be too indulgent to her in the case of her younger son, to omit it. But it ought to be considered, that as she was a Midianitish woman, and descended from Abraham by his wife Keturah, she could not have any aversion to the rite of circumcision, in which she acquiesced in the case of her elder son Gershom, and in which she was so expert, that upon her husband's incapacity, she herself performed the operation upon the younger.

The Midianites might perhaps, in this respect, imitate their neighbours the Ishmaelites, who did not circumcise their children until they were thirteen years of age; and, for this reason, some have imagined that Moses' son had not as yet undergone the operation: but Moses knew very well that there was a limitation of time in the institution of the ordinance; and therefore the more probable reason for this omission seems to be, that they were now upon their journey, when Zipporah was brought to bed, and that therefore they might think that the danger of the wound to the infant might excuse the deferring of his circumcision, as it excused the Israelites afterwards in the wilderness.

But as it does not appear that Moses lay under any necessity of taking his family, especially his wife with

¹ Exod. xiv. 22.

² 2 Kings xix. 20.

³ Exod. iv. 24, 25.

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child, along with him, so this omission of circumcising his son might be imputed to him as a greater fault than ordinary, because he may be supposed to have understood the will of God concerning this rite more perfectly than any other man, and was, but just before, reminded of the benefit of that covenant whereof this ordinance was a seal, and some part of which he was going now to take possession of.

But how absurd would it have been for Moses to be made a lawgiver to others, when himself lived in an open violation of God's laws? or to be appointed a chief ruler and instructor of the Israelites, to whom he was to inculcate the obligation of this ordinance, and on whom he was to inflict pains and penalties for their neglect of it, when himself was guilty of the same sin? Nor was this omission only a great sin in itself, but a great scandal likewise to the Israelites, who, by his example, might very likely be led into the same miscarriage, and be tempted to suspect the call of a person who showed such a visible contempt of God's law. As Moses therefore was a public person, and just invested with a commission from God, his disobedience to a known law was more enormous, his example might have done more mischief; and therefore God's severity against him, either in afflicting him with some sudden sickness, or affrightening him with some terrible apparition, was necessary to remind him of his duty. And accordingly, whatever the means was, we find, that it brought to his wife's remembrance the neglect of their not having circumcised the child: but we injure her character, if we think that the words which she is made to utter upon this occasion, were any angry taunt or exprobaton to her husband, since, according to the exposition¹ of a very learned writer upon the text, they are not directed to him, but to her son; and are not the effect of any angry resentment, but a solemn form of speech made use of at the time of any child's circumcision.

Several of the Jewish doctors tell us, that it was a custom of the Hebrew women to call their children, when they were circumcised, by the name of *Chatan*, that is, *spouse*, as if they were now espoused to God. And to this custom the apostle perhaps might allude, when he tells his Corinthians,² 'I am jealous over you with an holy jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' However this be,³ Zipporah, who was an Arabian woman, might the rather make use of this term, and apply it to her son, because the Arabians, whose language has a great affinity to the Hebrew, and who themselves, as descendants from Abraham, did all along use the rite of circumcision, make the word *chatan* signify to *circumcise*, and *chiten*, *circumcision*, as manifestly appears in their translation of the New Testament; which can no otherwise be accounted for than from this custom of calling a child *chatan* when he is circumcised, even as we, because a child in baptism is made a christian, use the word *christen* for to *baptize*.

If Zipporah's words then were directed, not to her husband, but the child whom she had just now circumcised, their proper meaning must be, "I, by this circumcision, pronounce thee to be a member of the church."

"For the child, on the day of his circumcision," says Eben Ezra upon this text, "was used to be called *chatan*, because he was then first joined to the people of God, and as it were espoused unto God." And if this be the sense of the matter, Zipporah was so far from expressing any angry resentment, or giving her husband any opprobrious language upon this occasion, that she only did the office of circumcising her son, when she perceived that the delay of it had given offence to God, and in doing that office, pronounced the words over him, which used to be pronounced whenever that ceremony was duly performed.

This is an interpretation which not only the Septuagint and Chaldee Paraphrasts seem to countenance, but what most modern masters of Jewish learning have approved. And as it seems to clear the character of Zipporah, so may it receive some farther confirmation from the subsequent behaviour of the angel, who, as soon as he saw the ceremony performed, and heard the solemn form pronounced over the child, 'let Moses go, and did not slay him;' whereas had the operation been done in the manner that some pretend, grudgingly, and of necessity, with inward regret and words of reproach to her husband, this, one would think, would have incensed the angel, either to have continued the punishment, be it what it will, upon Moses, or rather to have transferred it to his wife, who, upon this supposition, seems most justly to have deserved it.

Upon the whole therefore it appears, that the words of Zipporah were addressed to her son, and not her husband, and were the usual form of admission into the Jewish church; that it was at the child's feet that she laid the foreskin, and did not throw it at her husband in anger, when she spake the words above-mentioned; and that in this whole affair, there was neither any squabble between Moses and his wife, nor any indecent behaviour, or opprobrious language used by her.

It cannot be denied, indeed, but that God, from the very first day that he appointed Moses to go to Pharaoh, intended to deliver his people from their captivity, and when once they were departed out of Egypt, that they should never return again; and yet they are directed to demand only to go 'three days' journey into the wilderness.' This was not the whole of what was intended; but Moses lay under no obligation to let so bitter an enemy as Pharaoh into his whole design. It is sufficient to absolve him from any imputation of disingenuity, that he acted according to the instructions which God gave him; and God certainly was not obliged to acquaint Pharaoh with all his mind, but only so far as he thought proper: and for wise and good reasons, he thought proper to make the demand no higher at first, than 'three days' journey into the wilderness,' that by his denial of so modest a request, he might make his tyranny more manifest, and the divine vengeance upon him more just and remarkable.

It must be acknowledged again, that the expression of 'flowing with milk and honey,' when applied to any country, like that of king Solomon's 'making silver to be in Jerusalem like stones,'⁶ is hyperbolical. It denotes very rich pastures and grounds which should feed cattle

¹ Mede's Discourse 14.² 2 Cor. xi. 2.³ Mede, b. I. Discourse 14.⁴ Exod. iv. 26.⁵ Poole's Annotations in locum.⁶ 1 Kings x. 27.

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yielding abundance of milk, and which should produce great plenty of flowers and plants, for the bees to make honey. It represents indeed a general fruitfulness all the country over; for which Palestine, according to the account of writers of no mean character, was certainly once famous, however it came into Strabo's head to disparage it. For, to mention an author or two of some note, Aristeus, who was there to bring the seventy interpreters into Egypt, tells us that immense and prodigious was the produce and plenty it afforded of trees, fruits, pasture, cattle, honey, besides the spicery, gold, and precious stones, imported from Arabia,¹ Josephus describes the country as it was in his time, that is, in the time of our Saviour and his apostles, as most remarkably fruitful and pleasant, and abounding in the very choicest productions of the earth. Bochart, much later, and since the country has been inhabited by the Turks, lived in it for the space of ten years, and as he was particularly curious and diligent in informing himself in every thing, speaks the greatest things imaginable of the richness of its soil, and the choiceness of its products: and to name no more, our own countryman, Mr Sandys, who, in the beginning of the last century, travelled through it, gives it the character of "a land adorned with beautiful mountains, and luxurious valleys; the rocks producing excellent waters, and no part empty of delight or profit." And certainly those who either were natives, or have sojourned a long time in a country, may be supposed to have a more perfect knowledge of it than a foreigner, who lived at a distance, as Strabo did.

The truth is, if we consider of ~~what~~ a small compass the land of Canaan is, and yet what a prodigious number of inhabitants, both before and after the Israelites became masters of it, it maintained, we must conclude, it could not but deserve the character which the authors above cited have given us of it; and the barrenness and poverty of its soil, which some modern travellers seem to complain of, must be imputed either to its want of tillage and cultivation, (which the Turks, its present inhabitants, are utterly ignorant of,) or to the particular judgment of God, who, for the wickedness of any nation, has frequently performed what he threatened to the Jews of old: "I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass, and your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits."

Several things are said in Scripture to be done by God, which are only permitted by him to come to pass in their ordinary course and procedure: and thus God may be said to harden Pharaoh's heart, only because he did not interpose, but suffered him to be carried, by the bent of his own passions, to that inflexible obstinacy which proved his ruin. That Moses, to whom God used these expressions concerning Pharaoh, understood them in this sense, is evident from many parts of his behaviour to him, and especially from his earnestly entreating him to be persuaded, and to let the people go.³ Had Moses known, or even thought that God had doomed Pharaoh to unavoidable ruin, it had been an unwarrantable presump-

tion in him to have persuaded him to have avoided it: but that Moses, with all possible application, endeavoured to make an impression upon Pharaoh for his good, is manifest from this passage, "glory over me," that is, do me the honour to believe me, "when I shall entreat for thee, and for thy servants;" wherein he makes an earnest address to Pharaoh, to induce him to be persuaded to part with the people, which he certainly never would have done, had he been satisfied that God himself had prevented his compliance, on purpose to bring him to ruin.

It is farther to be observed, therefore, that not only in the Hebrew, but in most other languages, the occasion of an action, and what in itself has no power to produce it, is very often put for the efficient cause thereof. Thus in the case before us,⁵ God sends Moses to Pharaoh, and Moses, in his presence, does such miraculous works as would have had an effect upon any other: but because he saw some of the miracles imitated by the magicians; because the plagues which God sent came gradually upon him, and by the intercession of Moses, were constantly removed; he thence took occasion, instead of being softened by this alternative of mercy and judgment, to become more sullen and obdurate. When 'Pharaoh,' as the text tells us, 'saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunder ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart.' The mercy of God, which should have led him to repentance, had a contrary effect upon him, and made him more obstinate: "for an hardened heart (as one expresses it) is neither cut by compunction, nor softened by any sense of pity. It is neither moved by entreaties, nor yields to threatenings, nor feels the smart of scourges. It is ungrateful to benefactors, treacherous to counsels, sullen under judgments, fearless in dangers, forgetful of things past, negligent of things present, and improvident for the future:" all which bad qualities seem to have concentrated in Pharaoh. For whatever might have contributed to his obduration at first, it is plain, that in the event, even when the magicians owned a divine power, in what they saw done, and were quite confounded when they felt themselves smitten with the boils, and might thereupon very likely persuade him to surrender, he is so far from relenting, that he does not so much as ask a remove of the plague. It was therefore entirely agreeable to the rules of divine justice, when nothing would reclaim this wicked king, when even that which wrought upon the ministers of Satan made no impression upon him, to let his crime become his punishment, and to leave him to 'eat the bitter fruit of his own ways, and to be filled with his own devices.'

The Israelites, we own, did carry out of the land of their captivity several things of great value, which they had from the Egyptians. But then we are to consider, that the word which our translators render *borrow*, does more properly signify to *ask of one*: and what they render to *lend*, is as literally to *give*. For the case stood thus between the two nations. The Egyptians had been thoroughly terrified with what had passed, and especially with the last terrible plague upon their first-born, and were now willing to give the Hebrews any thing, or

¹ Antiquities, b. 5; and Fuller's Pisgah-Sight of Palestine.² Levit. xxvi. 19, 20. ³ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 9.⁴ Exod. viii. 9.⁵ Le Clerc's Commentary.⁶ Patrick's Commentary ⁷ Scripture Vindicated, part 2.

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every thing, only to get quit of them. They therefore bribed them to be gone, and courted them with presents, so very profusely, as even to impoverish themselves. But for this the Israelites were not at all culpable, because they only accepted of what the others gave them, and what was freely given, they doubtless had a right to detain.

But suppose that the strict sense of the word was, that they really did borrow many valuable things of the Egyptians; yet it is a truth allowed on all hands, that God, who is the supreme Lord of all things, may, when he pleases, and in what manner he pleases, transfer the rights of men from one to another. Considering, then, that God was now become the king of the Israelites, in a proper and peculiar manner; and considering farther what insufferable wrongs the king and people of Egypt had done to this people of God, who were now become his peculiar subjects and proprietary lieges; this act of spoiling the Egyptians, even in the harshest sense of the word, was, according to the laws of nations, more justifiable than royal grants of letters of marque, or other such like remedies, as kings are accustomed to make use of against other powers that have wronged their subjects, or suffered them to be wronged by those that are under their command, without making a proper restitution. In short, whatever the Hebrews took from the Egyptians, they took and possessed it by the law of reprisals, that is, by virtue of a special warrant from the Lord himself, who was now become, not their God only, but their peculiar king.

^a That some compensation was due, in strict justice, from the Egyptians to the Hebrews, for the great services they had done them, is what can hardly be denied: but supposing this borrowing and lending between them had been without any such regard, yet if the Israelites acquired a right to these things afterwards, there was then no obligation for them to make any restitution. Now, that they acquired such a right, is manifest from the Egyptians pursuing them in a hostile manner, and with a purpose to destroy them, after they had given them free liberty to depart; by which hostility and perfidiousness they plainly forfeited their right to what they had only lent before. For this hostile attempt, which would have warranted the Israelites to have fallen upon the Egyptians, and spoiled them of their goods, did certainly warrant them to keep them when they had them;

^a In the Gemarah of the Sanhedrim, there is a memorable story concerning the transaction. In the time of Alexander the Great, the Egyptians brought an action against the Israelites, desiring that they might have the land of Canaan, in satisfaction for all they had borrowed of them when they went out of Egypt. To this Gibeon Ben Kosam, who was advocate for the Jews, replied,—That before they made this demand, they must prove what they alleged, namely, that the Israelites borrowed any thing of their ancestors. To which the Egyptians thought it sufficient to say, that they found it recorded in their own books. Well then, says the advocate, look into the same books, and ye will find that the children of Israel lived four hundred and thirty years in Egypt; (Exod. xii. 40,) pay us then, said he, for all the labours and toils of so many thousand people, as you employed us all that time, and we will restore what we borrowed; to which they had not a word to answer. (*Patrick's Commentary.*) It is to be observed, however, that this passage in Exodus, which the advocate refers to, had respect to all the pilgrimages of Abraham and his posterity from the time of his setting out from Charran in Mesopotamia, to this their departure out of Egypt, as we shall have occasion to show very soon.

so that now they became the rightful possessors of what they had only upon loan, and could not have detained without fraud and injustice before.

Thus, in what view soever we contemplate this fact, whether it be a voluntary donation made by the Egyptians, or an act of reprisal made by the Hebrews, or a deed of forfeiture which the former incurred by an unjust invasion upon the latter, the Hebrews will be found not so culpable as some would make them: nor can we see where the pretended ill tendency of such a precedent can be, since it is allowed on all hands, that it is in no case to be followed, unless it be evidently commanded by the same divine authority.

Miracles indeed, we own, are the seals and attestations of God, to evidence the truth of any thing that he is desirous the world should believe; but if magicians, by the assistance of evil spirits, have power to impose upon our senses, or to work such wonders, as seem altogether miraculous, we are left under a great uncertainty how to determine our judgment in this case: and therefore, to give a full solution to this part of the objection, we shall first premise something concerning the nature of magic, and how far its powers may extend towards the operation of miracles; thence proceed to inquire who the particular magicians were who pretended to oppose Moses, and upon what account it was that Pharaoh sent for them; thence to consider whether the miracles they seemingly wrought were real or fictitious, or if real, why God permitted them to perform them; and thence to examine whether this permission tended any way to prejudice the evidence of Moses' mission from God, or rather not to confirm it, seeing the difference between them and Moses, in this contest of working miracles, was so visible and conspicuous.

Those who have professedly treated of the magic art, have generally divided it into three kinds, natural, artificial, and diabolical. ¹ The first of these is no other than natural philosophy, but highly improved and advanced, whereby the person that is well skilled in the power and operation of natural bodies, is able to produce many wonderful effects, mistaken by the illiterate for diabolical performances, even though they lie perfectly within the verge of nature. Artificial magic is what we call legerdemain, or slight of hand, whose effects are far from being what they seem. They are deceptions and impostures, the very tricks of jugglers, (as we corrupt the word *joculatores*,) far from exceeding the power of art, and yet what many times pass with the vulgar for diabolical likewise. Diabolical magic is that which is done by the help of the devil, who having great skill in natural causes, and a large command over the air, and other elements, may assist those that are in league and covenant with him (in Scripture called wizards, sorcerers, diviners, enchanters, Chaldeans, and such as had familiar spirits) to do many strange and astonishing things. ²

To deny that there ever were such men as these, is to

¹ Bishop Wilkins' Tract on Magic; and Edward's Body of Divinity, vol. 1.

² The Scripture warrants the belief, that, in early ages, before the coming of the Messiah, God permitted, in some instances, evil demons to league with mortals, but after the divine advent, that power seems to have been restrained, and a belief in it is now altogether discarded by every intelligent Christian. In the relation given by Moses of the miracles performed before Pharaoh, to induce him to allow of the departure of the Israelites, we read that

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sight the authority of all history; and to guess at the probable rise and original of them, we may suppose it to be this,—¹ That God being pleased to admit the holy patriarchs into conference with him, the devil endeavoured to do the same; and to retain men in their obedience to him, pretended to make discoveries of secret things; and that when God was pleased to work miracles for the truth, he in like manner directed those who were familiar with him, how to invoke his help, for the performance of such strange things as might confirm the world in their error.

Under which of these denominations, natural, artificial, or diabolical, the magicians who set themselves in opposition to the servants of the Most High God, are to be ranked, we have no instructions from Scripture; but it seems highly probable, that neither would Pharaoh have called together those of the least capacity and repute, neither would the devil, as far as his power extended, have been backward to assist his votaries upon such a solemn and momentous occasion as this.

Who the principal of these magicians were, our sacred historian makes no mention; but several, both Jewish and heathen authors, (from whom ² St Paul without doubt borrowed their names,) have informed us, that among the Egyptians they were called Jannes, and Jambres, which to give them a Latin termination, would be *Johannes* and *Ambrosius*, of whom Numenius (as he is quoted by Eusebius) ³ has given us this remarkable account, namely,—“That they were the scribes in religious matters among the Egyptians; that they flourished in Egypt at the time when the Jews were driven from thence; that they did not give place to any body in the science of magical secrets; and for this reason were chosen unanimously by all Egypt to oppose Moses, (so he calls Moses,) a leader of the Jews, and whose prayers were very prevalent with God.”

Now, supposing that these, and whoever else accompanied them, acted from the highest principles in magic, there are two ways wherein we may imagine it in the

power of the devil to be assistant to such persons as pretend to work miracles.

The first is, by raising false images and appearances of things; which may be done either by affecting the brain, or confusing the optic nerves, or altering the medium which is between us and the object. That he did some such thing as this to our blessed Saviour, when from the top of an high mountain he pretended ⁴ ‘to shew him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them in a moment of time,’ is very plain from the convexity of the earth, which bounds the horizon, and admits of no such unlimited prospect; so that all he could be presumed capable of doing in this case (as our Saviour was not insensible what he did do) was to maké fictitious representations of gay and magnificent things in the air.

Secondly, The other way wherein the devil may be supposed able to assist these magicians, is by making use of the laws of nature, in producing effects which are not above the natural power of things, though they certainly exceed what man can do. Thus to transport a body, with inconceivable rapidity, from one place to another; to bring together different productions of nature which separately have no visible effect, but when united work wonders; to make images move, walk, speak, and the like; these may come within the compass of the devil’s power, because not transcending the laws of nature, though we cannot discern by what means they are effected.

Thirdly, There is a farther supposition ⁵ of some learned men, namely, that, under the divine permission, wicked spirits have a power to work real miracles, of which they perceive ⁶ some intimations given us in Scripture, and in the nature of the thing no reasons to the contrary; and therefore the question is, whether what the magicians here performed, were real miracles or not?

Some learned writers have imagined, that there was not any real transmutation, when the rods of the Egyptian magicians were pretended to be changed into serpents, nor any real miracle exhibited, when the water was turned into blood, and the frogs produced; but that either the magicians played their parts well, as dexterous jugglers, or that they did it by their knowledge of some secret art; or that some demons assisted them, who by their power over the air, enabled them to ^a deceive the sight of

¹ Patrick’s Commentary in locum.

² 2 Tim. iii. 8. ³ Præpar. Evang. b. 9. c. 8.

⁴ Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh called also the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments: for they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods,’ (Exod. vii. 10, 11, 12.) The apparent miracle of the Egyptian magicians can be thus explained. The asp of Egypt when approached or disturbed, like the *cobra du capello*, elevates its head and body to a considerable degree, extends the sides of its neck, and appears to stand erect to attack the aggressor. That circumstance led to the employment of the asp as a dancing serpent by jugglers, either for exhibition as a source of profit, or to impose upon vulgar credulity. The asps for this purpose are carefully deprived of their fangs, which enables their owners to handle them with impunity. When they are to be exhibited, the top of their cage, commonly a wicker-basket, is taken off, and at the same moment, a flute or pipe is played. The asp immediately assumes the erect position, and the balancing motions, made during its protracted efforts to maintain this attitude, are what is called dancing. A really curious circumstance is stated, on good authority, relative to the asp, which is, that the jugglers know how to throw it into a sort of catalepsy, in which condition the muscles are rigidly contracted, and the whole animal becomes stiff and motionless. This is done by compressing the cervical spine between the finger and thumb. The trick is called ‘changing the serpent into a rod or stick.’—Ed.

⁴ Mat. iv. 8.

⁵ Stillingfleet’s Orig. Sacre, p. 236. Le Clerc’s Commentary.

⁶ Deut. xiii. 1. Matth. xxiv. 24. 2 Thess. ii. 9.

^a The Mahometans, in the account they give us of these transactions, seem to think them legerdemain tricks, rather than any real miracles in the magicians; for they tell us, that Moses having wrought some miracles before the king of Egypt, which not a little surprised him, he was advised by his council to amuse him with fair hopes, until he had sent for some of his most expert sorcerers from Thebais. Accordingly Sabour and Gadour, two brothers, renowned for their magic skill, were sent for; and before they came to Pharaoh’s court, they went to consult the manes of their father about the success of their journey; acquainting him withal, that the two magicians which they were sent for to oppose, had a rod, which they turned into a serpent, and devoured all that made head against it: to which their father’s ghost answered, that if that rod turned itself into a serpent whilst they were asleep, they must never expect to prevail against them. However, this did not hinder them from appearing before Pharaoh, at the head of his other magicians, to the number, as some say, of 70,000. All these had prepared their rods, and cords filled with quicksilver, which, when heated by the sun, imitated the winding of a serpent: but Moses’ serpent soon destroyed them, to the great surprise of all the spectators:

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beholders. It is to be observed, however, that in the account which Moses gives us of the miracles performed by himself and Aaron, and of what the magicians did by their enchantments, he does not hint any manner of difference, as to the reality of the performance of either of them. In the case of their rods being turned into serpents, he does not say, that they made them to appear to be such, by a deception of the sight, but that, ¹ 'they flung down every man his rod, and they became serpents;' and so of the other two miracles, which Moses exhibited, 'that the magicians did so with their enchantments.'

² Now, from the knowledge of natural causes and effects, which by the help of experiment and philosophy, has of late been introduced, we may venture to say, that no effects like what these men pretended to accomplish by enchantments, can be produced by any or all the powers of nature. No art, no study of occult sciences, can enable a man really to change a rod into a living serpent. There are no enchantments, no rules in sorcery sufficient to make a living frog, or to change water into real blood; and to suppose that the magicians went about to impose upon Pharaoh, and the rest of the spectators, by mere artifice and slight of hand, was giving Moses and Aaron, whom we cannot but suppose inquisitive upon this occasion, the fairest opportunity imaginable to detect the cheat, and expose them to the contempt and derision of the whole company.

Their only recourse, in this case, can be to the assistance of devils, deluding the company with false appearances of serpents, frogs, and blood: but let any one try to give a satisfactory account, how any magician could, by his power over the air, either by himself, or by the assistance of a demon, represent to the naked view of beholders, in opposition to a true miracle, serpents, frogs, and water converted into blood; nay, and so represent them, as that the fictitious appearance should not be distinguishable from the real, but should bear to be seen with them, at one and the same time, in the same light, in the same view; for so the magicians' rods turned into serpents certainly were, when Aaron's rod swallowed them up: I say, let any one try to give a reasonable account of this fancy, and he will quickly see, that he may more reasonably suppose the magicians able to perform a true and real transmutation, than to ascribe to them such imaginary powers as this supposition requires, and which (if they could be conceived) can tend only to destroy the certainty of all appearances whatever.

If then the magicians could have no knowledge of any mystic arts, or powers of nature, whereby to work miracles; if they could not deceive the spectators by any slight of hand, nor obtain any assistance from evil spirits, sufficient to impose upon them by false appearances; the consequence seems to be, that the miracles which they wrought were equally true with those which Moses and Aaron did. But then, as the magicians had no power inherent in themselves, they could not tell, even when they set about imitating Moses, what the success of their attempt would be. Their rods were

turned into serpents, they saw, but how that was effected, they could not tell. Had they had any certain rules of art or science to work by, or any superior help or assistance to depend on, they would at once have known what to attempt, and what not, and not have exposed themselves to scorn, by not being able to produce lice, as well as frogs. If what they did was by the agency of evil spirits, it is plain, that that agency was under the divine control, and could go no farther than the God of Israel permitted it; and the reasons of his permitting it might be these:

The learned in Egypt thought, that miracles, prodigies, and omens, were given by the planetary and elementary influences; and that students, deeply versed in the mysteries of nature, could cause them by art and incantation. Pharaoh might possibly be of this opinion; and therefore, seeing Moses do very strange things, and knowing that his magicians were great adepts in these sciences, he thought proper to send for them, in order to know whether the wonders which Moses wrought were the effect of the art of man, of the power of nature, or of the finger of God; for he seems to have argued thus—If his magicians could perform what Moses did, Moses was such an one as they, and endeavoured to delude him with artificial wonders, instead of real miracles. Fit therefore it was, that these practitioners should be suffered to exert the utmost of their power against Moses, in order to clear him from the imputation of magic, or sorcery, which, considering the prevailing notions of that age, both Hebrews and Egyptians might have been apt to entertain, had not this competition happened, and his antagonists thereupon acknowledged the superiority of the principle by which he acted, in comparison of which, all their arts and knowledge of occult sciences availed nothing.

The Israelites, it must be owned, were a people of a very suspicious, diffident, and desponding temper. When Moses came to them with a message from God, at first they seemed to receive him gladly, and to rejoice at their approaching deliverance; and when he had shown them the credentials which God appointed him to exhibit, it is said, ³ 'that the people believed, and when they heard that the Lord had looked upon their affliction, they bowed their heads, and worshipped:' but within the space of a day or two, when they saw that every thing did not answer their expectation, but that their petition, to an imperious tyrant was rejected with scorn; how is their tone changed to their very deliverers, and the blame of all their grievances laid upon them! ⁴ 'The Lord look upon you, and judge, because you have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword into their hands to slay us:' and therefore, for the confirmation of the faith of these wavering and uncertain people, it was highly necessary that this contest between Moses and the magicians should be permitted, that the disparity of persons acting by the power of God, and by the power of Satan, in such a contraposition, might be more conspicuous.

And indeed, what could more contribute to raise in the Israelites a confidence in God's promises, and a joyful hope of a speedy deliverance, than to see the

¹ Exod. vii. 11, 12. ² Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 9. whereupon Sabour and Gadour renounced their profession, and embraced the religion of Moses, which gave Pharaoh such a disgust, that he had them both put to death, as holding secret correspondence with Moses.—*Herbelot's Biblioth. Orient.* p. 648, and *Calmel's Dictionary*, under the word *Jannes*.

³ Exod. iv. 31.

⁴ Exod. v. 21.

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great disparity between the opposers and maintainers of their cause? To see, I say, that though, by the Divine permission, the magicians could change their rods into serpents, yet, as a manifest token of superiority, Moses' rod devoured all theirs; though they could turn water into blood, yet it was above their skill to restore it to its former nature; though they made a shift to produce frogs, yet they were utterly unable to clear the Egyptian palaces and houses of them; though they did, in short, some things, which only contributed to the calamities of Egypt, yet they could do no one thing to redress them, no even to relieve themselves against the plague of the boils? So true, and so severe withal, is that observation of the author of the book of Wisdom, ¹ "As for the illusions of the art magic, they were put down, and their vaunting in wisdom was reprov'd with disgrace; for they who promised to drive away terrors, and troubles from a sick soul, were sick themselves of fear, and worthy to be laughed at."

But now Moses not only does such miracles as the magicians never pretend to do, (the storm and hail, the thunder and lightning, and thick darkness, &c., they never once attempted to imitate,) but, supposing that Pharaoh might be addicted to astrologers, who fancied that all things here below might be governed by the motion and influence of the stars, he very frequently gives him the liberty to name the time when he would have any plague removed, that thereby he might know that God alone was the author of them, and that consequently there was no day or hour under so ill an aspect, but that he could prevail with him, at whatever moment he should assign, to rescue and deliver him.

Had Moses met with no opposition in working his miracles, Pharaoh had neither had so strong a conviction, nor could Moses himself have exhibited so clear a testimony of his divine mission. ² As the nature of the Egyptian learning then was, the king might have suspected that the prophet's miracles proceeded, if not from natural means and enchantment, at least from the influence of some planetary or elementary powers: but when men of equal skill and abilities; in all points of abstruse learning, were brought to contest the matter with him, and acknowledged their inability to proceed in a conflict where their adversary had a divine power apparently assisting him; this established the truth of Moses' pretensions, though it made the other's obstinacy and infidelity inexcusable; and ³ a signal instance of God's wisdom it was, to permit these sorcerers to proceed for some time in their contest with his servant, which added disgrace to the one's defeat, as it did no small glory to the other's conquest.

Thus we have endeavoured to satisfy the objections which are usually advanced against some parts of the Scripture history comprised in this period; and for the farther satisfaction of our reader, shall conclude with the testimony of some heathen writers, who, in all ages, have more or less taken notice of the birth, life, and several adventures of Moses, so far as we have hitherto advanced. ⁴ That of his being taken out of the river Nile, for instance, is sung by the author of the Orphic

verses, under the title ὁδογενής, or *born of the water*: that the beauty and gracefulness of his person, which recommended him to every one's affection, is remembered by Justin ⁵ out of Trogus Pompeius, and that ⁶ the whole fable of Venus falling in love with Adonis, in all probability arose from the story of Moses and Pharaoh's daughter: that the wonder of the burning bush is recorded by Antiphanus, with a small variation, as he is cited ⁷ by Eusebius: that several of the plagues upon Egypt are mentioned in the fragments of Eupolemus, preserved ⁸ by the same Eusebius; and that the slaughter of their first-born, in particular, is commemorated in that mournful feast of Osiris, wherein they rise at midnight, light candles, and go about weeping and 'groaning: that Moses' calling the God of heaven Jao, or Jehovah, is mentioned ⁹ by Diodorus Siculus: that the names of Jannes and Jambres, and the opposition they made against him, is preserved ¹⁰ in Eumenes, ¹¹ Pliny, and ¹² Apuleius; and, to go no farther, that the Israelites' departure out of Egypt, and settling in the land of Canaan, is ¹³ by Tacitus, who took it from some Egyptian authors, thus related. "The Hebrews were descended from the Assyrians, and possessing a great part of Egypt, led the life of shepherds; but afterwards being burdened with hard labour, they came out of Egypt under the command of Moses, with some Egyptians accompanying them, and went through the country of the Arabians, into Palestine Syria, and there set up rites contrary to those of the Egyptians." So fully does the testimony of aliens tend to the confirmation of thy revelations, O God!

CHAP. III.—Of the sacred chronology, and profane history, learning, religion, idolatry, and monumental works, &c., but chiefly of the Egyptians, during this period.

BEFORE we enter upon the historical matters which are contained in this period, between God's call to Abraham out of Mesopotamia, and the children of Israel's departure out of Egypt, it may not be improper to settle its chronology, and to take notice of some exceptions that may possibly be made to it.

The difference between the Hebrew, Samaritan, and Septuagint computations, in the former periods of time, ran wide; and it was some part of our care, either to determine which was most probably in the right, or to reconcile the seeming opposition between them: but in this the variation is so small, that they seem almost unanimously to agree, that ¹⁴ from the promise made to Abraham, to his posterity's exodus out of Egypt, are 430 years, which, according to the learned Usher, may very properly be divided into two halves.

1. ¹⁵ From the time of the promise, when Abraham was in the 75th year of his age, to the birth of Isaac, are 25 years; ¹⁶ from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob, 60 years; from the birth of Jacob to his descent into

⁵ B. 36. c. 2.

⁶ Huetius' Dem. Evang. prop. 4. c. 3.

⁷ Eusebius' Præp. Evang. b. 9. c. 22.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ B. 1.

¹⁰ Eusebius, b. 8. c. 8.

¹¹ B. 30. c. 1.

¹² Apolog. 2.

¹³ B. 5.

¹⁴ Exod. xii. 40.

¹⁵ Gen. xii. 4.—xxi. 5.

¹⁶ Gen. xxv. 26.

¹ Wisdom xvii. 7, 8.

² Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 9.

³ Stillingfleet's Origin. Sacre.

⁴ Eusebius' Præp. Evang. b. 13. c. 12.

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Egypt, with his whole family, 130 years; so that the whole of this division amounts to 215 years.

2. The other part of the division is thus reckoned up. Joseph, the son of Jacob, was 30 years old when he expounded Pharaoh's dreams: the seven years of plenty were run out, and ¹ the third year of famine begun, when his father came down into Egypt: so that by this time Joseph was 39. Now, 39 years taken from the 110 which Joseph lived, will make the time which the Israelites had continued in Egypt, before Joseph's death, to be 71: and as ² from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses, are precisely 64 years; so ³ from his birth to the time of the Israelites' departure, are 80 years. The several articles of this division, therefore, being put together, amount in like manner to 215 years; and the two gross sums make exactly 430.

The history indeed tells us, that ⁴ 'the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years:' but it does not therefore follow that they dwelt in Egypt all that time. They came into Egypt with Jacob, A. M. 2298, according to Hales, A. M. 3548, and went out of Egypt, A. M. 2513, *Ibid.* 3763; so that they lived in it just 215 years. Their sojourning, therefore, must not be limited to their living in Egypt, but be taken in a more general sense, and extended equally to the time of their living in Canaan, which being added to the time of their continuance in Egypt, makes exactly the number of 430 years.

That this is the sense of the divine historian, is manifest from the authority of the Samaritan text, which has the whole verse thus: 'Now the inhabiting of the children of Israel, and their fathers, whereby they inhabited in the land of Canaan, and in the land of Egypt, were four hundred and thirty years;' whereupon the learned Dr Prideaux ⁵ has this observation, "That the additions herein do manifestly mend the text; they make it more clear and intelligible, and add nothing to the Hebrew copy, but what must be understood by the reader to make out its sense;" and upon this presumption it may very reasonably be supposed, ⁶ that the ancient Hebrew text was, in this verse, the same with the present Samaritan, and that the words which the Samaritan has in this place more than the Hebrew, have been dropped by the negligence of some transcribers.

Again in the promise which God makes to Abraham, he tells him, ⁷ 'That his seed should be a stranger in a land which was not theirs; that there they should serve the inhabitants, and they afflict them for four hundred years; but that, in the fourth generation, they should return to Canaan again;' whereas four hundred years are not the number specified in the place just now examined, nor are four generations equivalent to the space of time wherein the Hebrews sojourned in strange countries. It is to be observed, however, that both in sacred and profane authors, a common thing it is, to mention only the large sum, and drop the less, especially when, to preserve the exactness of chronology, the precise number is in other places inserted: and that though a generation does usually denote a term of an hundred years; yet, taking the words to relate to the whole sojourning of the Hebrews, from

their going into Canaan to their going out of Egypt, the odd number of thirty years may here be supposed to be omitted, to make it a round sum, as well as in the former sense: but then taking a generation to mean no more than one descent, the matter of fact is, that from the Israelites' going down into Egypt, until the time of their leaving it, in some of the sons of Jacob, (particularly in Levi, who begat Cohath, and Cohath, Amram, and Amram, Moses, who conducted the people out of Egypt,) there were no more than four descents.

Whether, therefore, we take the word generation to denote an age of years, or a succession of lives, there is plainly no incongruity in the expression; because, bating the odd number of thirty, Abraham and his posterity sojourned in a strange land for the space of 400 years, and yet, allowing it to be meant of a descent of lives, at the Israelites' return to Canaan, from the time of their going down to Egypt, several persons of the fourth generation were not extinct.

Egypt indeed was the most considerable nation with whom the Israelites had any intercourse during this period: what dealings they had with the several parts of Canaan, will be best related when we come to treat of the history of that country. In the mean time we cannot but lament our want of the ancient records of those times, which forces us, instead of a continued history, to present our reader with nothing but a jejune catalogue of the succession of the Egyptian kings, which, as far as they relate to our present purpose, we have thought proper ^a to subjoin at the bottom of the page; and shall only

^a In the year of the world 1849, reigned in Thebais, or the Upper Egypt, Menes, whom the Scripture calls Mizraim, 62 years: in the year 1911, Athothes, 59 years: in the year 1970, Athothes II., 32 years: in the year 2002, Diabies, 19 years: in the year 2021, Pemphos, 18 years: in the year 2039, Tegar Amachus, 79 years: in the year 2118, Stoechus, 6 years: in the year 2124, Gofermies, 30 years: in the year 2154, Mares, 26 years.

In the time of these flourished the royal shepherds in the Lower Egypt; and in the year of the world 1920, Salatis, the first pastoral king, reigned 19 years: in the year 1939, Beon, the second pastoral king, 44 years: in the year 1983, Apachnas, the third pastoral king, 36 years: in the year 2020, Apophis, the fourth pastoral king, 61 years: in the year 2081, Janias, the fifth pastoral king, 50 years and one month; and after these Herules Assis, 49 years and two months.

Then follow the Theban kings in this order. In the year of the world 2180, Anophes, (who by Archbishop Usher is named Tethmosis, and is said to have expelled the royal shepherds, reigned 20 years: in the year 2200, Siricius, 18 years: in the year 2218, Cneubus Cneurus, 27 years: in the year 2245, Ravosis, 13 years: in the year 2258, Biyris, 10 years: in the year 2268, Saophis, 29 years: in the year 2297, Sensaophis, 27 years: in the year 2324, Moscheris, 31 years: in the year 2355, Masthis, 33 years: in the year 2388, Pannus Archadnes, whom Usher calls Ratholis, 35 years: and in the year 2423, Apaxus Maximus, 100 years. After the expulsion of the race of the royal pastors, in the year of the world 2205, Chebron succeeded to the kingdom of the Lower Egypt, and reigned 13 years: in the year 2218, Amenophis, 20 years and 7 months: in the year 2230, Ameses, 21 years and 9 months: in the year 2261, Mephres, 12 years and 9 months: in the year 2273, Miphragmuthis, 25 years and 10 months: in the year 2290 Tthmosis, 9 years and 8 months: in the year 2309, Amenophis II., 30 years and 10 months: in the year 2340, Orus, 36 years and 5 months: in the year 2376, Achenchres, 12 years and 1 month: in the year 2388, Rathotis, 9 years: in the year 2397, Achenchres, 12 years and 5 months: in the year 2410, Achenchres II., 12 years and 3 months: in the year 2422, Acmatis, 4 years and 1 month. In the year 2426, Ramesses, 1 year and 3 months: in the year 2427, Ramesses Miamun, 66 years and 2 months: and in the year 2493, Amenophis III., 19 years and 6 months: who is the last we meet with in this period.

¹ Gen. xlvii. 4.

² Compare Gen. xli. 46. with xlv. 6.

³ Exod. vii. 7.

⁴ Exod. xii. 40.

⁵ Connection, vol. 2. part 1. h. 6. p. 600.

⁶ Shuc'ford's Connection, vol. 2. h. 9.

⁷ Gen. xv. 13, 16.

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take notice here in particular, that A. M. 2084, when Abraham and his nephew Lot, went down into Egypt, Tegar Amachus was then upon the throne; that A. M. 2260, when Joseph was born, Biyris was king; and when he was sold into Egypt, about seventeen years after, Saophis had succeeded; that this Saophis was the prince whose dreams he expounded, and by whom he was promoted to great honour in the kingdom; that he died, however, before his dreams were accomplished, for it was A. M. 2298, that the first year of the famine began, when Sen-saophis, who was probably his son, and held Joseph in equal favour, swayed the sceptre; that this was the prince to whom Jacob and his sons, upon their coming down into Egypt, in the third year of the famine, were presented, and with whom Israel had the conversation above mentioned; that A. M. 2369, when Joseph died, Masthis was king, by whom, and some of his successors, the Israelites were well treated, in remembrance of the services he had done the public, until there happened a revolution in the government, which some choose to place about this time; that A. M. 2427, the Israelites began to be oppressed, and severely treated by Rameses Miamun, in whose reign Moses was born, slew the Egyptian, and fled into Midian; that A. M. 2493, Amenophis succeeded his father in his kingdom and in his cruelty to the Israelites; but that being compelled at last, by the mighty hand of God, to let them go, he, and all his army, in endeavouring to retake them, were A. M. 2513, swallowed up in the Red Sea.

Salatis, and his successors, not only oppressed the Israelites, as we said before, but by the violence of their conquests, so terrified the ancient inhabitants of the land, that many persons of the first figure thought it better to leave their native country, than to endeavour to sit down under such calamities as they saw were coming upon them. Cecrops, about this time, departed from Egypt; and after some years' travel in other places came at length to Greece, and lived in Attica, where he was kindly received by Actæus, the king of the country; married his daughter, and upon his demise succeeded to his throne; and thereupon he taught the people, who were vagrant before, the use of settled habitations; restrained all licentious lusts among them; obliged each man to marry one wife; and, in short, gave wise rules for the conduct of their lives, and the exercise of all civil and religious offices. About thirty years after the death of Cecrops, Cadmus^a came, either directly from Egypt, as some think, or rather from Phœnicia, as others will have it, and with several people that followed his fortune,^b of which some authors give us a strange account,

^a The true account of Cadmus is,—That his father, whose name is unknown, was an Egyptian, who left Egypt about the time that Cecrops came from thence, and obtained a kingdom in Phœnicia, as Cecrops did in Attica; and that his two sons Phœnix and Cadmus, were born after his settlement in that country; and hence it came to pass that Cadmus, having had an Egyptian father, was brought up in the religion, and was well acquainted with the history of that country, which occasioned several writers of his life to account him an Egyptian; and at the same time being born and educated in Phœnicia, he became master of the language and letters of the country, and had likewise a Phœnician name, which has induced several others that have wrote of him, to conclude, with good reason, that he was a native of that country.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. b. 8.

^b The account which Ovid, in his *Metamorphosis*, (b. 3. fab. 1.) gives us of this matter is,—That Cadmus' followers were all

having expelled the ancient inhabitants, settled himself in Bœotia, and built Thebes.

Danaus was another considerable person, who, about this time, left Egypt and came into Greece. He was originally descended from a Grecian ancestor, and being now at Argos, when the crown was vacant, he stood candidate for it against Galenor, the son of Sthenelus, and, by the superstition of the people who were his electors, carried it. But of all the refugees who quitted Egypt much about this time, Belus, the son of Neptune, seems to be the most famous. He, with some Egyptian priests, went to Babylon, and there obtained leave to settle, and cultivate their studies in the same manner, and with the same encouragement that had been granted them in their own country.

The chief aim of the ancient astronomers seems to have been, to observe the times of the rising and setting of the stars; and the first and most proper places that they could think of for that purpose were very large and open plains, where they could have an extensive view of the horizon, without interruption; and such plains as these were the observatories for many generations. But the Egyptians had, for above three hundred years before the time of this Belus, invented a method to improve their views by the building of pyramids, from the top of which they might take a prospect with greater advantage; and therefore it is no improbable conjecture, that Belus taught the Babylonians the use of such structures, and might possibly project for them that lofty tower which was afterwards called by his name.

For this tower seems to have been an improvement of the Egyptian pyramids. It was raised to a much greater height; had a more commodious space at top, more

devoured by a serpent, which when Cadmus had killed, and sown its teeth in the ground, there sprang up from them a number of armed men, who, as soon as they appeared above ground, fell a fighting one another, and were all killed except five, who, surviving the conflict, went with Cadmus, and helped him to build Thebes. And the mythologic sense of all this story, according to the conjecture of a learned author, is no more than this,—That when Cadmus came into Bœotia, and had conquered the inhabitants of it, it might be recorded of him in the Phœnician or Hebrew language, which anciently was the same, that he *Nashah Chail Chamesh Anoshim, Noshekim be Shenei Nachash*; but now there being several ambiguities in these words, where the vowels were not originally written, (Chamesh, for instance, may signify five, as well as warlike; Shenei, teeth, as spears; and Nachash a serpent, as well as brass,) a fabulous translator might say, “he raised a force of five men, armed with the teeth of a serpent;” whereas the words should be rendered, “he raised a warlike force of men armed with spears of brass;” and it is no wonder that the Greeks, who were so fond of disguising all their ancient accounts with fable and allegory, should give the history of Cadmus this turn, when the words, in which his actions are recorded, give them so fair an opportunity.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. b. 8.

^c The dispute between Danaus and Galenor, concerning their titles to the crown, was argued, on both sides, for a whole day; and when Galenor was thought to have offered as weighty and strong arguments for his pretensions, as Danaus could for his, the next day was appointed for the further hearing and determining their claims, when an accident put an end to the dispute. For not far from the place where the people were assembled, there happened a fight between a wolf and a bull, wherein the wolf got the better. This was thought a thing not a little ominous; and therefore, as the wolf was a creature they were less acquainted with than the bull, they thought it was the will of the gods, declared by the event of this accidental combat, that he who was the stranger should rule over them.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. b. 8.

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useful and large apartments within; and yet was a less bulky building, and raised upon a narrower foundation: so that the contriver of this seems to have been well acquainted with the Egyptian pyramid and its defects, and to have herein designed a structure much more excellent, which can be ascribed to none, with so great a show of probability, as to the Belus we are now speaking of.

That the Egyptians, in the early ages of the world, were very famous for wisdom and learning, is evident from many ancient writers, as well as the testimony of the Scriptures themselves; for when, among other things, to the honour of Moses, it is said, that ¹ 'he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians;' and to magnify the knowledge of Solomon, we are told, that ² 'he excelled all the wisdom of Egypt;' we cannot but infer, that this nation, above all others, had gained a reputation even for the invention of several useful sciences.

The tillage of the ground made the study of astronomy absolutely necessary, in order to their knowing, from the lights of heaven, the times and seasons for the several parts of agriculture; and the nature of their country, overflowed every year by the Nile, and every year losing its land marks, made it of continual use to them to study geometry; and, as a necessary handmaid to that, to make themselves expert in arithmetic.

It is not to be supposed, however, that hitherto they had carried the study either of astronomy or geography to any great height. They observed the places of the stars, and the periodical motions of the planets. They kept registers of their observations for a long course of years, and took account of the weather and seasons that followed their several observations. They recorded the times of sowing and reaping this or that grain, and, by their long experience, became able prognosticators of the weather and the seasons, and excellent directors for the tillage of the ground: and in like manner, by their knowledge in geometry, they contrived very proper methods of marking out, and describing the several parts of their country, and were very careful, no doubt, in making draughts of the flow and ebb of their river Nile every year; but when it is considered, that the Egyptians did not as yet apprehend that the year consisted of more than 360 days, and that ^a both Thales and Pythagoras, many ages after these times, made great improvements in geometry beyond what they had learned in Egypt; that Thales was the first who ventured to foretell an eclipse; and Eudoxus and Ptolemy to reduce the heavenly motions into tables; we can hardly think, that either astronomy or geometry were as yet carried to any great perfection.

¹ Acts vii. 22.² 1 Kings iv. 30.

^a Thales, who travelled into Egypt for the sake of their learning, after his return home, sacrificed an ox to the gods for joy that he had hit on the method of inscribing a rectangled triangle within a circle; and Pythagoras no less than a whole hecatomb, for his finding out the proportion of the longest side of a right-angled triangle to the other two, which is no more than a common proposition of the first book of Euclid; and yet these two philosophers could not have the invention of these things from the Egyptians, unless we suppose, either that the Egyptians did not teach them all that they knew, or that the disciples concealed the thing, and vainly arrogated to themselves what, in strict truth, they had borrowed from their masters.—*Diog. Laert. in Pythag. et Thalete.*

The science of physic is generally imputed to Æsculapius; which name was given to Sethorthis, a king of Memphis, who stands second in the third dynasty of Manetho, for his great skill in that art; and though no great credit is to be given to ^b their boasted proficiency in chemistry, yet it is reasonable to believe, from their constant practice of dissections, that they could not well fail of a competent knowledge in anatomy.

The science, however, for which they were most famous, and for which indeed they valued themselves most, was magic, though the whole structure of it had no other foundation than a superstitious belief of the great influence which heavenly bodies are supposed to have upon this inferior world. To this purpose they imagined, that the seven planets governed the seven days of the week; and pretended, that, by a long observation of the motion of the celestial bodies, they had obtained the art of foreseeing future events. They believed, in short, that the sun, moon, stars, and elements, were endued with intelligence, and appointed by the supreme Deity to govern the world; and though they acknowledged that God might, upon extraordinary occasions, work miracles, reveal his will by audible voices, visions, dreams, prophecies, &c., yet they imagined also, that, generally speaking, prodigies were caused, oracles given, and visions occasioned in a natural way, by the observation, or influence of the courses of the heavenly bodies, or by the operations of the powers of nature; and therefore they conceived, that their learned professors could work miracles, obtain omens, and interpret dreams, merely by their skill in natural knowledge, which, though strange and unaccountable to the vulgar, was very obvious to persons of science and philosophy.

In later ages indeed, and when the Egyptians began to worship their departed princes, a notion prevailed that spirits or demons, of a nature superior to men, were employed in the government of the world, and had their several provinces appointed them by God. To this honour they imagined that the souls of departed heroes and extraordinary persons were admitted; and for this reason they supposed, that they were not only endowed with powers far exceeding those of mortal men, but had likewise miracles, visions, oracles, and omens, submitted to their ministry and direction; and consequently, in all their demands or exigencies of this kind, made them the objects of their incantations and prayers.

These were some of the chief arts and sciences (for

^b Some modern assertors of the great antiquity of chemistry, tell us of a medicine used only by the Egyptian priests, and kept secret, even from most of the natives, that is of efficacy almost to do any thing but restore the dead to life again. This, say they, was the grand elixir, or chemical preparation made with the philosopher's stone, the invention of Hermes, by the help of which the Egyptian kings were enabled to build the pyramids, with the treasures which their furnaces afforded them; but these fables are sufficiently confuted by the profound silence of all antiquity in this matter. They are indeed built upon suspicious authorities, uncertain conjectures, and allegorical interpretations of the fabulous stories of the Greeks, which these men will have to be chemical secrets in disguise; inasmuch that they fancy that the golden fleece, which Jason fetched from Colchis, was only a receipt to make the philosopher's stone; and that Medea restored Æson's father to his youth again, by the grand elixir.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 3; and *Wotton's Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning*, c. 9.

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their architecture, painting, sculpture, and mechanics of all kinds, for which they were so justly famous, we have but just room to mention) that flourished at this time among the Egyptians; and we come now to observe a little by what means it was that this learning of theirs came to be preserved and transmitted to posterity.

The Egyptian language was certainly one of the most ancient in the world; for considering its structure and constitution,^a wherein it widely differs from all oriental and European languages, it must needs be an original, or mother tongue, formed at the confusion of Babel. Their most ancient way of writing was by hieroglyphical figures^b of various animals, and plants, the parts of human bodies, and mechanical instruments; for in these things did the hieroglyphics both of the Ethiopians and Egyptians, whereof Hermes is said to have been the inventor, most certainly consist: but, besides these, they made use likewise of literal characters, whereof they had two kinds, calling the one the sacred letters, in which their public registers, and all matters of an higher nature were written; and the other the vulgar, which every one

made use of in their common business. But both these characters are at present lost, unless they remain in some old inscriptions, that are unintelligible, and cannot be deciphered.

Not only the Egyptians, but several other nations, used to preserve the memory of things by inscriptions on pillars. The columns of Hermes, upon which he is said to have wrote all his learning, are mentioned by several writers of good note; and from them both the Grecian philosophers and Egyptian historians are supposed to have taken many valuable hints: but to these inscriptions succeeded the sacred books, which contained not only what related to the worship of the gods, and the laws of the kingdom, but historical collections likewise, yea, and all kinds of miscellaneous and philosophical matters of any moment, which the priests or sacred scribes were obliged to insert in these public registers, in order to be transmitted to posterity.

A nation so renowned for their knowledge and learning, and who had such certain methods of preserving the traditions of their ancestors, might have kept the original religion, one would think, with more than ordinary purity; at least would not have run into the same excess of idolatry and polytheism, that other people at this time were so strangely addicted to: and yet, if we look a little into their history, we shall soon find more corruption of this kind among them than in any other nation. Some of their wiser sort, indeed, are said to have acknowledged one supreme God, the Maker and Ruler of the world, whom they sometimes called by the name of Osiris, or Serapis; sometimes by that of Isis; and at other times by that of Neith, on whose temple at Sais was the following remarkable inscription—"I am all that has been, is, or shall be, and my veil hath no mortal yet uncovered." But though some parts of Egypt might at first be free from all idolatrous worship; yet when the humour once began to spread, it soon overran the whole kingdom. The heavenly luminaries were the first objects of profane adoration; and in Egypt, the sun and the moon went under the denomination of Osiris and Isis. After these, the elements, and other parts of nature, such as Vulcan, meaning thereby the fire; Ceres, the earth; Oceanus, the water; and Minerva, the air, were admitted into the number of their deities.

But, besides the celestial, they had terrestrial gods likewise; for most of their princes who had merited well of the people, were after their death canonized and invoked under the names of Sol, Saturnus, Rhea, Jupiter, Juno, Vulcanus, Vesta, and Mercurius; which, according to Diodorus, were the eight first hero gods which the Egyptians worshipped. Nay, and what is scarcely credible, they came at last to give divine honours to several animals, and that with so great a variety and disagreement among themselves, that, except some of the principal deities which were honoured all the kingdom over, there was almost in every town or village a different god held in veneration in one place, and detested in the next, which often occasioned bitter animosities, and sometimes inveterate quarrels, and dangerous wars.

Now the reason why the Egyptians adopted such a variety of animals into the number of their gods, was not so much from any consideration of their subserviency to human life, as from a certain similitude they perceived

^a For the Copts neither decline their nouns nor conjugate their verbs, not even those of foreign extract, otherwise than by prefixing particles, sometimes of one or more syllables, and sometimes of a single letter, which denote case, gender, number, and person, several of which are often joined together in one word, and the primitive word usually placed last: so that the difficulty of this language consists in the incredible combination of the words and particles, in the change of the vowels in transposing the middle part of the word, and adding superfluous letters, which it requires no small labour and skill to distinguish.—*Wilkin's Dissert. de Lingua Coptica*, p. 120.

^b Of these there were three kinds among the Egyptians, which seem to have more or less art in them, according to the period of their invention. The 1st was, to make the principal circumstance of the subject stand for the whole. Thus, when they would describe a battle, or two armies in array, they painted two hands, one holding a shield, and the other a bow: when a tumult, or popular insurrection—an armed man casting arrows, &c.: when a siege—a scaling ladder. The 2d was, to put the instrument of the thing, whether real or metaphorical, for the thing itself. Thus an eye, eminently placed, was designed to represent God's omniscience: an eye and sceptre—a monarch: and a ship and pilot—the governor of the universe. The 3d was, to make one thing represent another, where there was perceived any quaint analogy, or similitude between the representative and the thing properly intended. Thus, the universe was designed by a serpent in a circle, whose variegated spots signified the stars; and the rising of the sun by the two eyes of a crocodile, because they seem to emerge from his head; a tyrannical king was represented by an eagle; and a cruel or improvident parent, by a hawk. Thus, from the nature of the things themselves, or their resemblance to something else, from the principal circumstance of any action, or the chief instrument employed in doing it, hieroglyphics at first seem to have been invented. But whether their invention was prior to that of letters, has been matter of some debate among the learned; though one can hardly forbear thinking, that a picture character, as hieroglyphics are, would scarce be intelligible unless men could be supposed to delineate the forms and pictures of things more accurately than can well be imagined: but even if that were granted, they would at best have been but a very imperfect character, since they could only hit off the idea of things visible, and must therefore be defective in a multitude of signs to express the full meaning of a man's mind: for which reason some have supposed, that even the Egyptians themselves were wont to intermingle letters with hieroglyphics, to fill up and connect sentences, and to express actions more fully than pictures were found to do. These hieroglyphics were at first in common use, but in process of time were appropriated to sacred and religious matters, and wrote and understood by the priests only.—*Warburton's Divine Legation*, b. 4. and *Shuckford's Connection*, b. 8.

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between them and the deity to whom they were devoted. Thus the hawk was made sacred to Osiris, as an emblem of the supreme Deity, by reason of its piercing sight and swiftness; the crocodile and river-horse were sacred to Typho, the evil principle; Anubis was said to be the dogstar, and the dog was sacred to him; the serpent or dragon was consecrated to Nephthe; and other suitable animals to their respective gods: nor is the conjecture ^a of our learned countryman ¹ at all to be rejected, namely, That the use of the hieroglyphical figures of animals, might introduce this strange worship which the Egyptians in process of time came to pay them. For as those figures were made choice of according to the respective properties of each animal, to express the qualities and dignities of the persons they represented, which were generally their gods, princes, and great men, the people became gradually accustomed to these figures which they used to place in their temples as the images of their deities; and from hence it is not absurd to imagine, that they came at length to pay a superstitious veneration to the living animals themselves.

But whatever might be the reason or inducements to this kind of idolatry, nothing was so remarkable in the Egyptian religion, as the preposterous worship which that nation paid to animals, such as the cat, the dog, the ibis, the wolf, the crocodile, and several others which they had in high veneration, not when they were alive only, but even after they were dead.

Whilst they were living, they had lands set apart for the maintenance of each kind, and both men and women were employed in feeding and attending them. The children succeeded their parents in the office, which was so far from being declined, or thought despicable among the Egyptians, that they gloried in it as an high honour; and wearing certain badges to distinguish them at a distance, were saluted by bending the knee, and other demonstrations of respect.

If any person killed any of these sacred animals designedly, he was punished with immediate death; if involuntarily, his punishment was deferred to the discretion of the priests; but if the creature slain was a cat, a hawk, or an ibis, whether the thing was done with design

¹ Sir John Marsham, Can. Chron. p. 38.

^a This conjecture the learned author of the Divine Legation of Moses abundantly confirms; for having enumerated the several things that might give occasion to brute-worship among the Egyptians, such as, 1. A grateful sense of the benefits received from animals. 2. The considering these animals as symbols of the divine nature. 3. The notion of God's pervading, and being present in all things. 4. The Egyptian use of asterisms, or denoting constellations by the name of animals. 5. The doctrine of metempsychosis, or human souls transmigrating into the bodies of animals. And, 6. The invention of some Egyptian king or other, for his private ends of policy. All these causes or occasions, I say, our author having examined and refuted, carries the point somewhat farther than the learned Marsham, and concludes, that the true original of brute-worship among the Egyptians, was their use of symbolical writing; for which he assigns a further reason, namely, That when the use of writing by letters, as much more commodious than the other, came generally to prevail, the priests still continued the hieroglyphic characters in their works of science and religion; and as the other grew abstruse and obsolete to the vulgar, to make them more sacred, the priests in a short time were the only persons that could read them, and then to make them more sacred and mysterious, gave it out, that the gods themselves were the inventors of them, which might easily induce a deluded people to worship the very creatures, as having something extraordinary in them, which their gods had thought proper to delineate.—B. 4.

or no, ^b the person was to die without mercy, and sometimes without any formal trial or process. The extravagant worship which they paid to some of these animal deities, (as to the bull at Memphis, the goat at Mendes, the lion at Leontopolis, ^c the crocodile at the lake Moeris; and to many others at different places,) exceeds all belief; for they were kept in consecrated enclosures, and well attended on by men of high rank, who at great expense provided victuals for them, which consisted of the greatest dainties. Nor was this all; for these creatures were washed in hot baths, and anointed with the most precious ointments, and perfumed with the most odoriferous scents. They lay on the richest carpets, and other costly furniture; and, that they might want nothing to make their lives as happy as possible, they had the most beautiful females of their several kinds, to which they gave the name of concubines, provided for them.

When any of these animals died, the Egyptians lamented them as if they had been their dearest children, and frequently laid out more than they were worth in their burials. If a cat died in any house, all the family shaved their eyebrows; and if a dog, their whole body; and thus, putting themselves in mourning, they wrapped the dead body up in fine linen, and carried it to be embalmed; where, being anointed with oil of cedar and other aromatic preparations to keep it from putrefaction, it was buried with great solemnity in a sacred coffin. So true is that reflection ² of the apostle, and with regard to these Egyptians certainly it was made, that 'though they knew God, yet they glorified him not as God; but changed the glory of God into the image of four-footed beasts, and his truth into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.'

Before we leave Egypt, the sacred historian seems to remind us to take a view of some of the monumental works that are found there, and which, having been built within the compass of the period we are now upon, may well be presumed to be the product of some of the burdens and hard labour which the Egyptian kings laid upon the Israelites.

^d The pyramids were justly reckoned one of the won-

² Rom. i. 21, 23, 25.

^b Herodotus gives us an instance of this in a Roman, who happening accidentally to kill a cat, the mob immediately gathered about the house where he was, and could neither by the entreaties of some principal men sent by the king, nor by the fear of the Romans, with whom they were then negotiating a peace, be prevailed on to spare his life. And, what may seem still more incredible, it is reported that at a time when there was a famine in Egypt, which drove the inhabitants to such extremity, that they were forced to feed on one another, there was no one person accused of having tasted of any of these sacred animals.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 3.

^c The crocodile seems to be the last animal to which mankind could be tempted to pay divine adoration; but that this might be done with more safety, one of these creatures was trained up to be tame and familiar for the purpose, and had his ears adorned with strings of jewels and gold, and his fore feet with chains. He was fed with consecrated provisions at the public charge; and when strangers went to see him, which often happened out of curiosity, they also carried him a present of a cake, dressed meat, and wine, or a drink made with honey, which was offered to him by the priests; and when he died his body was embalmed, and buried in a sacred coffin at Arsinoe.—*Herodotus*, b. 2. and *Strabo*, b. 17.

^d It is a common opinion, that the word *pyramid* is derived from the Greek *pyr* or *pur*, fire; and that these structures were

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ders of the world, and there is more of them now remaining, than of all the other six, which have been so much celebrated. Not far from the place where Memphis once stood, there are three of these structures at no great distance from each other; two of which are shut up, but the third, which is the largest, and stands open for the inspection of travellers, we shall here describe, as a probable specimen of all the rest. *a*

so called from their shape, which ascended from a broad basis, and ended in a point like a flame of fire. Others, whose opinion Vossius seems to approve, say that the name comes from the word *pyros*, which, in the same language, signifies *wheat*, because they suppose them to have been the granaries of the ancient Egyptian kings. But a late writer, versed in the Coptic tongue, has given us another etymology from that language, wherein *pouro* signifies a *king*, and *missi*, a *race* or *generation*, and the reason why the pyramids had this name given them, was, as he tells us, because they were erected to preserve the memory of the princes, who were their founders, and their families.—*Wilkins' Dissert. de Ling. Copt.* p. 108.

a We shall here give the result of the investigations of modern travellers, regarding the pyramids of Egypt. The three largest are situated at Geez or Djiza, nearly opposite to Grand Cairo, and are named from their supposed founders, Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerines. Their height has been differently represented, and, owing to incorrectness, or different standards of measure, has been stated at all the gradations from about 800 to 500 feet. The following dimensions, however, taken by the French engineers may be given as very nearly accurate: That of Cheops, 448 feet in height, and 728 on each side of the base; Chephren, 398 feet in height, and 655 on each side of the base; and Mycerines, 162 feet in height, and 280 on each side of the base.

The pyramid of Cheops, which is the largest, is ascended by an uninterrupted series of steps, diminishing from four to two and a half feet high in approaching the top. The breadth of each step is equal to its height. Upon the top there is a platform thirty-two feet square, consisting of nine large stones, about a ton each, though inferior to some of the other stones, which vary from five to thirty feet long, and from three to four feet high. From this platform Dr Clarke saw to the south the pyramids of Saccara, and on the east of these, smaller monuments of the same kind nearer to the Nile. He remarked also an appearance of ruins which might be traced the whole way from the pyramids of Djiza to those of Saccara, as if the whole had once constituted one great cemetery. The stones upon this platform, as well as most of the others employed in constructing the decreasing ranges from the base upwards, are of soft limestone, of the same nature as the calcareous rock upon which the pyramids stand. The pyramids are built with common mortar externally, but no appearance of mortar is discerned in the more perfect masonry of the interior. It has been calculated, that this pyramid was built 490 years before the first Olympiad, or about 3000 years ago. It was explored by Mr Davidson in 1763; and with more success by Captain Caviglia in 1817.

The second pyramid, that of Chephren, is thought to have been covered by stucco of gypsum and flint. Belzoni discovered its entrance in the north front, in 1818. Advancing along a narrow passage, 100 feet long, he found the great chamber forty-six feet long by sixteen wide, and twenty-three high, cut out of the solid rock. It contained a granite sarcophagus, half sunk in the floor, with many bones, some of which have proved to be those of the bull. A little to the east of this pyramid is the sphynx, cut out of the same sort of rock upon which the pyramids are built; its height from the knees to the top of the head is thirty-eight feet.

To the south of these pyramids there are others, which shoot far into the deserts of Libya, and are generally called the pyramids of Saccara. These erections appear to be more ancient than those about Geez. They are less perfect, and some of them are formed of unburned bricks. The most ancient bricks of Egypt were only dried by the heat of the sun; and that they might stick more closely together, the clay was mixed with chopped straw; and hence the Israelites, while in slavery in Egypt, made use of straw in making bricks. Some of these pyramids are rounded at the top, and are like hillocks cased with stone. One of them

It is situate on a rocky hill, which, in a gentle and easy ascent, rises 100 feet, in the sandy desert of Libya, about a quarter of a mile from the plains of Egypt. Its basis is generally supposed to be an exact square, and every side, according to those that have been as careful as possible in its mensuration, about 693 English feet: so that the whole area of it contains 480,249 square feet, or something more than eleven acres of ground.

has steps like that of Cheops. The ranges or steps are six in number, each range being twenty-five feet high and eleven feet wide. The total height of this pyramid is 150 feet.

According to Herodotus, the pyramids were formed by distinct courses of stone, which successively diminished in size as the proportions of the edifices required it. Every course was so much within that immediately below it, as to make each front of the pyramid form a sort of stair. This agrees with the descriptions of modern travellers. A very simple machine, according to the same author, placed upon the first course, served to raise the stones destined for the construction of the second. The second being finished a similar machine was fixed upon it, and so on for the rest, one or more of the machines being always left upon each of the courses already laid, to serve successively for raising the stones from step to step. It is pretty certain, that the pyramids had all originally an outward coat either of square flags of marble or of bricks, so that they presented to the eye a perfectly even slope; but much of this has disappeared, through the dilapidation of time and other causes.

Many unsatisfactory conjectures have been formed, and theories adopted, with regard to the original design or use for which pyramids were built. The greater number of writers on the subject are of opinion, that they were erected for the tombs of kings and conquerors, to preserve their remains inviolate, and hand down their memory to the latest posterity. Herodotus states, that the Egyptians considered the pyramidal form as emblematical of human life, the broad base on the earth representing the commencement, and the gradation to a point, the termination of our existence. The emblem, if inverted, would bear an equally natural interpretation: yet this is the reason he alleges for pyramids being used for sepulture. That they were erected for astronomical purposes is a fanciful conjecture, although it is certain that they are constructed on scientific principles, and give evidence of some progress in astronomy, for their sides are accurately adapted to the four cardinal points. That they were meant for altars to the gods, their tapering form being in imitation of flame, as the Persians and other nations worshipped fire; or that they were constructed as a permanent memorial of the proper length of the cubit, of which it is said, that all their dimensions contain a certain number of multiples, appear to be conjectures equally strained and fanciful. Still less were they adapted to the purpose of granaries, as some have supposed. That they were originally intended to remedy the disadvantage of the Delta, and particularly Upper Egypt, by attracting the clouds and eliciting a discharge of rain, may be considered as in some measure sanctioned by the enormous sphinx found in their vicinity, and its relation to the fertilizing of Egypt by the waters of the Nile, the sphinx, representing the head and bosom of a woman with the body of a lion, being designed to symbolize the annual inundation, which takes place while the sun passes through the signs of the zodiac, denominated the Virgin and the Lion. But whatever their original destination was, or whether they ever served any purpose farther than gratifying the vanity of their builders, they now, as has been well remarked, harmonize admirably with a dewless heaven, a sandy waste, a people that have been. There is now a sublimity in their uselessness. Standing on the same earth which has entombed so many thousand generations, pointing to the same sky which heard the cry of the oppressed when they were building; they no longer belong to Cheops or Sesostris, Pharaohs or Ptolemies, Mamelukes or Turks, but to the imagination of mankind. "The humblest pilgrim," says Dr Clarke, "pacing the Libyan sands around them, while he is conscious that he walks in the footsteps of many mighty and renowned men, imagines himself to be, for an instant, admitted into their illustrious conclave. Persian satraps, Macedonian heroes, Grecian bards, sages, and historians, all of every age, and nation, and religion, have participated, in common with him, the same feelings, and have trodden the same ground."—*En.*

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Its altitude, if measured by its perpendicular, is 481 feet, but if taken according to the inclination of the pyramid, as it ascends, it is exactly equal to a side of its basis.

The ascent to the top of this structure is by degrees, or steps, which run round the whole pyramid in a level, and if the stones were entire on every side, would make a narrow walk. The first of these steps is near four feet in height and three in breadth; but the higher one ascends, they proportionably diminish. They are made of massy and polished stone, so very large, that the breadth and depth of every step is one single stone; but as the weather has in many places worn these steps, this pyramid cannot be ascended without some difficulty. According to the computation of most modern travellers, the steps are 207 or 208 in number, which end ^a on the top, in a handsome platform, covered with nine stones, besides two that are wanting at the corners, of sixteen or seventeen feet square, from whence you have a pleasant prospect of Old Cairo, and the adjacent country.

On the sixteenth step from the bottom of this pyramid, there is a door or entry of three feet and a half in height, and a little less in breadth, through which you descend insensibly, much about seventy-six feet, and then come to another passage, which very probably is of the same dimensions with the first entrance, but is so choked up with the sand, which the wind blows in, that it is no easy matter for a man of any bulk to squeeze himself through it. Having passed this strait, however, you meet with nothing deserving observation, till on the left hand you enter a passage which leads into a gallery 16 feet high, and 162 feet long; a very stately piece of work indeed, and not inferior either in curiosity of art, or richness of materials, to the most sumptuous and magnificent buildings! The stone of which this gallery is built, is a white polished marble, very evenly cut into large tables, and jointed so close, as hardly to be perceived by the most curious eye: but what adds a grace to the whole structure, though it makes the passage the more slippery and difficult, is the acclivity or rising of the ascent, which, however, is not a little facilitated by certain holes made in the floor, about six hands' breadth from one another, into which a man may set his feet, while he holds by a bench of marble, which runs all along the gallery, with one hand, and carries his light in the other.

As soon as you come to the end of this gallery, you enter another square hole, much of the same dimensions with the former, which brings you into two little rooms, lined with a rich kind of speckled marble; and thence you proceed into the chamber of the tombs or sepulchres, which is very large and spacious, 32 feet long, 16 feet wide, and 19 feet high. This room stands, as it were, in the heart and centre of the pyramid, equidistant from all the sides, and almost in the midst between the basis and the top. The floor, the sides, and the roof of it

are all made of vast and exquisite tables of Thebaic marble, which, if they were not sullied with the steam of torches, would certainly appear very bright and shining. From the top to the bottom of the chamber, there are about six ranges of this stone, which being all sized to an equal height, run very gracefully round it. The roof is flat, and consists but of nine stones, whereof seven, in the middle, are each four feet wide, and 16 feet long, but the other two, which are at each end, appear not above two feet broad apiece, because the other half of them is built into the wall. The stones lie athwart, over the breadth of the chamber, with their ends resting upon the walls on each side.

At the end of this glorious room stands an empty tomb, three feet and an inch wide, and seven feet two inches long; the stone which it is made of is the same with the lining of the room, a beautiful speckled marble, above five inches thick, and yet, being hollow within, and uncovered at the top, whenever it is struck it sounds like a great bell: which is just such a wonder as the surprising echo that is heard in this place, and, as some travellers tell us, will repeat the same sound some ten or twelve times together. The figure of this tomb is like an altar, or two cubes finely set together. It is cut smooth and plain, exquisitely finely polished, but without any sculpture or engraving. It is not to be doubted, but that the tomb was placed here before the pyramid was finished; and one reason for its want of ornaments may be what the inhabitants of the country tell us, namely, that it was built for the sepulchre of a king who was never buried in it; and the common opinion is, that it was the same Pharaoh who, by the just judgment of God, was drowned in the Red Sea.

These are the principal things that have been observed of this pyramid; only, to give us a still fuller idea of the vastness of its structure, Pliny has taken care to inform us, that it was 20 years in building; that 37,000 men were, every day, employed in the work; and that 1800 talents were expended upon them merely for radishes and onions. Which last article may seem incredible perhaps to those that were never in the country; but when it is considered, that this is the ordinary food of the common people, and that almost all those who were employed in raising these great piles were slaves and mercenaries, who, besides bread and water, had nothing but radishes and onions, there will be no occasion for any surprise or wonder at the supposed largeness of this account.

A building of the like date, and not of inferior grandeur, was the labyrinth which stood in the Heracleotic Nome, or province, near the city of Arsinoe, and not far from the lake Moeris. The design of this structure seems to have been both for a pantheon, or universal temple for all the gods that were worshipped in the several places of Egypt, and also for a general convention-house, for the states of the whole nation to meet, and enact laws, and determine causes of great importance: and therefore it is said by some to have been built at the common charge of the twelve kings who, in those days, reigned all at once in Egypt, as a monument of their magnificence, and a place for their sepulture.

To this purpose Herodotus ¹ tells us, that each pro-

^a On this platform Proclus supposed that the Egyptian priests made their astronomical observations; but it is far from being probable that these structures were designed for observatories, and it is scarce to be conceived that the priests would take the pains to ascend so high, when they might make the same observations with more ease, and as much certainly below, having as free and open a prospect of the heavens, and over the plains of Egypt, from the rock whereon it was built, as from the pyramid itself.

—*Universal History.*

¹ B. 2.

2 l.

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vince or nome had, in this building, a distinct hall, where its principal magistrates used to meet; that these halls were vaulted, were surrounded with pillars of white stone, finely polished, and had an equal number of doors opposite to one another, six opening to the north, and six to the south, all encompassed by the same wall; that there were three thousand chambers in this edifice, fifteen hundred in the upper part, and as many under ground; and that he viewed every room in the upper part, but was not permitted by those who kept the palace, to go into the subterraneous part, because the sepulchres of the holy crocodiles, and of the kings, who built the labyrinth, were there. What he saw there, as he reports, seemed to surpass the art of man; so many ways out, by various passages, and infinite returns, afforded a thousand occasions of wonder, as he passed from a spacious hall to a chamber, from thence to a private closet, then again into other passages out of the closet, and out of the chambers, into more spacious rooms, where all the walls and roofs were not only encrusted with marble, but richly adorned likewise with figures of sculpture.

To this description of Herodotus, others add, that this edifice stood in the midst of an immense square, surrounded with buildings at a great distance; that the porch was of Parian marble, and all the other pillars of the marble of Syene; that within it were the temples of the several deities, and galleries to which one ascended by 90 steps, adorned with many columns of porphyry, images of their gods, and statues of their kings, of a monstrous size; that the whole edifice consisted of stone, the floors were laid with vast tables, and the roof looked like one continued field of stone; that the passages met and crossed one another with so much intricacy, that it was impossible for a stranger to find his way, either in or out, without a guide; and that several of the apartments were so contrived, that upon opening the doors, there was heard within a terrible noise of thunder.

Such was the strength of this wonderful building, that it withstood, for many ages, not only the rage of time, but that of the inhabitants of Heracleopolis, who, worshipping the ichneumon, or water-rat, the mortal enemy of the crocodile, which was a peculiar deity of Arsinoe, bore an inconceivable hatred to the labyrinth, which was the sepulchre, as we said, of the sacred crocodiles; and therefore assaulted and demolished it, though ^a there

are some remains of it still to be seen, which retain manifest marks of its ancient splendour.

One building more, supposed to be the work of this period, though, according to modern accounts, it still stands firm and entire, is the well of the patriarch Joseph. It is entirely hewn out of a rock, in a kind of an oval or oblong form, being eighteen feet wide, twenty-four long, and in the whole two hundred and seventy-six deep. The depth is properly divided into two parts, which we may call the upper and the lower well; and to each of these there is a wheel, which being turned round by two oxen in each place, draws up the water by a long chain, to which are fastened several leathern vessels, that fill and empty themselves alternately as the wheel goes round.

To go down to the second well, as we call it, which is but fifteen feet long, and nine wide, there is a staircase of so easy a descent, that some say the oxen which draw the water below, are every day drove down and up it; though others report, that they are let down and drawn up upon a platform. However this be, it is certain that the staircase turns twelve times round the well, for which reason the Arabs call it the well of the winding staircase, and of these turnings, six have eighteen steps each, and the other six have nineteen, which make two hundred and twenty-two steps in all: and to secure you from falling, as you go down, you have, on the left hand, the main rock, and on the right, some of the same rock left, which serves both as a wall to the well on the inside, and on the other side as a wall to the staircase, which, at convenient distances, has windows cut in it, that convey the light down from the mouth of the well.

When you go down to the lower well, which has likewise a staircase, but neither so wide, nor so deep as the other, and no parapet on the side of the well, which makes the descent dangerous, it is here that you see the oxen at work, turning the wheel, and drawing the water from a spring at the bottom, about eight or nine feet deep; which water, passing through a pipe into a large cistern, is from thence drawn up again by two other oxen, which turn the wheel above; and so from a reservoir at the top of the well, the water is conveyed into all the apartments of the castle of Grand Cairo, which, by the bye, as Thevenot tells us, both for strength and beauty, is one of the finest palaces he ever saw; a work not unworthy the ancient Pharaohs and Ptolemies who built it, and which comes not behind the pomp and magnificence of the pyramids.

There are some other buildings in this place, such as Joseph's hall, Joseph's prison, Joseph's granaries, &c., which the inhabitants ascribe to that patriarch, as they do indeed every fine piece of antiquity: but as there is

^a The remains of this noble structure are thus described by our author. "The first thing you see is a large portico of marble, facing the rising sun, and sustained by four great marble pillars, but composed of several pieces. Three of these pillars are still standing, but one of the middle ones is half fallen. In the middle is a door whose sides and entablature are very massy; and above is a frieze, whereon is represented an head with wings, stretched out along the frieze, and several hieroglyphics underneath.—Passing through this portico, you enter into a fine large hall, above 40 feet high, all of marble. The roof consists of twelve tables of marble, exquisitely joined, each 25 feet long, and three broad, which cross the room from one end to the other; and as the room is not arched, but flat, you cannot but be struck with admiration at the boldness of its architecture, since it is scarcely conceivable how it could continue so many ages in a position so improper to support so prodigious a weight. At the end of this hall, over against the first door, there is a second portico, with the same ornaments as the first, but less, by which you enter into a second hall, not so big as the first, but covered with eight stones. At the end of this room, straight forwards, there is

a third portico, still less than the second, as well as the hall into which it leads, though it has sixteen stones to roof it; and at the end of this third hall, there is a fourth portico set against the wall, and placed there for symmetry only, and to answer the rest. The length of these three halls is the whole depth of the building, in its present condition. It was on the two sides, and especially under ground, that the prodigious number of rooms and avenues, mentioned by the ancients, were built.—What is now remaining of it seems to be no more than a fourth part of the inner edifice, which, in all probability, had four fronts, and twelve halls answering to them: the rest are decayed by time, or demolished by design, as appears from the prodigious ruins which are to be seen all around it.—*Lucas' Voyages*, b. 2. p. 18., &c.

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little or no probability that any of these came under the period we are now upon, we must refer the reader, who is minded to satisfy his curiosity in this matter,¹ to the authors who have purposely treated of them; and shall only take notice farther, that the great Selden in his *Arundel Marbles*, reckons the fabulous stories of Greece, such as the flood of Deucalion, the burning of Phaeton, the rape of Proserpine, the mysteries of Ceres, the story of Europa, the birth of Apollo, and the building of Thebes by Cadmus, together with the fables of Bacchus, Minos, Perseus, Æsculapius, Mercury, and Hercules, to have fallen out under this period; and it is certain

that² the learned Spanheim makes several ancient kingdoms, as that of the Argives, the Cretans, the Phrygians, the Ethiopians, the Phœnicians, the Midianites, Canaanites, Idumæans, and Nabatheans, either to have been founded, or to have flourished in this time. But as these, and other heathen nations, had no historian or chronologer of their own, and the Greeks, who undertook to write for them, for want of a certain knowledge of their affairs, have stuffed their accounts with the rapes and robberies of their gods; we thought it more proper to stop here than to enter into a barren land, where the country for a long way lies waste and uncultivated; or if perchance any fruit is to be seen, like the famed fictitious apples about the banks of the Dead Sea, it crumbles at the very first touch into dust and ashes.

¹ See Della Valle, Thevenot, Le Bruyn, Lucas, Marco Grimani, &c. travels; and Well's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 2.

² See Hist. Vet. Test.

THE

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK IV.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THINGS FROM THE ISRAELITES' DEPARTURE OUT OF EGYPT, TO THEIR ENTRANCE INTO THE LAND OF CANAAN, IN ALL FORTY YEARS.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

IN contemplating the extraordinary deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, we must advert to the instrument employed by divine providence in its accomplishment. Moses, who was called to this difficult and perilous task, was pre-eminently fitted by his talents and his temper for its performance. 'There arose not a prophet like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty land, and in all the great terror, which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel.' He himself having been rescued when an infant from the most imminent danger, was preserved to be the deliverer of his nation.

The redemption of the Israelites from the land of Egypt, is the greatest type of Christ's redemption, of any providential event whatsoever. It was intended to shadow forth that greater redemption from the captivity of sin and Satan, which was wrought out by the Son of God, when he destroyed principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross.

Nor can we fail to observe in the narrative of the period on which we are now entering, how much the giving of the law at Sinai tended to prepare the way for the accomplishment of this great redemption. It is here seen how the covenant of works operates as a school-master in leading us to Christ; how the law which is holy, just, and good, shuts us up to the faith of the gospel. That it might have full effect in this way, God was pleased to institute at the same time the ceremonial law—full of various and innumerable typical representations of good things to come; by which the Israelites were directed every day, month, and year in their religious actions—in all that appertained to their ecclesiastical and civil state, so that the whole nation by this law was, as it were, constituted in a typical state. The great outlines of gospel truth were thus held forth to the nation; and the people were thus directed, from age to

age, to look for salvation to the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world.

We must also observe the wisdom and the goodness of God in giving, for the first time, a written communication from himself. That written and infallible word, with its subsequent accessions of infallible wisdom, was the means, as it was designed to be, of carrying on in the world the work of redemption. The word of God had previously been transmitted from age to age by tradition; but now the ten commandments, the five books of Moses, and probably the book of Job, were, by the special command of God, committed to writing, and were laid up in the tabernacle, to be kept there for the use of the church.

That the church might derive instruction from typical representation, in the character and actions of intelligent beings, the progress of the redeemed through this world to that rest which remaineth for them in the heavenly Canaan, was shadowed forth by the journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness, from Egypt to Canaan. The low and wretched condition from which they are delivered,—the price paid for their redemption,—the application of that redemption in their conversion to God,—the various trials, difficulties, and temptations which they have to encounter in their christian course,—the manner in which they are safely conducted through this world by their great Leader, to their immortal inheritance, are all typified and represented in the history of Israel from their departure out of Egypt, to their entrance into the promised land. 'All these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.'¹

These typical representations were at the time accompanied with clearer predictions of Christ than had before been given. 'I will raise up a prophet,' says God unto Moses, 'from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him.' It is unnecessary to say,

¹ 1 Cor. x. 11.

A. M. 2513. A. C. 1491; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3763. A. C. 1648. EXOD. CH. xiii.—xxxiv. 24.

how clearly the mediatorial office of the Redeemer is pointed out in this remarkable prophecy. Balaam, also, during this period bore testimony to Christ, in the sublime prediction which he uttered concerning him in the well known words—'There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel:—Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion.'

Finally, we ought to notice in the narrative of God's procedure towards his ancient people, on which we are about to enter, the outpouring of his Holy Spirit on the young generation in the wilderness, or that generation which entered into Canaan. Concerning this generation God had said to their fathers—'But your little ones, which you said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.' This generation was, accordingly, brought into Canaan. They were distinguished for their piety, and their zealous adherence to all the will of God.

SECT. I.

CHAP. I.—From their Departure to the Building of the Tabernacle.

THE HISTORY.

WHEN the Israelites set out from Egypt, they made Rameses, the chief city of Goshen, the place of their general rendezvous; and from thence, on the 15th day of the first month, they travelled about ten or twelve miles to Succoth, where they made a stop, and reviewed their company, which consisted of 600,000 persons, besides children and strangers; for strangers of several nations, having seen the wonders which were wrought for their deliverance, left Egypt at the same time, with a purpose to accompany their fortunes.

While the sense of their deliverance, and God's judgments was fresh in their minds, Moses was commanded to let the people know, that when they came to be settled in the land of Canaan, the first-born both of man and beast, in remembrance of God's having spared their first-born when he destroyed the Egyptians, should be set apart and dedicated to him: and as Joseph, dying in the faith of this their deliverance, had laid an injunction upon his brethren, whenever they should go from thence, to carry his bones out of Egypt, so Moses ^a took care to have the coffin, wherein he had lain for above 140 years, not left behind.

^b From Succoth their nearest way to Canaan was certainly through the country of the Philistines; but for

^a The Jews tell us, that upon the Israelites' departure out of Egypt, every tribe took care to bring along with them the bones of the ancestor of their family; but though they are not always to be credited in matters of this nature, and Josephus does not seem to have dreamed of any such act of filial piety, or else he would, in all probability, have recorded it; yet St Stephen, (Acts vii. 15, 16,) seems to allude to some tradition among them, when he tells us, that 'Jacob and the fathers went down into Egypt, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre which Abraham had bought of the sons of Emmor.'—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^b It is somewhat difficult to make out the geography of the places where the Hebrews encamped, between their parting from Rameses and their arrival at the Red Sea; but the account of

fear that a people unaccustomed to war should, in case of any opposition, repent of their deliverance, and take it into their heads to return into Egypt, God ordered them to take their route along the coasts of the Red Sea; and for their greater encouragement and security, himself undertook to guide and direct them, both in their marches and encampments, by the wonderful appearance of a cloud, in the form of a large column, which shaded them from the heat of the sun by day, and in the night-time became a pillar of fire, or a bright cloud, to supply the sun's absence, and illuminate their camp. By this means they were enabled, upon any occasion, to march both day and night: and, under this auspicious guide, proceeding from Succoth, they came to Etham, which gives name to the wilderness on whose borders it is situated, and there they encamped.

In the mean time the king of Egypt had information brought him, that the Israelites, instead of returning to his dominions, were attempting their escape into the deserts of Arabia, by the cape of the Red Sea; and therefore grieving at the loss of so many useful slaves, and supposing that by speedy marches he might overtake

those who have wrote upon the subject is,—That though there are two places named Rameses, which are a little differently pointed, yet they are but one and the same, or, at the most, that they differ only in this, that the one was the province, and the other the chief city of it; that Succoth, not far from Rameses, in the way to the Red Sea, had its name from the tents (for so the Hebrew word signifies) which the Israelites pitched here, as we find upon the like occasion another place between Jordan and the brook Jabbok, so named: that Etham lay on the confines of Egypt and Arabia Petrea, not far from the Red Sea, and gave the denomination to the wilderness adjacent: that *Pi-hahiroth*, which in our English, and some other translations, is rendered as one proper name, is by the Septuagint made part of it an appellative, so as to signify *a mouth*, for so the word *pi* may mean, or a narrow passage between two mountains, lying not far from the western coast of the Red Sea: that *magaal* was probably a *tower* or *castle*, for the word carries that signification in it, upon the top of one of these mountains, which might give denomination to the city, which, as Herodotus informs us, lay not far distant from it; and that Baal-Zephon was by some learned men thought to be an idol set up to keep the borders of the country, and to hinder slaves from making their escape. *Baal*, indeed, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies *lord*; and hence the name is generally applied to the eastern idols; and the word *zephon* is thought to be derived from the radix *zapha*, to *watch* or *spy*; and from hence it is conjectured, that this idol has its temple on the top of some adjacent mountain, and that the sacred historian particularly takes notice of it, to show how unable it was, whatever opinion the Egyptians might have of it, to hinder the Israelites from going out of Egypt. There is but small certainty, however, to be gathered from the etymology of words; and therefore the authority of Eusebius should ponderate with us, who makes it not an idol, but a town, standing upon the northern point of the Red Sea, where the ancients, especially the Jews, think that the Israelites passed it, and where there stands to this day a Christian monastery.—*Patrick's and Calnet's Commentaries, his Dissertation on the Passage of the Red Sea, and Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

^c It is not unlikely, that some of the mixed multitude (Exod. xii. 38.) which went along with the Israelites, observing this alteration in their route, and not being able to perceive the reason of it, might forsake them, and returning to Pharaoh, inform him, that they had lost their way, and were entangled among the mountains: or, what is more likely, some spies, which Pharaoh had upon them, seeing them leave the way to Horeb, where they desired to go three days' journey, in order to offer sacrifices, concluded that they never intended to return to Egypt, but were running quite away, and might therefore bring Pharaoh the news thereof, as we may suppose, upon the eighteenth day.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

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and recover them, he mustered up what forces he could, and for the greater expedition, a considerable quantity of ^a chariots and horsemen, and with these ^b put himself upon the pursuit. But God, who well understood what measures were taking in Pharaoh's court, instead of suffering the Israelites to march round the point of the ^c Red Sea, as they probably intended, ordered them to

^a Josephus, who loves to magnify matters, when they tend to the glory of his countrymen, as well as conceal what would occasion their disgrace, tells us, that the Egyptian army consisted of 600 chariots, 50,000 horse, and 200,000 foot: but how so large a number could be raised in so short a time, or what need there was of so vast an armament against a weak and defenceless people, is hardly conceivable. As therefore we may presume, that the haste which the Egyptians were in, lest the Israelites should get out of the straits wherein they were entangled, or make their escape some other way, before they came up with them, made them pursue them with chariots and horsemen for the greater expedition; so we may observe, that the chariots they employed in this pursuit, are called chosen chariots, which most interpreters imagine to be such as were armed with scythes, which being drawn with horses, and filled with men, who threw darts and spears and other offensive weapons from them, could not but make a strange havoc wherever they came; and the number which the Scripture mentions, under proper captains, who might have the direction of them, was enough to destroy all the Israelites, being worn with hard bondage, wearied with marching, destitute of arms, strangers to war, and now encamped in a very disadvantageous situation.—*Josephus' Antiquities*, b. 2. c. 15., *Ainsworth's Annotations*, and *Howell's History*.

^b "Of all the infatuated resolutions," to use the words of the learned Dr Jackson, b. 10. c. 11., "that either king or people adventured on, the pursuing the Israelites with such a mighty army, after they had so irritated and urged them to leave their country, may well seem, to every indifferent reader, the most stupid that ever was taken." And so indeed the author of the Book of Wisdom, c. xix. 3., justly censures it: "For whilst they were yet mourning," says he, "and making lamentation at the graves of the dead, they added another foolish device, and pursued them as fugitives, whom they had entreated to be gone." But how much soever it was that the Egyptians had suffered for detaining the Hebrews; yet, now that they were gone, they possibly might be of the same mind with the Syrians, (1 Kings xx. 23.) who fancied, that the God of Israel might not be alike powerful in all places; or, if he was, they might nevertheless think, that Moses' commission extended no farther than the meridian of Egypt, or that if it did, it might however have no power over mighty hosts and armies. They knew, at least, that the Israelites, as we said, had no skill in military matters, no captains of infantry, no cavalry at all, no weapons or engines of war; whereas they were well furnished and equipped with every thing of this nature; and upon these and the like presumptions, it was that they became foolhardy, and desperately resolute, either to bring back the Israelites to their slavery, or to be revenged upon them for all the losses they had sustained, and the penalties they had suffered.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c The Red Sea, called by the ancients *Sinus Arabicus*, and now *Gulfo de Mecca*, is that part or branch of the southern sea which interposes itself between Egypt on the west, and Arabia Felix and some part of Petrea on the east; while the northern bounds of it touch upon Idumea, or the coast of Edom. Edom, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies *red*, and was the nickname given Esau for selling his birthright for a mess of pottage. The country which his posterity possessed was called after his name, and so was the sea which adjoined to it; but the Greeks, not understanding the reason of the appellation, translated it into their tongue, and called it *ῥοῦθρὸν θάλασσαν*; thence the Latins, *Mare Rubrum*, and we, the *Red Sea*. The Hebrews call it the sea of *Suph*, or *Flags*, by reason of the great abundance of that kind of weed, which grows at the bottom of it; and the Arabs at this day name it *Buhr el Chalsem*, that is, *the Sea of Clysm*, from a town situate on its western coast, much about the place where the Israelites passed over from the Egyptian to the Arabian shore. But as the word *clysm* may denote a *drowning* or *overflowing with water*, it is not improbable that the town built in this place, as well as this part of the sea, might have such a name given it,

advance along the coasts of it, until they came to Pi-hahiroth, which lies between Migdol and the sea, and there to encamp.

By this time Pharaoh and his army were come up with them; and when the Israelites perceived themselves hemmed in on every side, with the sea in their front, huge mountains on their flanks, and the Egyptian army in the rear, they began to despair of any means of escape, and to clamour against Moses for having induced them to leave Egypt, and for bringing them into the wilderness to be sacrificed. Moses, however, being apprized of God's design, instead of ^d resenting their reproaches, endeavoured to comfort them by giving them assurance that God himself would certainly fight for them, and by his almighty power bring matters to such an issue, that these very Egyptians, of whom they were so much afraid, should not one of them live to molest them any more.

With these comfortable words, he ordered them to advance towards the sea-side; and as they were advancing, the miraculous cloud, we were speaking of, removed from the front to the rear of the Israelites' camp, and so turning its dark side towards the Egyptians, made them incapable of knowing what they were about; while by its bright or fiery side, which it turned to the Israelites, it gave them a sufficiency of light, and kept the two camps from joining that night.

As soon as the Israelites came to the brink of the sea, Moses waved his sacred rod, and immediately a strong east wind blew, and drove the waves back from the land, and by dividing the waters, which stood suspended as it were a wall on each hand, made a dry and safe passage for the Israelites, until they had gained the other shore. The Egyptians, in the mean while, never suspecting but that they, with their chariots and horsemen, might safely follow, where they saw the Israelites go on foot, entered after them into the midst of the sea; but about break of day they began to see their error, and ^e their whole army

in memory of the fate of the Egyptians, who were drowned herein.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

^d The words which Moses makes himself speak upon this critical occasion, (Exod. xiv. 13, 14.) discover a wonderful spirit and bravery; and it is no bad comment which the Jewish historian has given us of them. "Put the case," says he, "that you had deposited some great trust in the hands of a person that had hitherto managed all well and wisely for you, might not you reasonably depend upon that man for the same care and kindness, and in the same case too, over again? What a madness is it for you to despond then, where God himself has taken you under his protection, and of his own free bounty, performed every thing by me that can contribute to your freedom and security? Nay, the very difficulty of the case you are in, is an argument to inflame your hope rather than discourage it. He hath brought you into this distress, on purpose to show his power and kindness in bringing you out again, even to the surprise and admiration of yourselves, as well as your enemies. It is not God's time to interpose with his almighty power in small matters, but in great and trying calamities; when all hopes of human help fail us, that is the season for him to work out the deliverance of those who cast themselves upon him. And therefore fear nothing, so long as you have him for your protector and defender, who is able to raise the lowly and oppressed, and to lay the honour of their persecutors in the dust. Be not afraid of the Egyptian armed troops, neither despond of your lives and safeties, because you are at present locked up between the sea and the mountains, and have no visible way in nature to come off; for the God whom you serve, is able to level all these mountains, and lay the ocean dry. His will, in fine, be done."—*Josephus' Antiquities*, b. 2. c. 15.

^e The expression in the text is, that 'God troubled the host of

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in the utmost confusion. Their chariots were some of them broken, others ran into quicksands, and others cast off their carriages; so that, perceiving the hand of God against them, they were turning about, and offering to flee, but all in vain. As soon as the Israelites were all landed, Moses, by the divine command, stretched out his rod again over the sea: whereupon the roaring waves break loose from their invisible chain, and come rushing upon Pharaoh and his army, and overwhelm them all; while the Israelites, beholding with wonder and amazement, the carcasses and rich spoils of their enemies thrown upon the sea-shore, began, at least seemingly, to fear God, and to reverence his servant Moses; who, to celebrate this joyful deliverance, having composed a triumphant hymn, wherein he extols the greatness of God's power, and his amazing mercy to his people displayed on this occasion, divided the company into two great choirs; and, setting himself and his brother Aaron at the head of the men, and his sister Miriam with a timbrel in her hand, at the head of the women, they sung and played alternately, and in the height of their joy intermixed dances.^a

But notwithstanding all these thankful acknowledgments of God's goodness, scarce had the Israelites travelled three days from the Red Sea into the wilderness of Shur, before their excessive thirst, and want of water, put them out of all patience: and when in a short time they met with some, at a place which is called Marah, it proved so ^b bitter, that they could not drink it. 'This

the Egyptians;' and to enforce the strength of this expression, the Jewish historian tells us, that before God let loose the waves upon the Egyptians, fierce winds and tempests, storms of hail and rain, terrible thunderings and lightnings, and whatever else could make their condition horrible, were sent down upon them from above; and therefore it is not without good reason, that these words of the Psalmist have been applied to this occasion, 'The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and were afraid; the depths also were troubled: the clouds poured out water, the air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was heard round about, the lightning shone upon the ground, the earth was moved and shook withal. Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known:' whereupon it follows, 'thou leadest thy people like sheep, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.'—*Josephus's Antiquities*, b. 2., and *Psal.* lxxvii. 16. &c.

^a *Exod.* xv. 20. 'And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.' Lady M. W. Montague, speaking of the eastern dances, says, "Their manner is certainly the same that Diana is said to have danced on the banks of Eurotas. The great lady still leads the dance, and is followed by a troop of young girls, who imitate her steps, and, if she sings, make up the chorus. The tunes are extremely gay and lively, yet with something in them wonderfully soft. Their steps are varied according to the pleasure of her that leads the dance, but always in exact time." (*Letters*, vol. ii. p. 45.) This gives us a different apprehension of the meaning of these words than we should otherwise form. Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and dances. She led the dance, and they imitated her steps, which were not conducted by a set well known form, but extemporaneous. Probably David did not dance alone before the Lord, when the ark was removed, but led the dance in the same authoritative kind of way. (*2 Sam.* vi. 14. *Judges* xi. 34. *1 Sam.* xviii. 6.) Representations similar to this are frequently to be met with in the ancient writers.—See *Chandler's Life of David*, vol. 2. p. 116.—*Ed.*

^b The word *Marah*, in the Hebrew language, signifies *bitterness*; and it was from the taste of the waters that the place received its name. That there are several fountains of bitter water not far from the Red Sea, at some small distance from the

disappointment inflamed their thirst, and exasperated their murmurings against Moses, until, by the divine direction, he made use of the wood of a certain tree, which as soon as it was thrown into the water, changed its offensive quality, and made it sweet.^c

From Marah they went, and encamped at ^d Elim, where there were twelve wells of water, and a good quantity of palm or date trees, and here they continued for some time. From hence they removed towards the wilderness of Sin; but before they entered it, the supposed scarceness of provisions made them begin to distrust God, and to repent from their very hearts, that they had suffered themselves to be decoyed from the plenty they enjoyed in the land of Egypt, into a barren wild waste, where they could have no other prospect but to die with hunger: and therefore, to convince these murmuring people of his almighty power and providence, God was pleased to inform them, that he would take care to supply them with food from heaven, which accordingly came to pass. For that very evening, he caused ^e quails to fall among them in such great quantities, as

city Arsinoe, is attested by Strabo, Diodorus, and most modern travellers; but then the question is, whether it was by the miraculous power of God, or by the natural virtue of the wood to which Moses was directed, that these bitter waters were at this time made sweet? The author of that excellent book called *Ecclesiasticus*, seems to be of the latter opinion: for, having treated of the honour and esteem due to a physician, he adds, 'The Lord has created medicines out of the earth, and he that is wise will not abhor them. Was not the water made sweet with wood, that the virtue thereof might be known?' *Eccles.* xxxviii. 5. But, notwithstanding the authority of this writer, we have reason to think, that there was no tree in these parts of this virtue, because had its virtue once been known, there is no question to be made, but that others, as well as Moses, would have made use of it to the same purpose: but that the writers who make mention of these bitter waters, would have told us, at the same time, of a tree or trees growing hard by, which had a medicinal quality to correct the taste of them; but since we meet with nothing of this kind, we may reasonably suppose that the author of *Ecclesiasticus*, a book of modern composition in comparison of Moses' writings, speculating in the chapter upon the medicines which God had provided for man's use, offered this hint purely from his own fancy, and without any authority for it; and consequently we may conclude, that the correction of the quality of this water is to be ascribed, not so much to the virtue of the wood, as to the power of God, who used it rather as a sign to the Israelites, than as an instrument to himself in doing it.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*, and *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. b. 10.

^c *Exod.* xv. 23. 'And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter.' Dr Shaw (*Trav.* p. 314.) thinks that these waters may be properly fixed at Corondel, where there is a small rill, which, unless it be diluted by the dews and rain, is very brackish. Another traveller tells us that, at the foot of the mountain of Hamamel Faron, a small but most delightful valley, a place called Garondee, is a rivulet that comes from the mountain, the water of which is tolerably good and sufficiently plentiful, but is bitter, though very clear. Porocke says, there is a mountain known to this day by the name of Le Marah, and toward the sea is a salt well called Birhammer, which is probably the same here called Marah.—*I. b.*

^d In remarking the several stations of the Israelites, from the Red Sea, until they came to the Mount Sinai, we must observe, that Moses does not set down every place where they encamped, as he does in Numbers, chap. xxxiii., but only those where some remarkable thing was done; but Elim, where they were now encamped, was esteemed a pleasant and fruitful place, at least in comparison of the desert and barren parts about it; and that the desert of Sin, which was their eighth station, and Rephidim their tenth, lay at equal distances, in their way to the holy mountain.—*Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

^e The word which we render quail, according to the confes-

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quite covered their camp; and on the next morning, as soon as the dew was gone, there lay upon the ground a little white round thing, much in the shape of a coriander seed, which when the people saw, they were struck with admiration, and said one to another, ^a 'What is this?' And from whence they gave it the name of 'manna.'

This was the bread which the Israelites were to eat for the space of forty years; and therefore God was pleased to give these special directions concerning it.—That it was to be gathered by measure, an homer for every head, according to the number of each family; but this direction some persons slighting, and gathering above the proportion that was allowed them, found their quantity miraculously lessened, while the more moderate had theirs increased: that it was to be gathered fresh every morning, and all that was gathered consumed that day; which precept some persons likewise neglecting, and keeping a part of it until the next morning, found that it was putrefied and stunk: that on the seventh day, which was the ^b Sabbath, there was none

sion of the Jews themselves, is of uncertain signification, and may denote a locust as well as a quail. But what should rather incline us to the latter acceptation, is that passage of the Psalmist, (lxxviii. 27,) where he tells us, that 'God rained flesh upon them, as thick as dust, and feathered fowls, like as the sand of the sea;' which cannot, with any tolerable propriety, be applied to insects. But here we must remember, that this was done in the middle of April, when these birds are known to fly out of Egypt cross the Red Sea in vast quantities; so that the sum of this miracle will consist, not so much in the prodigious number of them that fell in the Israelites' camp, as in God's directing them thither, and in that very evening too, according to his promise, and his servant Moses' prediction.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^a Our translation, and some others, make Moses fall into a plain contradiction, in relating this story of the manna, which they render thus: 'And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, it is manna, for they wist not what it was,' (Ex. xvi. 15.) whereas the Septuagint, and several authors both ancient and modern, have translated the text according to the original, 'The Israelites seeing this, said one to another, what is this? for they knew not what it was?' For we must observe, that the word by which they asked, 'what is this?' was, in their language, *man*, which signifies likewise *man ready prepared*; and therefore it was always afterwards called *man* or *mannna*. Various are the conceits which the Jewish writers have entertained concerning the taste of this manna, and some of them not unlikely have been borrowed from the author of the book of Wisdom, where he tells us of manna, "that it was able to content every man's delight, agreeing to every taste, and tempering itself to every man's liking." (Wisd. xvi. 20, 21.) Whereupon some have affirmed, that it had the taste of any sort of fish or fowl, according to the wish of him that ate it; but these are idle fancies; what we know of certainty is this,—That here, in Exodus, Moses tells us, that its 'taste was like wafers made with honey,' and in Numbers, he says, that the cakes made of it had the 'taste of fresh oil,' (c. xi. 8.) so that we may conjecture, that it had a sweetness, when gathered, which evaporated in the grinding, and baking. It tasted like honey, when taken off the ground, but the cakes made of it were as cakes kneaded with oil.—*Essay for a New Translation; and Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. b. 10.

^b This seems to be the first time that the 'rest on the seventh day' was solemnly appointed. God, indeed, from the very first intended to preserve the memory of the creation in six days, by appointing the seventh day to be kept holy; but when, before the flood, men grew so wicked as to neglect the thoughts of God, they very little regarded the distinction between this day and others; and after the flood, the dispersion of mankind very much blotted it out of their minds, as it did many other good things. In the family of Abraham, we may presume, the remembrance of it was preserved, though not with such a strict abstinence from all labour as was afterwards enjoined; and therefore we read nothing of their resting from their travels upon that day, before

to be found; and therefore, on the sixth they were to gather a double portion, which being laid up, according to God's direction, against the ensuing day, was never once known to corrupt: and that, to perpetuate the memory of this 'miraculous bread, wherewith God had fed their forefathers in the wilderness so long, an homer of it should be put in a pot, and repositied in the ark of the covenant within the sanctuary.

From the desert of Sin, the Israelites had not advanced many days' journey towards Horeb, until coming to Rephidim, and finding no water there, they fell into their old way of distrusting God's providence, and murmuring against Moses; but on this occasion they seemed to be more mutinous and desperate than ever. 'It was in vain for Moses to endeavour to persuade them to be patient a little, and wait God's leisure. His words did but inflame and carry them to such a height of rage, that they even threatened to stone him; so that he was forced to have recourse to God, who was soon pleased to dissipate his fears, by promising to signalize that place by a miraculous supply of water, as he had lately done another by a miraculous supply of food. ^d Taking, therefore, the elders of the people, who might bear testimony to the fact, along with him, Moses, as he was commanded by God, went to a certain rock on the side of Mount Horeb, which was distinguished from all the rest by the divine appearance resting upon it, and no sooner had he smitten it with his rod, but water in abundance gushed out at several places, and joining in one common stream, ^e ran down to the camp at

their coming out of Egypt. The truth is, they were kept under such severe servitude, and day and night so pressed by their taskmasters to hard labour without intermission, that all observation of the Sabbath was, very likely, laid aside; but when God brought them out of slavery, he renewed his commandment for it, with this addition, in memory of the Egyptian bondage, that they should rest from all manner of labour upon that day.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c Whether this manna had those extraordinary qualities in it or no, which some imagine, it must be allowed to be truly miraculous upon the following accounts. 1. That it fell but six days in the week. 2. That it fell in such prodigious quantity as sustained almost three millions of souls. 3. That there fell a double quantity every Friday, to serve them for the next day, which was their Sabbath. 4. That what was gathered on the first five days stunk, and bred worms, if kept above one day; but that which was gathered on Friday kept sweet for two days. And lastly, That it continued falling while the Israelites abode in the wilderness, but ceased as soon as they came out of it, and had got corn to eat in the land of Canaan.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^d Exod. xvii. 12. 'The elders of Israel.' Not only fathers, but old men, had great authority among the Israelites, and all the people of antiquity. They everywhere, in the beginning, chose judges for private affairs, and counsellors for the public, out of the oldest men. Thence came the name of senate and fathers of Rome, and that great respect for old age which they borrowed from the Lacedemonians. As soon as the Hebrews began to be formed into a people, they were governed by old men.—*Ep*.

^e It was this same water which served the Israelites, not only in this encampment of Rephidim, and in that of Mount Sinai, but in their other encampments likewise, perhaps as far as Kadesh-Barnea. For the Jews have a tradition, that as these waters were granted for the sake of the merits of Miriam, Moses' sister, so they happened to fail as soon as she died; and hence it is, that at the encampment of Kadesh-Barnea, which was soon after the death of Miriam, we find the people falling into murmurings again for want of water. St Paul, speaking of this miraculous rock, which he makes the type of Jesus Christ, tells us, that 'it followed them,' (1 Cor. x. 4.) And from hence

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Rephidim.^a This station, however, because it was so infamous for the mutiny of the people, and their distrust of God, Moses, as a caution and remembrance to them for the future, thought proper to have called *Massah* and *Meribah*, which signify *temptation* and *contention*.^b

While the Israelites continued at Rephidim, they were alarmed by the approach of an army of Amalekites, who were just upon their heels, and ready to fall upon them. Hereupon Moses ordered Joshua, a valiant young man who was always about him, to draw out a party of the choicest men in the camp, against next morning, and to give the Amalekites battle. When the next morning came, Moses, attended by Aaron and Hur, went to the top of an eminence, from whence they might have a view of the field of battle; and as the two armies were engaged, so it was, that while Moses held up his hands to God in prayer, and in one of them his wonder-working rod, the Israelites prevailed; but when, through weariness, his hands began to drop, the Amalekites had the better; which Aaron and Hur perceiving, set him down upon a stone, and supported his hands upon each side, until the going down of the sun, in which time the Amalekites were quite routed, and put to the sword.

This good success, in their first martial enterprise, gave the Israelites great encouragement; and the action

some have inferred, either that the streams which gushed out of the rock formed themselves into a kind of river, which followed them through all their encampments, or that they carried the rock itself in a cart, like a great tun always full, and always open to those that had an inclination to drink. But these are idle fictions, drawn from words that are not to be understood in a literal sense; what we may learn of certainty from modern travellers is,—That at the foot of the Mount Horeb, there is still to be seen a brook of water, but as for the rock itself, which is a vast large stone standing separate by itself, there is no water that now runs from it, though there are, at present, to be seen twelve holes or mouths, as it were, from whence the water did flow heretofore.—*Cabnet's Dictionary*, under the word *Rephidim*, and *Morizan's Voyages*, b. 1. c. 1.

^a Exod. xvii. 1. 'Rephidim.' "After we had descended, with no small difficulty, the western side of Mount Sinai, we came into the other plain that is formed by it, which is Rephidim. Here we still see that extraordinary antiquity, the rock of Meribah, which hath continued down to this day, without the least injury from time or accident. It is a block of granite marble, about six yards square, lying tottering, as it were, and loose in the middle of the valley, and seems to have formerly belonged to Mount Sinai, which hangs in a variety of precipices all over this plain. The waters which gushed out, and the stream which flowed, have hollowed, across one corner of this rock, a channel about two inches deep and twenty wide, appearing to be encrusted all over, like the inside of a tea-kettle that had been long in use. Besides several mossy productions that are still preserved by the dew, we see all over this channel a great number of holes, some of them four or five inches deep, and one or two in diameter, the lively and demonstrative tokens of their having been formerly so many fountains. It likewise may be further observed that art or chance could by no means be concerned in the contrivance, for every circumstance points out to us a miracle; and in the same manner with the rent in the rock of Mount Calvary at Jerusalem, never fails to produce a religious surprise in all who see it."—*Shaw's Travels*, p. 352.—Ed.

^b Exod. xvii. 6. 'Thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it.' This remarkable interposition of God for the Israelites appears to have been imperfectly known in other countries; and the remembrance of it is still retained in some of the heathen fables. There is a manifest allusion to it in Euripides, (*Bacchæ*, 703.) where he makes one smite the rock at Citharon, and waters gush out. Smiting rocks, and producing water, is recorded among the fabulous miracles of heathen mythology.—*Callimachus*, Hymn 1. v. 31.—Ed.

indeed was so very remarkable, that to transmit it to posterity, Moses was ordered to record it in a book, for Joshua's future instructions, and to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving: whereupon, he raised upon the spot an altar, which he called *Jehovah Nissi*, the Lord is my banner, as never doubting that that God, who had commanded him to denounce a incessant war against the Amalekites, would not fail to crown it with success.

The defeat of the Amalekites opened a way for the Israelites to Mount Sinai, where God at first appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and not far from the place where his father-in-law Jethro dwelt; ^d who having heard what mighty things God had done for him and the people he conducted, took his daughter, Zipporah, Moses' wife, and the two sons Gershom, and Eliezar, which he had by her, and brought them to the Israelitish camp; where, after mutual salutations and embraces, Moses

^c The Amalekites were a people descended from Amalek, the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, by a concubine, (Gen. xxxvi. 12.) And the ground of their enmity against the Israelites is generally supposed to have been an innate hatred, from the remembrance of Jacob's depriving their progenitor, both of his birthright and blessing. Their falling upon them, however, and that without any provocation, when they saw them reduced to so low a condition by the fatigue of their march, and the excessive drought they laboured under, was an inhuman action, and justly deserved the defeat which Joshua gave them; but then the reason why God thought fit to denounce a perpetual war against them is to be resolved into this,—That knowing the Israelites were pre-ordained by God to be put in possession of the land of Canaan, they came against them with an armed force, in hopes of frustrating the designs of Providence concerning them. And this is the reason which Moses himself assigns for this declaration of war, 'because his,' that is Amalek's, 'haud is against the throne of God,' that is, against God himself, 'therefore the Lord will wage war against him from one generation to another,' (Exod. xvii. 16.) The injury done the Israelites was not so much as the affront offered to the divine Majesty; and therefore God threatens utterly to extirpate the designers of it.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7, and *Patrik's Commentary*.

^d When it was that Jethro came from Midian to visit his son-in-law Moses, whether immediately after the fight with the Amalekites, as it is here set down, or some time after, when the Israelites were better settled, is a matter much controverted amongst interpreters. The Jews are generally agreed, and to them do some other great names, as well as the learned Usher and Selden, assent, that this visit happened after the promulgation of the law, in the first year of their coming from Egypt, and in the month Tisri, say the Jews, above three months after God gave Moses the second tables; though others will have it to have been in the second year. It seems reasonable to think, however, that Jethro would take the first opportunity to visit Moses, and to bring him and so near relations together, when once he had heard the news of their departure from Egypt, and passing the Red Sea: which he, as a borderer upon the wilderness, could not long be a stranger to. It is to be observed farther, that had the law been given before Jethro's arrival in the Israelitish camp, Moses could hardly have escaped saying something of the most remarkable passage of all others, God's glorious appearance upon Mount Sinai, and the decalogue which he pronounced from thence: whereas all that he relates at this meeting is, what God had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians; in what manner he 'had delivered his people;' and 'what travail had come upon them by the way,' which comprehend their passage of the Red Sea, their want of water and bread, their engagement with the Amalekites, and, in short, whatever we read in the foregoing chapters. But of the most momentous thing of all, we find him making no mention, nor Jethro, in the congratulations which he gives him, taking any manner of notice; which we can hardly suppose would, on either side, have been omitted, had they been prior to this interview; nor can we conceive, for what reason Moses should place the account of this interview in immediate succession, had it not followed the fight with the Amalekites.—*Patrik's Commentary*.

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entertained him with a particular account of every thing that had befallen him during his absence; and in return, Jethro, who was a devout man, offered up solemn praises to God, and joined with Moses, and the rest of the elders of Israel, in sacrifices, and such holy rejoicings as were thought proper upon this occasion.

While Jethro staid in the camp, he could not but perceive the great weight of business, in hearing complaints, and determining differences among so numerous a people, which Moses must necessarily labour under; and therefore he gave him advice, to substitute under him a certain number of officers, men of parts and men of courage, such as 'feared God, and hated covetousness,' to be rulers, some over thousands, some over hundreds, some over fifties, and some over tens, with proper authority for them to hear, and determine ^a all such matters, as they were able; but where causes were too difficult for their decision, these to refer to him; which in the event, as he told him, would prove a great ease and advantage both to himself and the people: and this advice of his, as soon as he saw put in execution, Jethro took leave of his son-in-law, and returned into his own country.

It was three months after their departure out of Egypt, when the Israelites came, and encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, before the mount of God: and they had not been long there, before God called Moses to come up to him on the mount, and there charged him to remind the Israelites of the many wonders he had wrought in their favour; and that, notwithstanding their frequent murmurings and distrust of his providence, if, for the future, they would become obedient to his laws, he would still look upon them as his peculiar people, a favourite nation, and a royal priesthood.

Upon his descent from the mount, Moses made a report to the elders, and they to the people, of the gracious message which God had sent them; which as soon as the people heard, they promised in return all possible obedience to the divine commands. With this answer of the people's Moses ascended the mountain again, and received a command from God, that all the people should purify themselves, and be in readiness against the third

day, for that within three days, ^b he would come down upon the mountain, and make a covenant with them. In the mean time he gave him strict charge to set boundaries about the foot of the mountain, which none might adventure to pass, under the severest penalties; ^c and when he had thus done, and the people had prepared themselves according to the divine injunction, on the third day they saw early in the morning, the mountain surrounded with a thick cloud, out of which proceeded such terrible thunder and lightnings as filled them with horror and amazement.

The signal for the people to approach the mountain, was upon the first sounding of the trumpet; and therefore as soon as it began, Moses brought them out of the camp, as near to the mountain as the barrier would permit, and there they observed the whole top of Sinai covered with fire and smoke, while the foundations of it seemed to tremble and shake under them. ^d In the

^b It must be observed here, as also in other places of the like nature, that the Scripture, suiting itself to man's common way of speaking and thinking, assigns such things to God, as are only proper to the effects. Thus it is said that God 'descended on the mountain,' because he made his presence more visible there by sensible and surprising effects; and whereas it is said by the protomartyr, St Stephen, (Acts vii. 53,) 'that the Jews received the law by the disposition of angels;' and by St Paul to the Galatians, (iii. 19,) 'that the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator;' there is in these, and the like passages, no contradiction between the new and old testament, which assigns all this dispensation to God himself. For though it was God who descended, in the sense we have explained it, upon the mount, yet the angels, these courtiers of heaven, attended him, and made up his train; and though he himself pronounced the law, yet the thunder and lightnings, and noise resembling the sound of a trumpet, which were preparatory to such pronouncement, may not improperly be ascribed to the ministry of angels. The intent, however, of these passages in the new testament, is only to oppose the gospel to the law in this respect, namely, that when God gave the law, he was surrounded with an awful host of angels, but when our Lord delivered the gospel, he was clothed in our flesh, and adapted himself to our weakness.—*Howell's History of the Bible, and Millar's Church History.*

^c Exod. xix. 13. 'He shall surely be stoned.' To be stoned to death was a most grievous punishment. When the offender came within four cubits of the place of execution, he was stript naked, only having a covering before, and his hands being bound, he was led up to the fatal place, which was an eminence twice a man's height. The first executioners of the sentence were the witnesses, who generally pulled off their clothes for the purpose: one of them threw him down with great violence upon his loins: if he rolled upon his breast he was turned upon his loins again, and if he died by the fall, there was an end; but if not, the other witness took a great stone and dashed upon his breast, as he lay upon his back; and then, if he was not despatched, all the people that stood by threw stones at him till he died.—*Lewis' Origines Hebraeae*, vol. 1. p. 74.—Ed.

^d Of all the descriptions that I ever read, there is no one seems to me so awful and tremendous, as this descent of God upon Mount Horeb, and the amazing phenomena that attended it. The pomp pretended to by pagan deities, even when set off with the grandeur of poetry, and the magic of numbers, is uncouth, ridiculous, and profane. The procession of Bacchus, as it is described by Ovid, (b. 3.) is neither more nor less, than a downright drunken riot, or the brutal pastime of a disorderly country wake. The boisterous expedition of Neptune, even as it is painted by the great master Homer, (Iliad, 13,) seems to represent nothing more august than the roaring of London bridge, or a rabble of sea monsters frisking in a storm; nay, that very famous speech of Jupiter, (Iliad, 18,) where he maintains his supereminence, by shaking Olympus with his imperial nod, and menacing his refractory offspring, in case they should rebel, though it certainly be embellished with the utmost force of words and stretch of art, is at the best but a lame and imperfect copy, in the main strokes of it, from the native majesty of this unlaboured prose, in the

^a The words of the text are, 'Every great matter they shall bring to thee, but every small matter they shall judge,' (Exod. xviii. 22.) And from hence some have imagined, that there were several sorts of causes, that might not at first be brought before inferior courts, and these they make to be four. 1. All sacred matters, or things relating to God and religion. 2. All matters of equity, where the rigour of the law was to be mitigated. 3. All capital cases, and, lastly, all such cases as the rulers of thousands referred to Moses. What the other rulers referred to him was indeed properly under his cognizance, because it supposed an incapacity in them, either for the want of some law, or a non-agreement among themselves, to determine it; but where nothing of this happened, they had a full power to judge finally. Neither was it the people, when a cause was thought intricate, that were to bring it primarily before Moses, but when any such difficulty arose, as they were not able to surmount, the judges, as Moses himself directs them, (Deut. i. 17.) were the persons that were to order the appeal to him: 'Bring it to me,' says he, 'and I will hear it;' which shows that the cause had been before the bar of inferior courts before, only they were not skilful enough to determine it. So that the words in the text do not intimate, that there were some causes which the other judges might not try, if they were able; but only where the causes were heavy, and they incompetent to decide them, these they were to refer to Moses.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

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midst of this dreadful scene, the trumpet was heard to sound louder and louder, claps of thunder and flashes of fire were more and more ingeminated, till all on a sudden every thing was hush and silent, and then God was heard from the midst of the fire and smoke (which still continued) to pronounce the law of the decalogue, or *a* ten commandments, which is indeed a complete system of the moral part of the Jewish institutes, and in few but significant words, comprehends their duty to God, to their neighbour, and to themselves.

In the mean time the people, astonished at what they saw and heard, removed farther off; and as soon as the divine voice had ceased speaking, came to Moses, and in the height of their fear and surprise, besought of him, that for the future, he would speak to them in God's stead, and whatever he enjoined them they would obey, because they were conscious, that were they to hear his dreadful voice again, they should certainly die with horror and astonishment. This motion, as it bespoke their reverence and respect, was not displeasing to Moses; and therefore he assured them, that all this wonderful scene was not exhibited to them with a design to create in them any slavish fear, but a filial confidence, and submission to such laws as the divine wisdom should hereafter think fit to enjoin them: and with these words he went up to the mount again, where, in addition to the decalogue, he received from God several other laws, both ceremonial and political, which seem to have been calculated with a wise design to preserve the people in their obedience to God, to prevent their intermixture with other nations, and to advance the welfare of their commonwealth, by securing to all the members of it a quiet enjoyment of their lives and properties.^b

19th chapter of Exodus. It must be owned, however, that our English poet Milton, has in several places described the usual display of the divine Majesty, in a very magnificent manner.

Clouds began

To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll
In dusky wreaths, reluctant flames, the sight
Of wrath awaked: nor with less dread the loud
Ethereal trumpet from on high 'gan blow,
At which command the powers militant,
That stood for heaven, in mighty quadrate joined
Of union irresistible, moved on
In silence their bright legions to the sound
Of instrumental harmony. —————

Again,

He on his impious foes right onward drove,
Gloomy as night: under his burning wheels
The steadfast empyrean shook throughout,
All but the throne of God. —————

And again,

He ended, and the sun gave signal high
To the bright minister that watched: He blew
His trumpet, heard on Oreb since perhaps
When God descended, and perhaps once more
To sound the general doom. —————

Paradise Lost, b. 6. and 11.

a These ten commandments, as contained in the 20th chapter of Exodus, are so very well known, that there is no occasion here for the repetition of them: and in what manner they are to be disposed of in the two tables, whether four are to be placed in the first, and six in the second table, which is the common distribution, or an equal number is to be appropriated to each table, as Philo and his followers among the Jewish rabbins contend, is not a question of moment enough to be discussed in this place.

b Exod. xx. 12. 'That thy days may be long upon the land.' As disobedience to parents is, by the law of Moses, threatened to be punished with death, so on the contrary long life is promised to the obedient; and that in their own country, which God most peculiarly enriched with abundance of blessings. Heathens also gave the same encouragement, saying, that such children should

With this body of laws, which were all that God for the present thought fit to enjoin, Moses returning from the mount, erected an altar to God, *c* and offered burnt-sacrifices and peace-offerings upon it; and having caused the contents of this new covenant to be read to all the people, and exacted a solemn promise from them, that they would keep it faithfully, he confirmed this covenant, by sprinkling the altar, the book, and the people with the blood of the victims which were slain upon this occasion; and then ordered twelve pillars to be raised, according to the number of the twelve tribes, as a standing monument of this alliance between God and them.

As soon as Moses had made an end of this ceremony, he took Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, some part of the way towards the mountain, where, without incurring any hurt, they were vouchsafed a prospect of the divine presence, and where, having committed the care of the people to them, he took Joshua along with him, and went up higher to the top of the mount, where he continued for the space of forty days.

Here it was that God, calling him nearer to himself, and into the cloud where he then resided, instructed him in what manner the tent or tabernacle, wherein he intended to be worshipped, was to be made. He described to him the form of the sanctuary, the table for the shew-bread, the altar of frankincense, the altar for burnt-offerings, the court of the tabernacle, the basin to wash in, the ark, the candlestick, and all the other sacred utensils. He gave him the form of the sacerdotal vestments, and taught him how the priests were to be consecrated; what part of the oblation they were to take, and in what manner the perpetual sacrifice was to be offered. He named the two chief men, Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiah, of the tribe of Dan, who were to be the builders of the tabernacle; and having recommended a strict observation of the Sabbath, *d* he gave him the two

be dear to the gods, both living and dying. So Euripides. It was also one of their promises, thou shalt live long, if thou nourish thy ancient parents.—*Patrick in locum*.—En.

c Exod. xx. 24. 'An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me.' This command certainly imports, that the altars of the Lord were to be as simple as possible. They were to be made either of sods and turfs of earth, which were easily prepared in most places, while they strayed in the wilderness, or of rough and unpolished stone, if they came into rocky places, where no sods were to be obtained; that there might be no occasion to grave any image upon them. Such altars, Tertullian observes, (*Apolog.* c. 25.) were among the ancient Romans in the days of Numa; when, as they had no sumptuous temples, nor images, so they had only altars hastily huddled up of earth, without any art.—*Patrick in locum*.—Ed.

d Exod. xxiii. 12. 'On the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may rest.' We should here observe the great clemency of God, who by this law requires some goodness and mercy to be exercised even to brute animals, that he might remove men the farther from cruelty to each other. The slaughter of a ploughing ox was prohibited by a law common to the Phrygians, Cyprians, and Romans, as we find recorded by Varro, Pliny, and others. The Athenians made a decree that a male worn out by labour and age, and which used to accompany other mules drawing burdens, should be fed at the public expense.

Exod. xxiii. 16. 'The feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.' The same custom prevailed among the Gentiles, who at the end of the year, when they gathered in their fruits, offered solemn sacrifices, with thanks to God for his blessings. Aristotle

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a tables of stone, wherein with his own hand, at least by his own direction, were written the ten great commandments, which were the sum and substance of the moral law.^b

While Moses was conversing with God on the mount, and Joshua waiting for his return, the people in the

(*Ethic.* b. viii.) says, that the ancient sacrifices and assemblies were after the gathering in of the fruits, being designed for an oblation of the first-fruits unto God.—Ed.

a Who was the first inventor of letters, and what nation had the invention soonest among them, is variously disputed by the learned. The invention seems to be a little too exquisite to have proceeded from man; and therefore we have, not without reason, in a former page, derived its original from God himself, who might teach it Adam, and Adam his posterity. As to particular nations, however, some say that the Phœnicians, others the Ethiopians, and others again that the Assyrians, had the first invention of them; but upon better grounds, it is thought by Eusebius (in his *Præpar. Evan.* b. 18.) that Moses first taught the use of letters to the Jews, and that the Phœnicians learned them from them, and the Grecians from the Phœnicians. The matter whereon men wrote in ruder times was different; some on the rinds of trees, others on tiles, and others on tables; which last was chiefly in use among the Jews; and probably from this example given them by God. The instrument wherewith they wrote, was not a pen, but a kind of engraver made of iron or steel, called a stylus, which was sharp at one end, for the more convenient indenting, or carving the character, and broad at the other for the purpose of scraping it out. To perpetuate the memory of any thing, the custom of writing on stone or brick was certainly very ancient, and (as Josephus, in the case of Seth's pillars, tells us, *Antiquities*, b. 11.) older than the time of the flood. The words of the decalogue, spoken by God himself, were such as deserved to be had in everlasting remembrance; and therefore God was willing to have them engraved upon durable matter; but then the question is, whether it was God himself, with his own finger, as we say, or some other person from God's mouth, who wrote them. In *Exod.* xxxiv. 27, 28, we are told, that 'the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words have I made a covenant with thee and with Israel;' and that accordingly 'he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, even the ten commandments.' Now since it is a common form of speech, that what a superior commands to be done, that he does himself; the meaning can be no more, than that the words of the decalogue were written by the hand of Moses, but by the direction and dictation of God.—*Howell's and Universal History.*

b *Exod.* xxiv. 11. 'And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand.' It is usually said that God 'laid not his hand' in a way of terror, or anger, on these nobles on account of their intrusion; but in the *Monthly Magazine* for January, 1804, is the following description of the appearance at court of the Mogul's officers, who partake of his bounty or rewards. "Those officers of the districts, whose time has expired, or who have been recalled from similar appointments, repair to the imperial presence, and receive the reward, good or evil, of their administration. When they are admitted into the presence, and retire from thence, if their rank and merit be eminent, they are called near to his majesty's person, and allowed the honour of placing their heads below his sacred foot. The emperor lays his hand on the back of a person, on whom he means to bestow an extraordinary mark of favour. Others from a distance receive token of kindness, by the motion of the imperial brow or eyes." Now if the nobles of Israel were not admitted to the same nearness of approach to the Deity as Moses and Aaron, perhaps this phrase should be taken directly contrary to what it has been. 'He laid not his hand' in a way of special favour, nevertheless they saw God, and did eat and drink in his presence. This sense of laying on the hand is supported by a passage in Bell's *Travels to Persia*, p. 103. "The minister received the credentials, and laid them before the Shah, who touched them with his hand, as a mark of respect. This part of the ceremony had been very difficult to adjust; for the ambassador insisted on delivering his letters into the Shah's own hands. The Persian ministers, on the other hand, affirmed that their king never received letters directly from the ambassadors of the greatest emperors on earth."—*Theological Magazine*, vol. iv. p. 140.—Ed.

camp, who by reason of his long absence began now to give him over for lost, assembled themselves in a riotous manner about Aaron's tent, and demanded of him to make them some gods to go before them. The demand was astonishing, and such was his weakness, and want of courage, that instead of expostulating the matter with them, he tamely submitted to their request; nay, he contributed not a little to their idolatry, by ordering them to bring a sufficient quantity of their golden ornaments, which when he received from them, c he tied in a bag, and thereof made them a molten calf. Nor was this all, for seeing them so highly delighted with their new made god, he set it upon a pedestal, in full sight of the camp, built an altar before it, and appointed the next day for a solemn festival, which was begun with offering of sacrifices to it, and concluded with feasting and dancing, and all d kinds of noisy mirth.

God, in the mean time, who knew what had passed in the camp, acquainted his servant Moses, that the people whom he had brought out of Egypt had so soon forgot their promises and engagements, that at that very time they had made them a molten image, and were worshipping a golden calf; a defection so provoking, that he threatened to extirpate the whole nation of them, but at

c The words in the text are these, 'All the people brake off the golden ear-rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron, and he received them at their hands, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it into a molten calf,' *Exod.* xxxii. 3, 4. But here seems to be a great mistake in most versions as well as our own, and what but few critics and expositors have yet espied. For it may very well be asked, who taught Aaron to engrave, or how could this idol be engraven so soon, since it is said that Aaron presented it to the people on the morrow! If the custom of engraving molten work was then known, how comes it, that we hear nothing of it even in Solomon's time, since it may be presumed, that the furniture of Solomon's temple was wrought with much more art than the figure of Aaron's calf? The whole foundation of this mistake seems to lie in the ambiguity of the Hebrew word *Tsour*, which sometimes signifies to fashion, and sometimes to bind or tie, and of the word *Chereth*, which signifies a graving tool, and sometimes a sack or bag, 2 Kings v. 23. And therefore the nature and circumstances of the thing here spoken of might have directed the translators to think of putting the great quantity of ear-rings, which were brought to Aaron, into a bag; which would have prevented the incongruity that the Geneva version has incurred, of engraving the calf before it was molten; for so it runs, 'he fashioned the ear-rings with a graving tool, and made a molten calf of them.' *Essay for a New Translation.*

d The words in the text are, (*Exod.* xxxii. 6.) 'the people sat down to eat, and to drink, and rose up to play;' and from hence some have supposed their sense to be, that after the Israelites had eaten of the sacrifices offered to this new idol, and drunk very plentifully, they committed fornication, after the manner of heathen worshippers, and as in after ages they were induced to do in the case of Baal-peor, *Numb.* xxv. 1, 2. It cannot be denied, indeed, but that those sacrificial feasts among the heathens were usually attended with drunkenness and lasciviousness, which generally go together; and that the word which we render play, is the same which Potiphar's wife makes use of, when she tells her husband, that his Hebrew slave came in to mock her, that is, violate her chastity; but since there is no intimation of this in the story, but only of their singing and dancing, it is hardly presumable, that they could become so very profligate the very first day of their setting up idol-worship. Much more reasonable it is therefore to suppose, that all this merriment of theirs was in imitation of the Egyptians, who, when they had found out their god Apis, whereof this golden calf was designed as an emblem, were used to bring him in solemn pomp to Memphis, the royal city, with children going before in procession, and all the company singing a song of praise to the Deity.—*Patrik's Commentary.*

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the same time promised to make him the father and founder of a nation as numerous, and more powerful than these ungrateful rebels were. But so far was Moses from seeking his own interest in their destruction, that he threw himself at the feet of the Lord, and interceded for their pardon with so much importunity, that having obtained a kind of promise of it, he took the tables and his servant Joshua with him, and so hastened down from the mount.

As soon as they were come to the bottom, Joshua hearing the noise which the people were making, expressed his apprehensions, that possibly there might be some alarm or engagement in the camp; but Moses, who knew what had happened, told him that the noise seemed to be an indication of joy, rather than of war; and as they drew near, and saw the golden calf, and the people singing and dancing about it, Moses, for indignation throwing down the tables he had in his hands, brake them in pieces; and then taking the idol calf, he put it in the fire, and melted it, and so ^a reducing it to powder, and mixing the powder in water, to make them more sensible of their folly in worshipping that for a god which was to pass through their bodies, he made them drink it up.

After this, Aaron was called to give an account how he came to indulge the people in this idolatrous humour; but all the excuse that he could make turned upon their tumultuous, and his timorous temper, which compelled him to comply with their demand. But Moses' business was, to take vengeance on the idolaters; and therefore turning from his brother Aaron, he called such to his aid as had not been guilty in the late rebellion; and seeing some of the tribe of Levi adjoin themselves to him, ^b he appointed them to take their swords, to go through the camp, and without any respect to age or quality, friendship or consanguinity, to kill all the ringleaders of this

^a This action of Moses, in melting, grinding, and pounding this golden idol, in order to make the people drink it, is by some thought contrary to our present philosophy, and the account which alchemists give us of the nature of gold. The goldbeater can reduce gold to the thickness of one fifteen hundredth part of an inch, in the form of leaves, which may be easily beat into powder, thrown into a liquid, and drunk. A strong current of electricity being made to play upon gold, will cause it to burn, and be dissipated in the form of a very fine purple powder, which may also be thrown into water and drunk. Gold may also be dissolved in nitro-muriatic acid and drunk? By the help of a file, Moses might grate it into a dust, as fine as flour that is ground in a mill. But the rabbinical reason for his giving the people this gold powder to drink, namely, that he might distinguish the idolaters from the rest, because as soon as they had drunk, the beards of the former turned red, is a little too whimsical to be regarded.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^b This may be thought too hazardous an undertaking, and, for a few Levites to kill 3000 of the people impracticable; but as they had God's warrant for what they did, and knew at the same time how timorous guilt is apt to make men, they might be confident, that none would have courage to oppose them. Before that Moses called any avengers to his assistance, the text tells us, that 'he saw that the people were naked, for Aaron had made them naked to their shame,' (Exod. xxxii. 25.) where, if by 'nakedness' we are, with some expositors, to understand their want of arms, which they had laid aside, that they might be more light and nimble to dance about the idol, it is plain, that the Levites might have less trouble in slaying such a number of people, loaded with liquor perhaps, and, as it usually happens in the conclusion of a festival, weary with dancing and sports, and without any weapons about them to make resistance.—*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

idolatrous defection, and their adherents; which the Levites accordingly executed; so that at this time there were about three thousand persons slain. Nor did the Levites, in consideration of this their laudable zeal and obedience, go long unrewarded; for, upon the institution of the priesthood, they were appointed to the honour and emoluments of that office, though in subordination to that of Aaron and his posterity.

The people, in the mean time, having seen this dreadful example on the delinquents, were not in a little fear and consternation. But Moses, the next day contented himself with reproving them for their ingratitude and extreme folly, and at the same time promised them that he would go up to the mount again, and try ^c how far his prayers would prevail with the divine mercy, to avert the punishment which they justly deserved. To show, however, how highly they had offended God by their wicked apostasy, he took a tent, and pitching it out of the camp at a good distance, he called it 'the tabernacle of the congregation,' whither the cloudy pillar, (to let them see that God would no longer dwell among them,) immediately repaired; and whither Moses, whenever he wanted to consult the divine oracle, was wont to resort. Nor was it long after this, that God, to comfort and encourage him under all the fatigue that he had with an obstinate people, granted his request, and showed him as much of his glory as his nature was able to bear, and gave him fresh orders to prepare two other tables of stone, and to come up again to him on the mountain all alone. Moses, accordingly, early next morning, repaired to the mountain, with the two tables, and having prostrated himself before God, implored of him to pardon the sins of his people; which God graciously condescended to do, and withal to make a farther covenant with them, upon condition that they would keep his commandments; would observe his Sabbaths, his pass-over, and other appointed festivals; and would not worship the gods of the Canaanites, nor make any alliances with the people of the country.

CHAP. II.—*Objections answered and Difficulties explained.*

THAT in the deserts of Arabia, and such extended plains (for there were no cities, rivers, or mountains for landmarks,) it was a general custom, before the invention of the compass, to carry fire before armies, in order to direct their march; and that, notwithstanding the present use of the compass, the guidance of fire is practised

^c Moses indeed was by lineage and descent of the tribe of Levi, which though it forfeited the primogeniture and regalia, by being concerned in the blood of the Shechemites, was nevertheless dignified with the priesthood, which gave him a right of approaching God, as an intercessor for a rebellious and backsliding people. Aaron, in strictness, was both the high priest and his elder brother, but besides that, he, by his imprudent compliance in the business of the golden calf, had at this time not only forfeited the honour of mediation, but stood himself in need of an atonement; there seems to be something in the character that is given of Moses' singular meekness, that might entitle him to the spirit of intercession, and make the younger, in this office, be preferred before the elder.—*Bibliotheca Biblica Append. of the Occas. Annot.*

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among the caravans in the east, and by the great number of pilgrims, who go every year from Grand Cairo in Egypt, to Mecca in Arabia, cannot, by any one that is acquainted either with ancient or modern history, be denied; and had the sole intent of the cloudy pillar been to guide and conduct the Israelites in their journeys, there might have been more grounds for asserting, that it was a mere machine of human contrivance, and had nothing miraculous or supernatural in it. But when it shall appear, that this pillar of a cloud was of much greater use to the children of Israel than barely to conduct them; that in it resided a superior power, upon whom the name and attributes of God are conferred; that from it proceeded oracles, and directions what the people were to do, and plagues and punishments, when they had done amiss; and that to it are ascribed such motions and actions, as cannot, with any propriety of speech, be applied to any natural fire; it will from hence, I hope, be concluded, that this guidance of the cloud was a real miracle; its substance quite different from that of portable fire preceding armies; and its conductor something more than a mere man.

The first mention that is made of this phenomenon is in the thirteenth chapter of Exodus, where Moses, describing the route which the Israelites pursued, tells us that¹ 'they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped at Etham, at the edge of the wilderness, and the Lord went before them, by day, in a pillar of a cloud, and, by night, in a pillar of fire:' and what we are to understand by 'the Lord, that went before them,' we are advertised in another place;² 'Behold I send my angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon thy transgression, for my name is in him,' that is, my name Jehovah, which is the proper and incommunicable title of God. Another place wherein we find this pillar of a cloud mentioned, is in the 14th chapter;³ and 'the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed, and went behind them, and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them, and it came between the camp of the Egyptians, and the camp of Israel, and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light to these.' There is, in the same book, another place where this pillar is taken notice of, and that is in the 33d chapter, where God being highly offended at the people's impiety in making the golden calf, refuses to conduct them any longer himself, and proposes to depute an angel to supply his place:⁴ 'When the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned;—and it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. All the people saw the cloudy pillar at the tabernacle door, and they rose up, and worshipped, every man at his tent door. We have occasion to mention but one place more, and that is in the 16th chapter of Numbers, where the people murmured for the loss of Korah and his company:⁵ 'And it came to pass, that when the congregation was gathered against Moses, and against Aaron, they looked towards the tabernacle of the con-

gregation, and behold the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared, and Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation, and the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them, as in a moment, and they fell upon their faces; and Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly into the congregation, and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun.' Now, from a bare recital of these passages, we cannot but observe, that the Israelites' pillar made quite another appearance than any combustible matter, when set on fire, and carried upon a pole, can be supposed to do; that in this pillar resided a person of divine character and perfections, and therefore called 'the Lord, the angel, the angel of the Lord, and the angel of his presence,' &c.; that this person was invested with a power of demanding homage and observance, of both punishing and pardoning transgressions, and to whom even Moses and Aaron, as well as the rest of the congregation, might fall down on their faces, and pay obeisance, without the imputation of idolatry. The whole tenor of the narration, in short, seems to denote, that every one in the congregation looked upon the pillar as something awful and tremendous, and the person residing therein above the rank and dignity of any created essence: and therefore, the most general opinion is, that he to whom these divine appellations, divine powers, and divine honours are ascribed, was the eternal Son of God, with a troop of blessed angels attending him in bright and luminous forms; and who, either by the display or contraction of their forms, could make the cloud they inhabited either condense or expand itself, either put on a dark or radiant appearance, according as the great Captain of their host signified his pleasure. For to suppose that mere fire, without any supernatural direction, could appear in different forms at the same time, with darkness to one sort of people, and light to another, is a thing incongruous to its nature.

For how many purposes this miraculous pillar might serve the Israelites, it would be presumption to determine; but this we may say with safety,—That besides its guiding them in their journey,⁶ it was of use to defend them from their enemies, that they might not assault them; of use to cover them from the heat of the sun in the wilderness, where there were few trees, and no houses to shelter them; and of use to convey the divine will, and to be, as it were, a standing oracle whereunto they might resort upon all occasions. In this cloud, we are told expressly, that⁷ the Lord appeared from the tabernacle; from this cloud, that⁸ he called Aaron and Miriam to come before him; and out of this cloud again, that he sent forth the expresses of his wrath, as well as the tokens of his love, among the whole congregation: and therefore this cloud could, at that time, be nothing else but the vehicle of God, as we may call it, or the place of his majestic appearance. Nor is the conjecture improbable, that from this very instance the poets first took the hint of making their gods descend in a cloud, and arrayed with a bright effulgency.

¹ Exod. xiii. 20, 21.² Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.³ Ver. 19, 20. ⁴ Chap. xxxiii. 4, &c. ⁵ Num. xvi. 42, &c.⁶ Patrick's Commentary.⁷ Deut. xxxi. 15.⁸ Num. xii. 5.

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However this be, it is certain, that the Jews were persuaded of the divinity of their guide; otherwise they would not have expressed such undissembled sorrow and concern upon hearing the news of his intention to leave them: nor could Moses, with all his authority, have ever prevailed with them to wander so long in the wilderness, exposed to so many dangers and hardships, had they been satisfied that it was no more than a man, with some fire, elevated upon a pole, that was their conductor. It may be allowed, indeed, that a multitude of such fiery machines might be of service to an army in a march; but the thing is utterly inconceivable, how a company of six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, and no small number of associates, together with all their cattle, could receive any great benefit from only one of these, which, at a moderate distance, would diminish into a small light, and at a larger be quite lost; or every moment was in danger of being blown aside by the wind, or extinguished by the rain.

The Scriptures everywhere represent the Israelites going out of Egypt with a high hand, marching in a regular order, and ¹ 'covered by God, in the day, with a cloud, and led, all the night through, with a light of fire;' but a sufficient company of link boys, placed in a regular order to illuminate each column as they moved, would have certainly been of more use, and made a much better appearance, than this pretended mixture of smoke and flame, smothering from an iron pot, at the end of a long pole. For from my heart I cannot conceive what manner of comparison there can be between the dark, fuliginous smoke arising from a culinary fire, and the glorious, heavenly, and bright appearance of ² 'that burning pillar of fire, which,' as the author of the book of Wisdom expresses it, 'was both a guide of their unknown journey, and an harmless sun to entertain them honourably.'

The Scripture indeed assigns but one reason for God's conducting the Israelites by the way of the wilderness, which was so much about, to the land of Canaan, and that is,—An apprehension that the Philistines, through whose country they were to go, being a bold and warlike people, would, in all probability, have disputed the passage with them, which the others, destitute of arms as they were, and having their spirits broken with a long servitude, were in no condition to make good: but as the almighty power of their conductor was sufficient to make them superior to all such obstacles, we may well suppose, that a farther end which the divine Providence might have herein, was to manifest his glory and goodness by his constant attendance upon them in this luminous appearance, and by the many wonderful works which he did to oblige them to his service.

According to the course of the country, Moses might have marched the people a much shorter way; but then, we had heard nothing of the 'angel of God's presence' visibly preceding them; nothing of his dividing the sea to facilitate their passage; nothing of his overwhelming their enemies in those very floods, which to them were a kind of wall on each side; nothing of his drawing out rivers of water from the stony rock; nothing of

his ³ 'sending down manna upon them, and giving them food from heaven;' nothing of his 'raining flesh, as thick as dust, and feathered fowls, like as the sand of the sea;' nothing of his amazing descent upon Mount Sinai, when, in the lofty words of the Psalmist, ⁴ 'he bowed the heavens and came down, and it was dark under his feet; he rode upon the cherubim, and did fly; he came flying upon the wings of the wind; he made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him with dark water, and thick clouds to cover him; there went a smoke out of his presence, hail-stones, and coals of fire, so that the earth trembled and quaked, the very foundations also of the hills shook, and were removed.' The wilderness, in short, was the scene which God had made choice of for the display of his almighty power and goodness: there it was, that he 'laid bare his arm,' as he calls it, to the Israelites; that every day he took care of their meat and drink, and indeficiency of their clothing; and had he not detained them there so long, he had not been so kind. It may be considered farther, that before this people were to be admitted into the possession of the inheritance which God had promised them, all matters were to be adjusted between him and them; and to this purpose laws were to be given, ordinances instituted, and covenants sealed; but a work of this importance could nowhere be so commodiously transacted as in the retirement of the wilderness. Here it was that God, in the bush, talking with Moses, gave it as a token of his promise, that the people after their deliverance should come to Mount Horeb, and ⁵ there worship him; and fit it was, that such an engagement on God's part should now receive its accomplishment. And since it was no more than requisite, that a nation designed for such peculiar favours from God, should be held some time in a state of probation, before they were admitted to it, and until the people, whom they were appointed to reject, had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and were ripe for extirpation; therefore it is, that Moses calls upon them ⁶ 'to remember all the way, which the Lord their God led them, for these forty years, in the wilderness, to humble them, and to prove them, and to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments or no.'

These commandments, it must be owned, were delivered to the Israelites with all the ensigns of horror, which the Psalmist, so lately quoted, has described; but that there is no ground to suspect any deceit in this wonderful occurrence, is manifest from Moses' dealing so openly with the people in this matter, and suffering them to go up into the mountain, after the Lord had departed from it. ⁷ 'When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.' This is the signal which God himself gives them; whereas, had there been any fallacy in the phenomenon, Moses would have debarred them from going up for ever. And therefore, as we need not doubt but that several upon this signal went up, we cannot but think, that the cheat would have soon been discovered, had there been any marks of a natural eruption of fire discernible upon the top of the mountain.

Those who give us an account of volcanos, or burning

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 14. and cv. 39.² Wisd. xviii. 3.³ Ps. lxxviii. 24, &c.⁴ Ps. xviii. 9, &c.⁵ Exod. iii. 12.⁶ Deut. viii. 2.⁷ Exod. xix. 13.

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mountains, do all agree in this, as the nature of the thing indeed seems to require it,¹ that on their tops they have always an open mouth, which the ancients called crater, through which they belch out their flames; and that after the fire is expended, it will still appear in the form of a monstrous gap, even unto the end of the world. And therefore, since all travellers, both ancient and modern, who have taken an accurate survey ^a of the Mount Sinai, could never discern the least appearance of any such gap, but, on the contrary, a continued surface, whereon there stands at present a little chapel of St Catherine; all this supposed contrivance of Moses, to make a natural volcano pass upon the people for the majestic presence of God upon the sacred mount, can be deemed no other than a crude, nonsensical fiction, wherein the lovers of infidelity are found to show their ignorance, as well as their malice, when they pretend to tax this relation of Moses, representing God's appearance in a flame of fire, in thunder, and lightning, &c., with any incongruity, or invent any groundless stories to account for it; since nothing can be more agreeable to the ancient divinity, or common notions of the heathen world,^b than that the apparition of their gods, whenever they descend

upon the earth, is usually attended with such like harbingers.

Sundry lawgivers, no doubt, have pretended to a familiarity with their respective deities, as well as Moses did with the God of Israel; but, besides the attestation of miracles in his favour, which none of them laid any claim to, we may venture to put his character upon this issue, namely, the excellency of his laws, above what Athens, or Lacedemon, or even Rome itself ever had to produce. For what a complete system of all religious and social virtues do the ten commandments, delivered on the Mount, contain, taking them, as we ought to do, in their positive as well as negative sense. In the second of these, indeed, there is a passage, of 'God's visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children,' which seems to bear a little hard upon his mercy and justice; but this is entirely owing to the mistake of our translation. For if the preposition *lamed*, and *hal*, which we there render *upon*, may,² according to the sense of some critics, be rendered *by*, or *in favour of*; then may the words now under consideration be properly translated, "God's punishing the wickedness of the father, *BY OR IN FAVOUR OF* the children." In the former of these senses,³ David's murder and adultery was justly punished by his favourite, but wicked son Absalom; and in the latter, the meaning will be, that God frequently inflicts remarkable judgments upon a wicked father, in order to deter his children, even to the third and fourth generations, from the like provocations.

What more just, as well as merciful constitution could there be devised, than to ordain cities of refuge for the innocent manslayer to fly to, thereby to avoid the rage and ungovernable fury of the dead man's relations, who, according to the custom of those times, were wont immediately to revenge their kindred's death, and thereby to gain time to prepare a plea in his own vindication; which, if it was found insufficient, and the man adjudged guilty of wilful murder, could not, according to the tenor of the same law, secure him from being dragged even ⁴ 'from the horns of the altar?'

'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' may seem to us, who live under a milder dispensation, a rigid and severe decree; but then we may observe, that it was no more than what was thought reasonable in other nations, and obtained a place among the ^c celebrated Roman laws of the twelve tables. It was in some measure necessary to restrain quarrelsome and unruly tempers from violence; and in case that death did not ensue, the law was always mitigated, and the *talio* commuted for a pecuniary mulct.

Several of the Jewish laws, which to us may seem frivolous, had a valid reason for their institution at first, if it were but to discriminate them from other nations, and to guard them against the common infection of idolatry. The wearing of linsey-woolsey was probably a proud, fantastical fashion of the heathens at that time, which the Jews were forbid to imitate. An ox and an ass were not to be coupled together in the same carriage,

¹ Nicholls' Conference, part 2. p. 279.

^a The mountains of Sinai and Horeb are promiscuously used by the sacred historian, by reason of their contiguity; and yet it is certain, that they are two different places. Sinai, which the Arabians at this day call *Tor*, or the *Mountain*, by way of eminence, or otherwise, *Gibel Mousa*, the *Mount of Moses*, stands in a kind of peninsula, formed by two arms of the Red Sea, one of which stretches out towards the north, and is called the Gulf of Kolsom; the other towards the east, and is called the Gulf of Elan, or the Elanitic Sea. Sinai is at least one-third part higher than Horeb, and of a much more difficult ascent; whose top terminates in an uneven and rugged space, capable of containing about sixty persons. Here, as we said, is built the little chapel of St Catherine, where it is thought that the body of this saint rested for 330 years, but was afterwards removed to the church which is at the foot of the mountain. Not far from this chapel issues out a fountain of good fresh water, which is looked upon as miraculous, because it is not conceivable how water can rise from the brow of so high a mountain. Horeb is to the west of Sinai, so that at sunrising the shadow of Sinai entirely covers Horeb. At the foot of this mount there is a fountain, which supplies water to the monastery of St Catherine, and about five or six paces from it, they show us a stone, about four or five feet high, and three broad, which, as they tell us, is the very same from whence Moses caused the waters to gush out. It is of a spotted grey colour, stands by itself, as it were, and where no other rock appears, and has twelve holes about a foot wide, from whence it is thought that the water came forth which the Israelites did drink.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Sinai*.

^b That fire and lightning should attend the presence of God, is a notion so frequent in the most ancient and oriental theology, that it might possibly give occasion to the worship of fire among the Chaldeans and Persians; to the Magi, among the Cappadocians called *Purethi*, which Strabo mentions, and to the vestal fires among the Greeks and Romans, as well as ancient Britons. "When you behold the formless sacred flame boundingly gleaming from earth's black abysses, then hark to the voice of Fire," say the Chaldaic oracles: and as for earthquakes, or shaking of mountains, this is no more than what all nations suppose have ever come to pass, upon God's manifesting himself at any time; for it is not only the Psalmist who tells us, that 'the earth shook, and the heaven dropped at the presence of God;' but in the description which Virgil gives us of the approach of Phœbus, he does in a manner translate the words of Moses,—"All things seemed on a sudden to quake, even the halls and laurel trees of the god; the whole mountain around was trembling, and the tripos groaned in the inner recesses of the temple."—See *Nicholls' Conference*, part 2.

^c Le Clerc's Commentary in locum.

² 2 Sam. xi. and some following chapters. ⁴ Exod. xxi. 14.

^c Aulus Gellius sets down this law of the twelve tables in this manner:—"Whoever breaketh a member of the body, unless he come to terms with the injured, let him suffer the same punishment."

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with this merciful intent, that one beast of greater strength might not strain a poor creature of less beyond its ability; and as sowing the ground with mixed seeds, in some men's opinion, is an effectual way to wear it out, it was therefore a practice prohibited, in commiseration, if I may so say, to our mother earth, as well as to set bounds to the husbandman's covetousness; though, as others imagine, these three injunctions, as they stand altogether in the same place, might perhaps have something emblematical in them, besides the precept, to make men have a greater abhorrence of all venereal mixtures, contrary to nature.

It is an injunction which God often inculcates to his people the Jews, ¹ 'After the doing of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, ye shall not do: and after the doing of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, ye shall not do: I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments;' which words seem to imply, not only that the idolatrous rites of the Gentiles were forbidden, but that those of God's appointment were made in direct opposition to them; and to this purpose we find ² the Roman historian representing the Jews as a people whose religious rites were so contrary to all the world besides, that what in others was most sacred, they accounted profane, and allowed as lawful what other nations were wont to abominate.

Now, if the Mosaic laws and ceremonies were given to the Jews, as barriers against idolatry, and formally repugnant to the customs of the heathens, we may appeal to any sober and considerate man, whether it be consistent with good sense, or congruous to truth and reason, that God should make laws exactly contrary to the Egyptians and other pagan nations, showing thereby, that he hated the very semblance of their rites, and yet at the same time take the rise of his institutions from the customs and practice of these pagans: nay, whether it gives us not such an idea of God, as reverence to his tremendous majesty will not suffer me to name, ³ to represent him making up all the vain, ludicrous, superstitious, impious, impure, idolatrous, magical, and diabolical customs, which had been first invented, and afterwards practised by the most barbarous nations, and out of these patching up a great part of the religion which he appointed his own people.

It cannot well otherwise be, but that, in matters of tradition, which have equally descended among all nations perhaps from Noah, a man of some learning and fancy may form a similitude between the religious rites and usages of one people with another; but it would really rack one's invention to find out the great agreement between the Jewish high priest and the Egyptian chief justice; since the Urim and Thummim ^a of the one was a piece of cloth, about a span square, beset with jewels, but the Alatheia, as they call it, of the other, was a golden medal, representing the figure of a bird; since

the robe of the one was made of scarlet, blue, and purple woollen cloth, only embroidered with wreaths of fine linen; but the garment of the other was made of linen only, because it was unlawful, ⁴ as Herodotus tells us, for the Egyptian magistrates to wear any thing else.

When the tables of the covenant were delivered to Moses, it seems no more than requisite, that some care should be taken of them: and if so, what could be a more apposite contrivance for that purpose than a chest? Moses, even by his enemies, is reputed a very cunning man; but they certainly mean it as a compliment, and not his due, if they think him not capable of so small a contrivance as this, without copying from the Egyptian cista, wherein the priests were wont to lock up their religious trinkets from the eyes of the vulgar; and as for the cherubim which overshadowed this ark, there certainly seems nothing analogous, but rather a particular opposition in these to the Egyptian idolatry. For, whereas their temples were generally filled with the images of monkeys, calves, and serpents, the representations of real animals, which, according to the natural deism of those times, they fancied to be parts and exhibitions of the Deity; Moses here ^b orders figures to be made, which had little or no resemblance of any thing in the world, and were expressive of the angelical nature only, which every one knew was subordinate to God's. So little congruity is there to be found between the Egyptian and Jewish laws and ceremonies, ^c less

¹ B. 2. c. 37.

^b What the particular figure of these cherubim was, it is hard to imagine at this distance. Grotius, indeed, and some others, have ingeniously conjectured, from the creatures seen by Ezekiel in his vision, c. i. 5. and x. 15., which he calls cherubim, that they had the face of a man, the wings of an eagle, the mane of a lion, the feet of an ox; and by this they will have the dispensations of divine providence, by the ministry of angels, symbolically represented; the lion exhibiting the severity of his justice; the eagle the celerity of his bounty; the man his goodness and mercy; the ox the slowness of his punishment; which comes, as the Greek proverb says, *βοσκία ποδι*, with an ox's foot.—*Nicholls' Conference*, part 2.

^c To this purpose, we are informed, that the brahmins, the Indian priests, wear bells about them like the Jewish high priest, were alone allowed to go into the inward part of the temple, and were like him obliged to marry virgins. Slaves there have their ears bored through; a perpetual light is kept in their temples, and cakes are set before their idols like shewbread. Nay, even the barbarous Tartars have many things not unlike the Jews; for they celebrate their new moons with songs and computations; they bewail their dead thirty days; they breed no hogs, and punish adultery with death. The like may be said of the people of the new world. Those of Jucatan are circumcised; those of Mexico keep a perpetual fire in the temples; and the Charibans celebrate the new moon with the sound of a trumpet, and abstain from swine's flesh; and therefore if a similitude in ceremonies is admitted as a valid argument, we may as well say that the Jews had their laws and religious ordinances from any of these, as that they had them from the Egyptians.—*Nicholls' Conference*, part 2.

Exod. xxviii. 33. 'Bells.' 'The bell seems to have been a sacred utensil of very ancient use in Asia. Golden bells formed a part of the ornaments of the pontifical robe of the Jewish high priest, with which he invested himself upon those grand and peculiar festivals, when he entered into the sanctuary. That robe was very magnificent, it was ordained to be of sky blue, and the border of it, at the bottom, was adorned with pomegranates and gold bells intermixed equally, and at equal distances. The use and intent of these bells is evident from these words:—'And it shall be upon Aaron to minister, and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.' The sound of the numerous

¹ Lev. xviii. 3, 4.² Tacitus, b. viii. c. 4.³ Edwards' Survey of Religion, vol. 1.

^a Exod. xxviii. 30. 'The Urim and the Thummim.' There was a remarkable imitation of this sacred ornament among the Egyptians; for we learn from Diodorus, (b. I. p. 68. ed. Rhod.) and from Elian, (*Far. Hist.* b. 14. c. 34.) that 'their chief priest, who was also their supreme judge in civil matters, wore about his neck, by a golden chain, an ornament of precious stones called truth, and that a cause was not opened till the supreme judge had put on this ornament.'—*Ed.*

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perhaps than might be discovered in several other nations, were we disposed to be prolix upon this subject. But let us return to their legislator.

That God, who is a pure spirit, eternal and omnipresent, has neither body nor parts, nor any affections thereunto belonging, is a proposition which our reason cannot but assent to; and yet when we set ourselves to explain, as we call it, the divine nature and attributes, we soon find ourselves under a necessity to borrow expressions from corporeal beings, the better to accommodate the loftiness of our subject to our reader's comprehension. For unless we could contrive a perfect set of new words, there is no speaking at all of the Deity without using our old ones in a tralatitious sense. Providence and mercy, for instance, are two known attributes of God; but if we respect their original use, and do not take them in a metaphorical meaning, they are altogether as absurd, when applied to God, as are his eye, or hand, or back parts, in their grossest sense. For how improper is it, literally speaking, to say, that God looks before him, like men when they act cautiously; or that he has that relenting of heart, or yearning of bowels, which merciful men feel at the sight of a miserable object? The truth is, languages were composed to enable men to maintain an intercourse with one another, and not to treat of the nature of that Being who dwelleth in light that is inaccessible. No form of words, be they ever so exquisite and well chosen, can reach those transcendent perfections that are unutterable; and therefore if we consider the low capacity of the people to whom the real poverty of the language, in which, and the vast sublimity of the subject, about which Moses wrote, we shall have less occasion to blame this metaphorical way of expressing the divine nature, which upon experiment he certainly found the best adapted, both to inform the understanding, and animate the affections of the people; while a number of dry, scholastic and abstracted terms, would have lain flat upon their minds, and served only to amuse and confound them.

Though therefore it must be acknowledged, that there is indeed an impropriety in language, when corporeal parts or actions are imputed to the Deity; yet since the narrowness of the Hebrew tongue would not furnish Moses with a sufficiency of abstract terms, and the dulness of the people, had he had a sufficiency, would not have permitted him to employ them, he was under a necessity of speaking according to the common usage, which was secured from giving the people any gross

bells that covered the hem of his garment, gave notice to the assembled people that the most awful ceremony of their religion had commenced. When arrayed in this garb, he bore into the sanctuary the vessel of incense; it was the signal to prostrate themselves before the Deity, and to commence those fervent ejaculations which were to ascend with the column of that incense to the throne of heaven." "One indispensable ceremony in the Indian Pooja is the ringing of a small bell by the officiating brahmin. The women of the idol, or dancing girls of the pagoda, have little golden bells fastened to their feet, the soft harmonious tinkling of which vibrates in unison with the exquisite melody of their voices." (*Maurice's Indian Antiquities*, vol. 5. p. 139.)—"The ancient kings of Persia, who, in fact, united in their own persons the regal and sacerdotal office, were accustomed to have the fringes of their robes adorned with pomegranates and golden bells. The Arabian courtisans, like the Indian women, have little golden bells fastened round their legs, neck, and elbows, to the sound of which they dance before the king.—ED.

ideas of God, because these phrases were always understood to be spoken with the feelings of a man; and therefore ¹ a Jewish rabbin acquaints us, that whenever they meet with an expression concerning the Deity, of this nature, they are used to interpose a *cabiacal*, or, if I may so speak.

Interpreters indeed are at some variance what we are to understand by the hand, face, and hinder parts of God. "The face of God," ² says an ingenious glossary, "signifies his essence, before the beginning of the world, and his hinder parts, his creation and providence in the government of the world;" but ³ Maimonides is of opinion, that these words may be interpreted according to the Targum, namely, that God made his majesty, that is, an exceedingly bright representation of himself, though not in its full glory, pass before Moses, in so much splendour as human nature could bear, which may be termed his back parts; but not in his unveiled brightness, which may signify his face, and, as the apostle speaks, is inaccessible; and ⁴ the hand, wherewith God covered him, while he passed by, may probably denote a cloud, which God cast about him, that he might not be struck dead by the inconceivable force and refulgency of those rays, which came from the face or full lustre of the divine Majesty.

In this sense the ancient Jews could not but understand their legislator, when they found him conveying sublime truths under outward and sensible representations. For, to clear him from all unjust imputation, we need but call to mind the glorious descriptions he gives, almost everywhere, but especially in Deuteronomy, of the Deity, and what pains he takes to deter them from making any representation of it, under any form whatever, by reminding them, that when God was pleased to display his glory upon Mount Sinai, at the delivering of the ten commandments, they saw no shape or likeness, but only heard his dreadful voice. ⁵ These so frequent inculcations may therefore be looked upon as so many intimations given them, in what sense they were to understand all those other expressions which he had been forced to accommodate to their capacity, that is, not in a literal, but in such a one, as was becoming the Deity, and suitable to the dignity of the subject.

Moses, no doubt, was a good governor, and zealously affected for the welfare of his people: but we injure his memory much, if we think him either so ignorant of a future state, or so negligent of his own salvation, as to wish himself damned, in his deprecation of God's judgments, for their salvation. The case is this,—The Israelites, in making a golden calf to worship, had highly offended God: God renounces all relation to them, and in his displeasure, threatens either to abandon or destroy them; whereupon Moses intercedes for their pardon, and among other motives, makes use of this: ⁶ 'Oh, my God, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sins; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written:' ⁷ not that God stands in need of a book wherein to register or record

¹ Quoted by Hottinger in his Dissert. Theolog. Philol.

² Elias Cretensis. ³ More Nevoch. part 1. c. 21.

⁴ Patrick's Commentary on Exod. xxxiii.

⁵ Universal History, b. 1. c. 7. ⁶ Exod. xxxii. 32.

⁷ Patrick's Commentary in locum.

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any of his purposes: "but the Scripture makes use of this form of expression, in allusion to the custom of numbering the people, and setting down their names in a scroll or register,"¹ as Moses did at their coming out of the land of Egypt. The same method was likewise observed at the return from the Babylonish captivity, as may be seen in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah; and those who were enrolled in this book, are said² 'to be written for life,' or 'among the living,' because every year they blotted out of this catalogue the names of those that were dead.

According to this construction of the phrase, and this is certainly the true construction, Moses can by no means be supposed to wish his own damnation, which would look like an enthusiastic rant, rather than divine inspiration; which would be impious for him to ask, and unrighteous for God to do; but only that, "rather than live to see the calamities which would befall the people in case God should either desert or destroy them, he desires to be discharged from life, that so he may escape the shock of so woeful, so terrible a spectacle."

In a former communion with God, wherein he threatens either to extirpate or disinherit his people, he promises Moses to³ 'make him a greater nation, and mightier than they;' but instead of that, Moses here desires to die with them; and, as a learned father of the church observes,⁴ "there is a great deal of pious art and policy in the petition, or proposal, as we may call it, which this great favourite and confident of God offers to him." He does not make it at all adventures, as one less acquainted with the divine mind might do; nor does he make it out of a slight and contempt of life, as one whose circumstances had brought him into despair might do. He knew God's goodness was infinite, as well as his justice; so that, in this alternative, 'either be thou pleased to slay me and them together, or to spare them and me together,' he was sensible he should engage God's mercy to pardon the criminals, whilst, on their behalf, he devoted himself at the same time to that justice which cannot be supposed capable of hurting the innocent."

One great commendation which we have frequently remarked of the author of the Pentateuch, above any other historian, is, that he consults truth more than plausibility in his narrations, and conceals no material point, even though it tends to the dishonour of the people whose actions he is recording. Josephus wrote the Jewish history of these times as well as Moses; and yet, when

¹ Num. i.

² Is. iv. 3.

³ Numb. xiv. 12.

⁴ Paulin. epist. 21.

a To this purpose the royal Psalmist, in relation to his own formation in the womb, bespeaks God, and says, 'Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book were all my members written,' as if God kept a catalogue of the children that were born, (Ps. cxxxix. 16.) And again, speaking of wicked men, he says, 'Let them be wiped out of the book of the living, and not be written among the righteous, (Ps. lxxix. 28.)' Nor is this form of speech to be found only among sacred writers, but even Plautus himself, having occasion, in one of his prologues, to take some notice of the divine Providence, makes use of these words:—"Those who by false witnesses wish to gain unjust pleas, those who in a suit deny by oath money which they owe, have their names inscribed in the rolls of Jupiter; he knoweth every day who here ask for what is unjust. The wicked who wrongfully entreat to gain their suit, who obtain false decisions from the judge, he hath marked in one tablet,—the good are enrolled in another."—*Le Clerc's Comment. ad Exod. c. 32.*

he comes to the proper period, he quite conceals their blind idolatry in worshipping the golden calf, whereas Moses relates it in all its aggravating circumstances, and seems to fix, in a manner, the whole odium of it upon his brother Aaron. And therefore, to inform ourselves how far Aaron was culpable in this particular, we must attend a little to the probable occasion of it.

While Moses was gone up into the Mount, he appointed Aaron and Hur to be the rulers of the people in his absence; but as his absence proved longer than was expected, the people began to be uneasy. They saw 'the glory of the Lord, which was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount,' and thereupon they concluded that Moses, who tarried so long, was certainly destroyed in the flames. They saw too that the 'pillar of the cloud,' which used to conduct them in their marches was gone, and in no likelihood of returning again; and hereupon having lost their guide, and the visible token of God's presence among them, they came unto Aaron, and in a tumultuous manner, demanded of him to make them another representation of the divine presence, in the room of what was departed from them. ⁵ Up, say they, and make us gods, or (as the Hebrew text will bear ⁶), 'make us a god which shall go before us.' ⁶ Not that they were so stupid as to imagine, that the true God could be made by any man, or that any image could be a means of conducting them, either forward into Canaan, or back again into Egypt; but what they wanted, was some outward object to supply the want of the cloud, by being a type and symbol of the Deity, and where they might depose the homage which they intended to pay to the supreme God; for so some of the Jewish doctors have expounded the text of Moses: ⁷ 'They desired a sensible object of divine worship to be set before them, not with an intention to deny God, who brought them out of Egypt, but that something, in the place of God, might stand before them, when they declared his wonderful works.'

The commandment against making images had so lately, in so terrible a manner, been enjoined by God himself, that though some reason may be given why the children of Israel were so forward to make the demand, yet none can be imagined, why Aaron should comply with it, without making any remonstrance; and yet we meet with no refusal recorded by Moses. All that we have in extenuation of Aaron's fault, is from the suggestion of the rabbins, who pretend that his compliance proceeded from his fear; that the people had murdered Hur the other deputy, for opposing their desire;

⁵ Exod. xxxii. 1.

⁶ Saurin's Dissertations.

⁷ R. Jehudah, in b. Cozzi, part 1. sect. 97.

b It has been argued by some learned men, that the Israelites intended here to fall entirely into the Egyptian religion, and that the Deity they made the calf to, was some god of the Egyptians: but to me this seems not to be the fact. In this calf the Israelites evidently designed to worship the God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and accordingly their feast was proclaimed, not to any Egyptian deity, but to the Lord, to Jehovah, their own God, (Exod. xxxii. 4.) So that their idolatry consisted not in really worshipping a false deity, but in making an image of the true and living God, which the second commandment expressly did forbid.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. b. 11.

c What authority they had for these assertions, I cannot say; but if what they offer be true, this does not at all prove Aaron to be innocent; because no obstinacy of the people could have forced him without his own fault, and he should have been will-

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that to discourage them from pursuing their design, Aaron demanded all their golden ear-rings, in hopes that they would not insist upon having an idol which would cost them so dear; but that when nothing would avail, he took their gold, and cast it into the fire, and, contrary to his intention, by some magical or diabolical art, there immediately came out a calf, which much increased the people's superstition. But this, and abundance more of the like nature, seem to be conceits invented for the excuse of Aaron, who is plainly enough said to have ¹ 'made this molten calf,' which he could not have done, without designing it, and running the gold into a mould of that figure.

The word which we here render *calf*, ² does, in other places of Scripture, signify an ox: and as an ox's head was, in some countries, an emblem of strength, and the horns a common sign of kingly power; so ³ a learned prelate, out of a design to apologize for Aaron, is willing to insinuate, that his design in making an ox the symbol of the divine presence, was to remind the Israelites of the power of God, and to express the great tokens which they had seen of it, in their wonderful deliverance. But how ingenious soever this hypothesis may be, it wants this foundation for its support, that this hieroglyphic of the divine power was not in use in the time of Moses; for if it was, we cannot imagine why Aaron, when called to an account by his brother, should forget to plead it in excuse for himself; or why God should be so highly incensed against him, had his design been only to exhibit a symbol of the divine power and authority to a people of too gross sentiments, without such a visible representation, ever to comprehend it.

Another learned prelate of our own, ⁴ equally inclined to excuse this action of Aaron, supposes that he took his pattern from part of what he saw on the holy mount, when the Shechinah of God came down upon it, attended with angels, some of which were cherubim, or angels appearing in the form of oxen: but this opinion is inconsistent with the great care which was taken on Mount Sinai, not to furnish any pretext for idolatry, and the caution which Moses gives the people to that purpose. ⁵ 'Take ye therefore good heed to yourselves, for ye saw no manner of similitude, on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire, lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of any male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth; the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air; the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground; the likeness of any fish,' &c. where the Holy Spirit enumerates animals of all kinds, and positively assures us, that none of their forms or figures appeared upon the mount.

The most common therefore, and indeed the most probable opinion is, that Aaron made choice of the

figure of an ox or calf, in compliance to the prejudice of the people, and because that creature was worshipped in Egypt. That the Israelites were sorely infected with the idolatry of the Egyptians, we have many plain proofs ⁶ from Scripture to convince us, that all sorts of animals were worshipped by the Egyptians, and among the terrestrial, more especially the ox, is what ⁷ the several authors, who have treated of the affairs of Egypt, do abundantly testify; and that the idolatry of animals, and more especially of the ox, was established in Egypt during the sojourning of the Israelites in that land, is more than probable from these words of Moses to Pharaoh; ⁸ 'If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes;' that is, if we sacrifice to our God, oxen, sheep, and goats, which the Egyptians worship and adore, and consequently make an abomination to the Lord, 'will they not stone us?' So that it seems most rational to suppose, that this image was made in compliance to the giddy humour of the people, who, upon the supposed death of Moses, were probably all for turning back again, and in imitation of the Egyptians, who worshipped their idol Apis, or Serapis, not only in a living ox, but in an image made after the similitude of an ox, bethought themselves of the like representation of a deity to go before them: the only question is, whether the worship of the Egyptian Apis was prior to the formation of this golden calf? which happens to be a point wherein ⁹ the learned are not so well agreed.

Thus we have endeavoured to give a full answer to several objections which have been raised against the sacred historian, during the period which is at present under consideration: and for a further confirmation hereof, we might now produce some foreign testimonies and traditions concerning the truth and veracity of his narrations. That the miraculous pillar, for instance, which conducted the Israelites in the wilderness, very probably gave rise to the ancient fables, ¹⁰ how Hercules and Bacchus, (who under different shapes, are both supposed to denote Moses,) set up pillars in testimony of their travels and expeditions; that the Israelites' safe passage over the Red Sea, upon its being divided by the rod of Moses, and the tradition which the people of Memphis have thereupon, are related by Antipanus, as he is quoted ¹¹ by Eusebius; that upon the return and conflux of the waters, the armies which pursued them were swallowed up in the deep, is mentioned ¹² by Diodorus, as a current story among the people inhabiting the western coast of the Red Sea; that on this coast there are several lakes and springs of a salt and brackish taste, in the manner that Moses has recorded, and no such thing found on the other side of the sea, is testified, ¹³ by Orosius, as well as several ancient geographers, that God's sending down manna for bread to the Israelites, and great plenty of quails for meat, is mentioned by Antipanus, as he is cited again ¹⁴ by Eusebius; that, from Moses' striking the rock with his rod, the fable of

¹ Exod. xxxii. 35.

² Ps. cvi. 20.

³ Patrick in his Commentary in locum.

⁴ Tension on Idolatry, c. 6.

⁵ Deut. iv. 15, &c.

ing, and adventured to die, rather than, by a timorous compliance, have made himself partaker of their sins. 'Neither the instigation of citizens shouting for crime, nor the stern look of the oppressive tyrant, can move from his rooted determination, the man upright and resolute in his purpose,' &c.—*Hor. Carm.* b. 3. ad 3.

⁶ See Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 7, 8. and xxij. 3, 8.

⁷ See Strabo, b. 17. de Egyptiacis templis, Herod. b. 2. Diod. b. 1. et Plutar. de Iside et Osiride.

⁸ Exod. viii. 26.

⁹ See Ger. Vos. de Idolat. c. 9. Bochart Hieros. part 1. b. 2. and Tension on Idolatry.

¹⁰ Huetius Quæst. Ainet. b. 1.

¹¹ Præp. Evan. b. 9.

¹² Præp. Evan. b. 3. p. 174.

¹³ Huetius Quæst. Ainet. b. 2.

¹⁴ Præp. Evan. b. 9. c. 27.

A. M. 2513. A. C. 1491; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3763. A. C. 1648. EXOD. CH. xlii—xxxiv. 24.

Bacchus' doing the same with his Thyrsus, in order to extract water for the relief of the virgin Aura, had its original: and, to name no more, that from Moses' receiving the law on Mount Sinai, most of the lawgivers of other nations took the hint to borrow their institutions from some god or goddess or other; Minos, from Jupiter; Lycurgus, from Apollo; Zeleucus, from Minerva; Numa, from Egeria, &c.; so well was the world persuaded of the truth and authority of the Jewish legislator, when they seemed to agree in this,—That even a distant imitation of him was enough to give sanction to their several fictions.

CHAP. III.—Of the Israelites passing the Red Sea.

THE passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea is what we have reserved for the subject of our dissertation, because it is one of the most remarkable events in this period, if not in the whole Jewish history; and yet has had the misfortune to meet with more suggestions against its miraculousness, than any other that we find upon record.

What has contributed to this perverseness, may not unlikely be the fond conceits which some ancient doctors, both of the Jewish and Christian church, have been pleased to affix to this miracle, namely, that God divided the sea into twelve passages, according to the twelve tribes; that to facilitate their passage, he pulled up the weeds, removed huge stones, levelled the rugged places, and made the sand at the bottom as hard as a rock; that the waters, upon being divided, were immediately congealed, and stood in array, like a wall of glass; and that some fragments of the Egyptian chariot-wheels may even to this day be seen at the bottom, as far as the sight can reach. For it is not improbable, that in prejudice to these extravagant fancies, others have exercised all their wit and learning to depreciate the miracle by asserting,—That there was no more in it, even as Josephus himself seems to insinuate, than in Alexander's passing the sea of Pamphylia; ¹ that the Red Sea, especially in the extreme part of it, where the Israelites passed, is not above two or three miles over, and very often dry, by reason of the great reflux of the tide; and that Moses, who perfectly understood the country, and had made his observations upon the flux and reflux of the sea, led down his men at the time of ebb, when, being favoured by a strong wind blowing from the shore, he had the good luck to get safe to the other side; while Pharaoh and his army, hoping to do the same, but mistaken in their computation, had the misfortune to be lost. And therefore, to give this matter a fair hearing, we shall first endeavour to establish the truth of the miracle, and then examine into the pretensions of those who are willing either to ascribe it to natural causes, or to compare it with other events, as they suppose, of the like nature.

Without entering far into Moses' character, we will suppose him at present a man of common sense, and who

had some honour and modesty in him; and yet if he had, we can hardly conceive how he durst have recorded so palpable an untruth, supposing this passage to have nothing miraculous in it, when there was such a multitude of living witnesses to confront him; or ² what possible artifice he could use to persuade above two millions of persons that God, by his hand, had wrought a stupendous miracle, when they knew as well as he that there was no such thing transacted. Among such a contumacious and mutinous set of people, Moses must necessarily have made himself ridiculous, and his authority despicable, had he ever once attempted to foist such a fable upon them. And therefore, when we find other sacred writers bearing testimony to what he relates, and relating the matter in the like lofty expressions; when we find the royal Psalmist assuring us, that ³ 'God dividing the sea, made the waters to stand up on an heap, and caused the Israelites to pass through;' when we find the prophet Isaiah demanding, ⁴ 'where is he, that brought them up out of the sea, that led them by the right hand of Moses, by his glorious arm dividing the water before him, to make him an everlasting name?' when we find the prophet Habakkuk declaring upon this occasion, that ⁵ 'the Lord made himself a road to drive his chariot and horses cross the sea, across the mud of the great waters;' and when we find the author of the book of Wisdom thus recording the story; ⁶ 'Where water stood before, dry land appeared; out of the Red Sea a way without impediment, and out of the violent stream a green field, where-through all the people went, that were defended by thy hand, seeing thy marvellous strange wonders; for they went at large like horses, and leaped like lambs, praising thee, O Lord, who hadst delivered them:' when we find these, I say, and several more writers of great authority, asserting the wonderfulness of this passage, unless we can suppose that they were all combined to impose upon us, we cannot but assent to the truth of the fact itself, how poetical soever we may think the words of that sacred hymn to be wherein Moses endeavours to display it: ⁷ 'By the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the flood stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.'

In an event so wonderful and so unaccountable to human reason, it cannot be expected but that traditions should differ, and accounts be various: but certainly it is no small confirmation of the testimony which the sacred writers give us of it that we find Antipanus, in his history of the Jews, as he is quoted by ⁸ Eusebius, and ⁹ Clemens of Alexandria, giving us this narration of the matter. 'The people of Memphis tell us, that Moses, who was acquainted with all the country, knowing the time when the tide would be out, carried over all his army at low water: but those of Heliopolis say otherwise, namely, that the king, following the Jews going away with what they had borrowed of the Egyptians, carried with him a great army; but that Moses, by an order from heaven, struck the sea with a rod, whereupon the waters immediately separated, and he led over his

¹ Calmet's Dissertation on the Passage of the Red Sea.

² Ps. lxxviii. 13.

⁴ Is. lxiii. 12.

⁵ Hab. iii. 15.

⁶ Wisd. xix. 7, &c.

⁷ Exod. xv. 8.

⁸ Prep. Evan. b. 9. c. 27.

⁹ Strom. b. I.

¹ See Le Clerc's Dissertation concerning the Passage of the Red Sea.

A. M. 2513. A. C. 1491; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3763. A. C. 1648. EXOD. CH. xiii—xxxiv. 24.

forces in a dry track; but that the Egyptians, attempting the same passage, were dazzled by lightning, and as the sea returned upon the paths they were in, were all destroyed either by fire or water." So that if the joint testimony both of friends and foes can have any weight with us, we cannot but believe that this passage of the Israelites, as it is recorded by Moses, was certainly matter of fact, and a fact so very wonderful and miraculous, that nothing in history can stand in competition with it.

The passage of Alexander the Great over the sea of Pamphylia bears no manner of resemblance to this of the Israelites. Alexander, as ¹ Arian, ^a and others relate it, was to march from Phaselis, a seaport, to Perga, an inland city of Pamphylia. The country near Phaselis, upon the shore of the Pamphylian sea, was mountainous and rocky; so that he could not find a passage for his army, without either taking a great compass round the mountains, or attempting to go over the strand between the rocks and the sea. The historian remarks, that there is no passing along this place unless when the wind blows from the north; and therefore Alexander, when he came to Phaselis, perceiving that the wind blew from this quarter, laid hold of the opportunity, and having sent some of his army over the mountains, went himself with the rest along the shore. But now what miracle was there in all this, unless we call the wind's blowing opportunely for Alexander's purpose a miracle? It is certain that, according to Plutarch's account of the thing, Alexander himself thought that there was nothing extraordinary in it; and therefore we may justly wonder ^b at Josephus' comparing this passage with that of the

Israelites, when there is so manifest a disparity between them: The Israelites crossed over a sea, where no historian makes mention of any persons, but they, that ever found a passage; whereas Alexander only marched upon the shore of the sea of Pamphylia, where the several historians who most magnify the divine providence in protecting him, do all freely allow, that any one may at any time go, when the tide retreats, and the same wind blows that favoured him.

What the breadth of the Red Sea may be at the place where the Israelites passed over, is not so easy a matter to determine, ^c because both geographers and travellers mightily differ in their computations. But if, according to some of the lowest accounts, we suppose it to be much about two leagues, most writers agree, that the sea in this place is very boisterous and tempestuous, which is hardly consistent with a shallowness, much less a total desertion of water, upon any hasty reflux. The wind, it must be owned, if it blew from a right quarter, might both forward the ebb, and retard the flux; but the wind, which blew at this time, we are told, was an east wind, whereas it must have been a west, or north-west wind, to have driven the water from the land's end into the main body of the sea, as any one who looks into a map may easily perceive. But now the east wind blows cross the sea, and the effect of it must be, to drive the waters partly up to the extremity of the bay, and partly down to the ocean, which probably is the meaning, if we must allow an hyperbole in the expression, of the waters 'being a wall to the Israelites on their right hand, and on their left,' because they so defended them on both sides, that the Egyptians could no way come at them, but by pursuing them in the same path which they took.

Why they ventured to pursue the Israelites, the sacred historian seems plainly to intimate, when he tells us, ³ that 'the angel of the Lord, which went before the camp, removed, and went behind them: it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and was a cloud and darkness to the one, but gave light by night to the other:' so that the true reason why the Egyptians went in after the Israelites into the midst of the sea, was, that they knew not where they were. They imagined, perhaps, that they were still upon the land, or at least upon the shore, whence the sea had retired; the darkness of the night, and the preternatural darkness of the cloud, not suffering them to see the mountains of water on each side. But ⁴ 'when the Lord looked on the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire,' that is, when he turned the bright side of the cloud upon them, to let them see the danger they were in, and at the same time, as Josephus adds, poured out a storm of thunder and lightning, and hailstones upon them from the cloud, ⁵

¹ Exped. Alex. b. 1; and Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. b. 9.

² In Alexand. p. 674.

^a Strabo relates the matter thus. "About Phaselis there are straits towards the sea, through which Alexander passed his army. There is also a mountain called Climax, which lies to the Pamphylian sea, leaving a strait passage to the shore, which is quite bare in good weather, but when the waves arise, it is for the most part covered with them. Now, the road by the mountain is about, and difficult; and therefore, in calm weather, they go by the shore. But Alexander coming hither in stormy weather, and trusting to his fortune, would go over before the waves were abated, which made his soldiers go all day up to the navel in water." (b. 14.) And much to the same purpose is the account which Plutarch gives us. "The march through Pamphylia," says he, "has been the subject to many historians of mighty wonder, and fine declamation, as if the sea, by order of the gods, gave place to Alexander, which almost always is rough there, and does very rarely open a smooth passage under those broken rocks. But Alexander himself, in his epistles, speaks of no miracle, but only says, that he passed by Climax, as he came from Phaselis." (*Vita Alex.*) Now, by the joint authority of these two excellent historians, this passage is no more than an ordinary thing; but the Mosaic transit must still remain a miracle, until we find as good historians to vouch for a passage over the Red Sea.—*Nicholls' Conference*, part 2.

^b The words of Josephus are these. "I have been more particular in these relations, because I find them in holy writ; and let no man think this story incredible of the sea's dividing to save the Hebrews, for we find it in ancient records, that this hath been seen before, whether by God's extraordinary will, or by the course of nature, it is indifferent. The same thing happened one time to the Macedonians, under the command of Alexander, when, for want of another passage, the Pamphylian sea divided to make them way, God's providence making use of Alexander at that time as his instrument for destroying the Persian empire." (b. 2. c. 16.) But it is evident that Josephus was ignorant of the account of the above cited historians, otherwise he would have said nothing of the Pamphylian sea's dividing

³ Exod. xiv. 19, 20. ⁴ Exod. xiv. 19. ⁵ Exod. xiv. 25. for the passage of the Macedonian army, when the matter of fact was no such thing.

^c One affirms that the sea is six leagues wide at this place; another makes it but fifteen furlongs; one says it is narrow, and long like a river, and another allows it to be the breadth of one league. Thevenot makes it eight or nine miles in breadth, but Andricomius will have it to be no more than six. The transit most probably took place at the embouchure of the valley of Bedea, or about twenty miles below Suez, at which point, according to Bruce, the gulf is three leagues over, with fourteen fathoms of water in the channel.

A. M. 2513. A. C. 1491; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3763. A. C. 1648. EXOD. CH. xlii.—xxxiv. 24.

'Let us flee,' cried they, 'from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them.'

It is not to be questioned, but that Moses was a person of excellent judgment: by his being so long a general of an army, he could not but know the proper advantages that might be made in marches and retreats; and yet he seems to give no great specimen of his skill, by declining the mountains, which possibly were inaccessible to the chariots and horsemen, and marching his men along the sea coasts, where Pharaoh's army might make after him, as we find they did, had not God commanded him to take this route, and foretold him the event. Upon the approach of the Egyptian army, Moses has sufficiently described the consternation which the Israelites were in; and can any one suppose, that such a situation of things was matter of their own choice, or that their leader would of his own head have brought them into a place where there was no possibility of escaping the fury of their enemies, without crossing the sea? ¹ Had Pharaoh laid hold of this advantage, and nothing but a miraculous interposition could have hindered him, how could Moses, with all his sweet words, and address, have prevailed with his people to run into the sea? Or, supposing that he trusted to the tide at ebb, how could he know for certainty, that this ebb would begin precisely at the close of the day, and that the Egyptians would allow him time to decamp, without their guards giving them intelligence, or their forces pursuing him in his retreat; which had they done, to what dismal extremities must he and his people have been reduced? If we suppose that this was an hasty resolution, which the difficulties he found himself in compelled him to take; yet we shall still be at a loss to know, how he could possibly answer for the event, or with what face he could promise the people, that ² 'the Lord would fight for them; that they should stand still and see the salvation which he would show them;' and that the Egyptians, who had given them so much molestation, 'they should see them again no more for ever?'

He might not be ignorant perhaps of the course of the tide, and might easily discern the favourable disposition of the wind; but was there never a man in all the great army which Pharaoh brought with him, of equal observation and skill? It is incongruous to think, that the Egyptians, who excelled at that time all other nations in their knowledge and observation of celestial bodies, should be ignorant of the fluxes and refluxes of the sea, in their own country, in their own coast, and in their own most trading and frequented ports and havens, and if they were not ignorant of the time of the reflux, it is hardly to be imagined, that any eagerness of pursuit would have made them venture into the gulf, when they could not but be sensible, that in case they miscomputed, the returning waves would devour, and swallow them up.

But the truth is, their taking the tide at the ebb would serve the purposes, neither of the Israelites escaping, nor the Egyptians pursuing them. That it badly answered the design of the Egyptians is plain from the event; and that the Israelites could promise themselves no

security by it, is evident from the nature of its motion.

³ Every one knows, that in the flux of the sea, its waters come on gradually, and for the space of six hours, swell higher and higher upon the banks; and then continuing in this state for about a quarter of an hour, they sink by degrees for six hours more, and retreating from the shores, which is called the reflux, they remain at their lowest ebb, as long as they had done at their highest flux, and then begin to change their course, and creep in towards the shore again; and in this revolution they always go on, with the variation only of three quarters of an hour, and some minutes, in each tide.

That the Red Sea does ebb and flow like other seas that have communication with the main ocean, we readily grant; but then we are told by those who have made the exactest observations, that the greatest distance that it falls from the place of high water, is not above three hundred yards, and that these three hundred yards, which the sea leaves uncovered at the time of low water, cannot continue so above half an hour at most; because, during the first six hours, the sea does only retire by degrees, and in less than half an hour, it begins to flow again towards the shore; so that upon a moderate computation, the most that can be allowed, both of time and space of passable ground, is but about two hundred yards, during six hours, and an hundred and fifty during eight. But now it is plain, that a multitude of above two millions of men, women, and children, encumbered with great quantities of cattle and household stuff, could never be able to cross, even though we suppose it to be that arm or point of the sea, which is not far distant from the port of Suez, and allow them withal a double portion of time, and a double space of ground to perform it in; whereas the general tradition is, that the place where the Israelites entered the Red Sea on the Egyptian side, is two or three leagues below this northern point, at a place called Kolsum; and the place where they came out of it, on the Arabian side, is at present called ⁴ Corondal, where the sea is about eight or nine miles in breadth.

From the breadth of the sea, and the Israelites coming out of it at a place ⁵ of the same name with that of their entrance, some have imagined, that they did not cross from shore to shore, but only took a short compass along the strand that was left dry at low water, and so came out a little farther in the bay, which the Egyptians attempting to do, by the unexpected return of the tide, were all lost. Now, besides the incongruity, as we said before, of supposing the Israelites better judges of the tide than the Egyptians were, we do not find, that the Scriptures any where determine the length of time which the former employed in passing this sea. 'In the morning watch,' which continued from two to six in the morning, it is said indeed, that ⁶ 'the Lord troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels;' but how long the Israelites might have entered the channel, before the Egyptians met with this obstruction, is nowhere said; so that the computation of time will depend upon the supposed breadth of the sea.

Supposing then, as we said before, that the breadth of

¹ Calmet's Dissertation on the Passage of the Red Sea.

² Exod. xiv. 13, 14.

³ Calmet's Dissert. ibid. ⁴ Thevenot's Voyage de Levant.

⁵ Compare Exod. xlii. 20. with Num. xxxvii. 6, 8.

⁶ Exod. xiv. 21, 35.

A. M. 2514. A. C. 1490; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3764. A. C. 1647. EXOD xxxiv. 28—NUM. xviii.

the sea, was about eight miles in all, we cannot but imagine, that a people, 'full of strength and vigour,' as ¹ the Psalmist represents them, pursued by so dreadful and enraged an enemy, would make the best of their way; nor can we see any absurdity, in an event so abounding with miracles, to suppose one more. ² Now, if God interposed his power to disable the chariots of Pharaoh, lest the return of the waters should excite the Egyptians' fears, and their fears, by improving their diligence, save them from destruction, why might not God interpose the same power, if there was occasion, to quicken and accelerate the Israelites, and make them perform their passage in due time? Nay, if we will allow his own words to be a good comment upon his actions, we cannot but suppose that he did so, when we find him, after all was over, recounting his kindness to them thus: ³ 'Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I did bear you on eagle's wings,' where the expression certainly denotes some extraordinary assistance given them in their passage, 'and brought you unto myself.' It cannot be denied, indeed, but that some ambiguity may arise as to the place where the Israelites came on shore, since they were at Etham but two days before, and now landed in a wilderness of the same name; yet if we will but suppose that there were two Ethams, the one a town where they encamped on the Egyptian side, and the other, on the Arabian side, a wilderness; or if we will needs have the wilderness of Etham denominated from the town, supposing that the town was situated near the upper part of the Red Sea, and gave denomination to a great desert, which surrounded the head of the bay, and reached down a considerable space on both sides of it, we may easily perceive that though the Israelites, in the evening, marched from the wilderness of Etham cross the gulf, yet, upon their landing in the morning, they would but be in another part of the wilderness of Etham still. Upon the whole, therefore, it appears, that the Israelites coasting it along the Egyptian shore, in a kind of semi-circle, is both a needless and groundless supposition. For had this been all, upon the return of the tide the drowned Egyptians must have been brought back upon their own shore; whereas the scripture account of this matter is, that, as soon as ⁴ 'Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, it returned to its strength, and the waters returned, and covered the Egyptians who fled against them;' which certainly can denote no less, than that the mountains of waters were first dissolved where they were first congealed, that is, on the Egyptian side, and that there beginning to reunite, in order to stop the Egyptians' return, they came rushing upon them in vast inundations, and of course swept them away to the contrary, that is, the Arabian shore, where all the host of Israel was safely arrived.

Thus we have endeavoured to evince the reality of this miraculous event, and to examine the pretences of those who have either compared it with others recorded in profane story, or ascribed it to natural causes, or espied some seeming contradictions in it; and have nothing now more to do, but, with the grateful Psalmist, to acknowledge upon this occasion, ⁵ 'Thy way, O Lord, is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy

footsteps are not known. Thou art a God that doest wonders, and hast declared thy power among the people.'

CHAP. VI.—*On the passage of the Red Sea, and journeyings of the Israelites.*

SUPPLEMENTAL.

THE following very satisfactory article on the geography of the Israelites' route from Egypt to Canaan, is taken from Mansford's Scripture Gazetteer, the best recent work on Scripture geography that we have met with.

"The Almighty having punished the Egyptians for their blindness and obduracy by the plagues which they had suffered, and prepared his people, by their miraculous preservation during these scenes of terror, to place an unlimited confidence in their leader, moved the hardened mind of Pharaoh that he should order their departure in the middle of the night. 'And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants; and he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel, and go, serve the Lord as ye have said. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste: for they said, We be all dead men. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth.'⁶ Rameses was a city built by the Israelites in the land of Goshen, a little to the south of the Babylon of the Persians, the Grecian Letopolis, and about six or eight miles above the modern Cairo. Here they assembled, and from hence they took their departure; making their first march towards the east, or to Succoth, which is estimated to have been about thirty miles.

In this first part of their route, they were obliged to incline a little to the north, to round the mountain called the mountain of Arabia, which shuts in the valley of Egypt on the eastern side through its whole length, and which sinks into the plain towards the north at a line nearly parallel with the point of the Delta. Succoth implies nothing more than a place of pens or booths; and was probably either a halting-station in the route towards the Desert, or an enclosure for cattle during the inundation of the Nile. Their stay here appears to have been short. 'And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, on the edge of the Wilderness.' This was a long march of not less than sixty miles, according to the present computed distance; which, as no intervening place of halt is mentioned, must be considered as having been performed at once. But it must be remembered, that they were flying from a treacherous and inexorable enemy, whose pursuit they had reason to fear; and that they were besides experiencing the particular protection and support of that power which could as easily prevent their being wearied in a forced march of sixty miles, as he could save their shoes from being worn out, or find them a passage through the Red Sea. But the real distance was probably not then so much by twelve or fifteen miles as at the

¹ Ps. cv. 37.² Saurin's Dissert.³ Exod. xix. 4.⁴ Exod. xiv. 27, 28.⁵ Ps. lxxvii. 14, 19.⁶ Exod. xii.

A. M. 2514. A. C. 1490; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3764. A. C. 1647. EXOD. xxxiv. 24—NUM. xviii.

present day; as, according to the concurrent reports of travellers, there are undoubted marks of the gulf having extended several miles in a north-west, or N.N.W. direction beyond its present limits. This was precisely in the route of the Israelites, and was just so much taken from their day's march, reckoning to where Suez now stands; the traveller having now to bend considerably to the south-east, to arrive at that place, after rounding the Arabian mountain, or Djibel Atakka.

Etham is said to have been in, or upon, the edge of the wilderness. But it must not be imagined from hence that the wilderness began here. It is probable that the whole way from Succoth to this place was, as it is at this day, the same kind of parched and stony desert; but here, at the northern extremity of the Red Sea, it first assumed the name of Etham; which it bore for some distance to the north, east and south. Arrived at this place, the Israelites may be said to have been safe from all fear of the Egyptians, as another such a march as that from Succoth would carry them into the heart of a desert, where no army, without a miracle, could subsist. They were now on the high road to Canaan, with nothing to interrupt their progress: but in the midst of their hopes and rejoicings, an order comes to *turn*. This must have been a grievous disappointment: such an order, indeed, as no body of people in their senses, unless convinced of the Divine appointment and supernatural power of their leader, would ever have complied with. Just congratulating one another on their escape, they were directed to return in the very face of their enemy; and not only so, but to place themselves in a situation where they would be rendered incapable either of resistance or of flight. 'And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn, and encamp before Pi-hahiroth (or Phi-Hiroth), between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-Zephon; before it shall ye encamp by the sea.' The situation into which their obedience to this decree brought them, was a narrow defile, shut in by the mountains on the west, the sea on the east, and closed up on the south by a small bay or inlet of the latter: they were, indeed, "entangled in the land." Some of them, at least, must have been acquainted with the position they were about to occupy; but they entered, and gave vent to no murmur until they saw themselves all at once in the power of their enemy, who stood before them in the only opening by which, without a miracle, it was possible to escape. At this sight their faith and courage failed; 'and they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?' But the God who brought them there, was about to show his power by again interposing in their behalf. 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.' While the Egyptians, hardened as usual, and blind to the power of

the God of Israel, ventured to pursue, and were quickly overwhelmed in the water.

The precise site of this miracle has much engaged the attention of travellers and of the learned; who have differed more or less according to their respective views and prejudices. The first step in our inquiry for the situation of this place, must obviously be to fix that of the previous encampment. Before taking up this encampment, it will be recollected that the last position was at Etham, at the bottom of the gulf, which will be found in the map twelve miles north-west of its present termination at Suez; and which carries up that position to meet the road towards Caanan, and makes the subsequent 'turn' completely retrograde. This turn was to bring them by another day's march beside Pi-hahiroth, before Migdol, and over against Baal-Zephon. The Hebrew word *Pi* answers to the modern *Fium* of the Arabic, and implies an opening in the mountains. Pi-hahiroth, then, means an opening or cleft in the mountain leading into the valley of that name. If, then, such an opening at a proper distance from Etham can be found, the situation of Pi-hahiroth may be considered as fixed. Just such an opening, and no other, presents itself about twenty miles to the south of Suez, and thirty-two or thirty-five from the ancient position of Etham: which answers exactly to the required distance; and being the only one of the kind, leaves little doubt of its identity. Into this opening, which runs quite through the mountains to the valley of Egypt, an inlet of the Red Sea, now dry, extended itself; closing up all possibility of advance in that direction. The situation of Migdol and Baal-Zephon are not so clear; but from the precision with which that of Pi-hahiroth can be fixed, their exact recognition is not so material. Migdol implies a fortress; and nothing can be more likely than that the Egyptians should station a garrison at this important entrance into their country. Such might be inferred from strong probability; but there are, in fact, distinct historical traces of such a fortress in this situation. Mr Bryant, in his learned Dissertation on the Egyptian Plagues, cites a passage from Harduin's Notes on Pliny to the following purpose: "At this present time, in the cosmography which was made during the consulships of Julius Cæsar and Mark Antony, I find it written, that a part of the river Nile flows into the Red Sea, near the city Ovila and the Camp of Mousseus (*Monsei*):" the last word is evidently a misprint for *Mousei*. This document is invaluable from the traditional evidence it bears of the situation of the miracle being at this place: and the "Camp of Moses" must imply either the place of encampment of the Israelites, or the fortress which always existed at the embouchure of the valley, to which the natives might probably enough have given the name of Moses. Mr Bryant thinks the former: but here, too, on the same spot, were the *Φρουριον*, or Præsidium Clysmatis of Ptolemy, and the *Castrum Clysmatis* of Hierocles; both undoubtedly referring to the same fortress, or Migdol of the Egyptians.

Of Baal-Zephon we have no traces. The name implies the *god of the watch-tower*; and it was probably a beacon for mariners on the opposite coast, over against which the camp was to be pitched. The position of this camp is now determined. It was in front of Pi-hahiroth, or the gorge in the mountains opening into the valley of

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Hiroth; which extended through the mountains all the way to the valley of the Nile. It was also in front of Migdol, which we have the strongest reasons to believe was a fortress at the opening of the valley, at the northern angle of the mountains, to defend it on the side of the Arabian Desert, for from the south there was no approach.

Something remains yet to be said in illustration of the topography of this interesting spot. Thus far the Israelites had advanced without meeting with any obstacle; but how came they to be stopped at this precise spot, without the possibility of proceeding another mile? How came they just here to be so "entangled in the land" that, without a miracle, they must have fallen an immediate prey to their enemies? for neither in the maps, nor in the general accounts given of this miracle, is there any explanation of this difficulty. After quitting Etham, they entered a lengthened defile, in which they advanced about thirty miles, having the mountains on their right hand and the sea on their left—both impassable. Arrived thus far, their further progress southward was arrested, either by the impracticable nature of the country beyond, or by an estuary of the Red Sea, which ran up into the valley of Hiroth; from which inlet, it appears by the above cited passage from Harduin, a canal of communication was, in the time of the Ptolemies, carried on to the Nile. The latter opinion the reader will find ably maintained by Mr Bryant, in the work already referred to. This estuary probably came so close to the foot of the mountains, as to admit only of a difficult passage in that direction; which was guarded by the fortress of Migdol. Besides, if it had been free of access, the Israelites could have had no inclination to take such a course, which would only have led them back again into the heart of Egypt. They were accordingly hemmed in, in a kind of cul de sac, which rendered the subsequent miracle for their deliverance as necessary as it was signal.

The place of this estuary is now dry; having been, in the course of ages, partly filled up by the fallen materials of the mountains, and partly left dry by the retreat of the sea itself: it is called Bedea by the Arabs—a name which may be referred to the same origin with the Phrygian word *Bēdu*, water. The inlet itself, some remnant of which perhaps existed in the time of the Greeks, was by them denominated Clysma; which likewise signifies water, or an inundation, and might refer either to the place or the miracle. From the inlet, the name was transferred to a town and fortress on its borders; which was probably in the same situation as the Migdol of the Egyptians, and was subsequently the Kolsum of the Arabs, a word denoting drowning, and which gave its name to the adjoining sea, which is still called Bayer-al-Colsum.

The position and agreement of these places are, however, not so clear, but that some authors of eminence have entertained a different opinion. Mr Bryant, and more recently Mr Horne, adopting the arguments of the former, contend that Clysma and Kolsum were not the same place; and that the mistakes of former writers from confounding the two, and thereby embarrassing the attempts to fix the precise place of passage, may by this means be rectified. It is possible, indeed, that they might not have been the same place; and the difficulties arising out of their supposed identity, and the situation

of Kolsum at Suez, would thus be obviated. But with deference to the learned authorities who have espoused this opinion, the grounds on which it is formed are not to be depended upon; and new and equal difficulties will be found to attach to them. Mr Bryant, confiding in the astronomical observations of Ptolemy and Ulug Beg, makes a distance of seventy miles from Heroum to Clysma, but of only twenty-two or twenty-three to Kolsum; thus separating them by nearly fifty miles of latitude. According to Ptolemy, the latitude of Heroum was $29^{\circ} 50'$, and that of Clysma $28^{\circ} 50'$. According to Ulug Beg, the latitude of Kolsum was $29^{\circ} 30'$. Now if the reader will take the trouble to consult a map, he will perceive that these positions are impossible; that of Heroum would be $7'$ south of the present head of the gulf at Suez, while that of Clysma would be far down the gulf, where no town and no communication with the interior ever existed. These observations of Ptolemy then must be erroneous, and permit no well-founded argument to be derived from them. But the position assigned to Kolsum by Ulug Beg is, in fact, within a few minutes of a degree of that of Clysma, and the difference is on the south instead of the north. Whether Heroum ever stood on the gulf, as Mr Bryant infers, or, in other words, whether the gulf ever extended up to that city, is not here of consequence. The canal of Ptolemy Philadelphus passed by it in its way to the Red Sea; but it cannot be shown that it ever stood on its shores. Whether it did or not, does not, in fact, affect the calculations in question; the latitudes are evidently erroneous, and all conclusions derived from them must be erroneous also. The actual distance, however, given by Ptolemy, between Heroum and Clysma, may be correct, though not on the meridian. This distance is, in fact, corroborated by Antoninus, who makes it sixty-eight miles; but then it is not in a direct line from north to south, but in a south-eastern one, which diminishes the amount in point of latitude one-half, or to thirty-four miles, equal as near as may be to half a degree. D'Anville has placed Clysma in $29^{\circ} 40'$ north latitude, and Heroum, or Heroopolis, in $30^{\circ} 17'$; difference $37'$, equal to about forty-three English, or forty-seven Roman miles; to which, if half of the amount, or $23\frac{1}{2}$ miles be added for the easting, it comes as near the distance of Antoninus as can be expected.

Nothing, then, in these calculations affects the true position of either Clysma or Kolsum, or the arguments founded on their identity. One thing, indeed, is clear: that no measurement from Heroum, on the Trajanus Annis, to Kolsum at Suez, will give the required distance between the former and Clysma; and as to the difficulties which have been supposed to have arisen out of the identity of the two places, they may, it is hoped, be shown to be far from formidable. These difficulties have chiefly arisen from the frivolous and sceptical arguments of the celebrated traveller Niebuhr; which are altogether founded in misconception, and in a culpable inattention to the scope and letter of the sacred history; and which from a writer of less repute would be totally undeserving of notice.

In the first place, then, this author, overlooking the obvious route of the Israelites round by Etham, which he himself places at the head of the gulf, makes them pass through the valley of Bedea to the sea; and then

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wonders how they could be said to be 'entangled in the land, and shut in by the wilderness,' with the way open before them straight up to Suez. This obvious difficulty is sufficient alone to show that this was not their route. Yet the intelligent Bruce has fallen into the same error. Niebuhr reasons on the march of the Israelites as on that of a modern caravan; and intimates, that as no mention is made of their being apprized that a miracle would be wrought for their deliverance, it is not likely that they would suffer themselves to be led blindfold into such a snare. "Amongst so many thousand persons," says he, "some would be well acquainted with the way, and would surely have opposed the design of Moses, if he had made them take a route which plainly led to their destruction. One need only travel with a caravan which meets with the least obstacle, a small torrent for instance, to be convinced that the Orientals are not deficient in intelligence, and that they do not suffer themselves to be led like fools by their Caravan-Baschi," or leader. After indulging in this style of reasoning, our author, wishing to diminish the force of the miracle, though not entirely to destroy it, contends for a higher passage near Suez, where the channel is narrower, and the passage itself may be supposed to have come more within the reach of natural causes; and here, to give some countenance to his argument, are the ruins of a town called Kolsum. And as the Arabic tradition has always placed the site of the miracle near that town; as the name of this town is also supposed to be only a variation of Clysma; and has, further, been taken by travellers to be the same with Arsinoe, or Suez; Mr Bryant took the above-mentioned mode of proving that they were not the same: in doing which he proved too much. But if the ruins in question be indeed those of a town called Kolsum, there is nothing conclusive to be drawn from thence. The original town of this name was very probably built on the true site of Clysma; from whence, in course of time, for greater convenience of trade, or to be nearer water, or for many purposes with which we may be unacquainted, it was removed to the site of the present ruins, carrying its name along with it. This is nothing more than what is perfectly analogous to what has happened in every country. Or if these ruins be those of the first and only town of Kolsum, what is there improbable in the supposition that this name should have been given to it? The distance from Clysma is comparatively insignificant: the event which the name records was too stupendous to be forgotten; while the precise spot in which it occurred, might, to the unlettered Arabs, though known to be near, be totally lost.

We again, then, come to the conclusion, that the position of this town, and its being or not the same as Clysma, cannot mislead us. Niebuhr, then, stands inexcused, even upon this principle, in endeavouring to fritter the miracle down to nothing, by placing it in a narrow and shallow part of the channel; and the following argument, like most of his others on this subject, admits as little of palliation: "Pharaoh," says he, "would not appear to me to have been inconsiderate in attempting to pass the sea at Suez, where it is not above half a league over; but he must have lost all prudence, if, after seeing such prodigies in Egypt, he ventured to enter the sea where it was more than three leagues in breadth."

These remarks of Niebuhr were called forth by some

sceptical queries proposed by the celebrated critic Michaelis; namely, "Whether there were not some ridges of rocks where the water was shallow, so that an army at particular times may pass over? Secondly, Whether the Etesian winds, which blow strongly from the north-west, could not blow so violently against the sea, as to keep it back on a heap, so that the Israelites might have passed without a miracle?" How different to those of Niebuhr are the observations of the sensible Bruce, to whom the same queries were proposed! These observations are indeed inimitable; and the author quotes them at length with the greater pleasure as he has more than once, in the course of the present work, found occasion to dissent from his opinions.

"I must confess," says Mr Bruce, "however learned the gentlemen were who proposed these doubts, I did not think they merited any attention to solve them. This passage is told us by Scripture to be a miraculous one; and if so, we have nothing to do with natural causes. If we do not believe Moses, we need not believe the transaction at all, seeing that it is from his authority alone we derive it. If we believe in God that he made the sea, we must believe he could divide it when he sees proper reason; and of that he must be the only judge. It is no greater miracle to divide the Red Sea, than to divide the river Jordan.

"If the Etesian wind, blowing from the north-west in summer, could keep up the sea as a wall on the right, or to the south, of fifty feet high, still the difficulty would remain of building the wall on the left, or to the north. Besides, water standing in that position for a day, must have lost the nature of fluid. Whence came that cohesion of particles which hindered that wall to escape at the sides? This is as great a miracle as that of Moses. If the Etesian winds had done this once, they must have repeated it many a time before and since, from the same causes. Yet Diodorus Siculus,¹ says, the Troglodytes, the indigenous inhabitants, of that very spot, had a tradition from father to son from their very earliest ages, that once this division of the sea did happen there; and that after leaving its bottom some time dry, the sea again came back, and covered it with great fury. The words of this author are of the most remarkable kind; we cannot think this heathen is writing in favour of revelation: he knew not Moses, nor says a word about Pharaoh and his host; but records the miracle of the division of the sea in words nearly as strong as those of Moses, from the mouths of unbiassed, undesigning pagans.

"Were all these difficulties surmounted, what could we do with the pillar of fire? The answer is,—We should not believe it. Why then believe the passage at all? We have no authority for the one; but what is for the other: it is altogether contrary to the ordinary nature of things; and if not a miracle it must be a fable."

The instrument employed by the Almighty for the division of the sea, is said to be 'a strong east wind.' But it is remarkable that there is no such thing as a natural east wind in all this country; the monsoon blows invariably half the year from the north, or north-north-west, and the other half from the opposite points.

Some authors have supposed, that Moses having lived long in the neighbourhood of the Red Sea, had become

¹ B. 3. p. 122.

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acquainted with the phenomena of its tides, and took advantage of the time of ebb to pass; while Pharaoh, less acquainted with them, rashly ventured in and was swallowed up. It was thus that the priests of Memphis explained the miracle. But this subterfuge falls at once to the ground, as the tides in this sea are exceedingly trifling; the difference between high and low water at Suez never being more, according to Niebuhr, than from three to four feet.

In the maps and descriptions accompanying Calmet's dictionary, the Israelites are represented to have crossed the gulf at Kolsum, or Suez, where Niebuhr places the passage. Baal-Zephon is made to be Suez; Migdol, Magdolos, far to the north in the isthmus; and Pi-hahiroth, the mouth of the gullet now filled up with sand. Without entering into any further discussion on the situation of these places than has already been done, there are two weighty arguments, in addition to those before advanced, against such an opinion. The first is,—That in this position the Israelites were in an open country, with no natural barriers by which they could have been said to have been so 'entangled in the land' as to be considered a certain and easy prey to the Egyptians; nor could the latter doubt but that their advance through such a country would be perceived by the Israelites, time enough to evade the pursuit, and to effect a retreat into the Desert, by resuming their tract, and rounding the head of the gulf. But the position twenty miles lower down, shut in on all sides by the sea and by mountains, except a narrow opening towards the north, precluded, in the eyes of the Egyptians (who made no attempt to pursue them, till informed of their critical situation), all possibility of escape, if they could reach unperceived the entrance to this defile, which, under cover of the long mountain barrier, on the west, acting as a screen, they were enabled to do.

The next objection to the above opinion is, that the gulf narrowing as it advances northwards, the point at which the passage is supposed to have been effected, is, according to the scale of the maps in question, scarcely a mile in width; which takes much from the sublimity at least of the miracle, if not from the reality of it. And if it be contended that the passage through a mile of water is no less a miracle than that of nine, which is not denied, or than that of the Jordan, of far less breadth, where without an equal miracle a passage could certainly not have been effected; it is replied, that we have not merely to seek a body of water, the division of which was sufficient to amount to a miracle, but an expanse, the returning surge of which could bury at once the numerous army of the Egyptians, consisting of 'six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt,' with horse and foot, amounting no doubt to many thousands. It is impossible to estimate the number implied by ALL the chariots of Egypt; but if we may judge by those with which Shishak invaded Judea, they were not less than 1200: the proportion of horsemen to which was 60,000, with people on foot out of number. Even supposing the whole army not to have exceeded this number, it is impossible to conceive such a body, together with 1200 chariots with their horses, impacted in the closest order in which it is possible for an army to move on the line of march, and with every allowable extension laterally, should all be engulfed together in the waters of a sea a

mile wide, and where, from the sandy and shelving nature of the beach on both sides, the centre only would afford sufficient depth. For it is to be observed, that the front of Pharaoh's army was still standing on the bed of the sea, when the rear had also entered it.

Nor does it appear that the original channel of the gulf, to the north of its present termination, has been filled up by sand, as supposed. There is a remarkable statement of Burckhardt, when crossing this tract, which renders this supposition next to impossible. He observed the ground, about five miles north of Suez, and beyond the present high water mark in the marshy creek, covered with a saline crust, and traversed, in the direction of the ancient channel, with a layer of small white shells, about a quarter of a mile over; while still farther to the north are salt marshes. These are undoubted proofs that the sea once extended over this ground; and that the cause of its retreat is not the influx of sand, but the gradual recession of the sea itself—a phenomenon common to all inland seas. If the former had been the case, the shells which mark the true bed of the sea, which once covered them, as well as the saline crust, must have been buried also. But the inference from these discoveries, the most to our purpose in the present inquiry, is, that although this part was once covered by the waters of the gulf, the change has been effected by a very trifling subsidence of its level. If sand had been the agent employed in effecting this change it might be contended that the channel had been filled up to an indefinite depth; but the shelly bed refutes this idea, and shows that the present level of the ground was at some time or other the true bed of the estuary, which, it cannot be doubted, a rise of a few feet above the present level of the sea would again cover, as well as the marshes beyond it. To draw accurate conclusions from these premises it should also be known, by other marks, what the actual fall of the sea has been: but as the country for a considerable extent on both sides, is represented as a plain, and the saline crust is limited to a stripe in the centre, it may be inferred that the fall cannot have been great. The canal of Ptolemy Philadelphus also taking this direction, shows how little was the inclination of the ground.

All these difficulties are removed by fixing the passage where it has been placed above, namely, twenty miles below Suez, opposite the valley of Bedea: where every thing conspired at once to cover the advance of Pharaoh, and to render the escape of the Israelites impossible without a miracle; where the channel was sufficiently deep and broad to make that miracle worthy of its author and its object; and where without a second miracle, was sufficient space to receive the entire host of the Egyptians, so that they should be at once overwhelmed, without the escape of a single man.

The precise place of the transit may, then, with as much certainty as we can ever hope to arrive at, be fixed at the embouchure of the valley of Bedea, or about twenty miles below Suez; where, according to Bruce, the gulf is three leagues over, with fourteen fathoms of water in the channel; and where the division of the waters would indeed form 'a wall' of fearful aspect, on the right hand and on the left. It may also be added, on the authority of the same traveller, and as an additional corroboration, that the north cape of the bay, opposite the valley

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of Bedea, which marks the place of the ancient creek of Clysma, is called Ras Musa, or the cape of Moses.

Arrived on the opposite shore, the Israelites entered the desert of Etham; where is a sandy and gravelly plain, called by Niebuhr, Etti, and by Burckhardt, El Ahtha—both bearing sufficient vestiges of the ancient name of the country. In this wilderness they went three days' journey, which brought them to Marah; whose bitter waters were rendered sweet for their use. The position of Marah answers to that of the bitter well of Howara, about eighteen hours from Suez. Burckhardt says, that this is the usual, and, as it appears, the exclusive route to Mount Sinai. He says also that there is no other road of three days' march in the way; nor any other well absolutely bitter on the whole of this coast as far as Ras Mohammed, at the entrance of the gulf. Burckhardt, indeed, has adopted the error of Niebuhr in supposing the transit to have been near Suez, and reckons his three days to Howara accordingly. But his arguments with respect to this place will answer equally well if we deduct twenty miles, or about six hours, for the difference in the distance between Suez and the true place of passage. There will then remain twelve hours, or three days of four hours, equal to about twelve miles for each day's journey—a rate of progress which may be considered as sufficiently suited to the condition of a people who had just escaped from the presence of an enemy; who now could have no doubt of their perfect safety; and had nothing to impel them to the forced marches which they had made from Rameses to Clysma.

The next journey was to Elim; where were 'twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees.' Both Niebuhr and Burckhardt agree in placing Elim in the Wady Gharendel, distant three hours from Howara; which answers very well with the rate of march above assumed, in a country, too, where the position of the encampments must be regulated very much by the situation of water. In the wady or valley of Gharendel, which is about a mile broad, are date or palm trees, tamarisks, and acacias; and a copious spring. This single spring, unusually abundant for this arid country, may be considered rather as a confirmation of the opinion, than as an argument against it; as Niebuhr attests, that water may easily be obtained any where by digging for it, although the apertures will quickly be filled up again by the sands. To search, in fact, after a lapse of 3500 years, for the identical twelve wells of Elim, rudely constructed in a sandy soil, is little better than absurd. The wells of rocky countries, indeed, are perhaps the most durable of all the monuments of antiquity, and serve to fix with unerring certainty the scene of many a memorable event; but the case is widely otherwise on a moving surface of sand, where the shallow excavations, and the simple masonry of Arabs, would not require centuries to obliterate: or, which is frequently the case, the wells may have been wantonly destroyed in the dissensions of the tribes. It is sufficient that water exists here in abundance, and is to be obtained in as many wells as the traveller chooses to dig; while the accordance of this position with the next movement from Howara, and the absence of any other springs that could be relied upon for a distance of many hours in the same route, leave little doubt of its being that of Elim. Former travellers, indeed, amongst whom are Monconys, Theve-

not, Pococke, and Shaw, considered a valley near Tor, where are date-trees and springs, to be Elim: an opinion which has been supported by Mr Bryant, who endeavours also to show that this position was the same with the Phenicon, or palm-grove, of Strabo and Diodorus, which it probably was; but it cannot, with strict attention to the route of the Israelites, be considered as Elim. In the first place, the distance from Howara to Tor is little less than a hundred miles; and as all the stations in this part of the journey appear to be laid down with great accuracy; as no mention is made of any between Marah and Elim; and as the Israelites were hastening to mount Sinai, we have no reason to conclude that any halt did actually take place; and with still less reason can we suppose this distance to have been performed in a single march. In the next place, if Elim be Tor, the four encampments between that place and Sinai will be crowded into a space which it is difficult to reconcile with any motive, or with any similar rate of progress in other parts of the march. After quitting Elim, the Israelites encamped by the Red Sea; then in the wilderness of Sin; then at Dophkah; then at Alush; then at Rephidim; and then in the wilderness of Sinai. Now the rocky region which constitutes the desert of Sinai, extends to within twenty miles of the coast; so that the four encampments, from that on the Red Sea, to Rephidim, at the edge of the desert, could not have been more than four or five miles apart: a series of petty movements across the barren plain of El Kaa, which, if they had been making their approaches to a fortress, might have had some object, but which, in the situation in which they were, must have been frivolous and vexatious, and without a parallel elsewhere. Nor is it likely, as Sinai was their destination, that they should have retrograded without any mention being made of such a course, or any cause assigned for it. Lastly, the position of Elim at Tor is incompatible with the situation of the desert of Sin. This desert is expressly said (Exod. xvi. 1.) to have been between Elim and Sinai; but it could only have formed a small part of the distance, as only one of the five intervening encampments took place within its limits. In Num. xxxiii. 10—12, it is said, that the Israelites 'removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red Sea; and they removed from the Red Sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin; and they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped at Dophkah.' Now the whole space between Tor and the encampment of the desert of Sinai, is a plain, bearing one name, and but of one day's journey, bounded every way to the north by the group of Sinai; so that the Israelites quitting the wilderness of Sin after a single encampment in it, must either have retraced their steps towards Elim, or have proceeded towards the eastern or Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea, beyond Sinai altogether: of neither of which circumstances is any intimation given; on the contrary, both are at variance with the order of the route, and the destination of the people, which was Sinai, to receive the law. But in the natural and established route, the whole is conformable with the scripture narrative, and confirmed by the local knowledge we possess of the country.

From the desert of Etham to the second march beyond Elim, the road, as it does now, ran parallel with the gulf of Suez, and at no great distance from it. At the end

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of the first day's march from Elim, an indentation of the coast brought them at once upon the sea, where was the encampment mentioned. Towards the end of the second, the coast, which had hitherto inclined in a south-east direction, turning directly to the south, quite away from the direct road to Sinai, obliged them to quit the vicinity of the sea, which they had hitherto constantly had on their right hand, and to enter farther into the heart of the desert; which in that part bore the name of Sin. This is precisely the route pursued at the present day; and near the point where the road leaves the coast, at the south-west foot of the mountainous ridge called El Tyh, is the sandy plain of El Seyh, extending two days' journey eastward. The western extremity of this plain only would the Israelites have to cross, which they would soon traverse, and have only one encampment to make on its surface; when the remaining stations of Dophkah, Alush, and Rephidim, would bring them, by marches of fifteen or sixteen miles, to the borders of the desert of Sinai.

Of Dophkah and Alush, we can only know the relative situations; and as nothing more is said of them than their bare mention as places of passage, it is of little consequence. But to Rephidim much interest is attached. Here, or hard by, the miraculous supply of water took place; and here the Israelites were, for the first time, attacked by their implacable enemies the Amalekites. It is not a little curious, that a person of Mr Bryant's sagacity should have found it necessary, in order to explain this attack of the Amalekites, to carry Rephidim far up to the northward, towards the borders of that people. There is nothing surely surprising in a people, who were probably apprized of the ultimate destination of the Israelites, wishing to carry the war from their own homes, and, by advancing on their enemy, to attack him at a disadvantage. But in Exod. xvii. 8, it is said, that Amalek '*came and fought with Israel at Rephidim.*' And in 1 Sam. xv. 2, '*Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt:*' that is, that he came down to Rephidim, and took the Israelites by surprise. It could not have been represented in this way, if the latter had approached the territories of the Amalekites. To set this question at rest, however, the Israelites were encamped at Rephidim when they were miraculously supplied with water from Horeb; consequently it must have been close to that mountain, or, in other words, on the edge of the desert of Sinai, where it has already been placed.

The next encampment, after that at Rephidim, was in the desert of Sinai itself, where the people arrived in the third month, and where they remained encamped eleven months, during which time the law was delivered.

At length, on the 20th day of the second month, in the second year, the signal for removing from Sinai was given by the pillar of the cloud being removed from the tabernacle, and preceding the line of march into the wilderness of Paran; into which, or at least from their encampment in the desert of Sinai, the Israelites advanced for three days before a convenient resting-place, for any time, was found them, in all probability for want of water. The first station in this wilderness of Paran, '*that great and terrible wilderness,*' which extended all the way from Sinai to the borders of

Canaan, and in which they spent the greatest part of the time they were condemned to wander, was at Taberah, or Kibroth-hattaavah: the former name being given by Moses, because here many of the people were consumed by fire from heaven for their complaining; and the latter, because, at the same place, the people lusted for flesh, and many more died while the quails, which had been miraculously sent them, were yet in their mouths. From this place, the stations mentioned northwards are Hazeroth, Rithmah, Rimmon-parez, Libnah, and Kadesh-barnea, where the camp was fixed while the spies were sent to explore the promised land; from whose evil report the people were so intimidated, and so unmindful of the promises they had received, and the protection they were under, that, as a punishment for their ingratitude and disobedience, they were ordered to turn back, and '*get them into the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea,*' Numb. xiv. 25. This retrograde movement carried them back southwards, through the same wilderness of Paran, but by a more eastern route, nearer mount Seir, to Eziongeber, on the eastern gulf of the Red Sea. The stations enumerated in this route are, Rissah, Kehe-lathah, mount Shapher, Haradah, Makkeloth, Tahath, Tarah, Mithcah, Hashmonah, Moseroth, Bene-jaakan, Hor-hagidgad, Jot-bathah, Ebronah, and Ezion-geber. What space of time was spent in these several encampments is not mentioned. The cloud resting on the tabernacle was the guide for the people: when and where that moved, thither they followed, and rested where it rested; and '*whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not; but when it was taken up, they journeyed,*' Numb. ix. 22.

In the map of this route, in the last edition of Calmet's dictionary, it is made to extend westward, towards Egypt, instead of southward, towards the Red Sea. Libnah, stated in the description to be west of Mount Hor, is yet supposed to be the same Libnah which Joshua smote. (Josh. x. 29, 30.) This Libnah, which was evidently in the tribe of Judah, is placed by Eusebius and Jerom in the district of Eleutheropolis; and Lachish, the next place taken by Joshua, only seven miles south of that city. In fact, the places successively captured by Joshua in his march southwards after Makedah, were, first Libnah, then Lachish, then Eglon, and then Hebron; consequently both Libnah and Lachish were north of the last mentioned city. Rissah, the next place in the route, is supposed to be El Arish, and mount Shapher mount Casius, on the confines of Egypt; but this track along the coast of the Mediterranean would, with more propriety, have been termed "*by the way of the Great Sea,*" than of the *Red Sea*. Besides, this route would have brought the Israelites again to the very edge of Egypt, and within reach of their incensed enemies, who may be supposed in this interval to have recruited their armies, and might have attacked them in this situation to much greater advantage than they did at Pi-hahiroth. But if no danger was to be apprehended from hostile attack, there was another of greater consideration. '*Let us,*' said the Israelites just before, disheartened at their sentence of retrogradation, and wearied with the privations and monotony of the desert, '*Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.*'

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This was their ready cry on all occasions; and it is not likely that God in his providence, or Moses in his policy, would have trusted them so near a country whose idols, and whose fleshpots, they were ever hankering after, and from which such mighty efforts and miracles had been employed to deliver them.

In the continuation of this supposed route, Moseroth is conjectured to be the present Fountains of Moses, so called, or *Ain-el-Mousa*, seven or eight miles from Suez. This would bring them again nearly into their old track in the desert of Etham or Shur; and it is strange that no mention should be made of these well-known places. But Moses says, that, after leaving Kadesh-barnea, 'they turned, and took their journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea; and they compassed mount Seir many days,' Deut. ii. 1: plainly implying, that the retrograde route was not by the Mediterranean and towards Egypt, but towards the nearest point of the Red Sea in the route next designed for them; stretching along the western side of the desert of Sin and mount Seir to Ezion-geber. What is meant by the way of the Red Sea, is further distinctly told us in Numbers xxi. 4; where it is said, that the Israelites, departing from Mount Hor, 'journeyed by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom;' or, in other words, to get to the eastern side of that mountainous country by crossing the plain of Elath and Ezion-geber. The whole of this scheme of the western route of the Israelites is, in fact, founded in a misconception of the true extent and position of mount Seir. It is true, that the precise situation of Libnah, or of either of the other stations in the desert after leaving mount Sinai, cannot be accurately known; but the general course of the route from Sinai to Kadesh-barnea, and from thence to Ezion-geber, is sufficiently indicated.

There is a curious anachronism in the above map. It was published in 1808; but has the route of Burckhardt in 1812 marked on it, without, however, adopting any of the improvements indicated by his discoveries. It retains, indeed, all the old errors; the insulated and northern position of Mount Hor—the double peak of a single mountain, representing Sinai and Horeb—the forked extremity of the gulf of Elah or Acaba—and the undefined position of the desert of Sin; while Mount Seir is laid down, by letters only, transversely across the desert of Paran. The labours of Burckhardt have enabled us to correct these errors; while the description of Moses directs us where to trace the course from Kadesh-barnea to Ezion-geber.

Thus far all is clear: but the ensuing part of the journey is, for the most part, but ill explained by commentators; nor has any map come within the inspection of the author, in which it is intelligibly laid down. The passage from the western to the eastern side of Mount Seir, round by Ezion-geber, is uniformly represented as one continuous route; Mount Seir itself is variously distorted from its true position; Mount Hor, an eminence of the former, is carried high up towards the borders of Moab, where it will be seen that it could not possibly have been; and very confused notions are entertained of the true situation of the desert of Sin. These inaccuracies have arisen, in part, from a strange inattention to the scripture narrative, and, in part, from the geographical errors more or less inseparable from the

want of a correct knowledge of the true features of a country.

With respect to the first cause of error, it will be the author's fault, and not any want of precision in the scripture account, if this part of the journey be not rendered sufficiently perspicuous; and to obviate the latter, Burckhardt has furnished us with abundant information. It will be found, indeed, that, instead of a single passage through the plain of Elath and Ezion-geber, this plain was twice passed, or at least, that the places situated in it were twice visited; and that Mount Seir, instead of having been merely doubled by a straight course, down one side and up the other, was four times skirted at its southern extremity, well illustrating the passage which says 'Ye have encompassed this mountain long enough.' In Numbers xxxiii. 36, 37, after the Israelites are described as having descended to Ezion-geber from their long sojourn in the desert on the north, it is said, 'And they removed from Ezion-geber, and pitched in the wilderness of Sin, which is Kadesh, and they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in Mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom.' In chapter xx. 1, 22, it is said, 'Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Sin, in the first month; and the people abode in Kadesh. And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto Mount Hor: where Aaron died, and was buried; and where a thirty days' mourning was performed for him. In chapter xxi. 4, it is said, 'And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom.' In other words, the children of Israel, from their first descent to Ezion-geber, ascended northwards, up the desert of Sin, to Kadesh; and from Kadesh to Mount Hor, 'in the edge of Edom;' where having buried Aaron, and paid the last respects to his memory, they turned again southwards, to the plain of Elath and Ezion-geber, to compass the land of Edom, and enter the plains of Midian.

In order to the better understanding of the relative position of these places, it will be necessary first to describe that of Mount Seir; which will form a key to the rest. Mount Seir of Edom is a mountain chain, which, under the modern names of Djebel Sherar, Djebel Hesma, and Djebel, extends from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea to the northern one of the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, about a hundred miles. On its western side, it rises boldly from a valley which accompanies its whole length; but sinks by an easier slope towards the east, into the elevated plains of Arabia Petraea. Its western border is so strong, as to be easily defended; so that the Israelites, when denied a passage by the king of Edom, dared not make any attempt to force one, but were compelled to return, and get round the mountain, by the plain of Ezion-geber. It was on a conspicuous eminence on this western border, called Hor, about forty miles north from the plain of Elath, that Aaron died, and was buried by the Israelites—an office in which, either not alarmed, or informed of their pious intention, the Edomites do not appear to have molested them. Tradition has preserved the situation of this mount: which is still visited as the tomb of Aaron, by both Mahometans and Christians.

This description of Mount Seir will facilitate that of the desert of Sin. There is, as was observed, a valley

A. M. 2514. A. C. 1490; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3761. A. C. 1647. EXOD. xxxiv. 28—NUM. xviii.

stretching along the whole western side of Mount Seir; which, like it, extends from the Dead Sea on the north, to the Red Sea on the south. This valley is a sandy plain, at a low level, having the chain of Mount Seir on the east, and a ridge of hills, of a lower elevation than those of Seir, on the west, and separating it from the desert of Paran. It is about five miles across; and is at present known in its northern part, by the name of El Ghor, and in its southern, by that of El Araba: it appears before the catastrophe of Sodom, to have afforded a course for the Jordan into the Red Sea. This can be no other than the desert of Sin, or Kadesh; with which it accords in all the required conditions. It had no water; neither is there any there now:—from hence messengers were sent to request a passage through the country of the Edomites; and from hence only, with any show of purpose, could such a request be sent:—from hence, also, the Israelites ascended Mount Hor; and from hence only could the ascent of that mountain be made without penetrating the whole breadth of Edom from the opposite side, where it is clear that they never yet had been:—and, lastly, into this desert it was that the Israelites entered from the plain of Elath and Ezion-geber; and this valley does strictly open from that plain, and is the only desert region answering to the name and the narrative into which they possibly could enter: they could not, in fact, move from their encampment at Ezion-geber in any other direction, without passing to the east of Mount Seir, which, as has been shown, they did not do till after their return from Mount Hor, or retracing their steps into the desert of Paran, which it is equally certain they did not do.

This desert was likewise called Kadesh: in which also was a place more particularly so termed, and situated in the 'uttermost border' of Edom, that is to say, at the very foot of the chain, bordering on the desert; from whence the Israelites sent messengers to the king of Edom to solicit a passage through his country. No situation can be allotted more probable as the position of this place, than that by which the modern road passes from Maan, on the east of Mount Seir, by the Wady Mousa, through the mountains, and across the valley of the Ghor or desert of Sin, to Gaza—the very route, in fact, of the Nabathæi from their capital Petra. As this is one of only two or three routes, at great distances, which penetrate the region of Seir; as it passes close by mount Hor; and as that mountain would be most easy of access by its means from the valley below; we cannot hesitate in fixing the position of Kadesh Proper at the point where the road, quitting the mountains, enters on that valley.

To recapitulate. The children of Israel having arrived at Ezion-geber from the desert of Paran, and at the southern foot of Mount Seir, made a detour northwards up the desert of Sin, or El Araba, on the western side of that mountain, and separated from the desert of Paran by a ridge of hills, but which formed no part of Mount Seir. This course they pursued to Mount Hor, 'in the edge of Edom,' a mountainous eminence rising abruptly from the eastern side of the desert of Sin, and standing on the western edge of Seir. Here they staid to bury Aaron, and to complete their mourning for his loss. The purpose for which they entered the desert of Sin was obviously to obtain a shorter and better passage

across Mount Seir, or through the land of Edom, to Canaan. Defeated in this object, nothing was left for them but to return to the plain of Ezion-geber, and to make the circuit of the mountain on its southern side.

The next encampment mentioned, after the return from Mount Hor, is at Zalmonah. Where Zalmonah was is not known; but it was probably in or near the plain of Elath, as there was no water in Sin. This was a long march; but the people could not tarry in a region which was destitute of the most indispensable article of subsistence. Besides, the period of their wandering was now drawing to a conclusion; and they were hastening with confidence to the termination of their fatigues and privations in the promised land. The same reason led them, by stages of thirty miles, by Punon, Oboth, and Ije-abarim, to the brook Zared; where they arrived at the end of the thirty-eighth year from the time of their leaving Kadesh-barnea, and the fortieth from their departure from Egypt, and when all the adults then living were dead. This brook, which appears to be the Wady Beni Hamed, descends from the mountains of Kerek, and falls into the Dead Sea near the middle of its western shore. From the Zared, the Israelites made one march across the Arnon, the Modjeb of modern geography, to Dibon Gad; the ruins of which, under the name of Diban, are shown about four miles to the north of the river. From Dibon, the encampments of Beer, Almon-diblathaim, Mattanah, Nahaliel, and Bamoth, brought them to the mountains of Abarim, on the east of the Jordan; which mountains they crossed at Pishgah, a part of the chain, where Moses was indulged with a bird's-eye view of the promised land, and where he died. Descending from these mountains, they pitched between Beth-jesimoth and Abel-shittim, on the banks of the Jordan^a itself; whose waters, deep and rapid, were divided for their passage, as those of the Red Sea had been. And thus this extraordinary journey of forty years terminated with a similar miracle to that with which it commenced.

There are two facts worthy of mentioning in this place. The first is, that the whole of the tribes, during their wanderings in the desert, had sustained a decrease of only 1820; their numbers being at this time 601,730, and before, 603,550. The other fact alluded to is, that as all the males above twenty years of age at Kadesh-barnea fell subsequently in the wilderness, none who crossed the Jordan, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, could exceed fifty-eight; consequently the whole of the adult males may be considered as effective for the purposes of war.

The map, illustrative of the journeyings of the Israelites, has been carefully constructed, so as to exhibit the physical features of the country, as laid down by Burck-

^a The average breadth of this celebrated stream may be computed at thirty yards, and its depth about nine feet; but from the rapidity of its current, it discharges a much greater body of water than many rivers of larger dimensions; it rolls, indeed, so powerful a volume of deep water into the Dead Sea, that the strongest and most expert swimmer would be foiled in any attempt to swim across it at its point of entrance. Its banks are beautifully picturesque, being shaded by the thick foliage of closely planted trees, and so beset with tamarisks, willows, oleander, and other shrubs, that the stream is not visible, except on the nearest approach. Its waters are generally turbid, and its annual overflowing takes place in the first month, which answers to our March.

A. M. 2514. A. C. 1490; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES

A. M. 3764. A. C. 1617. EXOD. xxxiv. 28—NUM. xviii.

hardt and others; and the line of route has been taken from the map which Mr Mansford constructed to accompany the preceding article, in his *Scripture Gazetteer*.

SECT. II.

CHAP. I.—*From the Building of the Tabernacle to the Death of Korah, &c.*

THE HISTORY.

FOR full forty days and forty nights, Moses continued upon Mount Sinai, as he had done before, without either eating or drinking; and when he came down from thence his face had contracted such a lustre, by his holding so long a conference with God, that the people were not able to approach him; and therefore, whenever he talked with Aaron, or any of them, he was accustomed to put a veil over his face, as long as the lustre lasted, but never made use of any when he went into the tabernacle to receive the divine commands.

While he was on the mount, God gave him the ten commandments, written in two tables, and withal full instructions in what manner the tabernacle, intended for his own habitation among them, and all its sacred utensils, were to be made; which he now communicated to the people, and at the same time exhorted them to bring in their several offerings to that purpose. This they did in such abundance, that he thought it convenient, by a public proclamation, to restrain their further liberality; and having thus made a sufficient collection of all kinds of materials, he gave them to Bezaleel and Aholiab, the two great artists in building, and all manner of workmanship, whom God had before made choice of.

In less than six months the tabernacle and all its rich furniture were finished, and on the first day of the first month, in the second year after the Israelites' departure out of Egypt, it was set up: when, as soon as this was done, the 'pillar of the cloud,'^a which is called 'the glory of the Lord,' covered, and quite filled it, so that Moses for some time was not able to enter in. However, when he entered in, he received instructions from

God, which he communicated to the people, in what manner, according to this new institution, he was to be worshipped by sacrifices and oblations; what festivals were to be observed, and how celebrated; what meats were forbidden; what the instances of uncleanness were; and what the degrees of consanguinity prohibited in marriage. And having appointed these and some other ordinances, he solemnly consecrated Aaron to the high priest's office; his sons, and in them their posterity, he made priests; and to these he adjoined the whole tribe of Levi, to serve in the tabernacle, with particular allowances for their subsistence, and some restraining laws, as to their persons, their conduct, and marriages.

Eight days after his consecration, Aaron offered his first burnt-sacrifice for himself and the people, which God was pleased to manifest his acceptance of, in the sight of all the people, by sending down fire from heaven, which, by consuming the offering, struck them with such reverence, that they all fell prostrate, in humble adoration, before the divine Majesty. The fire, thus miraculously kindled, was,¹ by the divine command, to be² kept perpetually burning, and no other to be used in all the oblations that were made to God. But Nadab and Abihu, two unhappy sons of Aaron, unmindful of this command, took common fire on their censers, and so entering the tabernacle, began to offer incense; but by this their profane approach, they so offended God, that he immediately struck them dead with lightning; and to inject terror to the rest, ordered them to be carried forthwith out, and there buried without any mourning or funeral pomp. And much about the same time, he gave another instance of his severity against sin, in a certain person, the son of an Israelitish woman indeed, but whose father was an Egyptian, who, for his cursing and blaspheming the name of God, was by him directly ordered to be stoned to death; from which it became a standing law,³ though there was no express

¹ Lev. vi. 12, 13.

² If it be asked how this fire could be preserved, when both the tabernacle, and the altar whereon it burnt, were in motion? as they evidently were, when the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness, I see no reason why we may not suppose, that upon these occasions, there might be a certain portable conservatory of this sacred fire, distinct from the altar: and that there was some such vessel made use of, seems manifest from the injunction, that at such times 'the ashes should be removed from off the altar, and a purple cloth spread over it,' (Num. iv. 8:—*Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 4, *Occasional Annotations* 2.

³ The criminal, and his offence, are only thus recorded by Moses: 'The son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, and a man of Israel, strove together in the camp, and the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed,' (Lev. xxiv. 11.) But the Jews, in explaining these words, have followed either that superstitious respect which they pay to the name *Jehovah*, or their wonted humour of supplying the silence of the sacred history, with circumstances nowhere to be found but in their own imaginations. In pursuance to their superstition, they fancy, that the crime of this blasphemer consisted simply in his pronouncing the name *Jehovah*, forasmuch as they suppose, that there can be no blasphemy without such pronouncement: and in pursuance to their humour of supplying the silence of Scripture, they have invented a genealogy for this blasphemer. For they tell us, that he was the son of one of those taskmasters who were set over the Israelites in Egypt, and of that very taskmaster, who, by persecuting her husband, violated the chastity of the Jewish nation *Sincometh*, and was afterwards slain by Moses, for using the same husband with great barbarity; that the son, who is here mentioned, quar-

^a 'The glory of the Lord,' what the Jews call *Shekinah*, was a particular manifestation of the divine presence, appearing usually in the shape of a cloud, but sometimes breaking out into a bright and refulgent fire. For we must not suppose that the cloud and the glory of God were two different things, but one and the same, even as the pillar of the cloud and fire were; for outwardly it was a cloud, and inwardly a fire. And, in like manner here, the external part of it covered the tabernacle without, while the inward part of it shone in full glory within the house; in which sense the account of this appearance (Exod. xvi. 10.) is to be understood: the glory of 'the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it,' that is, covered the glory of the Lord, not the mount, 'six days;' for on the seventh day, this glory broke through the cloud, and appeared like a devouring fire in the sight of all the people, (Exod. xxiv. 17.) This wonderful appearance, whether occasioned by the presence of angels, or, as others imagine, by the residence of the second person in the ever blessed Trinity, took possession of the tabernacle, on the day of its consecration, and, as the Jews believe, passed into the sanctuary of Solomon's temple, on the day of its dedication, where it continued to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Chaldeans; after which time it was never more seen.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Shekinah*; and *Patriek's Commentary*.

A. M. 2511. A. C. 1490; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3764 A. C. 1647. EXOD. xxxiv. 28—NUM. xviii.

precept to that purpose before, that whoever was guilty of the like offence, whether stranger or Israelite, was to undergo the same punishment.

Nay, and not long after this, another instance of the divine severity was upon a man, who by a post-fact-law was likewise adjudged to be stoned to death, for violating the Sabbath, which God had so strictly enjoined to be observed, by gathering some sticks on that day. There was no penalty annexed to the violation of this commandment; and therefore the people who brought him before Moses, were ordered to keep him in custody, until he should know the divine pleasure concerning Sabbath-breakers; and when he acquainted them, that such transgressors were to be punished with death,¹ they immediately led him out of the camp, and there stoned and buried him.

While the Israelites lay encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, God appointed Moses first ^a to renew the ordinance of the passover, and then, with the help of Aaron, and the heads of each tribe, to make a general muster of the men that were able to bear arms; which accordingly was done, and the whole number, exclusive of the tribe of Levi, which were appointed to attend the service of the tabernacle, amounted to six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty men; and upon this muster, God appointed their encampment, ever after, to be in this manner.

The whole body of the people were disposed under four large battalions, so placed as to enclose the tabernacle, and each under ^b one general standard. The

¹ Num. xv. 31, &c.

relying with a man of the tribe of Dan, because he would not let him encamp in the same district, brought his cause before Moses; but that being condemned at his tribunal, he began, out of mere rage and madness, to blaspheme. Of all this, however, Moses himself says nothing, out of a scruple, as we may well suppose, to relate the circumstances of a crime which his very thoughts detested.—*Saurin's Dissertations*, 58.

^a During the sojourning of the children of Israel in the wilderness, they seem to have had a divine dispensation from observing the ordinances both of circumcision and the passover. Circumcision did not consist with their itinerant course of life, and for the celebration of the passover, they had not, in every encampment, all the materials that were necessary. But having now rested in the confines of the holy mount for almost the space of a whole year, after the tabernacle was set up, the high priest consecrated, and his first oblation honoured with a gracious acceptance, God thought it not an improper time to re-ordain the celebration of the passover, that so remarkable a deliverance, as their escape out of Egypt, which, by their repeated desires of returning thither, seemed, in a great measure, to have been forgotten, might not be altogether obliterated. And if it should be asked, whence they could have a sufficiency of lambs and kids for so vast a multitude to feast on; there is no reason to deny, even supposing they had not a supply of their own, but that they might traffic with the Ishmaelites, and ancient Arabs inhabiting these parts, for such a number of small cattle, and being not far distant from Midian, (Exod. iii. 1.) by the interest of Jethro, might from thence be furnished with such a quantity of meat for unleavened bread, as this one passover, as this was the only one they kept in the wilderness, may be presumed to require.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^b All the twelve tribes were distinguished from one another by particular standards, and each standard is supposed by some to have been of the colour of that stone in Aaron's pectoral, upon which the name of the tribe whereunto it belonged was written. The figures on the standards of the four principal tribes that we have mentioned, are these,—In that of Judah was borne a lion; in that of Ephraim, an ox; in that of Reuben, the head of a man; and in that of Dan, an eagle and a serpent in his talons; which

standard of the camp of Judah was first. It consisted of the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, the sons of Leah, which pitched on the east side of the tabernacle, towards the rising of the sun. On the south side was the standard of the camp of Reuben, under which were the tribes of Reuben and Simeon, the sons of Leah likewise, and that of Gad, the son of Zilpah, her maid. On the west side was the standard of the camp of Ephraim under which were the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. And on the north side was the standard of the camp of Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid, and that of Asher the son of Zilpah. Between these four great camps and the tabernacle, were pitched the four less camps of the priests and the Levites, who had their attendance about it. On the east side encamped Moses and Aaron, and Aaron's sons, who had the charge of the sanctuary. On the south side were the Kohathites, a part of the Levites descended from Kohath, the second son of Levi. On the west side were the Gershonites, another part of the Levites, descended from Gershon, Levi's eldest son; and on the north side were the Merarites, the remaining part of the Levites, who sprang from Merari, Levi's youngest son.

This was the order of the Israelites encamping; and in like manner, the method of their marching was thus,—Whenever they were to decamp, which always was when the pillar of cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, the trumpet sounded, and upon the first alarm, the standard of Judah being raised, the three tribes which belonged to it set forward; whereupon the tabernacle was immediately taken down, and the Gershonites and the Merarites attended the wagons, with the boards and staves of it. When these were on their march, a second alarm was sounded, upon which the standard of Reuben's camp advanced with the three tribes under it; and after them followed the Kohathites bearing the sanctuary, which, because it was more holy, and not so cumbersome as the pillars and boards of the tabernacle, was not put into a wagon, but carried upon their shoulders. Next followed the standard of Ephraim's camp, with the three tribes belonging to it; and last of all, the other three tribes under the standard of Dan brought up the rear.

After that the Israelites had, for some time, continued in ease and rest, not far from the skirts of Mount Sinai, the pillar of the cloud gave them a signal to decamp; but they had not marched above three days into the wilderness, before they began to complain of the weariness of their journey, and to murmur against God; which so provoked him, that he ^c sent down fire, and destroyed the loiterers, and such as were found in the extreme parts of the camp; so that though, upon Moses' intercession, the fire ceased, the place never-

are indeed the four most perfect animals, forasmuch as the lion is the most noble among wild beasts; the ox among beasts of labour; the eagle among birds; and the man among all other creatures.—*Lamy's Introduction*, b. 1.

^c The fire which God sent upon the Israelites, came either immediately from heaven like lightning, or did issue from the pillar of the cloud which went before the tabernacle; or, according to the conjecture of a learned commentator, that which is here called fire, might be a hot burning wind, in these desert places not unusual, and many times very pestilential, and on this occasion preternaturally raised in the rear of the army, to punish the stragglers, and such as, out of a pretence of weariness, lagged behind.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

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theless obtained the name of Taberah, which signifies burning.

This fresh instance of the people's stubbornness made Moses apprehensive, that though he had certainly eased himself, in some measure, by constituting such magistrates as Jethro his father-in-law had advised him to; yet the work of governing so numerous, and so mutinous a people, would still be an overmatch for him; and therefore, by God's immediate direction, ^a he made choice of seventy of the chief of the elders of the people, men of renown for their wisdom and integrity, and every way fit to be erected into a supreme court.

To these God imparted a portion of the same spirit that he had given unto Moses, which enabled them to be highly assistant to him in the government of a people, which almost every day were discovering a spirit of discontent. For no sooner were they removed from Taberah, but they began to murmur at the manna they had so long ate, and to regret the flesh-pots of Egypt they had parted with; and hereupon they beset Moses' tent on all sides, and in a tumultuous manner demanded of him a supply of flesh, instead of manna; which, how unreasonable soever it was for them to request, God nevertheless promised Moses to perform; and accordingly caused the south wind to arise, which drove vast quantities of quails from the sea coast to within a mile of the camp where they lay, about a yard thick upon the ground. But while they were regaling themselves with these dainties, the anger of the Lord fell upon them, and smote a great number of them with a sore disease, whereof they suddenly died; in memory of which the place came to be called *Kibroth-Hattaavah*, that is, the *graves*, or *sepulchres of lust and concupiscence*.

From this place the people took their journey to Hazeroth, where another unhappy accident befell them. For Aaron and his sister Miriam, observing what great power their brother Moses had with the people, and that God chiefly made use of him in the delivery of his oracles to

them, began to envy him; but to give some colour to their quarrel, they pretended to fall out with him upon account of his marrying a foreigner, whom they called in contempt an Ethiopian. This Moses could not but perceive; but as it was a personal pique, he took no notice of it. God, however, would not suffer it to go off so; and therefore calling Moses, Aaron, and Miriam before the door of the tabernacle, he sharply rebuked the two latter. He gave them to understand the disparity ^b in point of divine revelation, between them and him, and, to leave a brand upon their contumaciously affecting an equality, he immediately smote Miriam ^c with a leprosy; and though, upon Moses' intercession, he promised to remove it, yet because the offence was public, he ordered her to be turned out of the camp for seven days, in the manner of any common leper, that others might be deterred from the like seditious practices. After several encampments, the people came at length to ^d Kadesh-Barnea, on the frontiers of Canaan, where Moses was commanded to choose twelve fit men, out of each tribe one, among whom were Joshua and Caleb, to take a view of the country: and accordingly, having received their instructions from him, to examine diligently into the strength of its cities and inhabitants, the nature and fer-

^b The Jewish commentators make the difference between Moses and other prophets, to consist in these particulars: 1st, That God spake to others by a mediator, that is, as they explain it, by some angel; but to him by himself, without the intervention of any other. 2dly, That they never prophesied, but their senses were all bound up, either in visions or in dreams; whereas he was perfectly awake as we are, when we discourse one with another. 3dly, That after the vision was over, they were oftentimes left so weak and feeble, that they could scarce stand upon their feet, (as appears from Dan. viii. 18;) whereas Moses spake with the divine Majesty without any consternation or alteration. And 4thly, That no prophet but he could know the mind of God when he pleased, because he communicated himself to them only when he thought proper; whereas Moses might at any time have recourse to God, to inquire of him, and receive an answer.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^a It may be supposed, indeed, that Moses had no occasion for any more assisting magistrates after what had been constituted by the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law; but it is highly probable, that those of Jethro's advising were appointed to hear and judge only in smaller causes; whereas all weighty and difficult points, as well as last appeals in smaller matters, still were left upon Moses; and that it was to ease himself of this burden, that he made choice of these seventy, as men of superior capacity and understanding, and who were to be assisted by the Spirit of God in their judgments and determinations. This assembly of the seventy elders, not only the Jews, but even Grotius, and some other Christians, will needs have to be the same with that famous council which afterwards obtained the name of SANHEDRIM. The rabbins have left no stone unturned to prove, that the Sanhedrim did constantly subsist ever since its first institution by Moses, and that the members of it always assembled themselves before the tabernacle, wherever that was set up, either in the wilderness, or in the promised land, till the erecting of the temple by Solomon, who, at the same time, built them a stately room or hall to convene in. They add farther, that this supreme court was continued in Babylon, during their captivity there, and that, at their return, it had the same place rebuilt in the second temple, and so continued till its total extinction under the Romans. But as they bring no authority for these, and many other particulars relating to this assembly, but merely their own traditions, they are justly rejected by the major part of Christians, who can find no footsteps of any such high court, either in the times of Joshua, of the Judges, or of the Kings, nor indeed after the Babylonish captivity, till the time of the Maccabees.—*Calmel's Dissertations sur la police des Anciens Hebreux*; and *Universal History*, b. i. c. 7.

^c A leprosy, as well as all other distempers, such as the scurvy, ring-worm, itch, &c., which bear resemblance to it, does proceed originally from a previous ill disposition both in the blood and juices, but the more immediate cause of it is an infinity of small imperceptible worms, that insinuate themselves between the flesh and skin, which first prey upon the scarf-skin and then upon the inner skin, and afterwards upon the extremities of the nerves and muscles, from whence arises a total corruption of the whole mass of blood, and all the other symptoms attending it. But the leprosy here inflicted upon Miriam was sudden and instantaneous. The juices of her body were not corrupted by a gradual decay, but turned at once into these corroding animals. And as this was a fit punishment for her pride and detraction, so by its being inflicted on her, and not on Aaron, it seems not improbable that she was first in the transgression, and drew Aaron, who seems in some instances to be a person of too much facility, over to her party. Aaron indeed, by his office, was appointed to judge of leprosy, which he could not have done had himself been infected with it; and as he was lately consecrated his high priest, God, for the preservation of his authority, might not think it proper to make him so soon become vile and contemptible in the eyes of the people, as this distemper was known to make men.—*Calmel's Dissertation sur la Nature, &c., de la Lepre*; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

^d Most commentators and geographers are of opinion, that whatever is said of Kadesh, in the travels of the Israelites, is to be understood of one and the same place; whereas the sacred history plainly makes mention of two places, of the same name, one adjoining to the wilderness of Paran, which is mentioned Num. xiii. 26, and the other lying in the wilderness of Sin, mentioned in Num. xx. 1, and xxxiii. 36.—*Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

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tility of its soil, and the like, they set out upon their progress, and finished it in forty days.

At their return they passed through a valley, which, for its fertility in vines, is called the valley of *Eshcol*, which signifies a *cluster of grapes*; and here they cut down a branch with but one cluster upon it, which, ^a by reason of its immoderate largeness, as well as to preserve the grapes from being bruised, they hung upon a pole, and carried between two men's shoulders. Nor was this the only product of that happy soil; the golden fig, and beautiful pomegranate, adorned the trees, and a variety of other fruits, of which they brought samples along with them, loaded the luxuriant branches.

Being at length happily arrived in the camp, they went and made their report to Moses and Aaron, in the presence of the elders, and of all the people. They began indeed with extolling the riches of the land, and showed them a specimen of some of the fruits which it produced; but when they perceived that this account had fired the people with a desire to become the happy possessors of it by a speedy conquest, ten of them then began to alter their tone, and to represent it as a thing impossible, both by reason of the strength of its fortified towns, and the valour and gigantic stature of its inhabitants.

Joshua and Caleb were the only two that remained true to their report, and gave them all imaginable encouragement that the enterprise was practicable; but the cowardly account of the other ten had got such a powerful possession of them, that they cried out, one and all, that they could never hope to overcome such powerful nations, in comparison of which they looked upon themselves as mere grasshoppers and reptiles; and their murmuring, in short, grew to such a height by the next morning, ^b that a return to Egypt was thought more advisable, than to face such an enemy. Nay, in the hearing of Moses and Aaron, of Caleb and Joshua, who endeavoured to dissuade them all they could, even to the hazard of being stoned by

them, they were deliberating upon a proper person to reconduct them into the land of their former thralldom; when, all on a sudden, the glory of God appeared in a brighter lustre than ordinary, in the tabernacle, and from thence was heard to speak to Moses in such threatening terms as gave the people cause to fear that some speedy and terrible judgment would be the reward of their rebellion and ingratitude.

Here Moses was forced again, as at several other times, to become their intercessor, and made use of such powerful arguments, and expostulations, as did in some measure avert the divine vengeance; but, as their ingratitude and infidelity were become intolerable, notwithstanding God's constant care in providing against their wants, screening them from their enemies, and preserving them from all dangers, he solemnly declared, that none of that generation, above twenty years of age, except ^c Joshua and Caleb, who received his commendations for their fidelity, should enter into the promised land, but should wander from place to place in the wilderness, for the space of ^d forty years; and as for the false spies, the immediate authors of this rebellion, they were all destroyed by a sudden death, ¹ and became the first instances of the punishment denounced against the whole nation.

This severe punishment, joined with the sentence of exclusion from the promised land, gave the humours of the people soon another turn: for, supposing that their forwardness now would make some atonement for their former cowardice, they assembled themselves together next morning, and offered to go upon the conquest. Moses endeavoured what he could to dissuade them from so rash an enterprise, by telling them that it was contrary to God's express command, and therefore could not prosper; that, by their late undutiful behaviour, they had forfeited his assistance and protection, without which it was impossible for them to succeed; and that, as the Amalekites and Canaanites had gained the passes of the mountains before them, there was no fighting them

Num. xiv. 36, 37.

^a That there are vines and grapes of a prodigious bigness in those eastern and southern parts of the world, is a matter recorded by several writers. Strabo tells, that in Margiana, and other neighbouring countries, there were vines so very thick about, that two men could scarce fathom them, and that they produced bunches of grapes of two cubits long. Pliny informs us, that in the inland parts of Africa there are bunches of grapes bigger than young children. Olearius, in his travels into Persia, acquaints us, that not far from Astracan, he saw vines which a man could hardly grasp with both his arms, and a cluster which produced three Scotch gallons of wine; and the learned Huetius affirms that in Crete, Chios, and other islands in the Archipelago, there are bunches of grapes from ten to forty pounds in weight.—*Quest. Ainet*, b. 2., and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^b Though they might in their raging fits speak of returning into Egypt: yet it is an amazing thing, that they should continue in their madness, and deliberate about it, nay actually appoint them a leader, as Nehemiah (ix. 17.) says they did. For how could they get thither without food, which they could not expect that God would send from heaven, when they had thus shamefully forsaken him? How could they hope to find their way, when the cloud which directed them was withdrawn from them, or think of coping with such nations as would oppose their passage, in case they should hit upon the right way? And after all, if they came into Egypt, what reception could they expect from a people, whose king, and princes, and first-born had lately been destroyed upon their accounts? Nothing can be said in answer to these questions, but that outrageous discontent infatuates men's minds, and will not suffer them to consider any thing but that which grieves them.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c Josephus introduces Joshua and Caleb, in order to pacify the tumultuous people, delivering themselves in words to this effect. "How is it possible for you, good people, to distrust the veracity and goodness of God, and at the same time to give credit to stories and amazements about the land of Canaan, that are propagated on purpose to abuse you? Why should not you rather believe and follow those who have taken so much pains to put you into the possession and enjoyment of the blessings you desire? What is the height of mountains, or depths of rivers, to men of undaunted spirits, and of honourable resolutions; especially when God is both their protector and defender? Wherefore let us advance and attack the enemy, without ever questioning the event. Only trust God for your guide, and follow us where we shall lead you."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 3. c. 14.

^d Moses here makes use of a round number, in allusion to the forty days of the spies searching the land; though it is plain, that the children did enter into the land of Canaan in less than thirty-nine years after this sentence was pronounced against their fathers. The truth is, Moses reckons the time past since they came first into the wilderness, which was a year and a half; so that the meaning of the sentence is,—That they should wander for forty years in all, before they went out of the wilderness; which, however, is not to be understood so precisely, as to want nothing at all of it: for since they came out of Egypt on the 15th day of the first month, and arrived in Canaan, and pitched their tents in Gilgal, on the tenth day of the first month, of the one and fortieth year after their departure out of Egypt, (Josh. iv. 19.) it is plain, that there wanted five days of full forty years.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

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upon the par. But all this admonition had no weight with them, notwithstanding the ark of the covenant went not with them, notwithstanding Moses their general was not at the head of them, yet out they marched to the top of the mountains, where the enemy surprised, defeated, and having slain many of them, pursued the rest as far as Hormah.

While the people continued in the wilderness, many remarkable occurrences befell them, and seditions almost innumerable were daily fermenting; but one in particular was hatched, with the utmost deliberation, in the breast of one of the chiefs of the tribe of Levi, and countenanced by some of the most considerable men in the whole camp.

^a Korah, the great grandson of Levi by his father Jahar, and consequently one of the heads of that tribe, impatient to behold Aaron and his family raised to the highest office in the priesthood, to which he thought himself had an equal title, was always caballing against him, until he had drawn a considerable number of eminent persons into his interest, and among these, Dathan, Abiram, and On, who were heads of the house of Reuben. As soon as things were ripe for an open rupture, Korah appeared at the head of the faction, and publicly upbraided Moses and Aaron with an unjust ambition, in usurping upon the liberties of the people, in engrossing all power into their own hands, and excluding every body else.

Surprised at the boldness of this accusation, Moses, for concern, fell prostrate upon his face; but when he rose again, he desired that the determination of their controversy might be left to God, and for that purpose appointed them to appear on the morrow at the door of the tabernacle, with every man his censer in his hand: and then addressing himself to Korah, and the rest of the Levites, he put them in mind of their ingratitude and arrogance, in not being content with the dignity and privileges which God had annexed to their tribe, without aspiring at the high priesthood, which he had reserved to Aaron and his posterity.

Dathan and Abiram were at some distance when Moses thus talked with the rest; and therefore supposing that they had been drawn into the conspiracy by Korah's insinuations, he sent privately to them, with a design to argue the case more calmly with them; but instead of a civil answer, he received a haughty message, wherein

^a At what time, or in what encampment this rebellion of Korah and his adherents happened, the sacred history has not informed us; but as the general opinion is, that the cause of the mutiny was his resentment upon the advancement of Aaron and his family to the office of the high priest; so we find Josephus introducing him, as addressing himself to his accomplices in words to this purpose: "A scandal it is, and a thing not to be endured, for Moses to take upon him at this rate; to carry on his ambition thus, under the mask of holiness and religion, and by that means to raise himself a reputation to the wrong of other men. He gave lately the priesthood, and other dignities, to his brother Aaron, without any right or colour for it. No consent of the people was asked, nor any pretence of authority produced, save only his own arbitrary will and pleasure—for what has he to say for himself for so doing? If God has annexed the honour to the tribe of Levi, I myself may pretend a right to the preference, being of the same stock with Moses, and his superior both in riches and years: or if it be to pass by seniority, it belongs to the tribe of Reuben, viz. to Dathan, Abiram, and Phaleu, who are the seniors of that tribe, and men of eminent credit every way among them."—*Jewish Antiquities*. b. 4. c. 2.

they upbraided him with a non-performance of his promise, and "that he had decoyed the whole nation from the rich and fertile land of Egypt, under the pretence of bringing them into a much better, but instead of that, had only detained them in a barren wilderness, there to domineer and tyrannize over them." At which message Moses was so highly provoked, that he appealed to God against the injustice of it, and at the same time requested of him not to regard the prayers and offerings of such ungrateful wretches.

Early next morning, Moses and Aaron went towards the tabernacle, whither Korah, at the head of his party, with each man a ^b censer in his hand, attended with a vast promiscuous multitude, which came in all probability to be spectators of this famous contest, failed not to repair. The first thing that drew their eyes was the amazing splendour which issued from the cloud over the tabernacle, from which God called to Moses and Aaron to withdraw from that rebellious crew, lest they should be swallowed up in the destruction which he was going to bring upon them. Hereupon Moses having first requested of him not to slay the innocent with the guilty, advertised the people, if they consulted their own safety, to separate themselves from the company of these wicked men; and then bespake the assembly to this purpose:—"That if these rebels died in the common way of nature, he would give them leave to call in question his divine mission; but that if the earth did immediately open itself in a miraculous manner, and swallow them up alive, he then hoped that they would look upon him only as an instrument in God's hand, and sufficiently authorized for all he did." And no sooner had he ended these words, but the earth clave asunder under their feet, and swallowed them up alive, together with their families, and all their substance; while at the same time, Korah, and his company, who stood with their censers before the court of the tabernacle, were all destroyed by a miraculous fire from heaven; and to perpetuate the memory of this judgment, as well as to deter, for the future, any but the sons of Aaron, from presuming to burn incense before the Lord, Eliezar was ordered to gather up the censers of the dead, and to have them beat into broad plates for a covering of the altar.

So terrible a punishment, one would think, might have been sufficient, for some time at least, to have kept the Israelites within the bounds of their obedience; but no sooner were they recovered from their fright, than they began to murmur afresh, and to accuse Moses and Aaron for having 'murdered the people of the Lord,' as they were not ashamed to call that seditious crew. Moses and Aaron were well aware of the unruly temper of the people, and therefore fearing to what degree of madness

^b The 250 princes had not as yet offered any incense, because they were prevented by death; however, it may be presumed, that they had lighted their censers at the holy fire, by which they obtained, at least in the opinion of the people, a kind of consecration; and therefore, to keep up among them a reputation and esteem for things consecrated, as well as to show the difference between his own institution and men's contrivances, God ordered all these brazen censers to be wrought into broad plates, and to cover the altar with them; that being polished bright, they might by their lustre put the people in mind of the offence of those who were once owners of them, and so caution others against the like offence.—*Howell's History of the Bible*, b. 2.

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and outrage they might proceed, they took sanctuary in the tabernacle; where they had no sooner entered, but God threatened to destroy all the rest of the congregation, as it were, in a moment, and had already sent out a plague amongst them; which Aaron, at his brother's directions, endeavoured to assuage by his interposing, with a censer of incense, between the dead and the living; but the plague, in this short time, had raged so violently, that no less than fourteen thousand and seven hundred persons, besides those that perished in the sedition of Korah and his company, were carried off by it.

This was enough, in all reason, to establish the authority, civil and ecclesiastical, in the hands of the two brothers: however, to put Aaron's claim beyond all manner of dispute, God was pleased to confirm it by one miracle more. Aaron, on the one side, and the heads of every tribe on the other, were ordered to bring each man his rod, with their respective names written upon them, and these were to be deposited in the tabernacle, until the next morning; by which time God would decide in favour of that family on whose rod some miraculous change should be seen. Accordingly, when they came to examine them next morning, ^a Aaron's rod alone was found not only to have budded, but blossomed likewise, and brought forth ripe almonds; in memory of which remarkable decision, God ordered the rod to be laid ^b

^a Some will needs have this rod of Aaron's to have been the same with that of Moses, wherewith he wrought so many miracles in Egypt and at the Red Sea; but there is this argument against them, that the miracle of its blossoming had not been a sufficient conviction to the Israelites, if so be that Aaron's rod had not been of the same kind of the rest. For whatever had come to pass, they might have ascribed it to the singular quality and virtue of the rod, especially had it been Moses' wonder-working rod, and not to the special hand of God interposing to establish the authority of Aaron; whereas, on the contrary, we find that the miracle had its intended effect, and silenced for ever the pretences of other people to the priesthood. It is presumed therefore by some learned men, that the rods which the several princes brought Moses, were neither their common walking staves, nor any such wands as were a badge of their power and authority in their respective tribes, but rather certain twigs that were cut of from some almond-tree, and not improbably from one and the same tree, that there might be no manner of difference between them. The difference, however, next morning, appeared in this:—That on the twig which bore Aaron's name, there was, in some places, an appearance of buds coming forth; in others, the buds were opened, and shot forth into blossoms; and in others, the blossoms were knotted, and grown into almonds.—*Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

^b It is made a matter of some inquiry, whether this rod of Aaron's was put within the ark of the covenant, or only by it. God commanded Moses to put it only in the tabernacle (Num. xvii. 4.) to be preserved there; but St Paul in Heb. ix. 4, says, that it was placed within the ark, with a pot of manna, and the tables of the law. Others affirm, that it was not put within, but only by the side of the ark; and for their opinion they allege a passage in 1 Kings vii. 9, which seems to intimate, that there was nothing in the ark but the tables of the law; but then their adversaries contend, that St Paul, in that passage to the Hebrews, is to be understood literally; that there could be no hindrance for its being put into the ark, since the ark was five feet long, and could not be but of capacity enough to hold it; and therefore, when the Scripture says, that there was nothing in the ark but the tables of the law, they conceive that it may be understood with this limitation,—That nothing else was originally in it, because the ark was primarily intended for that use; but this need not hinder but that afterwards other things likewise might be put in it. How long this wonderful rod continued in this repository, is nowhere mentioned in Scripture. When the ark

up in the 'ark of the covenant,' and gave an express prohibition, that none but the sons of Aaron should presume to come into the tabernacle, under pain of death.

CHAP. II.—*Objections Answered and Difficulties Obviated.*

In this state of our infirmity, indeed, we are obliged to repair the gradual decays of our bodies with a supply of daily food; but in that of a greater perfection, there will be no occasion for these weak supports of human nature. In the mean time we are assured, that ¹ 'man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' by whose command our natural perspiration may be so shut up, and the instruments of our digestion so retarded, as to make a small quantity of meat subsist us for a considerable time. Elijah, we read, had ² but 'a cake baked on the coals, and a cruise of water' for his whole repast, even when he was going to undertake a long journey; and yet we find, that both under the fatigue of body, and expense of spirits, which travelling must necessarily occasion, he was enabled to 'go in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights.' And for the like reasons we may suppose, that Moses being now received within the cloud on Mount Sinai, might find no uneasy cravings of appetite during his stay, and long conversation with God.

The Jews have a proverb, with relation to this long fasting of his, ³ which tends to this purpose, that above, where there is neither eating nor drinking, Moses staid eighty days, namely, at two different times, and became like the angels; and below, where men do eat and drink, ministering angels come down and eat and drink like them." Whereby they seem to impute this alteration of appetite in both to a change of climate, rather than a miracle. But whether the climate contributes to it or no, it is certain, that God, by influences and emanations from himself, can support a man as long as he thinks fit, and keep up his spirits in their just height, without the common recruits of any kind of aliment.

It is another notion of the Jews, ⁴ that as eating and drinking are actions which prejudice the understanding, God, who intended to prepare his servant for the reception of the revelations he was going to communicate, withheld all meat and drink from him, that by depressing his bodily faculties he might exalt his intellectual. In the case of Daniel, it is certain, that in order to dispose him for the heavenly vision, ⁵ 'he did eat no pleasant bread, neither came flesh or wine in his mouth, for three whole weeks together,' as himself testifies; and therefore, considering the many wonderful things which God intended to impart to Moses, there seems to be a propriety at least, if not an absolute necessity, of his being

¹ Mat. iv. 4.

² 1 Kings xix. 6, 8.

³ See Buxtorf.

⁴ Patrick's Commentary.

⁵ Dan. x. 3

was brought into Solomon's temple, (1 Kings viii. 9.) there is no notice taken of it; and yet it seems reasonable to think, that it should have been preserved for some considerable time, and preserved in that very verdure, wherein it now appeared, with its buds, blossoms, and fruit, for the conviction of posterity.—*Cabinet's Dictionary*, under the word *Rod*.

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put under the like regimen, to enable him, with more facility, to comprehend them.

St Paul is supposed to speak of himself, though modesty makes him conceal it, when he expresses his visions in these words:—¹ 'I knew a man in Christ, above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth,) such an one caught up to the third heaven; and I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth,) how he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful,' or, as the marginal note has it, 'not possible for man to utter.' Now wherever the divine presence is, there is paradise, and there is heaven: and therefore, if St Paul, when he was in a vision, and thought himself translated to the regions above, in the contemplation of the wonderful things he saw and heard there, lost all sense of his body, and perception of its affections; why may we not suppose, that the joy and ecstasy wherewith Moses was transported, upon the like occasion, made him never think of once eating or drinking?

A man must be a stranger to deep study and meditation, who has not experienced in himself a total forgetfulness for some time, not only of the nimble minutes, as they passed away, but of the necessities of nature likewise, as they came upon him; and even found, at length, that his recollection, and sensation of these things, proceeded from an imbecility of his mind, which was not able to endure a continued intention, or stretch of thought, more than any natural call, which seems to have been suspended as long as his superior faculties were thus agreeably employed. With much more reason, therefore, we may conclude, that in the presence of God, where the mind might be impregnated with a power to sustain the fatigue of close perpetual thinking, the variety of objects which presented themselves would be so great, and the entertainment of its intellectual faculties so very strong, as would quite absorb all corporeal desires and appetites.

Had Moses therefore been employed in no farther capacity, than barely in contemplating the many amazing wonders of God's infinite being, which the irradiations from his beatific presence must have transfused upon his mind, this had been enough to suspend all other operations, and engross, as it were, the whole complex of his faculties. But besides this, the Scripture informs us, that ² he took a review of the model of the tabernacle, and its furniture, which God had showed him when he was with him before, and, as we may suppose, received fresh instructions from God. This could not but take up some portion of his time; as most of the remainder of it seems to have been spent in ³ prayer and intercession with God for the people, that he would restore them entirely to his favour, and bring them, in his good appointed time, to their inheritance.

Upon the whole, therefore, it appears, that as Moses was in the presence of God all the while that he continued on the mount; had a full employ for his mind and thoughts during that time; and by the divine influence, had his spirits sustained in their proper height, and his animal part preserved without wasting; he could have

no leisure to think of eating and drinking, or that, had he thought thereon, he could find in himself no call or occasion for it.

The word *karan*, which our translators have made *shining*, is by the Vulgate rendered *cornutus*, or *horned*; and from this misapplication of ideas, painters very probably have been induced to draw Moses with a pair of horns branching, as it were, out of his forehead; whereas the proper representation of him should be with a glory covering his head, in the manner that the saints are painted in the Roman church; for it is not improbable, that the hair of his head was interspersed with rays of light, at the same time that a certain beauteous lustre proceeded from his face, and dazzled the eyes of its beholders.

Moses was certainly in this, as well as many other things, an eminent type of our Saviour Christ, and the change of his countenance an emblem of our Lord's transfiguration upon the mount, when ⁴ 'his face (as the evangelist relates the matter) did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.' In both cases, it was the glorious being ⁵ within the cloud, that transfused this radiant splendour around his Son and servant; but the reason why Moses, at his first time of being upon the mount, and conversing with God, did not contract this wonderful brightness, seems to be this,—That he had not then seen the divine Majesty in so great a splendour as he did now. He was obliged then to keep at a more awful distance from the tremendous throne of God, and not come within the circle of its refulgency; but now, upon his humble petition, God was pleased to vouchsafe him such a sight of his glory as his human nature could bear. So that, by being permitted to come within the circumference of it, he carried off, though unknown to himself, ⁶ such a beamy lustre from the divine refulgency as, like the lambent fires wherewith the poets adorn the temples of their heroes, played about his head and face, and there was permanent for some considerable time; for Moses being now to bring down the tables of the covenant from the mount, that the people might not suspect him of any fallacy or collusion, or think that his pretence to a correspondence with the Deity, as that of some subsequent lawgivers proved, was vain and fictitious, God was pleased to send along with him this testimony, as it were, of his having held communion with God. For the miraculous radiancy wherewith he was adorned, showed in what company he had been during his absence; confirmed his message to the people; and in every respect carried new credentials in it.

It may seem a little strange, indeed, why a people so immediately under the guidance of God, should every day stand in need of so many new credentials, and upon every little emergency, fall a murmuring and rebelling against the God of Israel, and his servant Moses. St

¹ Mat. xvii. 2.

⁵ Mat. xvii. 5.

⁶ It was a custom amongst the ancient heathens, and probably derived from what here befell Moses, to represent the gods with a beamy glory around their heads, to carry rays about their heads, as Lucian *De Deâ Syria* has it. And hence it was, that the Roman emperors, who were raised so much above the rest of mankind, that they were honoured as a sort of deities, were thus represented, as appears from the testimony of Pliny, among many more, who, in his panegyric to Trajan, makes the *radiation punitiani caput* the subject of some banter.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 2, &c.

² From the beginning of the 25th chapter of Exodus to the end of the 30th chapter.

³ Deut. ix. 18, 19, 25, 26. and x. 10.

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Stephen, in quoting the prophet Amos, has let us into the cause of this people's frequent prevarications: 'O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices, by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch,^a and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them.' By Moloch, the learned are pretty well agreed, that we are to understand the image of the sun, and by Remphan, that of the planet Saturn; and that the worship of these idols was a common thing among the Israelites, in the time of their sojourning in the wilderness, is manifest from that passage of the prophet, where he introduces God thus complaining of the perverseness of that people: 'In the day that I chose Israel, and lifted up my hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt, unto a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, then said I unto them, "Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me; they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt.' Nay, so far were they from forsaking the idols of Egypt, that we find them adopting strange gods from every other neighbouring nation, which occasioned that severe condemnation in God: 'I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people, because he hath given his seed unto^b Moloch, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my

holy name.' And if any one fail to punish this idolater, 'then will I set my face,' says God, 'against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off; and all that go a whoring after him, from among their people.'

Now, if idolatry was a practice which the Israelites retained, and in some instances improved, after their departure out of Egypt, there is great reason to presume that these idolaters were the very murmurers also who infected the camp with their infidelity. They might believe, because they saw so many manifestations of it, the residence of a God among them, but then it is not unlikely, that they thought of him, as most of the heathens thought of their gods, that he was a local and limited deity, who had done something for them indeed, but could not do all they wanted; who had brought them into the wilderness, but had not the power to conduct them into Canaan.

In this manner it is, that the Psalmist represents them reasoning with themselves. 'Shall this God of ours prepare us a table in the wilderness? He smote the stony rock indeed, that the water gushed out, and the streams flowed withal; but can he give bread also, and provide flesh for his people? Many of these miracles they saw wrought before their eyes; but then they might look upon Moses who did them,^c to be no more than a mere magician, though perhaps of a better sort than those of Egypt; and consequently might be apprehensive that upon every new turn and exigence, his art would fail him; and therefore having no better notions of God, and so gross a conception of their leader, it is no manner of wonder that they ran into murmuring and discontent, into riot and disorder, upon every little difficulty that pressed them.

Two times we find them complaining for the want of such food as they desired; once^d in the wilderness of Sin, a few days after their passage of the Red Sea, and again at the encampment^e of Kibroth-Hattaavah, not long after their departure from Mount Sinai; and at both of these times God thought proper to send them quails; not out of any destitution or scarcity of other provision, 'for^f all the beasts of the forest are his, and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills; he knows all the fowls upon the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are in his sight,' but for this very reason,—that how willing soever he might be to supply his people's necessities, he had no design to pamper their appetites with a needless variety, or to multiply miracles without any just occasion. And therefore, as both these events happened in the spring, when quails, which are found in great quantities upon the coasts of the Red Sea, are accustomed to pass from Asia into Europe, God caused a wind to arise, which in their flight drove them towards the camp of the Israelites, and,^g as the eastern tradition has it, was so very violent, that it broke their wings, and made them fall at a convenient distance, and in proper condition to be taken up.

^a Ps. lxxviii. 20. 21.^b Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. iv. Occasional Annotations, 5.^c Exod. xvi. 3, 13. ^d Num. xi. 34. ^e Ps. l. 10, 11.^f See Bibl. Orient. p. 749, col. 1.¹ Acts vii. 42, 43. ² Ezek. xx. 5, &c. ³ Lev. xx. 3, &c.

^a Thus the Seventy, from whom St Stephen took this passage in Amos, translate it; but the import of the Hebrew text is this, 'Ye have borne the tabernacle of your kings, and the pedestal (so the word *Chium* signifies) of your images, the star of your gods, which ye took to yourselves.' So that it seems very probable that the LXX read *Rephan* or *Revan*, instead of *Chium* or *Chevan*, and thereby mistook the pedestal for a god. Kircher, however, and Salmasius assert, that *Kiion* is *Saturn*; that his star is called *Keiran* among the Persians and Arabians, and that *Remphan*, or *Rephan*, signified the same thing among the Egyptians; and therefore they suppose, that the Septuagint, who made their translation in Egypt, changed the word *Chium* into that of *Remphan*, because they had the same signification. Remphan is generally supposed to have been an Egyptian god; and Hammond, in his notes upon Acts vii. 43, is of opinion, that this was the name of a certain king of Egypt, who, after his death, was deified by his subjects; but of what make and figure the image of this idol was, or in what manner he was worshipped, we can nowhere learn.—*Calmel's Dictionary*, under the words *Chium* and *Remphan*.

^b The rabbins assure us, that the idol Moloch, which was the same as Baal, the sun, or Lord of heaven, worshipped by all the people in the east, had its image made of brass, sitting upon a throne of the same metal, having the head of a calf, adorned with a royal crown, and his arms extended as it were to embrace any thing; but what the children's passing through the fire means, they are not so well agreed. Some of them are of opinion, that parents, in the worship of this idol, did not actually burn their children, but only caused them to leap through fire that was lighted before it, or to pass between two fires placed opposite to each other, by way of lustration; but the expressions of David are a little too strong to admit of this interpretation. For when he tells us, that 'they sacrificed their sons and daughters unto devils, and that they shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan,' Ps. cvi. 37, 38, we cannot but infer, that they did actually murder their children in this execrable way. When any infants were to be sacrificed, the idol was made hot by kindling a great fire in the inside of it; and when it was heated to a most intense

degree, the miserable victim was put into its arms, and soon consumed by the violence of the heat; but that the cries of the children might not be heard in their extremities, the people were wont to make a noise with drums and other instruments about the idol.—*Calmel's Dictionary*, and *Dissertations*.

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That quails among us are very excellent food, cannot be denied; but the same tradition informs us, that these birds in Arabia Felix, do vastly surpass all others, and as our author expresses it, have neither bones, veins, nor sinews in them, that is, are very fat and tender, something like our fig-peckers and ortolans. And, therefore, though God refused to gratify their palates with a profuse variety of dainties, yet is there no fault to be found with his provision, since the food he sent them was delicious in its kind, and a whole year had now intervened between the former and latter flight of quails, to whet their appetites, and prevent any danger of being cloyed with the same dish.

Something, however, there was in their behaviour, which provoked God in this their latter, more than their former complaint for want of flesh, to punish them so severely. ¹ The desire of flesh for food is in itself but natural, and, absolutely speaking, far from being criminal, or provoking to the Author of nature, who created every appetite of man, as well as his understanding; but when this breaks out into murmuring, mutiny, and disorder, the case is then entirely altered. In the former of these cases, the people were in want of bread, and really pinched with hunger; but in the latter, they had bread from heaven in abundance, and may therefore be said to complain not out of need but wantonness. Their discontent in the former case was expressed, comparatively, in modest terms; but here their tone is, ² 'Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick; but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes.' This same contempt of the manna, which God so miraculously sent from heaven, especially in persons so well instructed in the divine will, was such an instance of baseness and ingratitude, as justly deserved the punishment it met with.

In the former time of their complaining, God winked at their ignorance, and pitied their distress; he had not then given them his laws for the rule of their actions and appetites; and therefore, never looking to reap, where he had not sowed, he was not so extreme as to mark what they had done amiss; but after he had published his precepts from the holy mount, and many more instructions from the tabernacle, he then expected that their obedience should keep pace with their knowledge, and was more provoked at their backslidings than before, because they proceeded not from the ignorance of their minds, but the perverseness of their wills: for this was the true and the just cause of their ³ 'condemnation, that even when light was come into the world, they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'

In the 11th chapter of the book of Leviticus, we have a catalogue of the beasts, fishes, and fowls, which God either permitted, or prohibited the Israelites to eat. From his first making choice of them, God's purpose was to distinguish them from other nations, and more especially from the Egyptians, among whom they had long lived, had contracted their manners, and were too tenacious of their customs; and therefore, in opposition to

these, he enjoined them to eat such creatures as were worshipped in Egypt, which would be an effectual means to render the pretences of these sham deities contemptible; as, on the contrary, he ordered them to abstain from those that were held in the greatest delicacy among them. And because the Egyptians would have nothing to do with such animals as had hoofs and horns, the Jews were allowed to eat none but what parted the hoof, as well as chewed the cud.

It is to be observed farther, that in the very make and nature of some animals, there are certain qualities which prejudice mankind against them, and seem as it were to desecrate their use; that some, for instance, are monstrously big, others very ugly and deformed; some come from heterogeneous mixtures, others feed upon dead bodies, and to others most men have an inbred antipathy; so that, in the main, what the law forbade the Jews in this regard, was nature's aversion before: but then the question is,—Why the things which they were naturally averse to, and would have refrained without it, were made the matter of a divine interdiction?

Now, if we trace the history of this people, we shall find, that they had their seasons of affliction and scarcity as well as of prosperity and plenty. At the very time when these prohibitions were given them, they were travelling, and were to continue travelling for many years in a waste and barren desert, which being destitute of the conveniences, and necessities of life, might tempt them to make experiment upon the flesh of some of those animals that they naturally abhorred, but upon this occasion, as they thought, might innocently make use of: and therefore, to set a stronger guard upon human nature, God thought proper to confirm this their innate aversion, by the sanction and establishment of laws, which were to last beyond the term of their continuance in the wilderness.

The truth is, this people, by their gross impieties, and prevarications with God, brought frequently upon themselves famines, and sieges, and other calamities, wherein they suffered very grievously. To pass by the famines, which happened ⁴ in Judea, ⁵ in the times of the Judges, and ⁶ in David's days; in the reign of Ahab there was ⁷ a dreadful one in Samaria, when an 'ass's head sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of doves' dung (it should be rendered pulse) for five pieces of silver;' and, what is more lamentable still, when mothers entered into compact about eating their own children. But the most tragical account of all, is that which their own historian has recorded of them, at the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, when wives snatched the necessities of life from their husbands, children from their parents, and parents from their children; ⁸ when mothers were forced, for their own support, to defraud their infants of the little milk which was in their breasts, while the infants were dying in their arms for want of it; when hunger and necessity turned every thing into victuals, and, what is shocking to human nature but barely to think on, ⁹ made one Jewish lady of quality eat her own child.

⁴ Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. iii. Occasional Annotations, 3.

⁵ Ruth i. 1. ⁶ 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

⁷ 2 Kings vi. 25.

⁸ Joseph. De Bello Jud. b. 5. c. 10.

⁹ Joseph. De Bello Jud. b. 6. c. 3.

¹ Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. iv. Occasional Annotations, 3.

² Num. xi. 5, &c.

³ John iii. 19.

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Now the use that I would make of this melancholy part of their history, is this,—That as to God's pre-science, were present from everlasting all the wickednesses and rebellions of this people; so were those penalties and judgments which his infinite wisdom determined to be most suitable to them. For what method can be thought more proper to make an impression upon those that forsake God, than that he should forsake them, that is, so far at least, as to withdraw the succours of life from them? And considering his prohibition of certain animals for food under this view, it was certainly a kind and generous warning to his people, not to bring themselves, in consequence of these provocations, (which he foreknew, and against which he had so strictly cautioned them,) into such circumstances, as would oblige them either to forbear the very last means of sustaining life, or to break more of God's commandments than they had done before.

But there is a farther reason arising from the quality of animals, why God might enact a discrimination of meats, and that is,—to give his people therein a mystical system of morality. Thus the birds which were allowed to be eaten, the pigeon, the dove, the partridge, for instance, were either tame, or of gentle nature, feeding on grain or pulse; whereas all the species that lived on prey, and such as gorge themselves with flesh and blood, were utterly forbidden, thereby to bring into reputation justice and mercy, and moderation, and at the same time to discountenance the contrary disposition to rapine, oppression, and cruelty. It is a noted allegory, that in Homer, of Circe's changing Ulysses' friends into hogs. By Circe, the poet intends that we should understand sensual pleasures; by Ulysses, reason and discretion; and by his retinue, the inferior faculties and powers; and in like manner, the prohibition of swine's flesh, was designed to restrain the Jews from such lusts as war against the spirit, as pollute and debase human nature, like that creature's wallowing in the mire: for, as a learned author observes, ¹ the Jewish law was more remarkably strict in its prohibitions of things that were sordid and slovenly; wherein it seems to have had an especial aim to the training and forming of a people that had lived uncultivated, by reason of their long slavery in Egypt, and their dirty work in clay and bricks, to an elegance and politeness of manners, as well as a detestation of all filthy and brutal lusts, 'that being set free from sin,' as the apostle expresses it, ² 'they might glorify God in purity and holiness, both in their bodies, and in their spirits, which were his.'

The same apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, has informed us, 'that ³ the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw nigh unto God, did.' The Jewish high priest was a type of our blessed Saviour, and his entrance into the holy of holies, of our Lord's ascension into heaven, after his resurrection. The sacrifices which were offered under the Levitical law, were previous representations of the death of Christ; and the redemption of mankind by the effusion of his blood was exhibited every day in the several oblations in the tabernacle: '4 for if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling

the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?' Now, besides the arguments which might be drawn from the grossness of the Jews' understanding, and their incapacity to receive a more spiritual dispensation, God might have this farther design in setting before them the mystery of man's redemption under such typical representations, namely, that thereby he might excite their industry, and give a fuller scope to the exercise of their faith. For that the faith, and hope, and other graces of the patriarchs and devout Jews, were more effectually proved by the exhibition of things ambiguous and obscure, than if they had been altogether opened in the fullest and plainest propositions, is a matter that can hardly be contested. To rest assured, that God would bring to pass what he had expressly and circumstantially foretold, showed indeed a sincere and true faith in general; but to be persuaded, that faint resemblances, and the remotest hints were pregnant with certainty and solidity, and would, in their proper time, be gloriously completed, how unintelligible soever they might be at present, was, if we may so call it, a special advance of heroic faith, and rendered their dependence and resignation as complete as possible. And accordingly the apostle, having enumerated several ancient worthies, who by faith extended their views, and looked upon the dispensation they were under, as no more than a system of types and shadows of the good things to come, concludes their character in the following manner: ⁵ 'And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made so perfect.' So that the Jewish religion and worship was, in some respects, adapted to the capacity and genius both of the learned and ignorant: of the ignorant, as being made up of pomp and show enough to attract their attention; and of the learned, as abounding with shadows and emblems of higher matters, enough to exercise their deepest contemplation.

What the sin of 'offering strange fire before the Lord was,' and upon what account it raised the divine indignation against Nadab and Abihu, the two sons of Aaron, will best appear by attending a little to the probable occasion of it. After the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office, we are told, that a miraculous 'fire from the Lord,' that is, a fire which either came immediately down from heaven, or out of the cloud which covered the tabernacle, consumed the first victim which Aaron offered for a burnt-offering; that God had expressly commanded, that ⁶ 'the fire which was upon the altar should not be suffered to go out,' which, according to the consent of most interpreters, signifies, that the said miraculous fire which had confirmed the installation of Aaron and his sons after so surprising a manner, should be kept alive, and burning with the utmost care; and that, as at this very fire, Aaron was ⁷ required to light the incense which he offered to God in the most holy place, on the great day of expiation; so may we take it for granted, that the like injunction was imposed

¹ Spencer de Legibus Heb.² 1 Cor. vi. 20.³ Ch. vii. 19.⁴ Heb. ix. 13.⁵ Heb. ix. 39, 40.⁶ Lev. vi. 12.⁷ Lev. xvi. 12.

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on the inferior priests, with relation to the incense which they were to offer every day before God in the holy place. We have indeed no mention made of such a law; but the history we are commenting upon gives us a strong presumption, that the use of this fire only was permitted; and therefore the words ¹ in the text, 'which he commanded them not,' is thought to imply an express prohibition of any other.

The crime then of Nadab and Abihu consisted in their kindling the incense, which their office of priests obliged them to offer every morning and evening, with fire different from that which was continually on the altar of burnt-offerings; and consequently different from what God ordered them to use. ^a Other offences indeed have been laid to their charge. Some pretend, that they endeavoured to intrude into the most holy place, which was not permitted them to enter; because immediately after the recital of the manner of their death, Moses, in another place relates, that God commanded him to speak unto Aaron, ² 'That he should not come, at all times, into the holy place, within the veil, before the mercy-seat, that he died not;' but others insinuate, that they were guilty of intemperance, at the entertainment made at their installation, because after the account of their fatal end, Moses, by God's order, gives this injunction to Aaron, and the remainder of his sons: ³ 'Do not drink wine, nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die. It shall be a statute for ever through your generations, that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, between unclean and clean.' But these are no more than bare surmises, that have no proper foundation in the foregoing texts; nor is there any occasion to hunt out for passages to augment these offenders' crime.

Nadab and Abihu had not only been admitted, in common with the rest of their brethren, to the honour of the priesthood, which among the Jews was a dignity of no small esteem; but had particular motives which the others had not, to the observance of all God's commandments, as having had the privilege of seeing the symbols of the divine presence, on the formidable mount from whence his laws were promulged, without being consumed. The higher therefore their station was, and the more distinguishing the favours they had received, the more provoking was their affront, in attempting to adulterate an ordinance of God's institution. Common fire, they thought, might serve the purpose of burning incense, as well as that which was held more sacred: at least, in the gaiety, or rather naughtiness of their hearts, they were minded to make the experiment, even in opposition to the divine com-

mand, and therefore ⁴ it was just and requisite in God, especially in the beginning of the priesthood, and when one alteration of a divine precept might, in process of time, be productive of many more, to inflict an exemplary punishment, that others might 'hear, and fear, and not commit the like abomination.'

And for this reason, namely, the injection of terror into others, Moses is commanded to make no lamentation or funeral pomp for them; which among the Jews, who, of all other nations, were so very sumptuous in their obsequies of their deceased friends, was accounted a sore judgment. In the case of Jehoiakim the king of Judah, the commination of God is thought very terrible. ⁵ They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah! my brother, or ah! sister: they shall not lament for him, saying, ah! lord, or ah! his glory. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn, and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.' Temporal judgments, however, are not always sure indications of the final condemnation of the persons on whom they fall; and therefore Aaron had no occasion utterly to despond: on the contrary, he might presume that the justice of God being satisfied with the present punishment of his sons, might be appeased with relation to their eternal state; and that though their ⁶ 'flesh was destroyed, yet their spirits might be saved in the day of the Lord.' He knew too, how much himself had offended in the matter of the golden calf, and might justly think, that God had called his sin to remembrance in the destruction of his two sons. He acknowledged, therefore, the righteousness of God, in all that he had brought upon him, and in the phrase of Scripture, ⁷ 'was dumb, and opened not his mouth, because it was the Lord's doing.'

What the occasion of the difference between Moses and his brother Aaron, and sister Miriam was, is not so very evident. The history indeed tells us, that ⁸ 'they spake against Moses, because of the Ethiopian or rather Arabian woman, whom he had married.' The generality of interpreters suppose this woman to be Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, whom he married in Midian; for those who imagine her to have been another, can hardly get over this difficulty,—Why Moses should set so bad an example as to marry, at two several times, a foreigner, rather than one of the daughters of his people. The first time, indeed, that he did so, was when he lived in a state of exile, but was nevertheless kindly received in a family of the best distinction in the place, which might be inducement enough for his matching himself with one of the daughters, since no express precept against matches of this kind was then in force. But now that he was set at the head of a people, who were to be separated from the rest of mankind, and was conducting them into a country, with whose inhabitants they were to have no matrimonial intercourse, for fear of introducing idolatry, it would have been highly indecent and unpopular, an affront upon his own countrywomen, as well as a dangerous inlet to impiety, for him to have married into an idolatrous nation; nor would his brother and sister have been the only persons to clamour against him, but the whole congregation would have risen up in

¹ Lev. x. 1.² Lev. xvi. 2.³ Lev. x. 9, 10.

^a The author of the Connexion so often cited, supposes another kind of innovation to have been the occasion of their untimely death. God as yet, says he, had given no law for the offering of incense in censers: all that he had been commanded about it, was that Aaron should burn it upon 'the altar of incense' every morning and every evening; but these men took upon them to begin, and introduce a service into religion, which was not appointed, and which if it had been suffered, would have opened a door to great irregularities; and therefore God, by an exemplary judgment upon the first offenders, put an effectual stop to it.—*Shuckford*, vol. iit. b. 11.

⁴ Le Clerc's Commentary.⁵ Jer. xxii. 18, 19.⁶ 1 Cor. v. 5.⁷ Ps. xxxix. 9.

Num. xii. 1.

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arms, upon so notorious a provocation. Since, therefore, we hear of no such commotion, we may reasonably conclude, that this Cushite, or Arabian woman, was the same Zipporah, whom he had married some forty years before. But then why they should quarrel with him upon her account, at this time, and no sooner, is the difficulty.

Now, to resolve this, we must observe, that when Jethro, his father-in-law, was in the camp, it was by his advice that Moses¹ instituted judges to determine lesser causes; and that he found his son Hobab so very serviceable to him in the capacity of a camp-master-general, that^a he earnestly entreated him to continue with him, and received him, no doubt, into great confidence. It is to be observed farther, that in the foregoing chapter, we have an account of the creation of the office of the seventy elders to assist in the administration, and that these elders were nominated by Moses, without ever consulting Aaron or Miriam. As therefore this story of their quarrelling with him is immediately subjoined, it seems very likely, that taking themselves to be neglected, in so great an alteration made in the government without their advice, they were very angry; but not daring to charge Moses directly, they fell foul upon his wife, giving her opprobrious names, and complaining to the people, very probably, that she and her brother had too much power and influence over Moses.

Josephus, in his Jewish history, makes no mention of this family difference, as thinking that it might reflect discredit upon his nation; but Moses was an author of more veracity than to conceal any action which was proper for mankind to know, even though it tended to the lasting disgrace of his own family. For he does not affect to aggrandize the thing, or to make his family appear more considerable, when he introduces God as arbitrating the difference between them; but purely to acquaint us, that as the Israelites lived then under a theocracy, God himself being their immediate King, undertook to decide the controversies depending upon such of his chief ministers as were not accountable to any other judge; nor was the divine Majesty any more debased in condescending to make this decision, than any earthly prince would be, by interposing his authority to determine a controversy between two of his great and powerful subjects.

¹ Exod. xviii. 21, 22.

^a Moses' words to Hobab are these: 'Leave us not, I pray thee, forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes,' (Num. x. 31.) But if the being which resided in the miraculous cloud was their guide, what need was there for Hobab's stay? Now the design of the cloud was to direct the people when to decamp and where to encamp again: but for the securing of their camp against all hostile force, they were left to human means: and therefore Hobab, having lived long a borderer upon the wilderness, was well acquainted with every part of it, and the better able to advise them, both whence to provide themselves with such things as they wanted, and how to secure themselves against any neighbouring powers that should attempt to assault them; and for these reasons Moses was so pressing for his staying with him; though the Septuagint understand the passage as if he desired him to continue to be what he had hitherto been in the wilderness, namely, a good adviser, like his father Jethro, and withal assured him, that he would look upon him as an elder.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

Moses indeed inserts a passage to show that the occasion of this family quarrel was not from him; that he was a man of a meek and peaceable disposition; and therefore not addicted to strife and contention, especially with those of his own kindred; and why might he not insert this, when it was no more than what was due to his character, and perhaps at that time necessary for his own vindication? St Paul, to clear himself from some aspersions which the malice of his enemies had cast upon him, enters upon his own commendation, though it be with some reluctance, and to give it a better gloss, tries all the powers of eloquence in working it up. ² 'Whereinsoever any is bold,' says he, 'I speak foolishly, I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool, I am more: In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure: In prisons more frequent: In deaths often.—In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren: In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often; in hunger and thirst, in fastings often; in cold and nakedness; besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.' These are the words of our apostle, setting off the faithful discharge of his ministry; and yet no one ever suspected the genuineness of this his epistle to the Corinthians upon that account: as little reason have we, therefore, to call in question the authenticity of this book of Moses, because we find a passage or two that speaks favourably of him.

That all historians, both ancient and modern, when they come to speak of the part and concern they had in such and such actions, are commonly accustomed to speak in the third person; and that the most modest man upon earth may sometimes see occasion to magnify his office, or vindicate himself, without deserving the imputation of vanity or arrogance, cannot be denied. Now, considering what share it was that Moses himself bore in the facts which he relates, and that the narrations, laws, and admonitions which he recorded, were not designed for that age only, but directed to all succeeding generations of the world; and withal considering, that the seditious and turbulent behaviour of his brother and sister at that time obliged him to justify and clear himself; there was no imaginable way more proper for him to express himself in, than that which he made use of, even had it been a matter of his own study and contrivance: but then, if we suppose that he wrote by divine inspiration, the commendation that is given of his natural lenity and good nature, must be looked upon rather as the Holy Ghost's testimony concerning Moses, than Moses' testimony concerning himself.

Though Moses was certainly a good-natured man, and therefore could not live long at variance with his brother Aaron, yet we can hardly suppose, that his love and affection for him would ever prevail with him to enter into any fraudulent measures, in order to raise him to the pontificate. The rod which gave Aaron the preference, was not, as we noted before, Moses' wonder-

² 2 Cor. xi. 21, &c.

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working rod, but, in all probability, one of the same tree from whence the princes of the other tribes cut theirs. All these rods, with the names of the several tribes engraved upon them, were delivered to Moses in the face of the whole congregation, and by him were instantly carried into the tabernacle: and that he did not palm upon the people, when his back was turned, and put an almond twig into the place of Aaron's rod, is evident from what is related of it, namely, that it had leaves, buds, blossoms, and ripe fruit upon it, all at one time, which no tree of any kind ever was known to have before.

Some of the vulgar, and less curious, might perhaps, at a cursory review, have been imposed upon by a sham appearance of these things painted on Aaron's rod; but Moses knew very well, that he had the heads of each tribe to deal with; men of sagacity and observation, and who were too nearly concerned in the experiment to let any pretence to a miracle go unexamined: and therefore we may very well imagine that when he brought forth all the rods the next morning, they surveyed every one very carefully, and made diligent search into the alteration which had passed upon that which belonged to Aaron; and had they found any deception in it, would have exposed the two brothers to contempt and ridicule, or rather have deposed them from all rule and power for the future, as a couple of vile and impious impostors. But instead of that, we find that this miracle silenced all cavils for ever after against Aaron and his family; confirmed the authority of Moses; and made the people, when he told them, that by God's appointment, he had laid up Aaron's rod to be a witness against them, that if they murmured any more, they should most certainly be destroyed, break out into this doleful complaint: ¹ "Behold we die, we perish, we all perish, and shall be consumed with dying:" for they began now to believe God's threatenings, and to fear, that at one time or other they should experience some heavy and severe punishment, as by this new sign he had convinced them that they had justly deserved it.

Thus I have endeavoured to answer most of the material objections which have industriously been raised against the sacred history of this period; and were it any farther confirmation of its truth and authority, I might add, ² that the whole matter of Korah, how he rebelled against Moses, and made a defection among the people, for which he suffered the very judgment that the Scripture relates, was doubtless of standing tradition in the east, which the Mahometans have borrowed, and given us at second hand: that the consumption of Aaron's sacrifice, ³ "by the fire which came from the Lord," raised the report, ⁴ that, in ancient times, men did not kindle fire upon their altars, but called it down from heaven by prayer, and that the flame was produced by the deity to whom the sacrifice was offered: that the irra-

diation of Moses' face, when he came down from the mount, introduced the custom among the heathens, of adorning the images of their gods and heroes with a beamy glory about their heads: that the veneration paid to his wonder-working rod, established an usage which prevails almost every where, ⁵ for the great ministers of state to carry in their hands wands, as ensigns of their office, whenever they appear at court; and that the budding of his brother Aaron's rod, in all probability, gave rise to ⁶ the fable of Hercules' club, when left in the ground, striking root downward, and so reviving and repullulating. But I choose rather, in this place, to remark the great affinity between the divine and human laws, so far as they relate to what we call the *decalogue*, inasmuch, that whatever the ancient heathen lawgivers have enacted about these matters, seems little more than a transcript from the ten commandments, which Moses delivered to the Jews.

Thus the unity of God, and the folly of making any image of him, which constitute the two first commandments, was an ⁷ institution of Numa, which he took from Pythagoras, who maintained, that there was only one supreme Being, and that, as he is perfectly spiritual, and the object of the mind only, no visible representation can be made of him. The reverence of God's holy name, which is the subject of the third, was recognised by the heathens in all their solemn contracts, promises, and asseverations; and for this reason Plato, in his book *de Legibus*, acquaints us, that "it is ⁸ an excellent lesson, to be very cautious and tender, in so much as mentioning the very name of God." The setting apart one day in seven, and the observation of it for religious purposes, was a practice so general in the pagan world, that, according to Philo, this seventh day was truly called *Εργη πανδημος*, or the universal festival, and by the Athenians, according to the laws then in force, was observed with the utmost strictness, and such as admitted of no servile work. The honour and respect due to parents was secured by that excellent law made by Solon, which declares, ⁹ "that if any one strike his parents, or do not maintain them, and provide them a dwelling, and all things necessary, let him be utterly disregarded, and banished from all civil society." The prohibition of murder is confirmed by the laws of Athens, which make its punishment capital, when wilfully committed; banishment, when by chance medley; and for every maim designedly given, imposes both a confiscation of goods, and a proscription from the city where the injured person dwells. The prohibition of adultery was sufficiently enforced by Solon, when he left the guilty persons, when deprehended in the fact, to the mercy of the injured husband, who, if he suffered them to escape with their lives, had license to handle the man very roughly, ¹⁰ and to divorce the woman, who for her crime was excluded from all places of public concourse, and reduced below the condition of a slave. The prohibition of theft was supported by a law of Draco's, which made felons of what denomination soever lose their lives for their

¹ Num. xvii. 12, 13.

² Calmet's Dictionary under the word Korah.

³ Lev. ix. 24.

⁴ Servius in *Æneid*, b. 12. v. 200. and Patrick's Commentary in locum. From the fire of the altar, which, in the Mosaic language, was called 'the fire of the Lord,' as it came down from heaven, and was perpetually kept burning, it is obvious, at first sight, that the Greeks derived, in the way of etymology, their *ιστρία*, and the Romans their vestal fire, so famous in all history.—*Bibliotheca Biblica* on Num. Annot. 2.

⁵ Huet. *Quest. Ainet.*

⁶ Huet. *ibid.*

⁷ Clem. Alex. *Strom.* b. 5; and *Bibliotheca Biblica* on Exod. xx. 4.

⁸ De Leg. b. 2.

⁹ *Bibliotheca Biblica* on Deut. Dissertation 3.

¹⁰ Archbishop Potter's *Greek Antiquities*.

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crime; but this being thought too severe, Solon's institution was, that every petty larceny should be punished with double restitution, and sometimes imprisonment, but every greater robbery, to the value of fifty drachms, with death. The prohibition of false witness was,¹ ratified by the Athenian laws, which not only punished the offenders with fines, confiscation of goods and banishment, but degraded them likewise from all dignity, as persons extremely ignominious, and who, according² to the law of the twelve tables, deserved to be thrown from the Tarpeian rock. The prohibition of covetousness of all kinds, which is the tenth and last commandment, nowhere occurs in the edicts of any ancient legislator; for, as³ a pious bishop well observes, "all the laws that were ever made by any governors upon earth, respected only the words and actions, or the outward carriage and behaviour of their subjects. None ever offered to give laws to the minds or hearts of men, what they should think, or love, or desire, or the like; and it would have been ridiculous and absurd to have done it, because they could never have known whether such laws were observed or no;" so proper is the question, which their great lawgiver puts to the Jews,⁴ "What nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" So just the commendation which the royal Psalmist gives of it: "The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple. Moreover by them is thy servant taught, and in keeping of them there is great reward."

CHAP. III.—Of the Jewish Tabernacle, &c.

FROM the very first beginning of time, God had always some place appropriated to the solemn duties of religious worship.⁵ Even during the small space of his continuance in paradise, Adam had⁶ where to present himself before the Lord; and after his expulsion from thence, his sons in like manner, had⁷ whither to bring their oblations and sacrifices. The patriarchs, both before and after the flood, used⁸ altars, and⁹ mountains, and¹⁰ groves, for the self-same purpose. Here they had their *proseuchæ*, or places for prayer, which were certain plats of ground, encompassed with a wall, or some other enclosure, and open above. But since the first place of this kind, that made any considerable figure, was the tabernacle which God ordered Moses to erect in the wilderness, as an habitation for his majestic presence to reside in, it may not be improper, in this place, to give some account of it, and the other holy things appertaining to it.

The tabernacle was a tent covered with curtains and skins, but much larger than other tents. It was in the form of an oblong square, thirty cubits in length, and ten in height and breadth, and was properly divided into two parts, namely, the holy place, and the holy of holies.

The holy place was twenty cubits long, and ten wide, where stood the table of shewbread, the golden candlestick, and the altar of incense. The holy of holies, which was likewise called the sanctuary, was ten cubits long, and ten broad, contained the ark of the covenant, and was separated from the holy place by a veil, or hanging, made of rich embroidered linen, which hung upon four pillars of shittim or cedar wood, that were covered with plates of gold, but had their bases made of brass; and at the entrance of the tabernacle, instead of a door, there was a veil of the same work, sustained by the like pillars, which separated it from the outward court.

The boards or planks whereof the body of the tabernacle was composed, were in all forty-eight, each a cubit and a half wide, and ten cubits high. Twenty of them went to make up one side of the tabernacle, and twenty the other, and at the west end of it were the other eight, which were all let into one another by two tenons above and below, and compacted together by bars running from one end to the other; but the east end of it was open, and only covered with a rich curtain.

The roof of the tabernacle was a square frame of planks, resting upon their basis; and over these were coverings or curtains of different kinds. Of these the first, on the inside, was made of fine linen, curiously embroidered in various colours of crimson and scarlet, and purple and hyacinth; the next was made of goats' hair neatly woven together; and the last of sheep and badgers' skins, (some dyed red, and others of azure blue,) which were to preserve the rich curtains from wet, and to protect the tabernacle itself from the injuries of the weather.

Round about the tabernacle was a large oblong court, an hundred cubits long, and fifty broad, encompassed with pillars overlaid with silver, and whose capitals were of the same metal, but their bases were of brass. Ten of these pillars stood towards the west, six to the east, twenty to the north, and twenty to the south, at five cubits distance from each other; and over these hung curtains made of twined linen thread, in the manner of net-work, which surrounded the tabernacle on all sides, except at the entrance of the court, which was twenty cubits wide, and sustained with four columns, overlaid with plates of silver. These columns had their capitals and bases of brass; were placed at proportionable distances, and covered with a curtain made of richer materials.

In this court, and opposite to the entrance of the tabernacle, stood the altar of burnt-offerings in the open air, that the fire, which was kept perpetually upon it, and the smoke arising from the victims that were burnt there, might not spoil the inside of the tabernacle. It was five cubits long, as much in width, and three cubits high; was placed upon a basis of stone work, and covered both within and without with brass plates. At the four corners of this altar there was something like four horns, covered with the same metal, and as the altar itself was hollow, and open both at top and bottom, from these horns there hung a grate made of brass, fastened with four rings and four chains, whereon the wood and the sacrifice were burnt; and as the ashes fell through, they were received below in a pan. At a very small distance from this altar there stood on the south side, a brazen vessel, which, on account of its extraordinary size, was called the brazen sea, in which the priests were used to

¹ Bibliotheca Biblica on Deut. Dissertation 3.

² A. Gell. b. 12. c. 1. ³ Bishop Beveridge upon the Catechism.

⁴ Deut. iv. 8. and Ps. xix. 7, &c. Hooker's Eccles. Polity, b. 5. ⁵ Gen. iii. 8. ⁶ Gen. iv. 3.

⁷ Gen. xiii. 4. ⁸ Gen. xxii. 1. ⁹ Gen. xxi. 33.

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wash their feet, whenever they were to offer sacrifice, or to go into the tabernacle.

In that part of the tabernacle which was called the holy place, there was on the north side, a table made of Shittim or cedar wood, covered with gold, two cubits long, one in breadth, and one and a half in length. About the edge of it was an ornament, or border made of gold, together with a crown of gold in the middle, and at each end was placed the offering of the shewbread, namely, six loaves in a pile to represent the twelve tribes. The bread was changed every Sabbath-day, and not allowed to be eaten by any one but the priests.

Over against this table, on the south side, stood the candlestick, which was made of pure gold, upon a basis of the same metal, and had seven branches on each side, and one in the middle. These branches were at equal distances, adorned with six flowers like lilies, with as many knobs like apples, and little bowls like half almond shells, placed alternately; and upon each of these branches there was a golden lamp, which was lighted every evening, and extinguished every morning.

Between the table and the candlestick, was placed the altar of incense, which was but one cubit in length and breadth, and two cubits high; but was covered with plates of gold, and had a crown of gold over it. Every morning and evening, the priest in waiting for that week, offered incense of a particular composition upon this altar, and to this end carried a smoking censer, filled with fire, which he took from the altar of burnt-offerings into the tabernacle, and so placing it upon this other altar, retired.

The persons appointed to officiate about holy things were of three kinds, the high priest, priests, and Levites; and, what is very remarkable, in the first of this order, is the singularity of his vestments, which were the breastplate, the ephod, the robe, the close coat, the mitre, and the girdle. The ephod, the robe, and the close coat were all of linen, and covered the whole body from the neck to the heel. Over these was a purple or blue tunic, which reached not so low, but was curiously wrought all over, and at the bottom of it had pomegranates, and bells, intermixed at equal distances. The pomegranates were made of blue, purple, and crimson wool, and ^a the bells of gold.

^a What the number of bells worn by the high priest was, the Scripture is silent, and authors are not so well agreed; but the sacred historian has let us into the use and intent of them in these words: 'And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth into the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.' The kings of Persia are said to have the hem of their robes adorned, like the Jewish high priest, with pomegranates and gold bells. The ladies who are about his person, and whose business it is to please and divert him, have little gold bells fastened to their legs, their neck, and elbows, and when they dance, the sound of these make a very agreeable harmony. The Arabian princesses wear large hollow gold rings, which are filled with little flints, and make a sound like little bells when they walk; and besides these, they have abundance of little flat bobs fastened to the ends of their hair; which make a noise as often as they stir, and give notice that the mistress of the house is going by, that so the servants of the family may behave themselves respectfully, and strangers retire, to avoid seeing the person that is passing. It was therefore in all probability, with a design of giving notice, that the high priest was passing by, that he too wore little bells on the hem of his robe; or rather it was, as it were, a kind of public notice, that

The ephod was a kind of girdle, made of gold thread, and other threads of divers colours, which being brought from behind the neck, and over the two shoulders, was put cross upon the stomach; then carried round the waist, and brought back again about the body, did gird the tunic like a sash, and so fell down before, and hung as low as the feet. Upon that part of the ephod, which came upon the high priest's shoulders, were two large precious stones, whereon were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, on each stone six; and where the ephod crossed the high priest's breast, there was a square ornament, called the *pectoral*, or *rational*, wherein were twelve precious stones set, with the names of the twelve tribes engraven on them, on each stone one. The mitre was of fine flax: it covered the head; and on the forehead was a plate of gold, whereon were engraven these words, HOLINESS TO THE LORD, which was tied behind the head with two ribbons fastened to its ends.

These were the chief of the solemn ornaments which belonged to the high priest. The other priests had only a simple tunic, a linen mitre, and a girdle; but they all of them wore linen or cotton breeches, which covered their legs and thighs, and reached up to their waist. The Levites had no peculiar habit in the ceremonies of religion; but about the sixty-second year of Christ, they obtained of king Agrippa leave to wear a linen tunic, as well as the priests.

The high priest was at the head of all religious affairs, and the ordinary judge of all the difficulties which related to them. He only had the privilege of entering into the sanctuary once a year, which was on the day of solemn expiation, to make atonement for the sins of the whole people. The ordinary priests attended the service of the tabernacle; they kept up a perpetual fire upon the altar of burnt-offerings; lighted and extinguished the lamps of the golden candlestick; made the loaves of shewbread; offered them on the golden altar in the sanctuary; changed them every Sabbath-day; and every day, at night and morning, carried in a smoking censer of incense, and placed it upon the golden table, which, upon this account, was likewise called the altar of incense.

But the chief business of the priests was to offer sacrifices, of which there were four kinds. 1. The burnt-offering, which was totally consumed by fire upon the altar, after that the feet and entrails had been washed. 2. The peace-offering, whereof the inward fat, or tallow, made up with the liver and kidneys, was only burnt upon the altar: the breast and right shoulder was the perquisite of the priests, who were obliged to eat them in the holy place; and the remainder belonged to the person who offered the sacrifice. 3. The sacrifice for sin, committed either wilfully or ignorantly: and in this the priest took some of the blood of the victim, dipped hi

he was going into the sanctuary; for as in the king of Persia's court, no one was suffered to enter the apartments, without giving notice thereof by the sound of something; so the high priest, out of respect to the divine presence, residing in the holy of holies, did, by the sound of little bells, fastened to the bottom of his robe, desire, as it were permission to enter, that the sound of the bells might be heard, and he not punished with death, for an unmannerly intrusion.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Bell*.

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finger in it, and sprinkled it seven times towards the veil of the sanctuary. The same parts of the victim were burnt on the altar in this as in the former sacrifice. The rest, if the sacrifice was offered for the sin of the high priest, or for the people, was carried without the camp, and there burnt; but if it was for a private person, the victim was divided, as we said before, between the priest and the offerer. 4. The sacrifice of oblation was either fine flour, or incense, cakes of fine flour, and oil baked, or the first-fruits of new corn. Oil, salt, wine, and frankincense went always along with every thing that was offered. All the frankincense was cast into the fire; but of the other things the priest only burnt a part, and the rest he reserved to himself.

Thus we have taken a cursory view of the Jewish tabernacle, and its utensils; of the Jewish priesthood, and its offices; and have nothing more to do, but to inquire a little for what ^a ends and uses God was pleased to institute these things. To this purpose St Paul informs us, that the Jewish law was an imperfect dispensation from the very first, and ¹ 'added only because of transgressions, until the seed should come, to whom the promise was made:' that in great condescension, it was adapted to the weakness of the Jewish people, whom he compares to an heir under a tutor or governor; for these are his words: ² 'I say then, that an heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all: Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage, under the elements of the world;' so that ³ 'the law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ,' and ⁴ 'having only a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, it could never,

with those sacrifices which were offered, year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.' In order therefore to illustrate this point, namely, that the Jewish religion was, in a great measure, intended to typify and prefigure the more perfect dispensation of the gospel, we shall instance in some of its particulars already enumerated.

Thus the tabernacle itself was a type of the Redeemer dwelling in our nature; for so St John tells us, that ⁵ 'the Word was made flesh, and ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, dwelt among us,' as in a tabernacle. The altar of burnt-offerings in the court, pointed out the death and sacrifice ⁶ of our Lord, by the shedding of whose blood our sins are pardoned, and we received into mercy and favour. The altar of incense within the holy place denoted our Lord's powerful intercession for us, in his exalted state of glory; and the 'ark of the covenant in the holy of holies,' was an eminent emblem of him, from whose mouth we received a law, 'founded upon better promises;' by whose intercession we have access to the 'throne of grace with all boldness;' and whose satisfaction to the divine justice is our true propitiatory or mercy-seat.

What a manifest type the Jewish high priest was of our Lord and Saviour, the author to the Hebrews has declared in more instances than one. The Jewish high priest was the only man who was permitted to enter into the 'holy of holies;' and ⁷ 'we have such an high priest,' says the apostle, 'who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.' The Jewish high priest offered a solemn expiatory sacrifice once a year; our Lord ⁸ 'appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' After the expiatory sacrifice, the Jewish high priest went into the holy place, there to offer incense on the golden altar; our Lord, 'when he had purged our sins,' ⁹ sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; there ¹⁰ 'to appear in the presence of God,' and by the incense of his merits, to make continual intercession for us.

In like manner, whether we consider the several qualifications of the sacrifices under the law, or the several sorts of them, we shall find them to be types and prefigurations of Christ. The conditions of a Jewish sacrifice were,—That it should be without blemish, publicly presented before the congregation, substituted in the sinner's room, and the iniquities of the sinner laid upon him. With relation to these properties, our Saviour is said to be 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners.' That he might 'sanctify his people,' he is said 'to have' ¹¹ suffered without the gate, bearing our reproach; and that ¹² 'he, who knew no sin, became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

And so, if we look to the several sorts of sacrifices appointed under the law, we shall soon perceive that these equally lead us to Christ. For he was the trespass-offering, in that 'he was made sin for us;' the peace-offering because ¹³ 'he made peace by the blood of his

¹ Gal. iii. 19.² Gal. iv. 1, &c.³ Gal. iii. 24.⁴ Heb. x. 1.

^a Josephus, having treated of the tabernacle, and the several things appertaining to it, makes the use and design of them a little too mystical and allegorical. "Let but a man consider," says he, "the structure of the tabernacle, the sacerdotal vestments, and the holy vessels that are dedicated to the service of the altar, and he must of necessity be convinced, that our law-giver was a pious man.—For what are all these but the image of the whole world? The tabernacle consisting of thirty cubits, and being divided into three parts, whereof two are for the priests in general, and of free access, resembles the earth and the sea; while the third, where no mortal, except the high priest, is permitted to enter, is an emblem of heaven, reserved for God alone. The twelve loaves of shewbread upon the table, signify the twelve months in the year. The candlestick, which is made up of seventy pieces, refers to the twelve signs of the zodiac, through which the seven planets take their course; and the seven lamps, on the top of the seven branches, bear an analogy to the planets themselves. The curtains with the four colours that are wrought in them, represent the four elements.—By the high priest's linen garment is designed the whole body of the earth; and by the violet colour, the heavens. The pomegranates answer to lightning, and the noise of the bells to thunder. The four-coloured ephod bears a resemblance to the very nature of the universe, and the interweaving it with threads of gold, to the rays of the sun, which give us light. The pectoral or rational, in the middle of it, intimates the position of the earth in the centre of the world; the girdle about the priest's body, is the sea about the globe of the earth; the two sardonyx stones, on the shoulders, represent the sun and moon; and by the twelve other stones on the breast, may be understood either the twelve months, or the twelve signs of the zodiac." But all this is too light and fanciful, one would think, for so grave an author as Josephus, had not this way of allegorizing things been the prevailing custom of the age.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 3. c. 7.

⁵ John i. 14.⁶ Heb. xiii. 10.⁷ Heb. viii. 1, 2.⁸ Heb. ix. 26.⁹ Heb. i. 3.¹⁰ Heb. 9. 24.¹¹ Heb. xiii. 12, 13.¹² 2 Cor. v. 21.¹³ Col. i. 20.

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cross;' the meat and drink offering, for ¹ 'his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed;' the scape-goat, for he hath carried away our sins, ² never to be more remembered against us; the paschal lamb, for ³ 'Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us; the great sacrifice of atonement,' for ⁴ 'Jesus Christ the righteous is both our advocate with the Father, and a propitiation for our sins:' and in fine, ⁵ 'his blood, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God, without spot, is more effectual than the blood of bulls and goats, to purge our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God.'

Thus it appears, that the chief end of the several institutions relating to the ceremonial part of the Jewish worship, was to prefigure the person and transactions of our blessed Saviour, ⁶ 'when the fulness of time was come that God should send forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' And therefore, since the ceremonies of the Jewish law could never be of any esteem in the sight of God, any otherwise than as they promoted this end, and prepared men's minds for the reception of a more perfect institution of religion, it is manifest, that when this more perfect institution was once settled, the former and more imperfect was, of course, to cease; ⁷ 'there being necessarily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.'

And from hence we may finally infer, that though the essence of religion be eternally and immutably the same, yet the form and institution of it may be, and often has been, changed. ⁸ The essence of all religion is obedience to that moral and eternal law, which obliges us to imitate the life of God in justice, mercy, and holiness, that is, 'to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.' This is the sum of all natural religion, as appears from the discourses of those wiser heathens, who were freest from prejudice and superstition. This was the sum of the Jewish religion, as appears from the frequent and earnest protestations of God to that people by his servants the prophets; and this likewise is the sum of the Christian religion, as the apostles everywhere inculcate. But though religion itself is thus immutably the same, yet the form and institution of it may be different.

When natural religion, by reason of its obscurity, in this corrupt estate of human nature, proved ineffectual to make men truly religious, God left them no longer to the guidance of their reason only, but gave them first the patriarchal, and afterwards the Mosaic dispensation; and when, through the incumbrance with so many ritual observances, this latter proved ineffectual to the same great end, God abolished this form of religion likewise, and instituted the Christian. In all which proceeding, there is no reflection at all upon the immutable nature of God. For as the divine nature is, in the truest and highest sense, unchangeable; so religion itself, in its nature and essence, is likewise unchangeable. But as the capacities, the prejudices, and the circumstances of men are different, so the institution and outward form of

that religion, which in its essence is always the same, may, with the good pleasure of God, be changed; even as a careful nurse, to use a scripture comparison upon this occasion, adapts the diet to the strength and constitution of the person she attends: 'For every one that useth milk,' as the elements of the Jewish dispensation were, 'is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe; but strong meat,' or a religion of a greater perfection, as the Christian is, 'belongeth to them that are of full age; even those, who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.'

SECT. III.

CHAP. I.—*From the Death of Korah, to the Israelites' Entrance into Canaan; in all, 38 years.*

THE HISTORY.

AFTER the establishment of the high priest's office in Aaron, and his family, the Israelites moved about from place to place, in the deserts of Arabia, but chiefly about the mountains of Idumæa, until God, ^a shortening the period of human life, had taken away almost all that generation, ⁹ 'of whom he had sworn in his wrath,' as the Psalmist expresses it, 'that they should not enter into his rest.' And indeed, good reason had he to be angry with them, since during the remainder of their peregrination they were guilty of many more murmurings and idolatries than Moses has thought proper to record, which are nevertheless mentioned, with no small severity, ¹⁰ by other inspired writers.

As the time, however, for their entrance into the Holy Land now drew near, from Ezion-geber they advanced towards Kadesh in the wilderness of Sin, designing very probably to enter the country through those narrow passages, which, at that time were called, 'the ways of the spies;' but ¹¹ they were repulsed by the king of Arad, who coming out against them with a strong force, slew a considerable number, and took from them much booty. In their second attempt, however, they succeeded better; for they defeated the king's army, sacked some of his towns, and vowing at another opportunity ^b which happened in the time of ¹² Joshua) the utter destruction of

⁹ Ps. xcv. 11.¹⁰ See Amos v. 26; Ezek. and Ps. passim; Acts vii. 43.¹¹ Num. xxi. 1, 11.¹² Josh. xxii. 14.

^a After the many judgments and calamities sent upon Israel, by reason of their rebellions against God, Moses perceiving the divine threatenings to be daily accomplished by the frequent deaths of those who came out of Egypt, and 'whose carcasses were to fall in the wilderness,' composed the ninetyeth psalm, wherein he mentions, the reduction of human life to the term of years wherein it has ever since stopped, and makes several wholesome reflections thereupon: 'The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong, that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone. O teach us therefore to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.'—Ver. 10, 11.

^b The Jews have a tradition, founded on an express text in Deuteronomy, (chap. xx. 10, &c.) that the Israelites were obliged to send an herald to offer peace in their name, to every city and people, before they attempted to conquer them by the sword; that in case they accepted it they only became tributaries to them;

¹ John vi. 55. ² John i. 29. ³ 1 Cor. v. 7.⁴ 1 John ii. 1, 2. ⁵ Heb. ix. 13, 14. ⁶ Gal. iv. 4, 5.⁷ Heb. vii. 18. ⁸ Dr Samuel Clarke's Sermon, vol. x.

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the whole nation, they took their route for the present another way, and so arrived again at Kadesh.

Here it was that Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, (^a who was older than either of them,) in the hundred and thirty-third year of her age died, was buried with great pomp, and by the Israelites lamented for the space of a whole month. Here it was that the people fell again into their old way of murmuring for want of water, which God ordered Moses to supply, by speaking only to a certain rock; but some way or other he deviating from his instructions, either through impatience or diffidence, offended God to such a degree, as to deserve a denunciation, that neither he, nor his brother Aaron, who seems to have been equally in the offence, should be permitted to enter into Canaan. Hence likewise it was, that Moses sent an embassy to the king of Edom, desiring a free passage through his country, and promising to commit no hostilities, nor give the least molestation to any of his subjects. But the haughty Edomite was so far from granting his request, that he came out with a strong army to oppose him; which Moses, no doubt, would have resented as the thing deserved, had not God, whom he consulted upon this occasion, ordered him, for the present, not to engage with the Edomites: so that decamping from Kadesh, he came to Mount Hor, not far from the borders of Edom, where God gave Aaron notice of his approaching death, and not long after, commanded Moses to take him and Eleazar his son, who was to succeed him in the office of the high priest, to the top of the mount, and there to strip Aaron of his sacerdotal robes, and put them upon his son: which when Moses had done, Aaron ^b died on the top of Mount Hor, being an hundred

but if they refused their offer, they were then to be vowed to destruction. Maimonides has taken great pains to prove, that all those nations which were cut off by the Israelites, owed their destruction to their choosing to try the fortune of war, rather than accept of peace upon such terms. There is one objection however, which seems to stand a little in his way, and that is,—the stratagem which the Gibeonites made use of to obtain peace from Israel, which would have been needless, had the latter been obliged to offer it before they began any hostilities: but to this the learned Rabbi answers,—That the reason of the Gibeonites' policy was, that they had in common with their neighbours, refused the first offer of peace, and were consequently doomed to the same fate with them: and that, for the prevention of this, their ambassadors feigned themselves to come from a country vastly distant from any of the other seven, and by that means obtained the desired peace.—*Maimon. ap. Cunæus; et Easneus. Rep. Heb.* vol. i. b. 2. c. 20.

^a Miriam was older than either Aaron or Moses. Moses was the youngest: and when he was born she might probably be about twelve years of age, because when he was exposed upon the banks of the river Nile, she, we find, had address enough to offer her service to Pharaoh's daughter, to go and fetch her a nurse, which can hardly be supposed of one younger. Some of the ancient fathers are of opinion that she died a virgin, and was the legislatrix or governess of the Jewish women, as Moses was of the men; but the more probable opinion is, that she was married to Hur, a man of chief note in the tribe of Judah, and on several occasions a person of great confidence with Moses: but it does not appear that she had any children by him. She was buried, as Josephus tells us, with great solemnity, at the charge of the public, and her sepulchre, as Eusebius reports, was extant in his time at Kadesh, not far distant from the city Petra, the metropolis of Arabia Petræa.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7; and *Calmet's Dictionary*.

^b The Mount Hor was on the coast of the land of Edom, towards the east, in some part of that tract, which was afterwards denoted by the Mount Seir. In Deuteronomy (ii. 12.) we are

and twenty-three years old; and when the people understood that he was dead, ^c they bewailed him thirty days.

As soon as the days of mourning were over, they removed, and encamped at Zalmanah, which took its name from the image of the serpent, which Moses caused to be set up there. For the Israelites, being tired with the length of their journey, the narrowness of their passes, and the barrenness of the country, began to relapse into their old humour of murmuring and repining, which provoked God to send great ^d swarms of fiery

told expressly that the Horims dwelt in Seir before-time; and accordingly we read (Gen. xiv. 6.) that Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, with his confederates, smote the Horites in their Mount Seir. Now it seems very probable, that as places at first were wont to take their names from their inhabitants, both this place, and the people might derive their names from one Hor, whom they descended from, and who in the early ages of the world, inhabited this country; and that though, in process of time, the name of Mount Seir came to be used to denote the same tract, yet the old name of Mount Hor was preserved in that part of it, where stood the mountain here so called by Moses, and on which Aaron died. There seems to be however no small difficulty in reconciling this passage in Numbers xx. 23—28, with what we read in Deuteronomy x. 6. That 'the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth, of the children of Jaakan, to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried.' So that Moses seems to have forgot himself, when in one place he tells us, that his brother Aaron was buried on Mount Hor, and in another in Mosera. To reconcile this, some have supposed that Mount Hor was so near to Mosera, where the Israelites had their encampment when Aaron died, that either place might, with propriety enough, be called the place of his death and his interment. It seems, however, from the account which we have of their encampments, in Numbers xxxiii. very plain, that Mount Hor and Mosera were two distinct places; and therefore others have maintained, that the sixth and seventh verses in the tenth chapter of Deuteronomy, in the common Hebrew text, have been extremely corrupted by the ignorance of some transcribers, because the Hebrew Samaritan or old Hebrew text, makes the account in Deuteronomy x. 6, 7, exactly agree with the order of the encampments, mentioned in Numbers xxxiii. 32, 38, and there it is said that Aaron died, and was buried in Mount Hor.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii.

^c The author of Ecclesiasticus, having given us a long commendation of Aaron, and his vestments, comes at last to tell us, that "God chose him out of all men living, to offer sacrifices to the Lord, incense, and a sweet savour, for a memorial, and to make reconciliation for his people; that he gave unto him the commandments and authority in the statutes of judgments, that he should teach Jacob the testimonies, and inform Israel in the laws; that strangers conspired together against him, and maligned him in the wilderness—this the Lord saw, and it displeased him, and in his wrathful indignation, they were consumed.—But he made Aaron more honourable, and gave him an heritage, and divided unto him the first-fruits of the increase; so that he did eat the sacrifices of the Lord, which he gave unto him and to his seed," &c. He died in the arms of Moses his brother, and Eleazar his son, and successor in the high priesthood. They buried him in some cave belonging to Mount Hor, and kept the place of his interment from the knowledge of the Israelites, perhaps from an apprehension that in after ages they might pay some superstitious worship to him; or rather, that the Arabians, among whom they then dwelt, might not at any time take it in their heads to violate the sanctity of his grave.—*Eccclus.* xlv. 13, &c.

^d Some authors are of opinion, that these serpents were only little worms, which bred in the skin, and were of so venomous a nature, that they immediately poisoned those who were infected by them. But it is very evident, that not only the original words, *necashim seraphim*, signify a burning or winged serpent, but that these creatures are very common both in Egypt and Arabia, inasmuch that there would be no living in those countries, if these serpents had not by Providence been debarred from multiplying as other serpents do. For the Arabians tell us, that after

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serpents among them; but after the death of several, and upon the humiliation of the rest, he commanded Moses to cast a ^a brazen serpent, of the same size and figure with those that infested them, and to fix it upon a pole, situate on some eminent ground, that as many as were bitten by the living serpents, might look up to the brazen one, and be healed. Which accordingly was done, and had its intended miraculous effect.

Several were the marches and encampments which the Israelites, without committing the least hostilities, made between the countries of Moab and Ammon, till they came at length to the country of the Amorites. And from hence Moses ^b sent ambassadors to Sihon their king, demanding a passage through his country, and offering to pay for all manner of necessities, without giving him the least disturbance. ^c But the Amorite

that they had coupled together, the female never fails to kill the male, and that her young ones kill her, as soon as they are hatched. Herodotus, who had seen several of these serpents, tells us, that they very much resemble those which the Greeks and Latins call hydræ; and Bochart has quoted a great number both of ancient and modern authors to prove that they really are the hydræ. They are but short, are spotted with divers colours, and have wings like those of a bat. The ibis is their mortal enemy; and Herodotus tells us, that at Butos in Egypt, he had seen a vast quantity of their skeletons, whose flesh these birds had devoured. They love sweet smells, frequent such trees as bear spices, and the marshes where the aromatic reed, or cassia, grows; and therefore, when the Arabians go to gather the cassia, they clothe themselves with skins, and cover all their heads over, except their eyes, because their biting is very dangerous.—*Bochart de Animal. Sacr.* part 2, b. 3. c. 13.

^a The brazen serpent continued among the Jews above 700 years, even to the time of Hezekiah, king of Judah; but when it came to be made an object of idolatry, and the people for some time had paid their incense and adoration to it, that pious prince caused it to be broken in pieces; and by way of contempt, called it *nehelsthan*, that is to say, a *brazen bauble*, or *trifle*. At Milan, however, in the church of St Ambrose, they pretend to show you a serpent made of brass, which they tell you is the same with that of Moses. But every one may believe of this as he pleases.—*Cabinet's Dictionary*, under the word *Serpent*.

^b It may here be proposed as a difficulty, how Moses came to offer the Amorites terms of peace, considering that the Israelites were commanded to destroy them, and to take possession of their country. But to this it has been answered by some learned men, that notwithstanding God had expressly doomed this people to an extermination, yet Moses thought himself at liberty to indulge his usual meekness, and to begin with gentle and amicable measures, though he might at the same time be persuaded, that they would avail nothing: and this probably at the suggestion of God himself, to cut off all occasions or pretence of complaint from the Amorites, as if they had not been honourably and fairly dealt with, and that the equity and righteousness of God's proceeding with a prince of so savage and obstinate a temper, might appear in a stronger light, when the consequence of his refusing a free passage to the Israelites, and bringing his army into the field against them, should happen to be his own defeat and destruction.—*Bibliotheca Biblica* on Num. xxi. 21.

^c Grotius, in his second book on the *Right of War and Peace*, c. 2. sect. 13, is of opinion, that according to the law of nations, the highways, seas, and rivers of every country, ought to be free to all passengers upon just occasions. He produces several examples from heathen history of such permission being granted to armies, and thence he infers, that Sihon and Og, denying the Israelites this privilege, gave a just ground of war; nor does he think that the fear which these princes might conceive is any excuse at all for not granting the thing, because no man's fear can take away another man's right, especially when several ways might have been found out to have made their passage safe on both sides. But when all is said, it seems not clear that all men have such a right as this great man thinks they may claim. No man, we know, can challenge a passage through a

prince, not thinking it safe to receive so numerous a people into the heart of his kingdom, not only denied them a passage, but, accounting it better policy to attack, than to be attacked, gathered what forces he could together, and marched out to give them battle. But not far from Jahaz, where the engagement was, the Israelites overthrew him; and having made themselves masters of his country, put all, both man, woman, and child to the sword: and not long after this, Og, ^d king of Bashan, ^e a man of a prodigious gigantic size, attempting to obstruct their passage, underwent the same fate. For they seized his country, and utterly destroyed the inhabitants thereof, reserving only the cattle, and spoils of the cities, as a prey to themselves, as they had done before in the case of Sihon.

Encouraged by these successes, the Israelites marched to the plains of Moab, and encamped on the banks of the river Jordan, opposite to Jericho. This put Balak, who was then king of Moab, into a terrible consternation; for supposing himself not able to engage the mighty force of Israel, he had not only made a strong alliance with the Midianites and Ammonites, his neighbours, in order to stop their progress, but thought it advisable likewise, before he began any hostilities against them, to try how far the power of Balaam's enchantments (a noted magician in Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia) might go, in turning the fortune of the war towards his side.

To this purpose he despatched a select number of his nobles, with costly presents to ^f Balaam, entreating him

private man's ground without his leave; and every prince has the same dominion in all his territories that a private man has in his land. As for the examples, therefore, of those who had permitted armies to pass through their kingdoms, they are examples of fact rather than of right, and of such as were not in a condition to refuse what was demanded of them. For the thing is notorious, that several countries have suffered very grievously by granting this liberty; and therefore no prince, who consults his subjects' safety, is to be blamed for not granting it; nor was the war with the Amorites founded upon this reason, as we shall see hereafter.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d The land of Bashan was one of the most fertile cantons of Canaan, which reached on the east to the river Jordan, on the west to the mountains of Gilead, on the south to the brook Jabbock, and on the north to the land of Geshur. The whole kingdom took its name from the hill of Bashan, which is situate in it, and has since been called Battanea. It had no less than sixty walled towns in it, besides villages. It afforded an excellent breed of cattle, and stately oaks, and was, in short, a plentiful and populous country.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^e The description of this gigantic king, who was the last of the race of the Rephaim, or vast prodigious men, we have in Deuteronomy iii. 11., and from the size of his bed, which was preserved a long time in the city of Rabbath, the capital of the Ammonites, we may guess at his stature. It was nine cubits long, and four cubits broad, that is, fifteen feet four inches and a half long, and six feet ten inches broad. But the Jewish doctors, not content with such pigmy wonders, have improved the story to their own liking. For they tell us, that this bed of nine cubits could be no more than his cradle, since himself was six score cubits high, when full grown; that he lived before the flood, and that the waters of it, when at the highest, reached only up to his knees; that, however, he thought proper to get upon the top of the roof of the ark, where Noah supplied him with provision, not out of any compassion to him, but that the men who came after the deluge, might see how great the power of God was, who had destroyed such monsters from the face of the earth.—*Cabinet and Munster* in Deut. c. 3.

^f In 2 Peter ii. 15, Balaam is said to be the son of Bosor, according to our version; but as the words, 'the son,' are

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in the king's name to come, and curse him a people who were arrived upon the borders of his territories; but God for that time, would not permit him to go: whereupon Balak, supposing either, that the number and quality of his messengers did not answer Balaam's ambition, or the value of the presents his covetousness, sent messengers of a more honourable rank, with larger proposals, and promises of high promotion, if he would but gratify him in this one thing.

¹ Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness; and therefore blinded with this passion, he addressed God for leave to go; which God in his anger granted, but under such restrictions, as would necessarily hinder all his fascinations from doing the Israelites any harm.

With this permission he set forward with the princes of Moab; but as he was on the road, an angel met him, whom, though he perceived him not, his ass plainly saw, and therefore turned aside into the field to avoid him. With much ado, Balaam beat his ass into the road again; but when the angel stood in a narrow passage between two walls, which enclosed a vineyard, the ass for fear ran against one of the walls, and crushed Balaam's leg, which provoked him so, that he beat her again. At last, the angel removed, and stood in a place so very narrow, that there was no possibility of getting by him, whereupon the ass fell down under her rider, and would go no farther. This enraged the prophet still more; and as he was beating and belabouring the poor creature most unmercifully, God was pleased to give the ass the faculty of speech, wherein she expostulated the hard usage she had met with; and as Balaam was going to justify himself, he was likewise pleased to open the prophet's eyes, and let him see the angel standing in the way with a naked sword in his hand, which so terrified him, that he fell down upon his face, asked pardon for his trespass, and offered to return home again, if so be his journey was displeasing to God. ^a

¹ 2 Peter ii. 15.

not found in the original, but were inserted by the translators, to supply the sense, as they imagined, the word Bosor may denote a place as well as a person; and accordingly Grotius understands St Peter's words, not as if Bosor was the father, but the city of Balaam; for what was anciently called Pethor, the Syrians in after ages called Bosor, by an easy change of two letters, which is a thing not unusual.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^a Num. xxii. 31. 'Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way.' There are several instances to be found, both in the scriptures and in profane authors, where the eyes have been opened by a divine power to perceive that which they could not see by mere natural discernment. Thus the eyes of Hagar were opened, that she might see the fountain, Gen. xxi. 19. Homer also presents us with an example of this kind. Minerva says to Diomedes,

Go, while the darkness from thy sight I turn,
That thou alike both God and man discern.—*Sotheby*.

And in Virgil, Venus performs the same office to Æneas, and shows him the gods who were engaged in the destruction of Troy.

Now cast your eyes around: while I dissolve
The mists and films that mortal eyes involve,
Purge from your sight the dross, and make you see
The shape of each avenging deity. *Dryden*.

Milton seems likewise to have imitated this, when he makes Michael open Adam's eyes to see the future revolutions of the world, and the fortunes of his posterity.

— Then purged with euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see,
And from the well of life three drops instill'd.

Paradise Lost, b. 11. 411. — *Ed.*

That his journey was displeasing to God, he himself could not be ignorant, because, in his first address, God had expressly interdicted his going. Being resolved, however, out of the man's wicked inclination, to raise some kind of advantage, and to make him, who was hired to curse, the instrument of pronouncing a blessing upon his people, God gave him now free leave to proceed. When Balak understood that Balaam was on the road, himself went to receive him upon the confines of his dominions; and having, in a friendly manner, blamed him for not coming at his first sending, which Balaam excused upon account of the restraint which God had laid on him, he conducted him to his capital city, and there entertained him publicly, with his princes and nobles that day; and the next morning carried him to the high places consecrated to ^b Baal, that from thence he might take a view of the extremity of the Israelitish camp. Whilst they were here, the prophet ordered ^c seven altars to be erected, ^d and seven oxen, and seven rams to be got ready; and having ^e offered an

^b The word Baal signifies Lord, and was the name of several gods, both male and female, as Selden (*De Diis Syris*, c. 1.) shows. The god of the Moabites was Chemosh, but here very probably is called by the common name of Baal. And as all nations worshipped their gods upon high places, so this god of Moab, having more places of worship than one, Balak carried Balaam to them all, that from thence he might take the most advantageous prospect of the Israelites. These high places were full of trees, and shady groves, which made them commodious both for the solemn thoughts and prayers of such as were devout, and for the filthy inclinations and abominable practices of such as affected to be wicked.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c According to the account which both Festus and Servius give us of ancient times, the heathens sacrificed to the celestial gods only upon altars: to the terrestrial, they sacrificed upon the earth; and to the infernal, in holes digged in the earth. And though the number seven was much observed among the Hebrews, even by God's own appointment, Lev. iv. 6, yet we do not read of more than one altar built by the patriarchs, when they offered their sacrifices, nor were any more than one allowed by Moses; and therefore, we may well suppose, that there was something of heathen superstition in this erection of seven altars, and that the Moabites, in their worship of the sun, who is here principally meant by Baal, did at the same time sacrifice to the seven planets. This was originally a part of the Egyptian theology; for as they worshipped at this time the lights of heaven, so they first imagined the seven days of the week to be under the respective influence of these seven luminaries. Belus, and his Egyptian priests, having obtained leave to settle in Babylon, about half a century before this time, might teach the Chaldeans their astronomy, and so introduce this Egyptian notion of the influence of the seven ruling stars, which Balaam, being no stranger to the learning of the age and country he lived in, might pretend to Balak to proceed upon in his divinations and auguries.—*Le Clerc's Commentary in locum*, and *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. b. 12.

^d Num. xxiii. 1. 'Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams.' The ancients were very superstitious about certain numbers, supposing that God delighted in odd numbers.

Around his waxen image first I wind
Three woollen fillets, of three colours joined;
Thrice bind about his thrice devoted head,
Which round the sacred altar thrice is led.
Unequal numbers please the gods. *Ed.*

^e In the text it is said, that Balak and Balaam 'offered on every altar a bullock and a ram,' Num. xxiii. 2. But though it was customary, in those early days, for kings to officiate as priests, yet it is rather to be supposed, that Balak only presented the sacrifices, and that Balaam performed the office of sacrificing them; but then it may be made a question, to whom the sacrifices were offered. And to this it may be answered, that they might both have a different intention; that Balak might suppli-

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ox and a ram on each altar, he left Balak to stand by the sacrifices, while himself withdrew to consult the Lord; and upon his return, acquainted the king, "How impossible it was for him to do the thing that he might expect from him, namely, the cursing of a people who were so signally under the protection of heaven; and so magnifying their prosperity and increase, he concludes with a wish, that his fate might be theirs, both in life and death."

Balak, at these words, expressed no small surprise; but still not discouraged, he hoped that the change of the place might possibly produce some better luck; and therefore taking Balaam to the top of Mount Pisgah, he tried whether he might not be permitted to curse them from thence. But all in vain. The same number of altars were erected, the bullocks and rams were offered, and the prophet withdrew to consult God, as before; but still he returned with no better news: for the purport of his declaration was, "That God was fixed and immutable, in his favour to the Israelites; that he would not suffer any bloody designs, or any frauds or enchantments to prevail against them, but would finally make them victorious wherever they came."

This was so great a mortification to Balak, that to silence Balaam, he forbade him either to curse or bless; but he soon changed his mind, and desired him to make a further trial at another place. Accordingly another place was made choice of. Fresh altars were raised, and fresh sacrifices offered; but all to no purpose: Balaam perceiving that God was resolved to continue blessing Israel, without retiring, as aforesaid, under pretence of consulting God, at the first cast of his eye upon the tents of the Israelites, brake out into ejaculations of praise; and then, in proper and significant metaphors, foretold their extent, fertility, and strength, and that 'those that blessed them, should be blessed, and those that cursed them, should be cursed.'

By this time Balak, enraged to hear Balaam, whom he had sent for to curse the children of Israel, thus three times successively bless them, could no longer contain himself, but smiting his hands together, he bade him haste and be gone, since, by his foolish adherence to God's suggestions, he had both abused him, and defrauded himself. "Balaam had recourse to his old excuse,

cate Baal, while Balaam was making his addresses to the Lord, though with such superstitious ceremonies, as it is likely, were used by the worshippers of Baal. Or why may not we suppose, that Balaam, telling Balak, that he could effect nothing without the Lord, the God of Israel, persuaded him to join with him at that time in his worship, that they might more powerfully prevail with him to withdraw his presence from the Israelites? For there is no reason to imagine, that Balaam would go to inquire of the Lord, immediately after he had sacrificed to other gods.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

a Josephus brings in Balaam making his apology for himself, in order to pacify Balak's rage, for his having blessed the Israelites, instead of cursing them. "And does king Balak think, that where prophets are upon the subject of fatalities, or things to come, they are left to their own liberty, what to say, and what not, or to make their own speeches? We are only the passive instruments of the oracle. The words are put in our mouths; and we neither think nor know what we say. I remember well, says he, that I was invited hither with great earnestness, both by yourself and by the Midianites; and that it was at your request I came, and with a desire to do all that in me lay, for your service. But what am I able to do against the will and power of God? I had not the least thought of speaking one good word of

of not daring to transcend the divine commands; but being willing to gratify the king, and in compliance to his covetous temper, to gain some reward to himself, he offered to advertise him of what the Israelites would do to his people in subsequent ages; but still, against his own inclination, he bestowed blessings on Israel, and prophesied, 'That a star^b should come forth from Jacob, and a rod from Israel;' that it should smite the chiefs of Moab, and destroy the children of Seth; that Edom should fall under its power; and that the Amalekites and Kenites should be extirpated: in fine, that the western nations, the Greeks and Romans, should vanquish the Assyrians, destroy the Hebrews, and perish themselves.

After these predictions, as if vexed at his own disappointment in missing the reward he expected, and with a purpose to revenge himself on the Israelites, as the occasion of it, he instructed the Moabites and Midianites in a wicked^c device; which was to send their daughters

the Israelites' army, or of the blessings which God hath in store for them; but since God has decreed to make them great and happy, I have been forced to speak, as you have heard, instead of what I had otherwise designed to say."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 4. c. 6.

b Num. xxiv. 17. 'There shall come a star out of Jacob.' This prophecy may possibly in some sense relate to David, but without doubt it belongs principally to Christ. Here the metaphor of a sceptre was common and popular, to denote a ruler, like David: but the star, though, like the other, it signified in prophetic writings a temporal prince or ruler, yet had a secret and hidden meaning likewise. A star in the Egyptian hieroglyphics denoted God. Thus God in the prophet Amos, reproving the Israelites for their idolatry on their first coming out of Egypt, says, 'have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? but ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chium, your images, the star of your god which ye made to yourselves,' Amos v. 25, 26. The star of your God is a noble figurative expression to signify the image of your god: for a star being employed in the hieroglyphics to signify God, it is used here with great elegance to signify the material image of a god: the words, the star of your god, being only a repetition of the preceding, Chium, your image; and not, as some critics suppose, the same with your god star. Hence we conclude that the metaphor here used by Balaam of a star was of that abstruse, mysterious kind, and so to be understood, and consequently that it related only to Christ, the eternal Son of God." (*Warburton's Divine Legation*, b. iv. sec. 4.)—Bishop Newton, however, is of opinion, that the literal meaning of the prophecy respects the person and actions of David.—*Dissertations on the Prophecies*, vol. 1. p. 139.—Ed.

c Though Moses makes no mention of this contrivance, where he describes the interview between Balaam and Balak; yet in the 31st chapter of Numbers, ver. 16, he lays the whole blame upon Balaam: and Josephus accordingly informs us, that after he had gone as far as the river Euphrates, he bethought himself of this project, and having sent for Balak, and the princes of Midian, he thus addressed himself to them. "To the end that king Balak," says he, "and you the princes of Midian, may know the great desire I have to please you, though, in some sort, against the will of God; I have thought of an expedient, that may perhaps be for your service. Never flatter yourselves that the Hebrews are to be destroyed by wars, pestilence, famine, or any other of these common calamities; for they are so secure under God's special providence, that they are never totally to be extinguished by any of these depopulating judgments: but if any small and temporary advantage against them will give you any satisfaction, hearken to my advice. Send into their camp a procession of the loveliest virgins you can pick up; and to improve nature, dress them up with all the ornaments of art, and give them their lessons how to behave themselves upon all occasions of courtship and amour. If the young men shall make love, and proceed to any importunities, let them threaten immediately to be gone, unless they will actually renounce their country's laws, and the honour

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into the camp of the Israelites, in order to draw them first into lewdness, and then into idolatry, the sure method to deprive them of the assistance of that God who protected them. This artifice succeeded; (for the very next account we have of the Israelites is, that they lay encamped at Shittim, where many of them ^a were deluded by these strange women, not only to commit whoredom with them, but to assist at their sacrifices, and worship their gods, even ^b Baal-peor,) which was a crime so detestable to God, that he punished it with a plague, which, in a short time, carried off ^c about 24,000 of the offenders. This, however, was not the only punishment which God exacted; for he commanded Moses ^d to erect a court of

of that God who prescribed them, and finally engage themselves to worship after the manner of the Midianites and Moabites. This, says he, will provoke God, and draw vengeance upon their heads."—*Jewish Antiquities*, *ibid*.

^a The Jewish doctors tell us, that on a great festival, which the Moabites made in honour of their god Baal-peor, some Israelites, who happened to be there, casting their eyes upon their young women, were smitten with their beauty, and courted their enjoyment; but that the women would not yield to their motion, upon any other condition than that they would worship their gods. Whereupon pulling a little image of Peor out of their bosom, they presented it to the Israelites to kiss, and then desired them to eat of the sacrifices, which had been offered to him. But Josephus, tells the story otherwise, namely, that the women, upon some pretence or other, came into the Israelitish camp, and when they had enamoured the young Hebrews, according to their instructions, they made a pretence as though they must be gone; but upon passionate entreaties, accompanied with vows and oaths on the other side, the subtle enchantresses consented to stay with them, and grant every thing that they desired, upon condition that they would embrace their religion.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Josephus*, *ibid*.

^b The Jewish doctors are generally of opinion, that this Baal-peor was the same with Priapus, the idol of Turpitude; and that the worship of him consisted in such obscene practices, or postures at least, as were not fit to be named. Others have asserted that this god was the same with Saturn, a deity adored in Arabia; nor is it unlikely, that the adventure related of Saturn, and his castration by his own son, may have introduced the obscenities that are practised in the worship of this idol. But others, with great assurance maintain, that Peor was the same with Adonis, whose feasts were celebrated in the manner of funerals, but the people who observed them at that time, committed a thousand dissolute actions, particularly when they were told that Adonis, whom they had mourned for as dead, was returned to life again. However this be, it is very probable that as Peor was the name of a mountain in the country of Moab, the temple of Baal stood upon it, and thence he was called Baal-peor.—*Calnet's Commentaries and Dissertations*; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Selden De Diis Syriis*.

^c St Paul, in his observation upon the judgments which befell the Israelites in the wilderness, tells us expressly, that the number of those who were cut off in this plague was no more than 23,000, (1 Cor. x. 8.) Whereas Moses makes them no less than 24,000. But this difference is easily reconciled, if we do but consider, that in the 24,000, which Moses computes, the thousand who were convicted of idolatry, and thereupon were slain with the sword, 'in the day of the plague,' (Num. xxv. 5, 18,) are comprehended; whereas the apostle speaks of none but those that died of the pestilence.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d According to our translation, the command which God gave Moses, runs thus,—'Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord, against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel,' (Num. xxv. 4.) But unless we can suppose that the heads of each tribe were guilty of this lewdness and idolatry, the sentence here denounced would have been highly unjust: and what others allege, that they were guilty of a shameful neglect in not opposing the growing mischief, and punishing the offenders; this might be very probably out of their power, since even Moses himself, very frequently found them too headstrong for him. It was somewhat strange, there-

fore, that our translators should take the passage in this sense, when the Samaritan copy, the Jerusalem Targum, most of the ancient translations, and several later commentators of great note, have made the word *otham*, that is, *them*, not to refer to the heads of the people, but to such as had joined themselves to Baal-peor: and so the meaning of the command will be, that the heads of the people should divide themselves into several courts of judgment, and examine who had committed idolatry, and, after conviction, cause them to be hanged, that is, hanged after they were stoned: for among the Hebrews none were hanged alive, but in the cases of idolatry or blasphemy, were first stoned, and then hanged up against the sun, that is, publicly and openly, that all the people might see, and fear to sin.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

By this time, the greatest part of the people being come a little to themselves, were bewailing their folly and wickedness, at the door of the tabernacle; when they were surprised with ^e an instance of the most unparalleled boldness in one of the chiefs of the tribe of Simeon, named Zimri, who, in the sight of Moses, and the whole congregation, had brought a young Midianitish princess, whose name was Cozbi, into the camp, and was leading her into his tent. Their impudence, however did not go unpunished; for Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the high priest, fired with a just indignation and holy zeal, followed them into the tent, with a javelin in his hand, where, in the very act of whoredom, ^f he thrust

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^e When the Israelites, at the instigation of the strange women they had received into the camp, were fallen from lust into idolatry, Moses, according to Josephus, perceiving that the infection began to spread, called the people together, and, in a general discourse, reminded them how unworthy a thing it was, and how great a scandal to the memory of their ancestors, for them to value the gratifying of their lusts and appetites above the reverence they owed to their God, and their religion; how incongruous a thing, for men that had been virtuous and modest in the desert, to lead such profligate lives in a good country, and squander away that in luxury which they had honestly acquired in the time of their distress; and thereupon he admonished them to repent in time, and to show themselves brave men, not in the violation of the laws, but in the mastery of their unruly affections. This he spoke without naming any one: but Zimri, who took himself to be pointed at, rose up, and made the following speech:—"You are at liberty, Moses," says he, "to use your own laws: they have been a long time in exercise, and custom is all that can be said for their strength or credit. Were it not for this, you would, to your cost, have found long since, that the Hebrews are not to be imposed upon; and I myself am one of the number, that never will truckle to your tyrannical oppression. For what is your business all this while, but under a bare pretext, and talk of laws and God, to bar us not only from the exercise, but the very desire of liberty? What are we the better for coming out of Egypt, if it be only in exchange for a more grievous bondage under Moses? You are to make here what laws you please, and we are to abide the penalties of them, when at the same time, it is you only that deserve to be punished for abolishing such customs as are authorized by the common consent of nations, and setting up your own will and fancy against general practice and reason. For my own part, what I have done, I take to be well done, and shall make no difficulty to confess and justify it. I have, as you say, married a strange woman. I speak this with the liberty of an honest man; and I care not who knows it. I never meant to make a secret of it, and you need look no farther for an informer. I do acknowledge too, that I have changed my way of worship, and reckon it very reasonable for a man to examine all things, that would find out the truth, without being tied up, as if it were in a despotic government, to the opinion and humour of one single man."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 4 c. 6.

^f Upon this fact the Jews found what they call the judgment

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them both through the body, and by this action, not only obtained an high commendation from God, but an establishment likewise of ^a the Aaronical priesthood in him, and his posterity, for ever after.

As soon as this disorder was quieted, and the offenders punished, Moses began to bethink himself of revenging the indignity which the Moabites and Midianites had put upon Israel; and to this purpose commanded a detachment of 12,000 choice men, that is, ^b 1000 out of every tribe to go against them; among whom was the gallant ^c

of zeal, which authorized such as were full of this holy fervour, to punish any violent offenders, those, to wit, who blasphemed God, or profaned the temple, &c., in the presence of ten men of Israel, without any formal process. But this example of Phinehas countenances no such practice; nor can this action, done upon an extraordinary occasion, by a person in a public authority, moved thereunto by a strong divine impulse, and (what is a circumstance that some people add) in a commonwealth not perfectly settled, be made a precedent for private men, under a different situation, to invade the office of a magistrate, and with an enthusiastic rage, to persecute even those that are most innocent; as we plainly find it happened among the Jews, when, in the latter times of their government, they put this precedent in execution; of which St Stephen whom they inhumanly stoned, and St Paul whom they vowed to assassinate, without any form of justice, are notorious instances.—*Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

^a This, however, is to be understood with a certain limitation; because it is manifest, that after some successions in the line of Phinehas, the priesthood came, for a while, into the family of Eli, who was descended from Ithamar, the youngest son of Aaron. The reason of this interruption is not mentioned in Scripture; but some great sin, it is reasonable to suppose, provoked God to set aside the line of Eleazar for some years, till Eli's sons likewise became so wicked, that the priesthood was taken from them, and restored, in the days of Solomon, to the posterity of Phinehas, with whom it continued as long as the priesthood lasted. And this is enough to verify the promise of an everlasting priesthood, since the words everlasting, perpetual, and the like, in a general and indefinite sense, denote no more than a long duration. But there is another way of solving this difficulty: God had, before this time, limited the priesthood to Aaron and his descendants, and to them it was to be 'an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations,' (Exod. xl. 15.); upon this account it might properly enough be called, as limited to that family, 'the everlasting priesthood.' So that God does not here promise Phinehas, and his seed after him, an everlasting grant of the priesthood, as some commentators take it; nor a grant of an everlasting priesthood, as our English version renders it, but rather a grant of the everlasting priesthood, that is, of the priesthood limited to Aaron and his descendants by that appellation.—*Selden de Success. Pontif.* b. 1. c. 2. *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. b. 12.

^b The Scripture gives us no account of the order of battle between these two armies; but, in all probability, they were disposed according to the method of the ancient people of Asia; and therefore we may range the Israelites upon one line, formed of twelve corps, consisting of a thousand men each, at the head of which was the 'ark of the covenant,' surrounded by the priests and Levites, whose business it was to sound the charge, as well as defend the ark. The Midianites, we may suppose, were, in like manner, ranged in a phalanx, upon one line, and as the Israelites were doubtless much inferior in number to their enemies, they made much larger intervals between the corps of a thousand men each, in order to penetrate the enemy's line in different places. This was the constant practice of the Jews, whenever they were inferior in number to their enemies.—*Calmeil's Dictionary*, under the word *Midianites*.

^c Whether this Phinehas was sent to command the troops which were appointed by God to take vengeance on the Midianites, or whether he went along with the army only to perform such sacred offices as should be required by the general, who, with more probability perhaps, is thought to be Joshua, are questions arising from the silence of Scripture concerning the chief commander. Phinehas, indeed, was a man of great courage,

Phinehas, who took with him the ark, and what was repositied therein, together with the sacred trumpets, to blow in the time of action, in order to animate the men. The Jewish army was but small in comparison with the vast numbers they marched against; but God, who put them upon the expedition, blessed them with such success, that they slew five kings, and, among them, the wicked prophet Balaam; put every one to the sword, except women and children; and returned to Moses with a very considerable booty; one fiftieth part of which he ordered to be given to the priests, another fiftieth to the Levites, and the rest to be divided among the soldiery.

The remembrance, however, of what damage the Midianitish women had done, by alluring the Israelites to idolatry, made him think it unsafe to spare their lives; and therefore, he ordered all those that had ever known man, as well as all the ^d male children to be

and had lately performed a singular piece of service, which had gained him great reputation, and from hence some have imagined that he was the fitter person to be sent with an army 'to avenge the Lord of Midian;' as it is certain, that in after ages, the Maccabees, who were of the family of the priests, were appointed chief commanders. But then it must be considered, that these Maccabees were the supreme governors of the people, and as such, had a right to the military command; that in the war with the Amorites, Moses had sent the forces under Joshua's conduct: and that Phinehas, in short, had another province appointed him, which was to take care of the holy instruments: but what these instruments were, is another question. Several interpreters are of opinion, that they were the Urim and Thummim which Phinehas might take along with him, in order to consult God, in case of any difficulty that might arise in the management of the war; and to countenance this, they suppose that Eleazar was superannuated, and his son substituted in his room. But it may be justly doubted whether Phinehas, being the only son of the high priest, and not yet capable of that office, could be substituted to perform this great charge, which belonged to the high priest alone: nor do we find any warrant for consulting the Lord by Urim and Thummim, but only before the tabernacle. It seems, therefore, much more likely, that by the holy instruments, Moses means the ark of the covenant, and what was included in it, which, in the following ages, was wont to be carried into the field, when the people went to fight against their enemies. Nay, Joshua himself, not long after this, ordered the ark to be carried with priests blowing trumpets before it, when he surrounded Jericho, (Josh. vi. 4, &c.); and therefore, since the holy instruments are here joined with the trumpets, it looks very probable that they should signify the ark. Nor can we apprehend that Moses ran any risk in venturing the ark upon this occasion, because God had assured his people, that they should obtain a complete victory over the Midianites. It must be confessed, however, that the ark is never thus expressed in any other part of Scripture; and therefore, perhaps they give as true a sense of the words as any, who make the holy instruments and trumpets to be one and the same thing, and the latter no more than an explanation of the former; which trumpets the priests were commanded to take with them, that they might sound a charge when the engagement began, according to their direction, (Num. x. 8, 9.) and as the practice was in future ages: (2 Chron. xiii. 12.)

^d Moses ordered the male children to be slain, that thereby he might extirpate the whole nation, as far as lay in his power, and prevent their avenging the death of their parents, in case they were suffered to live to man's estate. For it is no hard matter to conceive how dangerous such a number of slaves, conscious that they were born free, and had lost their liberty with the massacre of their parents, might have proved to a commonwealth, every where surrounded with enemies. Why he was so severe against the women, we need not wonder, if we do but consider, that either by prostituting themselves or their daughters, they had been the chief instruments of drawing the Israelites into idolatry.—"Though no illustrious fame is got by taking revenge on a woman, and such a victory is attended with no praise, yet

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immediately despatched, and none ^a but virgins to be saved alive; and yet, what shows the greatness of the victory, the virgin captives amounted to 32,000, and the plunder of cattle and flocks consisted of 675,000 sheep, 72,000 oxen, and 61,000 asses, besides a great quantity of rich goods and ornaments: and, what makes the victory still more miraculous, not ^b one man on the Israelites' side, as appears from the report of the officers made upon the muster, was lost in this engagement.

The officers of the army were very sensible, that in saving the captive women alive, they had transgressed their commission; and therefore ^c they presented a great quantity of jewels, and other rich spoils, both as an expiatory offering to atone for their offence, and for a gratulatory offering, in acknowledgment of God's goodness, in giving them so great and signal a victory.

The Israelites, by this time, had made themselves masters of the country that lay on the Midianitish side of Jordan; and the tribes of ^d Reuben and Gad, together

with the half tribe of Manasseh, observing that the country was fertile, and stored with good pasturage, desired of Moses that they might be permitted to settle there, as a place very commodious for them, who had large stocks of cattle; which, upon condition that they should go over Jordan, and assist their brethren in the conquest of the land of Canaan, Moses consented to. And as they were now in the neighbourhood of Canaan, and just ready to enter upon the possession of it, he took this opportunity to appoint the limits of what they were to conquer, and the distribution of it by ^e way of lot, which he committed to the management of Joshua and Eleazar, at the head of the chiefs of each tribe.

Joshua was appointed by God to succeed Moses in his commission; and therefore, to prevent any contest after his death, he first laid his own hands upon him, and then presented him to Eleazar the high priest, who in a solemn form of admission, and in the presence of all the people invested him with the office of being the leader and general of all Israel, after Moses had given him several directions relating to his office, and one more especially, which concerned his consulting of God by way of Urim and Thummin upon every great emergency. In the division of the country, Moses assigned eight and forty cities, together with their suburbs, for the Levites to live in, and withal ordered, that six of these should be made cities of refuge, whither ^f the innocent man-

shall I be praised for having put an end to what is base, and infected deserved punishment."—*Virg. Æn.* b. 2. v. 583, &c. *Bibliotheca Biblica*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary* on Num. xxxi. 17.

^a The Jews have a tradition, that in order to find out who were real virgins, the young women were placed at a proper distance with other women, and all commanded to fix their eyes upon the high priest's mitre; whereupon those who had known man turned instantly as pale as ashes, and those that had not became as red as fire. But there seems to be no great occasion for this miracle, when either the appearance of an unqualified age, or the examination of some select matrons, might determine the matter as well.—*Bibliotheca Biblica* on Num. xxxi. 18.

^b In the fifth chapter of the 1st book of Maccabees, we have an account of another victory of the like nature, when Judas, after having several times defeated Timotheus, the heathen general, assaulted the city of Ephron a whole day and a night, and all without the loss of a man. For 'they went up to mount Sion with joy and gladness, where they offered burnt-offerings, because not one of them was slain, until they had returned in peace.' And, if other historians may be credited, the like has happened among other nations. After the famous and bloody battle of Leuctra, the Lacedemonians and Arcadians had a very sharp engagement, in which the latter lost many thousands of men, and the former not one; and in a sea engagement, between the Portuguese and the Indians, Osorius Lusitanus tells us, that the Portuguese admiral, Pacheco, succeeded so well, that he killed above 1500 of the infidels, without the loss of one man. (*De Rebus Emman.* b. 3.) But whether this had any thing miraculous in it, or was only the effect of God's ordinary providence, we shall not pretend to determine.—*Bibliotheca Biblica* on Num. xxi. 49.

^c The Jerusalem Targum supposes, that when these officers made their offerings, they addressed themselves to Moses in the following manner. 'Forasmuch as the Lord has delivered the Midianites into our hands, and we have subdued the country, entered into their chambers, and seen their fair and charming daughters, took their crowns of gold from off their heads, their rings from their ears and fingers, their bracelets from their arms, and their jewels from their necks and bosoms; therefore far be it from us to have turned our eyes towards them. We had no manner of concern or conversation with them, lest we should thereby die the death of the wicked in Gehenna. And let this be had in remembrance on our behalf, in the day of the great judgment, to make a reconciliation for our souls before the Lord.'

^d In the division of the country, which the Israelites took from Sihon and Og, two vanquished kings that lived on the east side of Jordan, and whose dominions extended from the river Arnon even as far as mount Hermon, (Deut. iii. 8.) Moses gave to the tribe of Reuben the southern, or rather the south-west part of the country, so that they were bounded to the south with the river Arnon; to the west with Jordan, and to the north and east with the tribe of Gad. In this tribe stood Heshbon, the capital

city of the kingdom of Sihon, situate on the hills over against Jericho, about twenty miles distant from the river Jordan. The tribe of Gad was bounded with the river Jordan to the west; with the half tribe of Manasseh to the north; with the Ammonites to the east; and with the tribe of Reuben to the south. In this tribe stood Ashtaroth, the capital city of the kingdom of Og, which very likely obtained its name from an idol, which was much worshipped in those times and parts. How the half tribe of Manasseh came to choose to stay on the east side of Jordan, the sacred history makes no mention; but it is reasonable to suppose that after they found that the tribes of Reuben and Gad had succeeded in their petition, they likewise might represent to Moses the great stock of cattle which they had; that the country would be equally commodious for them, and was over large for two tribes alone to occupy; nor is it to be doubted, but that Moses was inclinable to listen to their allegation, because the sons of Machir the son of Manasseh, had by their valour subdued a great part of the country, where they settled; which was bounded by the tribe of Gad to the south; with the sea of Cinnereth, afterwards called the lake of Gennesareth, or the sea of Galilee, together with the course of the river Jordan, from its head to the said sea to the west; with Mount Lebanon, or more peculiarly Mount Hermon, to the north and north-west; and with the mountains of Gilead to the east.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

^e Nothing could more prudently be contrived, than this partition of the country by lot, and making Joshua and the high priest superintendents of it; since it was the only one that could effectually prevent all murmurings and quarrellings among such an obstinate people as the Jews were. However, as the lots were to bear a proportion to the bigness of each tribe and family, it is supposed from what followed, that every tribe first drew its lot for its own canton, and that then there were proper persons appointed to measure out a quantity of land for each family, according to their bigness; but whether this last was done by this or any other method; whether the subdivisions between the families were likewise carried on by lot or otherwise, sure it is, that we read of no broils or jealousies that it ever occasioned among them.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^f The person, who without any premeditated malice, killed his neighbour accidentally had the best provision imaginable made for his escape. For the ways that led to the cities of refuge, were to be made very plain and broad, and kept in good repair. Two students of the law were to accompany him, that

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slayer, who had killed his neighbour by chance, might betake himself and live; though at the same time he made all proper provision, that the wilful murderer should certainly be put to death; but in this, and all other capital cases, he made it a law, that none should be convicted upon the evidence of one single person.

The nearer that Moses approached his death, the more he expressed his concern for the welfare of the people; and therefore, on the first day of the eleventh month, which answers to our January, and in the fortieth year from their departure out of Egypt, being then encamped on the plains of Moab by the banks of the river Jordan, he called them all together, and at different times made two very tender and pathetic speeches, wherein he briefly related to them all that had befallen their fathers, since the time they left Egypt; the gracious dealings of God with them; their continual murmurings and rebellions against him; and the many severe judgments that had followed thereupon, even to his own exclusion from the promised land. He gave them a summary of all the laws which the divine goodness had calculated for their happiness; and having repeated the decalogue almost word for word, he reminded them of the solemn and dreadful manner in which it was delivered from mount Sinai, and of the manifold obligations they lay under to a strict observance of it. He encouraged them to be faithful to God, by assuring them, that if they kept his commandments, they should not fail of having innumerable blessings heaped upon them, and by threatening them with all manner of calamities, if so be they departed from them. He renewed the covenant which their fathers had made with God at Horeb; commanded them to proclaim on ^a the mountains of Gerizim and Hebal beyond Jordan, blessings to those that observed, and curses to those that broke this covenant; and to erect an altar there, whereon they were to ^b write, in a legible character, the terms and conditions of it.

if the avenger of blood should overtake him before he got to the city, they might endeavour to pacify him by wise persuasions; and that he might not miss his way to the place, whither he intended to flee, there were posts erected, where two or three ways met, with the word *Miklal*, that is the *city of refuge*, inscribed on them, to direct him into the right road that led to it.—*Patrick's Commentary* on Num. xxxv. 13.

^a These two mountains are situate in the tribe of Ephraim, near Shechem, in the province of Samaria, and are so near to one another, that nothing but a valley of about two hundred paces wide parts them; so that the priests, standing and pronouncing the blessings and curses, that were to attend the doers or violators of the law, in a very loud and distinct manner, might well enough be heard by the people that were seated on the sides of the two hills, especially if the priests were advanced upon pulpits, as Ezra afterwards was, (Neh. viii. 4.) and had their pulpits placed at proper distances.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentary* in Deut. xxvii.

^b In this twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, the Israelites were commanded to write upon certain stones, all the words of the law very plainly, ver. 8. How many these stones were, the Scripture makes no mention; but some are of opinion, that they were twelve, according to the number of the pillars which Moses employed (Exod. xxiv. 4.) when he made the covenant between God and his people. Knew we for certainty the number of the stones, we might better guess what part of the law it was which Moses ordered to be engraven upon them, since, by reason of this uncertainty, some will have it to be the whole Pentateuch; others, no more than the decalogue; some, that summary of the laws which is contained in this book of Deuteronomy; and others, the curses which follow from Deut. xxvii. 15, to the end of chap. xxviii. which seems to be more likely, because they con-

These, and several other directions relating to their future conduct in the land of Canaan, Moses not only delivered to the people by word of mouth, but ordered to be written in a book which he committed to the care and custody of the Levites, who, by God's appointment, laid it up on the side of the ark, there to remain a witness against the children of Israel, in case they should rebel. And that they might never want a proper fund of devotion, he composed a song, or poem, which he not only repeated to the people, but gave orders likewise that they should all learn it by heart: for therein he had expressed in a very elegant manner, the many benefits and favours of God to his people; their ingratitude and forgetfulness of him; the punishments wherewith he had afflicted them; and the comminations of greater judgments, if they persisted to provoke him by a repetition of their follies.

Such was the care and concern of the Jewish lawgiver for the welfare of the people after he was gone: and therefore, perceiving that the time of his dissolution was now at hand, he called them together; and having taken a solemn farewell of them, in a prophetic blessing, which he pronounced upon each tribe, as Jacob had done just before his death, he went ^c up to the top of Pisgah, over against Jericho, from whence he might take a full view of the country which God had promised to Abraham's posterity. For though he was an hundred and twenty years old, yet his natural strength and vigour was not impaired, nor had his eyesight in the least failed him; so that he was able to survey the beauteous prospect, which the delightful town and plains of Jericho, and the fair cliffs and lofty cedars of Lebanon afforded him; and having done this, he resigned his soul into the hands of seraphim, who were waiting to convey it into a happier Canaan than what he had been surveying; and to prevent the danger of the people's idolizing him when he was gone,^d

tain select precepts, and the last of them seems to comprise the whole law, ver. 26. and Josh. viii. 34. But however we understand this, it is certain, that before the use of paper was found out, the ancients, particularly the Phœnicians and Egyptians, were wont to write their minds upon stones, as several authors mentioned by Huetius (*Demonstrat. Eran.* prop. 4. chap. 2.) do abundantly testify. Nay, he observes, that this custom continued long after the invention of paper, especially if men desired that any thing should be publicly known and transmitted down to posterity.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. b. 12, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

^c The mountains of Abarim were a ridge of hills between the two rivers Amon and Jordan. One part of these mountains was distinguished by the name of Nebo, as it appears from Deut. xxxii. 49; and comparing this with Deut. xxxiv. 1. we shall find that Nebo and Pisgah were one and the same mountain, and that if there was any distinction between the names, it was probably this, that the top of the mountain was more peculiarly called Pisgah, because it comes from a root which signifies to *elevate*, or *raise up*, and so may very properly denote the *top* or *summit* of any mountain. Not far from Nebo, was Beth-peor, which very probably was so called from some deity of the same name, that was worshipped there. But of all these mountains it must be observed, that though they are said to be in the land of Moab, yet they really stood in the territories of Sihon, king of the Amorites, however they retained their old names, because once they belonged to the Moabites.—Num. xxi. 26.

^d This very reason we have in R. Levi Ben Gershom. "Future generations," says he, "might perhaps have made a god of him, because of the fame of his miracles; for do we not see how some of the Israelites erred in the brazen serpent which Moses made? And what then would they not have done, had they but known where his remains were laid?" For this reason,

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God himself took care to bury his body in so secret a manner, in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor, that the place of his ^a sepulchre was never yet discovered.

Thus died ^b Moses, the ^c illustrious prophet and servant

very likely it was, that how much soever Moses was in love with Canaan, he did not desire to be carried thither to be buried with his ancestors, as Joseph did; because his interment in that country might have proved of dangerous consequence, if in their distress, especially in the captivity of the land, the children of Israel should have run to his sepulchre, and begged of him to pray for them, whose prayers and intercession, in their behalf, they had found in his lifetime so very prevalent.—*Patrick's Commentary* on Deut. xxxiv. 6.

^a But notwithstanding all this precaution of God, the Christians boast, that they have discovered the sepulchre, which has been kept secret for so many ages. For in the year 1655, some goats that were separated from the rest of the flock, went to feed in a certain place, in the mountain Nebo, and returned from thence so odiferous and perfumed, that the shepherds, astonished at so wonderful a prodigy, ran presently to consult with the patriarch of the Maronites, who sent thither two monks from Mount Lebanon, and they discovered a monument, on which was this inscription, "Moses, the servant of the Lord." But there is too much reason to think that this is all a fiction, on purpose to raise the reputation of the Maronites, as Basnage in his history and religion of the Jews has sufficiently proved.—B. 4. c. 17.

^b Nothing can be plainer from the text, than that Moses did die, and was really buried; nay, Josephus tells us, that the Scripture affirms that he died lest people should think, because of the excellency of his person, that he was still alive, and with God. And yet, notwithstanding this, some of the Jewish doctors do positively affirm, that he was translated into heaven, where he stands and ministers before God: and of those who admit of his death, and that his soul and body were really separated, the major part will not allow that he died a common death; for their notion is, that his soul departed with a kiss, because he is said to die *ad pi*, at the mouth (as it is literally in the Hebrew, that is, according to the word) of God; but if there be any sense in the expression, it must be that he parted with his soul with great cheerfulness and serenity of mind.—*Witsius's Miscel. Sacra*.

^c The commendation which the author of Ecclesiasticus gives Moses, is conceived in these words:—"Moses was beloved of God and men, and his memorial is blessed. The Lord made him like to the glorious saints, and magnified him so, that his enemies stood in fear of him, and by his word he caused the wonders to cease, and he made him glorious in the sight of kings, gave him ordinances for his people, and showed him part of his glory. He sanctified him in his faithfulness and meekness, and chose him out of all men. He made him to hear his voice, and brought him into the dark cloud, and gave him commandments before his face, even the law of life and knowledge, that he might teach Jacob his covenant, and Israel his judgments," chap. xlv. 1, &c. The character which Josephus gives him is to this effect:—"He was a man of admirable wisdom, and one that made the best use of what he understood: an excellent speaker, and no man better skilled in moving the affections of the people than himself; and so great a master of his passions, that he lived as though he had none, or as if he only knew them by their names, or by observing them in others. Never was there a greater captain, nor a prophet equal to him; for all his words were oracles." So true is the character which the sacred writer has given of him. "There arose not a prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs, and the wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all the land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all that great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel," Deut. xxxiv. 10, &c. "Nor was he less famous to posterity for his writings, than he was to the age he lived in for his actions." For besides the Pentateuch, which is all of his own composition, except the conclusive chapter, the ancients generally thought, that he was author of the book of Job, and of eleven psalms, which begin at the 90th, and end with the 100th; as there were once other books, as his Lesser Genesis, the Revelation of Moses, the Ascension of Moses, the Assumption of Moses, and the mysterious books of Moses, cited by some ancient writers, which were likewise ascribed to him. And though they have long since lost their authority, and been

of God; and when the people of Israel came to understand that he was dead, with great solemnity, they lamented for him for the space of thirty days. ^d

CHAP. II.—*Objections Answered and Difficulties Explained.*

BOTH Philo and Josephus are of opinion, that the account of Moses' death and burial, of the mourning which the Israelites made for him, and of the character which, in the conclusion of Deuteronomy, we find recorded of him, was penned by Moses himself, in consequence of the prescience which God was pleased to communicate to him: and the reason ¹ which Josephus gives for his thus relating the circumstances of his death beforehand, is, that the people, out of the great veneration they had for his person, might not imagine that he was translated.

But suppose this account to have been written after the death of Moses, by Joshua, Eleazar, or the seventy elders, or, as some imagine, much later, by Samuel, or even by Ezra himself, who, after the Babylonish captivity, made a revival of the sacred books; suppose it, I say, to have been written by any other hand whatever, yet this can no ways affect the authority of the rest of the Pentateuch, or imply that Moses was not the writer of it, unless we will be so perverse as to say, that the addition of some few lines, or even of a whole page, as an appendix to another man's book, makes the book no longer his.

There is another opinion, which seems very consonant both to reason, and matter of fact, and that is, that the last of the books of Moses, namely, the book of

¹ Jewish History, b. 4. c. 7.

exploded as spurious; yet are they still an argument of the greatness of his name, when so many authors, to recommend their own performances, were so ambitious to assume it."—*Josephus' Antiquities*, b. 4. c. 8., and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word Moses.

The noblest trait of his moral character, was his patriotic disinterestedness. He twice refused the tempting offer of the aggrandizement of his own family, when God threatened to reject the Israelites for their rebellions, and make of him 'a great nation' in their stead. And he left his sons without rank or patrimony, as private Levites, to subsist on the national bounty in common with their brethren! And, melancholy to relate, his grandson, 'Jonathan the son of Gershom,' and his family, became idolatrous priests to the Danites, until the capture of the ark by the Philistines, Judges xviii. 30; where the Masorite doctors to hide the disgrace to his memory, changed 'Moses' into 'Manassus,' by interpolating the letter N in the present copies of the Hebrew text. The posterity of his son Eliezer, were numerous in Solomon's time, and some of them high in office. 1 Chr. xxiii. 14—17; xxvi. 24, 25—*Hales' Analysis*, vol. 2. p. 256, 8vo edition.—Ed.

^d It was usual in the east to mourn for such persons as were absent from home when they died, and were buried at a distance from their relations. Irwin relates, (*Travels*, p. 254,) that one of the inhabitants of Ghinnah being murdered in the desert, gave birth to a mournful procession of females, which pressed through the different streets, and uttered dismal cries for his death. Josephus expressly declares it was a Jewish custom, and says, that upon the taking of Jotapata it was reported that he (Josephus) was slain, and that these accounts occasioned very great mourning at Jerusalem. It was after this manner that the Israelites lamented the death of Moses. He was absent from them when he died, neither did they carry him to the grave, but they wept for him in the plains of Moab.—*Harmer*, vol. 3. p. 392.—Ed.

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Deuteronomy, ended with this prophetic blessing ^a upon the twelve tribes, 'happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord,' &c. ? and that what makes now the last chapter of Deuteronomy, was formerly the first of Joshua, but thence removed and adjoined to the other by way of supplement.

Before the invention of sections, and other divisions, or so much as of pauses, and points of distinction; and when sometimes several books were connected together and following each other upon the same roll, as the ancient method of writing was, it is no hard matter to conceive, how easily the beginning of one book might be transferred to the end of another, and, in process of time, make that to be reputed the conclusion of Deuteronomy, which was originally intended for the introduction to the book of Joshua. And if this be the case, it is no wonder that we meet with several passages in this introduction which were in reality wrote by a later hand than Moses. But then, by whomsoever, or at what time soever, these passages were wrote, whether before or after the destruction of the first temple, they can no way invalidate the authority of the other parts of the book of Deuteronomy, to which imprudently, and by way of mistake perhaps, they came to be annexed: nor can the canonicalness of these very passages be called in question; since it is agreed on all hands, that they were written by a person of a prophetic spirit, and had in all ages the sanction of the great synagogue.

But whoever was the author of this additional chapter in Deuteronomy, it cannot well be accounted an impossible thing for God to show Moses the compass of the land of Canaan, from the top of Mount Nebo. The Jews indeed have a notion, that God laid before him a map of the whole country, and showed him therein how every part of it was situate; where each valley lay, each mountain stood, each river ran, and for what remarkable product each place was renowned: but if this had been all, we cannot see for what reason Moses was ordered to go upon the highest part of the mount, since in the lowest plains of Moab, he might have given him a demonstration of this kind every whit as well.

It was for some purpose, therefore, that the sacred historian has informed us, that though Moses was 120 years old, 'yet his eyes were not dim:' and if we suppose that upon this occasion God strengthened them with a greater vigour than ordinary, to enable him to take a larger prospect of the country, so that from this eminence, he might see Dan and Mount Lebanon, to the north; the lake of Sodom and the city of Zoar to the south; the Mediterranean sea to the west; and, as the town and country of Jericho were just at hand, he might easily discern the land of Gilead to the north-east. This indeed may be a compass above the stretch of human sight; but if God was pleased to assist his visive faculties a little, the matter might easily have been done; and accordingly ² some of the Jewish doctors have been wise enough in putting together both the natural clearness of Moses' eyes, and the additional strength which God at this time vouchsafed to give them: "For God showed him," say they, "the whole land as in a garden-plot;

and gave his eyes such power of contemplating it, from the beginning to the end, that he saw hills and dales, what was open and what was enclosed, remote or nigh, at one single view or intuition."

The Talmudists have a very odd conceit, that the great sin for which Moses was hindered from going into the land of Canaan, was, because he called the people of God ³ rebels; and from thence they have formed a maxim, that "he who treats the church, which ought to be honoured, with contempt, is, as if he blasphemed the name of God." But in opposition to this, it should be considered, that Moses on this occasion, uses the very same language that God himself does, when he bids him ⁴ 'lay up the rod of Aaron, as a token against the rebels;' and that if this was the thing wherein he offended God, he not long after committed the same thing, which he would hardly have done, considering already that it had cost him so dear, when he told the people plainly, ⁵ 'Ye have been rebellious against the Lord, ever since I knew you.'

Several Christians, as well as Jewish expositors, think, that the transgression of Moses lay in smiting the rock, when his instructions only were to speak to it; and for the support of this, they allege that God is an absolute sovereign, expecting an absolute obedience, and exacting punishment even of his greatest favourites, when they pretend to vary from his commands, or to mix their own conceptions with his directions: and that there was some such prevarication in the conduct of Moses and Aaron, seems to be implied in God's remonstrance, which immediately follows; ⁶ 'because ye believe me not,' or, as it should be translated, because 'ye were not faithful to me, to' (sanctify and) 'glorify me in the eyes of the children of Israel; therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.'

It is granted, indeed, that God ordered Moses to take his rod with him, and why should he take it, unless it were to strike the rock, as he had done before? But the Israelites perhaps began now to entertain a superstitious fancy of the virtue of this rod, which had been the instrument of so many miracles wrought before them; and therefore God was minded to give Moses an opportunity of convincing them of their folly, by making it appear, that neither himself, nor Aaron, nor the rod, was of any importance; that he alone was the worker of miracles, which he was able at any time to do, by a word's speaking. This had been doing justice to the honour of God, but instead of this Moses spake and acted ⁷ unadvisedly, that is, he spake and acted of himself, and what he had no commission to do, and thereby gave the Israelites an opportunity to imagine, that the supply of water might come from him, from his power and ability to procure it. The truth is, the divine writers, who have touched upon this history, have made mention of two defaults in Moses, namely, his impatience and his infidelity; and therefore we may suppose, that (the water now ceasing at the time, ⁸ when his sister Miriam died) he was exceedingly troubled on both these accounts; that unexpectedly assaulted by the people, who ought to have paid him more reverence, especially in a time of mourning, he fell into a greater commotion of anger and indignation, than was usual in him; and that this anger gave such a

¹ Deut. xxxiii. 29. ² Patrick's Comment. on Deut. xxxiv.

^a All the tribes are blessed, except the tribe of Simeon, and his is included in what is said concerning Judah.

³ Num. xx. 10.

⁴ Num. xx. 12.

⁵ Num. xvii. 10.

⁶ Ps. cvi. 33.

⁷ Deut. ix. 24.

⁸ Num. xx. 1.

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disturbance to his mind, and so disordered his thoughts, that when God bade him 'take his rod, and go, and speak to the rock,' he fell into some doubt, whether the divine goodness would grant the people the same favour he had done before; that therefore he struck the rock with diffidence, believing it improbable that such worthless and rebellious wretches should deserve a miracle; and that the water not issuing out at the first stroke, his diffidence increased into unbelief, and a settled persuasion that they should have none at all.

There is one conjecture more of a very learned¹ man, which I shall but just mention, namely, that Moses began to distrust God's promise of entering into the land of Canaan at the end of forty years, and to imagine, that if he brought water again out of the rock, it must follow them as long as the other had done, and engage them again in the like wanderings; and therefore the comment which he makes upon Moses' words is this:—"What, ye rebels, must we bring water out of the rock, as we did at Horeb? Are all our hopes and expectations of getting out of the wilderness come to this? We never fetched water out of the rock but once, and that was, because we were to stay a long time in the wilderness; and must we begin our abode here again, when we thought we had attained to the end of our travels? And with that he smote the rock in a passion twice; whereas God had commanded him only to speak to it. But whichever of these conjectures we are inclined to think most plausible, there are few writers who are not disposed to extenuate the fault of Moses, as not deserving so severe a punishment, had not God, in passing the sentence of exclusion upon him, considered the eminence and dignity of a person in his station, in whom a transgression of any kind could not but be far more grievous and inexcusable, than in an ordinary man.

For this reason we may observe, that when Moses has related the wickedness and punishment of Zimri, he takes care to inform us² of his family, his titles, and his high station in life. He was the prince of a tribe, the head of thousands in Israel, and one of the renowned men of the congregation. In this capacity he had a right to be an assessor with Moses and Aaron, and the other rulers in the government of the people; and consequently could not regularly be brought under the sentence of those judges who were inferior to him. This he knew full well; and therefore, in defiance of the laws, and in contempt of all authority,³ while 'the children of Israel were weeping before the door of the congregation in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the people, he brought a Midianitish woman into his tent. Moses had ordered the⁴ 'judges to slay every one his men that were joined to Baal-peor;' but we hear of none that were punished for this wickedness, except this Zimri, and those that afterwards died in the plague: the transgression was become too universal to be corrected by a judiciary proceeding, and the example of so leading a man was enough to bear all down before it, and make the infection spread. God had already ordered, that the persons who committed this great offence should⁵ be punished in a very exemplary manner: in regard to God,

therefore, Zimri was under sentence of condemnation, and as his guilt was too glaring and notorious to need conviction, and the judges were found timorous and remiss in the execution of their office, there was certainly wanting, on this important occasion, a proper person to supply their place.

Now, that the act of Phinehas in slaying Zimri was not the effect of zeal, and warm resentment only, but of a divine impulse and instigation so to do, I think is evident from the testimony of God himself, when he declares to Moses, 'that Phinehas,' by the death of Zimri,⁶ 'had made an atonement for the children of Israel.' For what atonement could he pretend to make, unless God had appointed him? 'No man taketh this honour upon himself,' neither can any one perform this office to good purpose, 'but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' And therefore, there is no propriety in the words, unless we suppose that God ordered Phinehas to make a propitiatory sacrifice of the blood of the offenders; and for the confirmation of this, we find God requiring of Moses to say to the people,⁷ 'Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace;' or, as it should more truly be rendered, 'Behold it was I who gave unto him my covenant of peace:' the intent of which declaration is to inform the congregation, that Phinehas had not done a rash action out of his own mere motion and warmth of heart, but that he had the immediate direction and appointment of God for what he did; that God had made a previous covenant with him to that purpose; and given him positive assurance, that upon the death of Zimri and Cosbi, slain by his hands, the wickedness that had been committed in the camp should be forgiven. And therefore we find God espousing the deed, and in a kind of exultation, declaring⁸ 'Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, in being thus zealous for my sake, hath turned away my wrath from the children of Israel.' In this view of the fact all is clear; nor can this example lay any foundation for a dangerous imitation, because it will in no wise prove that an illegal action, though proceeding from a most upright heart, zealously affected in a good thing, is ever to be justified, unless God, by an express and well-attested revelation from heaven, declares his patronage and acceptance of it.^a

The Jews, who love to magnify miracles sometimes beyond their proper bounds, have a current tradition that the clothes grew bigger according as the children themselves increased in bulk and stature: but there is no occasion for any such supposition as this; since the younger, in their proper degrees, might succeed to the vestments of the elder, and the miracle still remain wonderful enough, that God should preserve these vestments from decaying, or their feet, by so long travelling in hot and stony places, from swelling, or being callous, as some translate it, for the space of forty years. Some, indeed, will have the phrase to denote that their feet

⁶ Num. xxv. 13.

⁷ Heb. v. 4.

⁸ Num. xxv. 12.

^a Num. xxv. 11.

^a It may be remarked, that God had pronounced sentence of death against all who had offended, or should offend, as Zimri had done, (ver. 3, 5); and that Phinehas in slaying him, did nothing but what it was the duty of any man to do, who had courage to undertake it.—Ed.

¹ Lightfoot's *Chronica Temp.* ² Num. xxv. 14.

³ Num. xxv. 6.

⁴ Num. xxv. 5.

⁵ Num. xxv. 4.

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were not sensible of any uneasiness or fatigue, through the whole vast length of their journey; but this construction is plainly repugnant ¹ to the Scripture account we have of their travels; and therefore the easier interpretation will be, if, by way of metonymy, we take the shoe for the foot, and so make the latter agree with the former part of the verse, and bring the whole to this meaning, namely, "that as their clothes which covered the whole body, did not become useless through age, so neither did their shoes decay, or burst, or grow out of shape, (for in all these senses may the original word be taken,) though they were engaged in so tedious a march."

It is to be observed, however, that the Hebrews wanted neither flocks nor herds in the wilderness; and the hangings, and other works belonging to the tabernacle, sufficiently show that they were no strangers to the art of weaving. But supposing they did not manufacture their own clothes, they might, however, purchase them from the Arabians, and other neighbouring nations, and could therefore be under no want of a sufficient supply of this kind of necessities. And, from these considerations, ² a learned commentator concludes, that the sense of the words, 'thy raiment waxed not old upon thee,' must be—That in the deserts of Arabia, the Israelites had so great a plenty of clothes, and so many changes of raiment, that they were under no more necessity to wear them tattered, or threadbare, than if they had lived in one of the most plentiful, rich, and cloth-working countries. And thy feet did not swell, or grow callous, as poor people's feet are wont to do, when the soles of their shoes are worn out, and they forced to tread upon the hard ground; for so it is explained in another place, ³ 'thy shoe did not wax old upon thy foot,' that is, thy poverty did not oblige thee to wear thy shoes (as poor people do) until they were old, and grown so very thin, that in hard and stony ways they hurt thy feet, and made them swell. Poverty, we know, necessarily occasions a meanness of apparel; but men of large fortunes have a variety of suits, and commonly cast their clothes off before they are too far worn: and, in like manner, the historian's design is, in this instance of raiment, to signify to us, that the Israelites, while they abode in a barren wilderness, lived like men of affluence; ⁴ 'for the Lord their God was with them,' as he tells us elsewhere, 'and they lacked nothing.'^a

¹ See Deut. viii. 4., and xxix. 5.

² Le Clerc's Comment, in Deut. viii. 4. ³ Deut. xxix. 5.

⁴ Deut. ii. 7.

^a The common opinion, that the raiment and shoes of the Israelites were not, is certainly absurd. That they had carvers, engravers, silversmiths, and jewellers among them, plainly appears from the account we have of the tabernacle and its utensils; and that they knew how to spin and weave, is evident from Exod. xxxv. 25, 26. The meaning therefore is, that God provided them with all sufficient clothing. On any other supposition he would require, not one miracle, but a chain of the most astonishing miracles ever wrought to account for the thing; for as there were not less than 600,000 males born in the wilderness, it would imply that the clothes of the infant grew up with the increase of his body to manhood, which would require a miracle to be continually wrought on every thread, and on every particle of matter of which that thread was composed. And this is not all: it would imply that the clothes of the parent became miraculously lessened to fit the body of the child, with whose growth they were again to stretch and grow, &c. No such miraculous interference was necessary.—E.D.

But how well soever God might provide for the Israelites in this, and all other instances of his paternal care, yet we cannot think with some predestinarians, that, like an over-fond parent, he was blind to their faults. The word *aven*, which we translate *iniquity*, and the word *amal*, which we render *perverseness*, do both very frequently signify in Scripture the highest kind of wickedness, that is, *idolatry*; and so the reason which Balaam assigns why God had blessed the Israelites, and would not curse them, is, that they had not as yet incurred the sin of idolatry. ^b Some private men might perhaps be guilty of it, but it was not yet become national and epidemical; nor were there any hopes that God would ever deliver them into the power of their enemies, unless, some way or other, they should be seduced into that sin; and therefore Balaam advised the prince of Moab, by the allurements of some beautiful women, to entice them into it, as the likeliest way to deprive them of the divine protection.

Others take the words in a common sense, to denote sin, or wickedness in general; but then, by the words *see*, or *behold*, they understand such an observation of this wickedness as marks it out for punishment. According to this observation, they make the meaning of the phrase to be, that "though the Israelites were confessedly guilty of many great crimes, yet since they were not universally so, God would have more regard to his own promises than to the sins of some particulars; because he is a God of perfect veracity, and the unbelief and impiety of ill men shall not have force enough with him to recall and annul his promises to the good."

There is another signification of the word, which we render *behold*, and that is, 'to look upon with pleasure and approbation:' and ⁵ therefore, as the particle *beth* does frequently signify *against*, as well as *in*, and ⁶ so occurs in several parts of Scripture, the sense of the words will naturally run thus, "God does not approve of any wicked designs or practices against Jacob;" for the words which we render *iniquity* and *perverseness*, do equally signify *outrage* or *oppression*, *deceit*, or machinations of any kind, which God declares he would not suffer to be attempted against his people. And therefore Balaam, upon a review of the many blessings and deliverances which God had vouchsafed them, breaks out into this reflection, and therewith concludes his pro-

⁵ An Essay towards a New Version of the Scripture.

⁶ See Exod. xiv. 25—xx. 16; Num. xii. 1—xxiii. 23, *et alibi*.

^b Boothroyd, following the Samaritan and Syrian versions, translates the verses here referred to (Num. xxiii. 20, 21.) thus:—

Behold! I have received a command to bless;
For God hath blessed, and I cannot revoke it.
I behold no trouble in Jacob.
Nor do I see distress in Israel.
Jehovah their God is with them,
And to him they shout as their king.

This preserves the order of the narrative; and the two latter lines contain the reason of their happy circumstances. The common version is at variance with the whole narrative of Moses. How frequently are we told of their iniquities and perverseness. (*Boothroyd on the passage*.) The Targum of Onkelos, however, supports the view given in the text, and paraphrases the verse thus:—"I see that there are none who worship idols in the house of Jacob, (and there appears to have been none at that period,) nor any servants of trouble or vanity," as idols were called in Israel.—See also *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Taylor's Hebrew Concordance*.—E.D.

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phetic speech: ¹ 'Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink of the blood.'

Thus, in what sense soever we take the words, whether as relating to idolatry, of which the Israelites, in the main, were not at that time guilty; or to wickedness in general, which God's promises to the forefathers restrained him from punishing, though they might be guilty; or to the evil designs and practices against his people, which his justice and goodness both obliged him to disapprove; we shall have no reason to accuse him of a blind partiality towards them, but much, very much, to cry out with the inspired writers, ² 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true is thy judgment; ³ with the holy, thou shalt be holy; and with the upright man thou shalt be perfect; for the Lord knoweth who are his, and' can rightly distinguish 'between those that serve him, and those that serve him not.'

Of the number of those who served not God, Balaam was certainly one; and yet we have reason to presume, that he nevertheless was a real prophet. The Jews, indeed, are generally of opinion, that he was a busy and pretending astrologer, who, observing when men were under a bad aspect of the stars, pronounced a curse upon them; which sometimes coming to pass, gained him, in some neighbouring nations, a reputation in his way. Several of the ancient fathers suppose him to be no more than a common soothsayer, for so he ⁴ is called, who undertook to foretell future events, and discover secrets, &c., but by no good and justifiable arts. Origen will needs have it, that he was no prophet, but only one of the devil's sorcerers: and that of him he went to inquire; but God was pleased to prevent him, and ^a to put what answers he pleased into his mouth. It cannot be denied, however, but that ⁵ the Scripture expressly calls him a prophet; and therefore some later writers have imagined, that he had been once a good man, and a true prophet, till loving the wages of iniquity, and prostituting the honour of his office to covetousness, he apostatized from God, and betaking himself to idolatrous practices, fell under the delusion of the devil, of whom he learnt all his magical enchantments; though at this juncture, when the preservation of his people was concerned, it might consist with God's wisdom to appear to him, and vouchsafe his revelations.

Balaam indeed was a man of no great probity, and might by profession be a diviner; but by the free access he had to God, it seems to be apparent, that he was no common sorcerer, or prophet of the devil: for did ever any sorcerer address his prayers to the supreme God, and receive answers and instructions from him? Did ever

any sorcerer prescribe a law to himself, to say nothing less or more than what the Spirit of God should dictate? The Spirit of God, when did it ever come upon an enchanter? Or was it ever known, that an oracle, upon a remote event, and what God alone was capable of revealing, should be declared by a mere magician?

When God was pleased to give answers to his inquiries, to make his angel appear to him, and to put the word of prophecy in his mouth, on all these occasions, we find him expressing no surprise at all, as if he had been perfectly well acquainted with these several ways of divine communication; and therefore, bad as he was, and a slave to his passions, he must nevertheless be deemed a true prophet of God. The only suspicious passage in his conduct, is his having recourse to enchantments; for ⁶ 'what concord hath God with Belial?' Or what service could he possibly promise himself by making use of these? But to this it may be replied, that ⁷ the arts of magicians, and their incantations to procure oracles and prodigies, were, by the greatest philosophers of those times, held in great veneration, and by them reputed to be true. Though therefore this Balaam was really a prophet, yet as a man of learning, he might not be a stranger to the theory of what human science, and the then reputed natural knowledge had advanced upon these subjects: and as Saul, though he had before ⁸ 'put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land;' was yet induced, 'when the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets, to go to a woman that had a familiar spirit, and inquire of her;' so Balaam finding nothing but a full disappointment in all his views, in the several revelations which God was pleased to make to him, and being warmly inclined to purchase, if he might with any colour be able to do it, the advancement which Balak had offered him, was tempted to try what might be the event, if he used some of the arts which most learned nations held in the highest repute, and esteemed to be of the greatest efficacy. He tried, but 'found ⁹ no enchantment against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel.'

To enter therefore into the character of this true prophet and enchanter both, we must observe, 1st, That before the giving of the law, and the conquest of the promised land, there were other ^b true worshippers of God, besides the descendants of Abraham, dispersed over the face of the earth. 2dly, That this worship of God ^c was frequently mixed with such superstition and idolatry, even among them who professed to adore that one God of heaven and earth. 3dly, That this odious mixture did not hinder God ^d from revealing himself to those who practised such a monstrous and motley religion. 4thly, That supernatural gifts in general, and those of prophecy in particular, though they enlightened the

¹ Num. xxiii. 24. ² Ps. cxix. 137. ³ Ps. xviii. 25.

⁴ Num. xxii. 5. and Josh. xiii. 22.

⁵ 2 Pet. ii. 16.

^a To this purpose Philo, in his life of Moses, brings in an angel discoursing with Balaam to this effect. "It will be in vain for you to contend; for I, without your privacy or knowledge, will guide the organs of your mouth, and make you speak what upon this occasion is fit and proper. I will direct your speech, and cause you to utter prophecies, though you know nothing of the matter." Several passages to the same purpose, are likewise to be found in Josephus, (*Antiquities*, b. 4. c. 7.) though there is no foundation for them in what Moses tells us concerning these adventures of Balaam.

⁶ 2 Cor. vi. 15. ⁷ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. b. 12

⁸ 1 Sam. xxviii. 3, &c.

⁹ Num. xxiii. 23.

^b Thus Job and his friends dwelt in Arabia; Jethro and his posterity in the country of Midian; and Abraham's abode in Mesopotamia, where Balaam lived, might leave behind him some proselytes to the true religion.

^c The Teraphim of Laban proves this.

^d Abimelech and Nebuchadnezzar are instances of this, Gen. xxvi. and Dan. ii. 1.

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minds of the prophets, yet, " many times, did not sanctify their hearts and affections. And, 5thly, That the greatest weakness or wickedness of prophets never went so far, as to make them pronounce oracles contrary to what was dictated to them by the Spirit of God: ' 1 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, to do either good or bad of my own mind, but what the Lord saith that must I speak.'

It is not to be questioned, therefore, but that Balaam was conscious of his own inspiration, and did knowingly obey the divine will; but still he could have wished, for Balak's sake, as well as his own, that he might have been permitted to pronounce different things, to what he did; even as the prophets of Israel, in future ages, when ordered to denounce judgments against the people, would have desired liberty, no doubt, to prophesy things of a more grateful relish; but as they could not have that permission, they obeyed, though with some reluctance, and when they came to the point, did nevertheless pronounce boldly what they were ordered to pronounce.

And this, by the way, will, in some measure, account for the odd mixture in Balaam's behaviour, namely, his seeking for enchantments in one minute, and falling into a fit of devotion in the next. For besides that the words which he utters upon this occasion, are not properly his own, but infused into him by the Spirit of God, and for which, consequently, he is not responsible, to hear a wicked man sometimes come out with a pious wish, or holy ejaculation, can be no incongruous thing at all. ² The character of virtue is so very beautiful, its end so comfortable, and the odour of its memory so sweet, that even wicked men cannot see and hear it, without secretly preferring it, and inwardly sighing for it, and wishing at least that it were their own: and therefore it is no wonder, that even Balaam, under some sudden compunction of mind, or conviction of the amiableness and happy estate of virtue, both here and hereafter, should desire to die the righteous man's death. But there is something more to be said for Balaam in this respect, than for other wicked men; and that is, the business he was now about. The whole series of his behaviour indeed shows him to be a vain and ostentatious man. By the preamble to his prophecies, ³ ' Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open, who knew the knowledge of the most High, and saw the vision of the Almighty, hath said,' &c., he would make us believe, that he was a man of no small consideration, vastly familiar with God, and ⁴ quite superior to the little pretenders of his age; and as we may farther observe, that in all his intercourse with Balak, he never pretended to consult any but God, we cannot but think, that to seem to be in earnest about the matter, and now and then drop a religious sentence, was

no more than what became the business he was upon, and the character he thought proper to assume, even supposing the words to have been of his own invention, which, as we said before, were of divine inspiration.

Of all the prophecies which God at this time delivered from the mouth of Balaam, there was one of a more eminent and peculiar nature: ⁴ ' I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth.' All opinions agree in this, that Balaam here speaks of a king and conqueror; and perhaps in calling him a star, he accommodates himself to the long established notion, ⁵ that the appearances of comets denoted either the exaltation or destruction of kingdoms: but the great question is, of what king or conqueror is it that he speaks?

⁶ Some have applied the prophecy entirely to David, the most illustrious of the Jewish monarchs, who extended his conquests far and wide. ⁶ Others have applied it as entirely to the Messiah, supposing that the metaphor of a star comports better with him, and his celestial origin, than with David; and that the main strokes of the prophecy resemble an heavenly, more than an earthly conqueror. The matter, however, may be compromised, if we will but allow ⁷ of a learned man's observation, namely, that the most remarkable prophecies in the Old Testament, bear usually a twofold sense; one relating to the times before the Messiah, and the other, either fulfilled in the person of the Messiah, or in the members of his body, the church, of which kind we may justly esteem the preceding prophecy. For though its primary aspect may be towards David, yet whoever considers it attentively shall perceive, that its ideas are too full to extend no farther, and must therefore, in a secondary and more exalted sense, refer us to Christ, ' whose kingdom ruleth over all,' and ' to whom all things are put in subjection under his feet.'

In this sense, the generality of Jews as well as Christians, have all along understood it; and it is no improbable conjecture, ⁸ whatever some may think of it, that by the strength of this prophecy, kept upon record among the oriental archives, the magi of that country, at our Saviour's nativity, were directed to Jerusalem, and inquired, ⁹ ' Where is the king of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the east?' And, upon a farther supposition, that these very magi were descended from Balaam in a direct line, he might then, with propriety enough,

⁴ Num. xxiv. 17.

⁵ Le Clerc's Commentary on Num. xxiv.

⁶ Patrick's Commentary, *ibid.* ⁷ Grotius in Mat. i. 22.

⁸ Mat. ii. 2.

⁹ Justin, in his history, speaking of Mithridates, tells us that in the several years of his birth and accession to his kingdom, a comet shone with such a lustre, as if the whole heavens had been afire: (b. 37. c. 2.) Lucan, in the description which he gives us of the civil wars of Rome, among the several prodigies which were seen both on earth and in heaven, reckons up this: "The locks of a dread planet, and a comet shaking the kingdoms of the earth." And Diodorus Siculus delivers it as a doctrine current among the Chaldeans, that the rising of comets is either beneficial or hurtful not only to nations and states, but even to kings themselves, and sometimes to private persons.—B. 2. p. 116.

^d Witsius, in his Miscel. Sacra, b. i. 16. seems to explode this conjecture of Origen's, but act upon sufficient grounds.

¹ Num. xxii. 38.

² Young's Sermons, vol. 2.

³ Num. xxiv. 15, 16.

^a For so we read, 'the heads of God's people judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money,' Micah iii. 11.

^b The Jerusalem Targum paraphrases Balaam's words in a manner that shows his ostentatiousness: "The man said, who was honoured above his brethren, to whom that was revealed, which was hidden from all the prophets."—Patrick's Commentary on Num. xxiv. 3.

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pronounce of the Messiah, 'I shall see him,' that is, see him in my posterity, 'but not now; I shall behold him but not near.'

The promise or prediction which God orders Moses to make to the Israelites, is this, ¹ 'I will raise them up a prophet, from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him.' Now in order to discover wherein the similitude between Moses and this prophet was to consist, we must inquire into the particulars that distinguished Moses from the rest of the prophets; and accordingly we find God himself, upon a small sedition that Aaron and his sister were engaged in against him, making this declaration in his favour: ² 'If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream; but my servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all his house, with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches:' and what he means by speaking apparently, we find explained, when we are told, 'that ³ the Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend.' This was the distinguishing character of Moses, and in this particular neither Joshua, nor any of the succeeding prophets could pretend to be like unto him. They never saw God's glorious presence, nor heard him speak distinctly. He did not converse familiarly with them, but whatever he had to communicate, he did it by way of visions, or dreams, or some dark and enigmatical expressions.

⁴ They indeed had no special commission, no new institutes of religion to publish, nor had they usually any extraordinary credentials to produce. Their business in short, was to explain and inculcate the law which Moses gave, and even in this it is hardly supposable, that they were always infallibly directed, because it is said of several of them, that ⁵ 'they erred in vision, and stumbled in judgment.' So that with no propriety can it be affirmed of them that 'they were like Moses,' much less can that additional character belong to them 'I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him;' which certainly implies an extraordinary commission to publish something that was not revealed before.

But now, when it is said of the blessed Jesus, that he was ⁶ 'a teacher sent from God, for that no man could do the miracles which he did, except God were with him;' that he came, to ⁷ 'declare God,' or what is all one, to reveal a new religion, ⁸ 'which was confirmed by signs and mighty wonders;' and to qualify him for this, that he ⁹ 'was from the beginning with God,' and ¹⁰ 'is in the bosom of the Father:' when it is expressly said, that he is ¹¹ 'the mediator of a new covenant in his blood, for the redemption of the transgressions of the former covenant;' and ¹² 'as Moses was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of these things which were to be spoken after; so he, as a Son, was faithful to him that appointed him, and was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he, who hath built the house, hath more honour than the house:' when all this, I say,

is affirmed and verified of Christ, it is manifest, that the great lines of the prophetic description we are now considering, in their true primary sense, meet only in him, who is the 'express image of his Father,' ¹³ in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom, and knowledge.' But to return to Balaam.

Whatever opinion we may have of the matter, it is certain, that some of the wisest nations among the heathens had a great conception of the power of their prophets, and thought that they were persons in high favour and esteem with their gods, who were always inclinable to listen to and ratify either their benedictions or execrations. ^a The imprecations of these men, as ¹⁴ Plutarch informs us, were by the Romans held so very efficacious, that whoever was under them, could not possibly escape; and therefore we need not wonder, that in conformity to this custom, we find Balak sending for 'Balaam to come and curse' the Israelites for him, since it was his settled persuasion, ¹⁵ 'that he whom he blessed was blessed, and he whom he cursed was cursed.'

But though Balak acted according to the prevailing prejudices of that age, in sending for Balaam, yet God had sufficient reason to be angry with him for going. He had once consulted God about cursing the people of Israel, and had received a very full and peremptory answer, forbidding him to go about it; 'Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed.' This reason, however, he kept to himself; for had he communicated it to the ambassadors at first, in all probability, they would not have importuned him anew to go: but his covetousness urged him on, and the rich presents and promises which the messengers the second time brought, began to operate so very powerfully, that he forgot his reverence to the divine Majesty, and presumed once more to consult him about going.

Upon this occasion the sacred historian relates the matter thus:—¹⁶ 'And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them: and Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab, and God's anger was kindled because he went.' What, angry for what himself commanded him to do? ¹⁷ Our translators indeed thus render the text; but the Hebrew words

¹³ Col. ii. 3. ¹⁴ In vita Crassi, p. 553. ¹⁵ Num. xxii. 6.

¹⁶ Num. xxii. 20. ¹⁷ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. b. 12.

^a The Romans were of opinion, that by a certain form of imprecation, they could demolish towns, and defeat whole armies of their enemies; and what the usual form for this purpose was, Macrobius has taken care to leave us in these words:—'O father Pluto, or Jove, or by whatever other name it is proper to address thee, I entreat that thou mayest load with fear, alarm, and consternation, the whole of that city and army, which I feel that I am pronouncing; and may thou drag hence and deprive of the light of life all those who bear arms against us, our legions, and armies: destroy these armies, these foes, these men, their territories, and all who dwell in their dominion, in town or country. Deliver up to the hands of their enemies, the cities and territories of those whom I feel that I now pronounce; reckon as accursed and damned the whole of their cities, lands, and persons; granting assurance and safety to me, my fealty, and office,—to the legions and armies engaged in performing these purposes;—for myself, oath, office, and the Roman people, their legions, and armies I deliver up and devote in our stead, these enemies, as substitutes for punishment. If these things are done, in testimony thereof, I do vow that I will offer in sacrifice, three black sheep to thee, O mother Earth, and thee, O Jupiter, father of the gods.'—*Saturn*, b. 3. r. 9.

Deut. xviii. 18. ² Num. xii. 6, &c. ³ Exod. xxxiii. 11.

⁴ Sykes' Essay upon the truth of the Christian Religion.

⁵ Is. xxviii. 7. ⁶ John iii. 2. ⁷ John i. 18. ⁸ Acts ii. 22.

⁹ John i. 2. ¹⁰ John i. 18. ¹¹ Heb. viii. 6. ¹² Heb. iii. 2, &c.

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are clear of this absurdity; for they tell us, that 'God's anger was kindled,' not *ci halak*, 'because he went,' but *ci halak hua*, 'because he went of himself,' that is, without staying for Balak's messengers to come in the morning to call him. He had told them over night, that an 'house full of silver and gold' could not tempt him to go counter to what God should direct him to do; and by this vaunting speech they very possibly might think their master's offers neglected, and be tempted to go away next morning without him; but so full were his head and heart of expectations from the journey, that he would not run the hazard of their calling; but rose up early in the morning, went himself to them, which was acting directly contrary to God's express order, for which reason he sent his 'angel to stand in his way for an adversary against him.' By the mouth of his angel, however, God permitted him to go, as knowing very well that his journey would tend to his confusion, and the manifestation of his people's glory. For though there was nothing but malice in the prophet's heart, and a fixed determination to do all the harm he could to the Israelites; yet God, by his overruling providence, directed his words so, as to make them, upon every essay to curse, pregnant with blessings. Had not God forbidden the prophet to go upon his first application for leave, he had not declared his aversion to Balak's wicked project: had he not allowed him to go upon his further importunity, he had not exposed his folly and madness, as well as the weakness of his magical arts, so effectually: but now, in the wise method which he took, he defeated the designs of the wicked, and 'made the wrath of man to praise him;' he hath shown us, that no enchantments, no machinations can prevail, where he undertakes to protect; and ¹ has left us this lesson of instruction, "That when men are foolish and self-willed, and in the pursuit of their corrupt views, will follow their own ways, notwithstanding many kind hints and admonitions to the contrary, God then abandons them to their own imaginations, which, in the event, very frequently prove their ruin."

It cannot be denied, indeed, but that God gave Balaam sundry admonitions, not to follow, in this headstrong manner, the pursuit of his avarice. His enjoining him not to go, when the princes of Moab first came for him; his sending an angel in the road to rebuke him for his rash and unadvised proceeding; and when he was come to Balak, his overruling his words upon three different attempts, and making him pronounce what was least of all his intention, were sufficient remembrancers, that his ways could not possibly be right before God. But of all others, the speaking of his ass was such a miraculous incident, as would have made any considering man, one would think, retract his purpose.

This indeed is so wonderful an instance, that several of the Jewish doctors, who, upon other occasions, are fond enough of miracles, seem as if they would hardly be induced to assent to this. Philo, in his life of Moses, passes it over in silence; and ² Maimonides pretends, that it only happened to Balaam in a prophetic vision. An inspired writer in the New Testament assures us, that it was a real fact, as Moses relates it. Moses says, that 'the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam;' and St Peter tells us, that the ass,

'speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet;' an human voice came out of the mouth of the ass; but I do not apprehend, that this voice proceeded from her own sentiments. Her tongue was miraculously moved, not by any power of hers so to move it, and it spake what it was moved to utter, without any connexion of her words and sentiments, and without her understanding the very words she uttered upon this occasion. This seems to have been the fact, and the severest philosophy, I hope, cannot deny, that God is as able to make creatures, destitute of understanding, pronounce articulate and rational words, as it is for a musician, by the different touches he gives any instrument, to make it express a variety of notes.

It may seem a little strange indeed, that Balaam should show no kind of surprise, when he heard his ass speak like a human creature: but to this ³ some reply, that Balaam might probably have imbibed the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which was certainly very common in the east, and from thence might be less astonished to hear any brute speak; whereas ⁴ others suppose, that he was in such a rage and fury at the supposed perverseness of his beast 'crushing his foot,' and 'falling down under him,' that for the present, he could think of nothing else; though the conciseness of Moses' narration, that must be presumed to have omitted many circumstances, which if rightly known would dispel this, and many more difficulties that may be imagined in this transaction, does certainly furnish us with a better and more satisfactory answer. For, ⁵ though we could not assign a sufficient reason why God thought fit to work this miracle, yet who shall therefore dare to infer that it was never wrought? The account which we have here even of the most ancient times is very short; nor can we rightly form a judgment what the prevailing sentiments of the world might be, in the age when Balaam lived. The counsels of God are likewise a great deep, nor can any man so far penetrate into them, as to pronounce what is proper or improper for him to do. Upon this occasion, however, there seems to be some reason for his giving the ass the faculty of speech, namely, that thereby he might convince the princes of Moab, who are supposed to be in company with Balaam, how easy a thing it was for him, who had opened the mouth of this dumb creature, to stop that of its owner, or to direct his words to what purposes he pleased; and ⁶ how weak and impotent was the man in whom they confided, when, with all his curses and imprecations, he could not get the better of a poor brute, and much less then of the people, so immediately under the divine protection.

The Scripture indeed informs us, that after his fruitless negotiation with Balak, ⁷ 'he returned to his own place;' and so he might return to Mesopotamia, and yet when he heard of the success of his advice against the Israelites, and how many thousands of them had been cut off in consequence of it, he might go back again to the Midianites in hopes of obtaining an ample reward for his services; or when war was declared against them,

³ See Le Clerc's Commentary.⁴ See Patrick's Commentary in locum.⁵ Le Clerc's Commentary in Num. xxiii.⁶ Bibliotheca Biblica in Num. xxii.⁷ Ibid. in Num. xxiv. 14, 25.

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the Midianites themselves might possibly send for him again, and he be the rather inclined to go, because now he might have some hopes of cursing the Israelites with success, since they had apostatized from the worship of their God, and fallen into idolatry, which while they stood clear of, he knew he would not be permitted to do; and it is not unlikely, that for this purpose he was carried into the field of battle, and there became a sacrifice to his own evil policy.

It is a sad perversion of the sense of Scripture, when God, in condescension to our capacities, is pleased to make use of human words and phrases, to account that condescension, not only an impropriety of speech, but a disparagement likewise to the divine nature and perfections. The Scripture indeed makes mention of God's 'swearing in his wrath;' but who would ever think, that the form of this expression should give any disgust, or the sense of it be thought repugnant to the natural notions we have of God? He that at all considers the end and intent of an oath, must allow it to be a solemn asseveration, made as strong and binding as possible, in order to beget faith and confidence in others, or to procure a sure belief of what is so affirmed. When men swear, nothing can make their asseveration so strong and binding, as the invocation of God to be their witness, or avenger: and in like manner, when God himself is said to swear, we are to suppose, that he enforces and strengthens his asseveration as much as possible, or as much as is proper, to beget the highest trust and confidence in his revelations, not by invoking a superior, for that, we may say, is not in his power, but by condescending to make use of human forms of swearing, with such proper alterations as the case requires. Thus, when God swears ² by himself, or ³ by his great name, or ⁴ by his life, or ⁵ by his right hand, or ⁶ by his holiness, or ⁷ by his truth, or ⁸ his excellency, or any other of his attributes or perfections, the meaning of these expressions is much the same, namely, that he thereby declares the thing to be as certain, and as surely to be depended on, as his own being or attributes are. This, I say, is the whole purport of the thing; and God is therefore said to make use of this manner of speaking, only because it is more awful and solemn, and consequently apt to make deeper impressions, and beget a stronger confidence in the hearers than a naked declaration can.

It is the manner of the Scripture to ascribe to God hands, eyes, and feet; but the design is not that we should believe that he has any of these members according to the literal signification; but only that he has a power to execute all those acts, to which these members in us are so very subservient. It is the manner of the same Scripture, to represent him as affected with the like passions that we feel in ourselves, when we are angry or pleased, have our hearts attendered or provoked to revenge; and yet, upon reflection, we cannot think that any of these passions are inherent in the divine nature; but the meaning only is ⁹ that God will as certainly punish the wicked, as if he were inflamed with the passion of anger or revenge; and as infallibly relieve or

reward the good, as we will those for whom we have tender compassion or affectionate love. So that it is only by way of analogy and comparison, that the nature and passions of men are ascribed to God; and therefore certainly, when he is pleased to express himself in accommodation to our capacities, instead of making it a matter of cavil and reproach, we ought to be thankful for his condescension, and to interpret his words in a sense suitable to his divine Majesty.

It cannot be denied, indeed, but that the utter extirpation of the Canaanites carries a face of rigour and severity, not so very consistent with God's frequent declarations of his mercy and long-suffering; but then it should be considered, that as he is full of lenity and mercy to those that endeavour to please him, so he has thought fit to declare with the same breath, that he will ¹⁰ 'by no means clear the guilty.' Let us then see how the case stood between God and these nations, when the Israelites were sent to dispossess them.

There is no question to be made, but that most of these people had at first the true worship of God instituted amongst them, and that their several progenitors took care to leave behind them worthy conceptions of him; but notwithstanding this, in the days of Moses we find their notions so corrupted, and all kinds of idolatry so publicly established, that the land is said to have been defiled with them, and like a stomach overcharged with unwholesome diet, to have nauseated, ¹¹ 'and spued them up.'

In denouncing the sentence of their excision, therefore, ¹² 'Ye shall smite them, and utterly destroy them, and save alive nothing that breatheth,' God intimates the reason of his severity by the enumeration of these particulars; ¹³ 'Ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their statues, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire;' even the images of Chemosh, and Peor, and Moloch, and other detestable idols, to whom they are said to have offered human sacrifices, and to have ¹⁴ 'made their seed pass through the fire.' Nor was their idolatry less provoking, than the corruption of their morals, since adultery and bestiality of all kinds, incest, and all manner of uncleanness they both avowedly practised, and ¹⁵ 'took pleasure in those that did them.'

The Midianitish women, in particular, by prostituting their bodies, in order to draw the young Israelites into idolatry, had given sufficient evidence of their incorrigible attachment to wickedness, and how impossible it would be for the people whom God had selected from the rest of the world to preserve their integrity, if these, and such like public seducers, were permitted to live among them; and therefore God assigns this as another reason for their extirpation: ¹⁶ 'Because thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and he hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that be upon the face of the earth;' ¹⁷ therefore 'shalt thou consume all the people, which the Lord thy God shall deliver into thy hands; thine eyes shall have no pity upon them, lest they turn thee away from following

¹ See Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 250.

² Gen. xxii. 16.

³ Jer. xlii. 26.

⁴ Jer. li. 14.

⁵ Is. lxii. 8.

⁶ Amos iv. 2.

⁷ Ps. lxxxix. 40.

⁸ Amos. viii. 7.

⁹ Bishop King's Sermon of Divine Pred.

¹⁰ Num. xiv. 18.

¹¹ Lev. xviii. 28.

¹² Deut. vii. 2., and xx. 16.

¹³ Deut. vii. 5.

¹⁴ Lev. xviii. 21.

¹⁵ Rom. i. 32.

¹⁶ Deut. vii. 6.

¹⁷ Deut. vii. 16., and Exod. xxiii. 33.

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me, to serve other gods, which will surely be a snare unto thee.⁷

Now, if either the incorrigible wickedness of any people, or the danger of their corrupting others by their enticements and bad examples, may be deemed a sufficient reason, as it is in all civil governments, to cut off obnoxious members, for God to rid himself of any nation that has incurred his highest displeasure, the Israelites, who were only instruments in God's hands, are no more to be blamed for executing the Almighty's commands, than the person who apprehends a malefactor, and brings him to condign punishment, is to be thought culpable by the laws of the land. And though the malefactor may possibly plead for himself, that he never did the apprehender, or even the executioner, any wrong; yet this will be of no weight or significance to the magistrate, when he calls upon the inferior officer to do his duty.¹ Do but then allow the high and mighty magistrate of heaven and earth as much right as his deputies have that act under him, and a judgment sufficient to determine what concerns the public good, and then certainly the Israelites, acting by his orders, had at least as clear a right to destroy the Canaanites as any executioner can have to take away life by command of authority.

There is something, perhaps, that we may think more affecting in the case of the innocent children, which fell in this common devastation; but then we are to consider, that as the lives of all mankind are in the hands of God that gave them, so may he demand them back again, when, or in what manner he pleases; and as well may we quarrel with his providence, for sending a destroying angel armed with a famine, a deluge, or a pestilence, which sweeps away young and old together, as we may with his deputing the Hebrews to be the agents of his high behests, in a general and promiscuous slaughter of such nations, as his divine justice and wisdom had predestinated to destruction.

The Jews, it must be owned, have several rules of life, and customs peculiar to themselves, and by a rigorous observance of these, they contracted among other nations the character of being a sullen and unsociable people, haters of the rest of mankind, and averse to all civil society and commerce. Thus Manetho, as he is quoted² by Grotius, lays this heavy charge upon them, "That they would hold no manner of correspondence with any mortal that was not initiated into their religion." Tacitus says of them, "That though they are courteous enough to one another, yet they pursue foreigners with the utmost rage of exasperated enemies." And, to name no more, Diodorus relates, "That they were the only people in the world who rejected all commerce and friendship with foreigners; and not only so, but treated them as enemies." But all this must certainly be a gross mistake, because the law of Moses expressly commands those that live under it to do good to mankind in general; not only to love their neighbours,³ but 'to love the stranger'⁴ likewise, and in 'no case⁵ to vex or oppress him,' for this very reason, 'because they were strangers in the land of Egypt:' and therefore Josephus, in his book⁶ against Apion, tells us, that though their lawgiver would not admit those who came occasionally

only to the solemnities of their religion; yet, among other things, these he enjoined as necessary, and almost essential clauses in his law, namely, to supply every one with fire, water, and provisions, that was in want, and to direct the traveller in the road; which plainly contradicts the representation which the "Roman satirist" thought fit to give of them.

If we consult the practice of the first founders of the Jewish nation, we shall find Abraham⁶ making an alliance with Abimelech, king of Gerar, at Beersheba, and assisting even the impious Sodomites, when he thought them unjustly invaded by their enemies: we shall find Isaac⁷ entering into a covenant with the same, or another king of the same name, at the same place; and Jacob⁸ signing articles of agreement with Laban, his father-in-law. Nor can we think, that the promulgation of the Jewish ordinances made any alteration in this particular, or laid any restraint upon their votaries from joining in treaties of commerce, or any other negotiations that tended to the benefit of human society. For, had this been the case, we cannot conceive how⁹ both David and Solomon could have ventured to make a league with Hiram, king of Tyre, without offending God; which they were so far from doing, that Solomon in particular, as¹⁰ the sacred history informs us, was directed by 'that wisdom, which he received from God,' when he made his confederacy with this heathen prince.

Excepting then those several people whom God had appointed the Israelites, at their entrance into Canaan, to destroy, and some other kings and nations afterwards, against whom he had sent out his prophets to denounce vengeance for their sad impieties, the Jews were forbidden to maintain a civil intercourse with none; but, on the contrary, were frequently excited to use kindness and hospitality to aliens, as well as others, that all the world might see, as¹¹ Josephus puts the words into Solomon's mouth, at the dedication of the temple, "That the Hebrews were not so inhuman, as to envy strangers the common dispensations of the author and fountain of all our happiness."

And for this very reason,¹² I am confident it was, that the Hebrews are so often reminded by God of their having been strangers and bond-slaves in the land of Egypt, that by their hospitality and charity, they might comfort and relieve those who were in the like condition; that, in the words of the prophet,¹³ 'they might draw out their soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; that they might bring the poor that were cast out, to their houses; cover the cold and naked, and not hide themselves from their own flesh.' For this cause are they so frequently called upon, in the words of the same prophet¹⁴ 'to look unto the rock whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged, to look unto Abraham their father, and to Sarah that bare them:' that the happy change of their circumstances might beget in them a perpetual gratitude to their great

⁶ Gen. xxi. 22.

⁷ Gen. xxvi. 28.

⁸ Gen. xxxi. 44.

⁹ 2 Sam. v. 11.

¹⁰ 1 Kings v. 12.

¹¹ Jewish Antiq. b. viii. c. 2.

¹² See Exod. xxii. 21; Lev. xxv. 42, 55; and Deut. x. 19.

¹³ Is. lviii. 10, 7.

¹⁴ Is. li. 1, 2.

¹ Scripture Vindicated, part 2.

² Annot. in Deut. vii.

³ Deut. x. 19.

⁴ Exod. xxii. 21.

⁵ B. 2.

^a "Not to point out the way to any one, unless a worshipper of the same sacred things, and to conduct the circumcised alone to the wished-for fountain."—*Juv. Sat.* 14.

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benefactor, and the obscurity of their origin teach them to be humble.

It is part of the admonition of Moses to the Israelites, ¹ 'Thou shalt remember all the way, which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty years, in that terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, and whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no.' What restrained the serpents, which were so numerous in the wilderness, from stinging the Hebrews, was doubtless that great and sovereign being, who resided in the pillar of the cloud, to cover the camp in their march, and make every noxious creature flee before them. ² Several authors are of opinion, that the serpents which bit the Israelites, were of the flying kind, and might be called fiery, by reason of their colour. Herodotus informs us, that Arabia produced this sort of serpents in great abundance; and the time of the year wherein the Israelites were under this calamity was in the season when these creatures usually are upon the wing, to visit the neighbouring and adjacent countries; and might now be directed into the camp of the Israelites as a great army; for so God ³ calls 'the locust, the canker-worm, the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm, his great army,' to destroy and depopulate without control. For however the divine presence had protected them before, the people were now in a state of rebellion; they were murmuring at the tediousness of their journeyings, and at their want of provisions, though every day fed by providence at the expense of a miracle. So that God, being angry with them, had removed their heavenly safeguard; and no sooner was it removed, than things were left to their natural course. The serpents resumed their venom; and ⁴ as it was now in the heat of summer, when creatures of this kind are naturally most poisonous, they raised such sores, and sudden inflammations wherever they fell, as occasioned death in some of the most guilty, and violent pains in all, until God was pleased to provide them with a remedy of a nature somewhat extraordinary. ^a

¹ Deut. viii. 2. ^a Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. b. 12.

² Joel ii. 25. ^b Patrick's Commentary on Num. xx.

^a The fiery serpent mentioned Num. xxi. 6. Deut. viii. 15. Is. xiv. 29. was so called, probably from the burning sensation which its bite occasioned. Plutarch thus speaks of a similar kind of reptiles: "The inhabitants of the country round the Red Sea, were tormented in such a manner as was never heard of till that time. Little dragons bit their arms and legs: and if you touched them ever so lightly, they fixed themselves to the flesh, and their bite was intolerably painful, and like fire." The Hebrew original signifies also a winged serpent; and we are told that such were very common both in Egypt and Arabia. The learned Bochart describes them as short, spotted with divers colours, and with wings resembling those of the bat. The heathen writers concur in testifying that the deserts wherein the Israelites journeyed produced serpents of so venomous a kind, that their bite was deadly beyond the power of any art then known to cure it. The ancients observed in general, that the most sandy and barren deserts had the greatest number, and the most venomous of serpents.

The viper is one of the deadliest among the serpent tribes, as appears from the allusion of Zophar: 'the viper's tongue shall slay the wicked;' that is, he shall as certainly die as if a viper had bitten him. Every touch of the viper's tongue is instant death; for when the barbarians in Malta saw the venomous reptile leap from the fire, and fasten upon the hand of Paul, they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly. (Acts xxviii. 6.) The prophet Isaiah mentions it among the

Whether the sight of brass, as some naturalists say, be hurtful or no in such cases, this is certainly a prescrip-

venomous reptiles, which in extraordinary numbers infest the land of Egypt: 'from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent.' (Is. xxx. 6.) In illustrating the mischievous character of wicked men, and the ruinous nature of sin, he thus alludes to the dangerous creature: "they hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider's web; he that eateth of their eggs dieth; and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper." The cockatrice here undoubtedly means the viper; for the egg of one creature never produces, by any management, one of a different species. When the egg is crushed, the young viper is disengaged, and leaps out, prepared for mischief. It may be objected, that the viper is not an oviparous but a viviparous animal; and consequently, the prophet must refer to some other creature. But it is to be remembered, that although the viper brings forth its young alive, they are hatched from eggs, perfectly formed in the belly of the mother. The viper alone of all terrestrial animals, produces within itself an egg of an uniform colour, and soft like the eggs or roe of fishes. This curious natural fact, reconciles the statement of the sacred Scripture, with the truth of natural history.

The certain and speedy destruction which follows the bite of this creature, clearly proves the seasonable interposition of almighty power for the preservation of the apostle Paul. Exasperated by the heat of the fire, the deadly reptile, leaping from the brushwood, where it had concealed itself, fixed the canine teeth, which convey the poison into the wound which they had made, in his hand. Death must have been the consequence, had not the power of God, which long before had shut the lions' mouths, that they might not hurt the prophets, neutralized the viper's deadly poison, and miraculously preserved the valuable life of his servant. The viper, on this memorable occasion, exhibited every symptom of rage, and put forth all its powers: the deliverance of Paul, therefore, was not accidental, nor the effect of his own exertion, but of the mighty power of that Master whom he served, whose voice even the deadly viper is compelled to obey. This conclusion was in effect drawn by the barbarians themselves: for when 'they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said, that he was a god;' they did not hesitate to attribute his preservation to divine power; they only mistook his real character, not the true nature of that agency which was able to render the bite of the viper harmless.

To the deadly malice with which the scribes and Pharisees persecuted the blessed Redeemer and his followers after his ascension into heaven, John the Baptist pointedly alludes in these words: 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come!' And our Lord addresses them in the same terms: 'ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?'

The fiery flying serpents:—The brazen figure of this creature was a type of our blessed Redeemer, who, for our salvation, was lifted up upon the cross, as the serpent was elevated in the camp of Israel, for the preservation of that people. It is the only species of serpent which the Almighty Creator has provided with wings, by means of which, instead of creeping or leaping, it rises from the ground, and, leaning upon the extremity of its tail, moves with great velocity. It is a native of Egypt and the deserts of Arabia; and receives its name from the Hebrew verb *saraph*, which signifies to burn, in allusion to the violent inflammation which its poison produces, or rather its fiery colour, which the brazen serpent was intended to represent.

Bochart is of opinion, that the seraph is the same as the hydrus, or, as Cicero calls it, the serpent of the waters. For in the book of Isaiah, the land of Egypt is called the region from whence came the viper and flying seraph, or burning serpent. Elian says, they came from the deserts of Lybia and Arabia, to inhabit the streams of the Nile; and that they have the form of the hydrus.

The existence of winged serpents is attested by many writers of modern times. A kind of snakes were discovered among the Pyrenees, from whose sides proceeded cartilages in the form of wings; and Scaliger mentions a peasant who killed a serpent of the same species which attacked him, and presented it to the king of France. Le Blanc, as quoted by Bochart, says, at the head of the lake Chiamay, are extensive woods and vast marshes,

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tion of physicians, that such people as are bitten with any venomous beast, should be kept from the sight of the very image of the beast from which they received such hurt; and therefore God might take occasion, from the incongruity of the means, to magnify his own power, making use of this kind of remedy, that the Israelites might know, and be convinced, that both the disease and medicine came from him. When our blessed Saviour cured the blind man in the gospel, 'he spit on the ground and made clay, and spread it all over his eyes,' which some standers by might be apt to believe was a likelier way to put them quite out, than to recover them; but when they saw the thing have its effect, they glorified God, and said, ¹ 'How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?' because they could not but perceive, that it was a greater miracle to work the cure by incompetent or incongruous means, than by none at all. And in like manner, if, instead of setting up this brazen serpent upon a pole, God had ordered the Israelites to apply a leaf of any common herb to the bite of these poisonous serpents, as he did Hezekiah to ² 'lay a lump of figs for a plaster upon his boil,' the cure might have been the same; but then the singularity of it had not been so remarkable. Men might have imputed it to some secret

virtue in the plant, which now can be ascribed to nothing but the superlative power of God, who, even by contrary means, can bring about what ends he pleases.

The design of those men, however, can hardly be good, who, to rob God of the glory of the cure, would impute it to some secret quality in the brazen serpent itself. ³ A talisman, which, according to the common account, is a certain piece of metal, made under the influence of such and such planets and constellations, with a wonderful power to beget love, and overcome enemies; to drive away noxious animals, and cure diseases, &c., is a chimerical notion; and ⁴ to resemble the figure which God appointed Moses to set up, to any of these vain devices, is a scheme that ^a deserves our scorn, more than our confutation. The author of the book of Wisdom, addressing himself to God, and speaking of the Israelites, has imputed the virtue of this serpent to its true cause. ⁵ 'He that turned himself towards it, was not healed by the thing which he saw, but by thee, who art the Saviour of all.' And accordingly, in the foregoing verse, he calls it 'a sign, or symbol of salvation, to put them in remembrance of the commandment of the law.

The only considerable difficulty in the whole transaction is, why God, who had forbidden all manner of images, should, on this occasion, command one to be made. This the Jewish doctors, as ^b Justin Martyr

¹ John ix. 16.

² Is. xxxviii. 21.

which it is very dangerous to approach, because they are infested by very large serpents, which, raised from the ground on wings resembling those of bats, and leaning on the extremity of their tails, move with great rapidity. They exist, it is reported, about these places in such great numbers, that they have almost laid waste the neighbouring provinces.

The original term (*Mespheph*) does not always signify flying with wings; it often expresses vibration, swinging backwards and forwards, a tremulous motion, a fluttering; and this is precisely the motion of a serpent, when he springs from one tree to another. Niebuhr mentions a sort of serpents at Bassorah; they commonly keep upon the date trees; and as it would be laborious for them to come down from a very high tree, in order to ascend another, they twist themselves by the tail to a branch of the former, which making a spring by the motion they give it, throws them to the branches of the second. Hence it is that the modern Arabs call them flying serpents. Admiral Anson also speaks of the flying serpents that he met with at the island of Quibo, but which were without wings.

The hydi, it is true, are produced and reared in marshy places; not in burning and thirsty deserts, where the people of Israel murmured because they could find no water. But although that people might find no water to drink, it will not follow, that the desert contained no marshy place. Besides, it is well known, that when water falls, these serpents do not perish, but become chersydri, that is, seraphim, or burners. These chersydri, it is extremely probable, were the serpents which bit the rebellious Israelites; and in this state they were more terrible instruments of divine vengeance; for, exasperated by the want of water, and the intense heat of the season, they injected a deadly poison, and occasioned to the miserable sufferers more agonizing torments. The time of the year when Jehovah sent these serpents among his people, proves that this is no vain conjecture. According to Nicauder, the hydi became chersydri, and beset the path of the traveller, about the dog-days. Now, Aaron died on the first day of the fifth month, that is, the month Abib, which corresponds with the nineteenth day of July. The Israelites mourned for him thirty days: immediately after which, they fought a battle with Arad, the Canaanite, and destroyed the country: then recommencing their journey, they murmured for want of water, and the serpents were sent. This, then, must have happened about the end of August; the season when the hydi become seraphim, and inflict the most cruel wounds. The words of Moses seem to countenance the idea, that the hydi employed on this occasion, were not generated on the spot, but sent from a distance. 'And the Lord sent fiery serpents, or seraphim, among the people.' (Num. xxi. 6.) From these words it is natural to conclude, that they came

³ Saurin's Dissertations.

⁴ Le Clerc's Commentary on Numbers xxi.

⁵ Wisd. xvi. 7.

from that land of rivers, through which the congregation had lately passed. Nor will this be reckoned too long a journey, when it is recollected, that they travel from both the Lybian and Arabian deserts, to the streams of the Nile.

They inflicted on this memorable occasion an appropriate chastisement on the perverse tribes. That rebellious people had opened their mouth against the heavens; they had sharpened their tongues like serpents; and the poison of asps was under their lips; therefore they were made to suffer by the burning poison of a creature which they so nearly resembled. In this state of helplessness, they had recourse to him whom they had provoked, and whose patience and goodness they had so long experienced: they entreated Moses to intercede for them with God, that he might forgive their sins, and remove this calamity. He recommended Moses to make a brazen serpent in exact resemblance to the fiery serpent, and to raise it on a pole in the view of the people, so that the wounded might look to it, and be healed. There seemed to be no connexion between the means and the end, between a piece of brass, whatever might be its shape, and the cure which the looking to it, was designed to effect. But it was the appointment of God, and a just conception of his character would at once lead to the conclusion, that he who can accomplish his purposes without means as easily as with them, would not fail to render his own institution efficacious. Accordingly, when Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived. Our Lord has taught us, 'that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whose believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'—*Ed.*

a Sir John Marsham has collected several passages from the profane writers, which hint at charms and enchantments to cure the bite of serpents; and he says the Hebrews made use of enchantments for this very purpose; which assertion he endeavours to support by a citation from Ps. lvi. 4, 5; by another from Ecclesiastes, chap. x. 8; and by a third from Jeremiah, chap. viii. 17; and from the whole of what he offers, he would intimate, that the cure of the Israelites was not miraculous, but that the brazen serpent was properly a charm for the calamity, or an amulet for the distemper; but it would be trifling to refute this opinion.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. b. 12.

b In his book against Trypho, he insists upon this serpent as

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observes in his days, could give no account of; but had they known Jesus Christ, and him crucified, they might have soon perceived, ¹ that God intended it for a type of the death of Christ, and the manner in which he was to die; and that the effects of the brazen serpent upon them who looked on it, did represent the virtue received by true believers from the death of their Redeemer. For so we find our Saviour himself applying the mysterious meaning of it: ² 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whoso believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.'

Thus we have answered the several doubts and objections that have been made to that part of the history of Moses which includes this period of time: and if the attestation of profane writers, may be thought any confirmation of what has been said, we have the practice of most subsequent lawgivers, in imitation of this great Jewish leader, pretending to a familiarity with some fictitious deity or other, and thence deriving their institutions: and whoever compares the sacred and fabulous account of things together, will find a near resemblance between Aaron and the heathen Mercury; and that as this false deity is said to have been an Egyptian by birth, the messenger and interpreter of the gods, and is generally painted with a *caduceus*, or wand in his hand twisted about with snakes; so Aaron was himself born in Egypt, and appointed by God to be ³ an interpreter to his brother Moses, and a messenger to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, in whose presence he threw down his wonder-working rod, and it immediately became a serpent.

The whole history of Balaam, as romantic as it seems, is still upon record in the ancient oriental writers, from whence the present Mahometans have borrowed many things. It is not improbable that the speaking of his ass gave handle to the fiction of several other brute creatures, upon less momentous occasions, accosting their masters. That the deserts wherein the Israelites journeyed, were infested with serpents of so venomous a kind, that their biting was deadly, and above the power of art to cure, both Strabo and Diodorus testify. And, to instance no farther, the worship of *Æsculapius*, the known god of physic, under the form of a serpent, ⁴ and what some late travellers tell us of the Indians carrying about a wreathed serpent upon a perch, to which they pay their adorations every morning, had manifestly their original from some tradition or other of this serpent's image, which Moses was directed to set up. So true is the character, confirmed by testimony of all kinds, which the sacred writers give us of this Moses, the servant of the Lord, that both as the leader, the lawgiver, and historian of his people, ⁴ 'he was found faithful in all his house.'

¹ Kidder's Demonstration, p. 73.

² John iii. 14, 15.

³ Exod. vii. 1, 2.

⁴ Heb. iii. 5.

a type of Christ, and appealing to the company, what reason (exclusive of that) could be given of this matter, one of the Jews confessed that he was in the right, and that he himself had inquired for a reason among the Jewish masters, and could meet with none.—*Kidder's Demonstration*, p. 73.

a There is something very remarkable, and truly horrid, in what Clemens Alexandrinus mentions—that in the orgies of Bacchus Maenolis (or the mad) his worshippers were crowned with serpents, and yelled out *Eve, Eve*, even her by whom the transgression came.

CHAP. III.—On the Character and Conduct of Balaam.

[SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.]

DIFFERENT opinions have been entertained in regard to the real character of Balaam. The opinion of bishop Patrick, Dr Waterland, bishop Butler, bishop Horsley, and Dr Hales, is, that he was a true prophet of Jehovah, to whom, on this occasion, he offered the sacrifices which he had desired Balak to prepare. Others maintain, that he was merely an eminent soothsayer or diviner, who, it was supposed, could influence the fate of individuals and nations by his enchantments. Origen, Chrysostom, Basil, and Augustine, among the ancients, and Bryant and bishop Gleig, among the moderns, were of the latter opinion.

It is certain, as bishop Gleig has observed, that there is nothing recorded in Scripture which has excited more profane ridicule among arrogant infidels than the story of Balaam rebelling, or striving to rebel, against his God; reproved for that rebellion by a contemptible animal; blessing the people whom he was requested to curse, and whom he wished to curse; advising the seduction of that people to idolatry and fornication, immediately after blessing them, under the influence of the Spirit of God, for their abstinence from these vices; praying that he might himself die the death of the righteous, and soon afterwards falling in battle with those who, at his instigation, had provoked to war that very people to whom in his prayer he alludes as the righteous. That a true prophet, long blessed with a familiar though supernatural intercourse with Jehovah, and such Balaam is supposed to have been, should have persisted, to the end of his life, in deliberately thwarting, as far as he was able, the very designs of Jehovah which he declared were revealed to himself, and that he should at last have enticed to idolatry those whom he had been compelled to bless because they were not idolaters, and have taken up arms against them with whom he had prayed with such apparent earnestness that he might live and die, is an extraordinary picture of human nature.

Is this really the picture of Balaam exhibited by the inspired lawgiver of the Hebrews? If Balaam was a prophet of Jehovah, by whom he had long been inspired with the knowledge of future events, and whom he named as the only true God, it certainly is: but if he was an idolatrous diviner or soothsayer, as he is elsewhere styled, and compelled, on this occasion, to bless where he intended to curse, and to foretell, in language not his own, future events of the highest and most general importance, the character and conduct of Balaam, as described by Moses, will be found perfectly consistent with itself; whilst those who have attended to the import of the miracles which were wrought in Egypt for the deliverance of Israel, will at once perceive the wisdom of making the ass the instrument of rebuking the madness of this diviner.

My own opinion is, that Balaam was originally a diviner, or magician of great renown; but having acquired some knowledge of the true God, perhaps by hearing of the wonderful works performed by Moses in

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his name, he endeavoured to render this knowledge subservient to his interested and ambitious purposes, by professing himself a prophet of Jehovah, and uttering divinations as revelations from him. Thus the exorcists, observing how efficacious the name of Jesus proved in the mouth of the apostle, attempted to cast out devils, 'adjuring them by Jesus whom Paul preached:' and thus Simon Magus, finding the miracles of Philip so much superior to the effects of his magic, embraced christianity; and afterwards offered Peter money to confer on him the same power which he exercised, doubtless intending to enrich or aggrandize himself by it. On this supposition, Balaam's case of incantations, even in seeking Jehovah, was the natural effect of the association of his old practices with his new pretensions.¹ There is no evidence that God had ever spoken to him, or by him, before this event: but there is ample proof that he lived and died a wicked man, and an enemy of God and his people. This, however, has not been a singular case.² Balaam dwelt in or near Mesopotamia; but his reputation had reached so far, and he was so celebrated, that he was sent for, as it appears, in consequence of the counsel given to Moab by the elders of Midian; being the only person who was able to contend with Moses, the prophet of Israel. For we may suppose that they ascribed to the superior skill of Moses in some unknown arts all that power by which Israel had been brought out of Egypt, notwithstanding Pharaoh's determined opposition; had subsisted for so many years in the wilderness, and had obtained their late victories over the Ammonites.

Bishop Patrick does not think that Balaam was, at the time when visited by the messengers of Balak, either a true prophet, or a devout worshipper of Jehovah; but that he had formerly been both, till becoming so covetous as to love the wages of unrighteousness, he addicted himself to superstitious rites and ceremonies, making use of teraphim, which had been of ancient practice in his country, and worshipping God perhaps by other images. No evidence, however, can be adduced in support of these suppositions: for we know nothing of Balaam but from what is related of him in the book of Numbers, and in other books of sacred Scripture, which allude to the circumstances which are there mentioned.

My own opinion is, that Balaam was a soothsayer; and yet that he was inspired by the Spirit of God to utter important predictions. He was probably one of those early idolaters who did not entirely renounce the true God, or cease to worship him, but only associated with him, in their vain imaginations, a number of subordinate divinities, to whom they supposed that he had committed, under his own superintendence, the administration of the affairs of this world, assigning to the care of different deities different countries. To these fictitious beings, of whom they soon found images, they paid a kind of subordinate worship, without, however, neglecting the worship of Jehovah. Of this we have one instance in the case of Laban, who, while he appears to have acknowledged the supreme divinity of Jehovah, worshipped certain inferior gods, of which his daughter Rachel contrived to carry away the images. Such appears likewise to have been the state of religion in Egypt,

when Joseph was first carried thither: for it was the true God that sent to Pharaoh the dreams which Joseph interpreted, for the good of the country of which Pharaoh was the sovereign; and such was the case in Canaan, during the reign of the two Abimelechs, of whom we read in the book of Genesis.

Balaam, as it appears to me, was an idolater who never was a true prophet of the true God; but who had heard of Jehovah, and acknowledged not only his existence, but even his power as the tutelary God of the Israelites, though he may have been doubtful at first, as the Syrians were at a later period, whether the God of Israel, or his own god, were most powerful. The ancient idolaters never hesitated to acknowledge each others' gods, or to worship, along with their own, the gods of those nations in which they had occasion to reside; and the Jews and Christians would never have been persecuted by the Roman emperors for worshipping the true God, had they not refused to worship together with him, the idol deities of the empire.

According to Mr Bryant, the goat, the baboon, the ass, and the ram, were all considered sacred, and all for the same reason, by the Egyptians, and some other eastern nations. All these animals were considered, in the countries in which Baal-peor was the favourite deity, as emblems of that god, who was, in different temples, worshipped under their different similitudes.

On a sacred ass then, Balaam, the priest of Peor, zealous for the cause of his own god, and eager to gain the wages of iniquity, was prosecuting his journey to curse the worshippers of the true God, when he was encountered by an angel on the way. After various attempts to escape, the ass fell down before the angel, who had displayed himself to her, though not yet to her rider; that is, the emblem of the god of Balaam bowed down before the servant of the God of Israel; and at last, words proceeded from her mouth expressive of the severest reproof that could be given to the madness and obstinacy of the soothsayer of Pethor. It was a rule with the God of Jacob to display his supremacy to his people, by making all other deities and their agents subservient to his will. On this account, he often forced their representatives, and their prophets, to be the unwilling ministers of his commands; to attest the superiority of his power; and even to execute his vengeance on their own votaries. This was remarkably the case in all the miracles wrought by the ministry of Moses in the land of Egypt, when Jehovah made the gods of that country the instruments of his vengeance on Pharaoh and his host. In every step of his progress, Balaam was foiled at his own weapons. The instrument by which he was first rebuked on the way, though contemptible in our eyes, was sacred to the god in whom he trusted; and therefore the speaking ass, though it has often been the subject of ridicule among ignorant infidels, affords one of the most illustrious proofs of the divine wisdom. God, if he had pleased, might have reproved Balaam in the way without the intervention of the ass; when the soothsayer arrived at the end of his journey, he might have been compelled by the overpowering influence of the Spirit of God, to pour forth all the predictions which he afterwards uttered, without having recourse to any one of his enchantments; but the proof of Jehovah's superiority over the gods of Midian

¹ Acts viii.

² Mat. vii. 21—23, and 1 Cor. xiii. 1—4.

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and Moab would not have been so conspicuous to the grovelling minds either of those nations or of the Israelites themselves, had a single circumstance been omitted which actually took place. Balaam was everywhere compelled to bless the people whom it was his wish to curse; and to foretell the future destruction, by that people, of all the nations which worshipped the gods of Egypt, Midian, and Moab.¹

CHAP. IV.—*Of the Profane History, Religion, Government, &c., of such nations as the Israelites had dealings with during this period.*

TOWARDS the conclusion of the foregoing book, we carried the succession of the Egyptian kings down to the reign of Amenophis, who, according to the most received accounts, was that obstinate prince, that in pursuit of the Hebrews, together with all his army, was lost in the waves of the Red Sea: nor should we, as yet, concern ourselves any farther with the history of that nation, but that his son and successor, Sesostris,^a who

¹ See Gleig, Horsley, Butler, and Bryant, on the character of Balaam.

^a It is a matter of no small dispute among chronologers, in what time it was this Sesostris lived. The seeming analogy of the name makes Sir John Marsham think, that Sesostris was the same with Shishak, 'king of Egypt, who, in the days of Rehoboam, came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, the treasures of the king's house, and all the shields which Solomon had made,' &c. (1 Kings xiv. 25, 26.) What confirms him in this opinion, is a passage in Josephus, wherein he tells us, that "God avenged himself upon Rehoboam, by the hand of Shishak, king of Egypt, concerning whom Herodotus (being mistaken) ascribes what he did to Sesostris." (*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 8. c. 4.) But what if, in this matter, Josephus himself should be mistaken, and not Herodotus? Josephus certainly took his antiquities from the records of the Jews, which gave a full account of what happened to Abraham and his posterity, both before and after they inherited the land of Canaan; but gave no account at all of that country while it was in other hands, and particularly while the Israelites were in the wilderness: and therefore it is more probable, that Josephus knew of no conquest of the land of Canaan by the Egyptians, before the time of Rehoboam. For when he applies what Herodotus says of Sesostris' setting up several infamous pillars, to stigmatize the countries which he conquered for cowardice, to Shishak, after his expedition against the Jews, he plainly gives us to understand, that he knew of no other expedition from Egypt against the land of Canaan before that. And indeed these very pillars are enough to decide the matter, that our Sesostris was not Shishak. Shishak made an irruption into Judea, plundered the temple and the country, and so went back again into Egypt. Now, had he set up such pillars, as a perpetual mark of infamy upon the Jews, can we imagine that they would have let them stand, even to be seen in Herodotus' time, and not immediately pulled them down upon his retreat? But, on the other hand, if Sesostris, who succeeded the Pharaoh that was drowned in the Red Sea, conquered Canaan, and set up such pillars, there is good reason to think, that they might continue a long while, because the Canaanites, who were a conquered people, dared not pull them down in his reign, and in the time of the deputies who governed under him; and the Israelites, who knew that these pillars were no reflection on them, but only on their enemies, would be inclinable enough to let them stand. It is much more probable then, that the mistake belongs to Josephus, and not to Herodotus; because Herodotus, in what he asserts of Sesostris, agrees with Diodorus and others: but, to fix the actions of Sesostris upon Shishak, there is no one ancient author that will agree with Josephus. Aristotle affirms, (*Polit.*, b. 1. c. 10.) that the kingdom of Sesostris was much older, in

lived in the time of the Israelites' peregrination in the wilderness, and may therefore properly take his place here, was a person of so distinguished a character, that to pass him by in silence would be doing an injury to our reader.

As soon as Sesostris was born, some historians tell us, that Vulcan appeared to his father, in his sleep, and informed him, that his son should conquer the whole world: upon which presumption it was, that he took so much care, not of his education only, but of every male child's likewise that was born on the same day with him, even through all his kingdom of Egypt. The number of these is said to have amounted to 1700 in all; and the king gave orders that they should be trained up in the same

point of time, than that of Minos in Crete, which every one owns was in the time of Joshua. Pliny maintains, (*Nat. Hist.*, b. 37. c. 8.) that Troy was taken in the time of Ramesses, who was the third descendant from Sesostris. Strabo avers, (b. ult.) that Sesostris was long before the Trojan times; and Sir John Marsham, and in general all the writers of the Argonautic expedition, own plainly, that the colonies of Sesostris had been at Colchis before that, which all agree to have been a century before the fall of Troy. And, if to these we may add two moderns, both the learned prelate Usher, and the learned bishop Cumberland, do unanimously agree in making Sesostris to be the son of that Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea; which the latter of these has given several arguments to prove, (*Sanchon.*, p. 402.) But these the learned author of the Connection of the Sacred and Profane History has endeavoured to invalidate; and thereupon concludes, "That Sesostris should be the son of Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea, and that in the state which his father's misfortunes must have reduced Egypt to, he should immediately find strength sufficient to subdue kingdom after kingdom, and to erect himself a large empire over many great and flourishing nations; this must be thought, by any one who duly considers things, at first sight, a most romantic fiction;" (vol. 3. b. 11.) Shuckford is undoubtedly right when he says, in his Connection, that Sesostris could not have been the son of Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea. For it seems self-evident that the son of that monarch could not have been in a condition to attempt the conquests which Sesostris is known to have achieved. Had Sesostris returned flushed with victory, and known that the Israelites were wandering in the desert, as our author supposes, there is little doubt but that, in his thirst for universal empire, he would have attempted to reduce them again to bondage; and as the desert in which the Israelites spent the time of their journeyings was close upon Egypt, it would not have been a very difficult task to one who had carried an army through so many inhospitable countries, to have penetrated the desert and attacked the Israelites, and had he done so unsuccessfully, Moses would undoubtedly have recorded his defeat. But Dr Hales has shown, that there was not less than seventeen kings between the date of the exode of the Israelites and Sesostris, whose joint reigns amounted to 340 years. During all this period, there seems to have been no king of any note except Amenophis, or Moeris, the father and immediate predecessor of Sesostris, who seems to have been one of the best and wisest of the Egyptian kings. The formation of the lake that goes by his name is ascribed to him; but the extent of it, and other circumstances, make it evident that it could not have been excavated by human labour. But he seems to have opened a communication between the river and this vast natural basin, eighty stadia in length, and three stadia, or a hundred yards in breadth, according to Diodorus; and this converted the lake into a vast reservoir for the redundant waters of the river while inundated. A stupendous work, and far more glorious than either the pyramid or labyrinth, if we consider its various and important uses for agriculture, commerce, fishery, &c. At present this canal is called Bahr Jussuf, or "Joseph's river," and is vulgarly ascribed to the patriarch Joseph, while regent of Egypt; but was most probably repaired and denominated from the famous sultan, Joseph Saladin, who made that wonder of Cairo, called "Joseph's well."—See *Hales' Analysis*, vol. 4. p. 431, 8vo second edition.—Ed.

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discipline and exercises with his son, as justly supposing that they who had been the constant and equal companions of his childhood and youth, would prove his most faithful ministers, and affectionate fellow soldiers. ¹ Having therefore provided tutors and masters, and every thing necessary for this purpose, he had them, by degrees, inured to laborious and manly exercises, as well as instructed in all liberal and useful sciences, that, as they grew up, by the strength of their bodies, and the cultivation of their minds, they might be equally fitted either to command or execute.

Amenophis, after he had been at this vast expense and trouble in laying the foundation of his son's future grandeur, resolved to give him and his companions an opportunity of displaying the good effects of their education; and accordingly sent him, and them along with him, at the head of an army into Arabia. In this expedition, the young Sesostris surmounted all the dangers of serpents and venomous creatures, all the wants and hardships of a dry and barren country, and in the end, conquered the Arabians, a rude and barbarous people, that had never been vanquished before.

From Arabia his father ordered him westward, where he subdued the greatest part of Africa; but while he was engaged in this expedition, news was brought him, that his father, and all his army, were drowned in the Red Sea, which made him desist from his conquests, and hasten home with his army, in order to secure his succession to the kingdom. Whether it was that he called to mind the prediction of the god Vulcan, or was instructed by Mercury, who prepared him for the war; was assured of success by divination, by dreams in the temple, or prodigies in the air, or persuaded to it by his daughter Athyrte, a young lady of uncommon understanding, and who made it out to her father that the thing was practicable; but so it was, that no sooner was he settled upon the Egyptian throne, but his thoughts began to swell, and his mind to grasp at an universal monarchy.

His own country indeed he found but in a lamentable estate. The Israelites, who were their slaves, were gone. All their veteran soldiers, with their arms, chariots, and horses, were lost: the first-born of every family was slain, the cattle killed, the fruit of the earth destroyed, and nothing but famine was to be expected: and yet, notwithstanding all this discouragement, he was resolved to put in practice his scheme for a general conquest. But then considering that this would oblige him to be long absent, and far distant from Egypt, he could not but deem it necessary to gain the love and affection of his subjects, that those who followed him might lay down their lives more cheerfully in his service, and they whom he left behind might not be induced to attempt any innovations while he was gone.

To this purpose he endeavoured, in the first place, to oblige every one to the utmost of his power; some by largesses in money; others by donations in land; many by the concession of free pardons; and every one by fair speeches, and a courteous and affable behaviour upon all occasions. Those that were condemned for high treason he released with impunity, and

by paying what they owed, discharged such as were in prison for debt. In the next place, he resettled the ancient division of the country into six and thirty parts, which the Egyptians call *nomi*, or provinces; assigned a governor to each of these; and constituted his brother Armais, (whom the Greeks called Danaus,) supreme regent. Him he invested with ample power and authority, but restrained him from wearing the crown, from offering any injury to the queen and her family, and from having any dealings with the royal concubines.

Having thus settled the government, he proceeded in the last place, to raise an army equal to the vastness of his design, which consisted of 600,000 foot, 24,000 horse, and 27,000 warlike chariots. His principal officers were taken out of those brave men who were trained up with him in martial exploits; and that they might always be in readiness, without submitting to any mean employ, to attend him to the wars, he took care to bestow on them large estates in land, in some of the richest and most fertile parts of Egypt. With this army he marched at first against the Ethiopians, whom he soon conquered, and made them pay a tribute of ebony, gold, and elephants' teeth. But his land forces alone were not answerable to the conquests he intended; and therefore he fitted out two fleets of tall ships, somewhat resembling our modern form, one in the Mediterranean Sea, and the other in the Arabian Gulf. With the Mediterranean squadron he conquered Cyprus, the sea coasts of Phœnicia, and several of the Cyclades; and from the Arabian Gulf, he sailed into the Indian Sea, and there subdued all the coasts thereof, till happening to come into a shallow, and his ships drawing more water than usual, he either was unable or afraid to go any farther, and so returned into Egypt.

But he had not been long returned, before his ambition began to operate afresh; and therefore advising with his priests, he recruited his army, and marched into Asia. The Israelites were at this time in the deserts of Arabia, and therefore it may look a little strange, why a man of Sesostris' spirit should not have been tempted to pursue them. But besides the barrenness of the country, which could never support so vast a multitude as he carried with him, he could not but reflect on his father's fate: and therefore dreading the like miraculous overthrow, he declined the Israelites, and marched directly against Canaan, which, without the least opposition, at once submitted to him; so that, imposing an annual tribute upon the people, and putting governors in all their principal towns, he proceeded in the course of his conquests, and in a short time overran all Asia and some parts of Europe.

He passed the river Ganges, and pierced through all India; as far as the main ocean eastward: then ^a he

^a Though Herodotus, Diodorus, and others, relate, that he was victorious in these countries; yet some will have it that he met with a repulse, fled from the Scythians, and was worsted by the Colchians. For Justin tells us that Vexoris, or Sesostris, despatching ambassadors before him to summon the Scythians to surrender, they sent back his messengers with contempt, and threats, and defiance, and immediately took up arms; that Sesostris being informed that they were advancing towards him, by hasty marches, suddenly turned about, and fled from before them, leaving all his baggage and warlike apparel to the pursuers, who followed him till he came on the borders of Egypt (b. 2. c. 3.) Pliny relates (b. 33. c. 3.) that he was overthrown by the king of Colchus; and

¹ The chief of this account is taken from Diodorus Siculus, and Herodotus in his Euterpe, b. 1.

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subdued the Scythians, as far as the river Tanais, which divides Europe from Asia: here he brought into subjection the other parts of Asia; and from hence he went into Thrace in Europe; but as he was marching along the deserts, he was in danger of losing his army through the want of provisions, and difficulty of passes; and therefore ^a erecting, as his custom was, his pillars there, he adventured to proceed no farther: though the occasion of his return may rather be imputed to the news which he received from the Egyptian high priest, of his brother's revolt and usurpation.

For, encouraged with his long absence, and great distance, Armais had done every thing that was interdicted him; had assumed the diadem, violated the queen, made promiscuous use of the king's concubines, and by the advice of his false friends, was now meditating to maintain his usurpation by force of arms: but hearing of his brother's return, he feigns himself of another temper; meets him at Pelusium, a frontier town, before he could have certain intelligence of what had passed; and there received him with all the appearance of submission and joy, but with a real design, not only to take away his life, but quite extirpate his whole family. To this end he invited the king his brother, the queen, and her children, to a banquet, which he had prepared for their refreshment; but when they had all drank very plentifully, and were now gone to rest, he caused a great quantity of dried reeds, which he had before prepared for that purpose, to be laid round the king's pavilion, and set on fire, in hopes to destroy them all. Sesostris perceiving the danger he was in, and expecting no assistance from his guards, who were all overcome with wine, ^b lifted up his hands, and implored the gods in behalf of his wife and children, he rushed with them through the flames; and being thus unexpectedly preserved, he made oblations to several of the gods, but more especially to Vulcan, by whose protection he thought himself delivered. The traitor Armais being thus defeated in his wicked design, betook himself to arms, but was soon discomfited by Sesostris, and forced to flee into Greece, where he settled at Argos, and not long after was chosen king;

Valerius Flaccus insinuates, that he was repulsed with great slaughter, and put to flight in these parts.—*Argonaut.* b. 5.

^a It was the custom of this great warrior, to set up pillars in every country he conquered, with an inscription to this effect,—"Sesostris king of kings, and lord of lords, subdued this country by the power of his arms." If the nation had, without opposition, ignobly submitted to him, besides the inscription, he caused the privities of a woman to be carved, as a mark of their effeminacy and baseness; but if they had defended themselves bravely, the pillars bore the distinction of the contrary sex, in testimony of their courage. Besides these, he left statues of himself behind him, two of which were to be seen in Herodotus' time, one on the road between Ephesus and Phœcæa, and the other between Smyrna and Sardis. They were armed after the Ethiopian and Egyptian manner; held a javelin in one hand, and a bow in the other; and across the breast, had a line drawn from shoulder to shoulder, in which was this inscription:—"This region I obtained by these my soldiers."—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 3.

^b Herodotus adds one circumstance more: that waking out of sleep, and finding his danger, he consulted with his queen what to do in this extremity, who advised him to throw two of his children into the flames, that they might serve as a bridge for all the rest; which he accordingly did, and so they all escaped. But this is generally deemed a mistake in our historian, or a circumstance crept in, on purpose to make the distress appear more affecting.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 4. c. 5.

while his victorious brother, after nine years' absence, returning in triumph to Egypt, adorned the temples with rich spoils: and having disbanded his army, after he had rewarded them according to their merit, he began to apply his mind to such stupendous works as might immortalize his name, and everlastingly contribute to the public good.

He built a temple in every city in Egypt, and dedicated it to the peculiar god of the place. This was a work wherein he employed none but captives; and therefore he had it inscribed upon each temple, "None of the natives were put to labour here." He raised vast mounts and hills of earth, to which he removed the cities that had before too low a situation, in order to secure both man and beast from the danger of the Nile's inundations. All the way, from Memphis to the sea, he dug canals, which from the Nile branched out, and not only made an easier conveyance from place to place, but greatly advanced the trade and prosperity of the kingdom. All the towns that were upon the frontiers, and lay before exposed to any superior number of forces, he fortified against the incursions of enemies, and made them of difficult access. He defended the east side of Egypt against the irruptions of the Syrians and Arabians, with a wall drawn from Pelusium, through the deserts, as far as Heliopolis, which is at least 1500 furlongs. He caused a ship of 280 cubits long, to be built all of cedar, gilded over with gold without, and lined with silver within; and to perpetuate the memory of his actions, he erected two obelisks of polished marble, 120 cubits high, on which was inscribed an account of the extent of his empire, the value of his revenue, and the number of the nations which he had conquered. One thing, however is reported of him, which argues an horrid insolence, in so great a man, and tarnishes his character not a little, and that is, that at set times his custom was, to have the tributary kings, and such as held their dominions under his favour, to come into Egypt to pay their homage; and though he received them at first with all signs of honour and respect, yet on certain occasions, he would have his horses unharnessed, and some four or more of these kings yoked together, and made to draw his chariot: but, bating this opprobrious piece of arrogance, ^c and whereof he was cured before he died, he was certainly in all respects, the greatest prince that ever sat upon the Egyptian throne; and (what some have accounted an augmentation of his greatness) after he had reigned three and thirty years, he lost his eyesight, and out of disgust, laid violent hands upon himself, thereby making his magnanimity in death, as they call it, equal to the glorious actions of his life.

After that the children of Israel had left the Egypt—

^c The manner in which he was cured is said to be this:—One day, as some of these tributary kings were drawing him along, he perceived one of them to look back upon one of the wheels, with a very great steadfastness; and thereupon inquiring what might be the subject of his thoughts, or the occasion of his deep attention, he received an answer to this effect:—"The going round of the wheel, O king, calls to my mind the vicissitudes of fortune: for as every part of the wheel is uppermost and lowermost by turns, so it is with men, who one day sit on a throne, and on the next are reduced to the vilest degree of slavery." Which answer struck the king with such compunction, that for ever after he gave up this inhuman practice.—*Diodorus*, b. 1; and *Universal History*, b. 1. c. 3.

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tians in the Red Sea, the first people that gave them any molestation were the Amalekites. Amalek was the son of Eliphaz, by his concubine Timna, as Eliphaz was the first-born of Esau.^a He gave name both to the people and country where he lived, and notwithstanding the spuriousness of his birth, is,¹ in the catalogue of the dukes of Edom, reckoned as one of them. The country of the Amalekites lay somewhere between Egypt and Palestine, and was therefore very probably bounded by Canaan to the north; by Egypt or its dependent territories to the south; by Edom, or the land of Seir, to the east; and by the deserts towards the sea, or perhaps by the margin of the sea itself, to the west.

Their religion was at first no doubt the same that was taught in the house of Abraham; but in process of time they were carried away with the general corruption, and fell into the same idolatry that their brethren the Edomites practised. And as to their commerce or trade, the situation of their country might favour them, as much as their neighbours, and the superiority of the power and greatness to which they had advanced themselves, looks as if they had improved it more than others.

Their form of government was monarchical; and as it appears that the first, at least one of the first, and the last of their kings was called Agag, it is no unlikely supposition, that all their intermediate kings bore the same name. However this be, it is certain, that at this time they were a flourishing nation, and grown up to such a sudden height of power and grandeur, that their king is spoken of as much superior to any other; and therefore, when Balaam foretels the future majesty of the Jewish state, he expresses himself, that ² 'their king should be higher than Agag,' and styles them the 'first of the nations,' which seems to countenance the wonderful

things which the Arabian historians tell us of these people, namely, that they once conquered Egypt, and possessed the throne of that kingdom for several generations. The truth is, these Amalekites were a bold and daring people from the very first. No sooner had the Israelites set foot upon the Arabian shore, but they conspired against them, and falling on their rear, in their march to Horeb, made some slaughter among them, which Joshua, as soon as he had got his fighting men in order, took care to repay; though it must be confessed, that God for some time, was pleased to make use of this nation, in conjunction with some of the Canaanites, to ³ 'be scourges in the sides, and thorns in the eyes,' that is, his instruments for the punishment of the diffidence and disobedience of his own people.

Esau, who either from the colour of his hair and complexion, or for selling his birthright to Jacob for a mess of red pottage, had the name of Edom given him, was the progenitor likewise of this people. Their ancient kingdom, when in its meridian, was bounded on the north by the land of Canaan and the Salt Sea; on the south by the Arabian gulf; on the east, by the land of Midian; and on the west, by the kingdom of Amalek: and in this compass of ground, they had several remarkable cities, besides two eminent sea-ports, Elath and Ezion-geber, on the Arabian gulf; but the latter of these became so infamous for the many wrecks which befell the shipping that frequented it, that in time it came to be disused.

The people were naturally bold and courageous; jealous of their rights, and always in a disposition to maintain them; as those who claim the empire of the sea, in the manner that they did, should always be. As they were descended from Abraham, we are not to doubt, but that their belief and practice were right at first, though, by degrees, ⁴ they fell into idolatry, and if we can suppose that the book of Job was of as ancient date as is pretended, and that he himself lived among these people, we cannot but acknowledge, that the ⁵ invention and use of constellations in astronomy, ⁶ the art of writing, ⁷ the art of navigation, and many more parts of truly useful knowledge, were begun, and cultivated among them.

The form of their civil constitution seems to have varied according to the exigencies of the times. The Horites, who very early inhabited this country, were ruled, at first, by their respective patriarchs, or heads of families; ⁸ till being overcome by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, who swept them before him with other nations, they, to secure themselves for the time to come, changed the constitution into an elective monarchy; and it was under this form of government that Esau and his family lived for some time sojourners in this land. The monarchy, however, did not last above seven or eight successions, till, some way or other, it came to be divided into several little independent principalities, or dukedoms; and as the posterity of Esau exceeded all others in the number of their dukes, it cannot be incongruous to suppose, that they had the greatest hand in bringing about this revolution, and the largest share in the government that was founded thereupon.

¹ Gen. xxxvi. 12. ² Num. xxiv. 7.
^a This genealogy of the Amalekites seems to be altogether erroneous. The Amalekites are mentioned (Gen. xiv. 7.) as a people of some consequence at the time of the wars of Chedorlaomer, and must therefore have been a nation before the era of Abraham and Lot, which is a proof that they did not derive their origin from Amalek, the grandson of Esau, but from some older stock. That stock, according to the Arabian writers, was Amalek, or Amlak, a son of Ham, and, of course, grandson of Noah. This account of the origin of the Amalekites certainly agrees better than our author's, with the description of them by Balaam as the first of the nations in that part of the world; for had their common ancestor been a grandson of Esau, they must, in the days of that soothsayer, have been a nation of no antiquity. It must be confessed, however, that there is no Amalek or Amlak mentioned by Moses among the sons of Ham; but that is a very slight objection to the Arabian account, it being universally admitted that it is only of the family of Shem that the Jewish legislator gives a full and minute genealogy.—See Bishop Newton's *Dissertation on the Prophecies of Balaam*.

^b The kingdom of Edom commenced much about the time of the Israelites' departure out of Egypt; and that of Amalek could not be much, if any thing at all, older; and therefore when Balaam expressed himself in so high a strain, concerning Agag, and his monarchy, it could not have been much above forty years' standing. The expression of Amalek's being 'the first of the nations,' our version turns otherwise in the margin, 'the first of the nations that warred against Israel;' and if we compare what is said of Agag, but thirteen verses before, we shall not be at a loss for the right, at least for a natural, explication of the words, namely, that they were the greatest and most noble nation at that time; and accordingly Le Clerc's version styles them, 'the first-fruits of the nations,' by which in his Commentary, he understands them to have been the most ancient and potent nation of any of those which proceeded from the loins of Abraham and Lot.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 4.

³ Josh. xxiii. 13.

⁴ 2 Kings viii. 20.

⁵ Job ix. 8.

⁶ Job xix. 24.

⁷ Job ix.

⁸ Bishop Cumberland's Orig. Gent. Ant.

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And as they had the largest share in the government, it is not unreasonable to suppose farther, that in consequence of their power, they soon expelled the Horite dukes, and at the same time might force Amalek, or his spurious offspring, to leave their dominions. For in the next generation, the posterity of Esau, who are styled absolute dukes of Edom, were only eleven in number, and in all the country had no rivals. But as the approach of the children of Israel put them, and every nation else, in a great consternation, they thought it most conducive to their general safety, to unite under one common head; and thereupon having made choice of a king, they resolved to maintain their ground against any invasion. It was to this nameless king, or perhaps his successor, that Moses sent ambassadors, desiring a free passage through his country, which he absolutely denied, and to let him see that he was in earnest, immediately took the field; but as his design was to act upon the defensive only, and not distress a people that were his brethren, in matters wherein he could relieve them, without danger to himself, ¹ he supplied them, for their money, with whatever necessities they wanted. And thus far the history of the Edomites, during this period, goes.

Moab, the son of Lot, by an incestuous commerce with the elder of his daughters, was the progenitor of this people, and gave name to their country; which was bounded on the east by the deserts of Arabia; on the west, by the mountains that lie east from the Dead Sea; on the north, by the country of the Ammonites, the descendants of Lot by his younger daughter; and on the south, by the brook or little river Zerid, which runs into the Dead Sea; so that, in the whole, it is about forty miles in length, and as much in breadth.

That the people had once the knowledge of the true God, can hardly be doubted; but in time they loved not to retain that knowledge, but introduced the worship of false gods, with such monstrous and obscene ceremonies, as are not fit to be named. Their principal idols were Chemosh and Baal-peor; and to these they sacrificed, on mountains dedicated to that service, and in temples built in their cities, not only oxen and rams, but upon extraordinary occasions, human victims.

The form of their government was regal, and the first inhabitants of their country were the Emims, a great and powerful people, of extraordinary strength and stature, very probably the descendants of Ham, and of the same gigantic race with the Anakims and Rephaims, though the Moabites called them by the name *Emims*, which, in Hebrew signifies *terrible*. And too terrible an enemy had they been for the Moabites, had not Chedorlaomer and his allies, by their frequent incursions, much weakened them, and made them an easy prey. The Moabites, however, when they had thus dispossessed them, kept not their new dominions long entire; for Sihon king of the Amorites, who bordered on them eastward, fought against the king of Moab, and took from him all his kingdom to the north of the river Arnon.

The successor to this king was Balak, who was then upon the throne, when the Israelites came and encamped in the neighbourhood of his country. His tampering with the infamous Balaam was the reason why his people were

not permitted to mix or intermarry with the Hebrews; but as the Midianites, whose history we are now come to, were more particularly instrumental in seducing them to idolatry, their punishment, for the present, was more severe.

Midian, the fourth son of Abraham by his wife Keturah, is generally reputed to have given name to the country, and to have been the progenitor of the Midianites, who, in the early ages of the world, were confounded with ² the Ishmaelites, and soon after seem to be conjoined with the Moabites, as if they had been both one nation; when the true reason of this seeming commixture was, that according as they lived to the northern or southern parts of the country, of course they joined themselves either to the Moabites or Ishmaelites; and upon that account are oftentimes promiscuously mentioned in Scripture.

What the limits of their country were, it is not so easy a matter to perceive. Its boundary on the east is uncertain, but on the west, it was contiguous to the land of Edom; on the north to the country of Moab; and on the south, to the Red Sea.

Its inhabitants were very numerous, and may be distinguished into two sorts, shepherds and merchants. The shepherds moved up and down in tents; they drove their cattle before them, even when they went to war; and seem to have had few or no fixed habitations, except some strongholds near the borders of their country. The merchants, in like manner, travelled from place to place in companies, or caravans, as it is the custom in those parts even to this day, and the only settlements they seem to have had were their marts, and stations, in places convenient for their trade.

By these two different employs, however, the whole nation flourished to a great degree. The merchants grew excessively rich; and the shepherds by exchanging with them, their cattle for gold, and jewels of all kinds, were enabled to make a much better appearance than other nations. But as their affluence in these things soon introduced luxury, they were a people remarkable for all kinds of vanity, riot, and excess. Though their learning could not be great, yet their merchants were obliged to know something of writing and arithmetic, in order to keep their accounts; and as they were traders, and situate on the Red Sea, it can hardly be supposed but that they applied themselves to ship-building, in order to explore not only their own coasts, but those of other countries likewise, that lay contiguous to them; and consequently could not be without some tolerable skill in geography and geometry.

Their religion differed according to the part of the country which they inhabited. These who lived in the north of Midian, fell into all the abominations of the Moabites, and in their endeavour to corrupt the Israelites, quite exceeded them. But those that were placed more towards the south, if we may take Jethro, who is said to have ruled over a people near the Red Sea, for a pattern, retained just notions of God, and of the form of worship which he had prescribed to their forefathers; for they offered up praises, and thanksgivings, and sacrifices to him, though their religious rites and ceremonies are not specified.

¹ Deut. ii. 28, 29.

² Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28.

³ Gen. xxxvi. 35.

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Their form of government, might, in the like manner, be different, according to the part of the country which they inhabited, though in the main, it looks as if it had been aristocratical rather than monarchical. Jethro, indeed, in our translation is called a *priest*, and because the word in the original does equally signify a *prince*, it has generally been concluded, that he had the honour of being both. Mention is likewise made of other princes; and the five who fell by the hand of Israel, are sometimes styled kings, and sometimes dukes of Midian: so that this nation seems to have been governed by a multitude of dukes, or petty princes, who, perhaps, in their own jurisdiction, were independent on each other, and yet some way or other, were in Moses' time, ¹ feudatory under Sihon, king of the Amorites. Sihon had indeed made a conquest from the Moabites of the best part of the country he then possessed, and having settled himself in their place, made several of the neighbouring princes tributary to him; but refusing a passage to the Hebrews, and coming without ^a any provocation to attack them, he himself was slain, and his whole army routed; Heshbon, his capital city, was taken, and all the rest of his dominions distributed among the Israelites.

There were the several nations on the other, that is, on the east side of Jordan, which God delivered into the hands of his people; and more we shall have to say of them, as they meet us in our way. In the mean time the progress which the Israelites have hitherto made, the enemies they have vanquished, and the kingdoms they have seized and divided among themselves, notwithstanding all the artifices to prevent them, do sufficiently verify that conclusion, at the end of their leader's last exhortation: ² 'Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help; and who is the sword of thy excellency! Thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places. The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine, and his heavens shall drop down dew.'^b

¹ Josh. xiii. 21.

² Deut. xxxiii. 28, 29.

^a It is reckoned good policy in a general, when he has any great design in agitation, which cannot so well be executed without passing through a neutral country, not to ask leave at first, because too much civility would lay him under the suspicion of fear; but first of all to enter the prince's country, and then to send and desire permission for his troops to march through it. But this was not Moses' practice. He first sent ambassadors to the king of the Amorites, with this peaceable message: 'Let me pass through thy land, we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink the waters of the well; but we will go along by the king's highway, till we be past the borders? Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only I will pass through on my feet,' Num. xxi. 22. After so civil a message as this, if Sihon thought not proper to let the children of Israel pass through his country, he might have contented himself with so doing, because it does not appear that the Israelites ever threatened to force their passage. But when, instead of acting upon the defensive, which was all that in reason he should have done, he sets himself at the head of his forces, and marches out to fight, the war must be deemed unjust on his side, and the fate he met with no more than his desert.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

^b In hot countries where showers were less frequent, the morning and evening dews were a great refreshment to the earth, and productive of much plenty, as was fully exemplified in the blessed land of Canaan, which was fruitful and abounding with every product of the earth.

CHAP. IV.—On the Land of Canaan.

BY THE EDITOR.

THOUGH reference has already been made, both in a geographical and historical point of view, to Canaan, we think it may be instructive to insert a few additional paragraphs on the same subject. The land of Canaan is, on many accounts, entitled to more particular consideration; but chiefly because it was the residence of the chosen seed, and the theatre of our redemption.

When the Maker of heaven and earth appointed to the nations their inheritance, the country which is bounded on the west, by the Mediterranean, on the east by the river Jordan, the lake Asphaltites, and the sea of Tiberias, on the north by the mountain Antilibanus, and on the south by Idumea, fell to the lot of Canaan, one of the sons of Ham. It extends about 200 miles in length and 80 in breadth. From the grandson of Noah, by whom it was peopled, it was first called the land of Canaan. It has since been distinguished by other names, as the land of promise, the holy land, Judea, from the tribe of Judah, which possessed its finest and most fertile divisions, and Palestine, from the Philistines, by whom a great part of it was inhabited.

The descendants of Canaan, the original possessor of this highly interesting country, are thus enumerated by Moses:—'Canaan begat Sidon, his first-born, and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Senite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite.' All these families were settled at first within the limits of Canaan, but the increase of population, or what is more likely, the spirit of emigration and adventure, which is strongly felt in countries where much land remains to be occupied, soon carried them beyond the prescribed limits of their paternal inheritance. The original extent of the land of Canaan, is accurately stated by Moses in these words:—'The border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; and as thou goest unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.'³ But the sacred historian informs us, that several Canaanitish families, in process of time, settled in the circumjacent countries: his words are—'And afterwards were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad,' namely, beyond their original bounds, which he then proceeds to describe.

The true situation of the inheritance of Sidon, the first-born of Canaan, is clearly determined by the famous city of that name. Sidon was one of the most ancient cities in the world, and long the wealthiest and greatest of which Phœnicia could boast. It was very strong both by nature and art. On the north side, a citadel, built on an inaccessible rock, and environed on all sides by the sea; and on the south side, another fort defended the mouth of the harbour. Secured on all sides against the assaults of her enemies, and enriched by the extensive commerce which she carried on with the surrounding nations of Asia and Europe, her inhabitants lived in profound security, and indulged, without restraint, in every voluptuous gratification. So great was their

³ Gen. x. 19.

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luxury, that 'to live after the manner of the Sidonians,' became a sort of proverbial phrase for living quietly and securely in ease and pleasure.¹ But their wealth and luxury do not seem, at least for several ages, to have enervated their minds, and destroyed their powers of exertion, and habits of industry; for we know, from the testimony of an inspired writer, that in the days of Solomon, 'none were skilled to hew timber like the Sidonians.' They are represented by writers, both sacred and profane, as excellent artificers in several other professions or trades; and in proof of this fact, many of them were retained in the pay of Solomon, and employed as his principal workmen in building the temple of Jehovah.^a

Though the Tyrians were accustomed to boast of the great antiquity of their city, it cannot be doubted that Sidon can trace her history to a still remoter date; for in the same chapter, where the prophet Isaiah records the vain boast of the Tyrians, he expressly calls Tyre the daughter of Sidon;² by which he means that the Tyrians were a colony of the Sidonians. Indeed, Tyre rose by degrees to a height of greatness and splendour, which her illustrious parent was never able to reach; yet it is evident from ancient writers, that she was for several ages greatly her inferior. The former was distinguished by the name of the strong city, so early as the days of Joshua; but in the very same passage, the latter receives the more significant and honourable title of 'the great Sidon,' to intimate that she was then the capital of Phœnicia. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that Homer never mentions Tyre in any part of his writings, while he often celebrates the ingenuity and industry of the Sidonians. Many years after Sidon was built, says an ancient writer, the Sidonians being attacked by the king of Ascalon,

escaped in their ships, and laid the foundation of Tyre, sometime before the destruction of Troy.^b This event happened, according to Josephus, about 240 years before the building of Solomon's temple. But after the taking of Sidon, by the Persians, the city of Tyre rapidly increased in wealth and greatness, and became in a short time, the capital of Phœnicia, and the mart of the whole earth. At the time it was besieged by Alexander, it was in every respect, the greatest commercial city in the world. Including ancient Tyre it was nineteen miles in circuit: the houses were spacious and magnificent, consisting of several stories, and higher than those of Rome. Pre-eminent temples of Olympian Jove, Astarte, and other deities adored by the Tyrians, constructed by Hiram, adorned with pillars of gold, glittering with precious stones, and enriched with the splendid offerings of many kings. The city was defended by a wall of great height, formed of huge stones cemented with lime. Two harbours received its innumerable vessels, one looking towards Sidon, the other to Egypt. Strabo places it nearly at the distance of twenty-five miles from Sidon, its renowned parent. The inhabitants of Tyre, like the Sidonians, from whom they derived their origin, were distinguished for the acuteness and versatility of their genius. They were skilled in arithmetic and astronomy: but in the mechanical parts they were scarcely equalled, certainly not surpassed, by any people. For the brilliant colour known to the ancients by the name of the Tyrian purple, the kings of the east were indebted to their ingenuity. The fabrics produced in the Sidonian looms rivalled the fine linen of Egypt; while the productions of the artificer in iron, in brass, and in crystal, were not less remarkable for the beauty of the device, than for the delicacy of the execution. It is, therefore, a true account which the inspired prophet has given of the greatness and splendour of Tyre. Isaiah calls her, 'a mart of nations; the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth;' and Ezekiel, who alluding to old Tyre, places her 'at the entry of the sea,' and in another passage, to the new city, 'in the heart of the seas,' recounts the various nations that carried on a lucrative commerce with the Tyrians.

But the pride and luxury which her unrivalled power and riches produced among all ranks of her citizens, and above all, the cruel and unbrotherly triumph in which the Tyrians indulged, when the chosen people of God yielded to the arms of Nebuchadnezzar, and were led away captive beyond the river of Babylon, excited against them the displeasure of heaven. As a just punishment of their crimes, continental Tyre was taken and destroyed by the Chaldeans, after a siege of thirteen years;^c

¹ Judges xviii. 7.

² Is. xxiii. 7, 12.

^a Sidon was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, who, however, consented to receive the submission of the Sidonians, and permitted them to retain their own kings. Entering afterwards into a league with Nectanebus, king of Egypt, against Darius Ochus, king of Persia, they were besieged by the latter; when in despair they burnt their ships and their city; in which latter was so great a quantity of gold and silver melted down by the fire, that Ochus sold the ashes for a considerable sum of money. The city was, however, soon rebuilt; as about eighteen years after, we find it submitting to Alexander. It subsequently shared in the fortunes of the rest of Phœnicia, being alternately oppressed by the Grecian kings of Syria and Egypt; while its trade, together with that of Tyre, was diverted to Alexandria; though its declension was never so complete as that of the latter city. After the subversion of the Grecian empire by the Romans, Sidon fell into the hands of the latter; who, to put an end to the frequent revolt of the inhabitants deprived it of its freedom. It then fell successively under the power of the Saracens, the Seljukian Turks, and the Sultans of Egypt, who in 1289, that they might never more afford shelter to the Christians, destroyed both it and Tyre. But it again recovered, and has ever since been in the possession of the Ottoman Turks. Sidon, at present called Saïde, is still a considerable trading town, and the chief mart for Damascus and Upper Syria; but the port is nearly choked up with sand. Though presenting an imposing appearance at a distance, as it rises from the water's edge, it is like all Turkish towns ill-built and dirty, and full of ruins; having still discoverable, without the walls, some fragments of columns and other remains of the ancient city. Mr Conner made the number of inhabitants 15,000; of whom 2000 are Christians, chiefly Maronites, and 400 Jews, who have one synagogue. They are principally employed in spinning cotton; which, with some silk, and boots and shoes, or slippers, of Morocco leather, form the chief articles of commerce.—ED.

^b But from the mention of it in the time of Joshua, (chap. xix. 29,) noticed above, it must have been much more ancient than this.—ED.

^c At the end of this long period, continental Tyre was taken by assault and utterly destroyed, the ruins of which were afterwards called Pale Tyrus, or Old Tyre. But before this was effected, the inhabitants, foreseeing what must happen, and the blockade of Nebuchadnezzar, for want of a navy to second his land operations, being incomplete, transported all their valuable effects into a small island about a third of a mile from the shore, where they laid the foundations of New Tyre, which, by the vast resources of its trade, rose in a few years to an equal eminence

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and remained in a state of ruin and desolation seventy years, a term of equal duration with the captivity of Judah, whom they had so barbarously insulted in the hour of her distress. At the end of that period, Tyre recovered her wealth and splendour; an event which the prophet Zechariah describes in these striking terms: 'and Tyrus did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. But with her commerce and prosperity, her wickedness returned; and the judgments of God quickly followed. In fulfilment of ancient prophecies which sealed her doom, and even described the manner of her future destruction, Alexander besieged, and took, and set the city on fire: but so great was the forbearance of heaven, so numerous and efficient were her resources, that in the short period of nineteen years, she was able to withstand the fleets of Antigonus, and to sustain a siege of fifteen months before she was taken. But the time of her final desolation at length arrived; and nothing could divert or retard the full accomplishment of the divine purpose long before expressed by an inspired prophet: 'Thus saith the Lord God, behold I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth her waves to come up: and they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock: it shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God.'¹ To show the certainty of this fearful sentence, it is repeated: 'I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more; for I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God.' And again; 'I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God.'² The exact fulfilment of this prediction in all its parts, is attested by so many travellers of unimpeachable veracity, who beheld and examined the ruins of this once great, powerful, and splendid city, that the most stubborn unbeliever is awed into silence.^a

The descendants of Heth, or the Hittites, the second family of Canaan mentioned by Moses, were planted about Hebron, in the southern division of the country. Moses informs us, that Sarah died at Hebron, and 'Abraham spake to the sons of Heth' about the purchase

of a burying-place; and adds in a subsequent verse, 'Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth;' which sufficiently proves their claim to that part of the family inheritance. The principal settlements of the Hittites, were in the mountainous part of the country; for the Hittites are mentioned with the Jebusites as dwelling in the mountains.

The city of Hebron was originally called Kirjath Arba, or the city of Arba, a great man among the Anakims.³ It was a place of great antiquity; for, according to Moses, it was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt, the naval city of the Pharaohs, the ancient kings of Egypt; and was one of the oldest cities in that kingdom. Hebron was situated among the mountains, on the ridge which runs southward from Jerusalem. It became famous for the long residence of Abraham in its neighbourhood, and for being the burying-place of his family. In succeeding times, it was the chosen abode of David during the first seven years of his reign; and is supposed to have been the dwelling-place of Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of John the baptist. Hebron was also one of the cities of refuge, and was given to the tribe of Levi, by the appointment of Jehovah.

In the immediate neighbourhood of this city, was the plain of Mamre, called in another passage of Scripture, the vale of Hebron. It lies on the south side of the town, at a distance of about two miles; and is represented as remarkably fertile and pleasant; a circumstance sufficiently attested by the protracted residence of the venerable patriarch, who had a right to select the richest pastures of Canaan. His tent was pitched under the shade of a spreading oak, from whence, reposing at his ease, he could see his flocks and his herds feeding at large on the surrounding hills. But what chiefly recommended Mamre and its umbrageous oak to him, was the vision of angels with which he was honoured, on their way to execute the vengeance of God in the cities of the plain; a circumstance which has rendered that fertile vale memorable to every succeeding age.^b

Next to the Hittites in the same tract of country, were planted the sons of Jebus, who seem to have been its original inhabitants. The capital city of their possessions was called Jebus, in honour of their venerable founder; a name which it afterwards exchanged for Jerusalem, one of the most celebrated on the records of history. These facts are explicitly stated by the inspired writer: 'And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem which is Jebus; where the Jebusites were the inhabitants of the land.'⁴ This city is first mentioned in Scripture under the name of Salem, which is by interpretation, peace; the capital of the kingdom over which Melchizedek reigned. The name by which it was afterwards known, seems to be compounded of both Jebus and

¹ Ezek. xxvi. 3.² Ezek. xxiii. 3—5.

with the old city which had been destroyed. The rage of Nebuchadnezzar was so great at finding the place almost deserted, and entirely cleared of every thing valuable, that he razed the buildings to the ground, and killed every inhabitant that could be found. Two hundred years afterwards, Alexander, by forming a causeway from the mainland to the island, reduced New Tyre, after a seven months' siege.—Ed.

^a Tyre has again partially revived: Mr Buckingham, who visited it in 1816, represents it as containing 800 substantial stone built houses, and from 5000 to 8000 inhabitants. But Mr Jowett, on the authority of the Greek archbishop, reduces this number to less than 4000; namely, 1200 Greek catholics, 100 Maronites, 100 Greeks, 1000 Moutonalis, and 100 Turks. Mr Jowett observed numerous and beautiful columns stretched along the beach, or standing in fragments, half buried in the sand that has been accumulating for ages. 'The broken aqueduct, and the ruins which appear in its neighbourhood, exist as an affecting monument of the fragile and transitory nature of earthly grandeur.'² The old, or continental Tyre, has long since disappeared, and its very site, like that of Nineveh and Babylon, cannot now be accurately recognised.—Ed.

³ Josh. xiv. 15.⁴ 1 Chr. xi. 4.

^b It is at present called Hebron and Khalyt, is situated in a hilly country, twenty miles south of Jerusalem, at the foot of an eminence, on which are some ruins, the misshapen remains of an ancient castle. The adjacent country is a sort of oblong hollow, 5, or 6 leagues in length, and not disagreeably varied by rocky hillocks, groves of fir-trees, and often plantations of vines and olive-trees. Here are some small manufactories of cotton, soap, and trinkets; in consequence of which, Hebron is the most powerful village in this quarter.—Ed.

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Salem, and to have been originally written Jebussalem, but, for the sake of the sound, afterwards softened into Jerusalem. In Hebrew the word assumes the dual form, and is commonly read Jerusalem; probably to denote that the city consisted of two parts, of which one was the old city, where Melchizedek and the Jebusites dwelt; and the other the new city built by David and his successors on the throne of Israel and Judah, which for its extent might be regarded as a new city, or new Jerusalem. This term, the Greeks, adapting it to their language, according to their usual practice, changed into Hierosolyma, which literally signifies the sacred city.

The old city founded by the Jebusites before Abraham arrived in Canaan, is styled by some writers the city of Melchizedek, not because he was the founder, but because it was the seat of his government. This ancient city was so strongly fortified both by nature and art, that the people of Israel could not drive out the Jebusites, its original inhabitants, but were reduced to live with them at Jerusalem. The armies of Israel indeed seized the city; but the Jebusites kept possession of the strong fort which defended the town, till the reign of David, who took it by storm, and changed its name to the city of David, to signify the importance of the conquest, and to perpetuate the memory of the event. Having chosen Jerusalem for the place of his residence and the capital of his kingdom, he adorned the fortress with a royal palace for his own accommodation, and a variety of other buildings, which, from the continual additions made to them in succeeding reigns, increased to the size of a considerable city, and covered nearly the whole of Mount Zion. The largeness of the city of David, may be inferred from the expression of the sacred historian: 'David built round about from Millo and inward.'¹ This passage, and particularly the word Millo, has greatly exercised the genius and divided the sentiments of commentators; and is therefore entitled to more particular notice. That Millo was situate in the city of David, the inspired historian expressly asserts.² It seems to have been a public building, where the king and his princes met in council about affairs of state. The words of the historian are: 'And this is the reason of the levy (or tax) which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer.' But every ground of hesitation is removed by the sacred writer of the second book of Kings, who calls it expressly 'the house of Millo.'³ That it was a public building, in one of whose apartments the council of state met to deliberate upon public affairs, is rendered extremely probable by one of the kings of Judah losing his life there by the hands of his princes; for we are told, that 'the servants of king Joash arose and made a conspiracy, and slew him in the house of Millo,' whither he had probably come to consult with his princes and other principal persons upon some affairs of state.

This interpretation is greatly strengthened by a passage in the book of Judges, which informs us, that 'all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made Abimelech king.' The

city of Shechem then had also its house of Millo, and a great number of persons connected with it, whom the sacred writer distinguishes from the men of the city. Now, since both were concerned in making Abimelech king, it is natural to conclude, that the men of the city were the inferior inhabitants, and the house of Millo the chief men of the place: both of whom on this occasion met in the senate-house, to set the crown upon the head of their favourite.

The house of Millo upon Mount Zion, appears to have been a place of great strength, and essentially connected with the defence of Jerusalem; for when Hezekiah discovered that Sennacherib meditated the reduction of Jerusalem, 'he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance.'⁴ From the intimate connexion between the repairing of Millo and the making of darts and other implements of war, it has been conjectured by some writers that one part of that public building was occupied as an armoury, in which there is nothing improbable.

The possessions of the Philistines were divided into five lordships, denominated from their chief towns, Gaza, Ashdod, Eshkalon, Gath, and Ekron.

Gaza lay in the southern extremity of that narrow strip of country which submitted to the arms of the Philistines; and the city of Gaza, from which the lordship took its name, stood in the south-west angle of the land of Canaan. This was the city whose gates Samson carried away to the top of the hill, and where he was kept in prison by his cruel and ungenerous enemies. It was famous for the temple of Dagon, which the renowned Israelite pulled down upon himself and his unfeeling tormentors, in revenge for the loss of his sight and his liberty. This place was afterwards chosen by the Persians, to be the treasury where they deposited the tribute of the western provinces of their immense empire; whence all riches received, at length, among the people of those countries, the name of Gaza. It was destroyed by Alexander the Great, as the prophet had foretold, and consigned to perpetual desolation. The city built by Constantine, and called by the name of Gaza, is nearer to the sea than the ancient city, and by consequence does not affect the truth of the prediction.

Next to Gaza, northward, rose the city of Askelon, styled by the Greeks and Latins, Ascalon, and situate also on the sea shore. It is said to have been famous among the idolatrous nations of antiquity, for a temple dedicated to Decreto, the mother of Semiramis, who was adored here under the form of a mermaid; and for a temple of Apollo, in which Herod, the father of Antipater, and grandfather of Herod the great, officiated as priest.

Above Ascalon, still farther to the north, stood the city of Ashdod, called by the Greeks, Azotus, and mentioned under that name in the Acts of the Apostles. It lies near the shores between Gaza and Joppa, and was distinguished by the temple of Dagon. Into this temple the captive ark of Jehovah was brought, by the triumphant idolaters, and set by the side of their unsightly idol. But their joy was of short duration, the object of their

¹ 2 Sam. v. 9.

² 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.

³ 2 Kings xii. 20.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.

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stupid veneration was cast prostrate before the symbol of the divine presence, and broken in pieces, and a severe but righteous vengeance inflicted on themselves, for their presumption. The passage is too important to be omitted. 'And when they of Ashdod rose early on the morrow, behold Dagon was fallen on his face to the earth, before the ark of the Lord: and they took Dagon and set him in his place again. And when they rose early on the morrow morning, behold Dagon was fallen on his face to the ground, before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold, only the stump of Dagon was left to him.' Nor was this all; 'The hand of the Lord was heavy upon the men of Ashdod; and he destroyed and smote them with emrods, even Ashdod, and the coast thereof. And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us; for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. They sent, therefore, and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel thither.'¹

Gath, lying still farther to the north than Ashdod, was memorable in the history of the Old Testament, for being the birthplace of the giant Goliath, who defied the armies of the living God, and suffered the punishment due to his impiety, from the hand of David. The city was dismantled by this prince, but was afterwards rebuilt by Rehoboam his grandson, and after being again dismantled by Azias, king of Judah, was totally destroyed by Hazael, king of Syria. But from this catastrophe it gradually recovered, and retained its ancient name in the days of Eusebius and Jerome, who place it about four miles from Eleutheropolis, towards Diospolis, or Lydda.

Gath suffered severely while the ark of the covenant was detained within its walls: 'The hand of the Lord,' says the sacred writer, 'was against the city with a very great destruction; and he smote the men of the city, both small and great; and they had emrods in their secret parts. Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron.'² This city was placed in the northern extremity of the country, which submitted to the yoke of the Philistines. It was called by the Greeks Accaron; was a place of great wealth and power, and held out a long time against the armies of Israel. Ekron is frequently mentioned in the holy Scriptures, and particularly for the idolatrous worship of Beelzebub, that is, the lord of flies; a name given him by the Jews, either in contempt of his divinity, and the rites of his worship, or in allusion to the numerous swarms of flies which attended his sacrifices. But whatever might be the reason for distinguishing by this name, certain it is, in this city was the principal seat of his worship: here he was held in the highest honour, and is therefore called in Scripture, 'the God of Ekron.'

The inhabitants of Ekron, less hardened in crime, or less insensible to danger than their neighbours, were the first that advised the Philistines to restore the ark of Jehovah, the God of Israel. 'The Ekronites cried

out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people. So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go to its own place;' and the destructive calamity which hung over their devoted city was averted.

The land of Canaan was reserved by the wisdom and goodness of Heaven, for the possession of his peculiar people, and the display of the most stupendous wonders. The theatre was small, but admirably situated for the convenient observation of the human race,—at the junction of the two great continents of Asia and Africa, and almost within sight of Europe. From this highly favoured spot, as from a common centre, the report of God's wonderful works, the glad tidings of salvation through the obedience and sufferings of his eternal Son, might be rapidly and easily wafted to every part of the globe, and circulated through every nation. When the most High, therefore, fixed the boundaries of the post-diluvian kingdoms, he reserved the inheritance of Canaan, for the future seat of his glory; and while powerful states, and extended empires rose and flourished, in the circumjacent regions, his secret providence parcelled out the land of promise among a number of petty kings, whose individual weakness and jarring interests, gave them an easy prey to the armies of Israel. To this arrangement the inspired prophet certainly refers in these words, 'Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father, and he will show thee, thy elders, and he will tell thee.' When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel. Canaan and his posterity were directed to take possession of Palestine, rather than any other branch of Noah's descendants, because he had already fallen under the solemn malediction of his grandfather Noah, for his unnatural conduct; and they were permitted to fill up the measure of their iniquity by a general corruption of manners, and particularly, by departing from the knowledge of the true God, to the service of idols; and therefore might be justly driven out, when the time fixed in the divine purpose arrived, to make room for the chosen people of Jehovah. 'Their bounds,' says the inspired writer, 'he set, according to the number of the children of Israel;' for Canaan and his eleven sons exactly correspond with the twelve tribes, into which the family of Jacob was divided.³

CHAP. V.—On the Mountains of Canaan.

BY THE EDITOR.

PALESTINE is, in general, a mountainous country; even the whole of Syria, of which the Holy Land is reckoned a part, is in some degree a chain of mountains, branching off in various directions, from one great and leading ridge. Whether the traveller approach it from the sea,

¹ 1 Sam. v. 2—8.

² 1 Sam. v. 9, 10.

³ Paxton's Illustrations, vol. 1. p. 92—118.

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or from the immense plains of the desert, he beholds, at a great distance, a lofty and clouded chain running north and south as far as the eye can reach; and as he advances, sees the tops of the mountains sometimes detached, and sometimes united in ridges, uniformly terminate in one great line, towering above them all. This line, which extends without interruption, from its entry by the north quite into Arabia, runs at first close to the sea, between Alexandretta and the Orontes; and after opening a passage to that river, proceeds to the southward, quitting for a short distance the shore, and in a chain of summits stretches as far as the sources of the Jordan; where it divides into two branches, to enclose, as it were, in a capacious basin, this river and its three lakes. During its course, a countless number of branches separate from the main trunk, some of which are lost in the desert, where they form various enclosed hollows, as those of Damascus and Haran; while others advance towards the sea, where they sometimes end in steep declivities as at Carmel, or Nekoura, or by a gentle descent sink into the plains of Antioch and Tripoli, of Tyre and Acre.

Such is the general appearance of the country which Moses taught his people to expect, while they traversed the burning and dreary wilderness: 'for the land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot as a garden of herbs: but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven.'¹ The striking contrast, in this short but glowing description, between the land of Egypt, where the people of Israel had so long and so cruelly suffered, and the inheritance promised to their fathers, where Jehovah reserved for them and their children every blessing that a nation can desire, must have made a deep impression on their minds. In Egypt, the eye is fatigued with wandering over an immense flat plain, intersected with stagnant canals, and studded with mud-walled towns and cottages; seldom refreshed with a single shower; exhibiting, for three months, the singular spectacle of an extensive sheet of water, from which the towns and villages that are built upon the higher grounds, are seen like islands in the midst of the ocean, marshy and rank with vegetation for three others—and parched and dusty the remainder of the year. They had seen a population of naked and sunburnt peasants, tending their buffaloes, or driving their camels, or sheltering themselves from the overwhelming heat beneath the shade of the thinly scattered date or sycamore trees; below, natural or artificial lakes, cultivated fields, and vacant grounds of considerable extent—overhead, a burning sun, darting his oppressive rays from an azure sky, almost invariably free from clouds. In that "weary land," they were compelled to water their corn fields with the foot; a painful and laborious employment, rendered necessary by the want of rain. Those vegetable productions which require a greater quantity of moisture than is furnished by the periodical inundations of the Nile, they were obliged to refresh with water drawn out of the river by machinery, and lodged afterwards in capacious cisterns. When the melons, sugar canes, and other vegetables

that are commonly disposed in rills, required to be refreshed, they struck out the plugs which are fixed in the bottoms of the cisterns; and then the water gushing out, is conducted from one rill to another by the husbandman who is always ready, as occasion requires, to stop and divert the torrent, by turning the earth against it with his foot, opening at the same time with his mattock a new trench to receive it.² Such is the practice to which Moses alludes; and it continues to be observed without variation to this day. But from this fatiguing uniformity of surface, and toilsome method of watering their grounds, the people of Israel were now to be relieved; they were going to possess a land of hills and valleys, clothed with woods, beautified and enriched with fountains of water, divided by rivers, streams, and brooks, flowing cool and pure from the summits of their mountains, and, with little attention from the cultivator, exciting the secret powers of vegetation, and scattering plenty wherever they came.

Sometimes the drought of summer renders frequent waterings necessary even in Judea. On such occasions, the water is drawn up from the wells by oxen, and carried by the inhabitants in earthen jars, to refrigerate their plantations on the sides of the hills.³ The necessity to which the Jewish husbandman is occasionally reduced, to water his grounds in this manner, is not inconsistent with the words of Moses, which distinguish the Holy Land from Egypt, by its drinking rain from heaven, while the latter is watered by the foot. The inspired prophet alludes, in that passage, not to gardens of herbs, or other cultivated spots on the steep declivities of the hills and mountains, where, in so warm a climate as that of Canaan, the deficiency of rain must be supplied by art, but to their corn fields; which, in Egypt, are watered by artificial canals, in the manner just described; in Canaan by the rain of heaven.

The most remarkable mountains in Palestine, are those of Lebanon, so frequently celebrated in the holy Scriptures. This lofty range, described by ancient and modern historians under the names of Libanus and Antilibanus, is the highest point of all Syria, and serves equally as a boundary to Judea and Assyria; but, so frequent mention is made of them in the writings of the prophets, that they are generally included within the confines of the land of promise. They reach their highest elevation to the south-east of Tripoli; and their towering summits capped with clouds, are discerned at the distance of thirty leagues. The superior height of Lebanon, is ascertained by the course of the rivers. The Orontes, flowing from the mountains of Damascus, loses itself below Antioch; the Kasmia which, north of Balbec, shapes its course towards Tyre; the Jordan, forced by the declivities towards the south, prove this to be the highest point. Next to Lebanon, the highest part of the country is Akkar, which becomes visible as soon as the traveller leaves Marra in the desert. It appears like an immense flattened cone, and is constantly seen for two days' journey. The height of these mountains has not been ascertained by the barometer; but we may deduce it from a circumstance mentioned by every traveller who visits the land of promise. In winter, their tops are entirely covered with snow, from Alexan-

¹ Deut. xi. 11.

² Shaw's Travels.

³ Pococke's Travels.

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dretta to Jerusalem, but after March, it melts, except on Mount Lebanon; where, however, according to Volney, it does not continue the whole year, unless in the highest cavities, and towards the north-east, where it is sheltered from the sea breeze, and the rays of the sun. In this situation, that traveller saw it at the very time he complains of being nearly suffocated with heat in the valley of Balbec. Now since it is fully ascertained, that snow in this latitude, requires an elevation of fifteen or sixteen hundred fathoms, we may conclude that to be the height of Lebanon. It is therefore much lower than the Alps, or even than the Pyrenees: Mont Blanc, the loftiest of the Alps, is estimated at two thousand four hundred fathoms above the level of the sea; and the peak of Apian in the Pyrenees, at nineteen hundred.

Lebanon, which gives its name to the extensive range of the Kessauan, and the country of the Drusez, presents to the traveller everywhere majestic mountains. At every step, he meets with scenes in which nature displays beauty or grandeur, sometimes romantic wildness, but always variety. The sublime elevation and steep ascent of this magnificent rampart, which seems to enclose the country; the gigantic masses which shoot into the clouds, inspire him with astonishment and reverence. Should he scale these summits which bounded his view, and ascend the highest point of Lebanon, distinguished by the name of the Sannin, the immensity of space which expands around him, becomes a fresh subject of admiration. On every side, he beholds a horizon without bounds; whilst, in clear weather, the sight is lost over the desert, which extends to the Persian gulf, and over the sea, which washes the coasts of Europe. He seems to command the whole world; while the wandering eye, now surveying the successive chains of mountains, transports the mind in one instant, from Antioch to Jerusalem; and now, approaching the surrounding objects, observes the distant profundity of the coast, till the attention at last fixed by distinct objects, more minutely examines the rocks, the woods, the torrents, the sloping sides of the hills, the villages and the towns; and the mind secretly exults at the diminution of objects, which formerly appeared so great. He sees the valleys obscured by stormy clouds, with fresh delight, and smiles at hearing the thunder, which so often burst over his head, growling beneath his feet; while the threatening summits of the mountains are diminished, till they appear like the furrows of a ploughed field, or the steps of an amphitheatre, and he feels himself gratified by an elevation above so many lofty objects, on which he now looks down with inward satisfaction.¹

On visiting the interior parts of these mountains, the roughness of the roads, the steep descents and precipices, strike him at first with terror; but the sagacity of the mule which he rides, the only beast of burden which can traverse them with safety, soon relieves him, and he calmly surveys those picturesque scenes that entertain him in quick succession. There he travels whole days together, to reach a place which was in sight at his departure; he winds, descends, skirts the hills, and climbs their precipitous sides; and in this perpetual change, it seems as if magic herself varied for him at every step, the decorations of the scenery. Sometimes

he sees villages gliding from the steep declivities on which they were built, and so arranged, that the terraces of one row of houses, serve as a street to those above them. Sometimes he sees the habitation of a recluse, standing on a solitary height; here a rock, perforated by a torrent, and become a natural arch; there another rock, worn perpendicular, resembles a high wall. On the sides of the hills, he frequently sees beds of stones uncovered and detached by the waters, rising up like artificial ruins. In many places, the waters meeting with inclined beds, have excavated the intermediate earth, and formed caverns; in others, subterraneous channels are formed, through which flow rivulets for a part of the year. These subterraneous rivulets are common throughout Syria; they are found near Damascus, at the sources of the Orontes, and at those of the Jordan. That of the Mar-Kanna, near the village of Shouair, opens by a gulf called Elbaloisa, or the Swallower. It is an aperture of about ten feet wide, in the middle of a hollow; at the depth of fifteen feet, is a sort of first bottom, but it only hides a very profound lateral opening. Some years before Volney visited Lebanon, it was shut, as it had served to conceal a murder. The winter rains coming on, the waters collected and formed a pretty deep lake; but some small streams penetrating among the stones, they were soon stripped of the earth which fastened them, and the pressure of the mass of water prevailing, the whole obstacle was removed with an explosion like thunder; and the re-action of the compressed air was so violent, that a column of water spouted up, and fell upon a house at the distance of at least two hundred paces. The current thus occasioned, formed a whirlpool, which swallowed up the trees and vines planted in the hollow, and threw them out by the second aperture.

These picturesque situations often become tragical. By thaws and earthquakes, rocks have been known to lose their equilibrium, roll down on the neighbouring houses, and bury the inhabitants. This happened about twenty years before Volney's visit, when a fragment of the mountain, slipping from its base, overwhelmed a whole village, without leaving a single trace where it formerly stood. Still more lately, and near the same place, says that traveller, the entire side of a hill covered with mulberries and vines, was detached by a sudden thaw, and sliding down the rock, was launched like a ship from the rocks, into the valley below. It might be supposed, that such accidents would disgust the inhabitants of these mountains; but, besides that they happen seldom, they are compensated by an advantage, which makes them prefer their perilous habitations, to the most stable and fertile plains,—the security they enjoy from the oppressions of the Turks. This security is esteemed so great a blessing by the inhabitants, that they have discovered an industry on these rocks, which we may elsewhere expect in vain. By mere art and labour, they have fertilized a rocky soil. Sometimes to gain water, they conduct it by a thousand windings along the declivities, or stop it by dams in the valleys; while in other places they support the ground, ready to crumble down, by walls and terraces. Almost all these mountains cultivated in this manner, have the appearance of a flight of stairs, or an amphitheatre, every step of which is a row of vines or mulberry trees. Our author computed

¹ Volney's Travels, vol. 1. p. 203.

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from one hundred to one hundred and twenty of these gradations on the same declivity. In many places, their summits are flattened and stretched into vast plains; which reward the toil of the cultivator with luxuriant crops of corn and all kinds of pulse. Numerous rivulets of excellent water intersect these elevated regions, and diffuse on every side the nicest verdure. The soil which covers the declivities, and the narrow valleys which separate them, is extremely fertile, and produces in abundance, corn, wine, and oil, which D'Arvieux pronounces to be the best in Syria.

These mountains consist of a hard calcareous, whitish, stone, sonorous like freestone, and disposed in strata variously inclined. This stone has nearly the same appearance in every part of Syria: sometimes it is quite bare and peeled; such, for instance, is that of the hills on the north side of the road from Antioch to Aleppo, and that which serves as a bed to the upper part of the rivulet which passes by the latter city. In travelling from Aleppo to Hama, veins of the same rock are constantly to be met with in the plain; while the mountains on the right present huge piles, which appear like the ruins of towns and castles. The same stone, under a more regular form, likewise composes the greater part of Lebanon, Anti-Lebanon, the mountains of the Drusez, Galilee, and Mount Carmel, and stretch to the south of the lake Asphaltites. The inhabitants everywhere build their houses, and make lime with it. Of this beautiful stone was the temple of Jehovah built, and the other splendid edifices with which Solomon adorned the capital of his kingdom. He 'had three-score and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore hewers in the mountains; and the king commanded, and brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundations of the house. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stone-squarers.'¹

Volney never heard that these stones contained any petrified shells in the upper regions of Lebanon; but he found between Batround and Djebail, in the Kesraonan, not far from the sea, a quarry of schistus stone, the flakes of which bear the impressions of plants, fish, shells, and particularly the sea onion. The bed of the torrent of Azkalon, in Palestine, is also lined with a heavy stone, porous and salt, which contains many small volutes and bivalves of the Mediterranean. Pococke found a large quantity of them in the rocks which border on the Lead Sea. These are indubitable remains of the antediluvian world, and afford an additional proof, if any were needed, of the existence and prevalence of the deluge over the surface of our globe.

So famous was this stupendous mountain (Lebanon) in the days of Moses, that to be permitted to see it, was the object of his earnest desires and repeated prayers; and, as the strongest expression of his admiration, he connects it in his addresses to the throne of his God, with Zion the future seat of his divine glory. 'I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan; that goodly mountain and Lebanon.'

The storms and tempests which, gathering on the highest peak of Lebanon, burst on the plains and valleys below, are often very severe. When De la Valle

was travelling in the neighbourhood of that mountain, in the end of April, a wind blew from its summit so vehement and so cold, with so great a profusion of snow, that though he and his companions were in a manner buried in their quilted coverlets, yet it was sensibly felt, and proved very disagreeable. It is not, therefore, without reason that Lebanon, or the white mountain, as the term signifies, is the same by which that lofty chain is distinguished; and that the sacred writers so frequently refer to the snow and the gelid waters of Lebanon. They sometimes allude to it as a wild and desolate region; and certainly no part of the earth is more dreary and barren than the Sammin, the region of perpetual snow. On that naked summit, the seat of storm and tempest, where the principles of vegetation are extinguished, the art and industry of man can make no impression; nothing but the creating power of God himself, can produce a favourable alteration. Thus, predicting a wonderful change, such as results from the signal manifestations of the divine favour to individuals or the church, the prophet demands, 'Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field?'² The contrast in this promise between the naked, snowy, and tempestuous summit of Lebanon, and a field beautified and enriched with the fairest and most useful productions of nature, expresses with great force, the difference which the smiles of Heaven produce in the most wretched and hopeless circumstances of an individual or a nation.

Lebanon was justly considered as a very strong barrier to the land of promise; and opposing an almost insurmountable obstacle to the movements of cavalry and chariots of war. When Sennacherib, therefore, in the arrogance of his heart, and the pride of his strength, wished to express the ease with which he had subdued the greatest difficulties, and how vain was the resistance of Hezekiah and his people, he says, 'By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir-trees thereof; and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel.' What others accomplish on foot with much labour and the greatest difficulty, by a winding path cut into steps, which no beast of burden, except the cautious and surefooted mule, can tread, that haughty monarch vaunted he could perform with horses and a multitude of chariots. Surrounded by crouching slaves, and accustomed to see every obstacle vanish before him, he vainly supposed he could gratify the most inordinate desire; and what the world accounted physical impossibilities, must yield to his power.

The lofty summits of Lebanon were the chosen haunts of various beasts of prey; the prints of whose feet, Maundrell and his party observed in the snow. To these savage tenants of the desert, the prophet Habakkuk seems to allude in that prediction: 'For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts, which made them afraid, because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land.'³ The violence of Lebanon is a beautiful and energetic expression, denoting the ferocious animals that roam on its mountains, and lodge in its thickets; and that, occasionally descending

¹ 1 Kings v. 15, 17, 18.

² Is. xxix. 17.

³ Hab. ii. 8.

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into the plain in quest of prey, ravage the fold or seize upon the unwary villager. To such dangers Solomon expressly refers, in the animated invitation which, in the name of the Redeemer, he addresses to the church: 'Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.'¹ With these fierce and ravenous animals, the prophet Jeremiah joins the wolves of the evening, and sends them to lay waste the habitations of his guilty and unrepenting nation: 'Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evening shall spoil them; a leopard shall watch over their cities, every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces; because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased.'² Near the base of the mountains, the traveller is entertained with a more pleasing sight than the lion slumbering in his den, or the print of his feet in the snow; he sees the hart or the deer shooting from the steep, to quench his thirst in the stream.³ It was when David wandered near the foot of Lebanon, driven by his unnatural son Absalom from Zion and the fountain of Israel, the scenes of divine manifestation, that he marked the rapid course of these animals to the rivulets which descended from the sides of the mountains. He saw the hart panting for the water brooks, and the sight reminded him of his former enjoyments, while the circumstances of the creature bore a striking analogy to his own situation and feelings at the time. The passage, in which, prompted by the casual incident, he poured out the ardent longings of his soul for the waters of life, is wonderfully beautiful and tender: 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so pants my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?'⁴

Though the upper regions of Lebanon are unfit for the habitation of man, they still contribute to his advantage. From their accumulated snows descend a thousand streams of pure and wholesome water, to irrigate the fields below, to clothe them with verdure, and enrich them with the choicest products. The fountains and the streams of Lebanon, furnish accordingly a number of pleasing figures to the inspired writers. The church is described in the Song of Solomon, as a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.⁵ And the prophet, in reproving the folly and perverseness of his people, demands, 'Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or, shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?'⁶ No man, in the sober exercise of reason, would leave the pure and refreshing streams which descend from the sides of that stupendous mountain, for the miry puddle or the insipid waters of the cistern; yet, with still greater absurdity than such conduct betrays, had the chosen people of God forsaken the worship of his name, for the degrading and unprofitable service of idols.

The approach to Lebanon is adorned with olive plantations, vineyards, and luxuriant fields; and its lower regions, besides the olive and the vine, are beautified with

the myrtle, the styrax, and other odoriferous shrubs; and the perfume which exhales from these plants is increased by the fragrance of the cedars, which crown the summits, or garnish the declivities of the mountain. The great ravine, which runs a long way up into the mountain, and is on both sides exceedingly steep and high, is clothed from the top to the bottom with fragrant evergreens, and everywhere refreshed with streams, descending from the rocks in beautiful cascades, the work of divine wisdom and goodness. These cool and limpid streams, uniting at the bottom, form a large and rapid torrent, whose agreeable murmur is heard over all the place, and adds greatly to the pleasure of that romantic scene.⁷ The fragrant odours wafted from the aromatic plants of this noble mountain, have not been overlooked by the sacred writers. The eulogium which Christ pronounces on the graces of the church, contains the following direct reference: 'The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon;' and the prophet Hosea, in his glowing description of the future prosperity of Israel, converts the assertion of Solomon into a promise: 'His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon.'

The richness and flavour of the wines produced in its vineyards have been celebrated by travellers in all ages. Rauwolf declares, that the wine which he drank at Canobin, a Greek monastery on Mount Libanus, far surpassed any he had ever tasted. His testimony is corroborated by Le Bruin, who pronounces the wines of Canobin better and more delicate than are to be found any where else in the world.⁸ They are red, of a beautiful colour, and so oily that they adhere to the glass; these are so excellent, that our traveller thought he never tasted any kind of drink more delicious. The wines produced on other parts of the mountain, although in much greater abundance, are not nearly so good. To the delicious wines of Canobin, the prophet Hosea certainly refers in this promise: 'They that dwelt under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.'⁹

In striking allusion to the scenery and productions of that mountain, it is promised in the sixth verse: 'His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell (or his memorial, as the original term signifies,) as Lebanon.'¹⁰ His branches shall spread like the mighty arms of the cedar, every one of which is equal in size to a tree; his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, which is admitted by all who have seen it, to be one of the most beautiful productions of nature; and his smell, his very memorial, shall be as the wine of Lebanon, which delights the taste, and the very recollection of which excites the commendation of those that have drunk it, long after the banquet is over. The meaning of these glorious figures undoubtedly is, that the righteous man shall prosper by the distinguishing favour of Heaven; shall become excellent, and useful, and highly respected while he lives; and after his death, his memory shall be blessed, and embalmed in the affectionate recollection of the church, for the benefit of many who had not the opportunity of profiting by his example.

¹ Song iv. 8.

² Maundrell's Travels.

³ Ps. xlii. 1.

⁴ Song iv. 15.

⁵ Jer. xviii. 14.

⁶ Maundrell's Travels.

⁷ Harmer's Observations.

⁸ Hosea xiv. 7.

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The fragrant odour of the wines produced in the vineyards of Lebanon, seems chiefly to have attracted the notice of our translators. This quality is either fictitious or natural. The orientals, not satisfied with the fragrance emitted by the essential oil of the grape, frequently put spices into their wines to increase their flavour. To this practice Solomon alludes in these words: 'I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.'¹ But Savary, in his Letters on Greece, affirms, that various kinds of naturally perfumed wines are produced in Crete; and the wine of Lebanon, to which the sacred writer alludes, was probably of the same species.

The cedar of Lebanon has, in all ages, been reckoned an object of unrivalled grandeur and beauty in the vegetable kingdom. It is accordingly one of the natural images which frequently occur in the poetical style of the Hebrew prophets, and is appropriated to denote kings, princes, and potentates of the highest rank. Thus, the prophet Isaiah, whose writings abound with metaphors and allegories of this kind, in denouncing the judgments of God upon the proud and arrogant, declares, that² 'the day of the Lord of hosts, shall be upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan.' The king of Israel used the same figure, in his reply to the challenge of the king of Judah: 'the thistle that was in Lebanon, sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle.' The spiritual prosperity of the righteous man, is compared by the psalmist to the same noble plant: 'The righteous shall flourish as the palm-tree; he shall grow as the cedar in Lebanon.' Whatever is majestic and comely in the human countenance; whatever commands the reverence, and excites the love of the beholder,—Lebanon and its towering cedars are employed by the sacred writers to express.

To break the cedars, and shake the enormous mass on which they grew, are the figures that David selects, to express the awful majesty and infinite power of Jehovah: 'The voice of the Lord is powerful: the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars: yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He makes them also to skip like a calf: Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.' This description of the divine majesty and power, possesses a character of awful sublimity, which is almost unequalled, even in the page of inspiration. Jehovah has only to speak, and the cedar which braves the fierce winds of heaven is broken, even the cedar of Lebanon, every arm of which rivals the size of a tree; he has only to speak, and the enormous mass of matter on which it grows, shakes to its foundation, till, extensive, and lofty, and ponderous as it is, it leaps like the young of the herd in their joyous frolics, and skips like the young unicorn, the swiftest of the four-footed race.

The stupendous size, the extensive range, and great elevation of Libanus; its towering summits capped with perpetual snow, or crowned with fragrant cedars; its olive plantations; its vineyards producing the most deli-

cious vines; its clear fountains and cold-flowing brooks; its fertile vales and odoriferous shrubberies,—combine to form in Scripture language, 'the glory of Lebanon.' The extensive forests of cedars which adorned and perfumed the summits and declivities of those mountains, have almost disappeared. Only a small number of these 'trees of God,' which, according to the usual import of the phrase, signally displayed the divine power, wisdom, and goodness, now remain. Their countless number, in the days of Solomon, and their prodigious bulk, must be recollected, in order to feel the force of that sublime declaration of the prophet: 'Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof for a burnt-offering.' Though the trembling sinner were to make choice of Lebanon for the altar; were to cut down all its forests to form the pile; though the fragrance of this fuel, with all its odoriferous gums were the incense; the wine of Lebanon pressed from all its vineyards the libation; and all its beasts the propitiatory sacrifice; all would prove insufficient to make an atonement for the sins of men; would be regarded as nothing in the eyes of the supreme Judge for the expiation of even one transgression. The just and holy law of God requires a nobler altar, a costlier sacrifice, and a sweeter perfume,—the obedience and death of a divine person to atone for our sins, and the incense of his continual intercession, to secure our acceptance with the Father of mercies, and admission into the mansions of eternal rest.

The conversion of the Gentile nations from the worship of idols and the bondage of corruption, to the service and enjoyment of the true God, is foretold in these beautiful and striking terms: 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.' In the animated description which the same prophet gives of the prosperity to which the kingdom of Christ was destined to rise in the New Testament dispensation, the following allusion to the glory of Lebanon again occurs: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it.' By these words, the prophet meant to inform his nation, what the event has fully verified, that the church of the Gentiles was to be of great extent, like the range of Lebanon, intersecting the country in various directions; was to be firmly established in the earth, like a fortress built upon the summits of a steep and lofty mountain; was to overcome all opposition, set at defiance the hostile movements of all her enemies, and regard with indifference or contempt, the envious exertions of every competitor; for she shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into her. The rapid growth of the New Testament church, her great extent, and the countless number of her converts, are fully described in the figurative language of the psalmist: 'There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit

¹ Song viii. 2.

² Is. ii. 12, 13.

³ 2 Kings xiv. 9.

⁴ Ps. xxix. 4—6.

⁵ Is. xl. 16.

⁶ Is. xxxv. 1—6.

⁷ Is. ii. 2.

⁸ Ps. lxxii. 16.

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thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.' The forests of the east, always near the point of ignition, under the intense beams of a vertical sun, from the carelessness or malice of those who take shelter in their recesses, are frequently set on fire; and the devouring element sometimes continues its ravages, till extensive plantations are consumed. To such a terrible conflagration, the prophet justly compares the destructive operations of the Roman armies under the command of Vespasian and Titus, against the nation of the Jews, when the nobles and rulers were slaughtered, the city and temple reduced to ashes, the people either put to the sword or sold into slavery, and the whole country laid waste. ¹ 'Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. Howl, fir-tree, for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty is spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down.'

The north-east part of this mountain, adjoining to the Holy Land, is in Scripture distinguished by the name of Hermon. It lies on the east of Jordan; and is known in Scripture by different names: the Sidonians call it Sirion, and the Amorites Shenir. This Mount Hermon is thought, not without some probability, to be the same with Mount Hor, mentioned by Moses in his description of the promised land.²

Besides this Mount Hermon in the northern border of the country beyond Jordan, we read of another mountain of the same name, lying within the land of Canaan, on the west of the river Jordan, not far from Mount Tabor. To this mountain the holy psalmist is thought to refer in these words: 'The north and the south, thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.' And in the following passage, 'As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descends about the mountains of Zion.'

Another branch of Lebanon, which extended for a considerable way along the eastern coast of the country beyond Jordan, is mount Gilead, where Laban overtook Jacob in his return to his father's house; and being warned of God in a dream, not to injure the patriarch, made a covenant with him, and in witness of the solemn transaction, in conjunction with his son-in-law, made a heap of stones, and entertained their followers upon it, in token of sincere and lasting friendship. From this incident, the place was called Galeed, the heap, or circle of witness, and Mizpah, a beacon or watch-tower; for, said Laban to his son-in-law, ³ 'The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another, if thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters: no man is with us; see, God is witness between me and thee.' That this was done in a mountain, we are expressly told; and from the name given to the heap of stones constructed on that occasion, the whole mount, together with the circumjacent country, received in succeeding times, the name of Gilead. It lies on the east of the sea of Galilee, forming part of the ridge of mountains which run from Mount Lebanon toward the south, on the east of Canaan; and included the mountainous region, called in the New Testament, Trachonitis.

The mountains of Abarim lie beyond Jordan, in the

southern division of the country. One part of these mountains, or hills, was distinguished by the names of Mount Nebo and Pisgah. God said unto Moses, ⁴ 'Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, over against Jericho.' And that this was the same as Pisgah, from whose summit Moses obtained a sight of the promised land, and where he terminated a career of greater glory than ever fell to the lot of any mortal, may be inferred from the following words: ⁵ 'And Moses went up from the plains of Moab, unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah that is over against Jericho.' From this account it seems probable that Pisgah, was the highest pinnacle of Nebo, a mountain in the great range of Abarim; for the term Pisgah may be derived from a root which signifies to elevate, or raise up; and therefore may justly denote the top of the loftiest peak of that mountain.

On the south of Canaan lay Mount Seir, whither Esau retired from the presence of his brother Jacob. This mountainous country was originally inhabited by the Horites, or Horims, the descendants of Hor, or Hori, from whom the mountain was afterwards called Mount Hor. It was on a mountain of this name, by the coasts of Edom, that Aaron died. It is therefore probable, that the whole tract was formerly called Mount Hor; since we find that the inhabitants were formerly called Horites.

Gilboa was, according to Jerome and Eusebius, a ridge of mountains, six miles from Bethshan, among which stood a town of the same name. These mountains were remarkable for the death of Saul and Jonathan, and the total defeat of their forces, in a general battle with the Philistines; an event which the holy psalmist laments in the most tender elegiac strains. ⁶ 'The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offering, for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.'

The only remarkable mountain on the western border of Canaan, is Carmel, which lies on the sea coast, at the south end of the tribe of Asher, and is frequently mentioned in the sacred writings. On this mountain, which is very rocky, and about 2000 feet in height, the prophet Elijah fixed his residence. The fields around it have been celebrated in all ages, for the extent of their pastures, and the richness of their verdure. So great was the fertility of this region, that, in the language of the sacred writers, the name Carmel is often equivalent to a fruitful field.

Tabor is a lofty mountain of a conical form, which rises in the plain of Esdraelon, at two hours' distance eastward from Nazareth. On the lofty summit of this beautiful mountain, by the constant and universal suffrage of antiquity, our Saviour was transfigured before his disciples: when the fashion of his countenance was altered, his face shone like the sun, and his raiment became white and glistening.

The rough mountainous tract, lying between the hills of Gilead and the river Jordan, was called Bashan. By the Greeks it was named Trachonitis. It furnishes the

¹ Zec. xi. 1. ² Num. xxxiv. 7, 8. ³ Gen. xxxi. 4—8.

⁴ Deut. xxxii. 49.

⁵ Deut. xxxiv. 1.

⁶ 1 Sam. i. 19.

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sacred writers with many beautiful allusions, and apt illustrations. So beautiful and stately were the oaks of Bashan, that the prophet Isaiah classes them with the cedars of Lebanon. ¹ 'The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan.'

Bashan was celebrated for the extent and luxuriance of its pastures; so much so, that, when the prophet Micah foretells the restoration of his people, and their rapid prosperity under the fostering care of Jehovah, he exclaims, 'Let them feed in Bashan and in Gilead, as in days of old.' The cattle that grazed on these verdant mountains, were remarkable for their size, their strength, and fatness. Moses, in his dying song, makes butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs and rams of the breed of Bashan, a distinguished part of the portion which God bestowed on his peculiar people. The oppressors of Israel are frequently compared to the strong and fierce cattle reared in the same region: ² 'Strong bulls of Bashan,' cried the psalmist, in the name of the Saviour, 'have beset me round.'

Salmon is a mountain which stood in the neighbourhood of Shechem. Its declivities were clothed with lofty woods, and its summits were capped with snow. To both these circumstances there are allusions in Scripture. ³

With respect to the hills in or near Jerusalem, the most celebrated is Mount Zion, on whose summit stood the city of David, and where the ark of the covenant rested under the tent which that pious monarch pitched for it. The holy hill of Zion stood, according to some writers, in the north part of Jerusalem; but the more probable and general opinion is, that it is the same hill which is taken for Zion in modern times, situate on the south of the present city, for the most part without the walls. But when Jerusalem was in the height of her power and splendour, in the reign of Solomon and David, Mount Zion was enclosed within the walls, and formed the southern district of that celebrated metropolis.

The only other eminence deserving of notice is the mount of Olives; ^a a name certainly derived from the number of olive trees with which it was covered. It is a part of a long ridge of hills extending from north to south, with three summits. The mount of Olives is celebrated in the history of our Lord. To this mountain it was his custom to retire in the evening, after he had spent a laborious day in teaching the multitudes that attended his ministry in Jerusalem: it was from one of its summits that he beheld the city, and wept over it, and predicted its final destruction; in the garden which lay at the bottom, he commenced the scene of his last sufferings, for the sins of his people; and from the highest peak, as is generally supposed, after he had finished the work of our redemption on earth, he ascended into his Father's presence with unspeakable joy and glory. ⁴

CHAP. VI.—*On the Lakes and Rivers of Palestine.*

BY THE EDITOR.

THE only considerable lakes in the land of promise, are those of Tiberias, and the salt sea. The lake of Tiberias was also known to the sacred writers by the name of the sea of Galilee, and the lake of Gennesareth. It was called the sea of Tiberias from a town of that name on its western border; the sea of Galilee, from the province of Galilee, in general; and the lake of Gennesareth, from that particular tract of Galilee which skirted its western shore. The breadth of this lake or sea is stated by Josephus at 40, and the length at 140 furlongs. Mr Buckingham says it is twelve to fifteen miles in its greatest length, and a variable breadth from six to nine miles. Its water is limpid, sweet, and wholesome; and lying upon gravel, is softer than the water either of a river or fountain; and, at the same time, so cold, that, says the Jewish historian, it cannot be warmed by exposure to the sun, in the hottest season of the year. It abounds in a great variety of fish, which, for taste and shape, are peculiar to itself. The lake of Tiberias is properly a dilatation of the river Jordan, which through the middle of it pursues his course to the Dead Sea. The country on both sides is uncommonly fruitful and pleasant. So fertile is the soil, that every plant thrives in it; and so great is the felicity of the climate, that nuts, palms, figs, and olive-trees, flourish here in great profusion, although they naturally require a quite different temperature; which, observes the historian, looks as if Providence took delight in this place, to reconcile contradictions; and as if the very seasons themselves were in a competition which should be most obliging. The durable character of the fruits produced in this delightful region, is not less remarkable than their great variety and excellence. Figs and grapes continue in season there ten months in the year; and other fruits the whole year round. Gennesareth is not more celebrated for its delicious air and temperature, than for a spring of living waters, clear as crystal, to which the nations give the name of Capernaum. The length of the country along the lake is about four miles, and the breadth four miles and a half. This district was, in the time of Josephus, inhabited by a skilful and industrious people, who wisely availing themselves of the singular advantages which the soil and climate of their highly favoured country afforded them, carried the improvement of their lands to the highest degree of perfection. From the extraordinary fruitfulness of this tract, some conjecture that the word Gennesareth is compounded of two words, *Gan* and *Sai*; of which the first denotes in Hebrew a garden, the last a prince, and consequently the compound, the garden of a prince, or a princely garden. But, although the name in this view sufficiently corresponds with the nature of the country, it is more probable that the word Gennesareth, in the New Testament, owes its existence to the term Chinnereth, or Cinnereth, in the Old; for, in the days of Joshua, Cinnereth was a fortified city in the tribe of Naphtali; ¹ and it is evident from a passage in the first

¹ Is. ii. 10—14. ² Ps. xxiii. ³ Judg. ix. 47; Ps. lxxviii. 14.

⁴ Paxton's Illustrations, &c. vol. 1. p. 118.

^a It lies to the east of Jerusalem, beyond the brook Kedron, and on it still grows abundance of that plant, from which it is named; on its summits are the remains of some ancient edifices. It is without, mount Moriah being alone within the city.

⁵ Josh. xix. 35.

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book of Kings, that it gave its name to the surrounding country.¹ The Jewish legislator in several parts of his writings, and Joshua in the history of his proceedings, place the city of Chinnereth on the shore of the lake Tiberias, calling it by the same name, the sea of Chinnereth.² Hence, it is more than probable, that Gennesareth in the New Testament, is only a corruption of Chinnereth, the name by which the city and the lake on which it stood were known to the ancient Israelites. The city had indeed perished in the wars between the kings of Syria and Israel, long before the coming of Christ, which is the true reason that no mention is made of it in the New Testament, while the district where it stood retained its name for many ages after its fall. The date of its destruction may, with great probability, be fixed in the reign of Baasha king of Israel, about 958 years before Christ, when Benhadad king of Syria invaded his dominions, and 'smote Ijon and Dan, and Abel-beth-maachah, and all Chinnereth, with all the land of Naphtali.' Upon the ruins of ancient Chinnereth afterwards arose the city of Capernaum, deriving its name from the excellent fountain already mentioned, near which it was built; but the lake and the adjacent lands were permitted to retain their ancient name, till, in the lapse of ages, or by a change of dialect, it was moulded into Gennesareth. It was a common saying among the Jews, in reference to the lake of Gennesareth, that "God loved that sea more than all the other seas." And, in one sense, the observation is quite correct; for it was honoured, above all others, with the presence of our blessed Lord and Saviour, both before and after his resurrection. He made choice of Capernaum, which stood upon the margin of the lake, as his ordinary place of residence, on account of which it is called 'his own city.'³ On its shores he found several of his apostles pursuing the humble employment of fishermen, and called them to be witnesses of his mighty works, and the heralds of his kingdom. It was on this sea he came to them, walking upon the waters; where he rebuked the winds and the waves, and the furious storm was in a moment changed into a profound calm; and where he filled their nets with a miraculous draught of fishes.^a On the shore of this lake he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, and after rebuking Peter for his unfaithfulness, and exacting a threefold confession, corresponding to his threefold denial, restored him to his office as an apostle, and to his station as a pillar in the church.

The only other lake connected with the illustration of Scripture, is that called by moderns the Dead Sea, from a tradition commonly but erroneously received, that no

living creature could exist in its saline waters. It was anciently called the Sea of the Plain,⁴ from its situation in the great hollow or plain of Jordan; the Salt Sea,⁵ from the extreme saltiness of its waters; and the East Sea,⁶ from its situation relative to Judea. It is likewise called by Josephus, and by the Greek and Latin writers, Lacus Asphaltites, from the bitumen found in it; and is at present known in Syria by the names of Almotanah and Bahar Loth. This remarkable expanse of water covers the fruitful vale where once flourished the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, with the other cities of the plain; a vale so rich and beautiful, that the sacred historian compares it to the garden of paradise.⁷ It was changed into its present condition by an immediate interposition of God. 'The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.' The destruction was complete and irreparable; the country was in a manner extinguished, by converting it into a deep lake; so fierce was the indignation, so terrible the overthrow.

The learned Michaelis ascribes the destruction of those cities to material causes. It is possible that the sovereign Ruler of the universe employed the operation of such causes on that occasion. Sodom was built upon a mine of bitumen, as we know from the testimony of Moses and Josephus, who speak of wells abounding with bitumen in the valley of Siddim. Lightning, pointed by the hand of Omnipotence, kindled the combustible mass, and the cities sunk in the subterraneous conflagration. Nor is the ingenious suggestion of M. Malte Brun to be omitted, that Sodom and Gomorrah themselves might have been built of bituminous stones, and set in flames by the fire of heaven.

The lake Asphaltites is enclosed on the east and west with exceeding high mountains; on the north it is bounded with the plains of Jericho, on which side it receives the waters of the Jordan; on the south it is open, and extends beyond the reach of the eye.^a It is said to be seventy miles long, and twenty miles broad; and is fringed in some places with a kind of coppice of bushes and reeds. In the midst of this border, not a furlong from the sea, rises a fountain of brackish water, which

⁴ Deut. iii. 17. iv. 19. ⁵ Deut. iii. 17; Jos. xv. 5.

⁶ Ezek. xlvii. 18; Joel ii. 20. ⁷ Gen. xiii. 10.

1 Kings xv. 20. ² Num. xxxiv. 11; Deut. iii. 17; Josh. xii. 3.

³ Mat. ix. 1.

^a In the time of our Saviour, it is plain that ships sailed on the surface of this lake; and during the wars between the Jews and Romans, fleets of some force were stationed here, and bloody battles fought between them. But the case is greatly altered now, as not a boat is found to disturb its waters. Mr Buckingham says, "This fine piece of water abounds with a great variety of excellent fish; but from the poverty, and one must add, the ignorance, and the indolence of the people who live on its borders, there is not a boat or a raft, either large or small, throughout its whole extent. Some three years since, a boat did exist here, but this being broken up from decay, has never been replaced, so that the few fish taken, are caught by lines from the shore, nets never being used.

a This opening leads into the valley of El Ghor, which with a southern continuation called El Araba, both inspected by Burckhardt, descends uninterruptedly to the Euxine Gulf of the Red Sea; which it joins at Akaba, the site of the ancient Ezion-geber. This Mr Burckhardt supposes to be the prolongation of the ancient channel of the Jordan, which discharged itself into the sea before its absorption in the expanded lake of Sodom. This is extremely probable; and there cannot be a more interesting country in the world than this, to be made the subject of an accurate geological survey. We may infer, however, this much from what we know, that before the face of the country was changed by the judgment that fell upon it, the ground now covered by the water of the Dead Sea, was an extensive valley, and through which the Jordan flowed in its course to the sea. That it flowed through the vale, may be inferred from the great fertility of the latter; and that it passed beyond it, is equally to be inferred from the want of space over which the water could expand to be exhausted by evaporation. But the discovery of the opening on the southern border of the lake, and the inclined valley leading from thence to the sea, have rendered these inferences almost conclusive.—*Mansford*.

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was pointed out to Maundrell by his Arab conductor; a sure proof that the soil is not equally impregnated with saline particles. The ground, to the distance of half an hour from the sea, is uneven, and broken into hillocks; which Mr Maundrell compares to ruinous lime kilns; but whether these might be the pits at which the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown by the four kings who invaded their country, he could not determine.

The water of the lake is intensely salt, extremely bitter, and nauseous, and very heavy; ^a its depth seems to be altogether unknown; nor does it appear that a boat has ever navigated its surface. No verdure is to be seen on its banks; but it is not true that its exhalations are as pestiferous as to kill birds that attempt to fly over it. Mr Maundrell saw several birds flying about, and skimming the surface of the waters, without any visible harm. The same fact is attested by Volney, who states it as no uncommon thing to see swallows dipping for the water necessary to build their nests. The soil around it, impregnated also with salt, produces no plants; and the air itself, which becomes loaded with saline particles from evaporation, and which receives also the sulphureous and bituminous vapours, cannot be favourable to vegetation: hence the deadly aspect which reigns around the lake. The ground about it, however, is not marshy, and its waters are limpid and incorruptible, as must be the case with a dissolution of salt.¹ Mr Maundrell questions the truth of the common tradition, which is admitted by Volney in all its extent; that the waters of the Dead Sea are destructive to animal existence, having observed on the shore, two or three shells of fish, resembling oyster shells. That respectable traveller, willing to make an experiment of its strength, went into it, and found it bore up his body in swimming, with an uncommon force; but the relation of some authors, that men wading into it, are buoyed up to the top as soon as the water reaches to the middle, he found upon experiment untrue.

A recent traveller, on visiting the lake, found a crust of salt covering the surface of the ground, and resembling a snowy plain, from which a few stunted shrubs reared their heads. No murmur, no cooling breeze

¹ Volney's Travels, vol. 1.

^a The water of this sea is far more salt than that of the ocean; containing one fourth part of its weight of saline contents in a state of perfect desiccation, and forty-one parts in a hundred in a state of simple crystallization; that is to say, a hundred pounds by weight of water, will yield forty-one pounds of salt; while the proportion of saline contents in the water of the Atlantic is not more than 1-27th part in a state of dryness, and about six pounds of salt in a hundred of the water. The specific gravity of the water is 1.211; that of common water being 1000. A phial of it having been brought to England by Mr Gordon of Clunie, at the request of Sir Joseph Banks, was analyzed by Dr Marceet, who states that this water is perfectly transparent, and does not deposit any crystals on standing in close vessels. Its taste is peculiarly bitter and pungent; the contents of 100 grains of the water were as follows.

Muriate of Lime, . . .	3.920
Muriate of Magnesia, . .	10.246
Muriate of Soda, . . .	10.360
Sulphate of Lime, . . .	0.054

By this it appears that the water of this sea is in fact, a mineral water; while the excessive quantity of solid contents, and its consequent greater specific gravity, enable it to support on its surface substances that would sink in any other water; a circumstance which has given rise to many marvellous tales.

announced the approach to its margin. The strand, bestrewed with stones was hot, the waters of the lake were motionless, and absolutely dead along the shore: he found it impossible to keep the water in his mouth; it far exceeded that of the sea in saltiness, and produced upon the lips the effect of a strong solution of alum. Before his boots were completely dry, they were covered with salt; his clothes, his hat, his hands, in less than three hours, were impregnated with this mineral. About midnight he heard a noise from the lake, and was informed by the Arabs, that it proceeded from legions of small fish, which come and leap about on the shore.

The extreme saltiness of this lake, has been ascribed by Volney to mines of fossil salt in the side of the mountains, which extend along the western shore, and from time immemorial have supplied the Arabs in the neighbourhood, and even the city of Jerusalem. He does not attempt to invalidate the credit of the Mosaic narrative; but only insinuates, that these saline depositions were either coeval with the mountains in which they were found, or entered into their original conformation. The extraordinary fruitfulness of the vale of Siddim, before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, is asserted by Moses in terms so clear and precise, that the veracity of the sacred writer must be overthrown, before a reasonable doubt can be entertained of the fact. No disproportionate quantity of saline matter, could have been present either in the soil or the surrounding mountains. That it abounded with bitumen, some have inferred from the assertion of Moses, that the vale of Siddim was full of slime pits: where the Hebrew word *chemar*, which we render slime, others, and particularly the seventy interpreters, render bitumen. But *gophnith* and *chemar*, is the word Moses employs to denote brimstone, in his account of the judgment that overwhelmed the cities of the plain; and by consequence, brimstone is not meant, when *chemar* is used, but bitumen, a very different substance. Hence the brimstone which now impregnates the soil of the salt sea, and banishes every kind of vegetation from its shores, must be regarded, not as an original, but an accidental ingredient, remaining from the destruction of the vale by fire and brimstone from heaven. The same remark applies to the mines of fossil salt, on the surrounding mountains; the saline matter was deposited in the cavities which it now occupies at the same time, else the vale of Siddim, instead of verdant pastures, and abundant harvests, had exhibited the same frightful sterility from the beginning, for which it is remarkable in modern times. Bitumen, if the Hebrew word *chemar* denotes that substance, abounds in the richest soils; for in the vale of Shinar, the soil of which, by the agreement of all writers, is fertile in the highest degree, the builders of the tower of Babel used it for the mortar. The ark of bulrushes in which Moses was embarked on the Nile, was in like manner daubed with bitumen, *chemar*, and pitch; but the mother of Moses, considering the poverty of her house, cannot be supposed to have procured it from a distance, nor at any great expense: she must therefore have found it in the soil of Egypt, near the Nile, on whose borders she lived. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose, that bitumen abounded in Goshen, a region famed for the richness of its pastures. Hence it may be fairly concluded, that the vale of Siddim, before its destruction, in respect of

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natural fertility, resembled the plain of Shinar, and the land of Egypt along the Nile. But it is well known, that wherever brimstone and saline matter abound, there sterility and desolation reign. Is it not then reasonable to infer, that the sulphureous and saline matters, discovered in the waters and on the shores of the lake Asphaltites, are the relics of the divine vengeance executed on the cities of the plain, and not original ingredients in the soil.

If we listen to the testimony of the sacred writers, what was reasonable hypothesis rises into absolute certainty. Moses expressly ascribes the brimstone, the salt, and the burning, in the overthrow of Sodom, to the immediate vengeance of heaven. 'When they see the plagues of that land,—that the whole land is brimstone, and salt, and burning; that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon, (like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath); even all nations shall say, Wherefore has the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?'¹ In this passage, the brimstone, salt, and burning, are true and proper effects of the divine wrath; and since this fearful destruction is compared to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, the brimstone and salt into which the vale of Siddim was turned, must also be the true and proper effects of divine anger. This, indeed, Moses asserts in the plainest terms: 'Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.'² But since the brimstone and the fire were rained from heaven, so must the salt, with which they are connected in the former quotation; and this is the opinion received by the Jewish doctors. The frightful sterility which followed the brimstone, salt, and burning, in the first quotation, is in the same manner represented as an effect of the divine judgment upon the vale of Siddim; 'it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon.'

The barrenness and desolation that result from the action of brimstone and salt, are introduced by the prophet in these words: 'Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.'³ In this passage, the salt is assigned as the cause that the parched places in the wilderness remain in a state of perpetual sterility. In the judgments which the prophet Zephaniah was directed to predict against the kingdom of Moab, he alludes expressly to the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and intimates that one part of that punishment consisted in the vale being turned into salt: 'As I live, saith the Lord, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation.'⁴

Some writers suppose the Dead Sea to be the crater of a volcano, but this opinion is entirely without founda-

tion: for all extinguished volcanoes exhibit the same characters, that is to say, mountains excavated in the form of a tunnel, lava and ashes, which exhibit incontestible proofs of the agency of fire. The Dead Sea, on the contrary, is a lake of great length, curved like a bow, placed between two ranges of mountains, which have no natural coherence in form, no homogeneity of soil. They do not meet at the two extremities of the lake; but continue, and run northward as far as the lake of Tiberias; the other is lost in the sands of Yemen.

The rugged mountains and spacious caverns on the south-west shore of the lake Asphaltites, the chosen refuge of the oppressed in every age, acquired additional celebrity from the secure retreat which they afforded to David and his men, from the violence of Saul. 'It was told Saul, saying, behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the mountains of the wild goats.'

The rivers that water the land of promise, are not so remarkable as the mountains and the lakes which diversify its surface. The greater part of them, as the Kidron, the Jabbok, and the Arnon, are only brooks or mountain torrents, some of which are dry for the greater part of the year, or only run with a flowing stream during the melting of the snows on the peaks of Lebanon, or the fall of the former and the latter rain.

But the largest and the most celebrated stream in Palestine is the Jordan. It pursues its course through the whole extent of the Holy Land from north to south; and empties itself into the lake Asphaltites. It may be said to have two banks, of which the inner marks the ordinary height of the stream; and the outer its elevation during the rainy season, or the melting of the snows on the summits of Lebanon.⁵

CHAP. VII.—*The General Fertility of Palestine.*

BY THE EDITOR.

THE early promises which were made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with respect to the multiplication of their seed, seem to imply a proportionable fertility in the land of Canaan, which it was foretold at the same time should be given to them. The prophetic assurances, also, which described the land, spoke of it as abounding with cattle and productions favourable to the support of human life.

Jacob, in expressing his blessing to Judah, promises not, as to Issachar or Asher, that 'the land shall be pleasant, or his bread fat,' but that, 'binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine, he shall wash his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes; that his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk;' and when God appeared to Moses, he declared that 'he would bring the Israelites into a good land and a large, into a land flowing with milk and honey;'⁶ figures expressive of abundance, and the luxuries only of a simple state.

¹ Deut. xxix. 22.

² Jer. xvii. 5, 6.

³ Gen. xix. 24.

⁴ Zeph. ii. 9.

⁵ Paxton's Illustrations, vol. 1. p. 160. Clarke's Travels.

⁶ Gen. xlix. 12; Cant. v. 12; Gen. xlix. 8; Newton on the Proph.

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The whole history of the Jews tends to demonstrate the accomplishment of the promises, with respect to the wonderful increase of this peculiar people. Notwithstanding the frequent wars in which the nation was engaged, and the wasting dispersions by which they were scattered, the country continued to maintain prodigious numbers in every age, excepting during the captivity.

The support of those numbers required a very large produce, and Judea appears to have displayed a considerable fertility. The sacred writers describe, in interesting pictures, the multitude of its cattle, covering the hills, the luxuriance of its trees, and the rich produce of its vineyards. The grapes brought to Moses exhibited an early proof of the fidelity of the prophetic descriptions; and the vast multitudes of people which are enumerated on various occasions confirmed the assurance. The people, not addicted to commerce, cultivated the soil with regular industry, and with that attachment which resulted from the nature of a tenure, which could not be alienated permanently, as the land reverted to its original proprietor every fifty years.

That the divine blessing increased its exuberance may reasonably be supposed, as indeed it was especially promised; and a miraculous plenty must have been imparted every sixth year, or the land could not have remained uncultivated on the sabbatical year, as we learn even from heathen writers, that it did; who mention also many particulars which tend to confirm the report which has been given.

Notwithstanding these testimonies, however, Mons. de Voltaire, in order to indulge a sarcastic vein against the historical accounts of the Old Testament, gives vent to some remarks upon the subject which are not founded on accurate information, and which do not authorize any supposition of exaggeration in the sacred accounts.

This writer in his history of the crusades, represents Judea to have been, as he describes it to be at present, one of the worst of all the inhabited countries of Asia, as almost entirely covered with parched rocks, with one layer of soil, and such as, if cultivated, might be compared to Switzerland.

It is to be observed, however, that this unfair writer has totally overlooked many circumstances which explain and confirm the accounts of the sacred historian, and it would tend but little to justify his remarks, even if he could prove that the soil of Judea is now barren; since it would not be unwarrantable to contend, that the divine favour might have conferred extraordinary fertility upon it in former times, and the divine curse have afterwards condemned it to sterility; but in truth, there is no proof that it is now barren, while there is sufficient evidence, that it was formerly very productive, and capable of sustaining its vast population.^a

^a If the untilled and waste places at the present day afford no very prepossessing appearance, it ought to be remembered, that they were predicted by Moses, Deut. xxix. 22, et seq. and that the country has been laid waste successively by Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syrians, Persians, Saracens, the European crusaders, the Turks, and Moguls, and that it now groans under the dominion of the Turks, who neither protect the agriculturist from the incursions of the Arabs, nor afford him any encouragement, but the contrary. And yet it is the unanimous testimony of travellers, in regard to this country, that, where it is cultivated, it is extremely fertile. It produces all sorts of fruit trees; and vines

The great number of inhabitants which this country is represented to have supported, was not more than the exertion of the nation and their wars might seem to have required; and indeed, the accounts on this subject are confirmed by heathen testimonies, and by Josephus.^b

Tacitus describes the climate as dry, and the soil as fruitful, exuberant in its produce, like that of Italy, and bearing the palm and the balsam,¹ the former of great size and beauty: this account is attested by Pliny, and Galen,² not to mention Josephus, who represents, the soil to have been rich and fruitful,³ as does also Aristæus.⁴

Strabo describes part of the country as rocky, but commends that about Jordan and Jericho.⁵ Hecataeus, mentioned by Josephus, speaks of the soil as being very fertile. Whatever sterility and want of population may be complained of at present, should be attributed in a great measure, to the influence of political changes, to the vexatious tyranny and bad policy of the government, and to the consequent neglect of the inhabitants, and their want of industry and of numbers to work the soil.

It is to be observed also, that in the time in which great population prevailed in Judea, it was sustained under favourable circumstances, resulting from simplicity of manners, and the frugal habits of the people. The land was not covered by those masses of buildings, and those extensive gardens, woods, and parks, which occupy such large spaces of productive ground in other countries, in modern times. All was open to cultivation or to pasture.

As the people also were interdicted from commerce, and few devoted themselves to the arts of refinement or to science, no class was exempted from the employments of industry, and every part of the land was cultivated.

If the country was mountainous, it is to be considered that the extension of the surface thence resulting, (containing, according to Hecataeus, 3,000,000 of acres,) afforded great range for cattle in climates of the latitude of Judea; it is the mountain which affords the short and rich pasture, in which the herds particularly delight, and

¹ Hist. b. v. sec. 6.

² Plin. Hist. Nat. 13. 19; Galen de Alimentis, b. xvi. p. 761. edit. Par. p. 1104—1195.

³ De Bell. Jud. b. ii. sec. 234.

⁴ Cont. Apion, b. i.

⁵ See also Plin. Hist. Nat. 13. 19; Galen de Alimentis, b. xvi. p. 761, edit. Par. p. 1104—1195.

are not wanting although the Mahometans do not drink wine. — *Jahn's Archaeology*.—Ed.

^b Josephus (Jewish War, b. iii. c. 3. sec. 3.) praises Perea, which at the present time is a desert, for its vines and its palm trees; and particularly celebrates the region near the lake of Gennesareth, also the plains of Jericho, which are now uninhabited, and desolate, (b. iii. c. 10. sec. 8. b. iv. c. 8. sec. 3.) Indeed we are informed by Josephus, that in Galilee there were 204 cities and towns, that the largest of the cities had 150,000, and the smallest towns 15,000 inhabitants. Hence we can account for it, that Josephus himself, in this small province, short of forty miles long and thirty broad, collected an army of nearly 100,000 men. (Jewish War, b. ii. c. 20. sec. 6.) As so many people were collected in such a small extent of country, it is clear that the arts and commerce must have been patronized, and consequently the sciences; which leaves us to conclude, that the miracles of Jesus were performed in a country where they could be examined and fairly discussed. The reproach, which is cast upon Galilee, in John vii. 22., has no reference to the character of its soil or climate, but only to the fact, that the prophet or Messiah was not to be expected from that part of Palestine.

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by which their milk and flesh are improved, and hence it was that Hebron was granted to Caleb as a favour.

It is not to be conceived that writers who addressed their countrymen, and who professed to reveal the promises of God, and to relate their accomplishment, could describe that as fertile, which in fact was barren, or speak of a population which did not exist, and there are still sufficient proofs of its fruitfulness to justify this persuasion.

Nothing can be more unphilosophical than to rest on the vague and hasty reports of some travellers who have visited this country in later times, and to set them up, even when contradicted by others more intelligent¹ in the present day, in opposition to the description of those who were contemporaries and witnesses of the particulars which they relate, and who, if they had stated falsehoods, could not have excited the respect which they received.

The barrenness, or scarcity rather, of which some authors may either ignorantly or maliciously complain, does not proceed, in the opinion of Dr Shaw, from the incapacity or natural unfruitfulness of the country, but from the want of inhabitants, and from the great aversion to labour and industry in those few by whom it is possessed. The perpetual discords and depredations among the petty princes who share this fine country, greatly obstruct the operations of the husbandman, who must have small encouragement to sow, when it is quite uncertain who shall gather in the harvest. It is in other respects a fertile country, and still capable of affording to its neighbours, the like ample supplies of corn and oil, which it is known to have done in the time of Solomon, who gave yearly to Hiram, twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil.

The parts about Jerusalem particularly, being rocky and mountainous, have therefore been supposed to be barren and unfruitful: yet, granting this conclusion, which is, however, far from being just, a country is not to be characterized from one single district of it, but from the whole. And besides, the blessing which was given to Judah, was not of the same kind with the blessing of Asher, or of Issachar, that 'his bread should be fat or his land pleasant,' but that 'his eyes should be red with wine, and his teeth should be white with milk.'² In the estimation of the Jewish lawgiver, milk and honey, the chief dainties and subsistence of the earlier ages, as they still continue to be of the Bedouin Arabs, are the glory of all lands; these productions are either actually enjoyed in the lot of Judah, or at least, might be obtained by proper care and application. The abundance of wine alone, is wanting at present; yet, the acknowledged goodness of that little, which is still made at Jerusalem and Hebron, clearly proves, that these barren rocks, as they are called, would yield a much greater quantity, if the abstemious Turk and Arab would permit the vine to be further propagated and improved.

Wild honey, which formed a part of the food of John the Baptist in the wilderness, may indicate to us the great plenty of it in those deserts; and, that consequently taking the hint from nature, and enticing the bees into hives and larger colonies, it might be produced in much

greater quantity. Josephus, accordingly calls Jericho the honey-bearing country. The great abundance of wild honey is often mentioned in Scripture, a memorable instance of which occurs in the first book of Samuel: 'And all they of the land came to a wood, and there was honey upon the ground; and when the people were come to the wood, behold the honey dropped.'³ This circumstance perfectly accords with the view which Moses gave of the promised land, in the song with which he closed his long and eventful career: 'He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.'⁴ That good land preserved its character in the time of David, who thus celebrates the distinguishing bounty to his chosen people: 'He would have fed them also with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock, would I have satisfied thee.'⁵ In these holy strains, the sacred poet availed himself of the most valuable products of Canaan, to lead the faith and hope of his nation to bounties of a higher order, of greater price, and more urgent necessity, than any which the soil even of that favoured region, stimulated and sustained, as it certainly was, by the special blessing of heaven, produced,—the bounties of sovereign and redeeming mercy, purchased with the blood, and imparted by the Spirit of the Son of God.

As the mountains of Palestine abound in some places with thyme, rosemary, sage, and other aromatic plants, in which the bee chiefly delights; so, in other places, they are covered with shrubs and a delicate short grass, which is more grateful to the cattle, than that which the fallow grounds or the meadows produce. The grazing and feeding of cattle is not peculiar to Judea, it is still practised all over Mount Libanus, the Castravan mountains, and Barbary, where the higher grounds are appropriated to this purpose, while the plains and valleys, are reserved for tillage.

But even laying aside the profits which might arise from grazing, by the sale of butter, milk, wool, and the great number of cattle, which were to be daily disposed of, particularly at Jerusalem, for common food and for the service of the temple; these mountainous tracts would be highly valuable on another account, especially if they were planted with olive-trees, one acre of which is of more value than twice the extent of arable ground. It may be presumed, in like manner, that the vine was not neglected in a soil and exposure so well adapted to its cultivation.

Few traces are now to be found, except at Jerusalem and Hebron, of those extensive vineyards, which in better times adorned the hills of Canaan, and so amply rewarded the labours of the cultivator; but this is owing not to the ungratefulness of the soil, but to the sloth and bigotry of the present possessors. The vine is not of so durable a nature as the olive, and requires, besides, an unceasing culture and attention; while the superstitious Turk scruples to encourage the propagation of a plant, whose fruit may be applied to uses forbidden by the rules of his religion. But the general benefit arising from the olive-tree, and its longevity and hardiness, have been the means of continuing down to the present times, clumps of several thousands, to mark out to us the possibility, as they are undoubtedly the remains, of

¹ As Shaw, Maundrell, &c.

² Gen. xlix. 12.

³ 1 Sam. xiv. 25.

⁴ Deut. xxxii. 14.

⁵ Ps. lxxxi. 16.

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more extensive plantations. Now, if to these productions be joined several plots of arable ground, which lie scattered all over the valleys and windings of the mountains in the lot of Judah and Benjamin, we shall find, that the inheritance even of these tribes which are supposed to have had the most barren part of the country, fell to them in pleasant places, and that theirs was a goodly heritage.

Besides the great quantity of grapes and raisins, says Dr Shaw, in a note, which are brought daily to the markets of Jerusalem and the neighbouring villages, Hebron alone sends every year to Egypt, three hundred camel loads of the robb which they call dabash, the same word which is simply rendered honey in the sacred volume; as in the command of the patriarch Jacob to his sons: 'Carry down the man a present of the best things of the land, a little balm and a little honey:' for honey, properly so called, could not be a rarity there, so great as dabash must be, from the want of vineyards in Egypt. Several different substances appear to have obtained the name of honey among the ancient Israelites, which may be inferred from this precept: ¹ 'Ye shall burn no leaven, nor any kind of honey in any offering.' Besides the honey of grapes, of bees, and of the palm, the honey of the reed, or sugar, might be of great antiquity.

The mountainous parts of the Holy Land are so far from being inhospitable, unfruitful, or the refuse of the land of Canaan, that in the division of this country, the mountain of Hebron was granted to Caleb as a particular favour: ² 'Now therefore, give me this mountain, of which the Lord spake in that day.' In the time of Asa, the 'hill country of Judah' mustered five hundred and eighty thousand men of valour; ³ an argument beyond dispute, that the land was able to maintain them. Even in the present times, though cultivation and improvement are exceedingly neglected, while the plains and valleys, although fruitful as ever, lie almost entirely desolate, every little hill is crowded with inhabitants. If this part of the Holy Land was composed, as some object, only of naked rocks and precipices, why is it better peopled than all the plains of Esdraelon, Rama, Acre, or Zabulon, which are all of them extremely fertile and delightful? It cannot be urged that the inhabitants live with more safety on the hills and mountains, than on the plains, as there are neither walls nor fortifications to secure their villages and encampments; and except in the range of Lebanon, and some other mountains, few or no places of difficult access; so that both of them are equally exposed to the insults of an enemy. But the reason is obvious; they find among these mountainous rocks and precipices, sufficient conveniences for themselves, and much greater for their cattle. Here they have bread to the full, while their flocks and their herds browse upon richer herbage, and both man and beast quench their thirst from springs of excellent water, which is but too much wanted, especially in the summer season, through all the plains of Syria. This fertility of Canaan is fully confirmed by writers of great reputation, whose impartiality cannot justly be suspected. Tacitus calls it a fruitful soil, and Justin affirms, that in this country the

purity of the air, and the fertility of the soil, are equally admirable.

The justice of these brief accounts, Dr Shaw, and almost every modern traveller, fully verifies. When he travelled in Syria and Phœnicia, in December and January, the whole country, he remarks, looked verdant and cheerful: and the woods particularly, which are chiefly planted with the gall-bearing oak, were every where bestrewed with a variety of anemones, ranunculuses, colchicas, and mandrakes. Several pieces of ground near Tripoli were full of liquorice; and at the mouth of a famous grotto, he saw an elegant species of the blue lily. In the beginning of March, the plains, particularly between Jaffa and Rama, were every where planted with a beautiful variety of fritillaries, tulips of innumerable hues, and a profusion of the rarest and most beautiful flowers; while the hills and the mountains were covered with yellow pollium, and some varieties of thyme, sage, and rosemary.⁴

The account which has now been given of the soil and productions of Canaan, will enable the reader to perceive with great clearness, the force and justice of the promise made by Moses to his nation, a little before he died: ⁵ 'The Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees, and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey.'

If to the natural fertility of this highly favoured country be added, the manner in which it was divided among the tribes of Israel, it will furnish an easy and satisfactory answer to the question which the infidel has often put: "How could so small a country as Canaan maintain so immense a population, as we find in the writings of the Old Testament?" That rich and fertile region was divided into small inheritances, on which the respective proprietors lived and reared their families. Necessity, not less than a spirit of industry, required that no part of the surface should be suffered to lie waste. The husbandman carried his improvements up the sides of the steepest and most rugged mountains, to the very top; he converted every patch of earth into a vineyard, or olive plantation; he covered the bare rocks with soil, and thus turned them into fruitful fields; where the steep was too great to admit of an inclined plane, he cut away the face of the precipice, and built walls around the mountain to support the earth, and planted his terraces with the vine and the olive. These circles of excellent soil were seen rising gradually from the bottom to the top of the mountains, where the vine and the olive, shading the intermediate rocks with the liveliest verdure, and bending under the load of their valuable produce, amply rewarded the toils of the cultivator. The remains of these hanging gardens, these terrace plantations, after the lapse of so many centuries, the revolutions of empire, and the long decline of industry among the miserable slaves that now occupy that once highly favoured land, may still be distinctly traced on the hills and mountains of Judea. Every spot of ground was in this manner brought into a state of cultivation; every particle of soil was rendered productive; and by turning a stream of

¹ Lev. ii. 11. ² Josh. xiv. 12. ³ 2 Chron. xiv. 8.

⁴ Shaw's Travels.

⁵ Deut. viii. 7.

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water into every field where it was practicable, and leading the little rills into which they divided it, to every plantation, every tree and every plant, they secured for the most part, a constant succession of crops. Such was the management which Virgil recommended to the cultivators of Italy. "Then on the springing corn drives the stream, and ductile rills. And when the field is scorched with raging heat, the herbs all dying, lo, from the brow of a hilly tract he decoys the torrent, which falling down the smooth-worn rocks, awakes the hoarse murmur, and with gurgling streams allays the thirsty lands."¹

"This much is certain," says Volney, "and it is the advantage of hot over cold countries, that in the former, wherever there is water, vegetation may be perpetually maintained, and made to produce an uninterrupted succession of fruits to flowers, and flowers to fruits. In cold, nay even in temperate climates, on the contrary, nature benumbed for several months, loses in the sterile slumber the third part, or even half the year. The soil which has produced grains, has not time before the decline of summer heat to mature vegetables; a second crop is not to be expected; and the husbandman sees himself condemned to a long and fatal repose. Syria is exempt from these inconveniences; if, therefore, it so happens that its productions are not such as its natural advantages would lead us to expect, it is not less owing to its physical, than its political state."

On this question we have to add the temperament of the people to the physical powers of the country. The Israelite lived upon his own farm, in all the simplicity of rural life; was content with the produce of his own fields; a little wheat in the ear, or in meal, a few grapes and olives, dates or almonds, generally constituted his repast; and the great heat of the climate imperiously required him to lead a frugal and abstemious life. It is well known, that the inhabitants of warm countries subsist on much less and much lighter food than the people of colder latitudes, and by consequence, are capable of living in more crowded habitations. If all these circumstances are duly considered, the countless numbers of people, which, according to the Old Testament writers, once inhabited the land of promise, will neither appear incredible nor exaggerated.

The extraordinary fruitfulness of Canaan, and the number of its inhabitants, during the prosperous times of the Jewish commonwealth, may be traced to another, and still more powerful cause, than any that has been mentioned,—the special blessing of heaven, which that favoured people, for many ages, exclusively enjoyed. We know from the testimony of Moses, that the tribes of Israel reposed under the immediate care of Jehovah, their covenanted God and king, enjoyed his peculiar favour, and were multiplied and sustained by a special compact, in which the rest of the nations had no share. 'The Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give it.'² But the blessing of Jehovah converts the desert into a fruitful field; for thus it is promised, (and what God promises he is able also to

perform,) 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God; for in the wilderness shall the waters break out, and streams in the desert, and the parched land shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitations of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes.'³ In this passage the blessings of salvation as exhibited in the present dispensation of grace, are certainly intended; but the use of these figures would be quite improper if the special favour of God could produce no such important changes on the face of nature.

Indeed the divine blessing has not bestowed the same degree of fruitfulness on every part of Canaan. This fertile country is surrounded by deserts of immense extent, exhibiting a dreary waste of loose and barren sand, on which the skill and industry of man are able to make no impression. The only vegetable productions which occasionally meet the eye of the traveller in these frightful solitudes, are a coarse sickly grass, thinly sprinkled on the sand; a plot of senna, or other saline or bitter herb, or an acacia bush; even these but rarely present themselves to his notice, and afford him little satisfaction when they do, because they warn him that he is yet far distant from a place of abundance and repose. Moses, who knew those deserts well, calls them 'great and terrible,' 'a desert land,' 'the waste howling wilderness.' But the completest picture of the sandy desert is drawn by the pencil of Jeremiah, in which, with surprising force and brevity, he has exhibited every circumstance of terror, which the modern traveller details with so much pathos and minuteness: 'Neither say they, where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, a land of deserts and of pits, a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, a land which no man passed through, and where no man dwelt.'⁴

Besides these inhospitable deserts which environ the land of promise, the inspired writers mention several wildernesses within its proper limits. In sacred language, a mountainous or less fruitful tract, where the towns and villages are thinly scattered, and single habitations few and far between, is distinguished by the name of the wilderness. The forerunner of our Lord resided in the wilderness of Judah till he commenced his public ministry. We are informed in the book of Genesis, that Ishmael settled in the wilderness of Paran, and in the first book of Samuel, that David took refuge from the persecution of Saul, in the same desert, where it appears the numerous flocks of Nabal the Carmelite were pastured. Such places, therefore, were not absolute deserts, but thinly peopled, or less fertile districts. But this remark will scarcely apply to the wilderness, where our Lord was tempted of the devil. It is a most miserable, dry, and barren solitude, "consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered, as if the earth had here suffered some great convulsion, in which its very

¹ Geor. b. 1. l. 110.

² Deut. xxviii. 1, 2.

³ Is. xxxv. 7.

⁴ Jer. ii. 6.

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bowels had been turned outwards,"¹ A more dismal and solitary place can scarcely be found in the whole earth. About one hour's journey from the foot of the mountain which environs this wilderness, rises the lofty Quarantania, which Maundrell was told is the mountain to which the devil carried our blessed Saviour, that he might show him all the kingdoms and glory of the world.

¹ Maundrell's Travels.

It is, as the evangelist styles it, 'an exceeding high mountain,' and in its ascent both difficult and dangerous. It has a small chapel at the top, and another about half-way up, founded on a prominent part of the rock. Near the latter are several caves and holes in the sides of the mountain, occupied formerly by hermits, and even in present times, the resort of religious devotees, who repair to these lonely cells to keep their lent, in imitation of our Lord's fasting in the wilderness forty days.

THE

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK V.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THINGS FROM THE ISRAELITES' ENTRANCE INTO THE LAND OF CANAAN, TO THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE, IN ALL 447 YEARS,—ACCORDING TO DR HALES, 581 YEARS.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE people of Israel are at length settled in Canaan, under the guidance of Joshua. While we were contemplating the character of Moses, we beheld that astonishing dispensation, the deliverance of the whole nation of the Hebrews from the bondage of Egypt, their passage through the Red Sea, and their miraculous support and guidance in the wilderness for forty years. This indeed was the Lord's doing; and it is marvellous in our eyes. But Moses was employed as the chief instrument of executing the wondrous plan,—for the entire regulation of every thing was committed to him. While the Israelites were yet on the other side of Jordan, and had not entered the promised land; while they were preparing to attack their strongest and most formidable enemies; in that very critical and dangerous situation, their leader and commander was taken from them, and we were ready to ask, what now will become of Israel?—not remembering that He who had raised up Moses for their deliverance, and had fitted him for every service to which he had been called, is all-sufficient.

The history of Joshua, the successor of Moses, who had been nominated to his charge by the Lord himself, is contained chiefly in the book which bears his name, written probably by himself. Here, though we read of battles and conquests, in which we may seem to have no concern, we shall perceive the divine perfections displayed and exercised in a very eminent degree. The power of God is exhibited, altering the course of nature for the defence of his people; his justice taking signal vengeance on the wicked inhabitants of Canaan, when they had filled up the measure of their iniquities; his veracity giving the Israelites the possession of Canaan in completion of his promises and his holy covenant; and his grace and mercy, encouraging and assisting them in all their difficulties, till he had granted them rest and deliverance from their enemies.

The Lord did all this for his people by his servant Joshua, who was an eminent type of Christ, and who with a reference to him was distinguished by the same name,—the Hebrew of Jesus being Joshua. In two

passages¹ we read Jesus, where the Israelitish general is intended, and the word should more properly have been translated Joshua. The office which this name denotes, (Saviour,) Joshua did not take to himself; but he was expressly called to it, and invested with it by the highest authority. He received his commission immediately from God, and entered upon his work with the strongest assurances of the divine direction and support. Our exalted Leader, in like manner, was constituted the Head of the church by a particular designation; and therefore he declared that “he came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him.” Though, according to his original state, he was equal with God, and possessed the same glory as the Father, yet he submitted for our sakes to become a servant; and in his mediatorial character, as if he had been an inferior, he was set apart for his great undertaking, and furnished with full powers for its execution.

It is allowed that Joshua was qualified for his office, as being possessed of all necessary abilities. And shall we not maintain that Jesus was every way fitted for his great undertaking? His power, wisdom, love, and faithfulness, have all been demonstrated with unquestionable evidence. We rejoice then that he is able to save to the uttermost, that he will finish the work in righteousness, and that he will not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and fully accomplished the salvation of his people.

If Joshua in a triumphant manner conducted the hosts of Israel into Canaan, assigned to the various tribes their respective portions, and saw them settled in peace and prosperity around him,—Jesus, ‘the Captain of the Lord’s hosts,’ stands engaged to bring all his followers into heaven—to put them in the secure possession of the kingdom which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world. For the accomplishment of his purpose, he relinquished the throne of his glory, became obedient to the law, was made a curse, died, went down into the grave, and rose again; and he is now carrying on the same work: with a particular regard to it, he will

¹ Acts vii. 45. Heb. iv. 8.

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continue to maintain universal dominion, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. Not one of his faithful followers shall fail of attaining the eternal inheritance; for it is reserved in heaven for them, and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. His grace and truth are pledged for their present security, and for their final admission into the joy of their Lord. They shall sit with him in his throne, and shall reign for ever and ever.

The circumstances which claim the particular attention of the reader during this period are,—the regular observance of divine ordinances in Canaan, as these had been instituted in the wilderness;—the preservation of Israel from this time forward, when all the males went up, three times in the year, to the place which God had chosen for the celebration of the great festivals which he had commanded them to observe:—their preservation, too, although they were so often subdued, and brought under the dominion of their enemies;—and the preservation of true religion, notwithstanding their frequent apostasies. Nor should we fail to observe the frequent appearance of Christ during this period, in the form of that nature which he took upon him in his incarnation. He appeared in this form to Moses when God spake to him face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend, and he beheld the similitude of the Lord.¹ In this form he appeared to the seventy elders;² to Joshua, when he was near the walls of Jericho;³ to Gideon;⁴ to Manoah.⁵ Christ thus appeared, time after time, in the form of that nature which he was afterwards to assume for our redemption, because he was now carrying on that mighty design, and preparing the way for its accomplishment.

It was in this period that the school of the prophets was first instituted. In Samuel there was begun a succession of prophets, that was maintained continually from that era till the spirit of prophecy ceased about the time of Malachi; and therefore Samuel is spoken of in the New Testament as the beginning of this succession of prophets. ⁶ 'And all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken have foretold of these days.' The young men that belonged to these schools were called the sons of the prophets. At first they were under the tuition of Samuel; afterwards of Elijah, Elisha, and others. They were often favoured with a degree of inspiration, while they continued under tuition in the schools of the prophets; and God commonly, when he called any one to the constant exercise of the prophetical office, or to any extraordinary service, took them out of these schools, though not always. For the prophet Amos informs us that he had not been educated in the schools of the prophets, and that he was not one of the sons of the prophets. The main design of this institution was to foreshow the great Redeemer, and the glorious redemption that he was to accomplish by his obedience unto death. 'To him gave all the prophets witness,—those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.' There had before been occasional prophecies of Christ; but now as the time was drawing nearer when the Redeemer should come, it pleased God to appoint a certain

order of men, in constant succession, whose main business it should be to foreshow Christ and his redeeming work, and as his forerunners to prepare the way for his coming.

In the latter part of this period the scripture history leads us to consider God's providence towards that particular person whence Christ was to proceed, namely, David. It pleased God to select that person for whom Christ was to come, from all the thousands of Israel, and to put a most honourable mark of distinction upon him, by anointing him to be king over his people. But we are required to look up to him with veneration, as a preacher of righteousness, a prophet of the Lord, and one of the inspired penmen of the holy scriptures. His poetical compositions evince the sublimity of his genius: but they are to be regarded as superior to the productions of mere human abilities; for they are the word of God: it was the Holy Ghost who spoke by the mouth of David. These divine hymns were intended, not for instruction only, but as models of prayer and praise for the church in all ages, to assist us in our private and public devotions. They describe more clearly than any other portion of the Old Testament, him who was to come,—the consolation of Israel.⁷ They teach us with great fulness, the high dignity and mysterious person of Christ, who is David's son, and David's Lord; what office he sustains for his people, as their prophet, priest, and king; their shepherd, leader, and intercessor; that we are to view him in the different stages of his humiliation, assuming our nature, making his abode on earth in circumstances of poverty, contempt, and persecution, and at last closing a suffering life by a painful and ignominious death. The very manner in which he was to be betrayed, mocked, scourged, and crucified, is pointed out with astonishing exactness. We hear the derision of his enemies, and his own heavy complaints in his sufferings. We are led with him to the grave; but we also observe him rising from the dead, before he saw corruption. We are also told that he ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, that he has received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, also, that God the Lord might dwell among them.

It is certain that David was an eminent type of Christ; and that he frequently spake as concerning himself, what was applicable only to the great Antitype. In the Old Testament the Messiah is pointed out by the name of David, not merely because it was designed that in his human nature he should descend from the same family, but because there should be a designed resemblance in him to that illustrious progenitor. The blessings of redemption are on this account, called 'the sure mercies of David.' For the same reason also, long after that prince was laid in the dust, it was declared that the nation should be recovered from their captivity, and serve the Lord their God, and David their king.⁷ 'And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David.' In the New Testament Christ is called 'the root and offspring of David.'

The covenant of grace was solemnly renewed with David, that covenant which was all his salvation, and all his desire. This was the fifth establishment of the covenant of grace after the fall; the first was with Adam, the second was with Noah, the third was with the patriarchs,

¹ Num. xii. 8. ² Exod. xxiv. 9—11. ³ Josh. v. 13, 14.

⁴ Judges iv. 11. ⁵ Judges xiii. 17—21. ⁶ Acts iii. 24.

⁷ Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.

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Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the fourth was in the wilderness by Moses, and now the fifth is made with David. It is to this that a large portion of the eighty-ninth psalm refers.

Finally, the reader should take notice that, towards the close of the period on the narrative of which he is now entering, God chose a particular city out of all the tribes of Israel, to place his name there. There is mention made in the law of Moses, of the children of Israel's bringing their oblations to the place which God should choose,¹ but God had never proceeded to do it till now. The city of Jerusalem having been entirely taken from the Jebusites by David, the ark was brought thither, and the very spot was pointed out by divine direction on which the temple of God, should be built. This city, as the city of God, the holy place of his rest for ever became a type of the church of Christ, the habitation of God. This was the city in which the scattered followers of Christ were gathered together after his resurrection; in which the apostles and primitive Christians were favoured with that remarkable outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and in which was formed the first Christian church, which is the mother of all other churches throughout the world. ² 'Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. The Lord hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.'

SECT. I.

CHAP. I.—From their Entrance to the Death of Joshua.

THE HISTORY.

UPON the death of Moses, Joshua, who had a long while been his prime minister, by the command of God, undertook the conduct of the children of Israel: and as it was a very momentous charge, he was not a little anxious how he should be enabled to execute it. He saw himself indeed at the head of six hundred thousand fighting men; but then the nations which he was to subdue, were a warlike and gigantic people, that had already taken the alarm, and therefore made early preparations for a defence; had fortified their cities, and confederated their forces against him. And while he was musing on these things, to give him encouragement in his undertaking, ^a God was pleased to assure him, that he would not fail to

protect and assist him in it, in the same manner as he had done his predecessor Moses, and provided he took care to obey his laws, as Moses had done, make the whole land of Canaan a cheap and easy conquest to him: and therefore without perplexing his mind any further, he ordered him immediately to set about the work.

^b The city of Jericho was just opposite to the place where he was to ^c pass the river Jordan; and as it was the first that he intended to attack, he thought it advis-

speech, in the same manner that men speak. But in the place before us, whether it were an angel, or God himself, he seems to have spoken to Joshua out of the sanctuary, from whence he had spoken to him a little before Moses' death, and gave him encouragement to perform strenuously what he is now putting upon him.—Deut. xxxi. 14, 23.

^b Jericho was a city of Canaan, which afterwards fell to the lot of the tribe of Benjamin, about seven leagues distant from Jerusalem, and two from Jordan. Moses calls it likewise 'the city of palm trees,' Deut. xxiv. 3, because there were great numbers of them in the plains of Jericho; and not only of palm trees, but as Josephus tells us, (*Antiquities*, b. 4. c. 5.) balsam trees likewise, which produced the precious liquor in such high esteem among the ancients. The plain of Jericho was watered with a rivulet, which was formerly salt and bitter, but was afterwards sweetened by the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 21, 22; whereupon the adjacent country, which was watered by it, became not only one of the most agreeable, but most fertile spots in all that country. As to the city itself, after it was destroyed by Joshua, it was, in the days of Ahab king of Israel, rebuilt by Hiel the Bethelite, 1 Kings xvi. 34; and in the times of the last kings of Judea, yielded to none, except Jerusalem. For it was adorned with a royal palace, wherein Herod the Great died; with an hippodromus, or place where the Jewish nobility learned to ride the great horse, and other arts of chivalry, with an amphitheatre and other magnificent buildings; but during the siege of Jerusalem, the treachery of its inhabitants provoked the Romans to destroy it. After the siege was over there was another city built, but not upon the same place where the two former stood; for the ruins of them both are seen to this day. Of what account and bigness it was, we have no certain information; but some later travellers inform us, that at present it is no more than a poor, nasty village of the Arabs.—*Wells' Geography of the Old and New Testament*, and *Maunderell's Journey from Aleppo*.

This village, called Rieha, or Rihha, was long supposed to be situated on the site of ancient Jericho. But Mr Buckingham has shown that the real site of the ancient city was about four miles higher up the valley, where he traced to a considerable extent the boundary of its walls, and found portions of ruined buildings, shafts of columns, &c., scattered about over the widely extended heaps of this ruined city, which seemed to cover a surface of a square mile. The once celebrated "City of Palms" cannot now boast of a single tree of any kind, either palm or balsam; and there is scarcely any verdure or bushes to be seen about the site of this deserted city. But the desolation with which its ruins are surrounded, Mr Buckingham observes, is rather to be attributed to the cessation of the usual agricultural labours on the soil, and the want of a distribution of water over it by the aqueducts, the remains of which evince that they were chiefly constructed for that purpose, than to any change in the climate or soil.—ED.

^c Jordan is supposed to derive its name from the Hebrew word *Jor*, which signifies a *spring*, and Dan, which is a small town, and not far from the fountain-head of this river. It is certainly a river of very great note in holy writ, and of it the Jewish historian gives us the following account: "The head of this river has been thought to be Panion; but, in truth, it passes hither under ground, and the source of it is Phiala, an hundred and twenty furlongs from Cesarea Philippi, a little on the right hand, and not much out of the way to Trachonis. From the cave of Panion it crosses the bogs and fens of the lake Semechonitis, and after a course of an hundred and twenty furlongs further, passes under the city of Julias, or Bethsaida, and so over the lake Gennesareth, or Tiberias, and then running along through a wilderness or desert, it empties itself into the lake Asphaltites, or the Dead Sea." Now since the cave Panion lies at the foot of Mount Lebanon, and the lake Asphaltites reaches

¹ Deut. xii. 5—7.

² Is. ii. 1—3; Ps. cx. 2; cxxii. 13, 14.

^a It is the opinion of most interpreters, that whenever God is said to speak to Moses, to Joshua, or any other pious man in the Old Testament, he does not do it by himself, but by an angel only. This perhaps might be his most common way of communicating himself; but there want not several instances in Scripture, where God himself, or, as others will have it, the eternal Logos, converses with his servants. And this he may do, either by a mental locution, wherein he objects to their minds the express idea of what such a number of words would convey; or by a corporal locution, when he assumes an apparent body, and

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able to send two spies thither, to take a view of the situation and strength, and avenues of the place. As soon as the spies were gone, he bade the officers go through the camp, and give the people notice, that within three days they were to pass the Jordan, in order to take pos-

session of the promised land, and were therefore ^a to provide themselves with victuals for their march. ^b The spies who were sent upon this hazardous expedition, got safe into the city, and took up their lodgings in a public house that was kept by a widow woman, whose name was Rahab. But they had not been long there, before intelligence was brought to the king, so that he ordered the gates to be shut, and search to be made for the men: but their hostess, having had some notice of it, hid them under some hempen stocks, which lay drying upon the roof of her house, and when the king's officers came, she told them, "that there had indeed been two strangers there, who had made a short stay at her house, but that, a little before sunset, they went away, but might easily be overtaken, because they had not been long gone:" whereupon they sent out messengers after them, as far as the fords of Jordan; but in vain. Having thus eluded the king's officers, Rahab goes up to the spies, and tells them, "That she was very confident their God, who was the only true God, both in heaven and earth, had delivered that country into their hands; that the actions which he had done for them, in making all opposition fall before them, had struck a panic fear into all its inhabitants; and that therefore, as she was confident that this would be the event, and had, in this

to the very extremity of the south of Judea, the river Jordan must extend its course quite from the northern to the southern boundary of the holy land. [Burckhardt, however, who visited its source, does not notice this distribution; but says, that it rises an hour and a quarter, or about four miles, north-east from Banias, or Cæsarea Philippi, in the plain, near a hill called Tel-el-Kadi. There are, he says, two springs, near each other, one smaller than the other, whose waters unite immediately below. Both sources are on level ground, amongst rocks, of what Burckhardt calls *tufwacken*. The larger source immediately forms a river twelve or fifteen yards across, which rushes rapidly over a stony bed into the lower plain. The few houses at present inhabited near this spot, are called Enkeil. It is soon after joined by the river of Banais, which rises on the north-east of the city. Over the source of this river is a perpendicular rock, in which several niches have been cut to receive statues; the largest of which is above a spacious cavern, beneath which the river rises. This niche, the editor of Burckhardt sensibly conjectures, contained a statue of Pan; whence the name of Paneas given to the city, and of Πανισιον to the cavern. This explains the error of Josephus; who considered this to be, not the source of a distinct river, but the second head of Jordan, after emerging from its subterraneous channel.] But the largeness of this river is far from being equal to its extent. It may be said indeed to have two banks, whereof the first and uttermost is that to which the river does, or at least anciently did, overflow at some seasons of the year; but at present, (whether the rapidity of the current has worn its channel deeper, or its waters are directed some other way) so it is, that it seems to have forgot its ancient greatness: for "we," says Mr Maundrell, "could discern no sign or probability of such overflowing, though we were there on the 30th of March, which is the proper time for its inundations. Nay, so far was the river from overflowing, that it ran at least two yards below the brink of its channel. After you have descended the outermost bank, (continued he,) you go about a furlong upon the level strand, before you come to the immediate bank of the river, which is so beset with bushes and trees, such as tamarisks, willows, oleanders, &c., that you can see no water, until you have made your way through them. In this cover of the banks, lions, and other wild creatures are said to hide themselves in summer, but upon the inundation of the river, they are forced to dislodge." To which the prophet seems to allude in these words, 'he shall come like a lion from the swelling of Jordan,' (Jer. xlix. 19).—*Wells and Maundrell*.

The course of the Jordan is about one hundred miles; its breadth and depth are various. Dr Shaw computed it to be about thirty yards broad, and three yards or nine feet in depth; and states that it discharges daily into the Dead Sea about 6,090,000 tons of water. Viscount Chateaubriand, who travelled nearly a century after him, found the Jordan to be six or seven feet deep close to the shore, and about fifty paces in breadth. The late count Volney asserts it to be scarcely sixty paces wide at its embouchure. Messrs Bankes and Buckingham, who crossed it in January, 1816, pretty nearly at the same ford over which the Israelites passed on their first entering the promised land, found the stream extremely rapid; and as it flowed at that part over a bed of pebbles, its otherwise turbid waters were tolerably clear, as well as pure and sweet to the taste. The passage of this deep and rapid river by the Israelites, at the most unfavourable season, when augmented by the dissolution of the winter snows, was more manifestly miraculous, if possible, than that of the Red Sea; because here was no natural agency whatever employed; no mighty winds to sweep a passage as in the former case; no reflux in the tide on which minute philosophers might fasten to depreciate the miracle. It seems, therefore, to have been providentially designed, to silence cavils respecting the former: it was done at noonday, in the presence of the neighbouring inhabitants; and it struck terror into the kings of the Amorites and Canaanites westward of the river, 'whose hearts melted, neither was there any spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.' (Josh. v. 1.) The place where the Israelites thus miraculously passed this river, is supposed to be the 'fords of Jordan' mentioned in Judg. iii. 28. —*Ed.*

session of the promised land, and were therefore ^a to provide themselves with victuals for their march. ^b The spies who were sent upon this hazardous expedition, got safe into the city, and took up their lodgings in a public house that was kept by a widow woman, whose name was Rahab. But they had not been long there, before intelligence was brought to the king, so that he ordered the gates to be shut, and search to be made for the men: but their hostess, having had some notice of it, hid them under some hempen stocks, which lay drying upon the roof of her house, and when the king's officers came, she told them, "that there had indeed been two strangers there, who had made a short stay at her house, but that, a little before sunset, they went away, but might easily be overtaken, because they had not been long gone:" whereupon they sent out messengers after them, as far as the fords of Jordan; but in vain. Having thus eluded the king's officers, Rahab goes up to the spies, and tells them, "That she was very confident their God, who was the only true God, both in heaven and earth, had delivered that country into their hands; that the actions which he had done for them, in making all opposition fall before them, had struck a panic fear into all its inhabitants; and that therefore, as she was confident that this would be the event, and had, in this

^a The Israelites' usual food, while they sojourned in the wilderness, was manna: but as they approached the promised land, where they might have provision in the ordinary way, that miraculous bread did perhaps gradually decrease; and in the space of a few days after this, was totally withdrawn. They were now in the countries of Sihon and Og, which they had lately conquered, and the victuals which they were commanded to provide themselves with, were such as their new conquest afforded: for being, after three days, (Josh. iii. 1.) to remove very early in the morning, they might not perhaps have had time to gather a sufficient quantity of manna, and to bake it, before they were obliged to march.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b The eastern writers tell us, that these spies, whom they make to be Caleb and Phineas, were valiant and religious men, and in the prime of their youth; that to pass unobserved, they changed their habits, as if they had come from a distant country; and if any one asked them any questions, their reply was to this effect: "We are people from the east, and our companions, have heard of this powerful people, who were forty years in the wilderness, without either guide or provision: and it was reported to us, that they had a God whom they called 'the King of heaven and earth,' and who, as they say, hath given them both your and our country. Our principals have therefore sent us to find out the truth hereof, and to report it to them. We have likewise heard of their captain, whom they call Joshua the son of Nun, who put the Amalekites to flight, who destroyed Sihon and Og, the kings of Midian and Moab. We therefore be to us, and you, and all that flee to us for shelter! They are a people who pity none, leave none alive, drive all out of their country, and make peace with none. We are all accounted by them infidels, profane, proud, and rebellious. Whoever of us or you, therefore, that intend to take care of themselves, let them take their families and be gone, lest they repent of their stay, when it is too late." By this means they imposed upon the people; and, as Josephus informs us, went whither they would, and saw whatever they had a mind to, without any stop or question. They took a view of the walls, the gates, the ramparts, and passed the whole day for men of curiosity only, without any design. So that if any credit may be given to this account, it was but just that they who thus imposed upon the Canaanites should, in the same manner, be imposed upon by the Gibeonites.—*A Samaritan Chronicle* written in Arabic, p. 65, and *Josephus' Antiquities*, b. 5. c. 1.

^c The roofs of houses were very flat, and having probably battlements round them to secure people from falling off, as the manner of building was afterwards among the Jews, Deut. xxii. 8, were made use of for places to walk, or at any time to lay any kind of goods upon.

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instance, shown them uncommon kindness, her only request was, that when they came against the city, they would, in return, spare hers and her family's lives; for which she desired of them some assurance." An offer so generous and so unexpected, joined with so liberal a confession, could not but engage the two spies to a compliance with what she requested; and therefore they promised, and solemnly swore to her, that whenever they became masters of the city, not only she, and her family, but every one else that was found in her house, should be exempted from the common ruin.

The gates were so closely shut and guarded, that there was no possibility for making their escape that way; but Rahab's house being happily situated upon the city wall, as soon as it was conveniently dark, she first charged them to make to the neighbouring mountains, where they might keep themselves concealed, until the messengers were returned, and then let them down by a silken cord from one of her windows, which faced the country. But before they parted, they agreed that this same cord, hung out at her window, should be the token between them; and therefore they desired, that whoever she was minded to save, might, when their army approached the city, be kept within doors. The spies, having thus luckily escaped, took Rahab's advice, and concealed themselves in the mountains, until those who were sent out to pursue them were returned to the city, and then they made the best of their way to the camp; where they informed Joshua of their whole adventure, and withal gave him to understand, that the general consternation which they found the people in, was to them a sure omen that God Almighty intended to crown their arms with success.

Pleased with this news, Joshua gave orders for the army to decamp; but before he did that, he reminded the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, of the promise they had made to Moses to assist their brethren in the conquest of Canaan; ^a which they readily consented to do, and not only in that, but in every thing else he commanded them to do, promised to obey him with the same cheerfulness that they had done Moses: so that forty thousand of them decamped with him, and fell down to the banks of the Jordan.

It was now in the time of the barley-harvest, when, by reason of hasty rain, and the melting of the snow upon Mount Lebanon, the river is generally full of water, and sometimes overflows its banks: and as soon as the army was come within a small distance of the place where it was intended they should cross, Joshua sent and communicated to every tribe the order that was to be observed in this solemn march. The priests, bearing the ark, were to begin the procession; each tribe, in the order in

which they used to march, were to follow. When the priests were got into the middle of the channel, there they were to stand still, till the whole multitude was got safe to the other shore; and that this wonderful passage might be more regarded, they were all enjoined to sanctify themselves, by washing their clothes, avoiding all impurities, and abstaining from matrimonial intercourse the night before.

Before they crossed the river, Joshua, by God's direction, appointed twelve men, out of every tribe one, to choose twelve stones, according to the number of their tribes, in the midst of the channel, where the priests, with the ark, were ordered to stand, and ^b there to set them up, that they might be seen from each side of the river, when the waters were abated, as a monument of this great miracle; and to bring twelve more ashore with them for the like purpose.

With these orders and instructions, the army set forward. The priests with the ark led the van; and as soon as they touched the river with their feet, the stream divided. The waters above went back, and rose up on heaps as far as the city ^c Adam; whilst those that were below, continuing their course towards the Ded Sea, opened a passage of above sixteen or eighteen miles for the Israelites to cross over, and all the time that they were thus crossing, the priests with the ark stood in the middle of the channel, till every thing was done that Joshua commanded; and then, upon their coming out of it, the river returned to its wonted course.

By this miraculous passage, Joshua having gained the plains of Jericho, encamped in a ^d place which was afterwards called Gilgal; and while the whole country lay under a great terror and consternation, God commanded ^e the

^b It has been a custom in all nations to erect monuments of stone, in order to preserve the memory of covenants, victories, and other great transactions; and though there was no inscription upon these stones, yet the number of them, and the place where they lay, which was not at all stony, was sufficient to signify some memorable thing, which posterity would not fail to hand down from one generation to another.—*Patrick's Commentary on Joshua* iv. 7.

^c Adam, or Adom, is a place situate on the banks of the river Jordan, towards the south of the sea of Cinnereth, or the sea of Galilee.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*.

^d Gilgal, the place where the Israelites encamped for some time after their passage over the river Jordan, was so called, because here the rite of circumcision, which had long been disused, was renewed; whereupon 'the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt (that is, uncircumcision) from off you; wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal (that is, rolling) unto this day,' Josh. v. 9. From this expression the place received its name, and if we look into its situation, we shall find, that as the Israelites passed over 'Jordan right against Jericho,' Josh. iii. 16, and encamped in Gilgal, in the eastern border of Jericho, it is plain, that Gilgal must be situated between Jordan and Jericho; and therefore, since Josephus tells us, that Jericho was sixty furlongs distant from Jordan, and the camp of Gilgal was fifty furlongs from the same river; it hence follows, that Gilgal was ten furlongs (that is, about a mile and a quarter) from Jordan eastward. But as some learned men have observed, that five of the furlongs used by Josephus make up an Italian mile, so the distance between Gilgal and Jericho will be just two miles; which exactly agrees with the testimony of St Jerome, who makes it two miles distant from Jericho, and a place held in great veneration by the inhabitants of the country in his days.—*Wells' Geography*, vol. 2, c. 4.

^e The command which God gives Joshua, concerning the rite of circumcision, is this,—"Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise the children of Israel the second time," Josh. v. 2. And after

^a The two tribes and an half had the countries which had been lately conquered, and were now given to them in possession, to preserve against the attempts of the nations from whom they had taken them; and can hardly be supposed to go, one and all, along with their brethren, to the conquest of the countries which lay on the other side of the river Jordan. In the last muster of the army, they consisted of above an hundred thousand able soldiers; and we can hardly suppose that at this time their number was decreased. The forty thousand that went over Jordan, were but a part of them, and the rest were left behind to guard their new conquests against the vanquished nations, that had abundant reason to become their enemies.—*Saurin*, vol. 3, Dissertation 1.

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rite of circumcision, which for the space of almost forty years had been intermitted, to be renewed, that the people might be qualified to partake of the ensuing passover. This was the third time of their celebrating that festival: the first was at their departure out of Egypt; the second at the erection of their tabernacle, at the foot of Mount Sinai; and now that they were arrived in a country wherein there was a sufficient provision of corn for unleavened bread, God insisted upon the observance of his ordinances: he was minded, indeed, that all things now should go on in their regular way; and therefore, for the future, he left them to the provision which this land of plenty afforded them, and ceased to supply them any longer with manna.

Gilgal was much about two miles from Jericho, and therefore Joshua might possibly go out alone to reconnoitre the city, and to think of the properest way of besieging it; when, all on a sudden, there ^a appeared to

the rite was performed, God said, 'This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you,' ver. 9. Both of which passages have given no small trouble to commentators. The sharp knives are allowed to be, what our marginal notes call them, knives of flint, which stones could not but be plentiful in the mountains of Arabia, and when made very sharp, were the knives commonly made use of in the eastern countries: but St Jerome himself, as great an Hebraist as he was, could not find out what was this circumcision, which was to pass upon the Israelites a second time. Some of the Jews from these words of Jeremiah, 'I will punish the circumcised that has a foreskin,' c. ix. 25. have undertaken to prove, that it was possible to bring the foreskin again by art, which the Israelites had done, during their abode in the wilderness, and for this reason were ordered to be circumcised afresh; and those Christians who have embraced this notion, pretend to support it by the words of St Paul, 'If any man is called being circumcised *ἐν ἰσχυρῶς*, let him not become uncircumcised.' But whether the recovery of a prepuce be a thing probable or not, it is certain, that all the difficulty of the words arises from the misunderstanding the idiom of the original, and may easily be removed, if they were translated, or paraphrased thus,—Let the ceremony of circumcision, which has been so long discontinued, be renewed, as it was heretofore. While the Israelites lived in Egypt, we do not read of any neglect of this rite of circumcision among them; but while they abode in the wilderness, there are several reasons that might oblige them to omit it, until they arrived in the promised land, when they were to renew the ordinance of the passover, and, previous to that, were all to be circumcised; because no uncircumcised person, nor any one who had a son or a man-servant in his house uncircumcised, was capable of being admitted to it, (Exod. xii. 43.) 2d. 'The rolling away the reproach of Egypt,' is supposed by some to relate to the reproaches which the Egyptians used to cast upon the Israelites, namely, that the Egyptians, seeing the Israelites wander so long in the wilderness, reproached and flouted them, as if they were brought to be destroyed there, and not conducted into the promised land, from which reproaches God now delivered them, when, by enjoining circumcision, he gave them assurance, that they should shortly enjoy the country which no uncircumcised person might inherit. Our learned Spencer thinks the reproach of Egypt to be the slavery to which they had long been there subject, but were now fully declared a free people, by receiving a mark of the seed of Abraham, and being made heirs of the promised land. But the most common opinion is, that by the 'reproach of Egypt' is meant nothing else but uncircumcision, with which the Israelites always upbraided other people, and particularly the Egyptians, with whom they had lived so long, and were best acquainted; and admitting this to be the true (as it is the most unconstrained) sense, this passage is a plain proof, that the Israelites could not learn the rite of circumcision from the Egyptians, as some pretend, but that the Egyptians, contrariwise, must have had it from them.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7; *Spencer De Leg. Heb.* b. 1. c. 4; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. b. 12.

^a Who this person was that appeared to Joshua, is not well

him a person clothed in armour, and standing at some distance, with a drawn sword in his hand. Undaunted at this unusual sight, Joshua advances to him, and having demanded of what party he was, the vision replied, that he was for the host of Israel, whose captain and guardian he was; and as Joshua, in humble adoration, was fallen prostrate before him, he ordered him, in the manner he had done Moses at the burning bush, to loose his sandals from off his feet, and then proceeded to instruct him in what form he would have the siege carried on, that the Canaanites might perceive that it was something more than the arm of flesh that fought against them.

The form of the siege was this:—All the army was to march round the city, with seven priests before the ark, having in their hands trumpets made of rams' horns, six days successively. On the seventh, after the army had gone round the city seven times, upon a signal given, the priests were to blow a long blast with their trumpets, and the people on a sudden set up a loud shout; at which instant the walls of the city should fall so flat to the ground, that they might directly walk into it without any let or obstruction. These orders were put in execution; and accordingly, on the seventh day, the walls fell, and the Israelites entered. They put every one, men, women, and children, nay the very beasts to the sword, and spared no living creature, but Rahab only, and such relations as she had taken under the protection of her roof, according to the stipulation which had been made with her. For Joshua had given the two spies a strict charge beforehand, that when the town was going to be sacked, they should repair to her house, and convey every thing safe out that belonged to her; which accordingly they did, and then the whole army fell on, and set fire to the city, and destroyed every thing in it, except the silver and gold, and such vessels of brass and iron as were to be put into the treasury of the house of the Lord, as they had done once before ¹ in a case of the like nature: and that it might never be rebuilt again, Joshua ^b denounced a prophetic imprecation on the man

¹ Num. xxxi. 22, 23.

agreed among commentators. Some are of opinion that it was an angel, who, because the Hebrew calls him *Gebir*, is supposed to be Gabriel; but there are several reasons, in this very account of his apparition, which denote him to be a divine, and not a created being. For, in the first place, besides his assuming the title of 'the captain of the host of the Lord,' an image under which God himself is frequently represented in Scripture, Joshua's calling him 'Jehovah,' or the 'Lord,' a name which neither Joshua should have given, nor he accepted of, had he been no more than an angel; his falling down and worshipping him, which he durst not have done, since God alone is to be adored, nor would the other have permitted, but rather have reproved him, as we find one of them did St John, (Rev. xxii. 10.) are the surest evidence of the divinity of his person. For, when instead of reproving him for doing him too much honour, we find him commanding him to do more, by requiring him to loose 'his shoes from off his feet,' insisting upon the highest acknowledgment of a divine presence that was used among the eastern nations, we cannot but think ourselves obliged (with a learned rabbin) freely to confess, "That this angel who suffered himself to be worshipped, and by whose presence the place where he appeared was sanctified, so that Joshua was commanded to 'put off his shoes,' no doubt was the very same whom all the angels of heaven do worship."—*Joh. a Cuch.* upon the *Gemara* of the *Sanhedrim*, vol. 3. Dissertation 2.

^b The words of Joshua's execration are these: 'Cursed be the man before the Lord, that raiseth up, and buildeth this city

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(namely, that it should occasion the utter ruin of his family) that should attempt it.

^a Ai was a little city, about twelve miles distant from Jericho; and as Joshua knew that it was neither populous nor well defended, he detached a small body, of 3000 men only, to go and attack it. But, contrary to their expectation, the inhabitants of the place sallied out upon them, and having slain some few, put the rest to flight, and pursued them as far as their own camp. This defeat, how small soever, struck such a damp upon the people's courage, that ^b Joshua was forced to have recourse to God, who immediately answered him, (by

Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.' (Josh. vi. 26.) "This anathema," says Maimonides, "was pronounced, that the miracle of the subversion of Jericho might be kept in perpetual memory; for whoever saw the walls sunk deep into the earth," as he understands it, "would clearly discern, that this was not the form of a building destroyed by men, but miraculously thrown down by God." Hiel, however, in the reign of Ahab, either not remembering, or not believing this denunciation, was so taken with the beauty of its situation, that he rebuilt Jericho, and, as the sacred history informs us, "laid the foundation thereof in Abiram, his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua, the son of Nun." (1 Kings xvi. 34.) However, after that Hiel had ventured to rebuild it, no scruple was made of inhabiting it; for it afterwards became famous upon many accounts. Here the prophet sweetened the waters of the spring that supplied it and the neighbouring countries. Here Herod built a sumptuous palace. It was the dwelling-place of Zachæus; and was honoured with the presence of Christ, who vouchsafed likewise to work some miracles here.—*Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^a We have this place mentioned in the history of Abraham, who both before and after his going into Egypt, pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai, or Hai, as it was then called; and from both Gen. xii. 8. and Josh. vii. 2. it appears that this city lay to the east of Bethel, about three leagues from Jericho, and one from Bethel, as Masias informs us; and the reason why Joshua sent so small a detachment against it was, because the place in itself was neither strong nor large. For when it was taken, the number of the slain, both in it and Bethel, which, as some think, was confederate with it, were "but twelve thousand, both of men and women." (Josh. viii. 25.) The providence of God, however, was very visible, in sending so small a party against Ai: for if the flight of three thousand men put the Israelites into such a consternation, as we read Josh. vii. 5, 6., what a condition would they have been in if all the people had been discomfited, as doubtless it would have happened, while the guilt of Achan's sacrilege remained unpunished.—*Wells' Geography*, vol. 2. c. 4.

^b The spirits of the army, as Josephus tells us, were so sunk upon this disorder, and cast down into such a desperation of better things to come, that after they had spent the whole day in fasting, weeping, and mourning, Joshua addressed himself, with a more than ordinary importunity, to Almighty God, in words to this effect: "It is not any temerity, O Lord, or ambition of our own, that has brought us hither to make war upon this people, but a pure deference and respect to the persuasion of thy servant Moses, that has incited us to this undertaking, and not without a warrant of many signs and miracles, to convince us, that he had reason and authority on his side, when he told us, that thou thyself hadst promised us the possession of this country, and to give us victory over all our enemies. But what a change is here, all on a sudden, in the disappointment of our hopes, and in the loss of our friends! As if either Moses' prediction had not been of divine inspiration, or otherwise thy promises and purposes variable. If this be the beginning of a war, we cannot but dread the further progress of it, for fear that this miscarriage, upon the first experiment, should prove only the earnest of greater evils to come. But, Lord, thou alone, that art able to give us relief, help us, and save us. Vouchsafe unto us comfort and victory; and be graciously pleased to preserve us from the snare of despairing for the future." *Jewish Antiquities*, b. 5. c. 1.

Urim as is supposed,) that his commands had been sacrilegiously infringed; and therefore ordered him to have the offender punished with death, and directed him to a method how to discover who he was.

Before the taking of Jericho, ¹ Joshua had cautioned the people not to spare any thing that was in it, but to burn and destroy all that came in their way, except silver and gold, and brass, and iron, which were to be consecrated to the Lord: but notwithstanding his strict charge against reserving any thing that was either devoted to this general destruction, or consecrated to the Lord, a man of the tribe of Judah, whose name was Achan, took some of the rich plunder and concealed it in his tent. To find out the person therefore, Joshua, early next morning, called all the tribes together before the tabernacle, where, ^d by casting the lot, first upon the tribes, and so proceeding from tribe to family, from family to household, and from household to particular persons, the criminal was at last found to be Achan; who upon Joshua's admonition, confessed the fact, namely, that he had secreted ^d a royal robe, two hundred shekels of silver, and a large wedge of gold; and when upon search, the things were produced in the presence of all the people, they took him, and all his family, his cattle, his tent, and all his moveables, and carrying them to a neighbouring valley, which, from that time, ^e in allu-

¹ Josh. vi. 18, 19.

^c Some Jewish doctors are of opinion, that in the discovery of the guilty person, there was no use made of lots at all, but that all Israel being ordered to pass by the high priest, who, on this occasion had his peitoral on, in which were the twelve stones, with the names of the twelve tribes engraven on them, when the tribe to which the guilty person belonged, was called, the stone in which was the name of that tribe, changed colour, and turned black; and so it did when the family, the household, and the person was called. But this is a mere fiction. There is much more probability in the opinion of those who suppose that, at first, twelve lots or tickets were put into one urn, on each of which was written the name of one of these twelve tribes: that when one of the twelve tribes was found guilty, then were there as many lots put in as there were families in that tribe; after that, as many as there were householders in that family; and at last, as many as there were heads in that household, until the criminal was detected. But others will have it, that this was done by the high priest alone, who, by a divine inspiration, at that time, was enabled, without any more to do, to declare who the culpable person was.—*Saurin's Dissertations*, vol. 3. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries* on Joshua vii.

^d In the original, this robe is called a garment of Shinar, that is, of Babylon; and the general opinion is, that the richness and excellency of it consisted not so much in the stuff whereof it was made, as in the colour whereof it was dyed, which most suppose to have been scarlet, a colour in high esteem among the ancients, and for which the Babylonians were justly famous. Bochart, however, maintains, that the colour of this robe was various, and not all of one sort: that the scarlet colour the Babylonians first received from Tyre, but the party colour, whether so woven or wrought with the needle, was of their own invention, for which he produces many passages out of heathen authors. Such as:—"I would not prefer the gaudily coloured Babylonian robes, which are variegated with Egyptian needlework." (Mart. Ep. b. 8.) "The land of Memphis affords these gifts: the comb of Egypt is superior to the Babylonian needle." (Ibid. b. 14.) with many more citations out of several other writers. However this be, it is certain that the robe could not fail of being a very rich and splendid one, and therefore captivated either Achan's pride, or rather covetousness; since his purpose seems to have been, not so much to wear it himself, as to sell it for a large price.—*Bochart's Phaleg*, b. 1. c. 9.; *Saurin*, b. 3. Dissertation 3.

^e Though his name was primarily Achan, yet, ever after his execution he was called Achar, (so the Syriac version, Josephus,

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sion to that man's name, was called the valley of Achar, ^a there they stoned him, and those belonging to his family, as accomplices in his crimes. Whatever goods or utensils he had, these they consumed with fire, and so raised a great heap of stones over all, that thereby they might perpetuate the memory of the crime, and deter others from the like provocation.

After this execution of the divine justice, God ordered Joshua to attempt the conquest of Ai once more, and promised him success; which might best be obtained, as he told him, by laying an ambuscade somewhere behind the city, towards Bethel. ^b 30,000 men were therefore drawn out, and sent away by night upon this expedition, with instructions to enter the city as soon as the signal, which was to be a spear with a banner upon it, was given them: and early next morning, he himself marched with the remainder of his forces against the city. As soon as the king of Ai perceived him, he sallied hastily out of the town, with all his troops, and all his people, and fell upon the Israelites, who, at the first onset, fled as if they had been under great terror. But this was only a feint, to draw the enemy into the plain; and therefore as soon as Joshua saw, that, by stratagem, the city was pretty well emptied, he gave the signal to the ambuscade; which finding it now defenceless, immediately entered, and set it on fire.

By the ascent of the smoke, Joshua discerned that his men had got possession of the town; and therefore facing about, he began to charge the enemy very briskly; who, little expecting that the Israelites would rally, began now to think of retreating to the city; but when they saw it all in flames, and the party which had set it on fire issuing out, and just going to fall upon their rear, they were so dismayed and dispirited, that they had power neither to fight nor flee. So that all the army was cut to pieces; the city was burned, and made an heap of rubbish; every soul in it, man, woman, and child, were put to the sword; and the king, who was taken prisoner, was ordered to be hanged upon a gibbet till

sunset, when he was taken down, thrown in at a gate of the city, and a great heap of stones raised over him.

After this action was over, the cattle, and all the spoil of the city was, by God's appointment, given to the soldiers; and as Joshua was now not far distant from the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, this reminded him of the command which ¹ Moses had given about reading the law, with the blessings and curses thereunto annexed, from those two mountains; which he not only ordered to be done, but had an altar likewise erected, whereon not only sacrifices were offered, to give God the glory of all his victories, but ^c an abridgment of the law, or some remarkable part of it, was likewise engraven, at the same time that the whole of it was read in a large assembly of all the tribes.

Joshua's success against the two towns of Jericho and Ai, and the terrible slaughter he had made among their inhabitants, had ^d so alarmed the kings on that side the Jordan, that they confederated together, and entered into league for their mutual defence; but the Gibeonites, foreseeing the destruction that was hastening upon them, endeavoured by a stratagem to gain a peace with the Israelites, which they effected in this manner.—They chose a certain number of artful men, who ^e were

¹ Deut. xi. 29. and xxvii. 1—13.

^c It is a question (as we said before, p. 321, in the notes) among the learned, what it was that was written upon these stones. But besides other conjectures already enumerated, some think it not unlikely to have been a copy of the covenant, by which the children of Israel acknowledged that they held the land of Canaan of God, upon condition that they observed his laws, to which they and their posterity had obliged themselves; for this was the third time that the covenant between God and his people was renewed, and therefore the contents of that covenant, might be very proper at this time to be thus monumentally recorded.—Patrick on Deut. xxvii. 3. and Josh. viii. 32.

^d The Jews in the Talmud tell us likewise, that a farther cause of the Gibeonites' fear was, the inscription which they had met with upon Mount Ebal, where, among other parts of the law which Joshua, as they pretend, wrote upon stones, they found the orders which both he and Moses had received from God, utterly to extirpate all the inhabitants of the land of Canaan.—Saurin, b. 3. Dissertation, 4.

^e It is a question among the casuists, whether the Gibeonites could, with a good conscience, pretend that they were foreigners, and tell a lie to save their lives? And to this Puffendorf, (*Droit de la Nature*), b. 4. c. 2, thus replies; "The artifice of the Gibeonites," says he, "had nothing blameable in it, nor does it properly deserve the name of a lie: for what crime is there in any one's making use of an innocent fiction, in order to elude the fury of an enemy that would destroy all before them? Nor did the Israelites indeed properly receive any damage from this imposture; for what does any one lose in not shedding the blood of another, when he has it in his power to take from him all his substance, after having so weakened and disarmed him that he is no more able to rebel against him?" But the opinion of this great man seems to be a little erroneous in this case. Had the Israelites indeed been a pack of common murderers, who, without any commission from heaven, were carrying blood and desolation into countries where they had no right; or had the Gibeonites been ignorant that a miraculous providence conducted these conquerors, the fraud which they here put upon them might then be deemed innocent: for there is no law that obliges us under the pretence of sincerity, to submit to such incendiaries, and merciless usurpers, as are for setting fire to our cities, and putting us and our families to the edge of the sword. But the case of the Gibeonites was particular; and if in other things they went contrary to truth, in this they certainly adhered to it, when they told Joshua, 'We are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God, for we have heard of the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that

Athanasius, Basil, and others mentioned by Bochart, name him,) which signifies the troubler of Israel.—Patrick's Commentary on Joshua vii.

^a Since the law against sacrilege condemns transgressors to the flames, and God commanded the person here guilty to be burned accordingly, (Josh. vii. 18.) the Jews affirm that Achan was actually burned: and whereas it is said in the text that 'he was stoned,' they think that this was done not judiciously, but accidentally, by the people, who were so highly provoked, that they could not forbear casting stones at him as he was led to execution.—See Munst. on Joshua vii.

^b Some are of opinion, that this detachment of thirty thousand made up the whole force that was employed in this expedition against Ai: and that, out of these, 5000 were sent to lie in ambush, that, at a convenient time, they might set fire to the city: but this is so directly contrary to God's command, of Joshua's 'taking all the people of war with him,' which accordingly in chap. viii. 3, 11, we are told he did, that there is no foundation for it. And therefore it is reasonable to suppose, that the whole body designed for the ambuscade consisted of 30,000 men; and that the 5000 mentioned in the 12th verse, was a small party detached from these, in order to creep closer to the city, while the 25,000 kept themselves absconded behind the mountains, until a proper signal was given, both from the city, when this small party had taken it, and from the grand army, when they had repulsed the enemy, that then they might come out from their ambush, and intercept them as they were making their flight.—Patrick's Commentary on Joshua viii.

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instructed to feign themselves ambassadors come from a far distant country, in order to obtain a league with the people of Israel; and, to gain credit to this their pretence, they dressed themselves in old clothes, had old clouted shoes on their feet, carried dry musty bread in their bags, and the bottles wherein they kept their wine, were ^a all sadly tarnished and torn.^b In this plight

were beyond Jordan,' &c. (Josh. ix. 9, 10.) The idea which they had conceived of the God of Israel should have put them upon some other expedient than that of lying and deceit. They should have inquired, as far as the obscure dispensation they were under would have permitted them, into the cause of God's severity against them. They should have acknowledged, that it was their grievous sins which drew down this heavy judgment upon their nation; and after they had repented thereof in sack-cloth and ashes, they should have committed the rest to providence, never doubting, but that he who had changed the very course of nature to punish the guilty, would always find out some means or other to save the penitent; but this they did not do; and therefore they were culpable.—*Saurin*, vol. 3. Dissertation 4.

^a These bottles were not of glass, or clay, as those in use among us, but were made of leather, in which they formerly, and even now in some countries, kept their wine.

^b Chardin informs us that the Arabs, and all those that lead a wandering life, keep their water, milk, and other liquors, in leathern bottles. "They keep in them more fresh than otherwise they would do. These leathern bottles are made of goat-skins. When the animal is killed, they cut off its feet and its head, and they draw it in this manner out of the skin, without opening its belly. They afterwards sew up the places where the legs were cut off, and the tail, and when it is filled they tie it about the neck. These nations, and the country people of Persia, never go a journey without a small leathern bottle of water hanging by their side like a scrip. The great leathern bottles are made of the skin of an he goat, and the small ones that serve instead of a bottle of water on the road, are made of a kid's skin." These bottles are frequently rent when old and much used, and are capable of being repaired when bound up. This they do, Chardin says, "sometimes by setting in a piece; sometimes by gathering up the wounded place in manner of a purse; sometimes they put in a round flat piece of wood, and by that means stop the hole." Maundrell gives an account exactly similar to the above. Speaking of the Greek convent at Bellmount, near Tripoli, in Syria, he says, "the same person we saw officiating at the altar in his embroidered sacerdotal robe, brought us the next day, on his own back, a kid and a goat's skin of wine, as a present from the convent." (*Journey*, March 12.) These bottles are still used in Spain, and called *borrachas*. Mr Bruce gives a description of the *girba*, which seems to be a vessel of the same kind as those now mentioned, only of dimensions considerably larger. "A *girba*, is an ox's skin, squared, and the edges sewed together very artificially, by a double seam which does not let out water, much resembling that upon the best English cricket balls. An opening is left at the top of the *girba*, in the same manner as the bung-hole of a cask. Around this the skin is gathered to the size of a large handful, which when the *girba* is full of water, is tied round with whipcord. These *girbas* generally contain about sixty gallons each, and two of them are the load of a camel. They are then all besmeared on the outside with grease, as well to hinder the water from oozing through, as to prevent its being evaporated by the heat of the sun upon the *girba*, which in fact happened to us twice, so as to put us in imminent danger of perishing with thirst." (*Travels*, vol. iv. p. 334.) See *Harmer*, vol. 1. p. 132.

Homer mentions wine being brought in a goat's skin. (Il. iii. 247. *Odys.* vi. 78.

Now, to confirm the solemn pledges given,
And ratify the vows address'd to heaven,
The herald bore the lambs to feed the shrine,
And goatskins charged with consecrated wine.

Sotheby.

Her mother placed rich food the chest within.
And charged with wine the goat's capacious skin.

Sotheby.

Herodotus, ii. 121. refers to the same custom.—*Ed.*

they came to the camp at Gilgal; and being introduced to Joshua, they told him, 'That the fame of many miracles which God had wrought for them in the land of Egypt, and the wonderful successes wherewith he had blessed their arms against every power that had opposed them in their coming to that place, had reached even their remote and distant country; for which reason their states and rulers had sent them a long way, that by all means imaginable, they might obtain a peace with a people so renowned all the world over, and so favoured and honoured by God.' And then showing their clothes, shoes, and other tokens of the long journey they had taken, they solemnly assured them, that all these things were quite new when at first they set out from home, and thence left them to judge how distant and remote their country was.

This plausible story, confirmed, as they thought, by so many evidences, gained credit with the Israelites, so that they entered into an amicable alliance with them; and the other took care to have the treaty immediately ratified, both by Joshua and all the princes of the congregation. In three days' time the imposture was discovered; and they who pretended to come from a distant country were found to be near neighbours, and some of those very people whom Joshua was commissioned to destroy. So that when the thing came to be rumoured about, the people began to murmur against their princes for their indiscretion, and were for having the league cancelled; but as it was confirmed by a solemn oath, this they could not do without incurring the divine displeasure. And therefore, though they might not take away their lives, they might, nevertheless, hold them in a state of servitude, and, as long as they lived, make them useful drudges, hewers of wood, and drawers of water, and the like, which would both punish them much, and prove fully as beneficial to the commonwealth; and with this apology the people were appeased. Joshua, however, sent for some of the chief of the Gibeonites; and having expostulated the cheat with them, which they excused upon the score of saving their own lives, he told them what the determination of the princes was, namely, that they should remain in a state of perpetual bondage; which they received without any manner of murmuring, and humbly acquiesced in whatever was thought proper to be imposed upon them.

The confederate princes, hearing of this separate treaty which the Gibeonites had made with Israel, were resolved to be revenged of them for their desertion of the common cause; and accordingly, joining all their forces together, they came and invested their town. The Gibeonites in this distress, not daring to trust to their own strength, sent an express to Joshua for speedy help; who set out with an expedition, and, by quick marches, and the favour of the night, came upon the enemy sooner than they expected, and early next morning fell upon them, and routed them. In this expedition God had all along encouraged Joshua, and promised him success; and therefore, as the confederate forces were endeavouring to escape, and save themselves by flight, he poured such a storm of hail upon them as destroyed more than what perished by the sword.

^c Josh. x. 11. The common English translation of Joshua, reads, 'The Lord cast down great stones from heaven.' Some

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Joshua, on the other hand, was very desirous to make the most of this happy opportunity; and therefore, in full chase of victory, he addressed himself to God, that the sun and moon might stand still, and so prolong the day until he had completed his victory; which God was pleased to grant. So that this was the most memorable day that ever happened, wherein the 'Almighty listened to the voice of a man,' to change the course of nature, and stop the motion of those rolling orbs.

The confederate kings being thus put to flight, and either frightened at the storm of hail, or at the close pursuit of the enemy, made to a cave near ^a Makkedah, and there ran in to hide themselves. But Joshua, having intelligence of it, commanded the cave to be blocked up, and a guard to be set over it, and so continued his pursuit, that he might cut off as many as he possibly could before they reached to their fortified towns. In his return he ordered the cave to be opened, and the kings to be brought forth; and when execution was done upon them, he caused their bodies to be hanged upon several trees until the evening, when they were taken down, and cast into the cave, where they thought to have hid themselves; so that the place of their intended sanctuary became their sepulchre. After this signal victory, Joshua took all the southern parts of Canaan; which afterwards belonged to the tribes of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Dan, and Ephraim: and having thus ended his second campaign, he returned with his army to the camp at Gilgal.

Here he continued for some time without entering upon any fresh action, until several princes of the north of Canaan, under Jabin king of Hazor, confederated together, and raised a vast number of forces, which encamped not far from ^b the waters of Merom; and what

^c made the army more formidable, was the great number of horses and ^d armed chariots they had, whereas the Israelites were all on foot. This, however, did not in the least discourage Joshua, who, in pursuance of the instructions which God had given him, immediately took the field, marched directly towards the enemy, fell suddenly upon them, and put all, except ^e those that made

the lake Semechon, which lies between the head of the river Jordan and the lake of Gennesareth; since it is agreed on all hands, that the city Hazor, where Jabin reigned, was situate upon this lake. But others think, that the waters of Merom, or Merome, were somewhere about the brook Kishon; since there is a place of that name mentioned in the account of the battle against Sisera, Judg. v. 21. And it is more rational to think, that the confederate kings advanced as far as the brook Kishon, and to a pass which led into their country, to hinder Joshua from penetrating it, or even to attack him in the country where he himself lay encamped, than to imagine, that they waited for him in the midst of their own country, leaving all Galilee at his mercy, and the whole tract from the brook of Kishon, to the lake Semechon.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3. c. 5; *Reland's Palest.* b. 1. c. 40; and *Calmet on Josh.* xi. 5.

^c Their whole army, according to Josephus, was computed to amount to three hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and two thousand chariots; and to oppose against these the Israelites had no horse in their armies, because God had interdicted them, (Deut. xvii. 16.) lest a traffic into Egypt for that sort of cattle should be a snare to entangle them in idolatry; or lest, having a quantity thereof, they should put their confidence rather in them, than in the divine assistance; for which reason the prophet denounces a 'woe upon them that go down into Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are strong, but they look not to the Holy One of Israel, neither seek they the Lord.'—Is. xxxi. 1.

^d The chariots, which the ancient historians usually call *currus falciferi*, *covini falciferi*, *quadriga falcata*, (scythe-bearing chariots,) &c., are described after the following manner:—"The beam to which the horses were fastened, was armed with spikes with iron points, which projected forward: the yokes of the horses had two cutting falchions, of three cubits' length: the axle-trees had fixed to them two iron spits, with scythes at their extremities; the spokes of the wheels were armed with javelins, and the very feloes with scythes, which tore every thing they met with to pieces. The axle-tree was longer, and the wheels stronger than usual, that they might be the better able to bear a shock, and the chariot less liable to be overturned." The charioteer, who was covered all over with armour, sat in a kind of tower made of very solid wood, about breast high, and sometimes men well armed were put into the chariot, and fought from thence with darts and arrows. So that a dreadful slaughter these machines must at first have made, when they met with the enemy's troops; but in time, when men came to find out the way of declining them, they did not do so much execution, and were consequently disused.—See *Diodorus Siculus*, b. 17; *Quint. Curtius*, b. 4; *Xenophon. Cyropæd.* b. 6; *Lucretius de Rer. Nat.* b. 6.

writers are of opinion that this was hail, of which violent storms frequently occur in Arabia, but that this was larger, and more violent than usual; others maintain that Joshua is to be understood literally of a shower of stones; such a circumstance, so far from being impossible, has several times occurred. The Romans, who looked upon showers of stones as very disastrous, have noticed many instances of them. Under the reign of Tullus Hostilius, when it was known to the people of Rome, that a shower of stones had fallen on the mountain of Alba, at first it seemed incredible. They sent out proper persons to inquire into this prodigy, and it was found that stones had fallen after the same manner as a storm of hail driven by the wind. (*Tit. Liv.* b. 1. *decad.* 1. p. 12.; *Idem*, b. xxv. xxx. xxxiv. xxxv. *et alibi passim*.) Some time after the battle of Cannæ, there was seen upon the same mountain of Alba, a shower of stones, which continued for two days together. In 1538, near a village in Italy, called Tripergola, after some shocks of an earthquake, there was seen a shower of stones and dust, which darkened the air for two days, after which they observed that a mountain had risen up in the midst of the Lucrine Lake. (*Monfaucon Diar. Italic.* c. 21.) Dr A. Clarke, in his commentary on this passage, has given a long and interesting account of various showers of stones and hail which have fallen in various places, and to which the curious reader is referred. As a most stupendous miracle was wrought in this instance, in causing the sun and moon to stand still, there can be no doubt that the shower of stones whether hail or otherwise was also miraculous.—Ed.

^a It was a city in the tribe of Judah, about eight miles distant from Eleutheropolis; which place, though it is nowhere mentioned in the Scripture history, because it was built after the destruction of Jerusalem, is nevertheless frequently taken notice of by Eusebius and Jerome, as a point from whence they measure the distances of other places. Its name imports a 'free city,' and was itself situate in the tribe of Judah.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2. c. 4.

^b These waters are generally supposed by learned men to be

^e Some Jewish authors will needs have it, that when Joshua went into the land of Canaan, he proposed three things to the inhabitants thereof, either that they should leave the country, or come and make their submission, or take up arms and fight him. But this is said, in some measure to excuse the Jewish general, and to mollify the rigour of his proceedings. His express command from God was, to extirpate the seven nations, without making any treaty, or giving quarter: and though the Gibeonites by guile had obtained a kind of league with him, yet the conditions which he thereupon proposed were so very hard, that they could not but deter others from making the like attempt. It is not therefore to be wondered, that the Canaanites, who saw themselves driven to the necessity either of death or slavery, after they had tried the fate of their arms so often to no purpose, should endeavour to make their escape from a people everywhere victorious, and who were enjoined to be cruel and remorseless by their very God who had given them this success. Nor can we suppose but that God, who was minded to make room for his own people, did (according to his promise, Exod. xxiii. 27.) inject upon this occasion a terror so extraordinary into the natives of the country, and make them desire to be gone. And when they

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their escape into other countries, to the sword; hamstringed their horses, and burned their chariots with fire. Jabin had been the head of the confederacy against him; and therefore he killed him, and caused his city to be burned to the ground; but the other cities, whose inhabitants were slain in battle, he left standing, and gave the plunder of them to the soldiers.

Thus Joshua subdued all the land of Canaan ^a by degrees. He put its inhabitants, its kings, who were one and thirty in number, and all the giants that dwelt therein, except some few that still remained among the Philistines, to the sword; and having now extended his conquest as far as it was convenient at that time, he began to think of dividing the country among the tribes that were yet unprovided for, and of dismissing the two tribes and an half who had accompanied him in the wars, but had their habitations already settled by Moses, on the east side of the river Jordan. To this purpose he appointed commissioners, who should take an exact survey of the country, and bring in a full report without delay; which when he had done, ^b the country was divided into

were desirous to be gone, they had the ports lying upon the Mediterranean sea very commodious for their purpose. For whether the towns of Tyre and Sidon were at this time built or no, it is certain, that the places where these towns stood, could not but be proper harbours for shipping; and as the Phœnicians were still masters of the sea coasts, by their assistance the Canaanites might make their escape into what part they pleased. The Phœnicians, much about this time, did certainly send out a vast many colonies; but as it cannot be supposed, that so small a country should produce such swarms, the greatest part of them are presumed to be the refugees of Canaan, who made their escape by shipping to all the coasts which lay round the Mediterranean and Ægean seas, and even to other parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, as the learned Bochart has given us a large account in his Canaan, from page 345 to page 699.—*Calmet's Dissertation* on the country where the Canaanites, pursued by Joshua, saved themselves.

^a These great achievements may be allowed to have taken up some years. The history indeed informs us, that 'Joshua made war a long time with all these kings,' Josh. xi. 18. And from the words of Caleb, wherein he gives Joshua an account of his age, and that it was five and forty years since he was sent a spy to Kadesh-Barnea, there cannot be well less than between six and seven years spent in this war; and why the war was so long continued, God himself assigns this reason:—'I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee: by little and little will I drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased and inherit the land,' Exod. xxiii. 29, 30.

^b Those who are minded to know what particular towns and territories fell to each tribe, had best consult what Josephus, in his Jewish Antiquities; Jerome, de Locis Hebraicis; Reland de Urbibus et Vicis Palestinæ; Masius, in Joshuam; Fuller, in his Pisgah-sight; Raleigh, in his History, part 1. b. 2.; Wells, in his Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 2.; Patrick, Poole, Le Clerc, and several others, in their commentaries, have said on this subject. We shall make this one remark, which Masius, in his rich Commentary upon Joshua, furnishes us with, namely, that as Jacob and Moses, at the approach of their deaths, foretold the very soil and situation of every particular country that should fall to each tribe; so, upon this division by lots, it accordingly came to pass. To the tribe of Judah there fell a country abounding with vines and pasture grounds (Gen. xlix. 11.) To that of Ashur, one plenteous in oil, iron, and brass, (Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25.) To that of Naphtali, one extending from the west to the south of Judea, (Deut. xxxiii. 23.) To that of Benjamin, one in which the temple was afterwards built (Deut. xxxiii. 12.) To those of Zebulun and Issachar, such as had plenty of seaports, (Gen. xlix. 13.) To those of Ephraim and Manasseh, such as were renowned for their precious fruits, (Deut. xxxiii. 14.) And to those of Simeon and Levi, no particular countries at all; for as much as the former had a portion with Judah, and the other was interspersed among the several tribes. Since, therefore, as

equal portions, for which each tribe, according ¹ to God's directions, cast lots. But because some tribes were larger, and some territories richer than others, Joshua and Eleazar, together with the princes of the people, took care to adjust the proportion of the land to the largeness of the tribe, and in subdividing that, to consider the number of each family and household: pursuing exactly the orders which God gave to his servant Moses: ² 'Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance; and to few, thou shalt give the less inheritance.—Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by lot;—according to lot shall the possession thereof be divided among many, and few.'

Having thus divided the country on the west side of the Jordan, Joshua had a little place given him for his own habitation, not far from Shiloh, where, after the wars, the tabernacle was set up, that he might have an opportunity of consulting God upon any occasion; and, after all things were in this manner regulated, he called together the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who had served for almost seven years, as auxiliaries in the wars of Canaan, and gave them an honourable dismissal. "He acknowledged that they had duly executed the condition which they promised to Moses, in accompanying their brethren, and helping them to subdue their enemies, and commended their courage and fidelity for so doing. He exhorted them, now that they were going to separate from the tabernacle, never to neglect the service of God, but to bear always in mind those venerable laws which he had given them by his great legislator. He advised them to distribute a share of the rich booty they had taken from the Canaanites, among their brethren on the other side of Jordan; because, though they had not partaken of the peril of the late war, they had nevertheless done them great service, in protecting their families from the insults of their enemies on every side." And ^c with these acknowledgments and exhortations, together with many sincere wishes for their prosperity and welfare, ^d he sent

¹ Josh. xiv. 2.

² Num. xxvi. 53, &c.

our commentator reasons, each particular lot answered so exactly to each prediction, it must needs be the height of insolence or stupidity not to acknowledge the divine inspiration in these predictions, and the divine direction in these lots.

^c Josephus, in the speech which he introduces Joshua making to the Reubenites, &c., at their parting, concludes with these words:—"But, I pray you, let no distance of place set limits to our friendship. The interposition of rivers must never divide our affections; for on which bank soever, we are all Hebrews still. Abraham was the common father of us all, let our abode be where it will. It was from one and the same God that all our forefathers received their being; and that God we are all to worship, according to the ordinances and institutions left us by Moses. So long as we stand firm to that way of religion, we may be sure of the favour and protection of that God for our comfort; but whenever you apostatize into an hankering after strange gods, the God of your fathers will cast you off."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 5. c. 1.

^d The Chronicon Samaritanum, if we may believe what it reports, pages 92, 93, tells us that when Joshua sent the Reubenites away, he appointed Nephthai to be his deputy on the other side of Jordan; that he clothed him with a royal robe, put a crown on his head, and made him ride on a horse of state, whilst a crier went before him, proclaiming, "This is the king of the two tribes and a half, the president of justice, the director of affairs, and the general in the camp. Let his determination be conclusive. In all difficult cases let him desire an answer from

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them away; but they had not been long gone, before a sad misunderstanding had like to have happened between them and the other tribes.

Upon their arrival on the other side of Jordan, they erected an altar near the place where they and their brethren had miraculously passed over, not for any religious use, but as a memorial to succeeding generations, that though they were parted by the river, yet they were of the same extract and religion, and held an equal right to the tabernacle at Shiloh, and to the worship of God performed there, that the inhabitants of the other side had. But whether those on the other side were misinformed or misapprehended their intent, so it was, that they fell into a violent rage against them, as apostates from the true religion; and immediately took up arms for the vindication of the worship and religion of their forefathers, and to avenge the cause of God upon the heads and chief authors of this defection. But before they proceeded to these extremities, they were advised by their rulers to suspend the execution of their wrath, until they had sent a deputation to them in order to know the reason of their building such an altar; which accordingly they did, and made choice of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, with ten other persons of eminent distinction, to go upon the embassy. As soon as they were come into the land of ^a Gilead ^b they represented the great surprise that the rest of the tribes were in at their building this altar; and told them very roundly, that they feared it portended a defection into idolatry. To dissuade them, therefore, from that, they put them in mind of the calamities which God had formerly sent upon them for their worship of Baal-peor; and that if so lately he had been so severe upon them for the offence of one man, namely, Achan only, what might they not expect when two tribes and a half were going to make a general revolt! And as they suspected that the absence of the

tabernacle might give some occasion to this innovation, they invited them to come and live among them, where they might not want an opportunity of serving God, according to the custom of their ancestors.

Concerned to hear the ill opinion which their brethren had thus conceived of them, the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, ^c protested their innocence of any idolatrous intention, and made a solemn appeal to God, that so far were they from setting up any altar in opposition to his, that the only design of that structure was, to perpetuate their title to the service of the tabernacle, and to prevent their latest posterity from being excluded from it. Which when Phinehas and the rest of the deputies heard, they expressed no small satisfaction; and as they related the account of the whole matter upon their return, the people were infinitely pleased with the result of their embassy, and changed their angry thoughts of war into the tender affections of brotherly love and peace: while the Reubenites, on the other hand, to take away all further umbrage of suspicion, called the altar by the name of Ed, as being intended for a standing witness, (for so the word signifies,) that, though they lived at a distance from the rest of their brethren, yet had they both but one origin, and one God, who was the common God and father of all Israel.

Thus were the Israelites, on both sides of the river Jordan, settled in a quiet possession of their conquests: when Joshua, being now grown old, and perceiving the time of his death approaching, called a general assembly of the princes and magistrates, and as many of the common people as could be got together upon this occasion, to Shechem; and having, in a very tender and affectionate speech, enumerated the many blessings which God's providence had bestowed upon them and their ancestors; how he had preserved them in all their dangers and distresses, and relieved them in all their wants; and had made them victorious over all their enemies, and from a mean beginning, raised them to the highest degree of reputation, and brought them into the quiet possession of a land that abounded with all manner of plenty; in gratitude to so great a protector and benefactor, he exhorted them to a faithful observance of his laws, and invited them to a solemn renewal of the covenant which their forefathers had made with him. Which when they had done, he not only recorded the covenant in the book of the law, but

Eleazar the high priest; and if any one shall contradict his sentence, or withdraw from his allegiance, it shall be lawful for any one to kill that man, and the whole congregation shall be blameless."

^a Gilead, which took its name from Gilead the son of Machir, and grandson of Manasseh, is often put for the whole country that lies on the east side of Jordan, which the children of Israel took from the Moabites, Midianites, &c.

^b Josephus makes Phinehas the speaker upon this occasion, who delivers his commission in words to this effect:—"We are very sensible that the crime charged upon you at present is too heinous to be punished by words only; but we have not taken up arms, hand over head, to execute a vengeance according to the degree of the iniquity. For it is out of respect to our allies, and in hopes that second and sounder thoughts may bring you to better reason, that we are engaged upon this embassy, and speak in this assembly. We do but desire to be sincerely informed, upon what motives, and with what design you have now raised this altar. If you have done it out of any pious end, we have no quarrel with you; but if you are gone over to a false worship, it is for our God, and our religion, that we must draw our swords against you. We speak our fears: for we cannot think it credible yet, that a people so well instructed in the will and in the laws of God, our friends and allies that we have but just now parted with; a people newly established in the lot of a plentiful possession by God's special grace and providence; we cannot, I say, believe you to be so insensible and ungrateful, as to abandon the holy tabernacle, the ark, the altar, and the worship of your forefathers, to join with the Canaanites in the worship of false gods. Or, if unhappily you should have been so misled, do but repent, and disclaim your error, and return to that reverence you owe to the laws of God, and of your country, and you shall be still received," &c.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 5. c. 1.

^c If we can suppose any truth in the Samaritan tradition, Nephteli, who is said to have been Joshua's lieutenant over the two tribes and a half, may very properly be thought the person who answered Phinehas in these words, which Josephus thus puts in his mouth:—"We are not conscious of having ever departed from our alliance, neither are we, in any sort, guilty of that affection of novelty, in erecting this altar, which is now charged upon us. We know but one God, and that God is the God of all the Hebrews; and but one altar, which is the brazen altar before the tabernacle. As for this altar here, which we are suspected for, it was never intended for any religious use, but only for a civil memorial to future times of our friendship and alliance, and rather to keep us steady in our ancient religion, than to be any ways introductive to the violation of it. We can safely appeal to God, that we had no such thought in setting up this altar as is imputed to us: and therefore let us intreat you to have a better opinion of your brethren for the future, than to think us guilty of so mortal an apostasy from the rights and customs of our progenitors, a sin not to be expiated in any of the sons of Abraham, but with the loss of his life."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 5. c. 1.

A. M. 2514. A. C. 1490; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 3764. A. C. 1647. JOSH. I. TO THE END.

set up a great stone likewise, under an oak, near a place of religious worship, as a testimony against them, in case they should prevaricate from God's service; and being now in the 110th year of his age, ^a not long after this he died, and was buried at Timnath-serah, in Mount Ephraim, a place which the Israelites, in acknowledgment of his great services, had given him. ^b

In a short time after, Eleazar the son of Aaron, the priest, who lived near Joshua, and died soon after him, was buried not far from him, in one of the hills of Ephraim, ^c a place which the Israelites had in like man-

^a Jesus the son of Sirach gives us a long commendation of Joshua, (Ecclus. xlv. 1.) &c.; but Josephus is more concise in his character, where he tells us,—"That he was a man of political prudence, and endued also with a singular felicity of popular eloquence in expressing his thoughts; brave and indefatigable in war; and no less just and dexterous in peace; and, in short, that he was a person qualified for all great purposes." He is generally reputed to be the author of the book that goes under his name. In the 26th verse of the last chapter it is expressly said, that 'he wrote these things,' (Ecclus. xlv. 1.) The son of Sirach has made him successor to Moses in the prophetic ministry. And both the church and synagogue have all looked on the book as canonical. The truth is, Joshua was the only sacred penman we know of that the Israelites had in his age. After he had finished the division of the land, it is said, chap. xxiii. 1. that he had many years of great leisure, which he very probably employed in giving an account of the death and burial of Moses, and from thence continued a narrative of what had been transacted under his own administration, filling it up with a general terrier of the settlements of the tribes, which was highly expedient for the Israelites to have recorded, in order to prevent confusion about their inheritances in future ages. Now if this supposition be right, the work of Joshua must begin where that of Moses ended, namely at the 34th chapter of Deuteronomy, and ended at the 27th verse of the 24th chapter of Joshua. For as Joshua at the end of Deuteronomy, added an account of Moses' death; so what we find from the 28th verse of the 24th chapter of Joshua to the end of that book, was unquestionably not written until Joshua and all the elders his contemporaries were gone off the stage, and was therefore added to the end of the book of Joshua by some sacred penman, (most probably by Samuel,) who was afterwards employed to record the subsequent state of affairs of Israel.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. b. 12; and *Patrick's Commentary*, on Josh. xxiv. 33. But there is not the like certainty of another book of Joshua's, which the Samaritans preserve with much respect, and make great use of in the support of their pretensions against the Jews; neither can we tell whether Joshua was the author of that prayer which the Jews repeat as oft as they go into the synagogues, and begins thus:—"It is our duty to praise the Lord of the universe, and to celebrate the creation of the world; for he hath not made us like unto the nations of the earth, but hath prepared for us an inheritance infinitely richer and greater, &c."—*Wagonsail's Fiery Darts of Satan*, p. 223; and *Calnet's Dictionary*, under the word.

^b Josh. xxiv. 30. 'And they buried him in the border of his inheritance, in Timnath-serah.' This place is in Judges called Timnath-heres, because of the image of the sun engraven on his sepulchre, in memory of that famous day when the sun stood still till he had completed his victory, (chap. x.) This is asserted by several of the Jewish authors. Memorials alluding to particular transactions in the lives of great men, were frequently made use of to adorn their tombs. Tully has recorded concerning Archimedes, that a sphere and a cylinder were put upon his monument.—*Patrick in locum*.

^c This place is, in the Hebrew called the hill of Phinehas; it being customary in those days for men to call places by the name of their eldest son. But then the question is—To whom did the Israelites give this hill? The most probable answer is, that they gave it to Eleazar; for he being the high priest at the time of the division of the land, they thought proper to give him a peculiar portion, distinct from other cities of the priests, which were all in the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon, and none in the tribe of Ephraim, (Josh. xxii. 9, 17, 19.) And they made choice of this country the rather, that he might be near the tabernacle, which

ner presented him with, and which afterwards descended to Phinehas, his son and successor in the priesthood. And as the funerals of these two great men, so near the same time and place, called to remembrance the bones of Joseph, which, at his request, ^d had been brought out of Egypt, but not yet interred; the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh took this opportunity to perform their obsequies to the remains of their great progenitor, in a parcel of ground near Shechem, which Jacob having formerly bought, had ¹ given to his son Joseph, and was now become the inheritance of his posterity.

CHAP. II.—Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.

² 'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou, in thy mercy, hast led forth the people, whom thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them in thy strength, unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear and shall be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. The elders of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab shall tremble, and all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them. By the greatness of thine arm they shall be still as a stone, till thy people pass over, O Lord till thy people pass over, whom thou hast purchased: thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for them to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hand hath established.'

These words are part of that triumphant song, which Moses made upon the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. They are plain predictions of what befell the Israelites forty years after, and a declaration they are, that the conquest of their country, was not only by the order and appointment, but by the immediate help and assistance of God; ³ 'for,' as the Psalmist expresses it, 'they got not the land in possession through their own sword, neither was it their own arm that helped

¹ Gen. xlviii. 22. ² Exod. xv. 11, &c. ³ Ps. xlv. 3, 4.

was at Shiloh, and near to Joshua, who lived at Shechem, to be ready on all occasions, to advise him and consult the oracle for him. But then against this there lies an objection, namely, that no Levite or priest was to have any portion in the division of the land; and therefore it is a received opinion among the Jews, that either Eleazar or Phinehas had this inheritance in right of his wife: though we cannot see why the high priest especially, who was certainly the second person in the government, might not have a mansion-house, and some domains allotted him, for the greater state and dignity of his living, without any great infringement upon the general laws.—*Patrick's Commentary* on Joshua xxiv. 33.

^d It may reasonably be thought, that the bodies of the rest of the sons of Jacob, from whom the twelve tribes descended, were brought into Canaan, to be there interred, as Josephus relates from ancient tradition, (*Antiquities* b. 2. c. 4.) and as St Stephen confirms it, (Acts vii. 16.) For though Joseph excelled them in all dignity, and gave this special charge about his body, yet every tribe, no doubt, had as great a regard for their progenitor, and would be inclined to do the same for their fathers, that Joseph's descendants did for him; but whether they buried them in the sepulchre of Machpelah, or in some eminent place in their own tribe, as Joseph was, there is no one that gives us any account.—*Patrick's Commentary* on Joshua xxiv. 32.

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them; but thy right hand, and thine arm and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.' And if God so immediately concerned himself in the conquest of the country, we need not wonder, that we hear of the people who were to defend it, being amazed, and trembling, and melting away for fear. The Jewish doctors have a tradition, that the vast heaps of waters, piled upon one another, while the Israelites passed over the river Jordan, being seen by the people of Jericho, and other adjacent places, occasioned so general a consternation that they never once thought of maintaining the pass. And indeed their consternation must have been very great, when we find them inclosing themselves within their walls, and suffering the Israelites to surround them seven days successively, without even once attempting to make a sally. They saw, in short, that a power, superior to all human opposition, was engaged against them; and therefore whatever prior measures they had taken for their mutual defence, upon the approach of an army commanded by one, who, when he pleases, ¹ 'maketh the devices of the people ineffectual, and casteth out the counsels of princes,' they were all broken and disconcerted.

It cannot be denied, indeed, but that in ancient times, there was a great affinity between the business of an hostess and an harlot. Those who kept inns, or public houses for the entertainment of strangers, made no scruple of prostituting their bodies; and for this reason perhaps it is, that, in the Hebrew tongue, there is but one word, namely, *zonah*, to denote persons of both professions. For this reason very likely it was, that the Septuagint, speaking of Rahab, gives her the appellation of an harlot, and, as the Septuagint was at this time the common translation of the Jews, for this very reason, the two apostles, ² St Paul, and St ³ James, as they found it in the translation, might make use of the same expression. It is to be observed, however, that as the expression is capable of another sense, the Chaldee paraphrast calls her by a word, which comes from the Greek *πανδοχευτρια*, or, *a woman that kept a public house*, without any work of infamy; and therefore charity should incline us to think the best of a person, whom both these apostles have ranked with Abraham, the father of the faithful, and propounded as an example of faith and good works; who was admitted into the society of God's people; married into a ^a noble family of the tribe of Judah; and of whose posterity Christ, the Saviour of the world, was born.

To save the lives of the innocent is certainly a very commendable thing; but whether it may be done by the help of dissimulation and falsehood, or whether Rahab, in concealing the spies, and pretending to the king's messengers, that they were just gone, did not incur the sin of wilful lying, is a question not so very easy to be resolved. Men, as they are members of a civil society, have certainly a right to truth, and the very design of speech is to be the conveyance of our real sentiments to

one another; but some casuists are of opinion, that circumstances may so happen, as to make it both lawful and necessary, not only to disguise the truth, but to impose upon others by a false information. Suppose a madman, for instance, with a drawn sword in his hand, should pursue a friend of mine, with a full intent to kill him; and my friend, by the benefit of some short turning, gives him the drop, so that, having lost sight of him, he comes and demands of me, which way he took; but I, instead of setting him right, point the assassin another way; in this case, I presume, I commit no crime, because the man, in these circumstances, has forfeited all right to truth; nor could I indeed impart it to him, without making myself instrumental to my friend's murder. This, in a great measure, was Rahab's case. Her design was to save the spies from the hands of those that were sent to apprehend them; but in vain had she formed such a design, unless she was resolved to put it in execution; and yet, what other way had she of executing it, but by telling a lie? It had been to no purpose for her to have hid them on the roof of her house, if, for the sake of truth, she had thought herself obliged to discover the place of their concealment; if her silence had given any umbrage of suspicion to their pursuers; if she had not, in short, by a bold assertion, diverted their inquiry some other way. In this case the design, and the means of executing it were inseparable. And yet, since a design, which could no ways be executed without the help of a lie, is both praised and proposed in the Scripture, as a pattern for the church to imitate, what right have we to condemn it? Or, upon what presumption can we imagine, that Rahab would have acted more agreeably to the mind of God, in discovering the spies out of respect to truth, than she did, in preserving them by virtue of a feigned story?^b But there is another way of accounting for Rahab's conduct, and that is this: ⁴ The author of the epistle to the Hebrews informs us, that ⁵ 'by faith she perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace; where the Greek words are not *τοῖς ἀπιστοῖς*, with the unbelievers, but *τοῖς ἀπειθήσασιν*, with the disobedient, or those that were not persuaded of the truth of what was told them. But how the inhabitants of Jericho can be said to be unconvinced or disobedient, if God had revealed nothing to them, or required nothing of them, we cannot conceive. Some information must have been given both to them and Rahab, otherwise they could not be condemned for disobedience, nor she commended for her faith, that is, for believing and acting according to the will of God, made known unto her. Upon the supposition, then, that the design of God towards the inhabitants of Canaan was some way or other revealed to

^a Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. b. 12.^b Heb. xi. 31.

^b The first part of our author's attempt to vindicate the conduct of Rahab is very little to the purpose; his supposed madman would have no right to truth, but unquestionably the king and magistrates of Jericho had: the remaining portion of his remarks are much more to the purpose; but in fact there is no need for any elaborate inquiry, how far she may be considered guilty, or how far she may be excused in this circumstance; the inspired writer sets down the fact as it stood, without making the Spirit of God responsible for her dissimulation; and though it is intimated in other places of the Scriptures, that she was rewarded for her conduct, it is evident that she was rewarded for her *hospitality and faith*, not for her *lie*.—ED.

¹ Ps. xxxiii. 10.

Heb. xi. 31.

³ James ii. 25.

^a Rahab married Salmon, a prince of Judah, by whom she had Boaz. Boaz was father of Obed, Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of king David; so that Jesus Christ did not disdain to reckon this Canaanitish woman among his ancestors.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

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the king and people of Jericho, and both he and they had been sufficiently warned to save themselves from the destruction that was coming upon them, if they would not obey; but if Rahab did and acted conformably to the information that was given her, her whole behaviour will not only stand clear of every criminal imputation, but be highly commendable, and justly deserve a rank among those illustrious patterns which the apostle proposes to our imitation, as being a person justified not only by her faith,¹ but her works likewise, 'when she received the messengers, and sent them out another way.'

The declaration which their kind protectress makes to them,² 'I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath,' bespeaks the full persuasion of her mind; and therefore, not doubting, but that the Ruler of the universe had an uncontrollable right to dispose of all kingdoms and countries according to his good pleasure, she judged it reasonable 'to obey God rather than man,' and thereupon endeavoured, as much as in her lay, to deliver up the land to the true owners, to those whom God, by his donation, had made its rightful proprietors.

An order from heaven most certainly releases the subject from his allegiance to his prince, and the citizen from the engagement he lies under to those that are of the same society; and therefore Rahab, having such an order, or at least what was equivalent to it, was at full liberty to espouse what party she pleased, and must have been perfidious to God, and forgetful of her own preservation, if she had acted otherwise than she did. For³ even setting aside her faith,⁴ for which she is so justly commended in the gospel, if she had heard of the destruction of Pharaoh in Egypt, and of the other two kings on the east side of Jordan, the king of Jericho can hardly be supposed to be ignorant of their fate: and therefore it was as natural for her to be terrified at it, and to provide for her safety, as it was for him to make a brave resistance, or perish in the attempt. If therefore what the Scripture seems to intimate be true, namely, that Joshua was obliged to offer peace, before he made use of the sword against any of the Canaanitish nations; it was as lawful for her, or any other subject, to accept this peace, as it was glorious perhaps for a monarch to refuse it. At least we cannot but think, that the refusal of such advantageous terms from an irresistible conqueror, at the risk of being all infallibly massacred by him, for the sake of a king, who, for aught that appears to the contrary, might be a petty tyrant, or for the sake of a people whom fear had rendered incapable of making any tolerable resistance; when perhaps the difference of being under the natural monarch, if he was really such, or the conqueror, was inconsiderable, or, it may be, on the side of the latter: we cannot but think, I say, that such a refusal would have been an instance of patriotism, not to be expected from a Canaanite, and much less from such a young hostess, as Rahab must have been,

since we read of her being the mother of Boaz, above thirty years after this. So that, upon the whole, she acted a part that might naturally be expected from her, no ways inglorious in itself, and highly agreeable to the will of God, when she adjoined herself to those, who, by his almighty arm, were so visibly supported; and abandoned the interests of those, who, upon so many accounts, were very justly devoted to destruction.

What the Spirit says unto the church at Thyatira, 'I gave her space to repent of her fornication, but she repented not; behold, I will cast her into a bed, and then that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, and I will kill her children with death, and give unto every one according to his works,' is very applicable to the several nations in the land of Canaan. Four hundred years were to intervene between the commencement of the promise to Abraham, and this completion of it; and the reason which God gives for this long delay is, that 'the iniquity of the Amorites,' and by the Amorites he means all the other nations of Canaan, 'was not yet full: "And⁵ even though," as the author of the book of Wisdom argues, "he could have destroyed them all with one rough word, yet executing his judgments by little and little, he gave them place of repentance, not being ignorant that they were an haughty generation, and that their malice was bred in them, and their cogitation would never be changed." For instead of reforming, the only effect which this delay had, was to make them more confirmed in wickedness, and because⁷ 'this sentence against their evil works was not speedily executed, therefore were their hearts the fuller set in them to do evil.'

What the nature and heinousness of their iniquities were, we may best learn from⁸ the many precautions which God gives his people against them; "for he hated them," as the⁹ same author has drawn up the articles of accusation against them, "for doing most odious works of witchcraft, and wicked sacrifices, for their merciless murdering of children, devouring of man's flesh, and feasting upon blood;" and if we may suppose that God, some way or other, had given these nations sufficient notice of his intended severity against them if they did not repent; had abundant reason to preserve his own people from the infection of the abominations; and before their extirpation was executed, did¹⁰ by his servant Joshua, offer them conditions of peace: though the divine counsels are a secret to us, yet, even upon this face of things, we cannot find any fault with his treatment of them, since when he had given them 'space to repent, and they repented not,' his justice was certainly then at liberty to take what vengeance his divine wisdom should think fit.

And indeed this seems to be one of the reasons why God divided the river for the Israelites, who were to be the instruments of this his vengeance, to pass over, namely, that thereby he might inject a terror into the inhabitants of Canaan, and so facilitate the conquest of their country. On the side of Jordan, the kings of the neighbourhood feared no invasion. The depth of the river, especially at the time of its overflowing, which was in

¹ Jam. ii. 25. ² Josh. ii. 9, 11. ³ Univers. Hist. b. 1. c. 7.

⁴ This is rather a strange suggestion. If we set aside her faith, her conduct cannot be vindicated. And as it was for her faith she was rewarded, as the apostle assures us, we can neither doubt it nor set it aside.—ED.

⁴ Rev. ii. 21, &c.

⁷ Ec. viii. 11.

⁹ Wisd. xii. 4, 5.

⁵ Gen. xv. 16.

⁶ Wisd. xii. 9, 10.

⁸ See Lev. xviii. 4.; Deut. ix. 4, &c.

¹⁰ Deut. xx. 10, 11.; Josh. xi. 19.

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the harvest, when the Israelites¹ passed it, was barrier sufficient, they thought, against all that the Israelites could do. For in those days, pontoons were things never heard of in military expeditions; and the ^a stream is, even at this day, allowed to be too fierce and rapid for any one to swim over: and therefore, as they expected no danger from that quarter, and might for that reason draw out no forces to defend that side of their frontier; so the sacred historian has taken care to inform us, that, ² 'when all the kings of the Amorites which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until they were passed over, their hearts melted, neither was there spirit in them any more.'

And as this miraculous passage could not but fill their enemies with confusion, so it added, no doubt, fresh courage to the Israelites, when they came to consider, that the same God, about forty years before, had wrought the like miracle for them in their passage of the Red Sea; that then he divided the waves,³ to confirm the commission which he had given Moses, and now had parted the stream, to strengthen the authority of his successor, Joshua, and to give them assurance that ⁴ 'he would be with the one, as he had been with the other, and empower the latter to make good their possession of 'the land of promise,' even as he had enabled the former to accomplish their deliverance 'out of the land of bondage.'

In all rivers whatever, there questionless are some shallower places than ordinary, or some passages, either by boats or bridges, that may be called fords; but that the Jordan, at this time, was either so vastly overflowed as to render these fords impassable, or that the Israelites crossed it at places which the enemy never thought of, and where none of these passes were to be found, is pretty evident from the Canaanites making no preparation to defend their coasts on the river side, and from the great consternation we find them in, when once they understood that the Jewish army had got over. For, whatever opinion we, at this distance of time, may have of the matter, they justly inferred, that the suspension of a river's course could be effected no other way than

by a divine power, either immediately acting itself or by the instrumentality of its angels. And though there possibly may be some instances in history, wherein, by the violence of adverse winds, the course of rivers has either been retarded, or ^b driven back; yet as we read of no such wind concerned in this event, the prediction of Joshua, and the promises of God concerning this miracle, the time in which he chose to work it, and the analogy it bears with what before was wrought at the Red Sea; these, and several other circumstances, make this transaction beyond compare, and rank it, not only among those prodigies which very rarely come to pass, but among those stupendous works, which, contrary to the laws of nature, the great Author and Ruler of the universe, for the preservation of his people, and the manifestation of his own glory, is sometimes observed to do.

⁵ 'He that is born in thy house, or he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised, and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant; and the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.' These are the words of the precept, and they seem to be so very urgent and express, that one would really think the ordinance was intended not only for a distinction between Jew and Gentile, but for an institution likewise, to take away the guilt of original sin. And yet, even upon this supposition, ⁶ the people's frequent moving from place to place, the uncertainty of their decampments, and the inconvenience of their travelling, which would make it dangerous for children to be circumcised before a march, might be some apology for their omitting the observation of this rite, even though they had no divine dispensation for it.

⁷ It is one of the general rules among the Jews, that no precept, (always meaning no ceremonial precept, for some precepts there are that were to be observed, even at the expense of their lives,) whose observation occasions death, is to be attended to because the Scriptures say, that 'he who observeth these laws shall live,' not die, 'by them.' But how frivolous soever this reason may be, it is certain, that in case they apprehended any danger from the operation, they carried this dispensation so far, as to exempt the next child from having this ordinance pass upon him, if so be that his brother before him died of the wound which he received in circumcision. And for a farther excuse, they add, that during their

¹ Josh. iii. 15; 1 Chron. xii. 15; and Eccles. xxiv. 26.

² Josh. v. 1.

³ Saurin's Dissertation on the Passage of the Jordan. ⁴ Josh. i. 17.

^a That the sacred writings do constantly represent this river as not fordable, except at some particular places, very probably made by art, that the countries on each side may have a freer communication, is plain from the passages to which these several citations, (Josh. ii. 2; Judg. iii. 28, and xii. 5; 2 Kings ii. 14,) do refer. That it was not a poor and inconsiderable stream, such as some have represented it, is evident from the account of Thevenot, (in his *Travels*, p. 193,) who himself went near the place where the Israelites passed over, and describes it to be 'half as broad as the Seine at Paris, very deep, and very rapid;' which agrees very well with what Maundrell (in his *Journey from Aleppo*, p. 83) says of it, namely, "That its channel is twenty yards over, deeper than a man's height, and runs with such a current, that there is no swimming against it:" and that, whatever the present condition of Jordan may be, it is certain, when the Israelites came into Canaan, it was a much larger river than now it is; for even in Pliny's time (*Natural History*, b. 5.) its channel was much larger than what it now runs in, having then the title of *Amnis Ambitosus*; and in the days when Strabo wrote, (according to his *Geog.* b. 16,) even vessels of burden might navigate in it.—*Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. b. 12.

^b Gen. xvii. 13, 14.

⁶ Saurin's Dissertation on the taking of Jericho.

⁷ Lightfoot's *Hor. Heb.* in 1 Cor. vii. 19.

^δ Something of this nature seems to have happened in Augustus' time, according to that known passage in Horace:—"We saw the yellow Tiber, with its waves violently beaten back on the Etrurian shore, rush forth to cover the monuments of the king, and the temples of the Vestal Virgin."—B. 1. Ode 2.

Granting that we admit the truth of the poetical story, which would be stretching our belief to its utmost limits; and supposing it possible that the waters of the Jordan, running at such a rapid rate as they are known to do, (see note, pp. 363-4,) could have been kept back by a wind blowing against the course of the stream; it is evident that it would have been impossible for a multitude of men, women, and children, to have marched across in the course of that wind. The simplest way, therefore, is to admit the miracle on the testimony of the inspired writer, and not search for natural causes, which involve us in a labyrinth of difficulties.—Ed.

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sojourning in the wilderness for one crime or other, their forefathers were generally under the divine displeasure, in which condition it would have been a profanation of the sacrament to have administered it.

But then, if the other notion of this ordinance be admitted, namely, that it was no more than a note of distinction between the Israelites and other nations, as the Israelites were now alone in the wilderness, there was no danger of their mixing with others, and consequently less reason for their observation of this distinguishing rite, until they should enter upon the possession of a country where every kind of idolatry surrounded them on all hands.

Thus, whether we look upon the rite of circumcision as a sacrament of initiation into the Jewish church, or a character of distinction only between them and other people, the Israelites might, without the imputation of much guilt, omit the outward observance of it, if so be that they did but attend to what was the true intent and meaning of it, namely, ¹ 'the circumcising the foreskin of their hearts;' ² 'for he is not a Jew (as St Paul excellently argues) who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.'

In like manner, the observation of the Sabbath-day was a precept of severe injunction; but whether the destruction of Jericho happened on that day, or any other of the week, as the Israelites were ordered to compass the city for seven days successively, it is certain that one of these days must necessarily have been the Sabbath; and yet we must not suppose that they committed any great offence in what they did, because the same authority which made the law for the observation of it, gave now a full license for the profanation of it. The person who met Joshua, and prescribed the form of the siege of Jericho, by his assumption of divine honours and appellations, was doubtless the same who delivered the law from Mount Sinai: and therefore we need not question but that now he acted in as full power in suspending, since his orders could not be executed without such suspension, as he then did in enjoining the observation of the Sabbath; and it is in allusion, as some imagine, to this very passage, that our blessed Saviour pronounced that maxim in the gospel, ³ 'the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.'

However this be, it is certain, that before our Saviour's days, the Jews carried the observation of the Sabbath to a great degree of rigour. In the time of the Maccabees, they would not so much as defend themselves against the assault of their enemies on that day, ⁴ but yielded their throats to be cut, rather than stir a hand in their own vindication: whereas this example of their forefathers investing, if not sacking, Jericho on the Sabbath-day, might have taught them, one would think, that in cases of this nature, it was allowable, not only to defend themselves, but to prevent their enemies annoying them, nay even to fall upon and destroy them, whenever a favourable opportunity presented itself on that day.

In the conquest of Jericho, however, some have imagined that rams' horns were not proper materials whereof

to make trumpets; that they are not so easily perforated, nor can they ever be brought to make a sound shrill and extensive enough for their particular purposes; and therefore they conceive, that brass or silver, or any other metal, had been more convenient for this use; whereupon ⁵ they derive the word *Jobel*, in the singular, which we render a ram's horn, not from the Arabic, which signifies a ram, but from Jubal, the name of him who was the first inventor of musical instruments: and according to this sense, the trumpets which the priests upon this occasion used, may be said to have been fashioned according to those which Jubal first invented.⁶

This interpretation of the words, which is no bad one, removes all the incongruity that may seem to arise from the matter whereof these trumpets were composed: but then, it is to be considered, that as the first instruments of this kind were probably made of horns, so has the notion of the impossibility of boring a ram's horn been sufficiently confuted by our learned Spencer. The truth is, every one knows, that in the inside of it there is a softer part, which may be drawn out by art; after which it is hollow all the way up, except four or five inches towards the top, part of which is sawed off, to make it broad enough for the mouth, and then the rest is easily bored. But whether there is any foundation for that fancy of the Jews, that these horns were retained in the proclamation of some of their greatest festivals, in memory of Isaac's being rescued from his father Abraham's knife, by the substitution of a ram in his stead, is a point that we leave to the speculations of the curious.

Whatever materials these trumpets were made of, it is impossible to conceive that there should be any power in their sound to demolish cities; and though the noise of a great number of people might be very loud, yet still it would require a miracle in Joshua to know what the just proportion was between their noise, and the strength of the walls of Jericho, since the least deviation in this respect would have defeated the whole experiment.

What the effect of gunpowder, or of other sulphureous matter fired under ground, or in the bowels of the earth, is, no one that has seen either the springing of a mine, or felt the convulsions of an earthquake, needs be told; but that no stratagem of this kind could be employed in the siege of Jericho, is manifest, because the invention of gunpowder is a novel thing; nor had the Israelites been long enough on the western side of Jordan, to have undermined its walls, even though they had had the secret of some inflammatory stratum, to have lodged under them. On the contrary, the whole process of this siege, if we may so call it, was managed at such a rate, as plainly discovered an expectance of a miracle to be wrought: for had not this been the case, instead of sauntering about the walls for seven days, they should have

⁵ Masius in Josh. vi. 4; Bochart's Hieros. b. 2. c. 43; and Calmet in locum.

⁶ Boothroyd, following Coverdale, renders the phrase translated in the common text, 'trumpets of rams' horns,' jubilee trumpets; and Parkhurst observes, "I cannot find that the word *jebel*, ever signifies a ram; nor have the Septuagint, Vulgate, or other ancient versions, ever so rendered it: (Exod. xix. 13.) is plain against this rabbinical sense of the word." In the next verse they are called horns, but this might be their form. Of whatever materials they might be, they were such as were used at the Jubilee, according to the Vulgate.—Ed.

¹ Deut. x. 16. ² Rom. ii. 28, 29. ³ Mark ii. 27.

⁴ Prideaux's Connection, part 2. vol. 4.

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been working in their trenches, and carrying on their approaches, as we now call it.

The art of war was then but in its infancy; and as the manner of undermining and blowing up the most ponderous bodies, was what the ancients were unacquainted with, so was the battering-ram an invention of a later date than some imagine. ¹ Pliny indeed seems to say, that Epeus first made use of it at the siege of Troy; but in all probability, ² Ezekiel is the earliest author that mentions this machine, and perhaps the first time that it was employed was under Nebuchadnezzar, at the siege of Jerusalem.

But there is no need to ransack history for the confutation of this system, which ³ they who propose it do nevertheless acknowledge, that though the walls of Jericho might have fallen without any extraordinary act of divine power, yet by the circumstances of the whole account, it appears that this event was altogether miraculous. Nor should Joshua's denouncing an anathema over the vanquished city be thought a thing unprecedented, or a token of a furious and implacable spirit, since the like practice has been observed by some of the greatest generals of other nations; forasmuch as ⁴ Agamemnon, after he had taken Troy, denounced a curse upon those who should, at any time, attempt to rebuild it; the Romans published a decree of execration against them who should do the like to Carthage; and when ⁵ Crassus had demolished Sidon, which had been a lurking-place to the tyrant Glaucias, he wished the greatest evils imaginable upon the head of that man who should but so much as build a wall about the place where it once stood.⁶

Of all the questions in the Jewish schools, there is none more difficult than what we are to understand by the Urim and Thummim, which Moses takes notice of as something belonging to the attire of the high priest, and withal enabling him to give responses to such as, by his mediation, came to consult God. ⁶ The two words are variously translated; but in the main, all the translations amount much to the same purport; and as this sacred thing, be it what it will, was to be placed on the high priest's breast, it very properly reminded him of the

great qualifications requisite in those of his order; light, or sufficiency of spiritual knowledge; and perfection, or the virtue and sanctity of his life.

The general opinion indeed is, that this Urim and Thummim were one and the same thing. But an ingenious writer of our own nation, conceives them to be two different oracles, and applied to different purposes; that Urim was the oracle whereby God gave answer to those who consulted him in difficult cases, and Thummim, that whereby the high priest knew whether God did accept the sacrifice or no; that therefore the former is called 'light,' as giving knowledge, which dispels the darkness of our minds; and the other 'integrity,' or 'perfection,' because they whose sacrifices God accepted, were accounted Thummim, that is, 'just and righteous in his sight;' in short, that by the former, the Jews were ascertained of the counsel or will of God; by the latter, of his favour and good acceptance. But this distinction has not met with a general approbation, because, however there may be ⁸ passages where the one is mentioned without the other, yet in this case, the one, which is generally the Urim, may well enough be supposed to include both.

The Jewish doctors are mostly of opinion, that the Urim and Thummim were nothing else but the precious stones, which were set upon the breastplate; and that ⁹ by the shining or protuberating of the letters in the names of the twelve tribes, engraven upon the twelve stones, the high priest when he came to consult God, could read the answer: but in this opinion there are some difficulties hardly to be surmounted. For besides that all the letters in the Hebrew alphabet are not to be found on the pectoral, since there are four, namely, Heth, Teth, Zade, and Koph, manifestly wanting; ¹⁰ the question is, by what rules the high priest could make a combination of these letters, supposing there were enough of them, and so put them together, as to spell out the divine oracle; because it is not pretended that these letters moved out of their places, but only swelled, or raised themselves above the rest? Suppose, for instance, that any six of these letters should have swelled, or shone with a more than ordinary lustre, yet how should the high priest know to dispose of them in right order, and which should be first, and which last? If it be said—By the spirit of prophecy; this vacates all the necessity of the Urim and Thummim; because a prophetic spirit would teach him what he desired to know, without any farther assistance.

¹¹ Christophorus a Castro, and from him ¹² Dr Spencer will needs have it that this Urim and Thummim were two little images, (much of the same make with the Gentile teraphim,) which being folded in the doubling of the breastplate, did from thence give oracular answers by an audible voice, and that this device was taken from the Egyptians. But besides that the word teraphim, to which these others were compared, is seldom or never taken in a good sense, it seems a little improbable, that in a matter so solemn and sacred, the Jews should be left to follow the example of the idolatrous Egyptians. ¹³

¹ B. vii. c. 56.

² Ezek. iv. 1, 2, and xxi. 22.

³ P. Mersenne, in his Commentary on Genesis, and D. Geo. Merhof. de Scypho vitreo per certum humanæ vocis tonum fracto.

⁴ Strabo, b. 13. p. 898.

⁵ Zonara Annal. b. 9. p. 409.

⁶ Edwards' Inquiry into Difficult Texts, part 2.

^a All these events were long posterior to the destruction of Jericho, and though they had not, the conduct of Agamemnon or Crassus could have served nothing to the vindication of Joshua. The case appears to have been this,—Jericho was taken and destroyed in so singular a manner that it seems to have been the wish of the Hebrew leader, approved by God, to preserve a memorial of one of the greatest miracles that were wrought for Israel, by leaving the ruins of the city as a monument, to the latest posterity, of the power of the God of Israel, and his hatred of polytheism, and of such vices as sprang from polytheism, and were practised in Jericho. Accordingly Joshua adjured the elders of the people, or made them bind themselves by a solemn oath, to leave the ruins of the city as a perpetual warning to their posterity of the consequences of idolatry and vice; and to give additional sanctity to the oath, he pronounced a curse upon any one of them or their descendants, by whom it should be violated. It was one of the many extraordinary precautions taken to preserve the Israelites from worshipping the idol deities of the surrounding nations.—*Bishop Gleig.*—Ed.

⁷ Mede's Discourse 35. ⁸ Num. xxvii. 21; 1 Sam. xxviii. 6.

⁹ Prideaux's Connection, part 2. b. 3.

¹⁰ Calmet's Dictionary under the word Urim.

¹¹ De Vaticinio.

¹² Dissert. De Urim et Thummim.

¹³ Edwards' Inquiry, part 2.

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The sacred records indeed inform us, that the Jews borrowed of the Egyptians 'jewels of silver, and gold, and raiment:' but they nowhere intimate, that the Jewish high priest borrowed his pontifical, and particularly his oracular habit, from them; and therefore to think that God who declares himself so positively against the idolatrous practice of the Gentiles, should, by these images of pagan invention, take the ready way to give them countenance and encouragement; or to think, that the Jews, who were expressly commanded not to 'learn the way of the heathen,' and ¹ 'after the doings of the land of Egypt, where they had dwelt, not to do;' were permitted, nay, commanded to make use of this magical and superstitious rite, is such a heap of odd and wild conceits, as no unprejudiced mind can ever entertain.

Others therefore are of opinion, that it was the tetragrammaton, or ineffable name of God; and others, that it was no more than the two plain words *Urim* and *Thummin*, written or engraved on some plate of gold or precious stones, which, when placed upon the pectoral, would give it an oracular power: ² but the most probable opinion is, that it was no corporeal thing at all, but only a certain virtue, which God was pleased to give to the breastplate, at its consecration, of obtaining an oracular answer from him, whenever the high priest should put it on in order to ask counsel of him, in the manner that he had appointed; and that the names of *Urim* and *Thummin* were given it, only to denote the clearness and perspicuity which those answers of God had, namely, that they were not like the heathen oracles, enigmatical and ambiguous, but plain and manifest, and such as never fell short of perfection, either in the fulness of the answer, or the certainty of the truth of it.

Whether this oracle was only consulted in the great and important affairs of the state, or might be advised with in questions of a low nature, is not entirely determined by the learned; but the most prevailing opinion is, that the high priest, who was the only officiating minister in this ceremony, was not allowed to address it for any private person, but only for the king, the president of the sanhedrim, the general of the army, or some other public governor in Israel; and that not upon any private affairs, but such only as related to the public interest of the nation, whether in church or in state.

When therefore any such matter happened, wherein it was necessary to consult God, the custom was for the high priest to put on his robes and breastplate, and so present himself, not within the veil of the holy of holies, for thither he never entered but once a year, on the great day of expiation, but without the veil in the holy place, and there standing with his face directly towards the ark, or mercy-seat, whereon the divine presence rested, he propounded the matter; and at some distance behind him, but without the holy place, stood the person for whom the oracle was consulted, in devout expectation of the answer, which (as ³ it seems most congruous to the thing) was given him in an audible voice from the mercy-seat, which was within behind the veil.

Here it was that Moses went to ask counsel of God in all cases; and from hence he was answered in an audible voice: and in like manner, when the high priest

presented himself before God, according to the prescription of the divine law, it is reasonable to believe, that God gave him an answer in the same way that he did Moses, that is, by an audible voice from the mercy-seat: and for this reason it is, that such address for counsel is called 'inquiring at the mouth of God,' and the holy of holies (the place where the mercy-seat stood, and from which the answer was given) is so often in scripture styled, ⁴ 'the oracle;' because from thence were the oracles of God delivered to such as came to ask counsel of him.

⁵ Such was the standing oracle which the Israelites might have had recourse to upon all important occasions; and if, in their league with the Gibeonites, they were too hasty and precipitate, their unadvisedness is only to be blamed, and not the insufficiency of that means which God had appointed for their better information. The short of the matter is, the pretended foreign ambassadors drew them in by a wile and artifice. The story of their old shoes and mouldy bread was so well contrived, and seemed so very plausible, that they took the thing for granted, as we say. ⁶ 'They took of their victuals,' as the text expresses it, or received them without any farther inquiry, upon the account of the staleness of their provision, and ⁶ 'asked not counsel of the mouth of the Lord;' and therefore, no wonder that God should suffer them to be outwitted, when they had an infallible director so near at hand; and yet in a matter of such moment as that of entering into a national treaty, never once bethought themselves to consult him.

But there was a greater error in their conduct with relation to the Gibeonites. The orders and directions which God gave them, when they entered into a state of war, were to this effect:—⁷ That to all cities which, upon their summons surrendered to them, they were to give quarter; to save their lives, but at the same time to make them their slaves and tributaries; but that to such as slighted their summons, and stood upon their defence, they were not to use the same treatment. If they were a distant nation, or not belonging to the country of

⁴ Exod. xxv. 18, 20; chap. xxvii. 6; Lev. xvi. 2; 1 Kings vi. 5, &c.; 2 Chron. iii. 16; chap. iv. 20, &c.; Ps. xxviii. 2.

⁵ Josh. ix. 14.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Deut. xx. 12, &c.

^a The Jewish doctors think, that the custom of consulting God by *Urim* and *Thummin* continued no longer than under the tabernacle: for it is a maxim among them, that the Holy Spirit spake to the children of Israel by *Urim* and *Thummin*, while the tabernacle lasted; under the first temple, that is, the temple of Solomon, by the prophets; and under the second temple, or after the captivity of Babel, by the *bath-cob*, or daughter of the voice, by which they mean a voice sent from heaven, such as was heard at our Saviour's baptism and transfiguration, (Mat. iii. 17.) Our learned Spencer seems to have adopted this opinion, and endeavours to support it by these arguments, namely: That the *Urim* and *Thummin* were a consequence of the theocracy of the Hebrews; for while the Lord immediately governed his people, it was necessary, that there should always be a means at hand, whereby to consult him upon affairs that concerned the common interest of the whole nation; but since the theocracy ceased, when the kingdom became hereditary in the person and family of Solomon, and the interest of the nation ceased to be common, after the division of Israel into two monarchies, the oracles of the *Urim* and *Thummin* must necessarily cease. And accordingly, if we consult the sacred history, we shall meet with no footsteps of this applying to God, from the building of Solomon's temple, to the time of its destruction; and after its destruction, all are agreed, that this oracle was never restored again.—*Spencer De Urim et Thummin*, c. 2.

¹ Lev. xviii. 3.

² Prideaux's Connection, part I. b. 3.

³ Prideaux's Connection, part I. b. 3.

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Canaan, upon their taking any place, they were to put the men only to the sword, sparing the women, and children, and other living creatures that were found in it; but if they were a neighbouring, or Canaanitish state that stood out and resisted, they were to destroy all without exception; and save alive nothing that breathed. In the whole, however, there was this injunction, that of what country soever the people were, and whether they resisted or resisted not, the Israelites were to make no ¹ 'covenant with them, nor with their gods;' and the reason hereof is this,—² That as a league between two nations implies, in the very notion of it, their having upon some terms given their faith to each other, to observe punctually what had been stipulated between them; and as, when such public faith was given and taken, the parties to the treaty swore solemnly to each other by their respective gods; the Israelites, who looked upon the gods of these nations as vanity and nothing, who were obliged to ³ 'overthrow their altars, burn their groves, hew down their images, and utterly extirpate their religion, were totally debarred from entering into any treaty or alliance with them, because they could not recognise their idols as gods, nor take any public faith from the worshippers of them. For so the people seem to say to the Gibeonites, at their first coming into the camp to propose a treaty, 'peradventure you dwell among us,' "are some of those neighbouring nations, whom we are ordered to destroy, whose gods we are to drive out, and whose country we are come to take possession of," "and how shall we make a league with you?" "The interdiction we are under will not permit us; and therefore, if you pretend to impose upon us in this matter, the covenant of course is null and invalid;" and so in reality it was.

It is reasonable, however, to imagine, that after the fraud of the Gibeonites was discovered, the princes of Israel might reflect upon their neglect, in not consulting the divine oracle before; and as the peace, which they had entered into was plainly repugnant to God's command of exterminating all the Canaanites, the question was, what they should do in this case? whether abide by the treaty, and so postpone the command; or execute the command, and so disannul the treaty? The whole stress of the question turns upon this,—⁴ Whether God commanded the Israelites to destroy all the people of Canaan absolutely, and without exception; or whether he allowed them to spare such as voluntarily submitted themselves, and came to implore their pity and protection? The words of the injunction in this case are full, and express enough: ⁵ "When thou goest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it, and if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then shall all the people that are found therein be tributaries to thee, and shall serve thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, and which are not of these Canaanitish nations. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but shalt utterly destroy them, that they teach thee not to do all their abominations, which they

have done to their gods.' But here some great writers have observed, that this utter extinction of the Canaanitish nations, considering the reasons that are given for it, both here and ⁶ elsewhere, is to be looked upon ⁷ as a permission, rather than a positive command, and should, at least, ⁸ be understood with this limitation: 'unless they immediately submitted, renounced their idolatry, and did every thing that was enjoined them.' And to this purpose ⁹ the Jews have a tradition, that Joshua, before he declared war against the seven nations, wrote letters to them, wherein he offered them three conditions,—that if they were minded to depart, they should quit the country immediately; if they were desirous to make peace, they should come and treat with the Israelites; but that if they intended to fight it out, they might betake themselves to their arms: and they farther add, that the first of these conditions the Gergashites embraced, and fled into Egypt; the second the Gibeonites accepted, and made a league with Joshua; and the third the confederate kings made their choice, when they took up arms against the Israelites, and were all defeated.

But this is no more than a bare hypothesis, invented on purpose to solve the difficulty, and seems not to have near so good a foundation as that which supposes that the princes of Israel, remembering their former omission, and their insecurity in acting upon their own bottom, might, in this perplexity, have recourse to God for advice, and that this answer might be, 'that the league should be ratified.' Of this indeed we have no express mention in Scripture; but in so short a history of such a variety of transactions as that of Joshua is, we may well imagine, that several circumstances may be omitted. For that some such ratification of this treaty was determined by God, we have great presumption to believe,¹⁰ from the severe punishment which he afterwards inflicted upon the Israelites, and the posterity of Saul, for his having slain some of the descendants of these Gibeonites, not improbably ¹¹ at the sacking of the town of Nob. For though this action of Saul's was cruel and inhuman, because the decree for the extirpation of the Canaanites was now extinct; yet what made it more heinous and provoking to God, was the infraction of the treaty, which had subsisted about four ages, and which cost the lives of seven of that bloody prince's sons and grandsons to atone.

The heathens, it must be owned, had no small respect and veneration for oaths: whenever they took one, it was in the most solemn and religious manner. ¹² They looked upon the gods as inspectors and witnesses of what they said, more especially at such a time as this. They believed that the furies were appointed to be avengers of all perjury; and that as ¹³ disgrace attended it in this world, so destruction would pursue it in the next. And as this was the general notion of most heathen nations, so the Gibeonites, who had hitherto conceived a good opinion of the God of Israel, would have been strangely scandalized, ^a had they found his people pre-

⁶ Exod. xxiii. 33; and Deut. vii. 4. ⁷ Puffendorf, *ibid*.⁸ Grotius de Jure Belli, b. 2. c. 13.⁹ Saurin's Dissertation on the Artifice of the Gibeonites, vol. 3.¹⁰ 2 Sam. xxi. 1, &c.¹¹ 1 Sam. xxii. 19.¹² See Hesiod, *Dies*, v. 38, &c.¹³ The divine punishment of perjury is destruction; the human, disgrace.^a St Ambrose, treating of this story, speaks of it in this¹ Exod. xxiii. 32.² Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. b. 12.³ Deut. xii. 3.⁴ Puffendorf de Jure Gent. b. 4. c. 2. sec. 7. de Juramentis, &c.⁵ Deut. xx. 10, &c.

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varicating with their oaths, even though they were made upon a false supposition. For fear, therefore, lest any dishonour should fall ultimately upon that divine Majesty whose servants they were, the princes of the congregation unanimously agree, and there seems to be something of a divine inspiration in this their unanimity, and declare it as their joint opinion, 'We have sworn unto them, by the Lord God of Israel,' and therefore without breaking our oath, or forfeiting his favour, 'we may not touch them.'

It was the same commendable zeal for the honour of God, that made the Israelites on one side of Jordan conceive such angry resentments against their brethren on the other, upon suspicion that they had apostatized from his worship into the idolatry of the nations that were round about them. The two tribes and a half, upon their return from the wars, erected an altar, in memory of their relation to the tribes and tabernacle which they had left behind them.² This altar, it seems, was of an height somewhat extraordinary; and as it was the custom for heathens to worship their gods, which were generally celestial bodies, upon high places, as presuming that thereby they made nearer approaches to them; their brethren on the west side of the river conjectured from thence, that this was an altar raised for the worship of the sun, or some other planetary god. But if even they were mistaken in that conjecture, sufficient reason they had to suspect that it was for no good purpose, since God had expressly forbidden them to offer their sacrifices at any other place but the tabernacle, or upon any other altar but that which was built by his appointment: for these are directions which Moses gives them: 'Ye are not yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you: but when you shall be put in possession of it, 'ye shall not do after all these things, that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes: but in the place which the Lord shall choose, in one of thy tribes, there shalt thou offer thy burnt-offerings; thither shalt thou come, and there shalt thou do all that I command thee.'

Now when they had sufficient reason, as they thought, to suspect their brethren of a defection into idolatry, what should they do? Why, herein they punctually follow the rules which God himself had prescribed them in such a case: 'If thou shalt hear say, in one of thy cities which the Lord thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go, and serve other gods, (which ye have not known,) then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you, thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword; destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword; and thou shalt gather all the spoil of

it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city and all the spoil thereof, every whit, for the Lord thy God; and it shall be a heap for ever, it shall not be built again.' And if the Israelites on the west of Jordan, having this cause of suspicion, pursued these orders to a tittle, who shall say that they did amiss, or that their zeal for God's glory was rash and precipitate? They took the properest method, which was sending an embassy, for the discovery of the truth; and if, upon inquiry, their fears were found to be groundless, yet it seems to be an error on the better side, as we commonly say, and an instance of no contemptible prudence, in matters of so dangerous a consequence, always to suspect the worst.

It may be doubted perhaps, whether the Israelites were a people of the greatest bravery in the world, but it may truly be said, that there was no necessity for their being so; because, upon all occasions they had the Lord of hosts to protect them, and to fight their battles for them. Supported by his aid,³ how did one of them chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up? But when this was the case, no wonder at all, that 'the hearts of the people melted away and became like water.'

The short of the story was this,—They had all along hitherto been victorious; had subdued a country beyond Jordan; passed that river, and conquered the capital of the adjacent province by miracle: and now having sent out a party to summon a small place to surrender, upon the first sally that the inhabitants make, they are all on a sudden seized with a panic, forget their courage, and flee, without so much as striking a stroke. This they could not but perceive was the effect of God's displeasure, and therefore, considering themselves in an enemy's country, they had just reason to dread, that if God should desert them in this situation of their affairs, the people of the land, hearing the report of their defeat, would come, and, as Joshua expresses it, 'environ them round, and cut off their name from the earth.'

Good reason therefore had the Israelites to be disconsolate, when they found that God, to whom they owed all their valour and victories, had forsaken them. But in the mean time, how did they behave upon this occasion? Why 'they fell to the earth upon their knees,' in humble supplication to God for mercy; they continued all the day long in fasting and praying, and expressed their sorrow, and the sense of their unworthiness with the usual tokens of grief. And was not this better than to become obdurate under God's afflicting hand, as were the Egyptians? Nay, was not this the very behaviour by which the Ninevites moved the divine mercy to reverse the sentence of excision that had gone out against them? So that, all things considered, the Israelites, in this regard are not to be blamed; since they who had lost 'the rock of their might,' and had 'the terrors of the Lord set in array against them, were far from fearing where no fear was.'

And in like manner, if to the reasons we have already alleged for their conduct at Jericho, we add this one consideration, namely, that they were just now entering upon their conquests; that this was the first city they had

¹ Josh. ix. 19. ² Saurin's Dissertation on Joshua's dismissing the Reubenites.

³ Deut. xii. 9, 8, 14. ⁴ Deut. xiii. 12, 13, &c.

manner:—"Joshua did not think fit to break the peace which he had granted, because it was confirmed by the awful solemnity of an oath, lest, whilst he was blaming the perfidiousness of others, he himself should be worse than his word, and forfeit his own honour."—*De Officiis*, b. 3, c. 10.

⁵ Deut. xxxii. 30.

⁶ Josh. vii. 5.

⁷ Josh. vii. 9.

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taken on the west side of Jordan; and that the people they had to contend with, were to be terrified into submission rather than entreated, we cannot but be of this opinion, that an example or two of high severity, at the first setting out, was no less than necessary to reduce the country more speedily, and with a less effusion of blood; as well as to verify the promise of him who appointed them: ¹ ‘This day will I begin to put the dread of thee, and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of thee.’

Without entering therefore into any farther vindication of the Jewish nation, we may safely say, that in the cases we have had under consideration, they were neither zealous nor timorous, nor cruel without a cause; that in the first of these cases, they expressed their concern for God’s honour; in the second their dread of his departing from them; and in the third, their obedience to his command.

It is a law of God’s own enacting, that ² ‘the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers, but every man shall be put to death for his own sin:’ but then we are to consider, that this law was given to man, and not to God, who has certainly a more absolute right and sovereignty over men, than one man has over another. That as the Israelites at this time lived under a theocracy, and in a proper sense had God for their civil governor, every wilful transgression, such as Achan’s was, must have been deemed, not only a violation of the divine command, but a crime of lese majesty likewise; and that in crimes of this kind, the practice of all ^a governments, ancient as well as modern, has been, to make children suffer for the iniquity of the parent, (as in cases of attainder of blood, and confiscation of estate,) and that with the reputation of the highest equity. Upon the supposition then that Achan’s family were not accessory to their father’s crime, yet God who gave them life, had undoubtedly a full power to take it away, at what time, or in what manner he thought fit; and if in cases of high treason among men, it is thought reasonable to devolve some part of the parent’s penalty upon the children, there is this farther argument why Achan’s family should be made to suffer with him, because God could not express his severity against sin, nor take their lives away, at a more convenient opportunity than in the beginning of a new empire, and when each man’s right and property was going to be settled; that such a dreadful example of his indignation against stealth might deter others, if not for their own, at least for their dear children’s sake, to abstain from such dangerous and pernicious practices. ³ The Jews have a maxim, “That he who is an accomplice

in any crime, is as culpable as the person who commits it;” and therefore, if we suppose that Achan’s family was privy to what their father had done, and did conceal it, there could be no injustice in including them in the punishment. It may be pretended, perhaps, that some of them were infants, and so must be deemed innocent; but the text says nothing of this: it only calls them ⁴ ‘sons and daughters;’ and considering that Achan, in all probability, was an old man, as ⁵ being the fifth descendant from Judah, it seems most likely, that his children ⁶ were grown up, and so capable of knowing, and of either concealing or discovering the fact.

But, after all, there is no occasion for our running ourselves into any difficulty. The text does not say, neither is it any way implied, that Achan’s sons and daughters were executed with him. In the sentence denounced against him, we find no mention made of them, and why then should we suppose that they were partakers in his punishment, any other ways than as they were brought out to be spectators of it? ⁷ And a piercing sight no doubt it was, for persons so nearly related to behold the sad fate of their chief, first stoned to death, and then with all his goods and chattels, as well as those accursed things for which he was condemned, committed to the flames. His oxen, and asses, and sheep, are here taken notice of, to let us see that Achan was a wealthy man, and therefore was inexcusable in committing this fact. And though they were not capable of sin, nor consequently of punishment properly so called; yet as they were made for man’s use, they might fairly die for his instruction, namely, to convince him of the sad and contagious nature of sin, which even involves innocent creatures in its plagues; and emblematically to show him, how much sorer punishments are reserved for man, who having a law given for the conduct of his life, and the gifts of reason and will to restrain him from the transgression of it, will adventure upon things forbidden, and thereby contract greater guilt, and draw upon himself severer expressions of the divine wrath.

God indeed styles himself ‘The Lord of hosts,’ and had so immediate a hand in the conduct of Israel, that every military achievement of theirs might very properly be ascribed to him: but when he ordered Joshua ⁸ ‘to go up against Ai, and to lay an ambuscade behind it,’ he might, notwithstanding this, leave the whole glory of the invention and execution of it to him as an able and expert general; for if he had always wrought miracles in favour of his people, and left nothing for Joshua to perform, we cannot see how he could have merited the character of an extraordinary man.

In other events, where the whole may be said to be under the guidance of God, he takes care to direct every particular of the transaction. In passing the river Jordan, and surrounding the walls of Jericho, he prescribes the form and order of the people’s march, and how, upon every occasion, they were to behave; but

¹ Deut. ii. 25.

² Deut. xxiv. 16.

³ Saurin’s Dissertation on the Crime of Achan.

^a Thus Cicero, to excuse the confiscations decreed against Lepidus, which affected his children, the nephews of Brutus, has these words:—“I well observe how cruel it is that children should be punished for the crimes of their parents, but this has been beautifully explained by the laws, that a love for their children might render the parents more friendly to the state.” (To Brutus, b. 1. *Epis.* 12.) And again,—“In which there seems to be something cruel, that punishment should be inflicted on the children, who have never committed any crime; but it is a law as ancient as it is general.” (*Epis.* 15.)—*Warburton’s Divine Legation*, b. 5. sec. 5. note 2.

⁴ Josh. vii. 24.

⁵ Josh. vii. 1.

⁶ Poole’s Annotations.

⁷ Josh. vii. 2.

⁸ Bishop Patrick, Dr A. Clarke, and others, take the same view as our author, and it seems to be the correct one. Achan’s family were brought out to the valley, that they might see and fear, and be for ever deterred, by their father’s punishment, from following his example.—Ed.

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here, in the affair of Ai, he contents himself with merely suggesting the means, as things that Joshua was no stranger to, and leaves to him the contrivance and application of them. This stratagem indeed is the first that we find any mention of in Scripture; but we must not from thence infer that there was never any before put in execution. The art of war began very soon, and was carried on, no doubt, with great application. The whole excellence of its management consists in circumventing and doubling upon the enemy with dexterity; and therefore, no question but that the wits of mankind were always employed in taking advantage of each other, and in gaining a victory with the least expense of blood on their own side. ¹ The Romans fell frequently into the snares which were laid for them, because their generals were men of no military skill; and therefore, to excuse their ignorance, they alleged that they made war like honest men, without deceit or artifice. And if Alexander disclaimed the use of stratagems, it was because he knew the cowardice of his enemies, and how easy a matter it was to gain a conquest in a fair and open field. For it is not to be doubted, but that had he been to attack any other nation, except the effeminate Persians, he would have taken his friend Parmenio's advice, and, without blushing at a victory gained by good management, fallen upon his enemy under cover of the night.

However this be, that stratagems are lawful in war we have good presumption to think, from God's directing Joshua to make use of one; and though he does not, as other warriors do, employ any of these at a pinch, or because he cannot accomplish his designs without them; though he could, with one single act of his will, have destroyed the city of Ai, and all the inhabitants thereof, and without suffering his people to strike one blow, have put them in possession of the promised land; yet choosing to act by secondary means, he proceeded in the ordinary way, and leaving a good deal to Joshua's skill and management, assisted him only at some critical conjunctures, that, by a prolongation of the war, the reputation of his people might be raised, and more frequent opportunities occur for the display of his miraculous works.

² Josephus, indeed, seems not to have consulted the honour of Joshua much, when he ascribes the delay of the conquest of Canaan to the weakness of his army, and the impregnable strength of the places he was to attack. But ³ some other Jews make the matter much worse, when they tell us, that he desired to prolong the war, not only to retain the office and dignity of being captain-general, but because he was informed by the oracle, that as soon as the conquest was finished, he himself was to die. God, however, seems to have given us much better reasons for this retardation, when he acquaints Moses with his intention: ⁴ 'I will not drive the Canaanites out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee;' and when he complains of their sad defection after the death of Joshua, ⁵ 'I will not henceforth drive out from before them of the nations which Joshua

left when he died, that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or no:' whereupon, the historian tells us, that God accordingly 'did leave these nations without driving them out;' and adds another reason for their continuance in the country, namely, that the Israelites, by having an enemy to contend with, might be trained up in the art and mystery of war: for ⁶ 'these are the nations,' says he, 'which the Lord left to prove Israel, that by them they might teach those war, who before knew nothing of it.'

So that here are three reasons given us, why God delayed the entire subjection of Canaan, namely, because the children of Israel were as yet too few in number to replenish the whole country; because God by keeping the Canaanites in being, was willing both to make trial of his people's obedience, and to train them and their posterity, for some ages, up in military discipline and exercise.

But there is another reason which Joshua, in his dying speech, assigns for their not enlarging their conquests to the utmost bounds which God had given them: ⁷ 'Take good heed therefore,' says he, 'unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God; else if ye do in anywise go back, and cleave unto the remnants of these nations, even those that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you; know for a certainty, that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you.'

So that the promise which God made to the Israelites was conditional; and as they manifestly falsified their part of the obligation, by engaging first in affinity, and then in idolatry with the nations, which they were bound to destroy; so God might very well think himself released from his, and under no farther concern for their success, or the enlargement of their conquest; ⁸ but as they had been the ministers of his vengeance, in punishing the disorders of the Canaanites, they, in their turn, were now made the instruments of his chastising the disobedience of his own people: ⁹ 'They shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from the good land which the Lord your God hath given you.'

And indeed if we consider how violently, in after ages, the Israelites were opposed by their enemies, and by many battles and captivities, harassed and diminished in their numbers, we shall find no necessity of enlarging their possessions; because the country which they conquered in the first six years, was spacious enough to contain them. ¹⁰ The promise, however, which God made was sufficiently accomplished in the reigns of David and Solomon, when the kingdom of Israel was in its zenith; and though its territories did not extend to the Euphrates, yet its dominion did, since all that tract of land between Jerusalem and that great river was either subdued, or made tributary to them.

Upon the whole therefore it is evident, that the author of the book of Joshua, be he who he will, in the three instances which we have been considering, has left no imputation upon God; forasmuch as though he commanded

¹ Calmet's Dictionary, under the word *Ai*.² Antiquities, b. 5. c. 1.³ See Schoten Bibliotheca of Old and New Test. vol. 2. p. 402.⁴ Exod. xxiii. 29, 30.⁵ Judg. ii. 21, 22.⁶ Judg. iii. 1. 2.⁷ Josh. xxiii. 11, &c.⁸ Saurin's Dissertation, vol. 3. Dissertation 10.⁹ Josh. xxiii. 13.¹⁰ Poole's Annotations.

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Achan to be put to death, yet it does not appear that his children suffered with him; or if they did, there is presumption to believe that they were accomplices in his crime: though he ordered the taking of Ai by a stratagem, yet the whole form and contrivance of it he left to the general; and though the Israelites did not actually possess all that he had promised them, yet this was occasioned by their own disobedience and cowardice, and the falsification of those conditions, upon which the full conquest of the land of Canaan was suspended.

There is but one objection more, in the course of this period, which is usually alleged against the sacred history, and that is, the seeming contradiction of the ark's being said to be at Shechem, when it was, in reality, at Shiloh; but in answer to this, some have imagined, that as Joshua was now grown old and infirm, the ark¹ upon this occasion, was removed from Shiloh, the settled place of the divine residence, to Shechem, the place of Joshua's habitation, that he might with greater solemnity, and in the presence of God, whereof the ark was the proper emblem, deliver his charge to the people. But other learned men have observed, that by² 'the sanctuary of the Lord,' we are to understand, not the 'ark of the covenant,' but only some certain place of religious worship, such, very probably, as the Jewish oratories were. That the holy ark was not, on this occasion set up here at Shechem, is evident, they say, from that prohibition given by God,³ 'Thou shalt not plant a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make thee, neither shalt thou set up a pillar, which the Lord thy God hateth:' whereas in this sanctuary, we read both of an oak planted, and a pillar, or statue erected under it; which is certainly such a violation of the divine command, as Joshua, upon no occasion, can be supposed capable of incurring.⁴ It is a very probable opinion, therefore, that the place where Joshua set up this monumental pillar, was one of those which the tribe of Ephraim, to whom Shechem belonged, had consecrated, and set apart for a proseucha, or a place to assemble in for public prayer; and that they made choice of this rather than any other, to perform their devotions in, because it was that particular spot where God appeared to Abraham, and promised his posterity the possession of the land of Canaan.

^a That there were such oratories, or places of public

prayer among the Jews, and that they were generally beset, or shaded with trees, is evident from such a variety of testimonies, that it can hardly be contested; but whether they were of so early a date as Joshua's time, or not rather introduced after the captivity of Babylon, is a question not easy to determine. In the main, however, we may conclude, that whether the ark of the covenant was occasionally brought to Shechem, or at Shechem there happened to be such an oratory, as in after ages became frequent in Judea, there can be no incongruity in the sacred penman's saying, that the sanctuary of the Lord (since either the ark or the oratory might merit that name) was at Shechem. There is another solution, however, of this difficulty, which ought not to be disregarded.⁵ Shechem and Shiloh were about twelve miles distant from each other, and in the midway between them, was Timnath-serah, the place where Joshua lived. Since, therefore, the text informs us, that⁶ 'he gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and they presented themselves before God;' we may reasonably suppose, that though all the people met at Shechem, yet their elders and chief officers only presented themselves before God. That so great a multitude could not meet together, and encamp in any place but where there is a proportionable compass of ground, is a matter self-evident; and that, in the confines of Shechem, there was a large and open country, extending

⁵ Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. b. 12. ⁶ Josh. xxiv. 1.

ately in what unprotected niche I will seek you;" whereby he either intimates, that he was some poor wretch, who dwelt in a house that could not keep out wind and weather, but, like the Jewish proseuchæ, was all open above; or he alludes to the state of the Jews at that time, who were banished out of Rome by Domitian, and had no place of shelter, but their oratories, which were without the walls of the city. For that the Jews had their proseuchæ about the city of Rome, is evident from that passage in Philo, (*de Legatione ad Caium*), wherein he commends the clemency and moderation of Julius Cæsar, who knew that the Jews had such places of public worship, where they always assembled on the Sabbath-day, and yet gave them no molestation, as Caius had done. Josephus (in his life, sect. 54.) makes mention of a proseucha at Tiberias in Galilee, and in several places of the New Testament, the same term is made use of in the same signification; (see *Mede's Discourse* 18.) But then the question is, whether it be not a mistake in some learned men, to apply a usage, that is mentioned at such and such a time, to a people who lived many ages before.

Philo Judeus, (*de Legatione ad Caium*), speaking of the barbarous outrage of some Gentiles against the Jews, dwelling then at Alexandria, acquaints us, "That of some of their proseuchæ, they cut down the trees, and others they demolished to the very foundations." The poet Juvenal alludes to the very same custom of having trees planted where the Jewish oratories were, when, speaking of a fortune-teller of that nation, he thus describes her:—"The trembling Jewess secretly importunes for alms, though she be the interpreter of her country's laws,—the great priestess of the tree—and the faithful ambassadress of high heaven." (*Sat.* 6.) And in another place, complaining that through the corruption of the times, the once sacred grove of Capena, which had formerly been the habitation of the muses, and the place where Numa was wont to meet the goddess Ægeria, was now let out to the beggarly Jews for a proseucha, his expressions are these:—"Here, where Numa used to meet his mistress by night, are now to be found groves and shrines sacred to the Jews, the whole furniture of which is but a coffer and some hay; for every tree is commissioned to give a hire, and the muses being now expelled from it, the wood is gone a begging." (*Sat.* 3.) For it is hard to conceive what affinity there should be between Jews and trees, unless it be from the custom, that their oratories were usually shaded with them.

¹ Poole's Annotations and Patrick's Commentaries.

² Josh. xxiv. 26. ³ Deut. xvi. 21, 22. ⁴ Mede's Dis. 8.

^a Epiphanius, who was a Jew bred, and born in Palestine, speaking of some heretics, (b. 1. hæres. 61.) whom he calls Massalians, and who, according to his account, were neither Jews, Christians, nor Samaritans, but pagans, tells us, that they nevertheless pretended to worship the one true God, and for that purpose had certain open places, which they called proseuchæ. And that the Jews, as also the Samaritans, had places for religious worship of the same denomination, he proves from the Acts of the Apostles, (chap. xvi. 13.) where Lydia is said to have met St Paul, and to have heard him preach in that place, which 'seemed to be a place of prayer.' There is also at Shechem, which is now called Neapolis, continues he, about a mile without the city, a proseucha, a place of prayer, like a theatre, which was built in the open air, and without a roof, by the Samaritans, who affected to imitate the Jews in all things. Juvenal, in his third satire, describing the manner in which some wild young fellows were wont, in their drunken frolics, to affront and abuse every poor man they met with in the streets in the night time, brings them in speaking thus; "Tell me immedi-

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perhaps as far as Shiloh, and very commodious for their reception, we have the attestation of holy writ. But then, since it is impossible for one man to speak to such a number of people and be heard, Joshua very probably singled out the chief and principal of them, such as he foresaw would succeed him in the government after his demise, and these he took with him to Shiloh, a place in the neighbourhood, where was the ark, or sanctuary of the Lord, that he might there, with the greater solemnity, give them his final charge, which they, in their turns, might deliver to their respective tribes.

Thus we have endeavoured to satisfy the several objections, which are usually made against some passages in the sacred history, during the government of Joshua: and if profane testimonies would be of any force, we might produce the accounts which their historians give us of Neptune's drying up the river Inachus, and of Agamemnon's denouncing a curse against any one that should repair Troy, to justify the narrative we have in Scripture of the miraculous passage of Jordan; and the resentment and indignation which Joshua conceived against Jericho. The ancient Hercules was certainly the same with Joshua. He is said to have waged war in behalf of the gods, against Typhœus, and the rest of the giants of old, even as Joshua fought the battles of the Lord against the inhabitants of Canaan, men of a vast stature, and at that time under the displeasure of heaven. In conformity to the sacred record of God's destroying the confederate army of the Amorites with hailstones, the ancient heathens say, that Hercules was thus assisted in his war against the sons of Neptune; and Plutarch, in his life of Timoleon, tells us, that a terrible storm of hail, in the face of the Carthaginian army, gave him, though he had but very few forces to encounter them, a complete victory over them. The sun standing still is no new story. Callimachus ^a represents him as stopping the wheels of his chariot to hear the melody of a chorus of nymphs, wherewith he was so delighted, that it made him prolong the day: and though they are mistaken in the cause, yet the ancient poets discover a tradition of this miraculous event, ^b when they describe the heaven's blushing, and the sun's standing still at the sight of the unnatural murder which Atreus committed. For if Statius mistake not, this bloody fact happened in the time of the Theban war, which, according to the best chronologists, was much about the time of Joshua's conquest of Canaan. But even supposing Statius, or any other author from whom he took the hint, are mistaken in their chronology, ^c the time of Phaeton's life, whose story of misguiding the chariot of the sun, is supposed to take its rise from hence, will synchronize with the

year of the sun's standing still in the days of Joshua. So that, as to the most wonderful transactions which in this space of time we meet with in holy writ, God has not left himself without a witness; forasmuch as the heathen writers, though with some variation or disguise, according to the humour of their mythologists, are known to relate the same things.

CHAP. III.—Of the Shower of Stones, and the Sun's standing still.

OF all the miraculous things that happened in Joshua's wars with the people of Canaan, the shower of stones which God sent upon his enemies, while they fled, and the stop which he put to the course of the sun, that he might have a longer space to destroy them in their flight, are the most remarkable, and do therefore deserve a more particular consideration.

The former of these events the sacred history represents in this manner,—¹ 'And it came to pass that as they,' namely, the army of the Amorites, 'fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died. They were more which died of the hailstones, than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.' But the difference among commentators is, whether we are to understand this miracle of a shower of stones, properly so called, or of a shower of hail.

The learned Calmet, in a dissertation prefixed to his commentary upon Joshua, has taken a great deal of pains to show, that the stones, which the Lord is said to have cast upon the Amorites, were not ordinary hailstones, (since it would be incongruous, as he thinks, to interest God in so common an occurrence,) but real solid stones, which he supposes, might have been engendered in the air by a whirlwind carrying up sand or gravel into a cloud, and there mixing it with some such oily or nitro-sulphureous matter as might consolidate, and form it into a combustible body; that so, when by frequent agitation, it came to be fired, it might burst through the cloud, and scattering itself upon the explosion, might fall down upon the earth in the nature of a perfect shower of stones.

That great quantities of stones have in this manner been discharged from the clouds, is evident from several historians. Diodorus Siculus ² informs us, that as the Persian army was on their march to plunder the temple at Delphos, thunder and lightning, and a violent storm of stones fell in their camp, and destroyed a great number of men. ³ In the reign of Tullus Hostilius, when news was brought to the government, that it had rained stones upon mount Alba, those who were sent to inquire into the matter, brought word, not only that the fact was true, but that these stones had fallen from the skies with an impetuosity equal to the most violent storm of hail. ⁴ Not long after the battle of Cannæ, the same author assures us, that a storm of the same kind, fell on the same mountain, which lasted for two whole days; and events of this

^a His words are these:—"Jupiter Apollo never came near that beauteous choir, but checking his chariot, he would gaze in ecstasy, and cause the morning rays to linger."—*Callimachus to Diana*.

^b "Jupiter more slowly rolled away the darkness from the humid sky, and, as I think, with merciful care, delayed the driven-back air, while the fates forbade it; but the unaccustomed darkness remained only till the sun had resumed his usual strength."—*Statius's Thebais*, b. 1. and 5.

^c The sun stood still in the days of Joshua, A. M. 2554, when Phaeton was about twenty-four years old, an age of ambition enough to desire, though not of ability to execute, the difficult province which he undertook.—*Shuckford's Connection*, v. 3. b. 12.

¹ Josh. x. 11.

² Vol. ii. b. 11.

³ Liv. b. 1. dec. 1.

⁴ Liv. b. 25. 30, 31.

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nature, attested by the best authors, have been so frequent at Rome, at Capua, at Lavinium, and several other places in Italy, that a man must be destitute of all modesty, who pretends to deny them absolutely.

Nay, not only great quantities of smaller stones, but sometimes stones of a prodigious size, have been known to fall from the clouds, whereof this learned author,¹ among many others, gives us several instances, both of ancient and modern date. But then it is justly to be questioned, whether these authors have not suffered themselves to be imposed on by the too confident narrations of others. We may suppose indeed, that whirlwinds, or hurricanes, may raise the sand or gravel, and carry it on high, or some sudden irruptions of subterraneous fire may discharge great quantities of cinders, or ashes, into the air, where meeting with some exhalations of a sulphureous oily, or nitroline quality, they may, by the pressure of the clouds, be condensed and hardened into a stony substance; yet, how any cloud should be able to support such a quantity of smaller stones, much more of vast massy ones, as would be necessary to destroy the army of the five confederate kings, and to continue falling down upon them from Beth-horon to Azekah, places which lay in different tribes, and can hardly be supposed less than twelve or fourteen miles distant, (to say nothing of the many apertures in the earth, which must have been seen afterwards in these parts, upon the supposition that the thing was effected by volcanoes,) is a matter not altogether so credible.^a

¹ See Saurin's Dissertation likewise, who has given us a large account hereof.

^a Since our author wrote much light has been thrown on the disputed subject as to showers of stones, either large or small; and the fact has been established that the descent of such bodies is by no means uncommon. They are solid semi-metallic substances which fall from the atmosphere, and are known by the name of aerolites, or meteoric stones. As it is possible that such bodies were employed by the Almighty in this instance to effect his purpose, we subjoin a short account of them, and the conjectures as to their origin. The larger stones have been seen as luminous bodies moving with great velocity, descending in oblique directions, and frequently with a loud hissing noise, resembling that of a mortar-shell when projected from a piece of ordnance; they are sometimes surrounded with a flame, tapering off to a narrow stream at the hinder part, are heard to explode, and seen to fly in pieces. Of course these appearances have been observed only in the night; when the stones have fallen in the daytime, the meteor has not been observed, but the report and the shower of stones only have been noticed. The same meteoric mass has often been seen over a great extent of country; in some instances 100 miles in breadth, and 500 in length, which implies that they must have had a great elevation. Indeed from various calculations, it appears, that during the time in which they are visible, their perpendicular altitude is generally from 20 to 100 miles; and their diameter has, in some instances, been estimated to be at least half a mile. Their velocity is astonishing. Though rarely visible for more than a minute, yet they are seen to traverse many degrees in the heavens. Their rate of motion cannot according to calculation, be generally less than 300 miles in a minute. From the dimensions of these moving bodies, which certainly have not been overrated, since they have been known to illuminate, at once, a region of one or two hundred miles in extent, we are warranted in the conclusion that the stones which come to us from them, form but a very small portion of their bulk, while the main body holds on its way through the regions of the heavens. The velocity with which the pieces strike the earth is very great, frequently penetrating to a considerable depth, and when taken up, they have been found, in some cases, still hot, and bearing evident marks of recent fusion. Such falls have happened in cloudy as well as in clear weather, which leads

The truth is, there is no reason for carrying this miracle so high; since a shower of hailstones will not only do the work every whit as well, but seems to be the genuine import of Joshua's words, who having acquainted

to the belief that they are wholly unconnected with the state of the atmosphere. The most remarkable circumstance respecting them is, that they invariably resemble each other in certain easily cognizable characters, both as respects their external properties and chemical composition, so as to render it possible for a mineralogist or a chemist to recognize them with certainty, though he should have no information of their origin or fall. Those specimens in which earthy matter preponderates, resemble pretty closely certain varieties of the trachytic rocks, or ancient lavas, but they invariably contain, disseminated through their substance an alloy of iron and nickel, which has as yet never been discovered among the productions of our earth. The earthy minerals of which they are composed, are feldspar, olivine, and augite—the former greatly preponderating; and of metallic substances, besides the native iron, magnetic iron pyrites is a frequent ingredient. The alloy of iron and nickel often contains chrome, manganese, and cobalt, in minute proportions. This alloy varies in the proportion which it bears to the earthy matters, in stones which have fallen at different times: sometimes it is scarcely to be detected without the aid of the microscope; at other times it forms more than one half the bulk of the stone, and immense masses are found consisting entirely of native iron: such masses are called meteoric iron, while the expression meteoric stones is applied more strictly to those in which the earthy minerals preponderate. These last are invariably coated on the outside with a thin black incrustation, and have in general a spherical figure in which we often observe indentations, similar to those which are presented by a mass that has been impressed with the fingers. These constant characters, as respects their fall, and chemical and mechanical composition, indicate a common origin, and have given rise to a variety of hypotheses to account for their phenomena. We can only hint at these hypotheses. Some attribute them to terrestrial, and others to lunar volcanoes. They have again been supposed to be concretions formed in the regions of our atmosphere; while others have considered them as small planets circulating about the sun or earth, which, coming in contact with our atmosphere, take fire from the resistance and friction which they meet with in passing through it. With regard to the first supposition, namely, that these stones proceed from terrestrial volcanoes, it will be sufficient to observe, that no remarkable irruption has been known to have happened at or near the time of their fall; and that such bodies have been found at the distance of some thousand miles from any known volcano; besides the immense force that would be necessary to project bodies of such enormous dimensions as these meteors are known to possess, far exceeds any force that we can conceive of, not to notice the want of similarity between meteoric stones and ordinary volcanic exuvia. As to the theory that they proceed from volcanoes in the moon, it has a greater degree of probability. The same force that would project a body from the moon to the earth, would not, if it were exerted at the earth's surface send the same body to the distance of ten miles, in consequence of the superior gravity of our planet and the density of the atmosphere. It is computed that a body projected from a favourable spot on the moon's surface,—say the centre of her disk opposite the earth,—with a velocity about four times that commonly given to a cannon ball, or 8220 feet per second, would carry it beyond the centre of attraction, and consequently into the sphere of the earth's activity; whence it must necessarily either fall to the surface of the earth, or circulate about us as a satellite. A body so projected from the moon to the earth, would take three days in its passage; which is not so long but that it might retain its heat, particularly as it is doubtful whether in passing through a vacuum, or very attenuated medium, it would be possible for the caloric to escape, not to say that it might acquire a fresh accumulation of heat, by passing through the denser parts of our atmosphere. Besides, eruptions, resembling those of our volcanoes, have been frequently observed in the moon; and her atmosphere is extremely rare, presenting but little resistance to projected bodies. This theory might perhaps be tenable if we had only to account for those showers of stones which come to our earth's surface; but these it has been seen, are a very trifling part of the main masses from which they descend, and which are

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us that the Lord cast down great stones upon the Amorites, adds, by way of explication, 'that they were more that died by the hailstones than by the sword;' where it is reasonable to suppose, that had there been great stones as well as hail, the death of the greater numbers of those that perished would not have been attributed to the hail only.

It is some confirmation of this exposition, that we find the Septuagint, in both places of the text, translating it *Αἰθους Χαλάζης*, which Josephus¹ calls "a violent tempest of hailstones of a prodigious size;" and the author of² Ecclesiasticus thus recounts the whole matter: "With hailstones of a mighty power he made the battle to fall violently upon the nations, and in the descent of Beth-horon, he destroyed them that resisted."

The prophet Ezekiel, in his predictions against Gog,

¹ Antiquities, b. 5. c. 1.² Chap. xlv. 6.

believed to be in some instances more than a mile in circumference. And since it is conceived that we experience a shower of these stones every few months in some part of the world, it is obvious that at this rate the whole mass of the moon must soon be shot away. Nor is this all. Among a number of bodies, thrown at random from the moon, it is not probable that one in 10,000 would have precisely that direction and that rate of motion which would be requisite to cause it to pass through our atmosphere, without falling to the ground. With regard to the theory of these bodies being concretions formed in the air, there is one principal objection, namely, that the velocity with which they strike the earth, estimated by the depth to which they have been known to penetrate, is so great as to indicate their having fallen from heights far exceeding the limits of the terrestrial atmosphere. The remaining theory, especially that modification of it which conceives these meteoric masses to be terrestrial comets, appears encumbered with fewer difficulties than either of the others. The solar comets, it is well known, revolve round the sun in very eccentric orbits. In one part of their revolution, they sometimes come so near as almost to strike his body. They then move off far beyond the orbits of all the planets; and in some instances are gone hundreds of years before they return. The earth, it is imagined, in like manner is furnished with its system of comets, whose size and periods of revolution are proportioned to the comparative smallness of the primary body about which they revolve, and which like the solar comets, fly off in very elliptical orbits; and during the greatest part of their circuit are too far distant to be visible. In their approach to the earth, they fall within our atmosphere; by the friction of the air they are heated, and highly electrified, and the electricity is discharged with a very violent report, accompanied with the detachment of a portion of the mass, which descends in fragments to the earth. This hypothesis certainly accounts, in a very happy manner, for most of the phenomena attending the fall of aërolites. The velocity of the meteor corresponds with the motion of a terrestrial comet, passing through the atmosphere in an elliptical orbit. A body moving near the earth with a velocity less than 300 miles in a minute, must fall to its surface by the power of gravitation. If it move in a direction parallel to the horizon, more than 430 miles in a minute, it will fly off in the curve of a hyperbola; and will never return, unless disturbed in its motion by some other body besides the earth. Within these two limits of 300 miles on the one hand, and of 430 on the other (some allowance being made for the resistance of the air, and the motion of the earth), the body will revolve in an ellipsis, returning in regular periods. Now, the velocity of the meteors, which have been observed, has generally been estimated to be rather more than 300 miles in a minute. In some instances it is perhaps too great to suffer the body ever to return; but in most cases, it is calculated to be such as would be necessary in describing the lower part of an elliptical orbit. Various lists of the periods, places, and appearances of these showers of stones have been given from time to time in the scientific journals. One of the latest and most complete is that published in the first volume of the Edin. Phil. Jour., compiled partly from a printed list by Chladni, and partly from a manuscript one of Mr Allan, read some years ago, at the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

introduces God as threatening, that³ 'he would plead against him with pestilence, and with blood, with an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.' And in another place, speaking of false prophets, who seduced his people, into an opinion of their security, as if they had been fortified within a wall, he pursues the metaphor, and tells those who daubed it with untempered mortar, 'that it should fall; for there shall be an overflowing shower,' says he, 'and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rent it.' So that from these and several other passages of the like nature, we may learn, that in executing his judgments upon the face of the earth, hailstones are very frequently arrows in the hands of the Almighty: and of what force they are to do execution, we are advertised in what befell the Egyptians, when, as the sacred history has related it,⁴ 'The Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran upon the ground: and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt; so there was hail, and fire mingled with hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast: it smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.' Nor are there examples of a later date wanting, especially in our philosophical transactions, of the vast havoc and destruction that hailstones (from⁵ one to five pounds weight) have done in several places; killing both man and beast, and laying the whole country waste, for some sixty or seventy miles round. And therefore, since it is agreed on all hands, that hailstones have frequently fallen large enough to destroy never so great a number of people, when naked and defenceless against their blows, what need is there for our having recourse to any other solution?

A shower of hail, indeed, may be supposed to proceed from a mere natural cause; but when the event happened at the very instant wherein God promised to assist his people against their enemies; when, though it might have annoyed either army, it fell only on that which God had before determined to ruin; and fell so very heavily upon it, as to destroy more than the sword of the conquerors had done; such an event as this, I say, cannot but be looked upon as a miraculous interposition of providence, how fortuitous soever the concurrence of second causes may be. In working miracles, God usually employs natural causes and productions. He does not create any new thing for the purpose; but makes use of what is already created, in a new and extraordinary manner; and therefore, though the shower of hail, and probably the wind too, which made it fall with such impetuosity, were both of them natural; yet the sending them at the very nick of time, and directing them to fall upon the enemy only, in this there was manifestly the hand of God, and something supernatural.

The other miracle is thus related in holy writ. 'Joshua said, in the sight of all Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon: and the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves of their enemies.

³ Ezek. xxxviii. 22.⁴ Ezek. xiii. 11.⁵ Exod. ix. 23, &c.⁶ Saurin's Dissertation on the defeat of the five Kings.⁷ Josh. x. 12, &c.

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Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day; and there was no day like that, before or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.¹ Now, for the better understanding of these words, we must observe,

1. That nothing is more common in Scripture, than to express things, not according to the strict rules of philosophy, but according to their appearances, and the vulgar apprehension concerning them. The sun and moon, for instance, are called ¹ 'two great lights;' but however that title may agree with the sun, it is plain, that the moon is but a small body, much less than many others in the planetary system, and that it has no light at all, but what it borrows, and reflects from the rays of the sun; and yet, because it is placed near us, it appears to us larger than other heavenly luminaries, and from that appearance the holy Scriptures give it such an appellation.

And in like manner, because the sun seems to us to move, and the earth to be at rest, the Scriptures speak a great deal of the pillars, and bases, and foundations of the earth, and of the sun's ² 'rejoicing, like a giant, to run his race,' and of ³ 'his arising and going down, and hastening to the place where he arose,' &c. Whereas it is certain, that ⁴ if the sun were made to revolve round about the earth, the ^a general law of nature would thereby be violated; the harmony and proportion of the heavenly bodies destroyed; and no small confusion and disorder brought into the frame of the universe: but, on the contrary, if the earth turning upon its own axis every day, be made to go round the sun in the space of a year, it will then perform its circulation, according to the same law which the other planets observe; and, without the least exception, there will be a most beautiful order and harmony of motions everywhere preserved through the whole frame of nature. As therefore the Scriptures were designed to teach us the art of holy living, and not to instruct us in the rudiments of natural knowledge, it can be deemed no diminution either to their perfection, or divine authority, that they generally speak according to the common appearance of things, and not according to their reality or philosophic truth. The plain matter of

fact is, that in the early ages, both before, and long after the days of Joshua, the most learned astronomers had no notion of the improvements which our modern professors have since attained to. They never once dreamed of the earth's rotation, upon its own axis; but according to common appearance, were fully persuaded, that the sun and moon, had their respective courses. Upon this supposition they formed their schemes, and thought themselves able to answer every phenomenon by them. And therefore, if God had prompted Joshua to desire the prolongation of the day in a manner more agreeable to our new astronomy, or to record the miracle in terms more suitable to it, this would have been a plain contrariety to all the rules of science then in use. The people who heard him utter the words, 'Earth, rest upon thy axis,' would have thought him distracted, and those who read his account of what had happened, if related in suitable expressions, would have decried it as false in fact, or passed it by with contempt and disregard, as a wild fancy or blunder of his own.

2. In relation to the places over which the two heavenly bodies were to stand, the sun 'over Gibeon,' and the moon 'over the valley Ajalon,' we must observe, that, even upon the supposition of the sun's motion, the Jewish general cannot be thought to speak in a proper and philosophic sense. For since the sun is almost a million of times bigger than the earth, and some millions of miles distant from it, to justify the strict sense of the words, a line drawn from the centre of the sun to that of the earth, must exactly pass by Gibeon, which we know it cannot do, because no part of the Holy Land lies within the tropics: and therefore we must conclude, that Joshua here speaks according to the outward appearance of things, which makes the sense of his words plain and intelligible.

Wherever we are, if so be we are not hindered by objects immediately surrounding us, we can cast our eye upon part of the surface of the earth, and at the same time take into our prospect some small extent of the firmament of heaven, which seems, as it were, to cover the other; and each celestial body, which we perceive in this extent above, appears to us to be directly over such and such part of the earth, as we alternately turn our eyes to: and it was thus, that the sun, when Joshua spake, seemed to him, and to those that were with him, to 'be over Gibeon, and the moon to be over the valley of Ajalon.' This valley, in all likelihood, took its name from some adjacent town; but then, as there are three Ajalons mentioned in Scripture, one ⁵ in the tribe of Ephraim, another in ⁶ Zebulun, and another in ⁷ Dan, it is reasonable to think, that the place here spoken of was in Dan, the most remote province from Gibeon; for we must suppose that these two places were at some considerable distance, otherwise Joshua could not see the sun and moon both appear at the same time, as it is probable they were both in his eye when he uttered these words.

3. In relation to the time when this miracle began, and how long it lasted, the Scripture expression is, that the 'sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day:' which words can import no less, than that the sun stood still in the

¹ Gen. i. 16.

² Ps. xix. 5.

³ Ec. i. 5.

⁴ Keil's Astronomical Lectures.

^a Besides this general argument of Mr Keil's, Mr Whiston has one, which he accounts no less than a demonstration: "If the earth," says he, "have an annual revolution about the sun, it must affect the apparent motion of all the other planets, and comets; and notwithstanding the regularity of their several motions in their own orbits, must render these regular motions, to us, as living upon the moving earth, sometimes direct, and that swiftly or slowly; sometimes stationary, and sometimes retrograde, and that swiftly or slowly also; and all this, at such certain periods, in such certain places, for such certain durations, and according to such certain circumstances, as geometry and arithmetic will certainly determine, and not otherwise. Now that this is the real case in fact, and that every one of these particulars are true in the astronomical world, all that are skilful in that science do freely confess, even those who do not think fit to declare openly for this annual revolution of the earth, which yet is the natural and certain consequence of that concession."—(Whiston's *Astron. Princ. of Relig.*) The reader that is desirous to know more both of the annual and diurnal motion of the earth, may consult Dr Derham's Prelim. Disc. to his *Astro-Theol.*

⁵ Chron. vi. 69.

⁶ Judg. xii. 12.

⁷ Josh. xix. 42.

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meridian, or much about noon, and that in this position it continued for the space of a civil or artificial day, that is, for twelve hours. But ¹ Maimonides is of opinion, and in this he is followed ² by some Christian writers, that there was no such cessation of the sun and moon's motion, but that the whole purport of the miracle was this:—"That God, at Joshua's request, granted him and his soldiers such a degree of spirits, activity, and despatch, as enabled them to gain a complete victory, and do as much execution in one day as might otherwise have taken up two." But this is a construction so repugnant to the genuine sense of the words as to need no formal confutation.

There is something more, however, to be said to the notion of other learned men, who with regard to the time when Joshua might send up his request, and the miracle begin, think it more probable that he should pray for a longer day, when he perceived the sun just going to leave him, than when it was in its height. But Joshua, no doubt, had reasons for what he did: he was an old experienced general, eager for a complete victory, and able to compute what time it would take to achieve it: so that his fear of losing any part of the present advantage, might make him pray that the day might be thus prolonged until he had obtained the whole. If the sun, in its declension, had stopped its course, it might have answered his purpose perhaps; but then it had given a juster handle to the suggestions of those who would deny the whole merit of the miracle. For, if the retardation of the sun had not happened until it was going to set, ³ Spinosa might, with a much better grace, have attributed the extraordinary length of this day to the refraction of its rays from the clouds, which at that time were loaded with hail; or ⁴ Peirerius, to some *aurora borealis*, or *parhelium*, which, after the setting of the sun, might appear about the territories of Gibeon, and so be mistaken for the sun's standing still: but now, by fixing it in its meridian point, all these cavils are effectually silenced; and ⁵ God, no doubt, who heard him so readily, inspired the Hebrew general with that wish or prayer, which otherwise perhaps would never have come into his head.

4. In relation to the book of Jasher, (or of just and upright men,) which Joshua quotes as a voucher of the truth of this miracle, the opinions of learned men are much divided. ⁶ Some think, that it was the book of Genesis, which is here so called, because it treats of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, three of the most righteous men that the world then knew. The Targum of Jonathan calls it 'the book of the law,' as containing not only the chief precepts which God gave his people, but several promises likewise of the wonders which he intended to work for them. ⁷ Josephus, and some interpreters after him, will have it to be certain annals of the lives and particular adventures of some Jewish worthies, and of other things remarkable that happened to that nation; though others again suppose that this was only a collection of some verses, which the Israelites thought themselves concerned to learn by heart, the better to

remember the miracles which God had been pleased to vouchsafe them. But whatever the subject of this book was, or ^a whether it was composed in prose or verse, it is a groundless conjecture to say, ^b that it was wrote in a figurative and hyperbolical style, or that the quotation which Joshua takes from it, is so to be understood. The design of the quotation is only to confirm what Joshua affirms, that the sun did stand still, that of Jasher, in what style soever it was written, must necessarily be supposed to do the same; otherwise it would have been to no purpose to have cited it.

It cannot be denied, indeed, but that, upon some occasions, the sacred penmen do use figures, and poetical expressions; but then the sense and chain of the discourse do easily discover it when they do so. Whenever they intend to express themselves in a figurative manner, there is usually something going before, which prepares the reader for it; and besides that figurative expressions cannot be long continued, there is always something apparently in them, that can by no means be reduced to a literal sense. But now, in the Scripture account of this transaction, where do we perceive any thing like this? ^c Joshua, seeing the enemy put to the rout, begs of God to give him a complete victory, and, at the same time, out of the zeal and fervour of his mind, commands the sun and moon not to advance any farther, until he had effected his desire. The sacred historian tells us, that, at his command, these heavenly luminaries actually did stand still; and to evince the credibility of a thing so marvellous, having produced the testimony of another author that makes mention of the same event, he thereupon concludes, that ^d 'there was no day like that, before it or after it, that God hearkened to the voice of a man.' Here, we see, are all the tokens imaginable of a simple, literal, and historical narration: and the reader must therefore be strongly prejudiced against the belief of all miracles whatever, who can possibly distort such plain and uniform expressions into any figurative or metaphorical sense, in order to evade the force of this.

"But if there really was such a miracle wrought, it is somewhat strange, that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, when he certainly makes mention of things of less moment, should entirely forget this, or that we should have no memorial of it recorded by any profane

^a Grotius and Le Clerc in locum.

^b Calmet's Dissertation on the Commandment, &c. ^c Josh. x. 14.

^d M. Le Clerc has taken the pains to versify the two places where mention is made of the sun's standing still, by the transposition of some words, in order to make it appear at least probable, that the author of the book of Joshua, in quoting them out of that of Jasher, had only reduced them to historical prose by the contrary transposition. But besides the difficulty of telling us what kind of verses these are, since the art of scanning Hebrew poetry has been lost as long as St Jerome's days, if he supposes them to be only rhymes and cadences, it is no uncommon thing, we know, to meet with several passages both in the scriptural and other prose writers, which, with a small variation of the text, are capable of this harmonious turn, and yet were originally never so intended. It is to be observed, however, that though the words, 'so the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day,' are probably cited from some ancient record, yet the preceding ones, "and the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies," (Josh. x. 13.) are the author's own, wherein he talks, not in the loftiness of a poet, but in the plainness and simplicity of an historian: and therefore it

¹ More Nevoch. part 2. c. 39. ² Grotius and Masius in locum.

³ Tract. Theolog. Politic. c. 2. ⁴ Predam. b. 4. c. 6.

⁵ Calmet's Dissertation on the Commandment, &c.

⁶ J. Jarch. in Jos. x. 13. ⁷ Antiquities, b. 10. c. 17.

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writer. God is not so prodigal of his miracles, one would think, as to reverse the whole order of nature, and stop the sun in its regular course, merely that a victory might be obtained in one day, which, every whit as well, might have been gained in two; though it cannot be denied, but that, if it was so, his 'hearkening to the voice of Joshua,' gave him a pre-eminence far above Moses, forasmuch as all his miracles were nothing in comparison of this, even though the Scriptures say expressly, that 'there rose not a prophet, in all Israel, like unto Moses, in all signs and wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, and in the wilderness.'

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, in ² the chapter now under debate, meant no more, than to give his reader some notable instances of the wonderful power of faith. To have been too curious in the choice of these instances, especially when he wrote to persons of the same nation, and who were as well acquainted with these things as himself, would have savoured too much of art and human wisdom, which inspired authors always professedly avoid; and to have been too prolix in the commemoration of them, would have spoiled the form of his epistle, by swelling that part of it beyond its due proportion.

The apostle himself seems to be sensible of this; and therefore we find him cutting himself short, omitting some, and reckoning up several other instances in the gross; and ³ 'what shall I more say? For the time would fail me, to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha; of David also, and Samuel, and all the prophets.' You see, that in the catalogue of his worthies, he observes no great method in enumerating them, nor does he so much as mention Joshua, though his character be vastly superior to that of Gideon, and others that he takes notice of; and therefore, if his omitting this particular of the 'sun's standing still' may be deemed a sufficient argument against its reality, by parity of reason, all the other miraculous transactions which he has thought proper not to mention, such as the plagues of Egypt, the wonders in the wilderness, the passage of Jordan, and several others of the like nature, must be reputed destitute of truth, how frequently soever they may be recorded in other parts of holy writ.

And in like manner, though we find no mention made of this wonderful event in heathen writers, yet this is no valid objection against it, because it happened many ages before there were any historians or chronologers, that we know of, extant to record it. - Or if we think that a fact so very remarkable could have hardly escaped a general observation, why may we not suppose, that the public archives or monuments wherein it was re-

corded, in the long and obscure time that intervened before any of our present historians arose, have been lost; and that nothing has been transmitted to us, (except what we have in sacred writ,) but an uncertain tradition, clouded with fable, and poetical fictions.

It can hardly be thought, indeed, but that the humour which the poets had, ^a of imputing to magic the power of stopping the stars in their courses, and what they relate of their heroes and demigods being able to lengthen days or nights, as it best served their military or amorous purposes, proceeded from something: and to what can we ascribe it more properly, than to a glimmering knowledge which they might from tradition have of this miraculous event? But however this be, it is certain that the argument drawn from the silence of heathen authors, can be of no validity against the truth of this miracle, since it did not happen in any age when the earliest of them lived, and might therefore be what they knew nothing of; since all their works have not descended to us, and in what is lost, they perhaps might have related it, as in what is extant, we are sure they say nothing to contradict it.

⁴ It must be reckoned a point of justice then, and a kind of right belonging to all nations, to be determined, in what concerns the history of any country, by the history of those people, who are presumed to be better acquainted with their own affairs than any strangers can: and therefore we cannot, without apparent prejudice, deny this privilege to the Hebrew writers, even though we find some heathen testimonies not entirely according with them. But when nothing of this is pretended; on the contrary, when as far as those dark times would permit, there is a concurrence and harmony between them, there can be no shadow of reason for calling in question their veracity, unless the things which they relate be either impossible or contradictory, which, in the case before us, can never be affirmed; because it is sure and self-evident, that the Author of nature, who gave being and motion to the sun and stars, may stop that motion, and make them stand still, when, and as long as he pleases; especially when their rest will contribute to his glory, as it certainly did in this instance, as much as their continued motion does.

God indeed never works any miracle, but upon a just and proper occasion; but then we ought to remember, that this battle against the confederate kings, was fought not offensively, but defensively, on the side of Israel, in order to save a people whom they had solemnly taken under their protection. The Gibeonites, as is generally supposed, were a commonwealth, for which reason they might not enter into a league with the five kings; and as a free people, they had a right, no doubt, to take all proper measures for their safety. Joshua, therefore, could not but look upon the confederacy against them as cruel, and unjust, and himself obliged in honour not to refuse the oppressed the succours they requested of him, upon any pretence whatever; since God's honour was likewise concerned in the preservation of a people who had entered into an alliance with his own inheritance,

¹ Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11.

² Heb. xi.

³ Heb. xi. 32.

is, at least, a bold assumption to say, that a writer, who barely appeals to another for the truth of a single instance, has taken the whole from him. The most that can be fairly concluded from such an appeal is, that the fact is equally affirmed by both, either in the same or equivalent terms; whereas, had the terms of the 'sun's standing still in the midst of heaven' been intended to mean no more, than that there remained so much light after its setting, occasioned by some unusual refraction, as made the whole army think it was still above the horizon, no honest man, for fear of imposing on his reader, would have cited them, without modifying their sense, or giving them an explanation.—*Saurin's Dissertation on the Defeat of the Five Kings, and Universal History*, b. 1. c. 7.

⁴ Calmet's Dissert. on the Commandment, &c.

a "At the charms of her song, the vicissitudes of nature stopped, time stood still in a lingering darkness; the air obeyed no law, and the listening world fell into a torpid trance."—*Lucan's Pharsalia*, b. 6.

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and had their alliance ratified by the mouth of his high priest, and with the sanction of his most blessed name. Upon these considerations, Joshua loses no time, but marches all the night to their assistance; and on the next day, God is pleased to reward his faithfulness and zeal with a most miraculous victory, whereby he not only rescued his allies, but made all the land of Canaan sensible likewise, that a greater and more powerful God was on Israel's side than any whom they worshipped,¹ by stopping the sun and moon (which were two of the principal deities whom those idolatrous people adored) in the midst of their course.

God might, no doubt, in the compass of two days, have enabled the Israelites to have gained a complete conquest over their enemies, without the expense of a miracle, as these men call it. But then, had this been obtained by the dint of the sword only, it would have been imputed to their superior valour and strength, and deemed no more than the common fate of war: or had there nothing more remarkable happened in it, than a shower of large hailstones, this might have been thought owing to chance, or natural causes, or at most, been only known in that neighbourhood; whereas, the stopping of the two great luminaries, in the height of their career, (which could not but be universally seen and felt,) was enough to convince these poor deluded people, that the gods, whom they trusted in, were subject to the God of Israel, and at the same time deter the Israelites from falling into the like idolatry, from² 'kissing their hand, as Job expresses that form of worship, 'when they beheld the sun as it shined, or the moon walking in its brightness;' to convince them, I say, that³ 'the gods of the heathens were but idols,' and that it is the Lord who made, and who ruleth in the heavens.

It cannot be questioned but that the fame of this miracle raised Joshua's reputation to an high degree, nor⁴ can we see any inconvenience in admitting, that this was a more remarkable miracle than any which Moses ever did; because it does not therefore follow, that Joshua, in other respects, was a person of greater eminence than Moses. Our blessed Saviour tells his disciples,⁵ 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father. And yet he gives us to understand, in another place, that⁶ 'the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.'

Elisha was the servant and attendant on the prophet Elijah, and yet it is certain, that, according to our estimate, he did more and greater miracles than his master did; for even⁷ 'after his death his body prophesied;' as the son of Sirach expresses it; 'he did wonders in his life, and at his death were his works marvellous.' And therefore we need not account it a strange thing, that we find Joshua here doing a miracle, which in our opinion surpasses all that ever Moses did: because God's making use of the ministry of one man, rather than another, in his surpassing works of wonder, is no certain proof of the man's superior merit; since in this, as well

as any other dispensation, he is at perfect liberty⁸ 'to choose,' if he pleases, 'the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; yea, and base things, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.'

But after all, we talk of greater and less miracles, when in reality, there are no such degrees of comparison between them. For what is it that makes us account one work of this kind greater than another? if it be, because we conceive more difficulty in doing it; this, with regard to God, the sole author of all miracles, is a great mistake, for as much as all things are equally easy to his almighty power. The motion, and other properties of every created being were at first impressed by him: 'He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast;' and with the same facility, he can retard or suspend their operations; for they have no power of resisting the very first beck of his will. Since every thing, therefore, that is contrary to the ordinary course of nature requires the interposition of an almighty power, and whatever is not impossible in itself, is equally possible to God; with him there can be no difference between passing the Jordan and passing the Red Sea, between drawing water out of the stony rock and arresting the sun in the firmament of heaven; 'for 'whatever he pleased that did he, in heaven, and in the earth, in the sea, and in all deep places.'

Some of the Objections to the Credibility of the Old Testament Considered and Answered.

SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.

SOME of the objections which infidels have advanced against the credibility and divine authority of the Old Testament scriptures, and more especially against the part of them that has now been surveyed, are frivolous; others are founded on a mistranslation of the original; and all of them may be easily and satisfactorily answered.

1. The first which I shall notice, is the command of God to the Israelites, to destroy the seven nations of Canaan, and to take possession of their land. The transaction to which this injunction refers, is explained by Bishop Watson in his Apology for the Bible, in a manner which most persons consider to be satisfactory. The dispensation complained of, and which is supposed to be irreconcilable with the justice and the benevolence of the Deity, is as consistent with these attributes of the divine nature, as many occurrences which happen in the ordinary course of providence. "If it be consistent," as has been remarked, "with the justice and benevolence of the Supreme Being, that the Jewish nation, his own peculiar people, should, on account of the enormity of their sins, be in their turn attacked in their inheritance; be subjugated to a foreign power; become the prey and plunder of a long succession of capricious, cruel, and avaricious tyrants; have their city and temple at length assaulted; be loaded with every possible calamity which

¹ Patrick's Commentary in locum.

² Job xxxi. 26.

³ Ps. xcvi. 5.

⁴ Calmet's Dissertation on the Commandment, &c.

⁵ John xiv. 12.

⁶ Mat. x. 24.

⁷ Eccles. xlviii. 13, 14.

⁸ 1 Cor. i. 27, &c.

⁹ Ps. xxxiii. 9.

¹⁰ Ps. cxxxv. 6.

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pestilence, famine, and torture, their own mutual treacheries and animosities, and the implacable enmity and ingenuity of their adversaries, could invent, during the continuance of this tremendous siege; if it be consistent with the same adorable attributes, that upwards of a million of them should fall victims to so complicated a scourge, and that the wretched remnant who escaped, should be suffered to wander about as outcasts and vagabonds over the face of the whole earth, equally despised and derided by every nation among whom they might acquire a temporary abode; if it be consistent with these attributes, that this terrible visitation should be persevered in for a period of at least eighteen centuries, thus punishing from age to age, the children for the sins of their fathers; if the case before us, which we cannot but believe, be consistent with the justice and benevolence of the Deity, surely the case recorded, a case of far inferior vengeance, demands no great credulity to obtain our assent, nor strength of reasoning to reconcile it with the moral perfections of the Supreme Being.”¹ It is not the fact, however, that the Canaanites were all destroyed. The Gibeonites and Jebusites, were permitted to live. Rahab was saved, because she professed her faith in God.

It is to be observed, that the destruction of the nations of Canaan was not an arbitrary infliction of vengeance, but the merited punishment of their wickedness. This is fully proved by the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus, where, after mentioning their corrupt and abominable practices, it is said, ‘In all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you; for all these abominations have the men of the land done.’ They were early idolaters; sacrificed their infants to idol deities; they were addicted to unnatural lusts, and sunk in every kind of vice. It was on account of these enormities, which were general and habitual among them, that the nations of Canaan were destroyed. This is expressly affirmed: ‘In all these, the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it.—Ye shall not commit any of these abominations, that the land spue not you out also, as it spued out the nations which were before you.’² The very land is represented as sick of its inhabitants; of their odious and brutal practices; of their corruption and wickedness. This was the reason for destroying them; and not, as has been imagined, to make way for the Israelites.

God’s treatment of the persons guilty of those crimes was impartial, without distinction, and without respect of nations or individuals. The words which point out the divine impartiality, are those in which Moses warns the Israelites against falling into any of the like wicked courses: ‘That the land,’ says he, ‘cast not you out also, when you defile it, as it cast out the nations that were before you; for whoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them, shall be cut off from among their people.—Ye shall not walk in the way of the nations which I cast out before you: for they committed all those things, and therefore I abhorred them; as the nations which the Lord destroyed before

your face, so shall ye perish: because ye were not obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God.’

Nor were the Canaanites destroyed without warning, and much patience and long-suffering on the part of God. The stroke was suspended during several generations, till their wickedness rendered its infliction inevitable. In the 15th chapter of Genesis, God says to Abraham that his descendants of the fourth generation should return into that country, and not before: ‘for the iniquity of the Amorites,’ says he, ‘is not yet full.’

Even when this period arrived, they were still permitted to flee elsewhere, as in fact many of them did, or to renounce their idolatries, and serve the God of Israel; in which case it appears that mercy was exercised to them. The case of the Gibeonites, and of Rahab, already referred to, would seem to favour this view of the subject. We are told³ that there was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; all other they took in battle: from which words it is inferred, that the Canaanites might have had peace, if they had thought proper to accept the proposed terms. Had they submitted to these terms, they would have turned from idols to the worship of God; ceased from the practice of wickedness, and consequently would not have been a snare to Israel, by teaching them to do after their abominations.⁴

The objection therefore is not, and cannot be, to the destruction of the Canaanites: because, when God, for the wickedness of a people, sends an earthquake, or a fire, or a plague amongst them, there is no complaint of injustice, especially when the calamity is known, or expressly declared beforehand, to be inflicted for the wickedness of such a people. It is rather regarded as an act of exemplary penal justice, and, as such consistent with the character of the moral Governor of the universe. The wickedness of the Canaanites accounts for their destruction. To that merely no objection can therefore be made. The manner in which this was effected is that which is complained of. But where is the great difference, as Dr Paley observes, even to the sufferers themselves, whether they were destroyed by an earthquake, a pestilence, a famine, or by the hands of an enemy? Where is the difference, even to our imperfect apprehensions of divine justice, provided it be, and is known to be, for their wickedness that they are destroyed? But this destruction, you say, confounded the innocent with the guilty. The sword of Joshua, and of the Jews, spared neither women nor children. Is it not the same with all other national visitations? Would not an earthquake, or a fire, or a plague, or a famine amongst them, have done the same. Even in an ordinary and natural death, the same thing happens. God takes away the life he lends, without regard, that we can perceive, to age, or sex, or character. But, after all, promiscuous massacres, the burning of cities, the laying waste of countries, are things dreadful to reflect upon. Who doubts it? So are all the judgments of Almighty God. The effect, in whatever way it shows itself, must necessarily be tremendous, when the Lord, as the Psalmist expresses it, moves out of his place to punish the wicked. But it ought to satisfy us—that it was for excessive, wilful, and forewarned wickedness, that all this befell

¹ Dr Good’s *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Dr Alex. Geddes*.

² Lev. xviii. 28.

³ Josh. xi. 19, 20.

⁴ Deut. xx. 10—19.

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them, and that it is all along so declared in the history which recites it.

Besides, satisfactory reasons may be assigned for giving to the mode in which the Canaanites were punished the preference to every other. The superiority of their own gods above the gods of the nations which they conquered was, in the opinion of the people of those early ages, evinced, by their giving them victory in war. This being the actual persuasion which then prevailed in the world, how were the neighbouring nations, for whose admonition this dreadful example was intended, how were they to be convinced of the supreme power of the God of Israel above the pretended gods of other nations, and of the righteous character of Jehovah—that is, of his abhorrence of the vices which prevailed in the land of Canaan: how were they to be convinced so well, or at all indeed, as by enabling the Israelites, whose God he was known and acknowledged to be, to conquer under his banner, and drive out before them, those who resisted the execution of that commission with which the Israelites declared themselves to be invested, namely, the expulsion and extermination of the Canaanitish nations? This convinced surrounding countries, and all who were observers or spectators of what passed, first, that the God of Israel was a real God: secondly, that the gods which other nations worshipped were either no gods, or had no power against the God of Israel: and, thirdly, that it was he, and he alone, who possessed both the power and the will to punish, to destroy, and to exterminate, from before his face, both nations and individuals, who gave themselves up to the crimes and wickedness for which the Canaanites were notorious. Nothing of this sort would have appeared, or with the same evidence, however, from an earthquake, or a plague, or any natural calamity. These might not have been attributed to divine agency at all, or not to the interposition of the God of Israel.

First, the destruction of the Canaanites, then, was an act of penal justice. It was merited by their wickedness. Secondly, the infliction of this punishment by the instrumentality of the Israelites, made it more manifestly appear to proceed from the God of Israel, by whose miraculous power the devoted nations were subdued. Thirdly, their general destruction was not only just, but it was rendered necessary, to prevent the pernicious example of their crimes from gradually seducing the children of Israel to the practice of their vices and abominations. 'Thou shalt utterly destroy them, that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods.' Fourthly, the supreme moral Governor of the world was impartial in this exercise of punitive justice, because he threatened his chosen people with similar retribution, if they should be guilty of similar crimes. Fifthly, this dispensation regarding the Canaanites, which has been the subject of civil and complaint, is shown to be as consistent with the justice and benevolence of God, as many occurrences which happen in the ordinary course of providence. Sixthly, the circumstances of the Jews when they inflicted this punishment on the Canaanites, prove that they acted by divine commission. If we suppose the contrary, we must believe that Moses in this instance indicated a line of conduct directly opposed in its tendency to the peaceful habits which the facility given to the Jews

required and implied. "Up to a certain point they were to be trained in the worst possible discipline for peaceful citizens; to encourage every disposition opposite to those inculcated by the general spirit of the law. Those who were to be merciful to the meanest beast—who were not to exercise any oppression whatever towards a stranger of another race, on the capture of a Canaanitish city, were to put all to the sword.—At a given point their arms were to fall from their hands, the thirst of conquest subside; and a great unambitious agricultural republic, with a simple religion, an equal administration of justice, a thriving and industrious population, brotherly harmony and mutual good-will between all ranks, domestic virtues, purity of morals, gentleness of manners, was to arise in the midst of the desolation their arms had made, and under the very roofs, in the vineyards and corn fields, which they had obtained by merciless violence."

II. Another class of objections made to the divine authority of the Scriptures of the Old Testament is founded on a mistranslation of the original. Thus, ¹ God is said in the authorized version to have directed the Israelites to borrow of the Egyptians: it should have been rendered, to ask or demand. They were instructed to ask that which was their due: and the minds of the Egyptians were so overruled that they readily complied with the demand which was made. ² 'My (that is God's) breach of promise.' This is highly improper: it should have been rendered, my displeasure or indignation. ³ According to the common translation Jephthah is represented as promising to offer his daughter in sacrifice: but when the particle *vau*, is translated *or* instead of *and*, the objection founded on this passage falls to the ground. 'Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, if thou shalt surely give the children of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall either be the Lord's, or, I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.' That is, if what meets me on my return, be what the law allows for a burnt-offering, I will offer it, if not, it shall be, in as far as the nature of the case will admit, consecrated to God. ⁴ The dying charge of David to Solomon, relative to Shimei, has been often the subject of cavil to sceptics: but the objection is founded on a mistranslation: the Hebrew word should be read disjunctively, as in the former passage; and then we have, 'Neither hold him guiltless, for thou art a wise man: nor his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood.' That is, he is an artful, designing, dangerous person, who requires to be strictly watched; but nevertheless spare his life, and do not let him die by the hand of justice.

The conduct of David towards the Ammonites, as described 2 Sam. xii. 31, in 'putting them under saws and harrows of iron,' has been represented as an instance of extreme cruelty. The subject of complaint is founded on a mistranslation. The Hebrew prefix *beth* (*beth*) signifies to as well as *under*; and to put the people to saws, harrows, axes, and the brick kiln, means no more than to employ them in the most menial and laborious

¹ Exod. xi. 2. xii. 35.² Num. xiv. 34.³ Judges xi. 30, 31.⁴ 1 Kings ii. 9.

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offices. "This form of expression," as Mr Horne remarks, "is an Anglicism as well as a Hebraism; and we still say to put a person to the plough, to the anvil. We render the passage thus: 'He,' David, 'brought forth the people that were therein, and put them to saws and to harrows of iron, or iron mines, and to axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick kiln.' In a similar passage, ¹ Dr Kennicott has proved, that in place of the word, *cut with saws*, the word *he put them* should be inserted: so that this passage must be rendered and understood in the same manner as the former.

Finally, we are always to bear in mind that the character of this was peculiar to itself, in its not being intended to recover violated rights, or to procure indemnity for past injuries, or security against future; but to vindicate the cause of God against the incorrigible, and to exhibit them as examples of divine retribution. Regard to the interests of those who engaged, was not the only, or the prevailing principle of this war. The main object was, the manifestation of the righteousness and honour of God as the supreme moral Governor of the world. His authority, his attributes, and even his being had long been treated with the utmost indignity; and this was the peculiar method which he prescribed for their full vindication.

III. A third class of objections is founded on alleged contradictions to morality. An acquaintance with the manners and customs of eastern nations, so different from those of the moderns, will account for the circumstances which have been adduced either from ignorance or from design, as offensive to the feelings of delicacy.

It is also necessary to recollect the peculiar and extraordinary constitution of the Jewish polity and government. God was the immediate and temporal sovereign of the Jews, whose laws were enforced by present rewards and punishments. There were certain sins, such as idolatry, which were regarded as a renunciation of his authority, as high treason against the state, and which were therefore punished with death.

IV. It is alleged, that some of the things which are mentioned in the Old Testament are contradicted by philosophy. In consequence of the progress of science, this objection is now seldom advanced, at least by well informed persons. We have already adduced proofs from natural history of the reality of the deluge. Science also furnishes evidence in confirmation of the truth of the Mosaic account of the creation. "The structure of the earth," says Professor Jamieson, "and the mode of distribution of extraneous fossils or petrifications, are so many direct evidences of the truth of the Scripture account of the formation of the earth; and they might be used as proofs of its author having been inspired, because the mineralogical facts discovered by modern naturalists were unknown to the sacred historian. Even the periods of time, the six days of the Mosaic description,—are not inconsistent with our theories of the earth."² Nor are the phenomena of the heavenly bodies at all contradictory to the Mosaic history. To the objection, that the historian speaks of light before the creation of the sun, and calls the moon a great light, when every one knows it to be an opaque

body, modern philosophy furnishes the answer. It has discovered, that the sun is not the original source of light; and therefore Moses does not call either the sun or the moon a great light, though he represents them both as great luminaries or light-bearers. Surely the moon is as much an instrument of conveying light, as the reflector placed behind the lamps of a light-house, for the purpose of transmitting to the mariner at sea the light of those lamps which would otherwise have passed in an opposite direction to the land. Though the moon is not a light in itself, yet is that secondary planet a light in its effects, as it reflects the light of the sun to us. And both the sun and the moon are with great propriety called great,—not as being absolutely greater than all other stars and planets, but because they appear greater to us, and are of greater use and consequence to this world. And now, after all our improvements in philosophy and astronomy, we still speak of the light of the moon, as well as of the sun's motion, rising, and setting. And the man who in a moral, theological, or historical discourse, should use a different language, would only render himself ridiculous.

In like manner, had objectors referred to the original Hebrew of Gen. i. 6, 7, 8, (which in our English authorized version, as well as in other modern versions, is erroneously rendered firmament, after the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions,) they would have rendered it *expanse*; and they might have known that it meant the air or atmosphere around us, in which birds fly and clouds are formed, and that it had no reference whatever to a solid firmament; though such an idea was entertained by the ancient Greek philosophers, who, with all their boasted wisdom, were nearly as ignorant of the works, as they were of the nature of God. And does not this circumambient air divide the waters from the waters, the waters of the sea from the waters which float above us in clouds and vapours? For ³ 'there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth.'

Moses also represents the earth at first in a state of fluidity. ⁴ 'The Spirit of God,' says he, 'moved upon the face or surface of the waters.' The apostle Peter also speaks of the earth as being formed out of a fluid: 'The earth standing out of the water and in the water.' The same tradition reached also some of the ancient heathen philosophers; and Thales, in particular, one of the seven wise men, and the wisest of them all, as Cicero informs us, said that all things were made out of the water. Others, after him, taught the same doctrine; and is it in the least degree contradicted or disproved by modern discoveries? On the contrary, is it not more and more confirmed and illustrated by them? It is well known that if a soft or elastic globular body be rapidly whirled round on its axis, the parts at the poles will be flattened, and the parts on the equator, midway between the north and south poles, will be raised up. This is precisely the shape of our earth; it has the figure of an oblate spheroid, a figure bearing a close resemblance to that of an orange. Now, if the earth was ever in a state of fluidity, its revolution round its axis must necessarily induce such a figure, because the greatest centrifugal force must necessarily be near the equatorial parts, and

¹ 1 Chron. xx. 3.

² Preface to Kerr's Translation of Cuvier's Essay on the Earth.

³ Jer. x. 13.

⁴ Gen. i. 2.

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consequently there the fluid must rise and swell most. It has been demonstrated by experiment, that the earth is flattened at the poles and raised at the equator: and thus do the Scriptures and philosophy agree together, and confirm each other. The Scriptures assert that the earth was in a state of fluidity; and philosophy evinces that it must have been in such a state from its very figure.

It has been alleged also that the circumstance of the sun and moon standing still, which is recorded in Joshua x. 12, is contrary to philosophy. Let it, however, be recollected that the sacred historian expressly relates it as a *miracle*: it is therefore impossible to account for it on philosophical principles; it must be resolved wholly into the power of God, who hearkened to the voice of a man, to stop the luminaries in their diurnal courses, or perhaps the earth's rotation, and by prolonging the day of battle, to make them fight for Israel. From the circumstances of the narrative, we may collect the time of the day and of the month when it happened, namely, soon after sunrise, and when the moon was rather past the full.

Joshua, when summoned by the Gibeonites to come to their succour against the confederate kings, went up from Gilgal all night, and came suddenly (we may conclude about daybreak) upon the enemy, whom he discomfited with great slaughter, and chased along the way from Gibeon to Beth-horon, in a westerly direction, the Lord co-operating in their destruction by a tremendous shower of great hailstones, which slew more than the sword of the Israelites, but did not touch the latter. In this situation, the sun appeared to rise over Gibeon eastward, and the moon to set over Ajalon westward, near the Mediterranean sea, in the tribe of Dan; when Joshua, moved by a divine impulse, uttered this invocation in the sight of Israel:—'Sun, stand thou still over Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.' So the sun stood still in the hemisphere, and hasted not to go down about a whole day,—which in that climate, and shortly after the vernal equinox, might have been about thirteen hours long, thus giving him daylight for the destruction of his enemies for twenty-six hours, during which he took the city of Makkedah, and slew the five kings who hid themselves in a cave near it.¹

Many inquiries have been made concerning the way in which this miracle was wrought, and many difficulties and objections have been urged against understanding it literally. But the fact, as far as we are concerned about it, is authenticated by the divine testimony; and the manner in which it was accomplished, lies entirely out of our province, because beyond our discovery and comprehension. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? This question forms a sufficient answer to ten thousand difficulties which puny objectors, under the assumed title of philosophers, have, in every age, been starting against the truth of God in his written word. If the earth's diurnal motion was gradually stopped, it does not appear that it would, in respect of the dry land, make a more sensible difference to the inhabitants, than casting anchor, when a ship is under full sail, does to the mariners: and the power which caused the deluge, was sufficient to prevent the effects of this change, on

the seas and oceans, and keep them from overflowing any part of the globe.² As there are no records of profane history so ancient as this event, it cannot be any cause for wonder, that pagan authors have not mentioned it. Though some intimation of it seems given, in the fable of Phaeton driving the chariot of the sun, and throwing all things into disorder, so that there was one day wholly unlike all before or after it. This extraordinary miracle not only gave Israel an opportunity of completing their victory, but rendered Joshua honourable in the eyes of all the people; and both him and them terrible to the surrounding nations. It was also a public attestation, that the God of Israel was the Lord of the whole earth, and of the heavens; and a protest against idolatry, whilst the sun and moon, the worship of which formed the most ancient and plausible kind of idolatry, were obedient to the commands of the servants of Jehovah, the God of Israel.³

With respect to the shower of stones, I am inclined to believe with bishop Gleig, that the stones were meteoric stones, and not ordinary hailstones. Hailstones are not only natural, but common phenomena, and, therefore, were not calculated to make such an impression on the minds either of the Israelites or of the Gibeonites as a shower of fire-balls, or ignited stones. There seems, indeed, to be little room for doubt, but that the one kind of stone is formed in the atmosphere by some natural process, as well as the other; but in what manner, or by what law of nature the ignited metallic stones are formed, is, I believe, equally unknown to the philosopher and to the peasant. One of the most scientific chemists of the present day, after describing a great variety of such metallic stones, which are to be found in every quarter of the globe, says, that we may consider them all as fragments of fire-balls, which have burst in the atmosphere; but that the origin and physical cause of those fire-balls, will, perhaps, for ages, baffle all the attempts of philosophers to investigate them. The pouring down of such a shower of stones, by whatever process formed, on the army of the Canaanites confederated against Israel, was a miracle admirably calculated to convince the Israelites and Gibeonites of the superiority of Jehovah, over the gods of Canaan.

SECT. II.

CHAP. I.—*From the Death of Joshua to the Death of Samson.*

THE HISTORY.

AFTER the death of Joshua,^a no particular person, that we read of, succeeded him in the government; and

² Gen. vii. 10—12.

³ Deut. iv. 19. See Scott on the passage.

^a The Samaritan Chronicle tells us, indeed, that in the last assembly which Joshua held he nominated twelve chiefs, of every tribe one, and put it to the lot, who should succeed him in the government; that the lot fell upon his nephew Abel, whom he accordingly crowned, and invested with other ensigns of honour, &c., but this is thought to be no more than a fabulous account, invented to fill up this void space of time—*Saurin's Disser. on Heglon, king of the Moabites, who was killed, &c.*

¹ Josh. x. 1—28. Dr Hales, Dr A. Clarke's Note on the Passage, Horne's Introduction, vol. 1. p. 658—662.

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therefore, the most probable opinion is, that every tribe was governed by their respective heads, or elders, (which form of government subsisted about thirty^a years,) and

^a Dr Hales, following the chronology of Josephus, with some corrections, makes the whole period from the time of Joshua and the elders who survived him, to the election of Saul, 498 years, which he accounts for thus:—In the general introduction of his Analysis of Scripture Chronology, he endeavours to show that the interval from the exodus to the foundation of Solomon's temple, was 621 years; from which, subtracting 123 years, namely, forty years from the exodus to this return, eighty years from the two reigns of Saul and David, and the first three years of Solomon, the remainder is 498 years. "But," says the learned and indefatigable doctor, "although we are indebted to Josephus for this, and for supplying some material chasms in the sacred annals, such as, 1st, the administration of Joshua and the elders, 25 years; 2d, the ensuing anarchy, 18 years; 3d, the administration of Shamgar, 1 year; and, 4th, of Samuel, 12 years; still his detail of the outline there given requires correction.

For, 1. The year ascribed to Shamgar's administration is too short, as is evident from Deborah's account, (Judges v. 6.); I have therefore included it, with David Ganz, in Ehud's enormous administration of 80 years, and transferred the one year to Joshua's, making that 26 years. 2. I have restored Abdon's administration of 8 years omitted by Josephus, and deducted it from the 18 years he assigns to the anarchy, thereby reducing the latter to its correct length of 10 years. 3. I have dated the first division of the conquered lands in the sixth year, which Josephus reckoned in the fifth year; because Caleb was 40 years old when Moses sent him as one of the spies from Kadesh-barnea, in the second year after the exode; consequently he was 39 years old at the exode, and therefore 79 years old, 40 years after, at the arrival in Canaan; but he was 85 years old when he claimed and got the hill of Hebron for an inheritance, which therefore must have been six years after the arrival in Canaan. Compare Num. x. 11; xiii. 6., with Josh. xiv. 6.—15. 4. Josephus has omitted the date of Samuel's call to be a prophet, (1 Sam. iii. 1.—19.) which St Paul reckons 450 years after the division of lands, (Acts xiii. 19, 20.); and which, therefore, commenced with the 10 last years of Eli's administration of 40 years. This last most important chronological character, from the New Testament verifies the whole of this rectification; while it demonstrates the spuriousness of the period of 480 years in the present Masorite text of 1 Kings vi. 1., from the exode to the foundation of Solomon's temple."

Following the chronology of Josephus, in preference to the Hebrew text, his table of the Judges is as follows:—

	Years.	B. C.
I. Joshua and the Elders, . . .	26	1608
First division of lands, . . .		1602
Second do. do.		1595
Anarchy, or interregnum, . . .	10	1582
I. Servitude to the Mesopotamians, . .	8	1572
2 Othniel,	40	1564
II. Servitude to the Moabites, . . .	18	1524
3 Ehud and Shamgar,	80	1506
III. Servitude to the Canaanites, . . .	20	1426
4 Deborah and Barak,	40	1406
IV. Servitude to the Midianites, . . .	7	1366
5 Gideon,	40	1359
6 Abimelech,	3	1319
7 Tola,	23	1316
8 Jair,	22	1293
V. Servitude to the Ammonites, . . .	18	1271
9 Jephthah,	6	1253
10 Ibzan,	7	1247
11 Elon,	10	1240
12 Abdon,	8	1230
VI. Servitude to the Philistines, 40,	20	1222
13 Samson,	20	1202
14 Eli,	40,	30
Samuel called as a prophet, . . .	10	1152
VII. Servitude to the Philistines, . .	20	1142
15 Samuel,	12	1122
Saul elected king,	498	1110

that, in their wars with the Canaanites, they made them their commanders. For several of the Canaanitish kings remaining still unconquered, the Israelites unanimously resolved to set about their reduction; and accordingly repaired to the oracle at Shiloh, to ask directions of God, which tribe should begin the war. God's orders were, that the tribe of Judah should begin; and therefore, they, taking to their assistance the tribe of Simeon, first set upon the cruel^b king of Bezek: sacked the town, killed ten thousand of its inhabitants, and, as he was endeavouring to make his escape, seized him, and cut^c off his thumbs and great toes, in the like manner as he had done to no less than seventy little kings^d or princes, whom he compelled to gather their meat, like dogs, under his table: so that the similitude of his punishment made the tyrant reflect upon his own cruelty, and acknowledge the justice of God in what he had brought upon him.

After the conquest of Bezek, the two united tribes^e invested Jerusalem, and having taken it, put the inhabitants to the sword, and set the place on fire. They thence marched to Hebron, and having made themselves masters of it, went to attack Debir, which was part of

"The only alteration here made in the present text of Josephus is the insertion of Tola, and his administration of 23 years, (Judges x. 1, 2.), which are inadvertently omitted between Abimelech and Jair, (*Ant.* 5, 7, 15.) but evidently were included in the original scheme of Josephus, as being quite requisite to complete the period of 621 years. To Abdon no years are assigned by Josephus, (*Ant.* 5, 7, 15.), perhaps designedly, for Clemens Alexandrinus relates, that some chronologers collected together the years of Abathan and Elbron, (Abdon and Elon,) or made them contemporaries. But we may easily reconcile Josephus with Scripture, by only deducting eight years from the 18 years' interregnum after Joshua, which will give Abdon his quota of years, and leave that interregnum its juster length of 10 years.

"It is truly remarkable, and a proof of the great skill and accuracy of Josephus in forming the outline of this period, that he assigns, with St Paul, a reign of 40 years to Saul, (Acts xiii. 21.), which is omitted in the Old Testament. His outline also corresponds with St Paul's period of 450 years, from the division of the conquered lands of Canaan, until Samuel the prophet."—See *Dr Hales' Chronology*, vol. 1. p. 298; vol. 2. p. 257. *et seq.* second edition.—Ed.

^b There is another place in Scripture, namely, 1 Sam. xi. 8, where Bezek, is mentioned; and since Eusebius and Jerome tell us, that there were in their days two towns, about seventeen miles from Shechem, of the same name, and not far distant from each other, we see nothing of moment to hinder them from being both but one city in former times.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

^c The reason of their mutilating him in this manner, was to make him incapable of war any more, being unable to handle arms, by reason of the loss of his thumbs, or to run swiftly, which was a notable quality in a warrior in those days, by the loss of his great toes.—*Patrick's Commentary* in locum.

^d From this it seems very probable, that the different Canaanitish tribes were conveyed by a sort of chieftains, similar to those among the clans of the ancient Scottish Highlanders.—Ed.

^e We do not read that Jerusalem was ever taken by Joshua, though it seems highly probable, that when he took the king of Jerusalem, he did to it as he did to the rest of the cities belonging to those kings, (Josh. x. 3—23.) But when he was gone to conquer other parts of the country, it is likely that the o'd inhabitants returned again, and took possession of it, for the land was not then divided among the Israelites. But as Joshua, a little before his death, divided the land, and this city fell, in part, to the share of the tribe of Judah, they dispossessed the Jebusites that dwelt there, of all but the strong fortress on the top of mount Sion, which held out till the days of David.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

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Caleb's allotment, though the Canaanites at that time had possession of it. Caleb,^a who in all probability was general in these wars, being resolved to storm the place, made proclamation in the camp, that whoever should attack and carry it, should have his daughter Achsah as a reward of his valour; which his gallant nephew Othniel, son to his younger brother Kenaz, achieved, and so, not only obtained the beautiful damsel for his wife, but with her a large estate likewise, in a well-watered country, which, at her request, her father very generously bestowed on him.

Thus the tribe of Simeon assisted that of Judah to subdue the mountainous parts about Jerusalem, and the southern parts adjoining to the wilderness of Paran; and when this was done, the tribe of Judah in like manner, assisted the Simeonites to take Gaza, Askelon, and Zephah, which was then called Hormah; so that these places, in after ages, came into their possession.^b Encouraged by these successes, the family of Joseph undertook the conquest of Bethel; and to this purpose sent out spies, to take a survey of the town, and to gain what intelligence they could. They perceiving a man coming out of it, immediately seized him, but promised to spare his life, upon condition that he would give them the best information he could, in what way the town was approachable. The man did so; and by his information they succeeded so well, that sending for their forces, they entered the place, and put all the inhabitants to the sword, except the man who had given them intelligence, and his family.

The other tribes had equally good success in gaining the possession of the lands that were allotted them; only the tribe of Dan was compelled to quit the plains for fear of the Amorites, and to retire into the mountainous parts of the country, where they were pent up for some time, until the family of Joseph came to their assistance; and having restrained the insolence of their enemies, reduced them to a narrower tract of land than what they had at first.

One great default, however, in those that were successful against the Canaanites, was, that they did not make a right use of their victories, but either through a misplaced lenity, or covetousness, instead of destroying them, (as they were commanded,) suffered them to live promiscuously among them, and contented themselves with making them tributary; which so far incensed God,

^a Who was their general upon this occasion, is not expressly mentioned either in Scripture, Josephus, or any other ancient historian; and yet it is hardly to be questioned, but that Caleb was the person. He was of the tribe of Judah, older than any other by twenty years; and yet, like Moses, he continued in his full strength and vigour. He and Joshua, were the only two spies, who, having searched out the land, gave a true report of it; and therefore, as Joshua was the first general, he had the greatest right to succeed him; and this might be the reason why Joshua, at his death, named no other. He and Joshua, were the only two persons to whom the Israelites gave inheritances for their signal services; and as his inheritance lay unconquered in this tribe, he had the greatest reason to be active in reducing it. His name alone is mentioned in all these wars, and as his son-in-law, Othniel, was the first deliverer of the Israelites from their oppressions, he seems to have succeeded Caleb in this dignity; as his nearest and most valiant relation.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 5. c. 3.

^b The Septuagint in this place, (Judges i. 18,) reads, 'But Judah did not possess Gaza nor the coasts thereof; neither Askelon nor the coasts thereof; neither Ekron, nor the coasts thereof;

that he sent an angel from Gilgal, to expostulate the matter with them; to remind them of the favour which he had vouchsafed them, in delivering them out of Egypt, and bringing them into that happy land, of his punctual performance of all the promises he had made them, and of their vile ingratitude in rejecting his precepts, for which he had very justly withdrawn his protection from them.

The reproof made the people, for the present, a little sensible of their transgression, so that they fell into a general lamentation; and deploring the wretchedness of their condition, offered sacrifices to God, in order to appease his wrath. But no sooner was this fit of humiliation over, but continuing still their correspondence with the Canaanites, indulging themselves in their loose conversation, and making intermarriages with them, they fell into idolatry, and worshipped Baal and Ashtaroth, and other idols of the heathen, which so provoked the Lord, that he left them to themselves; and they, without his protection, made so weak a defence, that they were often taken, and enslaved by their enemies.

The first oppressor that the Israelites had, was named Chushan Rishathaim. He was king of Mesopotamia, and when he invaded the territories of Israel, he made an easy conquest, and imposed a tribute on them, which lasted for eight years; but at the expiration of that time, God raised up Othniel, Caleb's son-in-law, (who was the first of those whom the Scripture calls Judges,) and inspired him with courage and resolution to take up arms against the king of Mesopotamia, whom he soon defeated, and settled the Israelites in a state of peace and tranquillity, which lasted for forty years. But during this space of time, the people fell into a general apostasy, and corruption of manners, whereof the ^d two following stories are sad and remarkable instances.

neither Azotus nor its adjacent places: and the Lord was with Judah.' This is the reading of the Vatican and other copies of the Septuagint; but the Alexandrian MS., and the text of the Complutensian and Antwerp polyglots agree more nearly with the Hebrew text. St Augustine and Procopius read the same as the Vatican MS.; and Josephus expressly says, the Israelites took only Askelon and Azotus, but did not take Gaza nor Ekron. And the whole history shows that these cities were not in the possession of the Israelites, but of the Philistines; and if the Israelites did take them at this time, as the Hebrew text states, they certainly lost them in a very short time after.—*Dr A. Clarke*.—Ed.

^c The Jews are generally of opinion, that by this angel, we are to understand a prophet who was sent by God as a messenger which the very word often imports; and this messenger they commonly take to have been Phinehas, who was employed upon this errand. We can see no reason, however, for their departing from the usual signification of the word, especially when there is no absurdity in it, and the sense of the context seems to require our retaining it. Nay, there is reason to say, that the person who here reproves the Israelites, was something more than a created angel; for who but God can speak in this style, 'I made you to go out of Egypt?' No prophet, nor any created angel durst have been so bold; and therefore the opinion of most Christian interpreters is, that it was the Son of God, who is frequently in Scripture called 'the angel of the covenant.' And fit it was for him to appear now, as coming from Gilgal, to put them in mind of his illustrious appearance near that place once before, of the assurance he then gave them of his presence with them in the conquest of the land, and of the solemn covenant he made with them, by renewing of circumcision. The angel's coming up from Gilgal is therefore mentioned as a very pertinent circumstance, to upbraid the Israelites with their base ingratitude to God, and with their sloth in not endeavouring to expel the Canaanites.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d These two stories are related in the 17th, 18th, and 19th

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The tribe of Dan, as we said before, being pent up in the mountainous parts, found their territories much too narrow for them; and therefore they sent out of their body five spies, to survey the country, and bring them in intelligence, in what part of the regions round about, they might most likely extend their bounds. The spies, in their journey, came to the house of Micah of Mount Ephraim, whose mother, thinking it too much trouble to go to Shiloh to worship, and offer sacrifices there, had made an idol, and placed it in a private chapel of her son's building: for her son had an ephod and teraphim, and for some time, had consecrated one of his own sons to be his priest; until a Levite, who had dwelt some time at Bethlehem-Judah, travelling from thence to seek a better settlement, happened to call at Micah's house, and by him was hired to execute that office; whereupon the man was fond enough to believe, that God would prosper him not a little, now that he had got a Levite to be his priest.

It so happened, that some of these spies being acquainted with this Levite, and, after some discourse, understanding in what capacity he served Micah, desired of him to ask counsel of God, what success they might possibly promise themselves in the enterprise they were going upon, and with the encouragement which he gave them, they proceeded on their search, until they came to Laish;^b

chapters of Judges, and being so placed, they may seem to belong to the latter part of this period; whereas, in the judgment of most learned men, they were transacted much about this time. It is plain from the text, (chap. xvii. 6.) that these things happened 'when there was no king,' that is, no ruler, for properly speaking there had hitherto been no king, 'in Israel, but every man did what was right in his own eyes;' and the reason why Samuel, or whoever was the author of this book, places them here, is because he was not willing to break the thread of his history, by intermixing these matters with it, but reserved them to be related apart by themselves.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

a That the divine service might be performed with a greater resemblance of what was done at the tabernacle in Shiloh, he made priestly ornaments; for so some learned men take the ephod to comprehend, not only the breastplate adjoining to it, but all the rest of the vestments used by the high priest. His intention was to set up an oracle in his own house, in imitation of the sanctuary of Moses; and therefore, to make the conformity the greater, it is supposed that he erected a kind of ark, whereon he placed two teraphim, to answer the two cherubim in the tabernacle, as he caused the priest who officiated for him to wear an ephod, in the manner that the high priest did when he consulted God. Mr Selden (in his *Syntagma I. de diis Syriis*, c. 2.) well observes, that the worship of the true God, and of idols, was here blended together. The ephod and the Levite, which Micah afterwards provided, were intended, no doubt, for the service of the true God; but the graven image and teraphim, by which the children of Dan desired the Levite to inquire of God, belonged unto demons. They neither trusted to the ephod alone, which related to God, nor to their teraphim alone, which was their own invention, but thought it necessary to join both together in divine worship: and thus began idolatry in Israel, by the superstition of an old woman, who put this in her son's head. This woman, many of the Jews suppose to be the same with Delilah, who, having got so much money of every one of the lords of the Philistines, thought it expedient to employ some of it in expressing her devotion. But this is an idle conceit, that has no other foundation, than Delilah's being mentioned in the foregoing chapter; whereas Micah was some hundred years prior to her.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Jurieu's History of Doctrines and Worship*, part 3.

b The text reads, 'Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to

where observing a pleasant and fruitful country, and the people living in a secure and negligent manner, without any rule or discipline among them, they returned to their brethren, and gave them an account, how fruitful the country was, and how easily, in their opinion, the place might be taken by surprise.

Upon this, the Danites drew out a party of six hundred men, and sent them to take possession of the city Laish; but in their way through Mount Ephraim, they called at Micah's house, and, in his absence, seized the Levite, the ephod, and teraphim, and other images that Micah had made; and as the Levite was remonstrating against what they had done, they soon pacified him, by representing the advantage of being a priest to a whole tribe rather than any one family; and with the hopes of that he went very willingly along with them.

Micah returning home, and understanding that his priest and his gods were gone, musters up his friends, and pursues the Danites; but when he came up with some of the hindmost of them, and was making his complaint against the injury they had done, they wished him to be gone; for that if he persisted to irritate the rest of the party, it would certainly cost him and his friends their lives: and so continuing their march, on the third day they came to Laish, where finding it unguarded, they burnt the city, destroyed the inhabitants, and took possession of the country; but in a short time after, they rebuilt the city, which, after the name of their father, was called Dan, and here setting up the images which they had stolen from Micah, they made this same Levite, whose name was Jonathan, their priest; and in this state of idolatrous worship they continued for about three hundred years, even unto the time ^c that the ark of

shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man.' The following remarks of Dr A. Clarke, throw much light on this passage; he thinks that probably the people of Laish or Leshem were originally a colony of Sidonians, who were an opulent people; and being in possession of a strong city lived in a state of security, not being afraid of their neighbours. And that in this the Leshemites imitated them, though the sequel proves that they had not the same reason for confidence—that being a Sidonian colony they might naturally expect succour from their countrymen; but being far from Sidon the Danites saw they could strike the decisive blow before the news of the invasion could reach Sidon, and consequently before the Leshemites could receive any succours from that city. The last clause, 'and had no business with any man,' in the most correct copies of the Septuagint reads, 'and they had no transactions with Syria.' Now it is evident that instead of אדם *Adam*, MAN, they read ארם *Aram*, SYRIA; words so nearly similar that the difference which exists is only between the *resh*, and *daleth*; and this both in MS. and printed books is often undiscernible. This reading is found in the Codex Alexandrinus, in the Complutensian polyglot, in the Spanish polyglot, and in the edition of the Septuagint, published by Aldus. It may be proper to observe that Laish was on the frontiers of Syria; but as they had no intercourse with the Syrians, from whom they might have received the promptest assistance, this was an additional reason why the Danites might expect success.—Ed.

c The words of the text are;—'And the children of Dan set up the graven image, and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons, were priests to the tribe of Dan, until the day of the captivity of the land;' (Judges xviii. 30.) But then the question is, what we are to understand by the captivity of the land? Now there are two times mentioned in Scripture, when the children of Israel were carried away captive, by Tiglath-Pileser, when he 'took Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them into Assyria,' (2 Kings xv. 29.); and 2dly, by Salmanasser, who 'carried Israel away, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, by the river Gozan,

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God was taken captive by the Philistines, which was in the days of Samuel.

Not long after this, the war of the Benjamites broke out, which is another tragical piece of history, and as pregnant a proof of the people's immorality, as the other is of their apostasy. The substance of the story is this.—^a A Levite of Mount Ephraim, having taken a wife out of Bethlehem-Judah, who proved a lewd woman, she made an elopement from her husband to her father's house, where she continued for some months. The Levite, however, being willing to be reconciled to her, went to bring her home; but, in his return happening to be benighted, he was obliged to turn ^b into Gibeah, where an old man of Mount Ephraim, who was only an inmate there, after some conversation, received him into his lodgings. But while they were at supper, the men of the city beset the house, and demanded to have the stranger brought out to them, that according to the sin

of Sodom, they might know him. It was vain to use entreaties to so rude a rabble. The good old man offered them his own daughter who was a virgin; and, at length, by consent the Levite's wife was turned out among them. They abused her all that night; and the next morning, she was found dead at the threshold, which enraged her husband to such a degree, that taking her home with him, he cut her dead body into twelve parts, and sent one to every tribe, with an account of the inhospitable treatment he met with at Gibeah; that so, in a general assembly of Israel, it might be resolved, what method of revenge it was proper to take upon this dismal occasion.^c

The assembly agreed, that never so inhuman an act had been known in Israel since the time they left Egypt; and thereupon came to a resolution to bring the offenders to condign punishment, and in order to that, sent messengers to them demanding the men that had committed this outrage; but they refused to deliver them, and in order to defend the criminals, mustered up all their forces. The army of the Benjamites consisted but of six and twenty thousand, whereas that of all Israel amounted to four hundred thousand men; and yet, in two several engagements, the Benjamites had the better of them; for in the former, they killed them twenty-two thousand, and in the latter eighteen thousand men. But the misconduct of the Israelites upon this occasion was, that being too confident of the goodness of their cause,

and in the cities of the Medes,' (2 Kings xviii. 11.) And to one of these, the words of the text are supposed by some learned men to refer; but then it must necessarily follow, that this book was written in later times, even after the former of these captivities at least. It can hardly be supposed, however, that these images should be suffered to continue in the days of David, who was a man after God's own heart, and studied to advance true religion to the utmost of his power all the country over, from Dan to Beer-sheba; and therefore others, with good reason conclude, that by 'the captivity of the land,' is meant the taking of the ark by the Philistines, and carrying it captive into the temple of Dagon; for so the Psalmist expressly calls that unlucky event: 'he forsook the tabernacle in Shiloh, even the tent that he had pitched among them; he delivered their power into captivity, and their beauty into the enemies' hands,' (Ps. lxxviii. 60, 61.) (*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries*.) Instead of Manasseh, as observed in a former note, we should read Moses, as it is found in some MSS., the Vulgate and the concession of the most intelligent Jews. R. D. Kimchi acknowledges that the Jews have changed Moses into Manasseh, because they think it would be a great reproach to their legislator to have had a grandson who was an idolater; that Gershom the son of Moses is here intended, is very probable. See the arguments urged by Dr Kennicott, (*Dissertation* 1. p. 55, &c.) and the Var. Lect. de de Rossi on this place. We may add the following in support of the opinion, that by 'the captivity of the land,' the taking of the ark is meant. Hubigant contends that, instead of *haarets*, the LAND, we should read *haaron*, the ark; for nothing is easier than for the *vau*, and *y* final *nun*, to be mistaken for the *y* final *tsade*, which is the only difference between 'the captivity of the land,' and the 'captivity of the ark;' this conjecture is the more likely, because the next verse tells us that Micah's graven image continued at Dan all the time the house of God was at Shiloh, which was till the ark was taken by the Philistines.—See *Calmet*, *Poole's Synopsis*, and *Dr A. Clarke*.—Ed.

^a Josephus relates this story with a good deal of variation from the sacred history:—That the Levite's wife was not a lewd woman, but one who did not well agree with her husband, for which reason she left him, and went to her father; that the young men of Gibeah, seeing her to be a very beautiful woman, took notice of the house where she went in, and came and demanded her, and not the Levite himself, as the Scripture has it; that the Levite did not turn her out, but that the young men took her by force, and carried her to their own quarters, where they spent the whole night in all manner of bestial liberties, and then sent her back again next morning; that upon her return, she fell into such a confusion of thought, for what had befallen her that night, that, what between shame and indignation, she sank down upon the ground, and expired; that the Israelites met in convention, sent to the Benjamites to deliver up the malefactors, who had committed this brutal violence upon the Levite's wife, which they refused to do, as thinking it dishonourable, for fear of a war, to submit to rules of other people's prescribing, &c.—*Josephus*, b. 5. c. 2.

^b Gibeah lay north of Jerusalem, about twenty or thirty furlongs from it, and was built upon a hill, as its name imports.—*Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

^c Judg. xix. 29. 'And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel.' Interpreters say but little concerning the real views of the Levite in this transaction; they merely intimate, that it was done to excite a general indignation against the authors of the injury he had sustained. His motives certainly were good and regular. He intended to unite the whole nation in vengeance against a crime, in which it was interested: but as they might be checked in the extent of the punishment by the number, the credit, and the power of the offenders; by the natural commiseration which is felt for those who are of the same blood; or by an aversion to involve the city in destruction; he sought and seized a method which put them to the indispensable necessity of espousing his cause. The only part which he had to take was, to cut in pieces the body of his wife, which he did, or else that of an ox, or other like animal, which had either been devoted, or offered in sacrifice, and to send a part of it to each tribe. In consequence of this, every tribe entered into an indissoluble engagement to see justice done him for the injury he had received. This is what the interpreters of Scripture seem not to have known, and which it is necessary to explain.

The ancients had several ways of uniting themselves together by strict ties, which lasted for a stipulated time; amongst these may be noticed the sacrifice of Abraham, the circumstances of which are mentioned, Gen. xv. 9, &c. Another method was, to take a bullock offered or devoted in sacrifice, cut it in pieces and distribute it. All who had a piece of this devoted bullock were thenceforward connected, and were to concur in carrying on the affair which had given occasion for the sacrifice; but as this devoting and dividing was variously practised, it also produced different engagements. If he who was at the expense of the sacrifice, were a public person, or in high office, he sent of his own accord a piece of the victim to all who were subject to him; and by this act obliged them to enter into his views. If the sacrifice were offered by a private person, those only who voluntarily took a piece of the sacrifice, entered into a strict engagement to espouse his interest.

These circumstances, compared with the account given of the Levite's conduct, and the subsequent behaviour of the tribes, clearly point out, that the method used by the Levite to obtain redress, was consistent with the established usages of the times, and effected the retribution he desired to see accomplished.—*Burder's Orient. Customs*. vol. 1. p. 182.—Ed.

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and the superiority of their numbers, when they went to consult God, they only inquired of him which of the tribes should lead the van, without placing their confidence in him, or depending upon his assistance for success, which these repeated defeats brought to their remembrance; and therefore, before the third engagement, they humbled themselves in a proper manner before God, and from his encouragement, attacked the Benjamites once more. But to make their victory the more secure, they laid an ambuscade behind the city, which, while they pretended to fly, entered it, and set it on fire; whereupon the main body of the Israelitish army faced about, and charged so furiously upon the Benjamites, that they slew five and twenty thousand of them, set fire to their city, and destroyed all that belonged to them. It so happened, however, that six hundred of them, which were all that remained of the tribe, made their escape into the wilderness, and sheltered themselves in the fortress of Rimmon.

When the heat of the action was over, and the Israelites began to reflect coolly on what they had done, they were grieved not a little; and that the rather, because at the beginning of this war, they had all taken a rash oath not to marry their daughters to any of the Benjamites: so that how to recruit the tribe they could not tell, until they bethought themselves of these two expedients. When the war first broke out, they had bound themselves by oath, to put all to the sword who would not join them in the common cause against the Benjamites; and finding by their muster-roll, that the people of Jabesh-Gilead had neglected to come, they despatched twelve thousand men, with orders to put man, woman, and child to the sword, except such virgins as were marriageable, whom they intended to give to the Benjamites for wives. For by this time the Benjamites were reconciled to the rest of the people, had left their stronghold, and were come into the camp; so that when the men returned from the slaughter of the Gileadites, they brought four hundred virgins along with them, which were immediately given to the Benjamites; but as the Benjamites were six hundred in number, there was not for every man one, and therefore they betook themselves to another expedient.

Once every year, ^a there was a festival kept at Shiloh, whither the young women of the country used constantly

to come and dance. The Israelites therefore suggested to the Benjamites, that as many as wanted wives might at this time repair to the place, and concealing themselves in the vineyards, seize upon the young women as they came out adancing, and carry them off to their own habitations. The Benjamites accordingly pursued their instructions; and, watching their opportunity, took every one his damsel away with him: so that, having by this means got themselves wives, they settled again in their own country, and began by degrees to recruit their tribe.

After the death of Othniel, the Israelites again revolted from the service of God, and God, to chastise them for it, suffered Eglon, king of Moab, to subdue them; so that, for eighteen years together, they were forced to be tributary to him. But upon their humiliation and repentance, he raised them up a man, even out of the diminished tribe of Benjamin, who wrought their deliverance, but in a method no ways to be justified, under a less supposition than that he had a divine commission for so doing.

Every year it was customary for the Israelites to send a present or tribute to the king of Moab, and for that year Ehud, the son of Gera, was appointed to go with it. He was a left-handed man; and having a design either to free his country from this oppression, or perish in the attempt, he had for this purpose provided himself with a poniard, which he concealed on his right side. After he had delivered the present, pretending he had something of great importance to communicate to the king, he obtained a private audience of him, when, taking his opportunity, he stabbed him with the poniard to the heart, and so shutting the door after him, had time to make his escape. For as the king was a very corpulent man, his attendants supposed that he was either reposing or easing himself, and therefore forbore to enter into his apartment until Ehud was quite gone. As soon as he came to Mount Ephraim, he gathered together the Israelites that lay nearest him; acquainted them with what he had done; and then securing the fords of Jordan, that none of them might escape, he fell upon the Moabites, and destroyed them all; so that, after this conquest, the eastern part of the land of Canaan enjoyed a settled peace ^b for the space of fourscore years.

^a All the three great festivals were to be observed in the place where God settled his habitation, which was now at Shiloh; and therefore some are of opinion, that the feast here mentioned was one of these; particularly they think it was the feast of tabernacles, because this was a season of great joy, for having newly gathered their vintage, and the only season wherein the Jewish virgins were allowed to dance. At this time they dwelt in booths too, behind which the Benjamites, as they fancy, might very conveniently conceal themselves, and so watch an opportunity of carrying away the virgins: but what seems to make against this opinion is, that at any of these public festivals, the concourse of people would have been too great for a design of this nature to be put in execution, since the violence which must of course have been offered to the young women would hardly have met with a general connivance. It is much more probable, therefore, that this was some festival peculiar to the people of Shiloh, which the Benjamites perhaps might know nothing of, and were therefore put in mind of it by 'the elders of the congregation.' Josephus tells us that it was celebrated thrice every year: and on this festival it might be a custom for the young women to go out into the fields, and there dance by themselves, which might give their ravishers the very opportunity they wanted.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^b There are two ways wherein 'the land,' as it is in the text, may be said to have 'had rest fourscore years.' If by the 'land,' we understand the whole kingdom of Israel, the meaning must be, that it rested about fourscore years, or the greatest part of fourscore years. Because it is a very common thing in Scripture to use numbers in this latitude, and instead of a minute computation, to make mention of the round sum. Thus the Israelites are said 'to bear their iniquities forty years in the wilderness, (Num. xiv. 33.) when there wanted almost two years of that number; and to 'dwell in Egypt four hundred and thirty;' when, strictly speaking, there wanted several of it: and in like manner, the land is here said 'to have had rest fourscore years,' when it is declared at the same time, that the people served the king of Moab eighteen of them; nor is it any uncommon thing in other authors, as well as the sacred, to use this form of expression. But, 2dly, if by the land, we understand only such or such a part of it, the solution is easy. For it is but supposing that there were scarce any of the judges who ruled over the whole country of Israel, but some in one part, and some in another; so that, at the same time, there were several judges in the land, and peace in one part, when there was war in another; and then we may, with the learned Sir John Marsham, understand here, by 'the land which had rest fourscore years,' not the whole land of Israel, but

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But though the eastern coast was at rest, yet the west part of the kingdom was sadly molested by the incursions of the Philistines, who dwelt upon the same shore of the Mediterranean sea. Upon this occasion, ^aShamgar, the son of Anath, asserted the cause of Israel; and having received extraordinary vigour from above, with no better weapon than an ox-goad, ^bslew, at divers times, six hundred of these invaders, and preserved the peace of the country for eight years.

In the north part of the country, however, the idolatry, which Micah began, propagated apace; so that God being highly incensed at the people's impieties, per-

mitted the eastern part of it only, which had shaken off the yoke of Moab, while, in the mean time, the Philistines invaded the western parts, even as Jabin afflicted the northern, as we may see in the following chapter.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

^a Of what tribe this valiant person was, we are nowhere informed; but it is not unlikely, that he was one of those tribes which bordered upon the Philistines, Judah, Dan, or Ephraim, because what he did was against them. It is disputed by some, whether he is to be reckoned among the number of the judges; but for this, I think, there is no foundation. The short account which the Scripture gives of him, is this:—'And after him,' that is, after Ehud, 'was Shamgar, the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad, and also delivered Israel.' (Judges iii. 31.) After Ehud was Shamgar, that is, he succeeded him in the office of a judge, for this is the natural sense of the words; and 'he also delivered Israel,' which is the very phrase whereby the judges are described. It is not said, indeed, from what oppressions he delivered them; but he is a deliverer who preserves a nation from being oppressed, as well as he who rescues them from an oppression when they groan under it. This, in all probability, was Shamgar's case, who, when the Philistines invaded his country, gave them a repulse, with the loss of 600 of their men, which was enough to discourage them from all future attempts. And indeed, the great slaughter which he made among them, with a weapon, in all appearance, so incompetent for the work, argues him to have been a judge, and possessed of a divine power, as much as Samson was, who slew 1000 of his enemies 'with the jaw-bone of an ass.' (*Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*).—Dr Hales supposes Shamgar's administration in the west to be included in Ehud's administration of 80 years in the east; and as Shamgar's administration might have been of some continuance, so this servitude of the Philistines, which is not noticed elsewhere, might have been of the same duration, as may be incidentally collected from Deborah's thanksgivings.—Ed.

^b Judges iii. 31. 'And after him was Shamgar, the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad.' Mr Maundrell, (*Journey*, at April 15,) has an observation which at once explains this transaction, and removes every difficulty from the passage. He says, "The country people were now every where at plough in the fields, in order to sow cotton. It was observable, that in ploughing they used goads of an extraordinary size; upon measuring of several, I found them about eight feet long, and at the bigger end, six inches in circumference. They were armed at the lesser end with a sharp prick for driving the oxen, and at the other end with a small spade, or paddle of iron, strong and massy, for cleansing the plough from the clay that encumbers it in working. May we not from hence conjecture, that it was with such a goad as one of these that Shamgar made that prodigious slaughter related of him, Judges iii. 21. I am confident that whoever should see one of these instruments, would judge it to be a weapon not less fit, perhaps fitter, than a sword for such an execution. Goads of this sort I saw always used hereabouts, and also in Syria; and the reason is, because the same single person both drives the oxen, and also holds and manages the plough; which makes it necessary to use such a goad as is above described, to avoid the incumbrance of two instruments."

From Homer, (*Iliad* vi. line 130, &c.) it should seem that the ox-goads used in his time and country were of a similar kind; since he there describes the votaries of Bacchus as pursued and slain by Lycurgus with an ox-goad.—Ed.

mitted Jabin, who, at that time, assumed the title of king of Canaan, and ^chad fixed his imperial seat at Hazor, to oppress them with great severity for forty years. This prince had made Sisera, ^dan experienced soldier no doubt, general of his forces, wherein, besides great store of other military munition, there were 900 armed chariots, which terrified the Israelites to such a degree, that ^eseveral tribes, ^fdespairing of relief, sat still under their oppression, and some of them were going ^gto transport themselves into other countries. For their enemies were so very cruel to them, that they durst not travel the common roads, nor dwell in villages, for fear of being murdered or plundered; and having no arms left to defend themselves, they were forced to retire to fortified places, and there live together, in the utmost consternation.

In the midst of this distress, ^fDeborah, the prophetess,

¹ Judges v. 15, 16.

² Judges viii. 17.

^c It is very certain that Joshua burnt the city Hazor, and slew the king thereof, whose name in like manner was Jabin, which might possibly be the common name to all the kings of the country, as those of Egypt were called Pharaoh. But it seems not improbable, that this Hazor might be retaken, and rebuilt by its ancient inhabitants, and this king might be a descendant of the other. Some, indeed, interpret the words thus: That this Jabin was king of that part of Canaan which lay in the country where Hazor formerly stood, and whose seat then was at Harosheth of the Gentiles; for they understand this place to be mentioned in the text, as the dwelling-place, not of Sisera, but of Jabin himself, whose general Sisera was. But there is no reason for this inversion of the order of the words, since the Canaanites might, between the time of Joshua and Deborah, find frequent opportunities, considering the corruption and idleness of the Israelites, to re-establish their ancient kingdom in these parts, to rebuild their former capital, and to set up one of the old royal line to be their king; who, according to the common usages of those ages, retained one and the same name with his predecessors.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2. c. 6.

^d This Sisera, as Josephus informs us, was a very great favourite of the king, for the services he had done in reducing the Israelites, whom he worsted upon several encounters, time after time, and would never give over the pursuit, till he brought them at last to be absolute slaves, and tributaries to his master.—*Antiquities*, b. 5. c. 6.

^e This is the sense of those obscure passages in the song of Deborah: 'For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart. Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? Gilead abode beyond Jordan, and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his creeks,' &c. (Judges v. 15, &c.)

^f The words prophet and prophetess, are of very ambiguous signification in both Testaments: sometimes they denote persons extraordinarily inspired by God, and endued with the power of working miracles, and foretelling things to come; and sometimes they are used for persons endued with special, though not miraculous gifts or graces, for the better understanding and explaining the word of God; and of this sort were the sons of the prophets, or such as were brought up in the schools of the prophets. As, therefore, we read nothing of any miraculous action that Deborah did, she perhaps was only a woman of eminent holiness, and prudence, and knowledge of the holy Scripture, by which she was singularly qualified to judge the people, that is, to determine causes and controversies among them, according to the word of God. For though Jabin oppressed them sorely, yet it was rather by rigorous taxations, than infringing their laws, which he still suffered to be administered by their own officers: and of this he might take the less notice, because the supreme judicature was exercised by a woman, from whose power and authority he thought there was no reason to apprehend any danger; though this certainly gave her an opportunity of endearing herself to the people, and made her, by this means, the fitter an instrument to rescue them from oppression.—*Poole's Annotations*.

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a woman of great eminence, and who, for some time had administered justice to the neighbouring tribes, sent to Barak, the son of Abinoam, a message from God, that he should get together 10,000 men of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, and march them to ^a Mount Tabor, whither Sisera, with all his numerous army, coming to give him battle, should infallibly be routed. Barak readily agreed to the motion, upon condition that the prophetess would go with him: and so having mustered up all his complement of forces, they both went together, and posted themselves upon Mount Tabor. Sisera had soon intelligence of this, and, getting a powerful army together, he made hasty marches from ^b Harosheth; passed the ^c river Kishon; and encamped

at the foot of the mountain, in hopes of cutting off Barak's retreat. Upon this Deborah advised Barak not to stay till Sisera came up to him, but early next morning, to march directly down, and fall upon him, with all the assurance imaginable of success. The Hebrew general followed her directions; and coming down upon the enemy before they were aware, he charged them with such fury, ^d whilst God, at the same time, by a driving storm of rain and hail in their faces, struck with such terror, that they were not able to stand before the Israelites, but were soon broken, and put to flight. The pursuit, however, continued all day; and as the night approached, the stars shone with an uncommon brightness, to give light to the pursuers; and the river Kishon, ^e being swelled with the hasty rain, drowned the pursued, and carried the dead bodies away towards the Mediterranean sea.

Sisera, in the mean time, seeing his whole army broken and dispersed, quitted his chariots, and was making his escape on foot, when Jael, the wife of Heber

^a Tabor is a very remarkable mountain in Galilee, not far from Kadesh, in the tribe of Zebulun, and in the confines of Issachar and Naphtali. It has its name from its eminence, because it rises up in the midst of a wide champaign country, called 'the valley of Jezreel,' or 'the great plain' (Esdraelon), two leagues south-east of Nazareth. Josephus tells us, that the height of this mountain is thirty stadia, and that on the top of it, there is a beautiful plain of twenty stadia in circumference.—[According to the statements of Burckhardt and Buckingham, it appears to be 1400 or 1500 feet high, and is represented as entirely calcareous. Dr Richardson describes it as a dark-looking, insulated, conical mountain, rising like a tower to a considerable height above those around it.—Ed.]

By all which it appears how commodious a place this mountain was, to be the rendezvous of Barak's forces, since it stood upon the confines of so many different tribes, was not accessible by the enemies' horses and chariots, and had, on the top of it, a spacious plain, where he might conveniently marshal and discipline his army. What modern travellers tell us of this mountain is much to the same purpose:—"After a very laborious ascent," says Mr Maundrell, "we reached the highest part of the mountain, which has a plain area at top, fertile and delicious, and of an oval figure, about one furlong in breadth, and two in length. This area is enclosed with trees on all parts, except towards the south, and from hence you have a prospect, which (if nothing else) well rewards the labour of ascending it; for it is impossible for the eyes of man to behold any greater gratification of this nature. The top of this mountain was anciently environed with walls and trenches, and other fortifications, of which some remains are still visible; and, for many ages, it has been believed that here it was that our blessed Saviour was transfigured, in the presence of his three apostles, Peter, James, and John, though some late writers have made a doubt of it.—*Calmet's Commentary, Poole's Annotations, and Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.*

^b A place situate upon the lake Semechon, in the Upper Galilee, and is in Scripture called 'Harosheth of the Gentiles,' because the people of several nations fled thither to be under Jabin's protection, when they heard that he had possessed himself of that country, and kept the Israelites out of it.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

^c This river rises up out of Mount Tabor, and passing along the valley of Jezreel, now the plain of Esdraelon, empties itself into the Mediterranean sea. Some geographers will needs have it, that this river runs two ways, partly westward into the Mediterranean, and partly eastward, into the Sea of Galilee; but this is a thing incredible, and what is known of no other river in the world; and therefore, if there be any thing in it, the matter must be this,—that, from Mount Tabor, as it happens from many other hills, there flow waters out of its two sides, some shaping their course westward, to the Mediterranean, and others eastward, into the Sea of Galilee: so that there are two spring heads, and two distinct rivers, though both arising from the same mountain, and perhaps both called by the same name. But whatever becomes of the river that runs eastward, it is plain, from another passage, that the Kishon which is mentioned in Scripture, ran westward into the Mediterranean sea; for when Elijah had convinced the people assembled together at Mount Carmel, that Baal was not the true God, he enjoined them to seize all his priests, and to bring them down to the brook Kishon, there to be slain (1 Kings xviii.) So that the brook Kishon, which rises out of Mount

Tabor, must run by Mount Carmel, which stands on the sea-shore; and as Carmel stands west of Mount Tabor, the course of this river, which extends from the one to the other, must be so likewise.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2. c. 6.

[After a course of thirty miles it falls into the Mediterranean at a place called Caïpha, in a gulf formed by Mount Carmel and the Point of Acre. Near the mouth of this river, in the same gulf, another smaller stream discharges itself, which was called by the ancients Belus, and was celebrated for its sands, which were used in making glass. It is at present called Nahr Haloro.]—Ed.

^d Josephus relates the matter of God's interposition in this action in the following words:—"The armies were no sooner engaged, but there arose a violent wind, with a most impetuous tempest of hail and rain along with it. The storm, driving just in the face of the Canaanites, made not only their bows and slings useless, but their weapons likewise designed for close fight; for they could not so much as open their eyes against the weather; and their fingers were so benumbed with cold, too, that they could not handle their arms. In the conclusion, it came to pass, that the Canaanites' army was broken, dispersed, and cut to pieces: so that betwixt those that fell by the sword, and those that were trampled to death under the horses' feet, those that were torn to pieces by the chariots, and those that fled away, and fell into the hands of the Israelites in their flight, this prodigious army, which, according to our author, consisted of thirty thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and three thousand armed chariots, was, in effect, totally destroyed."—*Antiquities*, b. 5. c. 6.

^e Mr Maundrell tells us, that in the condition wherein he saw this river, its waters were low and inconsiderable; but in passing along the side of the plain, he discerned the tracts of many lesser torrents falling down into it from the mountains, which must needs make it swell exceedingly upon sudden rains.—*Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.*

^f He was of the posterity of Hobab, the son of Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, and is here called a Kenite, because originally he descended from those people who dwelt westward of the Dead Sea, and extended themselves pretty far into Arabia Petraea. The word *Ken*, from whence they took their name, signifies a nest, a hole, or a cave; and to this the prophet might allude, when he addresses himself to them in these words: 'Strong is thy dwelling place, and thou puttest thy nest on a rock: nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Ashur shall carry thee away captive, Num. xxiv. 21. These Kenites, indeed, were some of the people whose lands God had promised to the descendants of Abraham; nevertheless, in consideration of Jethro, all that submitted to the Israelites were permitted to live in their own country. In Num. x. 29, we find that Hobab was invited by Moses to accompany him into the land of Canaan, and, in all probability, he accepted the invitation. At their first coming, they settled themselves in the territories of Jericho; but having contracted a particular friendship with the tribe of Judah, they removed with them into

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the Kenite, seeing him coming, went to meet him, and invited him into her tent; ^a which he readily accepted, as apprehending no danger from her whose husband was his master's ally. The fatigue of the day had made him very thirsty, and therefore he entreated Jael to give him a little water; but when, instead of water, she had given him as much milk as he desired; ^b and he had strictly charged her to deny him, in case that any body should inquire for him, he laid himself down to rest. No sooner was he well asleep, but Jael, taking an hammer and a long tent-nail, set it to his temple, and, struck with such a force, that it quite pierced through his head, and pinned him to the ground; and when Barak, in pursuit of him, came that way, she called him in, and showed him the place and posture in which his enemy lay.

This victory, which was followed ^c with new successes every day, put an end to the oppression of the north for forty years. It proved the utter ruin of this kingdom of the Canaanites in Hazor: and, upon many accounts, was attended with so many signal events, that the prophetess Deborah composed a triumphant song in commemoration of it, ^d wherein she magnifies the deliv-

the country that fell to their lot, (Judges i. 16.) Every family of them did not so: for this Heber we find, for some reasons that are not mentioned, had settled his habitation in the tribe of Naphtali, (Judges i. 11.) The Kenites indeed, although they were proselytes, and worshipped the true God according to the Mosaic law, yet being strangers by birth, and so not pretending to any right or title to the land of Canaan, held it best policy, in these troublesome times, to observe a neutrality, and maintain peace, as well as they could, both with the Israelites and Canaanites; and upon this foot it was, that there was a peace between king Jabin and the house of Heber, and that Sisera, in his distress, fled to Heber's tent for protection, and put confidence in the feigned civilities of his wife.—*Howell's History of the Bible.*

^a Judges iv. 17—20. Pococke, giving an account of the manner in which he was treated in an Arab tent, in his journey to Jerusalem, says, his conductor led him two or three miles to his tent, and that there he sat with his wife and others, round a fire. "The Arabs are not so scrupulous as the Turks about their women, and though they have their harem, or women's part of the tent, yet such as they are acquainted with come into it. I was kept in the harem for greater security; the wife being always with me, no stranger ever daring to come into the women's apartment, unless introduced." (Vol. 2. p. 6.) Nothing can be a better comment on this passage than this story.

^b Judges iv. 19. "And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink." Jael certainly showed her regard to Israel by destroying Sisera, but it is as certain that she did not do it in the most honourable manner; there was treachery in it; perhaps in the estimation of those people, the greatest treachery. Among the later Arabs, giving a person a drink has been thought to be the strongest assurance of their receiving him under their protection. When Guy de Lusignan, king of Jerusalem, was taken prisoner, and was conducted before Saladin, he demanded drink, and they gave him fresh water, which he drank in Saladin's presence; but when one of his lords would have done the same, Saladin would not suffer it, because he did not intend to spare his life; on the contrary, advancing to him, after some expostulation, he cut off his head.—*D'Herbelot*, p. 371; *Harmer*, vol. 2. p. 469, p. 175.

^c Josephus farther acquaints us, that immediately after this victory, Barak marched with his army towards Hazor, where he encountered Jabin by the way, and slew him; and having killed the king, laid the city level with the ground, and afterwards governed Israel for a matter of forty years.—*Antiquities*, b. 5. c. 6.

^d Dr Hales, in his *Analysis of Chronology*, vol. ii, second edition, has given a new and beautiful translation of this song, more literal and elegant than the common English version. The translations of Boothroyd and Kennicott are also excellent, although the arrangement of the latter is too artificial; there is nothing more elegant and sublime than this song in the whole

erance it wrought, by recounting the many calamities which the Israelites before laboured under; acknowledges its proceeding from the same divine Being, who descended in great majesty to give the law on Mount Sinai; calls upon all those who partook in the benefits of it, to join in the praises of its great Author; commends those tribes that came readily to the war, and upbraids all those who declined their country's service.

During this forty years' peace, the people again rebelled against God, and God took the punishment of them into his own hands, by sending upon them a grievous famine, wherein several were forced to remove into strange countries; and, among the rest, ^f one Elimelech, a man of Bethlehem, with his wife Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, went into the land of Moab to live. Elimelech died there, and his relic married her sons to two women of the country, whose names were Orpah and Ruth. About two years after this, Naomi's two sons died, and she, resolving to return to her own country, desired her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab. Orpah, with tears, took leave of her mother; but Ruth could, by no means, be persuaded to part with her; and therefore she accompanied her to Bethlehem, where, by ^g her mother's art and contrivance, she so managed the matter, that she married Boaz, by whom she had Obed, who was the father of Jesse, and the grandfather of David, and from whom, according to the flesh, the Saviour of the world was lineally descended.

range of sacred poetry, and neither Homer nor Virgil have come near it.—Ed.

^e Judges v. 30. 'Have they not divided the prey: to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides.' This allusion in the triumphant song of Deborah is to the richest part of the spoil, which was highly esteemed by the people. Pliny mentions a great variety of them, both in his own and in ancient times; for he takes notice, that Homer speaks of painted garments, which shone in flowers and trees in beautiful colours. The Phrygians afterwards wrought these with needles, and Attalus invented the interweaving of gold into them. But, for these garments, Babylon was above all places famous; from whence they had the name of Babylonish garments, and were much valued, (Josh. vii.) It appears from Homer, (Il. vi. line 289, &c.) that the women of Sidon were famous for such kind of variegated works before the Trojan war. We find that Helen and Andromache were employed on such at their looms.—Ed.

^f The book of Ruth, which takes its title from the person whose story is there principally recorded, is properly an appendix to the book of Judges, and an introduction to that of Samuel; and is therefore not only placed between them, but supposed to be wrote by one and the same hand. Its subject is very different from the rest, and is therefore made a distinct treatise. It is indeed of so private a nature, that at the time of its being wrote, the generality of the people might have thought it not worth recording; but we Christians may plainly see the wisdom of God in having it done. It had been foretold to the Jews, that the Messiah should be of the tribe of Judah, and it was afterwards revealed farther, that he should be of the family of David: and therefore it was necessary, for the full understanding of these prophecies, that the history of the family of David, in that tribe, should be written before these prophecies were revealed, that so there might not be the least suspicion of any fraud or design. And thus this book, these prophecies, and the accomplishment of them, serve to illustrate and explain each other.—*Bedford's Scrip. Chron.*, b. 5. c. 5.

^g The whole management of this affair is recorded in the book of Ruth, to which we refer our reader, having less reason to be prolix in a matter that concerns a private family only, and what had not been related in such a particular manner, but for the reasons that we have already assigned.

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After the death of Deborah and Barak, the Israelites fell again into their old impiety, and were again given up into the hand of their enemies. The Midianites were a people situated on the east side of the river Jordan, whom the children of Israel, in their passage to the land of Canaan, ¹ had almost totally destroyed; but it is not improbable, that some of that nation, saving themselves by flight into other countries, and after the Israelites were settled in Canaan returning thither again, might, in the space of 200 years, repossess the land where they dwelt before, and still retain the name of Midianites. These people, together with their neighbours, the Amalekites, ^a and some other eastern nations, for seven years, kept the Israelites in such subjection, that they were forced to betake themselves to the mountains, and to dwell in dens and caves, and fortified places, from whence, as the spring came on, they stole out to cultivate and sow their land; but all to no purpose: for towards the time of harvest, these enemies made inroads into the country, and having destroyed the increase of the earth, and killed all the cattle which fell into their hands, they then returned home, and left the poor Israelites nothing to support themselves withal. Upon this sore calamity, the people began to be sensible of their apostasy, and to humble themselves under the afflicting hand of God; whereupon God ^b sent them a prophet who reproached them sharply with their base ingratitude; but at the same time, ^c sent his angel to

Gideon, the son of Joash, who dwelt at ^d Ophrah, and was then thrashing out his corn, in a private and unsuspected place, the better to conceal it from the depredation of the enemy.

To him the angel signified the purport of his message, which was to acquaint him, that the Lord had made choice of him for the deliverance of his people. Gideon at first excused himself upon account of the obscurity of his family and fortune; and when the angel urged the thing, he desired of him some token of the divine mission, and at the same time, requested him to accept of a small entertainment from his hands.^e The angel seemed not to refuse the invitation, whereupon Gideon hastened, and having boiled a kid, and made some unleavened cakes, he spread a table, and set them before him; but the angel ordered him to take them hence, and place them upon a rock hard by, and so pour the broth upon them, which, though it might seem a little strange, Gideon did; and, as soon as the angel had touched them with the staff that was in his hand, immediately there issued fire out of the rock, which consumed them, whilst himself, at the same time, vanished out of sight.

Convinced by this miracle, that it was a messenger from heaven who appeared to him, Gideon began to fear, as the notion then was, that he should not long survive it; but being assured by the angel, though then invisible, that no harm should befall him, he built a monument, which he called Jehovah-shalom, that is, the Lord of peace, in commemoration of this gracious interview; and being that night admonished in a dream to destroy the altar of Baal, and cut down the grove that surrounded it; to build an altar to God upon the top of this wonderful rock, and to offer a burnt-sacrifice to him with one of his father's bullocks, he readily obeyed: and taking ten of his father's servants with him, he demolished the one, and erected the other by next morning; choosing the night to do it in, that he might meet with no obstruc-

¹ Num. xxxi. 7, &c.

^a Though the Midianites were the principal people concerned in these invasions and inroads, yet, besides the Amalekites, they had other confederate nations, who are called 'the children of the east,' (Judges vi. 3, 33,) by whom we may understand the Ammonites and Moabites, as lying east of the land of Israel, if not the Ishmaelites, and others that inhabited the parts of Arabia. The children or people of the east, in Gen. xxix. 1. denote the inhabitants of Mesopotamia; but these seem to be too far distant to have any part in these incursions; and therefore since we read, (Gen. xxv. 6.) that Abraham sent away the sons of his concubines, particularly the sons of Keturah, one whereof was Midian, the father of the Midianites, eastward, into the east country, it may not improbably be inferred, that by 'the children of the east,' in this history of Gideon, are denoted the descendants of the other sons of Keturah, and of the other brothers of Midian, who had settled themselves in the eastern parts adjoining to Midian.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament.*

^b Who this prophet was, we have no manner of intimation given us. The Jews generally fancy that he was Phinehas; but Phinehas must by this time have been above five hundred years old, which far exceeded the stated period of human life then. St Austin is of opinion, that he was the same with the angel which soon after appeared to Gideon; but it is far more likely, that God still continued other prophets among the Israelites, besides the high priest, to put them in mind of their duty, and to call them to repentance, when they forsook him: for, from the case of Deborah, who is said to have had the spirit of prophecy, it appears, that at least in extraordinary cases, God failed not to raise up such persons among them. It is remarked, however, of this prophet, be he who he will, that he gave the Israelites no hopes of the divine assistance, but only upbraided them with their sins. However, when he tells them, that their calamities were occasioned by their idolatry, he plainly intimates, that if they would return to the true worship of God, he would again look graciously upon them and deliver them; and accordingly we find, that the history of their deliverance immediately follows.—*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

^c That he was not a mere created angel, is plain from the incommunicable name, Jehovah, which he assumes, and whereby he suffers himself so frequently to be called, (Judges, vi. 14, 16, 23, 24, 25, 27.) And therefore the Jews, according to their Targum, which styles him 'the Word of the Lord,' look

upon this angel, not merely as an heavenly messenger sent from God, but as the Son of God himself, appearing in the form of an angel.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^d Gideon was of the family of Abiezer, of the tribe of Manasseh; and so the Ophrah where he dwelt must be understood to be situated in the half tribe of Manasseh, on the west side of Jordan; and for this reason it is styled 'Ophrah of the Abiezrites,' (Judges viii. 32.) to distinguish it from another Ophrah that lay in the tribe of Benjamin.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3. c. 6.

^e Judges vi. 19. And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out to him under the oak, and presented it.' There is one passage in Dr Shaw, that affords a perfect commentary on this text. It is in his preface, (p. 12.) "Besides a bowl of milk, and a basket of figs, raisins, or dates, which, upon our arrival, were presented to us to stay our appetites, the master of the tent where we lodged, fetched us from his flock, according to the number of our company, a kid, or a goat, a lamb, or a sheep; half of which was immediately seethed by his wife, and served up with cuscusocoe: the rest was cut into pieces and roasted; which we reserved for our breakfast or dinner next day.

May we not imagine that Gideon, presenting some slight refreshment to the supposed prophet, according to the present Arab mode, desired him to stay till he could provide something more substantial for him; that he immediately killed a kid, seethed part of it, cut into pieces and roasted another part of it, and when it was ready, brought out the stewed meat in a pot, with unleavened cakes of bread which he had baked; the roasted pieces in a basket for his carrying away with him for some after repast in his journey.—*Harmer*, vol. 1. p. 330.—Ed.

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tion. On the morrow, when the people understood that Gideon was the person who had put this affront upon Baal, they came and demanded him of his father, that they might put him to death; but, instead of complying with their demand, his father's answer was, 'that ^a if Baal was a god, it was his business, and not theirs, to avenge his own quarrel;' and from this answer, where-with he appeased the tumult, Gideon ever after obtained the name of Jerub-baal, that is, the opposer of Baal.^b

About this time the Midianites and their company, ^c passing over the river Jordan, came and encamped in ^d the valley of Jezreel; upon which Gideon, being moved by a divine impulse, summoned all those of his own family to take up arms first, and then sent messengers to several adjacent tribes, exhorting them to shake off the yoke of the Midianites, and to join with him; which accordingly they did, and came in such numbers, that, in a short time, his army amounted to two and thirty thousand men, though small in comparison of the enemy's forces, which consisted of no less than a hundred and thirty-five thousand.

As soon as each tribe's complement of men was arrived, Gideon, being willing to satisfy them that he did not act this on his own head, but was the person appointed by heaven to be their leader and deliverer, desired of God to give them some token of his commission; and the token which he made choice of was,—that upon his lay-

^a It is generally supposed that Gideon's father had been a worshipper if not a priest of Baal; and therefore it is not unlikely, that he had by this time been convinced by his son, that God had given him a commission to recover his people, and to begin with this reformation; and this made him appear so boldly in his son's cause, because he knew it was the cause of God.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

^b Boothroyd renders this passage, (Judges vi. 31.) as follows: 'And Joash said to all that stood against him, will ye contend for Baal? Should ye preserve him who hath contended with him, he will die ere morning. If he be a god he will contend for himself, with him who hath broken down his altar.' And adds in a note; 'I have adhered to the order of the text, and the sense given, I am satisfied, is that intended. The common version is contradictory; it makes Joash propose, that he who pleadeth for Baal, should be immediately put to death, and then assert that Baal would plead for himself.' 'I have followed Menochius, (see *Poole*) and consider the meaning to be, 'If Baal be really a god, ye need not avenge his quarrel, or desire the death of my son: Baal will speedily avenge himself; and you will see the demolisher of his altar die a sudden death.'—Ed.

^c That is, 'the Amalekites and the children of the east.' (Jud. vi. 3.) This included the posterity of Abraham's sons by Keturah, of whom the Midianites were the principal nation, and appear to have taken the lead in the enterprise here recorded. (Jud. xxv. 6.) It also included the Ishmaelites, (Jud. viii. 24.) who had settled in the vicinity of the Midianites in the wilderness of Paran. (Gen. xxxvii. 28. xxi. 21.)—Ed.

^d The city of Jezreel, which gave name to the valley, belonged to the half tribe of Manasseh, on the west of Jordan, and lay in the confines of that half tribe and the tribe of Issachar, as appears from Josh. xix. 18. In the history of the kings of Israel, this city is frequently made mention of, where, by reason of the pleasantness of its situation, some of them had a royal palace, though their capital was Samaria. The vale of Jezreel, which, as we said before, is now called the plain of Esdraelon, is, according to Mr Maundrell, of a vast extent, [It is estimated at thirty miles in length and twenty in breadth.] very fertile, but uncultivated, and only serving the Arabs for pasturage; but some have supposed, that the valley of Jezreel here mentioned, denotes some other lesser valley, lying between Mount Hermon and Mount Gilboa.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2. c. 6.

ing a fleece of wool on the ground, ^e the dew might be upon the fleece only, and the earth round about it be dry, which accordingly happened; and then, inverting the former manner, he desired that the fleece might be dry, while the ground all around it was wet; which accordingly came to pass likewise. ^f Confirmed by these signs, that it was the will of God that he should enter upon action, Gideon marched directly to the camp of the Midianites, who then lay in the plain of Jezreel; but before he came thither, God rightly foreseeing, that if this army conquered the Midianites, they would vainly impute it to their own courage or numbers, and not to his assistance, ordered Gideon to make proclamation in the camp, that whoever was diffident of the success of the undertaking, should have liberty to return home. ^g Whereupon 22,000 quitted the field, so that 10,000 only remained with him. It might be thought possible, however, for these 10,000 to defeat the army of the Midianites; and, therefore, God, resolving that the glory of the whole victory should be accounted his own, ordered

^e He supposed that the dew which was distilled from heaven, was a divine gift, as the Scripture after testifies, and therefore he desired that it might be directed by God, that though it commonly falls everywhere, by his extraordinary providence, it might now water only his fleece. Some are apt to think, that he chose a fleece for this purpose, not only because it was ready at hand, but the better to express how the land was shorn by the Midianites, even as the sheep had been by him; that when he begged the dew, as a sign of the divine favour, might fall upon the fleece, it was to represent the kindness of God to him; and when he begged it might fall upon the whole ground, to represent his favour to all the people. But there is farther reason why he might desire to have the miracle inverted: for, as it is in the very nature of the wool to draw moisture to it, some might be apt to think, that there was no great matter in this; and, therefore, he requested of God a second miracle, which was contrary to the former.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^f Judges vi. 38. 'And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.' It may seem a little improbable to us, who inhabit these northern climates, where the dews are inconsiderable, how Gideon's fleece, in one night, should contract such a quantity, that when he came to wring it, a bowl full of water was produced. Irwin, in his voyage up the Red Sea, when on the Arabian shores, says, "difficult as we find it to keep ourselves cool in the daytime, it is no easy matter to defend our bodies from the damps of the night, when the wind is loaded with the heaviest dews that ever fell; we lie exposed to the whole weight of the dews, and the cloaks in which we wrap ourselves, are as wet in the morning as if they had been immersed in the sea."—p. 87.

^g The text reads, 'Whosoever is afraid let him return, and depart early from Mount Gilead.' Gideon, however, was certainly not at Mount Gilead at this time, but rather near Mount Gilboa. Gilead was on the other side of Jordan. Calmet thinks there must either have been two Gileads, which does not from Scripture appear to be the case, or that the Hebrew text is here corrupted, and that for Gilead, we should read Gilboa. This reading, though adopted by Houbigant and Le Clerc, whom Boothroyd follows, is not countenanced by any MS., nor by any of the versions. Dr Hales endeavours to reconcile the passage as it stands with the circumstances of the case, by the supposition that there were in Gideon's army many of the eastern Manassites, who came from Mount Gilead; and that these probably were more afraid of their neighbours, the Midianites, than the western tribes were; and therefore proposes to read the text thus: 'Whosoever from Mount Gilead is fearful and afraid, let him return (home) and depart early. So there returned (home) 22,000 of the people.' Dr Adam Clarke thinks this perhaps, on the whole, the best method of solving the difficulty—the intelligent reader will form his own opinion.—See *Clarke and Boothroyd on the passage*, and *Hales' Analysis*, vol. 1. p. 424—425, and vol. 2. p. 281.—Ed.

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Gideon ^a to lead the soldiers down to the water to drink, where he would give him a signal what men were fit for his purpose, and what not; and the signal was this,—That they who ^b took up water in their hands, and lapped it, should go with him; but they who laid themselves down to drink, should be dismissed; which experiment reduced them to no more than 300.

These 300 men he ordered to hold themselves in readiness, and to have every one a trumpet, a lamp, and an empty pitcher to conceal the light which the lamp would otherwise give; and while they were providing themselves with these, he took his servant with him, and went down to the enemies' camp, where he heard a Midianite relating his dream to his companion, which the other interpreted in Gideon's favour; so that returning to the camp, he drew his men out, and dividing them into three companies of 100 men each, he came upon the enemy ^c in the dead time of the night. The watchword was, 'the sword of the Lord and of Gideon;' and as every

soldier had directions to do as his general did, they all broke their pitchers, brandished their lamps, and sounded their trumpets together.

The Midianites, hearing so many trumpets, and seeing so many lights at once, supposed themselves to be attacked by a formidable army; and so rising in a fright, and mistaking their friends for their enemies, ^d they fell upon one another, until they had put every thing into the utmost confusion. By this means, Gideon having obtained an easy victory, sent to the rest of the army, who, upon his proclamation, had withdrawn themselves, some to pursue the routed enemy, and others to secure the passes of the river Jordan, in order to prevent their retreat.

The passes, however, could not all be secured; so that some of the enemy's troops having made a shift to cross the river, Gideon, with his 300 men, pressed hard after them, while the other part of the army destroyed those who stayed behind; and having taken the two Midianitish princes, ^e Oreb and Zeeb, they cut off their heads, and sent them to Gideon.

Gideon, in the mean time, and his small party, were in full chase of two other princes of Midian, Zeba, and Zalmunna; and when he came to Succoth and Penuel, two towns on the other side of Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, he desired of them some provision for his men, because they were faint and weary; but instead of giving him any refreshment, they ridiculed the smallness of his army; for which insolence he vowed to be revenged of them, upon his return. Continuing his pursuit, therefore, with his small fatigued party, he came up with the enemy at Karcor, where the two Midianitish kings, thinking that they had now sufficiently escaped, were regardless of all danger; but Gideon falling upon them unexpectedly, surprised and defeated them, and having taken them prisoners, carried them in triumph with him into Succoth, where he executed the vengeance which he had threatened, by crushing the princes of that place to death, under thorns and briars, killing the people of Penuel, and demolishing its fortifications. Zeba and Zalmunna, in their march, had laid all the country waste, and put many to the sword, otherwise Gideon was inclinable to have shown them some mercy; but understanding by their own confession, that they had slain his brethren at Tabor, he

^a Mr Le Clerc is of opinion, that the sacred historian has omitted one circumstance, which, nevertheless, in the very nature of the thing is implied, namely, that Gideon, when he led his men down to the water, did forbid them to make use of any cup or pot, or such like thing: for he thinks it incongruous (as well he may) that among such a number as 10,000 men, no one should be furnished with some drinking vessel or other. But then, had any of these been permitted to be used upon this occasion, the experiment could not have been made.—*Comment.* on Judges vii. 6.

^b Interpreters are at a sad puzzle to conceive, for what possible reason God made a distinction between the soldiers who lapped water in their hands, and those that laid themselves down to drink. Some of the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that all except 300 who lapped, had been accustomed to the worship of Baal, which they unwarily discovered by their kneeling to drink: but this is a groundless and far-fetched conceit. The notion of those who impute these 300 men's lapping, some to their sloth and laziness, and others to their timorousness, and the great fear they were in of being surprised by the enemy, is of no more validity: for though God, if he thought fit, might have employed the most dastardly among them upon this expedition, that the glory of the victory might entirely redound to himself; yet, since we are told all the fearful persons were dismissed before, and since it but badly befits the character of the courageous to be lazy, this action of lapping is rather to be accounted a token of their temperance, and of the nobleness of their spirit, which made them so desirous to engage the enemy, that they would not stay to drink, but, though they were very thirsty, contented themselves to moisten their mouths, as we say, with a little water; whereas the rest indulged themselves so far, as to drink their bellyful. But, after all, the true reason and design of this method seems to be only this,—That God was minded to reduce Gideon's army to a very small number, which might very likely be done by this means. For, as the season of the year was hot, and the generality of the soldiers weary, thirsty, and faint, it was most probable, that they would lie down, as indeed they did, and refresh themselves plentifully, and scarce to be expected that any great number would deny themselves in this matter.—*Patrick's Commentary, and Saurin's Gideon's defeat of the Midianites.*

^c The expression in the text is, 'in the beginning of the middle watch;' for though the Romans, in after ages, divided the night into four watches, (Mat. xiv. 25.), yet, in the eastern parts, and in more ancient times, it consisted but of three, whereof the first began at six, and continued four hours. The second, therefore, is called the 'middle watch,' and began at ten; so that we may suppose, that it was some time after this, that Gideon alarmed the Midianitish camp; and the reasons why he chose this part of the night to do it in, are obvious, because the trumpets would then seem to sound louder, and the lights to shine brighter, and so both increase the consternation of the enemy, and conceal the smallness of his own army.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^d There might be several reasons for their doing this:—Either because the night was so dark that they could not distinguish friends from foes; or because the thing was so sudden, that it struck them with horror and amazement; or because they suspected treachery, as they might easily do, since the army consisted of several nations, (Jud. vi. 3.), or because God had infatuated them, as he had many others on the like occasions.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^e As the language of the Ishmaelites, the Midianites, and the Amalekites, who dwelt in Arabia, was originally the same, because they all descended from Abraham, their common father; so we may infer, that there was little or no difference in them at this time. *Oreb*, in the Hebrew, signifies *a crow*, and *Zeeb*, *a wolf*; and these are no improper words to represent the sagaciousness and fierceness which should be in two such great commanders. Nor was it an uncommon thing for great families, in ancient times, to derive their names from such like creatures, either as omens, or monuments of their undaunted courage and dexterity in military achievements. But after all, it seems every whit as probable, that these were only nicknames, which the Israelites gave these two princes of Midian, to denote their fierceness and rapaciousness of prey.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 5. c. 3; *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

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ordered his son Jether to fall upon them, but as he was but a youth, and seemed a little timorous, ^a he himself despatched them with his own hand, having first ordered them to be stripped of their royal ornaments, ^b and their camels of their rich trappings and furniture.

These great and glorious actions, in defence of his country's liberty, raised Gideon's name to such a height that the people came, and voluntarily offered to settle the government upon him and his family; which he modestly and generously rejecting, and desiring only, as an acknowledgment of his services, to have the pendants or ear-rings taken in the plunder of the Midianites given him, the people readily consented, and, over and above these, threw in the costly ornaments, and the robes of the kings, together with the golden ^c chains, which were about the camels' necks, the whole amounted to a prodigious value; and of these rich materials he made an ephod, and placed it in the city of Ophrah, as a monument only of his victory, though in after times, it came to be perverted to a bad use, gave occasion to a fresh apostasy, and proved the ruin of Gideon's family.

Gideon, while he lived had several wives, by whom, in all, he had seventy sons, besides one by a concubine, ^d whom she named Abimelech. As soon as his father was dead, this Abimelech, who was a bold aspiring youth,

^a In ancient times, it was as much a custom for great men to do execution upon offenders, as it is now a usual thing for them to pronounce sentence upon them. They had not then, as we have now, such persons as the Romans called carnifices, or public executioners; and therefore Saul bade such as waited on him kill the priests; and Doeg, one of his chief officers, did it, (1 Sam. xxii. 17, 18.) But the reason why Gideon would have had his son do this execution, was that he might be early animated against the enemies of Israel, even as Hannibal is reported, when he was a boy, to have been incensed against the Romans. (*Patrick's Commentary*.) In these ages it would be thought barbarous for a king to command his son to perform an execution like that mentioned in this passage: but anciently it was thought no dishonour. Homer (*Odys. b. xxii.*) represents Ulysses as enjoining such a task upon his son, which was instantly performed. See also Virgil, *Æn. xi. 15.*—Ed.

^b Judges viii. 26. 'And purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian.' Purple seems anciently to have been appropriated to kings, and to them only on whom they bestowed it. It is here mentioned by the sacred historian as being found on the Midianitish kings. A garment of fine linen and purple is given to a favourite by king Ahasuerus, (Esther viii. 15.) The Jews made a decree that Simon should wear purple and gold, and that none of the people should wear purple, or a buckle of gold, without his permission, in token that he was the chief magistrate of the Jews, (1 Maccab. xlii.) Thus also Homer describes a king:—

In ample mode
A robe of military purple flow'd
O'er all his frame: illustrious on his breast,
The double clasping gold the king confess'd.

Odys. xix. 261. Pope.

^c The word which we render *chains*, is in the original, *little moons*, which the Midianites might wear strung together about their camels' necks, either by way of ornament or superstition, because they, as well as all other people of Arabia, were very zealous worshippers of the moon.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^d What the name of his other sons were, we have no mention made in sacred writ; but the name of this one is particularly set down, because the following story depends upon it: and not only so, but his mother perhaps might give him this name, which signifies, *my father a king*, out of pride and arrogance, that she might be looked upon as the wife of one who was thought to deserve a kingdom, though he did not accept it; and it is not improbable, that the very sense of this might be one means to influence the mind of her son afterwards, to affect the royal dignity.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

tampered with the people of Shechem, the place of his nativity, and where his mother's family had no small interest, to make him their king. They, by his persuasions, were inclinable to do it; and, that he might not want money to carry on his design, furnished him with some out of the treasury of ^e their god Baal-berith, wherewith he hired a company of profligate fellows to attend him. With these he repaired to his father's at Ophrah, and having seized all his brethren, except Jotham the youngest, who made his escape, he slew them all upon one stone, and when he returned to Shechem, instead of meeting with detestation for this unnatural murder, was in a general assembly of the people elected their king.

When young Jotham heard of this, he went upon Mount Gerizim, which overlooks the city of Shechem, and from thence, in a parabolic speech, represented to ^g the people his father's modesty and self-denial, in refus-

^e The learned Bochart is of opinion, that the Baal here mentioned was the same with Beree, the daughter of Venus and Adonis, desired in marriage by Neptune, but given to Bacchus: and that she gave her name to Berith in Phenicia, where she was much worshipped, and thence translated a goddess into other parts. But though the word *Baal*, as he maintains, be frequently used in a feminine sense, yet it can hardly be imagined, but that the sacred historian, if he had been minded to express a goddess, might have found out some way of distinguishing her; might have called her, for instance, *Balah-berith, the lady, or goddess of Berith*, without making both the words of a masculine termination. And therefore the most simple and natural manner of explaining the name, is to take it in general for the god who presides over covenants and contracts, to whom it belongs to maintain them, and to punish all those that violate them. For it is to be observed, that the most barbarous as well as the most knowing, the most religious as well as the most superstitious nations, have always looked upon God as the witness, as well as the vindicator of oaths and covenants; that the Greeks had their Zeus Horkios, as well as the Latins their Jupiter Pistius, or Deus Fidius, or Fecialis, whom they looked upon as a god of honesty and uprightness, always superintending in treaties and alliances. And for this reason not improbably, the house of their god Berith was the citadel, the arsenal, and the treasury of the Shechemites, even as Plutarch informs us, that in the temple of Saturn the Romans repositd both their archives and public wealth.—*Bochart, Cunaan, b. 2. c. 17.*; *Poole's Annotations in locum*; *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Baal-berith*; and *Jurieu's History of Dogmas and Religions*, part 4. c. 1.

^f This stone some will have to be an altar, which Abimelech dedicated to the idol Berith, and erected in the same place where his father Gideon had destroyed his altar before; and so they account that this slaughter of his sons was designed for an expiatory sacrifice of their father's crime in demolishing the altar and grove dedicated to that idol. But this is a little too far-fetched, though there is hardly any other reason to be given, why they should all be murdered upon one and the same stone.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^g This is the first fable that we find any where upon record; and from hence it appears, that such fictions as these, wherein the most serious truths are represented, were in use among the Jews, as they are still in the eastern countries, long before the time of Esop, or any other author that we know of. Various are the reasons that may be assigned for the first invention of them; but these two seem to be the principal: 1. Because men would suffer themselves to be reprehended in this guise, when they would not endure plain words; and, 2. Because they heard them with delight and pleasure, and remembered them better than any grave or rational discourses.

'The trees went forth on a time, to anoint a king over them,' (so that anointing was in use 200 years before the first kings of Israel;) 'and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man,' (because oil was offered in sacrifice to God, and fed the lamps of his house, besides all the other uses wherein it was serviceable to man,) 'and go to be pro-

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ing to have the government settled on him and his family, which they had now conferred on one, as much inferior in virtue and honour to Gideon, and his lawful sons, as the bramble is to the olive-tree, the fig-tree, or the vine. And then expostulating the injury done his family, and upbraiding them with their ingratitude, he appeals to their consciences, whether they had done right or not, and denounces a curse against them for their siding with Abimelech in all his wicked deed.

Having thus delivered himself to the Shechemites, Jotham made his ^a escape to Beer, where he lived secure from Abimelech's rage; and it was not long before his curse began to operate. For the people of Shechem, ^b

moted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou and reign over us. But the fig-tree said to them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, (an apt representation of that content and fulness of pleasure which may be enjoyed in a private life, and cannot without folly be exchanged for the troubles and cares that men meet with in the management of public affairs,) 'and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man,' (a form of speech imitated by heathen authors, especially by Virgil, (*Georg.* b. 2.) where, speaking of some generous wine, he terms it "even beloved by the gods in their carousals," since wine, as well as oil, was used both in Jewish and heathen sacrifices,*) 'and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble,' (the meanest of all trees, good for nothing but to be burned, and therefore fitly resembling Abimelech, from whom the Shechemites could expect no manner of benefit, but a great deal of trouble and vexation,) 'Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If, in truth, ye anoint me king, then come and put your trust in my shadow,' (an apt emblem of Abimelech's ridiculous vanity, to imagine that he should be able to maintain the authority of a king, any more than the bramble could afford a shadow or shelter,) 'and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon (words that carry a lively image of Abimelech's ostentatious spirit, and menaces to take severe vengeance on the nobles of Shechem, such as the house of Millo, who had been chiefly instrumental in his promotion, in case they should desert him.) This is the parable, and, in some measure, the interpretation. The only difficulty is, to know whom these trees are set to signify. And here, some have thought, that by the olive-tree we are to understand Othniel; by the fig-tree, Deborah; and by the vine Gideon; for to the two former, they suppose the offer of the kingdom was made for the services done their country, and by them rejected, as well as by the last. But for this there is no authority; neither is there any necessity in the explication of such fables, to assign a particular reason for every image that is drawn in them. It is sufficient if we can but hit off their main intendment, which, in this of Jotham, was to convince the Shechemites of their folly in choosing a man for their king, who was no more able to protect them, than a bramble was to cover other trees that should resort to it, under the shadow of its branches.—*Saurin's Dissertations, and Patrick's Commentary.*

^b This was a city that stood on the northern frontiers of the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles from Jerusalem, in the way to Shechem and Napolze, which did not acknowledge Abimelech for king; and therefore Jotham knew, that he might have sure refuge and protection there. Dr Richardson says, Beer seems to have been once a place of considerable consequence. It has a well of good water, and close to it are the mouldering walls of a ruined Khan, and on the top of the hill two large arches of a ruined convent.—Ed.

^c In the text the expression is, 'Then God sent an evil spirit, or spirit of discord, between Abimelech and the men of Shechem,' (Judg. ix. 23,) which, in Scripture, is an usual form of speech, and denotes not any positive action, but a permission only, or, at most, a direction from God. It is observed, however, that this manner of expression may possibly have given rise to some notions in the theology of the heathens, when they suppose, that

* Wine, as the Jewish doctors assert, was not only used in their sacrifices, but till the drink-offering was poured out, they did not sing the hymn that was then sung to God.

growing jealous and distrustful of their new king, were for apprehending and killing him, which made him leave the place, and escape for his life. As soon as he was gone, they set up another vile wretch, Gael, the son of Ebed, to be their governor. Under his protection, the people ventured out to reap the fruits of the earth, and having upon this occasion, made themselves merry, they expressed their detestation of Abimelech, and none was more forward than Gael to speak contemptibly of him, and make his boasts what he would do with him, if he could but once catch him. Zebul, whom Abimelech intrusted with his concerns in his absence, gave him intelligence of all that passed, and advised him to come with some forces, before it was too late. Accordingly, he marches all night, divides his army into four parts, and early in the morning had beset the city. Gael, though a very coward, seeing matters reduced to this extremity, marched out with what forces he had, but was soon defeated and slain. Abimelech, next day, stormed the place, and killed all the inhabitants that came in his way; but some having betaken themselves to a fort belonging to the temple of their god Berith, he set fire to it, and destroyed them all together.

During these times of confusion, the town of Thebez, not far distant from Shechem, revolted; and Abimelech, being now flushed with victory, besieged and took it; but the inhabitants flying to a strong tower, ^c he endeavoured to burn that, as he had done the other, but not with the same success. For while he was encouraging his men, and helping them to set the gate on fire, ^d a woman threw down a piece of millstone upon him, which

the furies are appointed by the gods to sow the seeds of discord among men.

Thus having said, she sinks beneath the ground,
With furious haste, and shoots the Stygian sound,
To rouse Alecto from the infernal seat
Of her dire sisters, and their dark retreat.
This Fury, fit for her intent, she chose;
One who delights in wars and human woes.

And a little lower,

'Tis thine to ruin realms, o'erturn a state,
Betwixt the dearest friends to raise debate,
And kindle kindred blood to mutual hate.
Now shake, from out thy fruitful breast, the seeds
Of envy, discord, and of cruel deeds:
Confound the peace establish'd, and prepare
Their souls to hatred, and their hands to war.

Virgil, Æn. 7.

^c Jud. ix. 51. 'But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and shut it to them.' Besides fortified towns and cities, we find that in the time of the croisades they had towers for the people of open towns to fly to in time of danger. Thus in the reign of Baldwin the Second, when the strength of the kingdom was collected together to the siege of Tyre, the people of Ascalon suddenly invaded the country about Jerusalem, and put to the sword the greatest part of the inhabitants of a town called Mahomesia, five or six miles from Jerusalem. But the old men, the women, and the children, betaking themselves to a tower, escaped. (*Gesta Dei, per Francos*, p. 840.) Towers of this sort appear to have been in use in very early times.—*Harmer*, vol. 2. p. 239.

^d Thus Plutarch relates, that Pyrrhus, at the siege of Argos, was killed by a woman throwing a tile upon his head; but there is something more remarkable in Abimelech's death by a stone, because, as he slew all his brethren upon one stone, for him to die by no other instrument carried some stamp of his sin upon it. The manner of his death, however, puts me in mind of what the same author records of the Spartan general Lysander, who fell ingloriously under the walls of Haliartus. "Thus he died," says

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fractured his skull; so that finding himself mortally wounded, he called to his armour-bearer to put an end to his life, that it might not be said he died by the hand of a woman. Thus God, in his abundant righteousness, punished both Abimelech and the men of Shechem according to their deserts; and within the space of three years after their crimes were committed, made them the instruments of each others' destruction.

After the death of Abimelech, Tolah the son of Puah, an eminent man of the tribe of Issachar, undertook the government, and continued in it for three and twenty years. He dwelt on Mount Ephraim, near the centre of the country, that the people might with more convenience, resort to him for judgment; and though there is not much recorded of him, yet he seems to have been a prudent and peaceable man; raised up to reform abuses, to put down idolatry, to appease tumults, and heal the wounds which were given to church and state, during Abimelech's usurpation.

He was succeeded by Jair, a Gileadite, of the tribe of Manasseh, the first governor that was raised up out of any of the tribes beyond Jordan, and who, in the main, seems to have been more solicitous to aggrandize his own family, than to mind the concerns of religion. For during his administration the people not only worshipped Baalim, and Ashtaroth, as they had frequently done before, but adopted the gods likewise of every neighbouring nation, of the Syrians, the Zidonians, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Philistines; so that God being enraged against them, incited the Philistines and the Ammonites to invade them on all quarters in one and the same year. Nor did these people make their incursions only upon the tribes that were on the east side of Jordan, but passing the river, gave the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, no small molestation, and by their sundry defeats, made them feel the weight of their power.

The Israelites, finding themselves not able to cope with such powerful enemies, grew sensible of their folly; and, to recover the protection of God, renounced all

their idols, and betook themselves to his service in good earnest; whereupon ^b his mercy returning with their repentance, he soon found out means to effect their deliverance.

There was, at that time, in the half tribe of Manasseh, which settled on the east side of Jordan, a man of note among his people, whose name was Gilead, of the family of that Gilead, the son of Machar, to whom Moses gave the ¹ city of Gilead, from whence the family took their name. This man had by his wife several sons, and one ^c by a concubine, whom he named Jephthah; but when his sons grew up, and their father was dead, they expelled Jephthah, as having no right of inheritance with them, so that he was sent to seek his fortune, and, at length, settled in the ^d land of Tob; where, being a man of great courage and bravery, he was soon made the captain of a small army, with whom he used to make excursions into the enemies' country, and sometimes bring off rich spoils.

The Ammonites had now raised a large army with a design to invade the country of Gilead itself. The Gileadites on the other hand, were resolved to defend their country, and, to that purpose, had got together

¹ Num. xxxii. 29.

^b This is the most remarkable repentance and reformation that we meet with in the history of the judges; and it seems to be serious, that in the times of those three governors who succeeded Jephthah, we read nothing of their relapsing into idolatry. And as their repentance was sincere, so the expression of the divine compassion towards them, namely, 'that his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel,' (Judg. x. 16.) is the strongest that we meet with; though every one knows, that the divine nature is not capable of grief properly so called; but the meaning is, that he quite altered his former intention, and in much mercy, resolved, upon their repentance, to deliver them.

^c Several Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the word *Zonah* may signify either *one of another tribe*, or, *one of another nation*; and so Josephus calls Jephthah *ἑνὸς ἀπὸ τῆς πατρὸς, a stranger by the mother's side*. It is to be observed, however, that among the Jews, if such persons as were deemed strangers embraced the law, their children were capable to inherit among the rest of their brethren. Jephthah indeed complains of the hard usage he met with, but it was upon this occasion, when his country he found stood in need of him; for had he been unjustly dispossessed of his right of inheritance before, we can hardly suppose, that a man of his courage and martial spirit would have sat down contented with his exclusion. It is not to be doubted, therefore, but that he 'was the son of an harlot,' properly so called. But then the question is, why God should make choice of a person of his character for so great an instrument of his glory? To which it may be replied, 1st, That God has prescribed laws to men, but none to himself; and can therefore alter his dispensations as he pleases, according to the circumstances and exigencies of things. 2dly, That as he chooses to act by second causes, he always makes use of such instruments, as, all things considered, are properest for this purpose, without regard to any blemishes, for which they themselves are not accountable; and 3dly, That he might purposely dispense with the law in this case, to show, that those who are basely born, ought not to despond, but by a virtuous and good life, expect a share of God's blessings.—*Howell's History*, b. 4. in the notes. [Although it is asserted above, that Jephthah's mother was an harlot, this is by no means clear; as, if she was a Canaanite, (which seems very probable, and in addition to this, was only a secondary wife, or concubine,) then Jephthah could not have a title to a share of the inheritance.]—*Ed.*

^d We read no where else of this country, which very probably was not far from Gilead, upon the borders of the Ammonites, in the entrance of the Arabia Deserta; or perhaps it is the same with what is called *Isa-tob*, (2 Sam. viii. 6, 8.) which was in Syria, and so near the Ammonites, that they hired forces from thence, as well as from other nations, to fight against David.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

he, "but not like Cleombrotus, who was slain while he was gloriously making head against an impetuous enemy at Leuctra, not like Cyrus, or Epaminondas, who received a mortal wound, while he was rallying his men, and securing to them the victory. These great men died in their callings. They died the death of kings and commanders: whereas he, like some common soldier, or one of the forlorn hope, cast away his life ingloriously; giving this testimony to the ancient Spartans, that they did not well to avoid storming of walls; in which the stoutest man may chance to fall by the hand, not only of an abject fellow, but by that of a boy, or a woman, as they say Achilles was slain, in the gates of Troy, by the hands of the effeminate Paris."—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Plutarch's Comp. of Lysander and Sylla*.

^a The reasons which the Scripture gives us to think, that he really did aggrandize his own family, are, 1st, because he is said to have thirty sons, that rode on thirty asses' colts: for as in those days the Israelites had but few chariots, and were not allowed to keep many horses, the most honourable of them were used to be mounted on these creatures, which, in the eastern countries, were much higher, and more beautiful than they are with us. 2dly, 'They had thirty cities or villages, called after their own name, in the land of Gilead.' For as we read that Jair, the son of Manasseh, went and took the small towns of Gilead, and called them Havoth-jair, (Num. xxxii. 41. and Deut. iii. 14.) so we may presume that this Jair who was afterwards judge of Israel, recovered the places which his ancestor conquered, and perhaps added some more to them, that each son of his might have one.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

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what forces they could; but then they were at a loss for a general. Jephthah, they knew, was a man of courage and conduct, who had signalized himself on frequent occasions against the enemy; and therefore, in a full assembly of their chiefs, it was resolved to send him an offer of the command of their army. Surprised at this sudden change, and remonstrating a little their former unkindness to him, he consented at last to accept of the command; but it was on this condition, that if he happened to be successful in the war, they should establish him their governor for life, which they readily consented to, and solemnly ratified. Being invested with this power and authority, Jephthah sent ambassadors to the king of Ammon, to demand the reason of his invading the Gileadites; to whom that prince replied, that their land was his, and that the Israelites, in their passage from Egypt, had taken it from his ancestors, which he now intended to recover. Jephthah returned him, by other ambassadors, in answer, that if either conquest or prescription conferred a title, they had a just right to the country they possessed, since they took it, not from them, but from the Amorites, and had, for 300 years, been in quiet possession of it; but all would not do. The Ammonites were resolved upon a war, and Jephthah made all things ready to receive them. But before he took the field, he made a vow, that if he returned with victory, the first thing that came out of his house to meet him, he would certainly offer unto the Lord, which many think was the occasion of the sacrificing his own daughter.^a

However this be, it is certain, that when he returned out of the country of Ammon, where his battles were fought with success, he met with some disturbance at home; for the tribe of Ephraim, not long after, passed the river Jordan, on purpose to pick a quarrel with him, because, as they pretended, he had not sent for them to join the army, and share in the victory.^b At other times they had been noisy and clamorous enough, but now they proceeded so far as to threaten to burn his house over his head. Jephthah endeavoured what he could to pacify them with good words; but when he found that reasoning would not do, he fell upon them with his army, and put them to flight: and being resolved to hinder them from giving him the like molestation any more, he sent and secured all the passes over Jordan in their way home; so that, as fast as they came thither, if upon examination they owned themselves Ephraimites, they were immediately put to the sword:

^a Judges xi. 30. 'And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord.' Though he did not doubt, yet he supposed that he should be more certain of the victory, if he made a religious vow beforehand, of being grateful to God for it. In this he acted conformably to the general practice of great warriors in all ages. Livy frequently mentions it as the custom of the Roman generals, who used to vow to Jupiter or Apollo part of the spoil they should take in war, or to build temples to their honour. Thus the Israelites, when Arad came against them as they were going to Canaan, made a vow respecting his country, if God would deliver it into their hands.—Num. xxi. 2.

^b Though Gideon had called the Ephraimites to assist in the pursuit of the Midianites, and had given them the advantage of plunder, and the honour of taking Oreb and Zeeb, two princes of Midian, prisoners; yet, because they were not called at first to the battle, they took upon them to reprehend him very sharply, which he, like a prudent man, took patiently, and pacified them with good words.—Howell's History, b. 4., in the notes.

if they denied it, they had^c the test-word *Shibboleth* given them, which, if they pronounced it *Sibboleth*, discovered their country, and cost them their lives; inso-much, that what in the field, and what on the banks of the river, no less than^d 42,000 Ephraimites were slain.

Thus Jephthah, having delivered his country from the attempts both of foreign and domestic foes, lived the remainder of his days in peace, and after the administration of public affairs for six years' continuance in all, he died, and was honourably buried in his own country.

He was succeeded by Ibzan of Bethlehem, who, after he had governed seven years, was succeeded by Elon, of the tribe of Zebulun; and he, after he had ruled ten years, by Abdon, of the tribe of Ephraim, who ruled eight. Of these judges the sacred history says nothing remarkable, only that some of them had a numerous issue, which is mentioned to show that the government, at that time, was not hereditary.

During the administration of these judges, the Israelites, enjoyed a peace of three and twenty years' continuance; but when they relapsed into their old impieties, God suffered the Philistines to invade and oppress them, whereupon Samson's valiant acts began to display themselves. He was the son of Manoah,^e of the tribe of

^c Nothing is more notorious than that the people of the same nation, who speak the same language, differ very much, in their pronunciation of it, in several parts of the country. In Palestine, the people in Galilee, and those that lived in Jerusalem, spake the same tongue, and yet, in the time of Christ, the latter could tell St Peter, that his 'speech betrayed him,' (Mat. xxvi. 73.) In Greece all spake Greek, and yet the Ionians, Attics, Dorians, and Æolians pronounced very differently. And here, though the Gileadites and Ephraimites were all of one nation, yet the latter, we find, could not pronounce the letter *schin*. There were doubtless, therefore, many other words which they could not frame their mouths to speak, as the Gileadites did, but this one was chosen, because it was fit for their purpose. For as *Shibboleth* signifies *floods of water*, the Gileadites, when they saw any Ephraimites appear, might put this test to him, and bid him say, Let me pass over the water.—*Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries*.—In Arabia, the difference of pronunciation by persons of various districts is much greater than in most other places, and such as easily accounts for the circumstance mentioned in this passage. Niebuhr, (*Travels*, p. 72.), relates something similar to it. "The king of the Hamjares, at Dhafar, said to an Arab, a stranger, *Theb*, meaning to say, *Sit down*; but as the same word in the dialect of the stranger signified leap, he leaped from a high place, and hurt himself; when this mistake was explained to the king, he said, Let the Arab who cometh to Dhafar first learn the Hamjare dialect." He further says, "Not only do they speak quite differently in the mountains of the small district which is governed by the imam of Yemen, from what they do in the flat country; but persons of superior rank have a different pronunciation, and different names for things from those of the peasants. The pronunciation of certain letters also differs. Those which the Arabs of the north and west pronounce as K or Q, at Muskat are pronounced Tsch; so that *bukkra kiab* is by some called *butscher tschiab*."—Ed.

^d This was a terrible slaughter for one tribe to make of another: but the Ephraimites seemed to have deserved it, as a just punishment of their pride and insolence, in despising so great a man as Jephthah, who had saved all the people of Israel, and threatening to destroy his house, after so glorious a victory; in reviling their brethren likewise; invading them without a cause, and attempting to drive them out of their country.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^e As the tribe of Dan lay bordering upon the Philistines, it was most exposed to their incursions and invasions; and, therefore, God, out of that tribe, chose Samson to be a scourge to them, and a revenger of his people, which is very agreeable to the prophecy of Jacob, when he blessed his sons, a little before his death: 'Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the

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Dan, and of a mother, whose name we nowhere find in Scripture. This woman was a long time barren, and had no children; and, therefore, when an angel appeared to her, while she was alone, and gave her assurances that she would be mother of a son, who was to be a ^a Nazarite from his birth; to drink no wine or strong liquor; and ^b never have his hair shaved: upon her telling her husband these glad tidings, he requested of God to vouchsafe him a sight of the same heavenly messenger, which accordingly God granted him, and, when Manoah entreated the angel to accept of a small entertainment, which he chose rather to have converted into a sacrifice, Manoah made ready a kid, and wine for libations; and having placed them upon an altar made of stone, as the smoke of the sacrifice began to ascend, the ^c angel mounted up in the flame, and so disappeared.

At the time appointed the divine promise was accomplished, and the woman was delivered of a son, whom she named Samson. While he was yet a youth, the Spirit of God began to appear in him, and to exert itself in some notable exploits and feats of activity, in what was called ^d the old camp of Dan, lying between ^e Zorah

path, biting the heels of the horse, so that his rider shall fall backwards.—Gen. xlix. 17.

^a A Nazarite was one who, under the Levitical law, either to attain the favour, or avert the judgments, or acknowledge the mercies of Almighty God, vowed a vow of particular purity, and separated himself, for so the word signifies, in an extraordinary manner, to the service of God. The time of this vow lasted usually for eight days, sometimes for a month, and, in some cases, for the person's whole life. During this time, the persons (for women as well as men might enter into this engagement) bound themselves to abstain from wine, and all strong liquors; not to cut the hair of their heads; not to come near a dead corpse, nor assist at a funeral: nay, the matter was so high, that if any happened to die suddenly in their presence, the whole ceremony of this separation was to begin anew. After the time that their separation was ended, they were to offer such sacrifices as the law appointed, and then, being absolved from their vow by the priest, they might drink wine, and use the same freedom that other people did. Samson's Nazaritism, to which he was consecrated by his parents, was to last the whole term of his life: but his frequent intercourse with the Philistines, and the great havoc and slaughter that he so often made among them, would induce one to think, that he had a particular dispensation exempting him from the observation of some of the foregoing rules.—See Num. vi.: *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries* upon it; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

^b Long hair was esteemed very much among the Jews; and such persons as were made Nazarites by their parents, and consecrated to God from the womb, were required to wear their hair long and uncut, because it was a token not only of beauty, but of majesty and veneration.—*Howell's History*, in the notes.

^c Angels' bodies, which the Platonists called *εὐφράτα*, or vehicles, are not subject to the laws of gravity, as ours are. After our Saviour's resurrection, the history of the gospel informs us, how immediately, and in an instant, his body could move from place to place; and therefore it is no wonder, that Manoah and his wife should discover the person that appeared to them to be an angel, by the manner of his ascension.—*Le Clerc's Comment.*

^d This camp of Dan was probably the place where the Danites made their encampment, in their expedition and enterprise against Laish, (Judg. xviii. 11.); for it is not at all likely that the Philistines, who had the Israelites, at that time, entirely under their subjection, should suffer them to have any standing camp. And this, by the bye, is a good argument, that the story of Micah, and the Danites' expedition, was transacted before Samson's time, though the compilers of the Bible have placed it after.—*Howell's History*, in the notes.

^e Both these were towns in the tribe of Dan, whereof Zorah lay on the frontiers of Judah; and for this reason Rehoboam, upon the revolt of the ten tribes, seems to have kept this place, though

and Eshtaol, the place where he was born. When he came to man's estate, he fell in love with the daughter of a Philistine, who lived at Timnath; and though his parents did not so well approve of the match, because she was sprung from an idolatrous family, yet, such was their tenderness for their son, that they indulged his passion, and went both of them with him to ^f Timnath to treat about the marriage. As they were on their journey, and Samson was straggling a little from the company, all on a sudden a young lion came running at him with open mouth, but he took it, and slew it with as much ease as if it had been a kid; and some time after, as he passed that way, which was when his father and mother went with him to solemnize his nuptials, he turned aside to see what was become of the lion's carcass, and, to his great surprise, found a ^g swarm of bees, and some honey in it, which he took, and gave part of it to his parents, but did not tell them whence he had it.

It was customary in those days to continue the nuptial entertainment for seven days, ^h and, to do the bridegroom greater honour, his wife's relations had brought ⁱ thirty of their prime youth to bear him company, to whom, as the manner then was, he propounded a riddle, ^j which if they could explain in the time that the feast

lying in one of these tribes, and to have fortified it for a barrier town, on that side of the kingdom of Judah; as he did also Ajalon, another town belonging to the same tribe.—*Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2. c. 6.

^f It is not improbably thought, that the place which is called Timnath, (Josh. xv. 10.) and Timnatha, (Josh. xix. 43.) was the same with this. It was assigned at first to the tribe of Judah, but afterwards to the tribe of Dan, and was, in all likelihood, the place whither Judah, the patriarch of the tribe that was called after him, went up to his sheep-shearers.—Gen. xxxviii. 12.—*Wells's Geography*, *ibid*.

^g Bees are observed by Aristotle and others to abhor stinking smells, and to abstain from flesh; which has made some think it strange, that a swarm of bees should be found in the carcass of a lion: but it is no hard matter to suppose that either time had consumed, or birds and beasts devoured all the flesh, so that nothing was left of the lion but the skeleton, in which the bees did not breed, (for the notion of insects breeding in that manner is now quite exploded,) but only settle themselves, when they swarmed as they have sometimes done in dead men's skulls, and in their tombs.—*Bochart's Hieros.* part 2. b. 4. 10; and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^h This was according to the custom of all countries; it was called by the Jews the nuptial joy. No other feast was to be intermixed with it, and all labour ceased as long as it lasted.—*Selden, Uxor. Hebr.* b. 2. c. 2. p. 172.

ⁱ During the time of the marriage-feast, which, for a virgin, lasted seven, but for a widow, only three days, it was customary among the Jews, to have a chosen set of young men, whom the Greeks call *Paranymphe*, and the Hebrews *Scheliachim*, to keep the bridegroom company; as also a certain number of young women were about the bride all this time. These young men were generally of the bridegroom's relations and acquaintance; but at Samson's marriage, they belonged to his wife's family, and were sent, as some of the Jews think, not so much to do him honour at the time of his nuptials, as to be a guard over him, lest he should make any disturbance, of which the Philistines were afraid, when they understood that he was a man of so much strength and might.—*Lamy's Introduction*, b. 1. c. 14.; and *Calmet's Dissertation on the Marriages of the Jews*.

^j This riddle which Samson proposed at his nuptials, is somewhat singular. As the men and women were not permitted to be together in these eastern countries, they could not amuse themselves with their conversation; and as they could not spend their time merely in dull eating and drinking, it is hence presumed that their custom was, in their competitions and feasts, (as we find it afterwards among the Greeks,) to propose questions and hard problems to be resolved, in order to exercise the wit and sagacity

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lasted, he obliged himself to give them thirty suits of clothes, and an equal number of shirts; but if they could not, they were to forfeit the like to him. The words of the riddle were, 'Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness;' which so puzzled the young men, that they could not for their hearts devise what it meant; and therefore applying themselves to Samson's wife, what with threats, what with entreaties, they prevailed with her to get the secret out of her husband: which, when, with much importunity, she had done, she told it them, and they at the conclusion of the feast, gave him to understand that they knew it. He told them, however, by whose information they had it, and, being desperately enraged, went down to ^a Askalon a city of the Philistines, where having slain ^b thirty men, he gave their clothes to those that expounded the riddle; but taking the thing very ill of his wife, he left her, and went down to his father's house, while she, in his absence, was married to one of the young men that had been his companion all the wedding week.

As soon as his resentment was abated, and his anger appeased, Samson took a kid for a present to his wife, and went to her father's house, with a full purpose of being reconciled to her; but to his great amazement, was denied admittance to her room, and told by her father that, upon presumption he had quite forsaken her, he had married her to one of his companions, but had another daughter younger, and more beautiful, that was at his service. This answer was far from satisfying him; and therefore, imagining that the affront was not so much the act of his father-in-law, as the general contrivance of the Philistines, he turned about short, and vowed revenge, which he afterwards executed in the following manner.

of the company.—*Selden de Uxor. Hebr. b. 2. c. 16.* But as to this riddle of Samson's, some people are apt to find exceptions. The opposition, they say, is manifest in the former part of it, but not in the latter; for weakness is opposed to strength, not sweetness, whose opposite is bitterness or sharpness. But Bochart has ingeniously observed, that these two words, strong and sharp, are oftentimes used promiscuously. For, in the Arabic language, the word *mirra*, which signifies, *strength*, comes from *marra*, which signifies to be *sharp* or *bitter*; and so it is in the Latin, where *acer*, a *sharp man*, is as much as a valiant man, one who eagerly (as we speak) engages his enemy, and, what is more, we find, in some of the best authors, this particular epithet applied to lions, "The impetuous race of lions," (*Ovid. Fast.*) And therefore the antithesis of the word is this,—"Food came from the devourer, and sweetness from what is eager, or sharp," that is violent and fierce.—*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

^a It is a city in the land of the Philistines, situated between Azoth and Gaza, upon the coast of the Mediterranean sea, about 520 furlongs distant from Jerusalem. It is said to have been of great note among the Gentiles, for a temple dedicated to Derceto, the mother of Semiramis, here worshipped in the form of a mermaid; and for another temple of Apollo, where Herod, the father of Antipater, and grandfather of Herod the Great, served as priest. The place subsists to this day, but is now very inconsiderable. Some mention there is made of the wine of Askalon, and the cypress-tree, (a shrub that was anciently in great esteem, and very common in this place,) but modern travellers say no such thing of it now.—*Cabnet's Dictionary* under the word; and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

^b It may well be questioned, upon what occasion Samson could meet with thirty Philistines, all clothed in their new and best attire, even though we allow that he went with a disposition to pick a quarrel with them, and slay them; but then it is but supposing, that at this time, there was a merry-making, either in the fields, or in the city, at some public solemnity, when great companies used to be gathered together, and appear in their best apparel, and the thing is done.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

By some means or other, he got together a multitude of foxes to the number of 300; and, tying them two and two together by the tails, with a lighted torch between each pair, he turned them into the standing corn at different places, and so not only set the field on fire, but the vine and olive yards likewise, insomuch that the whole country was in a blaze. When the Philistines understood that it was Samson who had done this, in revenge to the affront which his father-in-law had put upon him, they came in a body and fired the house over his head, and so burnt him and Samson's wife together. This was a fresh provocation, for which Samson threatened to be revenged; and, thereupon, without any ceremony, fell immediately upon them, and ^c slew a great number of them.

Samson, being conscious to himself, that he must have highly provoked the Philistines by this last slaughter of them, took up his residence thenceforwards on the ^d top of the rock Etam, ^e which was in the tribe of Judah. Hereupon the Philistines came down with an armed force, and demanded Samson to be delivered up to them. The people of Judah, fearing the consequence of this invasion, detached a body of 3000 men to Samson; who, after they had expostulated the injury he had done them in provoking their enemies so highly, told him in plain

^c The words in the text, according to our translation are, 'And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter,' (*Jud. xv. 8.*) But the words in the original will admit of this signification, "He smote them with his leg on their thigh, and gave them great hurts or wounds;" and to justify this sense, a learned commentator supposes, that there was, at this time, somewhere among the Philistines, wrestling matches and other rural exercises, to which every one was invited, and that Samson, among the rest, might go thither; that there he threw great numbers of the Philistines, who might value themselves upon their activity that way; and, in the midst of the grapple with them, broke their thighs with a kick or twist of his leg. If this supposition be right, the phrase, "to squeeze the leg on the thigh," seems to be much the same with what the Greeks call *σκιζέειν*; or *ἀποσκιζέειν*; for, though this kind of exercise grew into high esteem among the Grecians, who were so famous for their gymnastic sports; yet that wrestling was an exercise not unknown among the people of the east is manifest from *Gen. xxv. 26. xxx. 8.* and *xxxii. 24.* This our commentator offers but as a conjecture indeed; but it seems much more feasible than the interpretation either of the Vulgate or Chaldee paraphrast.—*Le Clerc in locum.*

^d This was a strong place in the tribe of Judah, as Josephus relates to the top of which no more than one man could come abreast, and therefore easily defensible; by all this, however, and what follows in this history of Samson, it is plain that he had no commission from God, nor was moved by any extraordinary impulse to make open war (as did Gideon, Jephthah, and others) for the deliverance of Israel from the yoke of the Philistines, but only to weaken them and keep them in awe, that, out of dread of him, they might be less cruel in their oppression; and that this was all that God intended to do by him, is pretty plain from the words of the angel, (*Judg. xiii. 5.*) 'He shall begin to deliver Israel.'—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^e *Judg. xv. 8.* 'And he went down and dwelt on the top of the rock Etam.' It appears that rocks are still resorted to as places of security, and even capable of sustaining a siege. So we read in *De La Roque*, (p. 205.) "The Grand Signior, wishing to seize the person of the Emir, gave orders to the Pacha to take him prisoner; he accordingly came in search of him, with a new army in the district of Chouf, which is a part of Mount Lebanon, wherein is the village of Gesin, and close to it the rock which served for retreat to the Emir. The Pacha pressed the Emir so closely, that this unfortunate prince was obliged to shut himself up in the cliff of a great rock, with a small number of his officers. The Pacha besieged him here several months, and was going to blow up the rock by a mine, when the Emir capitulated."—*Travels in Palestine.*—*Ed.*

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terms, that they were come to seize, and deliver him up to the Philistines.

Samson submitted to have himself bound, which was done with new strong cords, upon condition that they themselves would not side with the enemy against him; and so being brought to the place where the Philistines were encamped, they now thought they had him secure, and therefore ran out with joy to receive him. But as they came near him, he snapped the cords asunder, and happening to espy a fresh jaw-bone of an ass, he made use of that for want of a better weapon, and therewith slew no less than a thousand men; from which achievement, the place was afterwards called, either simply *Lehi*, that is, *the jaw-bone*, or *Ramah-Lehi*, *the lifting of the jaw-bone*. Fatigued with this fight, and being now excessively thirsty, in a place where no water was to be had, he made his supplication to God, and God immediately caused a fountain of delicious water to issue from a hollow rock adjacent to Lehi, wherewith Samson allayed his thirst, and was revived; and from this event, the place was called *En-hakkor*, *the well of him that prayed*, ever after.

After this action Samson made nothing of the Philistines, but went openly into ^a one of their cities called Gaza, and took up his lodging in a public house of entertainment. The governor of the place had soon intelligence of him, and sent guards to beset the house, and to watch the gates of the city for his going out next morning; but Samson, being informed of this, rose in the midnight, and taking the two gates of the city, gateposts, bars, bolts, chain and all, he laid them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of an hill, ^b that looks towards Hebron, and there left them.

^a This city was, by Joshua, made part of the tribe of Judah, but, after him, it fell into the hands of the Philistines, and was one of their five principalities, situated between Raphia and Askelon, towards the southern extremity of the promised land. The advantageous situation of this place was the cause of the many revolutions to which it became subject. At first of all it belonged to the Philistines, but in Joshua's time, was conquered by the Hebrews. In the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, it recovered its liberty, but was conquered by Hezekiah. It was made subject to the Chaldeans, when they reduced Syria and Phœnicia; and afterwards fell into the hands of the Persians. They were masters of it when Alexander besieged, took, and demolished it. It afterwards rose again, but not nearly of the same magnitude, under the name of Majuma, which underwent as many vicissitudes as the former. The kings of Egypt had it for some time in possession: Antiochus the Great took and sacked it; the Asmoneans, or Maccabees, took it several times from the Syrians; Alexander Jannæus, king of the Hebrews, destroyed it; Gabinus repaired it. Augustus gave it to Herod the Great; Constantine gave it the name of Constantia, with many independent privileges, in honour of his son; but the emperor Julian destroyed and deprived it of all.—*Cabnet's Dictionary*.—Gaza lies 44 miles south-west of Jerusalem, and about one mile from the Mediterranean sea, in long. 34° 40' E., and lat. 31° 25' N., and has a population of about 5000. The environs are exceedingly fertile, and produce pomegranates, oranges, dates, and flowers, in great request even at Constantinople. The manufacture of cotton employs 500 looms in the town and neighbourhood. There are likewise great quantities of ashes made by the Arabs, and used in the manufacture of soap; this manufacture has lately declined. Gaza is at present divided into two parts, called the upper and lower. Both of these parts taken together are now called Gazara; and the upper part where the castle is situated has the same name, but the lower part is, by the Arabs, distinguished under the name of Harel el Segiagé.—*En*.

^b The words in the text are, that 'he carried them up to the

At length a more fatal adventure than any of these befell him: for falling in love with a beautiful woman, named ^c Delilah, who lived in the vale of Sorek, which lay in the tribe of Judah, he was so infatuated to her, that he lost all regard to his own safety. The princes of the Philistines, observing his passion for this woman, came and promised her ^d a round sum of money, if she would learn of him, and discover to them what might be the cause of this his wonderful strength, and ^e how he might be deprived of it. This she undertook to do; and failed not to employ all her art and solicitation to get the important secret from him. For some time he amused her with fictions, and made her believe, that his strength consisted sometimes in one thing, and sometimes in another; first, that binding him with hands made of green withes, then, that tying him with ropes that had never been used, and again, ^f weaving his hair into

top of a hill, that is before Hebron,' (Judges xvi. 3.); but the word which we render 'before,' does equally signify 'in the sight of Hebron;' and therefore, since the distance between Gaza and Hebron is no less than twenty miles, it is more probable, that the hill where Samson left these gates, lay between the two cities, and in view of both, that the inhabitants of one city might behold them to their confusion, and they of the other, to their encouragement to hope for a future deliverance.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c It is certain that Sorek was a place in the land of Judea, famous for choice wines, as may be gathered from Gen. xlv. 11.; Isaiah v. 12.; and Jer. ii. 21., and lay not above a mile and a half from Eschol, from whence the spies brought a bunch of grapes for a sample of the fruitfulness of the country; but whether Delilah, who is said to live here, was a woman of Israel, or one of the daughters of the Philistines, (who at this time were rulers in the country of Judah,) or whether she was his wife, or an harlot only, is not expressed in her story. St Chrysostom, and others, are of opinion that he was married to her; but if so, some mention, one would think, there should have been of the marriage ceremonies in this, as well as in his former wife's case. Nor can we think that the Philistines would have been so bold as to attempt to draw her into their party, and to bribe her to betray him into their hands, had she been his lawful wife. It appears, indeed, by her whole behaviour, that she was a mercenary woman, who would do any thing to get money; and accordingly, Josephus, (*Antiquities*, b. 5. c. 1.) calls her a common prostitute of the Philistines.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^d The princes of the Philistines, from their five chief cities, Accaron, Askalon, Gaza, Azoth, and Gath, (1 Sam. vi. 17.) are supposed to be five in number, so that, if they made her a common purse, as we say, of five times 1100 pieces, or 5,500 shekels of silver, it would amount to about 343 pounds fifteen shillings.—*Howell's History*, in the notes.

^e There is a good deal of probability in Josephus's manner of telling this story, namely, That while they were eating and drinking together, and he was caressing her, she fell into an admiration of his wonderful deeds; and having highly extolled them, desired him to tell her how he came so much to excel all other men in strength. For we cannot suppose, that she came bluntly upon him all at once, and desired to know, as it is in the text, 'wherewith he might be bound and afflicted.' This had been discovering her wicked design against him at once, and defeating herself of an opportunity of betraying him; and therefore, we must conclude that the sacred history in this place, as it frequently does elsewhere, gives only the sum and substance of what Delilah said to her paramour, without taking notice of all the cunning and artful speeches wherewith she dressed it up.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^f We have followed in this passage, which indeed is a very obscure one, the notion of the learned Spencer, (*On the Law of Moses' Rites*, b. 3. c. 6. Dissert. 1.) concerning the hair of the Nazarite; but a learned commentator is of another opinion, namely, that Samson's hair, being very long, was interwoven with the threads and warp of a web of cloth. And to this purpose he supposes, that in the room where he sometimes slept

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tresses, and so filleting them up, would bereave him of his strength. But these were no more than mock stories; for, upon trial, she found that all these signified nothing; and therefore, betaking herself to all her arts and wiles, she complained of his falseness, and upbraided him with his want of love, since he withheld a thing from her which she was so impatient to know: and thus, by daily teasing and importuning him; she prevailed with him at length to tell her the secret, namely, that 'in the preservation of his hair (for he was a Nazarite from his birth) his strength and security lay.'

There was something in his manner of telling her this, that made Delilah believe she had now got the true secret from him; and therefore, she sent word thereof to some of the chiefs of the Philistines, who came and paid her the money they had covenanted to give her: and when she had cut off his hair, as he lay sleeping in her lap, they fell upon him, bound him, and put out his eyes; and having carried him to Gaza, they shut him up in prison, and made him ^a grind in the mill like a slave.

In process of time, however, his hair grew again, and with it his former strength returned: so that, when several of the princes and nobility of the Philistines were met in a general assembly, to return thanks to their god ^b Dagon, for having delivered their worst and sorest

enemy into their hands; and after they had feasted a while, and were now grown merry, they ordered that this same Samson should be sent for, that they might have pleasure in ridiculing his misery, and making sport with his blindness, and accordingly Samson was brought. A large number of people was upon this occasion met together, and the building where the feast was celebrated had only two large pillars to support the roof. After the Philistines therefore had insulted Samson as long as they thought fit, he desired the boy, that led him, to guide him to one of those pillars that he might rest himself a little against it. The boy did so: and Samson, by this means, having laid hold of the two main supporters, the one with his right hand, and the other with his left, after a short ejaculation to God for the restoration of his former strength, he gave them such a terrible shake, that down came the house, and crushed no less than three thousand persons to death under its ruins, and Samson among the rest.

^c Thus died this hero, in the midst of his enemies, as he desired; and when his relations heard of his death, they sent, and ^d took away his body, and buried it honourably in the sepulchre of his fathers.

upon a couch, there might stand very near a loom, wherewith Delilah, as the custom then was, at her leisure hours, might work and divert herself; and that now, by his permission and connivance, she might take the locks of his hair, work it into the web, and, to hinder it from being pulled out, secure it with an iron pin thrust into the beam, but that Samson, when he awoke, took the loom along with him at his hair. And, indeed, without some such supposition as this, we cannot very well tell what to make of his going away with 'the pin of the beam, and with the web.' (Jud. xvi. 14.)—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^a Before the invention of wind and water mills, men made use of hand mills, wherewith to grind their corn; and as this was a very laborious work, we find masters, especially in most comic authors, threatened their servants with it, in case of any delinquency. It was the work, indeed, of malefactors, as well as slaves; and therefore, it seems very probable, that in this prison, where Samson was put, there was a public mill, as Socrates (*Hist. Eccles.* b. 5. c. 18.) tells us there were several afterwards in Rome, in the time of Theodosius. So that from this and some other circumstances, we may learn, that the Philistines' purpose was not to put Samson to death, even as they had promised Delilah they would not, but to punish him in a manner, namely, with blindness, hard labour, and insults, much worse, and more intolerable than death itself.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^b The word *Dagon* is taken from the Phœnician word *Dag*, which signifies a fish; and accordingly the idol is usually represented, as the heathens do Tritons and Syrens, in the shape of a woman, with the lower parts of a fish,—*desinēt in piscem, mulier formosa superne*.—For this reason learned men have imagined, that Dagon was the same with Derceto, which the people of Askelon worshipped, and near which place there was a great pond full of fish, consecrated to this goddess, from which the inhabitants superstitiously abstained, out of a fond belief that Venus, having heretofore cast herself into this pond, was metamorphosed into a fish. The learned Jurieu is of another opinion, namely, That Dagon whose termination is masculine, both in sacred and profane writings, is always represented as a male deity, and may therefore very properly be thought to be the Neptune of the ancients. The Phœnicians in particular, from whom both the Greeks and Romans borrowed their gods, living upon the sea coast, and by their navigation and commerce, gaining great advantages from that element can hardly be supposed to want a deity to preside over it. Saturn, and his three sons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, were their principal idols: and as Saturn was their Moloch, Jupiter their Baal, and Pluto their Baal-zebub; so have we reason to presume, that Neptune was their Dagon. This however will not hinder us from sup-

posing that there might be two deities, a male and a female, worshipped in the same country, and under the same figure or form: and that as the pagan theology gives Jupiter a Juno, to be his consort in heaven; and Pluto a Proserpine, to keep him company in hell; so Neptune had his Amphitrite, to be the partner of his liquid empire in the sea. According to this supposition, the Dagon of Gaza or Ashdod must be Neptune and the Derceto of Askelon, a few leagues distant, Amphitrite, the daughter of Doris and Oceanus. Nor can it be thought incongruous to suppose farther, that the universal god of the sea might, in one place be represented as a male, as at Ashdod, and in another, as at Askelon, as a female, to signify the fecundity of that element, which produces and nourishes so many living creatures.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*; *Calmet's Dictionary*; and *Jurieu, History of Opinions and Religion*, part 4. c. 6.

^c It is made a question among the casuists and divines, whether Samson ought to have died in this manner, with a spirit of revenge and self-murder? St Austin excuses him indeed, but it is upon the supposition that he was urged thereunto by the inward motions of him who is the great Arbitrer of our life and death; and St Bernard affirms that if he had not a peculiar inspiration of the Holy Ghost to move him to this, he could not without sin have been the author of his own death; but others maintain, that without having recourse to this supernatural motive, this action of his might be vindicated from his office, as being the judge and defender of Israel, and that he might therefore devote his life to the public good, as some heathens have merited the commendation of posterity by so doing, without having any thing in view but the death of his enemies, and the deliverance of his own people.—*Calmet's Dictionary*; and *Saurin's Dissertation on the various feats of Samson*.

^d How the people of Gaza came to permit Samson's relations to come and take away his body, is not so obvious to conceive. In all nations, there was formerly so much humanity, as not to prohibit enemies from interring their dead, nor did any of the Israelites join with Samson in his enterprises; he stood alone in what he did: but this last slaughter which he had made among them, might have provoked them, one would think, to some acts of outrage even upon his dead body. It is to be observed, however, that instead of any acts of violence, they might perhaps be much humbled and mollified by this late disaster; and might fear, that if they denied him burial, the God of Israel, who had given him such extraordinary strength in his lifetime, would not fail to take vengeance of them. And therefore, dreading his very corpse, they were desirous to get quit of it, even as they were of the ark afterwards, and glad that any came to take such a formidable object out of their sight.—*Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

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CHAP. II.—*Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.*

JUDGES, which in Hebrew, are Shophetim, were a kind of magistrates, not much unlike the archontes, among the Athenians, and the dictators, among the Romans.

The Carthaginians, a colony among the Tyrians, had a sort of rulers, whom they called suffetes or shophetim, much of the same extent of power; and Grotius, in the beginning of his Commentary on this book of Judges, compares them to those chiefs that were in Gaul, in Germany, and in Britain, before the Romans introduced another form of government. Their power consisted in a medium (as it were) between that of a king and an ordinary magistrate, superior to the latter, but not so absolute as the former. They were indeed no more than God's vicegerents, and every attempt to raise themselves to regal dignity was looked upon as an usurpation upon his right, who alone was to be considered as the sovereign of the Hebrews; and therefore we find Gideon refusing this supreme authority when it was offered him: ¹ 'I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you.'

The honour of these judges lasted for life, but their succession was not always continued; for there were frequent interruptions in it, and the people lived often under the dominion of strangers, without any government of their own. According to common custom, they were generally appointed by God. The gifts which he invested them with, and the exploits he enabled them to do, were a call sufficient to that office: but in cases of extreme exigence, the people sometimes made choice of such as they thought best qualified to rescue them out of their oppression, without waiting for any divine designation.

Their right extended so far, as to arbitrate in all affairs of war and peace, and to determine all causes; but then they had none at all to make any new laws, or lay any new taxes upon the people. Their dominion did seldom reach over all the land; but, as it often happened, that the oppressions which occasioned a recourse to their assistance, were felt in particular tribes or provinces only; so the judges which were either raised, or chosen to procure a deliverance from those grievances, did not extend their command over all the land in general, but over that district only which they were appointed to deliver.

In short, these judges were by their office the protectors of the laws, the defenders of religion, and the avengers of all crimes, especially of that of idolatry; and yet it must be owned, that these were men of the like passions and infirmities with others, and that the great advantages which, under God, they procured for the Israelites, did not exempt them from that frailty which is incident to all human things.

The sacred story indeed tells us, that ² 'the Lord raised up judges, which delivered the Israelites out of the hands of those that spoiled them,' and that 'when he raised them up, he was with them,' that is, he communicated to them gifts, both natural and supernatural, according to the exigencies of his people, and, in all

their encounters with their enemies, attended them with a peculiar providence: but as well may we infer, that every general who fights the king of England's battles with success, should be a man of singular sanctity, as that those who were employed under God in that capacity, should lead lives answerable to their high character. The power of working miracles is not always accompanied with a holy life. Many, that shall say unto Christ, ³ 'have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works,' by reason of the iniquity of their lives, shall find no acceptance with him. What wonder is it then, to behold some, both kings and conquerors, even while they ride in triumph over the vanquished foes, tamely led captive by their own passions; so that while we cannot but admire them for their military exploits, we are forced to blame and censure them for their private conduct?

To mention one for all, Samson, a person born for the castigation of the Philistines, and to be a pattern of valour to all succeeding heroes, forgot himself in the arms of a Delilah, and to the passion he had for a base perfidious woman, sacrificed those gifts which God had bestowed on him for the deliverance of his church, and so, to all ages, he became a sad example of the corruption and infirmities of human nature. The like perhaps, in other respects, may be said of the rest of the judges: but then we are to remember, that they were persons under a particular economy of providence; that their conduct therefore is no direction to us, though their passions the Almighty might make use of, and therefore tolerate, for the accomplishment of his wise ends: ⁴ 'Howbeit, they meant not so, neither did their hearts think so,' as the prophet expresses himself upon the like occasion.

Whether it be lawful, according to the right of nature and nations, for subjects to rescue themselves from tyranny by taking away the life of the tyrant, and to recover their country, which has been unjustly taken from them, by destroying the usurper, is a question that has been much debated, and what, at present, we need not enter into, for the vindication of Ehud's fact. It is the observation of the learned ⁵ Grotius, that the authority of the king of Moab was never legitimized by any convention of the Israelites, and consequently that they were at liberty to shake off his yoke whenever they found a convenient opportunity. The only difficulty is ⁶ whether a private man might make himself an instrument in effecting this, in the manner that Ehud did? But to this it is replied, that Ehud was no private man, but acted by warrant and authority from God; and to this purpose, the history acquaints us, that ⁷ 'when Ehud had made an end of offering the present' which the Israelites sent to Eglon, he was upon his return home, and 'had gone as far as the quarries which were by Gilgal.' The word *pesil*, which is here rendered *quarries*, most commonly signifies, as indeed it is in the marginal note, as well as the Septuagint and Vulgate, *graven images*, which it is not improbable the Moabites had set up in this place rather than any other, in pure contempt of the

¹ Mat. vii. 22.² Is. x. 7.³ On the law of War and Peace, b. I. c. 4, sect. 19.⁴ Saurin's Dissertation on Hecion killed by Ehud.⁵ Judg. iii. 11, &c.⁶ Judg. viii. 23.⁷ Judg. ii. 16, 18.

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God of Israel, who had for so long a time made Gilgal famous by his presence in the tabernacle while it stood there.

These images when Ehud beheld, his ¹ spirit was stirred with a just indignation within him; and therefore, proceeding no farther on his journey home, he dismissed his attendants, and went himself back with a resolution to revenge this affront to God, as well as the oppression of his people.

That this his return was directed by a divine impulse and instigation, is evident, I think, from the hazard of the enterprise he was going upon, and the many unfavourable occasions that accompanied the execution of it. For, how could any man, in his senses, think that a single person as he was, should ever be able to compass the death of a king, amidst the circle of his guards and attendants? How could he expect that an enemy, as he was, should be admitted to a private audience? or that, if he should prove so lucky, the king should be so far infatuated as to order all the company to quit the room? The killing the king must have been a great difficulty under these circumstances; but then his making his escape had all the signs of an impossibility in it: and yet, without his escaping, the design of delivering his country must have been abortive. Upon the whole therefore it appears, that nothing but a divine instinct could have given him courage to set about the thing; and therefore it was not all fallacy, when he told Eglon, that 'he had a message from God unto him,' because God had sent and commissioned him to kill him: so that what he did in this case, he did not of himself, or from his own mere motion, but by virtue of an order which he had received from God, who had destined this oppressor of his people to this untimely kind of death.

This seems to be the only way whereby we can apologize for Ehud, in a fact which by no means is to be made a precedent, and, without a divine warrant, is in no case to be justified. But as for the Holy Scriptures, wherein this action is related simply, and without either dislike or approbation, why should they suffer in our esteem upon that account, any more than Livy, Thucydides, or any other heathen author, for recording the various transactions, and some of them full as base and barbarous as this, that happened in the ages whereof they treat?

It is a mistake to think, that every person whom the Scripture mentions, nay, whom the Scripture commends in some respects, should, in all others, be faultless and unblamable; and it would be a much greater imputation upon the truth and authority of these sacred records, if the people of God were all made saints, and no black actions recorded of them; since it is the received character of a good historian, 'That as he should not dare to relate any thing that is false, so neither should he conceal any thing that is true.'

There is something peculiar in relation to the fact of Jael, and that is the words of the prophetess, in her triumphant song: ² 'Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, be; blessed shall she be above women in the tent;' which some look upon as a commendation of Jael, and consequently an approbation of the murder of Sisera: ³ But Deborah herein might

only prophesy how and in what manner the Israelites would be affected towards that woman, by whose means, though not in the most commendable way, they had been delivered from a very dangerous enemy.

It is natural for us, when at any time we are rescued from an adversary, by whom we have suffered much, and have reason to dread more; it is natural, I say, for us to wish well to the person by whose means he was taken off; nor are we apt to consider the action according to the measure of strict virtue, by reason of the benefit which accrues to us thereby. Deborah might, therefore, mean no more than what were the common notions of mankind in a case of this nature. But, even "admitting her words to be a commendation of the fact, we might, very likely, perceive several reasons for it, if we had but a knowledge of some circumstances, which we may reasonably suppose, though the Scripture has not related them to us.

It is certain, that the Kenites, descended from Hobab, the son of Jethro, father-in-law to Moses, were ⁴ at first invited to go with the Israelites into the land of Canaan, and were all along kindly treated by them. They, indeed, had no share in the division of the land, nor were they permitted to dwell in their cities; yet they had the free use of their country, and were allowed to pitch their tents (as their manner of life was) wherever they thought fit for the convenience of their cattle, though generally they chose to continue in the tribe of Judah. By this means a strict friendship interfered, and a firm alliance was always subsisting between the Israelites and these people; whereas, between the Kenites and Jabin, there was no more than a bare cessation of hostilities; and though Heber and they continued neutral in this war, yet it was not without wishing well to their ancient friends the Israelites, among whom they lived.

Now, it is a received maxim among all civilians, That where two compacts stand in competition, and cannot be both observed, the stronger should always have the

⁴ Num. x. 29.

a One of our annotators has another way of accounting for the commendation which is given to Jael in Deborah's song, and that is, by giving up the divine inspiration of it. "It is not to be denied," says he, "but that there are some words, passages, and discourses recorded in Scripture, which are not divinely inspired, because some of them were uttered by the devil, and others by the holy men of God, but mistaken: such is the discourse of Nathan to David, (2 Sam. vii. 3.) which God presently contradicted, (ver. 4, 5.) and several discourses in Job, which God himself declares to be unsound: 'Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath,' (Job xlii. 7.) This being so," continues he, "the worst that any malicious man can infer from this place is, That this song, though indicted by a good man or woman, was not divinely inspired, but only composed by a person piously minded, and transported with joy for the deliverance of God's people, but subject to mistake; who, therefore, out of zeal to commend the happy instrument of so great a deliverance, might easily overlook the indirectness of the means by which it was accomplished, and commend that which should be disliked. If it be urged, that the song was composed by Deborah, a prophetess, and must, consequently, be divinely inspired, the answer is, 1st. That it is not certain what kind of prophetess Deborah was, whether extraordinary and infallible, or ordinary, and so liable to mistake. But, 2dly, That every expression, even of a true and extraordinary prophet, was not divinely inspired, as is evident from Nathan's mistake above mentioned, and from Samuel's error concerning Eliab, whom, from his outward stature and comeliness, he took to be the Lord's anointed." (1 Sam. xvi. 6.)—*Poole's Annotations.*

¹ Patrick's Commentary.

² Judg. v. 24.

³ Le Clerc's Commentary.

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preference. An agreement, for instance, says Puffendorf,¹ that is made with an oath, should always supersede that which is made without one. It is but supposing then, that the two depending treaties were of these different kinds, and this will be a circumstance in favour of Jael ; but then, if we may suppose farther, that Jabin was a grievous tyrant, and Sisera the chief instrument of his tyranny ; this,² according to the opinion of some, will supply us with a full apology for what she did. "For there are certain monsters in nature," say they, "in whose destruction all civil society is concerned. To do any thing to preserve them, nay to slip a proper opportunity of ridding the world of them, whatever terms we happen to be under with them, is to be false to what we owe to the whole community, under the pretence of fidelity to a base ally. When matters are come to such an extremity, that we must fight with men, as we do with wild beasts, fallacy of any kind, which at other times is justly detested, may, in some measure, be then excused ; nor have they, who, in their dealings with others, are regardless of all laws, both human and divine, any reason to complain, if, upon some occasions, they meet with a retaliation."

Jael, when she took the hammer and nail in her hand, might have this, perhaps, and much more, to say in her own vindication : but what absolves her most effectually with us is, the declaration which God had made in favour of the Israelites, by the wonderful defeat of Jabin's army, and the direction and impulse wherewith he excited her to despatch his vanquished general. ³ Had she been left to herself, she would have been contented, one would think, to have let him lain still, until Barak, who was in pursuit of him, had come up, and surprised him. To fall upon him herself was an enterprise exceeding bold and hazardous, and above the courage of her sex ; and therefore, we may conclude, that if it was God who inspired her with this extraordinary resolution, she was not to be blamed, notwithstanding the peace between Jabin and her family, for being obedient to the heavenly impulse ; because all obligations to man must necessarily cease, when brought in competition with our higher obligations towards God. ^a

Whoever looks into the catalogue of the worthies whom the author of the Hebrews enumerates, will soon perceive, that, as he is far from being exact in the order wherein he places them ; so, by the faith for which he commends them, he means no more than a belief of what God told them, and ready obedience to his commands, whenever they were signified to them by a proper authority. Deborah was, at this time, a very remarkable woman, famous for the administration of justice, and determination of controversies among the people ; but notwithstanding this, it would have been rashness in Barak to have gone upon so hazardous an undertaking without any farther assurance than this. He did not absolutely refuse to go, nay, he offered to go upon the first notice, and for this his faith is commended in Scripture ; but then he was minded to have some farther conviction that this notice was from God, and of this he could not have a better proof, than if the prophetess herself would go and share with him the fate of the battle.

The enemy was as formidable a one as ever the Israelites had to encounter. Nine hundred chariots of iron, when, ⁴ in times of greater military preparation, Mithridates had but 100, and Darius no more than 200 in their armies, was enough to inject terror into any commander, whose forces consisted all of foot, and had no proper defence against these destructive engines. Good reason had he, therefore, to apprehend, that the people would not so readily have enlisted themselves into the public service, had there not been a person of her character to appear at the head of it. She was a prophetess, and had received frequent revelations from God ; and therefore, when the people saw her personally engaged in it, they would be the apter to be persuaded, that the expedition was by God's appointment, and therefore, without all peradventure, would be attended with success. And as Deborah's joining with Barak in the expedition might be thought a good expedient to raise a sufficient number of forces ; so might it equally be thought a means effectual, both to prevent their desertion, and to animate them to the fight : and accordingly ⁵ Josephus tell us, "that when the two armies lay encamped, one within the sight of the other, the Israelites were struck with such a terror at the infinite odds of the enemy in numbers, that both general and soldiers were once upon the very point of shifting for themselves, without so much as striking a blow ; but upon Deborah's assurance, that it was the cause of God, and that he himself would assist and bring them off, they were prevailed upon to stand the shock of the battle."

¹ On the Law of Nature and Nations, b. 4. c. 2.

² See Le Clerc's Commentary, and Saurin's Dissertation on the defeat of Jabin.

³ Scripture Vindicated, part 3.

^a This is very inconclusive reasoning. When our duty to God, and to any individual man become inconsistent with each other, no one ever supposed that the latter is not to be superseded by the former ; but I am not aware that any duty, either to God or to the Israelites, made it necessary for Jael to violate the laws of hospitality to Sisera the captain of the host of Hazor. The house of Heber her husband was equally at peace with Israel and with Jabin king of Canaan. The Kenites had indeed been much more indebted to the Israelites than to the Canaanites. Jael might therefore have refused to receive Sisera under her roof, because she could not protect him from his enemies should they come in pursuit of him, without violating an obligation much stronger than any under which she was either to him or to his master ; but when he came under her roof she was surely to protect him as far as that superior obligation would permit. He was not her personal enemy ; and granting himself and his master, to have been such tyrants as our author supposes, neither Jael nor any other private individual had a right to rid the world either of the sovereign or of his servant, by treachery ! She might, without the breach of any duty, have received Sisera into her tent ; but when she had received him, she could not, without incurring guilt of the deepest dye, murder him with her own

⁴ Le Clerc's Commentary.

⁵ Antiq. lib. 5. c. 6.

hands ! She could not indeed, with innocence, have gone to the tent door, and voluntarily betrayed him to Barak ; but had she remained quietly within, and Barak had come to demand if he was there, she could not, without a breach of the higher duty which she owed to Israel, have preserved Sisera at the expense of a lie. It is perfectly in vain to attempt a vindication of her conduct ; for God can never have authorized falsehood and treachery in such a case as hers with Sisera ; nor do the words of Deborah at all imply an approbation of Jael's moral conduct. They are merely a wish or prayer that she might be rendered happy in this world, for the services that she had rendered to Israel ; and perhaps it is not possible for the most upright mind, in such circumstances, to avoid the forming of such a wish.—*Bishop Gleig.*

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But there is one advantage more which Barak might more especially promise to himself in having Deborah's company in this expedition, and that is, that he might not want an oracle to resort to upon any emergency that might happen; because he was persuaded, that God, who, by her means, had put his people upon this enterprise, would not fail, by her mouth, to direct him in the management of it. And, accordingly, in the grand point of all, namely, when it was the properest time to engage the enemy, we find the benefit which he received from her company and conversation. 'Up,' says she, 'for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thy hand. Is not the Lord gone out before thee?' So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him, and the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword.¹

The faith of those persons whose actions are recorded in the Old Testament, and fame commemorated in the New, consisted, as we said, in a firm belief of God's declarations, and a ready obedience to his commands; and how can we account Gideon culpable in either of these respects? When the angel of the Lord, or a person much superior, as some suppose, appeared to him, and brought him the news of God's having appointed him to deliver his people from the oppression of the Midianites, he seems indeed at first to be willing to decline the office, as conscious of his own incapacity; but desires withal to have some conviction given him, as who, upon the like occasion, would not have desired some; that the messenger came from heaven, and was in reality no impostor; but when once he was satisfied in this, he never pretended to dispute the divine command.

He knew very well, that, when he pulled down the altar and grove of Baal, he must necessarily incense the whole country against him, and run the hazard of his own life; and yet, to do it more effectually, he took to his aid ten of his father's servants, and, that he might meet with no molestation, did it in the night. He knew very well, that when he sounded a trumpet, in order to form an insurrection in the country, and to raise some forces to assert his nation's liberty, the Midianites would interpret this as an open declaration of war, and come against him with an army as numerous as the sand on the sea shore for multitude; but this he mattered not. He knew that two and thirty thousand men, when he had raised them, were but a handful, in comparison of the enemy; and yet, to see two and twenty thousand of these desert him all at once, and of the ten thousand that remained, no more left at last than bare three hundred; this was enough to stagger any one's mind, that had not a firm reliance on the word and promises of God. He knew, that three hundred men, had they been all giants, and armed cap-a-pee with coats of mail, would not be able to do any great execution against so numerous a foe; but when he found, that, instead of being armed, he was to attack the enemy naked, and instead of swords and spears, as usual, his soldiers were to march in such a plight as never was seen before, with every one a light, a pitcher, and a trumpet in his hand; and, when they came up with their enemy, were to break their pitchers, flourish their lights, sound their trumpets,

and, instead of regular fighting, were only to shout and roar, like so many men either mad or drunk; who but a Gideon, that had his faith confirmed by so many visions and miracles before, would have obeyed, and put in execution such orders as must have been thought wild, frantic, and absurd, had they proceeded from any other mouth but God's?

Well therefore might he be allowed to request a repetition, nay, a multiplication of miracles, who was to have the trial of his faith and obedience carried to such an extremity: but the truth of the matter is, that it was not for his own sake that he made this request. He had been sufficiently convinced by the fire's breaking out of the rock, at the touch of the rod in the angel's hand, that nothing was impossible to God, and that the means which he directed, how incongruous soever they might appear to men, would certainly not fail of their effect: but it was for the sake of his allies that had just now joined him in this expedition, that he sent up this petition to God, to have them likewise satisfied; and therefore we may observe, that when all the quotas were come up, and encamped together, then very likely in the audience of the whole army, he requested of God, 'and said, if thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold I will put a fleece of wool on the floor,' &c. It was for their sakes, I say, that the miracles were wrought, that they who were to share in so hazardous a war, and to destroy the army of the aliens with so small a force, nay, with no force at all, should have some assurance given them, that the God of Israel, who had so often promised their forefathers, that if they would continue in his favour, 'one of them should chase a thousand, and two of them put ten thousand to flight,' was determined to assist them in this enterprise.

If ever this promise was literally fulfilled, it was in this defeat which Gideon gave the Midianites: but the inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel, it seems, made but a jest and ridicule of it, for which they received a condign punishment; but of what kind their punishment was, commentators are not so well agreed. 'The word in the Hebrew signifies *thrashing*, and thence it is generally inferred, that Gideon caused the principal men of Succoth, who had denied his soldiers provision in their distress, to be stripped naked, laid flat on the ground,^a and a good quantity of thorns and briers heaped on them; that so, by cart-wheels, or other heavy carriages passing over them, their flesh might be pierced and torn, and themselves tortured, if not quite crushed to death.

This was a punishment not much unlike what David inflicted on the Ammonites, after he had taken their city Rabbah; but the Ammonites, in my opinion, did not so much deserve it as these: for thus stands the case. Gideon was now in pursuit of two kings, who, after the general rout of their army, were making their escape with a party of five thousand men. Coming to two places in the tribe of Gad, who were Israelites as well as he, and equally concerned to have been venturing their lives for the public liberty, he is denied a small refreshment for his men, fatigued all the night with

² Judg. vi. 37.

³ Dent. xxxii. 30. ⁴ Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

^a This was the manner of thrashing their corn in the eastern countries.

¹ Judg. iv. 14.

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fighting for them, and without some recruit, in no condition to continue their pursuit: so that, as far as in them lay, instead of assisting their gallant countrymen, who had merited every thing from their hands, these Gadites took part with the enemy, and did what they could to facilitate their escape, by denying some relief to their weary pursuers. By the right of war Gideon might have demanded this help from any nation, but much more from a people who were embarked in the same cause, and whose refusal of so small a boon had the aggravation of perfidy and ingratitude, as well as hard-heartedness, to inflame its guilt.

Nor was this all. His brethren the Gadites, not only refused him this common courtesy, but were very witty likewise, in making their jests and sarcasms upon Gideon. They upbraided him with the smallness of his army, and magnified the strength of his enemies, and thereby not only did all they could to discourage his men in their pursuit, but endeavoured likewise to have it believed, that there was no interposition of God in gaining this victory, and that Gideon would never be able to accomplish it: and so, to their other vile qualities, they added insult and irreligion, a contempt of God, and a disparagement of the man 'whom the Lord had made so strong for himself.' And therefore it is not at all to be wondered at, that Gideon, under all this exasperation, should choose to bring the two captive kings, with whom they had upbraided him, in triumph to these two places, and then resent the affront which was done to God, as well as himself, by making a severe example of some of the chief offenders.

It is suggested indeed by some, that Gideon was as great an offender as any, in his making an ephod for the purpose of idolatry; but before we admit of so rash a censure, we should inquire a little into the nature of this ephod, and for what possible purpose it was at first made.

¹ An ephod, we know, is a common vestment belonging to priests in general; but that of the high priest was of very great value. This vestment, however, was not so peculiar to the priests, but that sometimes we find the laity, as in the case of David bringing home the ark of God, allowed to wear it: and therefore some have imagined, that the ephod which Gideon made, was only a rich and costly robe of state, which, on certain occasions, he might wear, to denote the station he held in the Jewish republic. But if his intent was only to distinguish himself from others by such a particular vestment, how this could give occasion to the people's falling into idolatry, or any way become a snare to Gideon and his house, we cannot conceive.

Others therefore suppose, that the word ephod is a short expression to denote the high priest's breastplate, together with the Urim and Thummin; and hence, by an easy figure, they are led to think, that to make an ephod is to establish a priesthood; and thereupon conclude, that Gideon's crime, in making this ephod, was not to establish idolatry, but only to institute another priesthood, besides that which God had appointed in Aaron and his posterity: and, to this purpose, they suppose, that he erected a private tabernacle, an altar,

a mercy-seat, with cherubim, &c., that being now made the supreme governor, he might consult God at his own house, in such difficult points as occurred in his administration.

But besides that it is not easy to imagine, that a man familiar with God, and chosen by him, as Gideon was, should, after so signal a victory as he had obtained, immediately apostatize, as he must have done, had he set up an oracle in his own house, there seems to have been no manner of necessity for it, because Shiloh, where the tabernacle stood, was in the tribe of Ephraim, which adjoined to that of Manasseh, whereunto Gideon belonged. ² Nor should it be forgotten, that this ephod was ³ 'set up in Ophrah,' which place Gideon ⁴ quitted, as soon as he had resigned his public employ, and retiring to a country-house of his own, in all probability left this ephod behind him: there is reason therefore to believe, that the design of setting it up, was merely to be a monument of his remarkable victory over the Midianites, in like manner as other conquerors had done before him; only as the common custom was, to erect a pillar, or hang up trophies upon the like occasion, he chose rather to make an ephod, or priest's habit, perhaps all of solid gold, as a token that he ascribed this victory only to God, and triumphed in nothing so much, as in the reformation of the true religion by that means. This was an action of no bad intent in Gideon, though, in after-times, when the people began to return to idolatry, and had this fancy among others, that God would answer them at Ophrah, where this ephod was, as well as his tabernacle in Shiloh, it was perverted to a bad purpose. But as this abuse arose from the mad caprice of the people, and not from any ill intent in Gideon, he is no more chargeable therewith, than Moses was with the idolatrous worship which the Israelites, in future ages, paid to the brazen serpent, which he, for very beneficial purposes, at first set up.

It is generally supposed, ⁵ that the sacred history has not furnished us with a complete catalogue of the several judges that governed Israel, from the death of Joshua to the reign of Saul; and that even of those whom it takes notice of, it relates nothing but what was most remarkable in their lives and actions: and yet, notwithstanding this conciseness, it is far more exact and instructive than the history of Josephus, to which ⁶ Scaliger seems to give a preference above all others. The fault of Josephus, as any one may perceive it, is this:—That he omits the account of several miracles which the Holy Scripture relates, for fear that other nations, to whom he writes, should think that he gives too much into the marvellous, though at the same time, he makes no scruple of sacrificing the glory of God to his own private character.

For this reason it is, that ⁷ he says nothing of the angel's touching with the end of his rod the sacrifice which Gideon had prepared, and so causing fire to flame out of the rock and consume it; nothing of the two signs which God was pleased to grant him, for the confirmation of his and his confederates' faith, exhibited in the fleece's being at one time wet, and at another dry;

¹ Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries; Pool's Annotations, &c.

² Patrick's Commentary. ³ Judg. viii. 27. ⁴ Judg. viii. 29.

⁵ Saurin's Dissertation on Heglon killed by Ehud.

⁶ Proleg. de Emend. Temp.

⁷ Antiq. b. v. c. 8.

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nothing of his zeal in demolishing the altar and grove of Baal, for which he drew upon himself the indignation of all the abettors of idolatry; and here, in the matter of Shamgar, he suppresses the circumstance of his slaying 600 Philistines with an ox-goad, though this be the only remarkable action recorded of him, and what may, not improbably, be thus accounted for.

In not many ages after this, we read that these very Philistines, with whom he had here to do, had disarmed the Israelites to that degree, that ¹ none in their whole army, when they came to action, had either sword or spear, but only Saul and Jonathan his son; nay, that they would not so much as suffer a smith to live among them, for fear of their providing themselves with military weapons, but obliged them to repair to them, whenever they wanted to sharpen or repair their instruments of husbandry.

Now, it must be allowed, that the Scriptures say nothing of any such reduction as this, in the days of Shamgar: but if such was the policy of the Philistines, in the beginning of Saul's reign, why may we not suppose that it commenced some time sooner? This certainly the Scripture tells us expressly, that ² 'in the days of Shamgar, the highways were unoccupied, and the inhabitants of the villages ceased,' by reason of the Philistines, who came and plundered the country, and carried off what booty they pleased, without molestation; and therefore, it is not unlikely, that for want of some regular arms, whereof the Philistines had stripped the Israelites, Shamgar might make himself a goad, so well contrived, that with it he could kill any man, without any manner of suspicion that it was made for that purpose, but only for common use; that with this instrument he usually went to plough; ³ and when, at any time, the Philistines made their inroads into his lands, he, with the assistance of his servants, who, perhaps, were armed in the like manner, fell upon them, and, at several times, killed to the number of 600 of them in the space of about twenty years. This is a fair analysis of the sense of the words; and where is the great incongruity of this? Or what, indeed, is there in the whole, that an ordinary master of a family, with his domestics about him, might not do, even though we should not call in any supernatural strength to his assistance?

There is more reason, however, why we should have recourse to the supernatural aid of God, in Samson's slaying 1000 of these Philistines, at one heat as it were, with no other weapon than the 'jaw-bone of an ass.' ⁴ For though asses in Syria, as the learned affirm, are both stronger and larger than what we have with us, and their bones consequently fitted for such hard service as this; yet it must be owned, that it was by the wonderful strength that God infused into him, and not to any aptitude of the instrument he made use of, that he was enabled to do all this execution, which is only incredible to those ⁵ that do not consider the power of God, who can raise our natural strength to what degree he pleases, and, at the same time, enfeeble the spirits of those who oppose his designs, in such a manner, that they shall have no power to help themselves.

It must be owned, however, that there are some circumstances in this transaction which might possibly intimidate the Philistines, and thereby contribute to facilitate the slaughter which Samson made among them. The people of Judah had now prevailed with him to suffer himself to be bound, and conducted to the Philistines' camp. The Philistines, as soon as they saw him coming, ran out with joy to receive him, and very likely forgot to take their arms with them, as knowing for certainty, that he was safe enough now, and bound, as we say, to his good behaviour. But when, contrary to their expectation, they saw him first break the cords so easily and suddenly, and then coming upon them with such fury and vengeance, ⁶ it is not unlikely this might put them in no small confusion, and as they straggled about in their flight, gave him the opportunity of slaying them one by one, as he came up with them.

This, we must allow, is the highest instance of personal prowess that we any where read of; and yet profane historians inform us of other men, who, by their mere natural courage, unassisted by any divine power, (as the Scripture informs us Samson was,) have made great havoc among their enemies. For Flavius Vopiscus reports, that in the Sarmatic war, Aurelian slew forty-eight men in one day, and in several days ⁷ 950, which diminishes the wonder of this achievement of Samson's not a little; especially considering, that the Philistines, in their surprise, might think that this was all a trick and management of his conductors to get so many unarmed men into their power, and that they too were ready to fall upon them, and assist him, in case they should make any opposition against their champion.

That Samson, after so long a fatigue, should be almost ready to ⁸ die with thirst, is no strange thing at all; but the question is, how, in a place where no water was, he came to have this thirst allayed? The Hebrew word *mactes* does properly signify *the socket*, in which the great teeth in the jaw are fastened; and from hence Bochart, among many others, endeavours to maintain by arguments, that God made one of these teeth drop out of the jaw, wherewith Samson had done all this execution, and immediately a stream of water gushed out from thence. But with all due deference to the learning of so great a man, ⁹ it is somewhat strange, that he should

⁵ Patrick's Commentary.⁶ Le Clerc's Commentary.

⁷ Upon this occasion the boys made a song, not much unlike that which Samson made of himself, (Judg. xv. 16.), which, after a military manner, they shouted in their dances: "We, a single man, have slain a thousand men—a thousand we have slain—long life to him who slew his thousands—no one has as much wine as the blood shed by him."

⁸ Josephus gives us a strange account of the reason of Samson's thirst, and what there is no matter of foundation for in the Scripture. "Samson," says he, "was so transported with the thoughts of this victory, that he had the vanity to assume the honour of the action to himself, without ascribing the glory of it to God's power and providence, as he ought to have done. But while this arrogant and overweening humour was yet upon him, he found himself seized with a violent parching thirst, which gave him to understand, that, after all his successes, he was but flesh and blood still, and liable to human infirmities. The sense of this disorder brought him to the knowledge of himself, and to a penitent confession that the victory was God's, and that he was able to do nothing of himself without the divine assistance. He begged pardon for his past vanity and presumption. His prayers were not in vain; for immediately there gushed out of a rock, that was hard by, a stream of delicious water to relieve him in his raging drought."—*Antiquities*, b. 5. c. 1.

¹ 1 Sam. xiii. 20, &c.² Judg. v. 6, 7.³ Poole's Annotations.⁴ Patrick's Commentary.

⁵ The description of the goad in common use, as given in a preceding note, renders this supposition unnecessary.—Ed.

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not observe, when he had this passage under consideration, that such a miracle as this would be inconsistent with the words which follow: 'wherefore¹ he called the name thereof,' that is, of the fountain of water which gushed out, 'En-hakkor,' or 'the well of him that cried to God, which is in Lehi even unto this day.' Lehi is here therefore the proper name of a place. This place had doubtless its appellation from this adventure of Samson's with the jaw-bone, and from this place God caused a spring to arise, that he might allay his hero's thirst. For it is incongruous to think, that the jaw of an ass, or any other creature, could have subsisted to the time when the author of this book of Judges lived; or (if all this while none should have had the curiosity to take away this wonderful bone) that God should, out of the socket of one of its teeth, cause a stream of water to flow, by one continual, useless miracle.

It must then be a mistake in our version, to render the words, 'God clave a hollow place, which was in the jaw,' when, according to the ^a sense of the ancients upon this place, they should be translated, 'which was in Lehi.' For the truth of the matter is, that though this jaw be long extinct and gone, yet those who have travelled through this part of Palestine do inform us, that in the suburbs of Eleutheropolis, where Lehi very likely stood, the fountain which arose upon this occasion is still remaining, and called the fountain of the jaw to this day.

But be that as it will, whether the water which refreshed Samson in this his distress came from the jawbone, or, others think, from a cliff in a rock, or a hollow in the earth, the miracle is the same, though it may not be improper, whenever we can by an easier interpretation, to take away occasion from those that seek occasion to disparage the oracles of God.

We are not, however, concerned to vindicate Samson in all his extravagant and outrageous actions; such as his marrying an idolatress, and then leaving her; his loving lewd women, and discovering the great secret whereon his all depended to a common prostitute; his killing some and maiming others, who perhaps had never done him any personal injury; and setting the whole country on fire, to burn their corn-fields and vineyards, with many other things that might be alleged against him. All that we have to say is, that God raised him up to be a scourge to the Philistines, and that had there not been some peculiarities in his temper, he had not been so proper an instrument in his hand; or that, had he not run himself so often into præmunires, he would not have had so frequent occasion to employ the strength which God had given him, in extricating himself from thence by the death and destruction of his enemies. Though

therefore there was no fatality in making him of this unruly disposition, (for that he contracted himself,) yet there was a wise direction of God's providence in making his rugged temper subservient to his purposes, and even out of his faults and enormities extracting the plagues and punishment of his foes; for ² 'surely the wrath of man shall praise thee,' says the Psalmist, 'and the remainder of his wrath shalt thou restrain.' This we may lay down as a general reason for God's making use of so furious an instrument as Samson was, in the execution of his will: and now, let us examine a little into the other inconsistencies which some pretend to espy in the sequel of this story.

A certain anonymous author,^b in a dissertation upon Samson's foxes, has solved the whole difficulty of that piece of history, if we will but admit of his suppositions. He supposes that the word *schualim*, which we render *foxes*, should, with a little variation, be written *schoalim*, which denotes *sheaves*, or rather *shocks of corn*; and that the word *zanab*, which, in our translation, is a *tail*, equally signifies *the extreme* or *outermost part* of any thing. Thus, in an orchard planted in the form of a *quincunx*, the farthest tree is called *zanab*; and, in like manner, the extreme or outside shocks in a field may be so called here: and then the sense of the words will be, "That Samson, at different places, set fire to 300 shocks of corn, which stood in the out parts of the fields belonging to the Philistines, and so, by the fire's spreading from shock to shock, destroyed, in a manner, all their crop."

But without entertaining any novel interpretation, and which, upon examination, perhaps will hardly bear the test, we may adventure to say, that these 300 foxes, which Samson is said to have caught, are not, even in a literal sense, so incredible a thing, nor so liable to ridicule, as some may imagine. For we are to consider, (as the learned³ Bochart, from the account of several travellers, evinces,) that the whole country, especially that part of it which belonged to the tribe of Gad, so abounded with foxes, that from them⁴ several places took their names: that under the name of foxes may not improperly be comprehended a creature very much like them, called *thoes*, which go in such herds, that 200 of them have been seen together at once; that the manner of catching them was not, as we may imagine, by hunting only, but by snares and nets, as the above-mentioned author plainly demonstrates; and that Samson did not do this alone by himself, in a day and night's time, but that, being assisted by his servants and neighbours, as he was a man of considerable eminence in his country, he might possibly be some weeks in accomplishing his design.

His design, however, will not appear so romantic, if

¹ Judg. xv. 19.² Ps. lxxvi. 10.³ Hieroz. i. 3. c. 10.⁴ Judg. i. 35.

^a To this purpose we may observe, that the Seventy interpreters, the Chaldee Paraphrast, and Josephus in his history, make it to be a proper name of a place, whence the waters gushed out. The words in the Septuagint are, 'God clave a hollow place in the ground, which was afterwards called Lehi, or Siagon, and out of it issued water.' Josephus is quoted before, only he had these words farther, "which rock," says our translator of Josephus, "from the exploit of Samson, bears the name of a jaw unto this very day." And the words of the Paraphrast are directly to the same purpose: so that it is much to be wondered at, how so learned and acute a man as Bochart, should overlook these sentiments of the ancients.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^b Mr Bernard, in his Republic of Letters, October, 1707, p. 407., makes mention of a small treatise in 12mo, entitled "Dissertation on Balaam's ass, the foxes of Samson, the jawbone of the ass," &c., from whom I have extracted the author's sentiment, as Mr Bernard has represented it; but could, by no means, meet with the book itself, and cannot therefore properly enter into an examination of the author's opinion. However, I thought convenient to make mention of it, because there seems to be something ingenious, as well as singular in it.

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we consider what collections have been made of creatures much wilder and rarer than foxes: that ¹ Lucius Sylla, when he was prætor, ordered to be shown, on the amphitheatre, a hundred lions; Julius Cæsar, when he was dictator, four hundred; and that ² the emperor Probus, at one spectacle, exhibited a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, a hundred Lybian, and a hundred Syrian leopards, and an infinite number of other strange creatures: and why then should it be thought to be a thing so incredible, as to need the intervention of a miracle, as some contend, for Samson, with the assistance of his friends, who might be let into his design, to get together, in some time, three hundred foxes, in a country that everywhere abounded with them?

Foxes, we are none of us ignorant, are very apt to do a great deal of mischief wherever they abound, and ³ therefore Samson might have this farther aim in collecting so many, namely, that thereby he might clear his own country of such noxious animals, and at the same time, that he very well knew, no creature could be more convenient for his purpose of annoying and detriming his enemies. For as these creatures are very swift of foot, and have a natural dread of fire, they could not well fail, when once they were turned into it, of setting the standing corn in a blaze, and then, as they were tied in couples, tail to tail, this would make them draw one against the other, and so being retarded in their flight, and staying longer in a place, they would give the fire more time to spread itself, and make a conflagration universal.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that the mustering up such a number of foxes, in order to burn up the Philistines' corn, was neither a foolish nor impracticable thing, supposing Samson was at liberty to prosecute his revenge in this manner. ^a But for his

righteousness in this, and many of his other proceedings, we are, as we said before, no ways accountable, unless his

a measure of extension. Add to this, that in all other places of Scripture where we meet with the word *handful*, that is, as much grain in the stock as the reaper can grasp in his hand, or *sheaf*, a collection of such handfuls bound together, different terms from that in dispute, are always made use of in the original; as Ruth ii. 15, 16, and elsewhere.

"The supposed incredibility of the story, as it stands in our bibles, is, I imagine, the only reason for forcing it into another meaning. The language of the critics I oppose, is this: 'The action of Samson, as represented in our translation, is so extraordinary, that it must be miraculous. The occasion was unworthy of the divine interposition. Therefore the Translators of the Bible must in this particular have mistaken the meaning of the sacred historian.' But we have shown above, from an examination of the principal terms, that the translation is just. It remains then to be shown, either that the occasion was not unworthy of the divine interposition, or that the action was not above human capacity. The latter, I am fully persuaded, is the truth of the case, though I am far from thinking the former indefensible. The children of Israel were, in a peculiar manner, separated from the rest of mankind, for this purpose more especially, to preserve in the world, till the times of general reformation should come, the knowledge and worship of the one true God. At sundry times, and in divers manners, did the Deity for this end interpose. Many instances of this kind are recorded in the book of Judges. When this people perverted the end of their distinguished privileges, God suffered them to be enslaved by those idolatrous nations whose false deities they had worshipped. By this means they were brought to a sense of their error; and when they were sufficiently humbled, 'the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.' Jud. ii. 16. In such a state of servitude to the Philistines were they at this time. Samson was raised up in an extraordinary manner to be their deliverer; and his intermarriage with the Philistines was a means which Providence saw fit to make use of to effect their deliverance. Thus the affair is represented. Samson proposes his intentions to his parents. They expostulate with him. 'Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all thy people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?' 'But they,' adds the sacred historian, 'were ignorant that it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines; for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.' Though Samson, then, might propose to himself nothing more in forming a connexion with a foreign lady, than the gratification of his own inclinations, yet we are warranted to say, an overruling Providence had a further design. The same may be affirmed of other actions of Samson, which appear to have proceeded from passions of a more rugged complexion. His intention in them might be unworthy of a divine interposition; but the end which God had in view, the deliverance of a people chosen to preserve his worship in the world, would make it highly fit and necessary. Nor ought it to be reckoned strange, that such means should be used; for we are authentically assured, that the wrath of man, and, by parity of reason, other passions too, are sometimes made to praise the Lord. Thus much I thought necessary to say, for the sake of those to whom a solution on natural principles shall seem unsatisfactory. Such a solution I now proceed to give.

"In the first place, it is evident from the Holy Scriptures, that Palestine abounded with foxes, or that animal, be it what it will, which is signified by the Hebrew word *שׁוּלוּ*. This appears from many passages. Psalm lxxiii. 10; Cant. ii. 15; Lam. v. 18; 1 Sam. xiii. 17; Josh. xv. 28; xix. 3. From their numbers, then, the capture would be easy.

"Further: under the Hebrew word *שׁוּלוּ*, was probably comprehended another animal, very similar to the fox, and very numerous in Palestine; gregarious, and whose Persic name is radically the same with the Hebrew. It is no easy matter to determine, whether the Hebrew *שׁוּלוּ*, means the common fox (*canis vulpes*), or the *jackal*, (*canis aureus*), "the little eastern fox," as Hasselquist calls him. Several of the modern oriental names of the *jackal*, that is, the Turkish *chical*, the Persian *sciagal*, *sciagal*, *sciachal*, or *schacal* (whence the French *chacal*, and English *jackal*), from their resemblance to the Hebrew, favour the latter interpretation. Perhaps the term may include both animals, although it seems most probable that

¹ Pliny, b. 2. c. 16.² In Vopiscus on Probus.³ Calmet's Commentary on Judg. xxv.

^a Dr Kenicott contends for the translation noticed above, namely, that instead of *foxes* we should read *handfuls* or *sheaves*, but this meaning does not seem borne out by the use of the word in other places, nor is it supported by the context in this place. The following strictures on this criticism, and remarks on this subject generally, we quote from Dr Harris's Natural History of the Bible. "However plausible this turn may seem, I think that it is as far from the sense of the sacred historian as it is from our translation, which, I imagine, truly expresses his meaning. For the word *לֶקֶח* *lakar*, which our Translators have rendered 'caught,' never signifies simply to *get*, *take*, or *fetch*, but always to *catch*, *seize*, or *take by assault*, *stratagem*, or *surprise*, &c., unless the following place, 1 Sam. xiv. 47, 'So Saul took the kingdom over Israel,' be an exception. Again, admitting the proposed alteration in the word *שׁוּלוּ*, *shuol*, it will be difficult to prove that even then it means a *sheaf*. The word is used but three times in the whole Bible. Its meaning must be gathered from the connexion in which it stands here. The first place is 1 Kings xx. 10, where it is rendered 'handfuls,' not of grain, but of dust. 'The gods do so unto me, and more also,' says Benhadad, king of Syria, 'if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for *handfuls* for all the people that follow me.' In Isaiah xl. 12. the same word is translated, 'the hollow of the hand.' 'Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span.' The last place in which the word occurs is Ezekiel xiii. 9. 'And will ye pollute me among my people for *handfuls* of barley, and for pieces of bread?' The connexion here with pieces of bread seems evidently to point out to us handfuls of barley in the grain, not handfuls or *sheaves* in the ear and straw. In fine, from the places quoted, taken in their several connexions, the word plainly appears to mean a measure of capacity, as much as the hollow of the hand can hold; as a *hand-breadth* is used in Scripture for

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being considered as a chief among the Israelites, (whom God had raised up to annoy the Philistines, and in such methods as this, rather than open war, to weaken them by his personal valour and strength,) may be admitted in justification of what he did. But to proceed.

¹ Whether Samson's hair was the physical, or only moral cause of his strength, needs not, I think, be made any question. For though plenty of hair may be some indication of bodily strength, yet since he that is naturally strong becomes not less so by having his hair cut off, though this was certainly the case of Samson, it must necessarily follow, that his hair was no natural cause of his strength, but that it was a supernatural and

¹ Calmet's Dictionary, under the word Samson.

it was the jackal that Samson employed. Dr Shaw is of this opinion, and observes, that "as these are creatures by far the most common and familiar, as well as the most numerous of any in the eastern countries, we may well perceive the great possibility there was for Samson to take, or cause to be taken, three hundred of them. The *fox* properly so called, he adds is rarely to be met with, neither is it gregarious." So Hasselquist remarks: "Jackals are found in great numbers about Gaza; and, from their gregarious nature, it is much more probable that Samson should have caught three hundred of *them*, than of the solitary quadruped, the fox." Allowing this to be the animal, the story is easily admissible to belief, without the supposition of a miracle. For it is not said, that Samson caught so many foxes in one hour, or one day; or, that he caught them all with his own hands. Being then judge of Israel, he might employ many hands, and yet be said, according to the common use of language, to do it himself.

"Add to this, that the season, the days of wheat harvest, was extremely favourable for hunting these animals; and, as they were gregarious, many might be surrounded or entrapped at once.

"I shall conclude with an argument more in favour of the justness of our translation, in rendering the word *שׁוּאֹל*, *shual*, 'a fox,' not a *sheaf*. It has been esteemed by some persons of extensive literature to be a demonstrative argument. I shall mention it, and leave it to stand on its own bottom. At the feast of Ceres, the goddess of corn, celebrated annually at Rome about the middle of April, there was the observance of this custom,—to fix burning torches to the tails of a number of foxes, and to let them run through the circus till they were burnt to death. This was done in revenge upon that species of animals, for having once burned up the fields of corn. The reason, indeed, assigned by Ovid, is too frivolous an origin for so solemn a rite; and the time of its celebration, the 17th of April, it seems, was not harvest time, when the fields were covered with corn,—"*vestitus messibus agros*;" for the middle of April was *seed-time* in Italy, as appears from Virgil's *Georgics*. Hence we must infer that this rite must have taken its rise from some other event than that by which Ovid accounted for it; and Samson's foxes are a probable origin of it. The time agrees exactly, as may be collected from several passages of Scripture. For instance, from the book of Exodus we learn, that before the Passover, that is, before the fourteenth day of the month Abib, or March, *barley* in Egypt was in the ear; (xii. 18; xiii. 4.) And in ch. ix. 31, 32, it is said, that the *wheat* at that time was not grown up. Barley harvest, then, in Egypt, and so in the country of the Philistines which bordered upon it, must have fallen about the middle of March. Wheat harvest, according to Pliny, N. H. lib. viii. c. 7, was a month later. "In Egypt barley is reaped on the sixth month after sowing, corn on the seventh." Therefore, wheat harvest happened about the middle of April; the very time in which the burning of foxes was observed at Rome.

"It is certain that the Romans borrowed many of their rites and ceremonies, both serious and ludicrous, from foreign nations: and Egypt and Phœnicia furnished them with more, perhaps, than any other country. From one of these, the Romans might either receive this rite immediately, or through the hands of their neighbours the Carthaginians, who were a colony of Phœnicians; and so its true origin may be referred back to the story which we have been considering."

miraculous gift, not, ² perhaps always inherent in him, but only dispensed at certain times, when the Spirit of God came upon him. ³ It depended indeed on the covenant made between God and him, the sign of which covenant was his hair; and therefore when, in compliance to his harlot, he suffered his hair to be cut off, he broke the covenant with God, and forfeiting the spirit of strength and courage, was left to his own natural weakness, and so became an easy prey to his enemies. But having been now a considerable time in prison, wherein he was cruelly used, he began to repent no doubt of his folly; and therefore making fervent supplications to God for pardon of the violation of his Nazaratism, he renewed his vow, and so, being restored to the condition he was in before he lost the favour of God, his strength began to grow and increase, in proportion as his hair did.

When his hair was thus grown, and his strength returned, it is made a question, whether the house, as it is called in Scripture, which he pulled down, was the temple of Dagon, for whose honour this festival was appointed, or some other edifice?

That it was not a common house, is evident from the multitude of the people which it contained; and though the temples of the Philistines are supposed ⁴ by some to have been of the same figure and make with those in Egypt, that is a kind of rotunda, flat-roofed, with a large portico without, and pillars within to sustain the building; yet this seems to be no more than a fiction, devoid of all authority, and accommodated to the purpose of solving this difficulty. It is not certain, that the Egyptian temples were built in this manner, and much more probable it is that this house of their famous god Dagon was made of stone; and though it wanted no proper supports, yet it is scarce supposable, that in a structure of this kind, the whole weight should be supported by two pillars only, and these so very contiguous, that Samson could lay hold on them both at one time.

The most general opinion, therefore, is, that this was a structure which the Philistines made use of, upon such occasions as this, built all of wood, and supported by wooden pillars, in the form of the theatres which in after-times were in great request among the Romans. Towards the middle of this building, we may suppose that there were two large beams, upon which the weight of the whole structure lay; and that these beams were supported by two pillars, which stood in a manner contiguous to each other. So that, as soon as Samson had moved and unsettled these, down must the principals, and with them the whole building, come. The only remaining difficulty is, how a building made of wood, and supported by two pillars only, should be able to contain such a multitude of men and women? But whoever reads ^a Pliny's Natural History, will therein find a

² Patrick's Commentary. ³ Collier's Introduction.

⁴ Calmet's Commentary.

^a The words of Pliny upon this occasion are so very remarkable, that I thought it not improper to quote them. "He erected two vast wooden theatres, suspended each on a hinge that rested on a moveable pillar: while the forenoon spectacle of the games was exhibiting, they were opposite to one another, lest the noise of exhibition should disturb their mutual attention; but no sooner was the exhibition over, than by a sudden impulse they were forced round again, so that they stood in juxtaposition; and in the evening by the taking down of the scenery, and by combining

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description of two theatres, built by Curio, capable of containing a much greater number of people than the Philistines are here said to be, and yet what was a wonder much greater than the two pillars here, whenever they were turned round, as they frequently were, to meet and make one amphitheatre, they both rested upon one hinge only, which, had it happened to slip, must have occasioned, as our author tells us, a much greater slaughter than what was at the battle of Cannæ; as, by the actual fall of an amphitheatre, built by Atilius, no fewer than fifty thousand persons as ^a Tacitus relates the story, were killed, wounded, and maimed: which is enough, one would think, to silence the cavils of those who are apt to fancy that a building of such capacity could not be so contrived as to rely only on two supporters.^b

the two wings, an amphitheatre was formed, and the gladiatorial spectacles were exhibited, it was capable of enclosing the whole of the Roman freemen who had become gladiators for hire. But in this erection what can we most admire? the inventor or the invention? the workman or the planner? that any one should dare to plan or execute it? should act as servant or master in it? Besides all these there was added the madness of the people, who dared to sit on a foundation so imperfect and unstable, ready every moment to be overwhelmed in ruin."—B. 36. c. 15.

^a The fall of this amphitheatre Tacitus relates in these words: "In the consulship of Marcus Licinius and Lucius Calpurnius, the horror of an unforeseen calamity equalled the havoc of mighty conflicting armies. Its beginning and termination were simultaneous. A certain freedman, named Atilius, erected an amphitheatre at Fidenæ for the exhibition of gladiatorial combats; but its wooden texture was utterly devoid of all solidity and safety, for he was urged to its erection by no superfluity of riches nor desire of municipal honours, but by the base love of money. At the command of the emperor Tiberius, vast crowds of both sexes and of every age and class, were seen eagerly rushing to Fidenæ, and as the distance from Rome to Fidenæ was but small, (only five miles) so on that account the misfortune was rendered the greater; no sooner was the building crammed with the multitude, than all at once it gave way, some parts of it falling in, dragging headlong, and burying the spectators, while the other parts of it falling outwards, overwhelmed the crowded masses of people around its walls. By this disaster, 50,000 beings are said to have been killed or mutilated."—*Annal.* iv. 62.

^b The sentiments of Sir Christopher Wren on this subject, will doubtless be considered as important. "In considering what this fabric must have been, that could at one pull be demolished, I conceive it was an oval amphitheatre, the scene in the middle, where a vast roof of cedar beams resting round upon the walls centered all upon one short architrave, that united two cedar pillars in the middle. The pillars would not be sufficient to unite the ends of at least one hundred beams, that tended to the centre; wherefore, I say, there must be a short architrave resting upon two pillars, upon which all the beams tending to the centre of the amphitheatre, might be supported. Now if Samson by his miraculous strength pressing upon one of these pillars, moved it from its basis, the whole roof must of necessity fall."—*Parentalia*, p. 359. "The eastern method of building may assist us in accounting for the particular structure of the temple or house of Dagon, (Judg. xvi.) and the great number of people that were buried in the ruins of it, by pulling down the two principal pillars. We read (v. 27.) that about three thousand persons were upon the roof to behold while Samson made sport. Samson must therefore have been in a court or area below them, and consequently the temple will be of the same kind with the ancient sacred enclosures, surrounded only in part or altogether with some plan or cloistered buildings. Several palaces and *dau-wanas*, as they call the courts of justice in these countries, are built in this fashion; where upon their festivals and rejoicings a great quantity of sand is strewed upon the area for the wrestlers to fall upon, whilst the roof of the cloisters round about is crowded with spectators of their strength and agility. I have often seen hundreds of people diverted in this manner upon the roof of the dey's palace at Algiers; which, like many more of the same quality and denomination, hath an advanced

And indeed all the other exceptions, which are usually made to Samson's character and conduct, are in effect no more than mere cavils, which arise in a great measure from an unacquaintance with the idiom of the Hebrew tongue. For as, when in Jotham's parable, 'wine' is said ¹ 'to cheer both God and man: the words *Elohim*, and *Anashim*, may signify as well *high* and *low*, *princes* and *peasants*, that is, all conditions of men do find themselves cheered and refreshed with wine; so when it is said, that ² 'the Spirit of the Lord came nightly upon Samson,' we are not to understand thereby, that he had any grace extraordinary, or sanctifying influences of the Blessed Spirit communicated to him, but only that he was endowed with wonderful courage and fortitude, an undaunted mind, and a supernatural strength of body at such and such times, which enabled him to do great acts, but made no alteration in his manners. And in like manner, when he is said to ³ 'have judged Israel twenty years,' we need not infer, that he was the supreme magistrate in the republic, for that very probably was Eli, but only that he was the chief man of war, whose valour was renowned, and who did many great and signal exploits, in order to rescue his countrymen from the oppression of their enemies, and to restore them to their former liberty: I say, in order to this, for he did not perfect their deliverance: only, by the several defeats which he gave them, and the great damages he did them, he infused into the Israelites such a spirit and resolution, that not many years after, they took up arms, and appearing in the field against them, defeated, and subdued them; so that, in all the days of Samuel, we hear of no farther molestation from that quarter.

The Scripture, however, furnishes us with a reason why idolatry was not abolished, and a thorough reformation of religion established, during this period: for it tells us, that ⁴ 'in those days,' namely, between the death of Joshua, and the first institution of the judges, 'there was no king,' that is, no chief ruler or magistrate, for the regal authority did not as yet begin, in Israel, 'but every one did that which was right in his own eyes;' so that considering the natural propensity of the people to idolatry, and the want of a supreme power lodged in some one's hand to control them, we need not wonder, that before the institution of judges, they fell into the like practices with the nations among whom they lived.

The judges indeed were invested with authority to suppress these practices; but then we are to consider, that few or none of them had a jurisdiction over the whole land of Israel, but were only rulers of some particular cantons, which they undertook to deliver from imminent danger; and therefore how zealous soever they

¹ Judg. ix. 13.

² Judg. xiv. 6.

³ Judg. xvi. 31.

⁴ Judg. xvii. 6.

cloister over against the gate of the palace, (Esth. v. 1.) made in the fashion of a large pent-house, supported only by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or else in the centre. In such open structures as these, in the midst of their guards and counsellors, are the bashas, kadees, and other great officers, assembled to distribute justice, and transact the public affairs of their provinces. Here likewise they have their public entertainments, as the lords and others of the Philistines had in the house of Dagon. Upon a supposition therefore, that in the house of Dagon, there was a cloistered structure of this kind, the pulling down of the front, or centre pillars only, which supported it, would be attended with the like catastrophe that happened to the Philistines."—*Shaw's Travels*, p. 283.—Ed.

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might be for a reformation, yet since their authority was not of sufficient extension, the wonder is not great, that ¹ idolatry should still be practised in some dark corners of the land, and that in the tribe of Dan, which was so far distant, 'there should be set up Micah's graven image which he made, at the time that the ark of the Lord was at Shiloh.'

Shiloh indeed was so far distant from several parts of the land of Canaan, that people began to account it too much trouble to go up thither to pay their vows and oblations, and therefore bethought themselves of setting up private chapels, wherein, as they supposed, they might serve God as well; and in the institution of these, being left to their own fancies, they generally intermixed some idolatrous practices, and, partly in imitation of the cherubim at Shiloh, and the teraphim among their heathen neighbours, chose to worship God through some visible representation, which, by one means or other, was carried on in time to direct idolatry.

The Moabites, we know, even when the Israelites were in a state of independency, and had reason sufficient to have a jealous eye over them, by their arts and contrivances drew them into the worship of their god Baal-peor; and much more might the nations, to whom they were now in subjection, succeed in their attempts, either of recommending, or, if need required it, of forcing their religion upon them: so that it was not to be wondered at, if things ran into such disorder, when there was, if not a total dissolution, at least a grievous relaxation of government; when some of the governors themselves were far from being the best of men; and through inclination, entreaty, or compulsion, the people were so liable, upon many occasions, to relapse into idolatry.

What Micah's intention might be in setting up a teraphim, and other kind of images in his house, commentators are not so well agreed. Those that are willing to apologize for the thing, are ready to say, ² that as he lived in a time of great trouble and confusion, wherein the public worship of God was much neglected, if not totally disused, his design was to erect a kind of domestic tabernacle, wherein he might serve God in private, since he could not, without much difficulty, do it in public; and that the sacred habiliments he made, his ephod, his teraphim, &c. were no more than what he had seen at Shiloh: but since the laws of God condemn ³ the making images of any kind, as objects of adoration; the setting up any religious worship, different from what he had established; the offering sacrifices, or ⁴ performing any public service any where but in the tabernacle; and the employing any priests in their worship but such as were of the race of Aaron; it is certain that Micah was guilty of a violation of all these prohibitions, and in the matter of these graven and molten images, cannot be excused from the crime of idolatry.

Indeed, unless he intended to patronize that, what reasons could he have to make any innovations in religion, since, according as we date this action, either Phinehas or Eli were then in the high priest's office at Shiloh, where the public worship was performed in all its formality, and from whence Micah, who lived in the

mountains of Ephraim, was not so very distant, but that he might have gone thither upon all solemn occasions.

The Spirit of God therefore, in repeating the admonition, that 'in those days there was no king in Israel,' &c. before it begins to relate this story of Micah, seems to insinuate, that this was a wicked and enormous practice of his; that the worship he instituted was idolatrous, and the priest he had procured to officiate, a renegade: and if so, the answer this priest received in behalf of the Danites, and wherein he promised them the success they met with, must have proceeded from no good principle, unless we suppose, what seems indeed most reasonable, that the Levite promised them success, because he was minded to please them, merely out of his own head, though, to give it a better sanction, he might pretend to receive it from this fictitious oracle. In this case, there was no occasion of having recourse to any oracle whatever; because any man of a moderate foresight, considering the undaunted courage and valour of the Danites, and the supine negligence and cowardice of the people of Laish, if once they came to action, might, without the spirit of prophecy, foretell the event.

The directions which God gave Moses concerning Joshua's consulting the divine oracle, are conceived in these words:—⁵ 'He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim, before the Lord; at his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.' In all the book of Joshua indeed we do not find, that he had this constant recourse to the oracle, ⁶ and from hence some Jewish doctors conclude, that he was bound to do this only at his first entrance upon his office, to demonstrate to the people that he was Moses' successor; but that afterwards the spirit of prophecy rested upon him, so that he knew how to conduct all public affairs, without having occasion for this oracular advice. Moses we know made no use of the Urim and Thummim, to consult God by the mediation of the high priest: he went immediately and directly to God himself: but we do not read that Joshua was admitted to such familiarity, nor had he such frequent revelations from God, as his predecessors had. And therefore, as God was pleased, in supplying that defect, to remit him to this method of consulting him; we cannot but think, that upon every momentous occasion, especially in the weighty affairs of war, he was always careful to pursue it: and therefore the words in the beginning of Judges, 'Now after the death of Joshua, the children of Israel asked of the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites?' do not import, that they never consulted God by way of Urim and Thummim, during the life of Joshua, but rather that after the death of so great a commander, they were at a stand what to do, nor would they adventure to proceed in the war of Canaan, without following the same directions which were given to Joshua, and which he had so long pursued with so good success.

Nay, the consulting of the divine oracle, especially in matters of war, was accounted so very necessary, in order to obtain success, that some commentators have esteemed this the only reason why the Israelites, in so just a cause as punishing the Benjamites for their

¹ Judg. xviii. 31.² Calmet's Commentary.³ Exod. xx. 4. and xxxiv. 17; Deut. iv. 15, 16.⁴ Lev. xvii. 8. and Deut. xii. 14.⁵ Num. xxvii. 21.⁶ See Patrick's Commentary in locum.

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unheard of wickedness, were, in two several battles, defeated; even because they did not previously apply to God, as they should have done.¹ They sent up indeed to the house of the Lord, 'and asked counsel of him, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin?' that is, which of their tribes should have the honour or hazard of making the first attack:² but it is observable, that they had come to a full resolution of making war against the Benjamites, and, to that purpose, had made draughts of the men that were to be employed in it, without ever consulting God, whether an enterprise of this nature, wherein there was likely to be such an effusion of the blood of their brethren, would be pleasing to him or no.³ The truth is, they never questioned his approbation of what they accounted so laudable: they presumed upon his protection and assistance; and the vast superiority of their forces made them confident of success. But now, in a matter of such moment as this, to overlook the divine oracle, and be determined by their own counsels only, and to march against one of their own tribes, with a full purpose of destroying them utterly, before they knew any thing whether God had decreed their destruction or no, was not only an instance of their rashness and presumption, but an act likewise of rebellion against the majesty of God, who was the king of Israel, and upon that account alone, had right to declare whether they were to wage war against their brethren the Benjamites or no.

But supposing that the grounds of the war were justifiable, and God consenting to it, yet why might not he take the opportunity of punishing the Israelites, by means of the Benjamites, for their tame permission of crimes more enormous than what they had now taken into their heads to chastise;⁴ for suffering spiritual adultery among them, even while they were so hot upon punishing carnal?

The laws which God gave the Israelites against the sin of idolatry, were so very severe, that whoever did but so much as entice another to the commission of it, was to lose all title to pity and compassion, though he was ever so dear a friend, ever so near a relation:⁵ 'Thine eyes shall not pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him; thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people.' But now in the case of Micah, and the whole tribe of Dan, who had notoriously fallen into idolatry, the rulers of Israel were so far from putting this law in execution, that they connived at their apostasy: and therefore God took occasion, from this quarrel between the other tribes and that of Benjamin, to make use of the latter as scourges to punish this base connivance of the former; and after he had twice employed them to this purpose, he inverted the fate of the war, and in so doing, made the confederate army of Israel the instruments of that terrible vengeance which he took upon the Benjamites, in the punishment of their execrable lewdness. For this is the wonderful wisdom of God's providence, to employ

the passions of men to his purposes, and to make one wicked set of people the instruments of his punishing another, even as he expresses himself in another case, that in some measure is not incongruous to this: 'Woe unto the Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand, is mine indignation:—against the people of my wrath will I give him charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like mire in the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Sion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks;' and in like manner here, when by the hand of the Benjamites, he had chastised the rest of the Israelites, by the hand of the Israelites he punished the Benjamites for their gross impieties, making use of their respective passions, and furious resentments, to accomplish his will: albeit 'they meant it not so, neither did their hearts think so; but it was only in their hearts to cut off one another.'

When the heat of their fury, however, was abated, and the Israelites began to look back with a little coolness upon what they had done; how they had almost totally destroyed one tribe of their brethren, and bound themselves by an oath never to marry their daughters to any of the poor remains of it, which could not but prove the extirpation of the whole, the joy and triumph of their late victory was turned into mourning and bitter lamentation.

Whether this oath against contracting any affinity with the Benjamites, was in itself lawful and obligatory, or no,⁶ some interpreters, without any manner of reason, as I think, have disputed. For, whatever was attended with such pernicious consequences, as to oblige their brethren either to live unmarried, which would prove the extinction of their tribe, or to marry the daughters of the heathens, which was contrary to their divine law, or to take to themselves wives wherever they could find them by force and violence, which was contrary to the universal law of nations: whatever, I say, was attended with such evil consequences as these, could not be lawful in itself, nor of any obligation to the consciences of those that made it; and therefore it is somewhat wonderful, how the Israelites, when they found themselves involved in such difficulties, as⁷ they themselves testify, that for the preservation of this their oath, they were forced to have recourse to acts of the utmost cruelty and violence, did not perceive the illegality of it, and themselves, consequently, absolved from its observation.

It is not the intent of the sacred historian to relate matters otherwise than they happened; nor is it any part of our business to apologize for actions that in themselves are abominable, and will admit of no excuse. The massacre of the people of Jabesh-gilead, without ever sending to know the reason of their absenting themselves from the war, was a cruel expedient to extricate the Israelites from a difficulty in which their superstitious observance of an unlawful oath had involved them; and a sad instance it is of the iniquity and barbarity of these times: for how severe soever the laws of military dis-

¹ Judg. xx. 18.² Calmet's Commentary on Judg. xx.³ Saurin's Dissertations, vol. 4. Dissertation 18.⁴ Patrick's Commentary on Judg. xx.⁵ Deut. xiii. 8, 9.⁶ Is. x. 5, &c. ⁷ See Calmet's Commentary. ⁸ Judg. xxi. 6, &c.

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cipline may be, or with ¹ what justice soever recusants, as well as deserters in war may be deemed guilty, and the Jabeshites be called public enemies, because they did not obey the order of the whole congregation, and by refusing to join with them against the Benjamites, made themselves partakers of their crimes: yet certainly to slay the innocent with the guilty, and to put women and children to death, who were never made to bear arms, was the very height of injustice and barbarity. If it be said, that the *cherem*, or the sentence of utter execration was passed upon them, I do not see with what justice the virgins could be spared, as we find they were by a public decree, unless we suppose that God, from the tabernacle at Shiloh, before which the Israelites were now assembled, signified his intentions of dispensing with the full execution of the sentence, by reason of the public necessity.

And, indeed, the public necessity is the only good reason that can be given for that other act of violence, the rape of the virgins at Shiloh. For whatever may be said in vindication of the Benjamites, namely, that what they put in execution was by order and advice of their superiors, and that their intent in doing it was just and honest, and devoid of that brutal lust which is incident to common ravishers; whatever may be said in excuse of these, the elders of Israel, who gave them this counsel and authority, had certainly no right to dispose of other people's children without their parents' consent and approbation.

^a The rape of the Sabine virgins is usually produced as a piece of history parallel to this; ² but Romulus, in whose reign it happened, was one of those princes who accounted every point that contributed to the establish-

¹ Judg. xxi. 6, &c.² Saurin's Dissertation 18. vol. 4.

^a This piece of history we find thus related: "Romulus, perceiving that his new city was surrounded by several very powerful and warlike nations, who bore them no very good will, formed a design to make them his friends, by contracting marriages with them: but considering with himself, that these neighbouring nations would hardly enter into that affinity with a people, as yet famous neither for their riches nor great exploits, without being in some measure compelled into it, he was resolved to put in practice the stratagem of his uncle Numitor, and to enter into this alliance with them by carrying off their daughters. This design he communicated to the senate, and having obtained their approbation of it, he proclaimed a public feast to be celebrated in honour of Neptune, and invited all the neighbouring cities to the many diversions and spectacles which he then intended to exhibit. Crowds of people, with their wives and children, flocked to the feast; but on the last day, when it began to draw to a conclusion, Romulus ordered all the young men, that upon a signal given, they should seize and carry off every one a virgin, keep them all night, without offering any rudeness to them, and bring them the next morning before him. The young men took care to execute his orders: for dispersing themselves into small companies, as soon as they saw the sign, they seized on the damsels, who, upon this occasion, made a hideous outcry, as expecting much worse usage than they met with. The next day, when they were brought before Romulus, he spoke very courteously to them, and told them, That it was to do them no dishonour, but merely to procure them husbands, that he ordered that rape, which was an ancient custom derived from the Greeks, and the most noble and gallant manner of contracting marriage. He therefore entreated them to be well affected towards those husbands which fortune had given them; and so, distributing the young women, which were 683, among an equal number of unmarried men, he dismissed them."—*Dionys. Halicarn. Antiq.* b. 2. c. 21.

ment of his dominions, not only lawful, but glorious, and that every thing ceased to be a crime, when once it became necessary for reasons of state: but the rulers of Israel either had, or should have had, different notions. They were governed by God, 'whose throne is established in righteousness,' and should therefore, one would think, have contrived some other means for re-establishing a diminished tribe than those violent ways of rapes and forced marriages. But the sacred historian has assigned a reason for these unrighteous proceedings, when, in ³ four different places in the book of Judges, he tells us, that 'in those days there was no king in Israel:' and ⁴ for want of such a supreme authority, every tribe, and every city, nay, which is more, every private man committed many horrid things, which were not publicly allowed. This ⁵ was the cause of Micah's idolatry, as we noted before; of the Benjamites' filthiness and abominable lusts; and of all the enormous things done by the main body of the Israelites; their killing all the Benjamites without distinction; their binding themselves by rash and unlawful oaths; their killing all the women of Jabesh-gilead who were not virgins; and here, their permitting, nay, their ordering this rape, for the preservation of a rash and unjustifiable oath: and this should teach us to be very thankful for the authority that is set over us, in order to preserve us from the commission of such like enormities; for which end the custom was, among the ancient Persians, as our learned Usher observes, to let the people loose to do even what they listed, for five days after their king died; that by the disorders which were then committed, they might see the necessity of having a king to govern them, and when one was settled in the throne, the great reason of being obedient to him.

Thus we have endeavoured to clear up most of the passages in the book of Judges, which seem to imply any inconsistency or incredibility, during this period: and if any heathen testimonies may be thought a farther confirmation of their truth, we may say, that the seeming incongruity of Shangar's slaying so many Philistines with an ox-goad is mightily abated, by what is told of Lycurgus, namely, that he overthrew the forces of Bacchus with the self-same weapon; that from Deborah's being a prophetess, a governess, and dwelling upon a mount, the story of the Theban sphinx, as some learned men imagine, was invented by the Greeks; that their Hercules was certainly the Samson of sacred writ, his Omphale and Delilah the same, and that his pillars at Cales were of near affinity with those of Gaza; ⁶ that

³ Judg. xvii. 6. xviii. 1. xix. 1. and xxi. 25.⁴ Patrick's Commentary.⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The story is thus told by Ovid. Nisus was besieged by Minos in his capital city Megara. The fate of that city, which was the strength of his kingdom, depended upon a certain lock of red hair, which was concealed under the rest. The siege had now been continued for six months, when the daughter of Nisus, who had frequent opportunities of beholding her father's enemy Minos from a tower that looked into his camp, was so taken with his goodly mien and deportment, that she fell desperately in love with him. Her love, and the occasion of it, the poet has thus related. "In her opinion Minos appeared beautiful when he concealed his head in a helmet with dangling plumes, and alike so when he assumed his shield all glittering with gold, &c. but when by taking off the armour he displayed his animated countenance, and when in a purple dress he gracefully strode his

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his fatal locks gave rise to the fable of Nisus king of Megara, upon whose hair the fortune of his kingdom depended; that his foxes were commemorated at Rome, every return of their harvest, ^b by a similar ceremony of tying them tail to tail, and so letting them go; and to name no more that Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter to God, is partly adumbrated by Agamemnon's offering his Iphigenia to Diana, and partly by Idomeneus's promising to make a victim to Neptune of the first thing he should meet on shore, if he escaped the present storm, which happened to be his own son. So happily do many fictions of the poets concur to confirm the truth and authority of holy writ.

CHAP. III.—*Jephthah's rash vow.*

THIS vow of Jephthah's, which has employed the thoughts and pens of so many learned men, is conceived in these words:—'And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, if thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be, that whosoever cometh forth out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.' And the result of this vow was, that 'Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands;' whereupon 'he came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold his daughter came out to meet him, with timbrels, and with dances, and she was his only child: beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, alas! my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I

milkwhite steed decorated with variegated trappings, scarcely was the Niseian virgin mistress of her reason. Happy, she said, is the javelin which he holds, and happy is the bridle pressed by his lovely hand."—*Met.* b. 8. The result of this passion was, that this perfidious daughter stole into the chamber, while her father was fast asleep, cut off the lock whereon the fate of his kingdom depended, and carried it to Minos, as an undoubted pledge of her love. But if this fable and Samson's history have a near resemblance in some of their first circumstances, they are very different in the conclusion: for Minos rejected the present with scorn, and slighted the woman because of her perfidy; whereas the princes of the Philistines took the advantage against Samson, which Delilah's treachery gave them.—*Saurin*, vol. 4. Dissert. 17.

^b There was anciently a feast in Rome, called *Vulpinalia*, or the feast of the foxes, which Ovid makes mention of, for, inquiring into the custom of tying lighted torches to their tails, that is to say "the cause why foxes when let loose bore burning torches bound to their tails," he resolves the matter, by telling us, that a certain youth, having caught a fox which had destroyed much poultry, was going to burn it. His words are these: "He first wrapped the captive all round with straw and hay, and then set fire to it, when all in a flame the animal escaped from his hand, and wherever it fled, the produce of the fields were set in a blaze, the wind giving strength to the destructive element. The story of the deed has perished, but its monument remains; for the Carseolane law declares that every fox that is caught must be put to death. To avenge for the deed, this race of animals is burned with straw, and have to perish in the same manner that their progenitor destroyed the cornfields."—*Fast.* b. 4.

But Bochart has confuted this notion of Ovid's concerning the origin of this custom, and endeavours to refer it to this piece of history in Samson's life.—*Saurin*, vol. 4. Dissert. 17.

have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which proceeded out of thy mouth, forasmuch as the Lord has taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon: only let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I, and my fellows. And he said, go; and he sent her away for two months, and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass, at the end of two months, that she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow, which he had vowed, and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah, four days in a year.' I set the whole passage before the reader, that he may the better judge of the depending controversy there is among commentators, whether this daughter of Jephthah's was really sacrificed or no: and for his farther satisfaction in this point, I will fairly state the arguments on both sides; consider a little on which side they preponderate; and then inquire, in case he did sacrifice his daughter, or as others will have it, devote her only to God's service in a single life, whether the thing was lawful for him to do, and what might possibly be the motive of his doing it.

Those ¹ who maintain the negative, or more merciful side of the question, argue in this manner:—That Jephthah was certainly a very good man, because we find him ranked among the worthies of old, that are commemorated with honour by the author of the Hebrews: That he was an Israelite, and as such lived under the law, which prohibited human sacrifices by the severest penalties: that had the vow been intended in this sense, God would never have vouchsafed Jephthah so signal a victory as he did, which must have terminated in the violation of his own laws: and therefore they conclude, that so kind and tender a father as Jephthah is represented, would never have sacrificed an innocent, dutiful, and obedient child, as her whole carriage seems to denote her, in discharge of a rash and inconsiderate vow; especially when, according to the prescription of the law, he might have redeemed his daughter at a price so inconsiderable, ² 'as ten shekels of silver.'

It must be something else, therefore, say they, that Jephthah did unto his daughter, and that, according to the import of the text, was to devote her to a state of celibacy, or that she might live in the manner of a religious nun all the days of her life: for the particle *vau*, which we render *and*, 'it shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up,' is a disjunctive in this place, as it is elsewhere, and signifies *or*; so that the true version of the passage should be, 'whatever cometh forth to meet me shall surely be the Lord's, *or* I will offer it up for a burnt-offering,' that is, if it be a human creature, I will dedicate it to the service of God; if a beast of any kind, proper for sacrifice, I will instantly offer it up: for that in this sense the vow is to be understood, is evident from her going into the mountains to bewail her virginity, which, had she been doomed to be sacrificed,

¹ Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries. Jenkin's reasonableness, vol. 2. c. 18. Selden on the Law of Nature and Nations, b. 4. c. 11. Howell's History, &c. ² Lev. xxvii. 5.

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had not been near so proper, as to bewail her untimely end. Nor can we think that Jephthah would have ever suffered her to have made a circuit of two months among her companions, for fear of her making her escape, or procuring some of her friends and acquaintance either to rescue her, or intercede for her, had she been destined to suffer death upon her return.

On the contrary, when she returned to her father, and he had done to her according to his vow, it immediately follows, that she knew not man; which shows that the purpose of his vow was answered by obliging her to a state of perpetual virginity, in some retired place, where she was secluded from all society, except that the daughters of Israel, those especially of her acquaintance, went up, either to talk and converse with her, or to celebrate her praise, or to comfort her concerning her solitary condition, for to all these senses may the word *letannoth* be applied, four days in the year, that is, one day every quarter.

Upon the whole, therefore, they infer, that Jephthah's daughter did not fall a sacrifice, but was consecrated to God and his service, that is, devoted to a single life, and to remain a recluse all her days; which could not but occasion Jephthah no small grief and trouble, because by this means, his family became extinct, and himself destitute of issue to inherit his estate, and perpetuate his name.

These are some of the most plausible arguments that are generally employed to prove, not the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, but only her obligation to a perpetual virginity in the worship and service of God.

Those ¹ that maintain the affirmative, or harsher side of the question, namely, that Jephthah, in pursuance of his vow, did actually sacrifice his daughter, form their arguments in this manner. ² That the times wherein Jephthah lived, were so sadly addicted to idolatry, that ³ 'to burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods,' was a common practice among the Israelites, as well as other nations; and that the manner ⁴ in which he lived, before he was called to the assistance of his country, which was chiefly by plunder and rapine, and bloodshed, might make him not incapable of vowing to sacrifice the first of his domestics that should meet him upon his victorious return. That this vow is delivered in general and indefinite terms, namely, 'that whosoever should come forth out of the doors of his house to meet him, that should surely be the Lord's, and it should be the Lord's, by being offered up for a burnt-offering:' that though the particle *vau* be sometimes used in a disjunctive sense, yet it can only be so, where things are really distinct and different from each other, but cannot be admitted, where the one manifestly includes the other, as it is in the passage before us; that therefore it is much more congruous to all the rules of good sense to understand the words of Jephthah so, as that, by promising whatsoever he met should be the Lord's, he obliged himself in general to consecrate it to God, and that, by promising farther, that he would offer it up for a burnt-offering, he specified the manner in which he intended to make his consecration.

Vows of perpetual virginity, say they, are institutions of a modern date: the word of God knows nothing of them; nor has this pretended celibacy of Jephthah's daughter any manner of foundation in Scripture; and therefore, when this circumstance is inserted, that 'she knew no man, it is not to signify, that she lived a perpetual virgin, but only, that she was so unhappy as to leave the world in her youth, and before she had the knowledge of a man.

Had Jephthah meant no more, say they, by performing his vow, than consecrating his daughter, a perpetual virgin, to the service of God, what cause was there for renting his clothes, and bemoaning himself, as we find he did? Had Jephthah made only a vow of celibacy for his daughter, whereby she was bound to nothing more painful, than to lead a single life, what reason was there for bewailing this as a grievous calamity, which some men account a thing so eminently glorious and honourable? Is the being shut up as a recluse, and entered into the list of perpetual virgins, a matter of such bitter complaint and lamentation? Was this so sore an evil, an affliction so extraordinary, that not only before she underwent it, she and her companions should, for two months together, be allowed to bewail it; but that, after she had undergone it, the daughters of Israel should be required to lament it four times a year? ⁵ If she was actually put to death, in execution of her father's vow, it is easy then to understand, why the particular circumstance of her dying without issue, when she was the only daughter of her father, and had no other prospect of posterity to keep up his family, should be represented as a sore aggravation of her violent and untimely death: but it seems very difficult to account for that bitter lamentation, made by her father, by herself, by her companions, and by all the daughters of Israel in succeeding times, if she suffered no other, no severer punishment, than that of being devoted to a single life.

These are some of the most prevailing arguments on the affirmative side; and for the confirmation of them, it is farther alleged, that both Josephus and the Chaldee Paraphrast testify the same thing; that the ancient doctors, both of the Jewish and Christian church, were of the same opinion; and that, as to the substance of the fact, the compilers of the homilies of our church, do perfectly agree with these ancient writers: so that how desirous soever we may be to clear Jephthah from the imputation of so cruel, so impious, so unnatural an act, as that of murdering his own daughter; yet if we will adhere to the more easy and obvious construction of the words, and as they appear to us at first view; or if we retain any just esteem and veneration for the sense of antiquity, we must necessarily conclude, that when it is said of him, that 'he did with his daughter according to the vow which he had vowed,' the meaning can be no less, than that he did really put her to death: but whether he acted well or ill in so doing, is another inquiry we are now to pursue.

The law of *Cherem*, as the Hebrews call it, which is a law of a peculiar nature, is delivered in these words: ⁶ 'No devoted thing, which a man shall devote to the Lord, of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy to the Lord. None devoted,

¹ Edward's Inquiry into some Remarkable Texts.

² Deut. xii. 31. ³ Saurin, vol. 3. Dissertation 15.

⁴ Grotius on the passage. Calmet's Dissertation on Jephthah's Vow, and Saurin on the same, &c.

⁵ Bishop Smalridge's Sermons.

⁶ Lev. xxvii. 28, 29.

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which shall be devoted by men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death.¹ Of this sort, a very learned² commentator supposes this vow of Jephthah's to have been, and that therefore he could not redeem his daughter, but was necessitated to put her to death. It is to be observed, however, that³ *Cherem* (which is the term here made use of) signifies either persons devoted to slaughter for their execrable impieties, as were the Amalekites and other nations, whom God commanded the Israelites to extirpate, or things destined to destruction, as were Jericho and Ai, for the wickedness of those to whom they appertained; so that the law of Cherem related only to such persons or things, as by an irrevocable vow, were destined to utter destruction for their horrid crimes, and because indeed there was particular command from God, both for the making or putting such a vow in execution; but it can by no means be pretended, either that Jephthah's daughter merited such a punishment, or that her father had any order or commission from God to inflict it. On the contrary, all human sacrifices are expressly forbidden, as odious and detestable to God: ⁴ 'Thou shalt not do so to the Lord thy God; thou shalt not burn thy sons, and thy daughters in the fire,' as the heathens used to do to their gods; 'for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done.'

There is one law, indeed, which seems to be of some moment in the case before us, and that is this:—⁵ 'If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.' But then all sober casuists are agreed, that a vow has only a constructive, not a destructive force, that is, that it can only lay a new obligation, where there is none, or where there is one, strengthen it; but that it cannot cancel a former obligation, or superinduce one that is repugnant to it. Now all our obligations to obedience proceed from God. ⁶ He hath an uncontrollable right to give laws to his creatures: but if men, by entering into vows, could free themselves from the obligation of his laws, they might then, whenever they pleased, by their own act, defeat his authority. Whatever, therefore, is in itself forbidden by God, and for that reason unlawful; whatever is against any precept of natural or revealed religion; whatever is inconsistent with those relative duties which men owe to one another; whatever, in short, is in any respect sinful, cannot, by being made the matter of a vow, become justifiable. So that he who hath vowed to do what cannot be done without sin, is so far from being obliged to perform his vow, that he is, notwithstanding his vow, obliged not to perform it; because there is not only great obliquity in making such an unlawful vow, but this obliquity is so far from being lessened, that it is aggravated by keeping it.

⁶ Since, therefore, the thing vowed by Jephthah seems to have been in itself unlawful; since his daughter was innocent, and had done nothing to deserve death; since the running out to meet her father with joy and congratulation, was an act of piety, which seemed to entitle her

to his love and favour; since the natural affection of a father towards his child ought to be stifled, before he could give way to the execution of the sentence of death upon her; since the sacrificing of children to their gods was a crime, for which the heathen nations were justly detested, and punished by God; since Jephthah's offering his daughter as a victim to the Lord, might reflect a dishonour upon the true God, as if he also delighted in such sacrifices; since these, I say, and several other things, might be urged in aggravation of this action, we may safely and confidently aver,⁷ with the Jewish historian, "that the sacrifice which Jephthah offered was neither lawful nor acceptable to God,"⁸ but on the contrary a very impious act, and an abominable crime, though it might possibly proceed from a mistaken principle of religion.

The religious observation of oaths and vows has, at all times, been esteemed a duty incumbent on those that made them; inasmuch, that even when they have been procured by guile, they have not been thought destitute of their obligation. The Gibeonites certainly imposed upon the children of Israel, when they obtained from them a league of amity and friendship; and yet we may observe what notions the Israelites had of this kind of obligation, when, in their public consultations, they say, ⁹ 'We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel; now therefore we may not touch them.' This was a remarkable instance before Jephthah's days, and it is not improbable, that he might have it in his remembrance, and imprudently make use of it, as a precedent of the irreversibleness of oaths, and of the inviolable tie he was under by reason of his vow: but in succeeding times, there is a passage in Scripture, which comes nearer to the case now before us. Saul, in the day of battle, perceiving his enemies to give ground, out of the abundance of his zeal, made a vow to God, that whoever would taste any food before the pursuit was over, should certainly die; and upon this occasion his own son Jonathan had like to have been made a sacrifice, merely because his father would have been thought religious and austere to the observation of his oath; notwithstanding he was plainly excused from the obligation of it as to his son, who was both in another place, and ignorant of his father's will, and under necessity of taking some small refreshment when he was so faint and hungry. What wonder then if Jephthah, who, we have reason to believe, was a person much more religiously inclined than Saul, should think himself under an obligation to observe his vow, even though it was to the destruction of his own and only daughter.

What the acceptableness of Abraham's offering his son Isaac was, he had read in the book of Moses; and this might possibly lessen the horror of the fact he was going to commit. For though Abraham had the positive command of God for what he did, which Jephthah could not pretend to, so that there was a great disparity between their two cases; yet it was plain, from the acceptableness of Abraham's offering, and the great reward bestowed on him for his intended oblation, that the sacrificing a beloved child was not, in all cases, and under all circumstances sinful, but might be so circumstantiated as to be an act of piety, and approved in the sight of God: and when this example proved such an action, as to the

¹ Diatribe of Lud. Cappel concerning Jephthah's Vow.

² Edward's Inquiry into several texts.

³ Deut. xii. 31. ⁴ Num. xxx. 2. ⁵ Bishop Smalridge's Sermon.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Josephus' Antiquities, b. v. c. 9.

⁸ Josh. ix. 19.

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matter and substance of it, not only lawful but commendable, Jephthah might from hence be led into an opinion that the difference between his case and that of Abraham was not so great, as that what was laudable and almost meritorious in the one, should be imputed as an unpardonable crime to the other.

He had read likewise in the law, that ¹ 'when thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord, thou shalt not be slack to pay it;' and was sensible that a wilful neglect of this was a heinous crime, ² a mocking of God, a dissembling with Heaven, and an act of injustice and unfaithfulness towards him, who is a severe exactor of vows, and is wont to avenge the breach of them by the infliction of the sorest punishments; and upon these premises he might possibly argue with himself in this manner: "Though I know that the performance of my vow will be accompanied with murder, yet I consider likewise that my not performing it will be attended with downright perjury. Seeing then there is a necessity of sinning one way or other, I am resolved to choose the former; for though that be an injury to my daughter, yet the other is an affront to God. My child is dear to me indeed, but my God, my Father, is much more so. It is better therefore to be cruel than impious; to be guilty of bloodshed, than to be perjured and false to the Lord of heaven and earth. 'I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.' I must not reverse, I dare not revoke the sacred promise which I have made to the Almighty; but my firm and unshaken purpose is to perform it." Thus the mistaken sense of the indissoluble obligation which his vow had laid upon him, blinded his eyes, and ran him upon this fatal rock.

He could not but know, had he considered at all, that no vow is obligatory, where the matter of it is unlawful; or that, what is unlawful in itself, cannot possibly be made otherwise by the interposition of a vow. Nay, he could not but know, that to act unlawfully, in virtue of a vow, was a double sin, since not only the vow itself was sinful, but the act consequent thereupon was sinful likewise; and yet so blind sometimes is the zeal of an erroneous conscience, that it will not suffer men to perceive, at least to be governed by the most rational and self-evident principles.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that how great soever this sin of Jephthah's was, yet, properly speaking it was the sin of ignorance, and the effect of a misguided conscience. By the bitter complaint, which he uttered upon the first sight of his daughter coming out to meet him, it is evident that he was under great trouble and perplexity; and as she had done nothing to alienate his affections from her, but in this very act of meeting him, had done something to engage his affections more strongly towards her, the bowels of a father must necessarily yearn to save the life of a loving and a beloved child. The generous offer which she made him, that he might do to her what he pleased, according to his vow, though it made the doing of it less unjust, could not but add a fresh sting to his grief, and, if he had any generosity in his breast, make him do it with more reluctance. No one who is a parent; no one who has felt the workings of nature towards his own issue; no one who hath suffered, or who hath feared the loss of

an only child, but must be sensible of what pangs of sorrow, what meltings of compassion, what agonies of grief, must pierce the soul of Jephthah, when he imagined himself under the sad necessity of sacrificing his own, his only, his virgin daughter, whom he could not offer up for a burnt-offering, without sacrificing, at the same time, all the propensions of nature, all the ease and pleasure of his life, all the prospect of keeping up his family. Nothing less than a mistaken opinion of the indispensable obligation of his vow could prevail with him thus to overrule the strong motives of interest and inclination; and a mistake which took its rise from so good a principle must, without question, at least extenuate the guilt, in the judgment both of good-natured men, and of an all-merciful God.

We cannot, however, part with this remarkable piece of history, without making one inference, namely, that we should be strictly careful how we engage ourselves in any rash and indeliberate vows; because, as a vow is confessedly an act of religion, when once 'we have opened our mouths unto the Lord,' we cannot, without manifest prevarication and contempt of God's authority, 'go back.' And therefore, to conclude in the words of a great ³ divine already quoted upon this subject, "as in civil life, men of the best character for integrity, and such as are most punctual in keeping their words, are observed to be very sparing in making promises; so in religion, the best way we can take to observe the precept given us by Solomon, ⁴ 'that when we vow a vow unto God, we should not defer to pay it,' will be, in the first place, to observe another precept, which he lays down before this, namely, that ⁵ 'we should not be rash with our mouths, nor let our hearts be hasty to utter any thing before God.'"

CHAP. IV.—On Jephthah's Vow.

SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.

In the course of the previous section, our author states, that Josephus and the Jewish writers in general, as well as the principal writers of the early ages of the church, were of opinion that Jephthah, in consequence of his vow, offered his daughter as a burnt-offering to the Lord, and he seems himself decidedly to incline to the same view. This opinion has been adopted by very respectable modern commentators. But from this view of the matter I dissent, as I conceive that Jephthah only devoted his daughter in a peculiar manner to the service of the Lord, I am confirmed in the accuracy of this opinion, by all that is recorded of the piety of this judge, as well as by the language in which his vow is couched. He is uniformly represented in Scripture, as a man who feared God. He is mentioned by the apostle Paul as one of the eminent men who obtained a good report through faith: and it is declared, that at this very time,—the time in which he uttered his vow,—that he was under the influence of the Spirit of God. I maintain, that all this is irreconcilable with the supposition, that Jephthah deliberately vowed to commit murder; for he must have knowingly done so, if we may imagine that he bound

¹ Deut. xxiii. 21.

² Edward's Inquiry into several texts.

³ Smalridge's Sermons.

⁴ Eccles. v. 4.

⁵ Eccles. v. 2.

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himself by an oath to kill the first man, woman, or child, that should meet him on his return. He, who in his expostulation with the king of Ammon, showed that he was well acquainted with the history of Israel, could not be ignorant of the law which said, 'Thou shalt not kill,' and which expressly forbade to imitate the heathen in offering human sacrifices. He who was aware that the law prescribed that, if a man even unintentionally should kill his slave, should be punished, could not imagine that the law permitted him intentionally and deliberately to kill his own daughter.

There is no similarity between the case of Jephthah and that of Abraham offering up his son Isaac. Abraham acted in obedience to the divine command; but there is no intimation that the Spirit of God, under whose influence he was, gave any such order to him. Nor even if such a sacrifice had been required for the trial of his faith, can we conceive that he would be allowed to carry it into effect.

But the idea of Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter, is not more irreconcilable with what we know of his piety than it is with the provisions which the law itself made in such a case. It permitted a valuation to be made of any thing devoted, and the ransom money to be offered in its stead. The valuation, in the case of a human being, varied according to the age and sex of the person; but, if it were a beast, the offerer was required to give as the price of its redemption, a fifth more than its estimated value. No ransom could be given for cities or possessions which God had declared accursed, and had devoted to destruction; such were the Amalekites and Canaanites, to spare whom was to sin against God. We are entitled to presume, that Jephthah, who was so well acquainted with the history of his people, was also acquainted with the law concerning vows and things devoted; and that in making his vow, therefore, he had in his view those exceptions in things offered, which the law made, and those exchanges which it admitted. Even if he had been ignorant of this, can we suppose, that the priests were so ill instructed, and so forgetful as to overlook it? Especially as the execution of the vow was deferred for two months, and great lamentation made on account of it? It is true, idolatry with its attendants, ignorance and superstition, prevailed over the land; but at no period did it prevail to the utter extinction of the worship of God, and neglect of his law. Besides, Jephthah, and the people of Israel, had united in a reformation of religion; and in doing so had obtained signal marks of the peculiar favour and presence of God. Would the people allow the instrument of their deliverance, on his return from victory, to sacrifice his own daughter? Would they not have interposed for her safety, as they did at a subsequent period of their history, on behalf of Jonathan when his father Saul had doomed him to destruction?

There is nothing in the language in which the vow of Jephthah is couched, which requires us to suppose that he devoted his daughter to death. The conjunction *vau* rendered *and* in our version, might be rendered *or*: and it is often thus translated in other passages, 'Whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, shall surely be the Lord's, *or*, I will offer it for a burnt-offering': 'Whatever it may happen to be, it shall be consecrated to God: *or*, should it be fit to be offered in

sacrifice to the Lord, it shall be presented as a burnt-offering.' To satisfy us that this is a correct translation, it may be remarked that the conjunction *vau* must be rendered disjunctively in Lev. xxvii. 28, where the law regarding things devoted is recorded, 'Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, either of man or of beast, *or* of the field of his possessions shall be sold or redeemed.'

These considerations, when viewed in connexion with those which I am about to mention, prove conclusively that Jephthah neither did sacrifice his daughter, nor was under any obligation from his vow to do so. The sacrifice of children was an abomination to the Lord: he repeatedly expressed his abhorrence of the practice; and it was prohibited by law under pain of death.¹ No father could, by his own authority, put an offending, much less an innocent child to death upon any account, without the sanction of the magistrates, and the consent of the people, as in the case of Jonathan.² The Mishna says, that "if a Jew should devote his son or daughter, his man or maid servant, the devotement would be void, because no man can devote what is not his own."

In what way, then, did Jephthah fulfil his vow? The consideration of this question will lead us to the same conclusion as that to which we have already come. After Jephthah had subdued the children of Ammon, we read that he 'came to Mispah unto his house, and behold his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances, and she was his only child; beside her, he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas! my daughter! Thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth. And she said unto her father, let this thing be done for me, let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. And he said go:—And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed. And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.'

The first thing in this narrative which claims our attention, is the notice which Jephthah's daughter takes of the effect of this vow on herself. If we understand the vow as subjecting her to a life of celibacy, and of seclusion from the world, and consecration to the service of God, her language on the occasion is natural, and what might have been expected from her: but had she been doomed to death, to this she would doubtless have alluded, and have made it the ground of her lamentation. If it be supposed that her piety would have made her silent as to death, the same piety would have led her silently to acquiesce in the other calamity; and like Isaac, be willing to forego every prospect in regard to the promised land. If it be alleged, that on the supposition of her only being doomed to a life of celibacy and seclusion from the world, it was not necessary for

¹ Lev. xx. 2, 3.² Deut. xxi. 18—21.

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her to ask two months to bewail her fate, since she might have years to mourn over it;—we may reply, and the reply is sufficient, that in the apprehension of the Israelites, who looked for the promised Messiah, it was a heavy affliction to die childless, that the affliction was greatly increased in the present instance, by the circumstance that she was Jephthah's only daughter, and that in her all the honours of her house would become extinct. Her fate was a kind of death by anticipation, and it was meet, therefore, that there should have been a marked and public mourning on account of it.

The language in which her father is said to have fulfilled his vow, next deserves our notice. 'Her father did with her according to his vow which he had vowed.' Here there is no mention of her death or of her having been offered in sacrifice to the Lord. While the allusions to her life of celibacy and seclusion from the world are frequent, there is not a single hint concerning her death,—a circumstance for which we cannot account, but on the supposition that that event was not contemplated, and that it did not really happen. If she had been dead, it would not have been necessary for the daughters of Israel to assemble in any particular place, since they might as well conduct their lamentations on her account, on the supposition of her death, in their respective dwelling places.

On these grounds, then, I am decidedly of opinion that Jephthah's daughter was not offered in sacrifice; but that she was devoted to a life of celibacy and seclusion from the world.

To this view of the matter, it is objected; first, that we have no intimation in Scripture of vows of perpetual celibacy, and that they appear to be a modern invention. But is there not quite as little said in Scripture of devoting to death a human being in honour of God? Nay, is not the testimony of Scripture against any such practice? If the silence of Scripture be deemed a valid objection in one case, its express prohibition is surely to be reckoned an insuperable objection in the other.

Secondly, it is further objected, that parents had no right to devote a child to a life of entire seclusion from the world. This may be true; and I would only say by way of reply, that far less had parents a right to devote a child to death. The devotement of Jephthah's daughter to the service of the tabernacle, took place with her own consent.

Thirdly, the most specious objection to the view of the matter which we have taken, is, that she might have been thus devoted to the service of God, and at the same time enter into the married state. Thus, Samson, Samuel, and others, who were devoted to God from the womb, were married. But in answer to this objection, it may be answered, that in ancient times, the condition of females was different from that of males; that while the latter were allowed to act for themselves, the former were in some measure restrained by the will of others; and that, therefore, it was necessary, that the daughter of Jephthah, who had been consecrated by a vow to the Lord, should be under no control in giving herself up to the service to which she had been thus devoted.¹

To these arguments, I am not aware of any reply that can be made, except that which is urged by Warburton—

that Jephthah was a semi-pagan, who knew little of the law, and had long been accustomed to disregard it. This, however, as Bishop Gleig observes, is said without the shadow of proof; and is indeed so directly contrary to all that we know of Jephthah's character and conduct, that the ingenious prelate is forced to confess, that after he was appointed judge or chief ruler of Israel, Jephthah appears to have acquired a competent knowledge of the law: but this confession completely destroys the argument of this learned critic. For, it was after this period that Jephthah devoted his daughter.

SECT. III.

CHAP. I.—From the Birth of Samuel to the Death of Saul.

THE HISTORY.

DURING the time of Samson's great exploits, both the civil and ecclesiastical administration seems to have been in the hands of Eli the high priest, in the beginning of whose government Samuel was born.^a He was the son of Elkanah, a Levite who dwelt in Ramah,^b a city belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, and, as the custom of those times was, had two wives, whose names were

^a According to the arrangement of the period by Dr Hales, given at the commencement of the preceding section, page 396, this statement is incorrect, as it is there stated that Samson's administration of 20 years commenced B. C. 1202, and terminated B. C. 1182, when Eli's administration of 40 years began. That he succeeded Samson is asserted by Josephus, (*Antiq.* v. 9. 1.) Eli was 58 years of age when he began his administration, (1 Sam. iv. 15—18,) and was the first high priest of the line of Ithamar, the younger son of Aaron. The date of Samuel's birth is not noticed in any part of the book called by his name; but it is ascertained by the research of Josephus, that Samuel at the time of his prophetic call was 12 years old; but his call was 450 years after the first division of the conquered lands, (*Acts* xiii. 20.) and therefore happened in the thirty-first year of Eli's administration, and consequently his birth in the nineteenth year of it. Samuel died about two years before Saul, and therefore lived about 92 years.—*Dr Hales' Analysis*, b. 2. pp. 299—302.—Ed.

^b *Ramah* signifies an *eminence*, or *high situation*, and is therefore an appellation given to several places that are built in this manner. This is said to have stood upon Mount Ephraim, thereby to distinguish it from other towns, in different tribes, of the same denomination; and the reason why it is here called *Ramathaim*, in the dual number, is, as some imagine, because it was built upon two hills, which made it appear a double city; and because it was situated on high, and had a watch-tower built in it, it therefore had the title of *Zophim* added to it. It stood upon the road that led from Samaria to Jerusalem; and for this reason, as well as its advantageous situation, Baasha king of Israel caused it to be fortified, that there might be no passage out of the land of Judah into that of Israel, (1 Kings xv. 17., and 2 Chron. xvi. 1.) but in St Jerome's days it was no more than a small village. Here it was that Samuel passed a great part of his time; for his mother's dedication of him to the service of God did not confine him to Shiloh, after that God had called him out to a public employ, and appointed him his residence in a place more convenient for the execution of it. The truth is, after the captivity of the ark, and the death of Eli, all religious ceremonies seem to have ceased at Shiloh, for which reason it is said, that Samuel built an altar at Ramah, the place of his residence, to the intent that the people might resort to him, either to receive judgment, or to offer sacrifices, which, though it was contrary to the law of Moses, seems to be a case of necessity; because the ark being at one place, and the tabernacle at another, neither of them could properly be resorted to

¹ Num. xxx. 13.

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Hannah and Peninnah. ^a Thrice every year he used to go to Shiloh, there to offer up his usual sacrifice, and as he was a pious and religious man, he generally took his two wives with him, that they, in like manner, might make their oblations. Now Hannah, though she had no children, was his favourite wife, and therefore, at ^b every feast upon the peace-offering, he usually sent her a separate mess, and of the choicest of the meat; which the other perceiving, was wont to ^c upbraid her with her sterility, or want of children. Hannah took this so sore to heart that all the kind things which her husband said to her, could not assuage or comfort her; but as soon as she rose from table, away she hastens to the tabernacle, and there pours out her soul before God, desiring of him to bless her with a son, which favour if he would grant her, she promised to make him a Nazarite, and all the days of his life devote him to his service.

Her prayers were heard, and, in a proper time, she conceived, and brought forth a son, whom she called Samuel, even because she had 'asked him of the Lord,' for so his name imports, and after he was grown to a competent age, she brought him to Shiloh, and in a very joyful and thankful manner, presented him to Eli, who gladly received him, and immediately clothed him with a proper habit, even with a linen ^d ephod, that he might attend upon the service of the tabernacle.^e

Eli himself was a very good man, but by much too indulgent to his children. He had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were mere libertines. They domineer-

ed over the men, and debauched the women at their devotions; and so far were they from being content with the portions which God had allotted them as priests, that they forced from the people even before they had made their oblations, what part of the sacrifice they pleased; which gave so general a disgust, that religion grew into contempt, and the worship of God came to be disused.

Eli was not unacquainted with his sons' ill conduct; but instead of chastising them as his authority required, he contented himself with reproving them now and then, but that in such gentle and mild terms, as rather encouraged than deterred them from proceeding in their wicked practices; till at length, God, being provoked with this his remissness, ^f sent a prophet to threaten him and his family with utter destruction; to upbraid him with his ingratitude in slighting the sacerdotal honour which he had conferred on him; to foretell the death of his two sons both in one day, ^g the removal of his priesthood into another and better family, and the extreme poverty which his posterity would fall into, upon their ejection from the sacerdotal office. Nor was it long before God discovered the same heavy judgments to Samuel, which was the first revelation he made to this young prophet, and which Eli, when he was told it, received with a mind fully resigned to the divine pleasure: ¹ 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.'

In these days ^h there were but few prophets, and revelations were very scarce; and therefore when the Israelites perceived, by the truth of his predictions, that God had appointed Samuel to the prophetic office, they were not a little rejoiced: and it was from the great expectations they had of God's favour in renewing this order of men among them, that they took up arms; in order to rescue themselves from the Philistines' yoke. The army of the Israelites encamped at a place which was afterwards called ⁱ Eben-ezer, and that of the Phil-

either for sacrificing, or any other part of public worship.—*Patrick's, Le Clerc's, and Calmet's Commentaries; and Universal History.*

^a The precept is exactly thus,—'Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord thy God,' (Exod. xxiii. 17.) which were at the feast of the passover, the pentecost, and that of the tabernacles; but women were exempted from this attendance; and therefore it was an extraordinary act of piety for Elkanah to take his two wives with him.

^b The blood of this peace-offering was shed at the foot of the altar, the fat was burnt, the breast and right shoulder was the priest's perquisite, and all the rest belonged to the person who brought the victim. With this he made a feast of charity, to which he called his friends and relations, and in several places of Scripture, God reminds him to invite the Levite, the poor, the fatherless, and the widow.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^c Sterility was looked upon among the Jews as one of the greatest misfortunes that could befall any woman; insomuch that to have a child, though the mother immediately died thereupon, was accounted a less affliction than to have none at all. And to this purpose we may observe, that the midwife comforts Rachel in her labour, even though she knew her to lie at the point of death, in these terms, 'Fear not, for thou shalt have this son also,' Gen. xxxv. 17.—*Saurin, in vol. 4. Dissertation 17.*

^d The ephod which the high priest wore (as we have described it elsewhere,) was a very rich habit indeed, (Exod. xxviii. 6.) but there were other kinds of ephods, which not only priests and Levites, but even laymen, upon some occasions wore, as we find in the instance of David, (2 Sam. vi. 14.) which was not a sacred, but an honorary garment, as we may call it, and such as the high priest might order Samuel to wear, to distinguish him from some other inferior officers belonging to the tabernacle.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^e 1 Sam. ii. 19. The women made wearing apparel, and their common employment was weaving stuffs, as making cloth and tapestry is now. We see in Homer the instances of Penelope, Calypso, and Circe. There are examples of it in Theocritus, Idyl. 15. But what appears most wonderful is, that this custom was retained at Rome among the greatest ladies in a very corrupt age, since Augustus commonly wore clothes made by his wife, sister, and daughter.—*Suet. Aug. 73. Prov. xxxi. 13.—19. Fleury's Hist. of the Israelites, p. 72.*

¹ 1 Sam. iii. 18.

^f Who this prophet was, commentators are at a loss to know. Some imagine, that it was Phinehas the son of Eleazar, but Phinehas very probably was dead long before this time. Others therefore will needs have it to have been Elkanah, Samuel's father; and some Samuel himself: but we nowhere read, that the father was endued with the spirit of prophecy, and the son was certainly then too young, and unacquainted with the voice of God. The safest way therefore is, to own our ignorance of what the sacred historian hath not thought proper to discover to us.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^g The high priesthood was originally settled upon Eleazar, the son of Aaron, by a divine decree; but that decree being conditional only, it is reasonable to presume that there was some great offence or other in Eleazar's family, though not recorded in Scripture, which provoked God to remove it into the family of Ithamar, who was Aaron's youngest son, and from whom Eli descended; and here, for the abominable practices of his sons, which he was too negligent to restrain, God threatens to translate the priesthood back again from the family of Ithamar to that of Eleazar, which accordingly happened in the reign of king Solomon, who deposed Abiathar, the last of Eli's line, from the pontificate, and set up Zadok in his stead.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^h Whatever revelations God might impart to some pious persons privately, there was at this time none publicly acknowledged for a prophet, unto whom the people might resort to know the mind of God: nay, so little acquainted were these ages with the prophetic spirit, that we read of no more than two prophets, (Judg. iv. 4. and vi. 8.) in all the days of the Judges.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

ⁱ This place is here mentioned prophetically: for it had not this name till about twenty years after, (1 Sam. iv. 1.) when

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istines at Aphek, a city of Judah; but when they came to join battle, the Israelites were defeated with the loss of four thousand men.

The reason of this defeat was imputed by some to their want of the ark in the army, which as the symbol of God's pretence, would be a sure means of success; and therefore they sent to Hophni and Phineas to bring it with them, and when it arrived in the camp, received it with many a joyful acclamation. The Philistines at first, were dispirited at the news, as much as their enemies were animated: but at length, taking heart, and exhorting one another to act courageously, they repulsed the Israelites, when they came to attack them; and having slain thirty thousand of their foot, among whom were Hophni and Phineas, they routed the rest, and put them all to flight, so that the ark of the Lord fell into their hands.

This ill news a soldier of the tribe of Benjamin, escaping from the field of battle, brought to Shiloh that very day, with the usual emblems of extreme sorrow, ^a his clothes rent, and earth upon his head; and then there was no small outcry and lamentation in the city. Eli, inquiring the cause of it, had the soldier brought before him, who gave him an account, ^b that the Israelites were routed, his two sons slain, and the ark taken. Eli heard

Samuel fought with the Philistines, and gave them a total overthrow, and set up a monument of his victory, for the proper name signifies the stone of help, in the field of battle, which lay on the north border of Judah, not far from Mizpeh, and Aphek, where the Philistines encamped, must not be far distant from it.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

^a If we consult Josh. vii. 6. Job ii. 12. and Ezek. xxvii. 39. we shall find that this was the manner of men's expressing their deep sorrow for any great calamity that had befallen them. And accordingly we find Virgil representing Latinus rending his clothes, and throwing dust upon his gray hairs, when he laments his private and public calamities: 'with his garment rent, Latinus, defiling his hoary head with dust, proceeds.'—*Æneid*. 12.

^b Who this Benjamite was that brought the ill news to Shiloh of the loss of the battle, the history is silent, and the conjecture of some Jews, that it probably was Saul, is very uncertain and precarious; but there is something very remarkable in the account which he gives of the action. The words are these; 'And Eli said to the Benjamite, What is there done in the battle, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons Hophni and Phineas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.' (1 Sam. iv. 16, 27.) Madam Dacier highly commends the manner wherein the sacred historian makes his messenger speak, and compares these words, 'Hophni and Phineas are dead, and the ark of the Lord is taken,' with those of Antiochus to Achilles, when he tells him the sad news.—'Patroclus is stretched a corpse; the Greeks fight around him lying naked, and Hector with the dazzling helmet, is in possession of his armour.' (Il. 18.) Whereupon she quotes the glossary which Eustathius has upon this passage in Homer. "This speech of Antiochus," says that excellent critic, "affords us a pattern, with what brevity such melancholy news should be related; for, in two verses, it comprises every thing that happened, the death of Patroclus, the person who slew him, the encounter about his body, and his arms in the possession of his enemy. The Greek tragic poets have not been so wise as to imitate this; and, of all others Euripides, who, upon the most doleful occasion, is so apt to make long recitals, is most egregiously defective herein. Homer is the only author that deserves to be followed. Nothing is more ridiculous, than to hear a messenger, when he is to report some very bad news, running into tedious circumstances, and pathetic expressions. All he talks is not minded; for he to whom he addresses himself, cannot attend to what he says; the first word that acquaints him with the misfortune, makes him deaf to every thing else."—*Saurin*, vol. 4. Dissertation 23.

the defeat of the army, and the death of his sons with courage and unconcern enough: but when he came to understand, that the ark of the Lord was fallen into the enemy's hand, his spirits forsook him, and being both heavy and aged, he fell from his seat, and broke his neck and died, after he had been the supreme magistrate in Israel ^c for the space of forty years: and, what was a farther family misfortune, his son Phineas had a wife, then big with child, and near her time, who hearing of her father's and husband's death, and, what was the worst of all, of the captivity of the ark, fell in labour at the news, and being delivered of a son, had just strength to name him Ichabod, that is, no glory, before she died; because the ark which was the glory of Israel, as she assigns the reason, 'was departed from them.'

The Philistines having thus got possession of the ark, ^d carried it in triumph to one of their principal cities, named Ashdod, and there placed it in the temple of their god Dagon hard by his image. The next morning the people of ^e Ashdod, going into the temple, found Dagon

^c The Septuagint, and some ancient manuscripts, make the term of Eli's magistracy to be no more than twenty years; and to reconcile this with the Hebrew text, some suppose, either that he had Samson joined in the government with him for the first twenty years of his administration, or his sons, for the last; but there is no reason for the solution of a difficulty which arises from nothing else but a fault in the text of the Septuagint.—*Cabinet's Commentary*. [See note on this subject at the beginning of this section.]—*En*.

^d It was a custom among the heathens, to carry in triumph the images of the gods of such nations as they had vanquished. Isaiah prophesies of Cyrus, that in this manner he would treat the gods of Babylon: 'Bel boweth, Nebo stoopeth; their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle, and themselves are gone into captivity,' (Isa. xlv. 1, 2.) Daniel foretells of Ptolemy Euergetes, that he would 'carry captive into Egypt the gods of the Syrians, with their princes,' (Dan. xi. 8.) And the like predictions are to be met with in Jeremiah xlviii. 7. and in Amos i. 15. We need less wonder, therefore, that we find Plutarch, in the life of Marcellus, telling us, that he took away out of the temple of Syracuse, the most beautiful pictures and statues of their gods; and that afterwards it became a reproach to Marcellus, and raised the indignation of other nations against Rome, "That he carried along with him, not men only, but the very gods captive, and in triumph."—*Saurin*, vol. 4. Dissertation 24.

^e The Philistines were descendants from Mizraim the father of the Egyptians, and so, in all probability, having their first settlement in Egypt, or the parts adjoining, lay to the south-west of the land of Canaan. In process of time, however, they made inroads upon Canaan, and, in Abraham's days, had got possession of a good part of the territories which lay along the western coasts of the Mediterranean sea. This tract of ground was divided into five principalities, or little kingdoms, namely, Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Akron; which for the better understanding of some particulars related of the ark, during its stay in this country, it will not be improper to describe all together. The city of Gaza, from which the territory took its name, stood, as it were, on the very south-west angle, or corner of the land of Canaan; but of this place we have spoken before. To the north of Gaza lay next the city of Askelon, called by the Greeks Ascalon, and of great note among the Gentiles for a temple dedicated to Dirceto, the mother of Simiramis, who was here worshipped in the form of a mermaid. To the north of Ascalon, lay Ashdod, called by the Greeks Azotus, and famous for the temple of the god Dagon, whereof we have taken notice before. Still more to the north lay Gath, memorable for being the birth-place of the giant Goliath, whom David slew, and of several others of the same gigantic race. It was dismantled by Ozies king of Judah, and finally laid waste by Hazael king of Syria: however it recovered itself, and retained its old name in the days of Eusebius and St Jerome, who place it about four miles from Eleutheropolis, in the way to Lidda. The most northern

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fallen down upon his face before the ark; ^a but supposing this to be an accident, they set him up again; and again, next morning, found him not only fallen down, but his head and the palms of his hands broken off, and lying upon the threshold; whence there arose a superstitious use among the Philistines, that neither priest nor people would ever ^b tread upon his threshold.

By this means the people of Ashdod could not but perceive that their Dagon was far inferior to the God of Israel, who, to make them still more sensible of this, smote them, and the inhabitants of the places adjacent, with emerods, and destroyed the fruits of their grounds with swarms of mice; so that, to redress their complaints, the princes of the Philistines ordered the ark to be removed to Gath, where the same judgments befell the people of that place; and when from thence it was carried to Ekron, not only the ^c plague of the emerods,

but a wasting pestilence likewise, went along with it; so that the people were resolved to send it away, and to that purpose called their priests together to advise with them in what manner they might best do it.

The priests advised them to provide a new cart, and to yoke to it two milch kine, that had never drawn before, but to keep up their calves confined. In this cart they ordered them to place the ark, and, because it was proper to make some trespass-offering to the God of Israel, to have five golden emerods, and as many golden mice, ^d according to the number of the principal cities of the Philistines, made, and put in a coffer by the side of the ark. But above all, they cautioned them to take notice, which way the ^e kine went; for if they took

of these cities, still upon the coast of the Mediterranean sea, was Ekron, called by the Greeks Accaron, a place of great wealth and power, and famous for the idolatrous worship of Beelzebub, who had here a celebrated temple and oracle. But of this idol we shall have occasion to say more, when we come to the reign of Ahaziah, king of Judah, who sent in his illness to consult him.—*Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

a 1 Sam. v. 4. The destruction of Dagon before the ark of the Lord, clearly discovered the vanity of idols, and the irresistible power of God. The circumstances attending his demolition are remarkable; and in them it is possible may be traced a conformity with the manner in which different nations treated the idol deities of each other. Dagon was not merely thrown down, but was also broken to pieces, and some of these fragments were found on the threshold. There is a circumstance related in Maurice's *Modern History of Hindostan*, (vol. 1. part 2. p. 296.) which seems in some points similar to what is recorded of Dagon. Speaking of the destruction of the idol in the temple at Sumnaut, he says, that "fragments of the demolished idol were distributed to the several mosques of Mecca, Medina, and Gaza, to be thrown at the threshold of their gates, and trampled upon by devout and zealous Mussulmans." In both instances the situation of the fragments at the threshold seems to intimate the complete triumph of those who had overcome the idols, and might possibly be a customary expression of indignity and contempt.

Tibullus informs us, that to beat the head against the sacred threshold was, with many, an expiatory ceremony. It probably originated with the Egyptians in the worship of Isis.

For crimes like these I'd abject crawl the ground,
Kiss her dread threshold, and my forehead wound.

Grainger.—Ed.

b It is somewhat strange, that when the Philistines saw their Dagon cast down before the ark of God, with his head and hands broken off, they should not thence infer, that he was no more than a vain idol: but instead of that, we find them honouring the very threshold, whereby he received these maims, as if they had been consecrated, or had some divinity infused into them, from the mere touch of this idol. This is a sore instance of blindness and infatuation; but it is no more than what other heathen nations fell into. For whether the custom took its first rise from this practice of the Philistines or no, it is certain, that among the Romans the threshold was consecrated to the goddess Vesta, and those which belonged to temples, were always held in the highest veneration, as appears from Juvenal, "adore the Tarpeian threshold;" and that other passage in Tibullus, "If I was deserving I would not hesitate to fall down before the temples and kiss their consecrated thresholds." B. 1. el. 5. Nay, at this very day, there are some mosques in Persia, whose thresholds are covered over with plates of silver, and which the people are not allowed to tread on; for that is a crime which cannot be expiated, without undergoing very severe pains and penalties.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

c The word *Apholim*, which only occurs here and in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, is, by different interpreters, supposed to signify different things. Some take it for a *dysentery*, others for what they call *procidencia ani*; some for a *cancer*, and others for something *revereal* in that part. The Scripture tells

us expressly, that "God smote his enemies in the hinder parts," Ps. lxxviii. 66. And therefore our translation is not amiss, which supposes their malady to have been such painful tumors in the fundament as very frequently turn into ulcers.—*Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

d 1 Sam. vi. 4. The ancient heathens used to consecrate to their gods such monuments of their deliverances, as represented the evils from which they were rescued. They dedicated to Isis and Neptune, a table containing the express image of the shipwreck which they had escaped. Slaves and captives, when they had regained their liberty, offered their chains. The Philistines hoping shortly to be delivered from the emerods and mice, wherewith they were afflicted, sent the images of them to that god from whom they expected deliverance. This is still practised among the Indians. Tavernier, (*Travels*, p. 92.) relates, that when any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, he brings the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper according to his quality; this he offers to his god, and then falls a singing, as all others do after they have offered. Mr Selden also has observed, that mice were used amongst the ancient heathen for lustration and cleansing.—*De Diis Syris, Syntag.* 1. cap. 6.

Such offerings have been made from time immemorial by the Hindoos. The women, in many parts of India, hang out offerings to their deities; either a string of beads, or a lock of hair, or some other trifling present, when a child, or any one of their family, has been recovered from illness. Among the Greeks, it was customary to devote within their temples, something more than the mere symbol of a benefit received. Inscriptions were added to such signs, setting forth the nature of the remedy that had been successful, or giving a description of the peculiar grace that had been recorded. Dr Clarke, (*Travels*, vol. iii. p. 329.) in a long note from Walpole's MS. Journal, gives many curious instances of this custom. The following are selected from it. In the island of Santerin there are some singular representations of the rock. Tomasini gives the votive figure of a man in a dropsical state. At Phocæa, in the ancient Lydia, at Eleusis, at Athens, and other parts of Greece, are to be seen holes of a square form, cut in the limestone rock, for the purpose of receiving their votive offerings. Sometimes in the offerings themselves, eyes, feet, hands, have been discovered. At Cyzicum there is a representation of two feet on marble, with an inscription, probably the vow of some person who had performed a prosperous journey. The temples of Æsculapius were adorned with tablets presented by persons restored to health. Invalids were allowed to sleep in the porticoes, to obtain directions from the gods in their dreams. The medicine itself was sometimes placed in the temples; as in the case of a goldsmith, who on his deathbed, bequeathed an ointment to a temple, which those who were unable to see the physicians might use. Such votive offerings were fixed sometimes in the rock, near the sacred precincts of a temple; sometimes appended to the walls and columns of the temples, and sometimes fastened by wax to the knees or other parts of the statues of the gods. (*Juven. Sat. x. 54. Prudent. contra Symm. b. 1. Lucian Philop.*) The temples of the Greeks were used by different states, as banks. To this circumstance was owing, in part, the vast wealth which they contained; and this was increased by the costly offerings in gold and silver presented on various occasions.—Ed.

e It was no bad policy in the Philistines to take milch kine, that had never been yoked before, to draw the cart, in order to

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towards Judea, they might conclude that these judgments were of the God of Israel's infliction, if any other way, they might look upon them only as common accidents.

When all things were thus got ready, the kine were let go; and taking the road which led to Bethshemesh, in the way to Judea, they went lowing along until they came to the field of one Joshua, and there stood still by a great stone. Bethshemesh was one of the cities belonging to the Levites, and therefore, when word was brought them of the arrival of the ark, they went and took it down, and the coffer with it; and cleaving the wood of the cart for a fire, sacrificed the two kine for a burnt-offering to the Lord. But whether out of joy or curiosity, so it was, that some of the Bethshemites adventuring to look into the ark, which was expressly against the divine command, were immediately slain to the number of seventy, which so terrified the rest, that they sent to the people of Kirjath-jearim, acquainting them that the Philistines had brought back the ark, and desiring them to come and fetch it; which accordingly they did, and placed it in the house of one Abinadab, whose son was consecrated to keep it, and there it continued for the space of twenty years.

Upon the death of Eli, Samuel succeeded to the government; and having called the people together, very probably upon the occasion of removing the ark from Bethshemesh to Kirjath-jearim, ^a he exhorted them very earnestly to renounce their idolatrous practices, and to devote themselves entirely to the worship of God, and then they need not doubt but that he would deliver them from all their enemies. This the people promised him faithfully to do: so that Samuel dismissed them for the

know whether there was the hand of God in what had befallen them. As these creatures were unacquainted with the yoke, it would be a wonder if they should go jointly together, and not thwart and draw counter to each other; it would be a wonder if their natural affection would not incline them to return to their calves, which were left behind; and it would still be a greater wonder, if, when there were so many different ways to take, they should go directly forward to Judea, without any manner of deviation. It was therefore a matter of no small sagacity for them to make this experiment. To say nothing, that it was a received opinion among the heathens, that in the motions of a heifer or cow that was never yoked, there was something ominous and declarative of the divine will. "Apollo says thou shalt in the lone field be met by an ox that has never felt the yoke, or been oppressed by the crooked harrow; with her as your guide proceed on your way."—*Ovid. Met. b. 3.*

^a The speech, which according to Josephus, Samuel makes to the people, upon this occasion, is to this effect:—"Ye men of Israel, since ye find by experience, that the malice of your enemies is implacable, and that your earnest supplications to God for relief are graciously received; you should do well to consider, that your wishing for the freedom you want will never do the business, without exerting your power to the uttermost, upon the proper means of procuring it: for to do otherwise, is but praying one way, and acting another. Wherefore, in the first place, be careful not to bring scandal upon your profession by ill manners, but turn yourselves to the love and practice of justice, without partiality or corruption. Purge your minds of all gross affections. Turn to God, call upon him, adore him, and honour him in your lives and conversations, as well as with your lips. Do good things and good will come on it, that is, liberty and victory; for these are blessings not to be obtained by force of men, strength of body, or bands of soldiers: but God, who is truth itself, has promised them, as the rewards of probity and righteousness, and you may depend upon it, he will never disappoint you."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 6. c. 2.

present, but ordered them to meet him again, within a certain time, at ^b Mizpeh.

Here they held a solemn fast and humiliation to the Lord. They wept, and prayed, confessed their sins, offered sacrifices, and ^c made libations; and Samuel took this opportunity to administer justice among them. The Philistines hearing of this their assembly, took the alarm, and coming upon them unawares, put them into no small consternation. Upon Samuel's sacrifice and intercession, however, God declared himself manifestly in favour of the Israelites: for as soon as the fight began, there was heard ^d such a dreadful peal of thunder, as struck terror and amazement into the enemy, so that they betook themselves instantly to flight, and were pursued by the Israelites as far as Bethcar. The truth is, this was so signal a victory, that for a long time the

^b The Mizpeh here mentioned, as appears from the circumstances of the story, must be different from that which is remarked in the history of Jephthah. There is indeed another Mizpeh mentioned among the cities of Judah, (Josh. xv. 38,) and a third among those of Benjamin, (Josh. xviii. 26.) Some are of opinion, that these two cities are one and the same, and are only supposed to be two, because they lie in the confines of each tribe: but if they are not the same, it seems most probable, that the Mizpeh in the tribe of Benjamin, was the city which is here spoken of. And we may observe farther, that as Mizpeh is said to be situated not far from Eben-ezer, and probably on the east or north side; so Shen (if it be the name of a place, and not rather of some sharp rock thereabouts) was situated not far from it on the opposite, that is, on the west or south-west side, to which Bethcar must needs be contiguous.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3. c. 1.

^c The words in our translation run thus:—"And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord," (1 Sam. vii. 6.) but what we are to understand by this water, the conjectures of commentators have been various. Some take these words in a metaphorical sense, to denote those tears of contrition, which were drawn as it were, from the bottom of their hearts, and fell from their eyes before the Lord. Others think, that with this water they washed their bodies, as they are supposed to have done upon another occasion, (Exod. xix. 20.) to signify the purification of their souls from the pollution of sin. Others that they made use of it to cleanse the ground where Samuel was to erect an altar, that it might not stand upon an impure place. Some suppose that it was employed as an emblem of humiliation, of prayer, of expiation, of execration, and I know not what besides. But the most probable opinion is, that this water was, upon this occasion, poured out, by way of libation, before God: and for support of this, it is commonly alleged, that libations of this kind, were very customary in ancient times; that Theophrastus, as he is cited by Porphyry, (*Of Abstinence*, b. 2.) tells us, that the earliest libations were of water, though afterwards honey and wine came into request; that Virgil, (*Æneid*, iv.) mentions the practice of sprinkling the water of the lake Avernus; and that Homer, (*Odyssey*, 12.) remarks, that for want of wine the companions of Ulysses poured out water in a sacrifice, which they offered to the gods. It is certain, that David poured out unto the Lord the water which the three gallant men in his army brought him from the well of Bethlehem, at the hazard of their lives, (2 Sam. xxiii. 16;) and therefore, though the law does not enjoin any such libations of water; yet since there is no positive prohibition of them, why may we not suppose, that upon this extraordinary occasion, something singular and extraordinary might have been done.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries*.

^d Josephus gives us this account of the whole transaction:—"In some places God shook the foundations of the earth under the feet of the Philistines, so that they could not stand without staggering: in others, it opened and swallowed them up alive, before they knew where they were; while the claps of thunder, and the flashes of fire were so violent, that their very eyes and limbs were scorched to such a degree, that they could neither see their way before them, nor handle their arms."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 6. c. 2.

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Philistines durst not appear upon the frontiers of Israel, but were forced to restore the cities which they had taken from them: so that Samuel had a good reason to set up a monument (which he did between Mizpeh and Shen, calling it 'Eben-ezer,' that is, 'the stone of help,') in memory of so great a deliverance.

After this action, the most part of Samuel's government was employed in a peaceable administration of justice.

For which purpose he took a circuit every year round a great tract of the country: but as he grew in years, he appointed his two sons Joel and Abiah to the execution of that office, who degenerating ^a from their father's example, became such mercenary and corrupt judges, that the elders of Israel came in a body to Samuel, complained of the grievances they lay under, by reason of his infirmity, and his sons' mal-administration, and thereupon demanded to have the form of their government changed, and a king instituted among them, as there was in other nations.

This demand was far from being agreeable to Samuel; however, he consulted God upon it, who gave him answer, that he should comply with the people in what they desired, notwithstanding the affront did not terminate so much upon Samuel as himself; but before they proceeded to the choice of a king, he ordered him to acquaint them with what his prerogatives were, and what rights they might expect, that he would demand from them; and withal to inform them, ^b that slavery to them and their children, subjection to the meanest offices, loss of liberty, heavy taxes, constant war, and many other inconveniences would be the consequence of a kingly power. But ^c all these remonstrances availed nothing:

^a It may probably be made a question, why God did not punish Samuel, as he did Eli, for the wickedness of his sons? But to this it may be answered, that Samuel's sons were not so bad as those of Eli; since taking bribes privately was not like openly profaning the tabernacle, and making the worship of God contemptible. And besides this, it is possible that Samuel might be ignorant of the corruption of his sons, since he lived at Ramah, and they at Beersheba.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b The rules of conduct which God prescribes to the person that should at any time be constituted king over Israel, are of a quite different sort from this practice. 'He shall not multiply horses to himself, neither shall he multiply wives to himself, neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver or gold. He shall write him a copy of the law in a book, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep all the words of this law, and those statutes, to do them, that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandments to the right hand, or to the left,' (Deut. xvii. 16.) &c. So that Samuel does not in the words before us, define what are the just rights of kings, but describes only such practices as the kings of the east, who were despotic princes, and looked upon their subjects as so many slaves, were generally accustomed to: and the prophet had reason to draw a king in those black colours, because the Israelites desired such a one as their neighbours had, who were all under the absolute dominion of their princes.—*Le Clerc's and Calnet's Commentaries*.

^c It is generally supposed, that what made the Israelites so urgent at this time for a king, was a present strait they thought themselves in, for want of an able leader: for Nahash the king of the Amorites coming up to Jabesh Gilead, and encamping before it, had put the inhabitants into such a fright, that, without more to do, they offered to surrender upon terms, telling him, that 'they would become subjects to him, if he would make a league with them.' (1 Sam. xi. 1.) But the haughty Amorite in contempt of Israel, let them know, that if he made a league with them, the condition thereof should be, 'that they should

the people persist in the desire of a king, and God tells Samuel, that he will not fail to give them one.

The appearance of providence in the election of their king was indeed very remarkable. Saul the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, was a very tall, handsome youth; and it so happening at this time, that some of his father's asses being gone astray, he, and a servant along with him, were sent to look for them. They wandered about a great way without gaining any intelligence, till coming to Ramah, the place of Samuel's residence, at his servants' instigation, he went to advise ^d with him concerning the asses. God had apprized Samuel with the coming of the person that day, who was to be appointed king; and therefore Samuel, when he saw him, showed him all the respect that was due to his former

come out to him, and let him thrust out all their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.' The elders of Jabesh, in this sad circumstance, demanded seven days' respite, that they might send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel, and if in that time no succours arrived, they would submit. This, it is thought, was the reason for their pressing so hard upon Samuel at this time a king; whereas their duty was, to have inquired of the Lord, as they had done at other times, who it was that he would be pleased to constitute the general in this exigence, to lead out their forces against their enemies.—*Howell's History* in the notes.

^d The narration of this circumstance we have in the text, 1 Sam. ix. 5—8, as follows, we quote Boothroyd's version:—"When they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his young man who was with him, come let us return, lest my father cease to think on the asses, and become anxious for us. And he said unto him, behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man; all that he saith assuredly cometh to pass: let us now go thither; perhaps he may show us the way in which we should go. Then said Saul to his young man, But, behold should we go, what shall we present to the man? for the bread which was in our bags is spent, and we have not a present to bring to the man of God; what have we? And the young man answered Saul again, and said, Behold I have in my possession the fourth part of a shekel of silver; that let us give to the man of God, that he may show us the way." Presenting gifts is one of the most universal methods of doing persons honour in the east. Maundrell (*Journey*, p. 26.) says, "Thursday, March, 11, this day we all dined at consul Hastings' house, and after dinner went to wait upon Ostan, the bassa of Tripoli, having first sent one present, as the manner is among the Turks, to procure a propitious reception. It is counted uncivil to visit in this country without an offering in hand. All gentlemen expect it as a kind tribute due to their character and authority, and look upon themselves as affronted, and indeed defrauded, when this compliment is omitted. Even in familiar visits amongst inferior people, you shall seldom have them come without bringing a flower, or an orange, or some other such token of their respect to the person visited; the Turks, in this point, keeping up the ancient oriental custom hinted, 1 Sam. ix. 7. 'If we go,' says Saul, 'what shall we bring the man of God? there is not a present,' &c.; which words are unquestionless to be understood in conformity to this eastern custom, as relating to a token of respect, and not a price of divination." To this account it may be added, that when Lord Macartney had his interview with the emperor of China, in his embassy to that prince, in 1793, the receiving and returning of presents, made a considerable part of the ceremony. Presents of some kind or other are the regular introducers of one party to another in the east. Pococke tells us of a present of fifty radishes. Bruce relates, that in order to obtain a favour from him, he received a very inconsiderable present. "I mention this trifling circumstance," he says, "to show how essential to humane and civil intercourse presents are considered to be in the east: whether it be dates or whether it be diamonds, they are so much a part of their manner, that without them, an inferior will never be at peace in his own mind, or think that he has hold of his superior for his protection. But superiors give no presents to their inferiors."—*Travels*, vol. i. p. 68.; *Forbes's Oriental Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 260.—Ed.

A. M. 2888. A. C. 1116; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4259. A. C. 1152. 1 SAM. i. TO THE END.

character. He took him with him ^a to the high place, where he was going to sacrifice; he invited him to feast with him upon the sacrifices that were to be offered; and had invited thirty guests more to bear him company. He seated him in the highest place, and distinguished him likewise by ordering the choicest dishes to be served up to him.^b That evening he had a long conference with him in private, and the next morning ^c as he was waiting on him out of town, he ordered ^d the servant to be sent before him, that he might acquaint him with God's purpose of exalting him to the regal dignity; and having ^e anointed him to be king of Israel, he foretold him

^a In several places of Scripture, the Canaanites are said to have had their high places whereon they worshipped their idols; but this is the first instance of any belonging to the people of God; and it is the opinion of some learned men, that this appointment of a private or inferior place of worship, even while the ark and tabernacle were in being, by so great an authority as that of Samuel, gave rise to the institution of synagogues and proseuchas in so many places of the kingdom afterwards.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^b 1 Sam. ix. 24. 'And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul.' The shoulder of a lamb is thought in the east a great delicacy. Abdolmelek the Caliph, (*Ockley's History of the Saracens*, vol. ii. p. 277.) upon entering into Cufah, made a splendid entertainment. 'When he was sat down, Amron the son of Hereth, an ancient Mechzumian, came in: he called him to him, and placing him by him upon his sofa, asked him what meat he liked best of all that ever he had eaten. The old Mechzumian answered, an ass's neck well seasoned and well roasted. You do nothing, says Abdolmelek: what say you to a leg or a shoulder of a sucking lamb, well roasted and covered over with butter and milk?' This sufficiently explains the reason why Samuel ordered it for the future king of Israel, as well as what that was which was upon it, the butter and milk.—*Harmer*, vol. i. p. 319.—Ed.

^c Boothroyd following the Septuagint translates, (1 Sam. ix. 25, 26,) as follows. 'They then came down from the high place unto the city, and Samuel communed with Saul on the roof of the house; for in the roof a bed had been made for Saul, in which he slept. Now when the morning dawned, Samuel called to Saul on the roof of the house, saying, Arise, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out abroad.' This makes the matter clear and satisfactory, and is in accordance with the customs of the east.

Sleeping on the top of the house has always been customary with the eastern people. "It has ever been a custom with them, equally connected with health and pleasure, to pass the night in summer upon the house tops, which for this very purpose are made flat, and divided from each other by walls. We found this way of sleeping extremely agreeable; as we thereby enjoyed the cool air, above the reach of the gnats and vapours, without any other covering than the canopy of the heavens, which unavoidably presents itself in different pleasing forms upon every interruption of rest, when silence and solitude strongly dispose the mind to contemplation."—*Wood's Balbec, Introduction*, and *Forbes's Oriental Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 234.—Ed.

^d This was with design to let Saul understand, that what he was going to do was by the divine order and appointment; and that when it should come to the casting of lots, (as it did afterwards, 1 Sam. x. 20,) he might perceive that he was not chosen king by chance of a lot. There might be likewise this further reason for Samuel's bidding Saul to send away his servant, namely, lest the people suspecting Samuel to do this by his own will, more than by God's appointment, might be inclinable to mutiny. Since this royal unction then was only designed for Saul's private satisfaction, it was necessary not to have it published before the people had proceeded to a public election of their king.—*Howell's History*, in the notes.

^e We read of no express command for the anointing of kings, and yet it is plain from the parable of Jotham, (Jud. ix. 3.) that this was a custom two hundred years before this time. Why oil, rather than any other liquid, was the symbol of conveying a regal authority, we are nowhere informed. It is true, that God directed Moses to consecrate Aaron to the high priest's

several ^f events which should befall him in his return home, in token of the truth of his designation to that office.^g

Thus Saul was appointed king; but then it was only between Samuel and himself. To make his choice and inauguration therefore more public, Samuel called an assembly of the people together at Mizpeh, to which place the ark of the Lord was brought, that they might, with more solemnity, proceed to the election of a king. The method of their electing was this:—First, the lot was cast for every tribe separately, to know out of which the king was to be chosen, and the lot fell upon that of Benjamin: next, it was cast for all the families of this tribe, and fell upon that of Matri; and lastly, it was cast for all the persons of this family, and fell upon Saul, the son of Kish, who, when he came into the assembly, for he chose to be absent at the time of the election, and had been recommended by Samuel in a short speech upon that occasion, appeared so portly, and with so much majesty, that he gained the affections and good wishes of all, except some few disorderly persons, who disapproved of the choice, and, in pure contempt, refused to ^h make him the usual presents; which Saul

office, by anointing his head with oil, (Exod. xxix. 7.) But the anointing of kings, we may presume, was of a prior date. Uction indeed, in the days of Jacob, was the common method of setting apart from common use even things inanimate, (Gen. xxviii. 18.); and therefore it may well be supposed that persons of such designation, as kings were, were all along admitted by the same ceremony, which might be of divine appointment, perhaps at the first institution of government, in the antediluvian world, and thence handed down, by a long tradition, to future generations. This rite of unction, in short, was so much the divine care, that we find God giving Moses a prescription how to make the consecrating oil, (Exod. xxx. 23.) But though Solomon was anointed with oil taken from the tabernacle, yet since Samuel was no priest, and could not therefore have any access to the tabernacle, which at this time was at some distance from him, it is more reasonable to think, though some Jewish doctors will have it otherwise, that what he made use of, upon this occasion, was no more than common oil.—*Patrick's Comment.*

^f The events which Samuel told Saul he should meet with in his return home, were these:—That near Rachel's tomb, he should meet two men, who should inform him, that his father's asses were found again; that departing thence, he would meet three men going to Bethel, one of them carrying three kids, another three cakes of bread, and the third a bottle of wine, and that they should give him two parts thereof; and that when he came to Geb, which was commonly called the hill of God, where there was a garrison of the Philistines, he should meet a company of prophets going into the city, where the Spirit of God should fall upon him, and he, to the wonder of all that should hear him, should begin a prophesy among them: all which signs happened exactly as Samuel had foretold them. (1 Sam. x. 2, &c.)

^g The text (1 Sam. x. 1.) says, 'Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?' The kiss of homage was one of the ceremonies performed at the inauguration of the kings of Israel. The Jews called it the kiss of majesty. There is probably an allusion to it in Psalm ii. 12.—Ed.

^h It was a constant custom among the eastern nations, and is even to this day, whenever they approached the prince, to present him with something; but here, in the case of Saul, at his first accession to the throne, it was the proper method of recognising him. The Chaldee paraphrase says, that "they did not come to salute him, or wish him an happy reign;" but this is the same thing, because the first salutation offered to a king was always attended with presents, which carried with them a sign of peace and friendship, of congratulation and joy, and of subjection and obedience.—*Cabnet's Commentary.*—See this subject illustrated in a preceding note.—Ed.

A. M. 2888. A. C. 1116; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4301. A. C. 1110. 1 SAM. i. TO THE END.

could not but perceive, though in point of prudence he thought proper at that time ^a to overlook.

Saul had not been many days upon the throne, before there happened a fit occasion for him to exert himself. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, laid siege to ^b Jabesh-Gilead on the other side of Jordan, and had so closely begirt it, that the people offered to capitulate; but on no better conditions would he permit them, than that each man should have ^c his right eye put out. Hereupon they sent to Gibeah to demand aid of king Saul ^d in the space of seven days, (for that was all the time allowed them;) and he, having summoned all Israel to come to their assistance upon pain of death, in a very short time had an army of 300,000 Israelites, besides 30,000 of the tribe of Judah, and with these he promised to relieve the besieged the very next day. Nor was he worse than his word: for dividing his army into three parts, and falling upon the besiegers about daybreak, he so totally routed and dispersed them, that scarce two of them were left together.

This victory, ^e and the deliverance which it procured from a barbarous and insulting enemy, raised their new

^a In this Saul acted a very wise and politic part, as being unwilling to begin his reign with any disorder or tumult, which his just resentment of such an affront might perhaps have occasioned. These sons of Belial, as they are termed, were very likely persons of some rank or quality; and therefore they despised Saul, for his having been related to a small tribe, and sprung from an obscure family. If then he had taken notice of this affront, and not revenged it, he had shown himself mean-spirited; and if he had resented it as it deserved, he might both have provoked a party against him, and at his first setting out, incurred the censure of rashness and cruelty: a prejudice, which, in the future course of his reign, would have been far from doing any good.—*Howell's History* in the notes.

^b This town lay on the east side of Jordan, and not far distant from the Ammonites who besieged it. It was in being in the times of Eusebius and St Jerome, and was situate on a hill about six miles distant from Pella, as one goes to Gerasa. It is sometimes in Scripture simply called Jabesh, and what the inhabitants thereof are further remarkable for, is—their grateful remembrance of the benefits they had received from Saul, when, after his death, having heard that the ‘Philistines had fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan, they went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons from the wall, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there, and took their bones and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days;’ for which they were highly commended by David, (2 Sam. ii. 5.)—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

^c The reason why Nahash was for having their right eye put out, was not only to bring a reproach upon Israel, as himself declares, but to disable them likewise from serving in war; for, as the manner of fighting in those days, was chiefly with bow and arrow, sword and shield, the loss of the right eye made them incapable of either; because, in combat, the left eye is covered with the shield, and in shooting with the bow, it is usual to wink with ‘t; so that depriving them of their right eye, made them useless in war: and yet this barbarous king thought it not proper to put out both their eyes: for then he would have made them utterly incapable of doing the service, or acquiring the tribute for him, which he expected from them.—*Calmel's Commentary*.

^d It may seem a little strange, that this barbarous prince should be willing to allow the Jabeshites the respite of seven days; but Josephus assigns this reason for it, namely, that he had so mean an opinion of the people, that he made no difficulty to comply with their request. Saul indeed had been appointed king, but having not as yet taken upon him the government, he lived just as he did before, in a private condition, (1 Sam. xi. 5.) So that had he, upon this notice, endeavoured to levy an army, he could not think it possible to be done in so short a space as seven days; and therefore he thought he might grant them these conditions without any danger, and without driving them to desperation as he might have done, had he denied them their request.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^e Josephus acquaints us, that Saul did not content himself

king's fame to such a degree, that some, remembering the indignities that were put upon him at his coronation, were, in the height of their zeal, for having them now punished with death; but Saul very prudently opposed the motion, and expressed his aversion to have the glories of that day, sullied with the blood of any of his subjects.

From this victory, however, Samuel took occasion to give those who had hitherto refused their allegiance, an opportunity of coming in, and recognising the king; and for that purpose ordered a general meeting at Gilgal to confirm Saul's election; which accordingly was celebrated with mirth and joy between both king and people, as well as with sacrifices and thanksgivings to God, as the author of all their successes.

Samuel was, at this time, to resign the government entirely into the hands of Saul; and therefore, in the speech which he made upon this occasion, he insisted not a little upon the vindication of his administration. He reminded them of the great transgressions which they and their forefathers committed: he set before them the blessings consequent upon their obedience, and the judgments which would certainly attend their disobedience to the laws of God: he gave them to understand, that they had been ^f far from doing an acceptable thing to God, in rejecting his government, and desiring a king; and (that they might not think that he mentioned this out of any prejudice, or indeed without a divine direction) he gave them this sign—That God would immediately send a storm of thunder and rain, which, in the ^g time of wheat harvest, as it was then, was a thing unusual; and

with barely relieving Jabesh, but carried on a war against the Ammonites, slew their king, laid waste their country, enriched his army with spoils, and brought the people safe and victorious to their homes again.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 6. c. 6.

^f That part of the speech, which Josephus introduces Samuel, as making to the people, and complaining of their importunity for a change of government, is conceived in these terms:—“What should you choose another king for, after the experience of so many signal mercies, and miraculous deliverances, while you were under God's protection, and owned him for your governor? You have forgotten the story of your forefather Jacob's coming into Egypt with only seventy men in his train, and purely for want of bread; how God provided for them, and by his blessing, how they increased and multiplied. You have forgotten the slavery and oppression they groaned under, till, upon their cries and supplications for relief, God rescued them himself, without the help of kings, by the hands of Moses and Aaron, who brought them out of Egypt into the land you are now possessed of. How can you then be so ungrateful now, after so many blessings and benefits received, as to depart from the reverence and allegiance you owe to so powerful and so merciful a protector? How often have you been delivered up into the hands of your enemies for your apostasy and disobedience, and as often afterward restored to God's favour, and your liberty, upon your humiliation and repentance? Who was it but God, that gave you victory first over the Assyrians, then over the Ammonites, and then over the Moabites, and last of all over the Philistines, not by the influence and direction of kings, but under the conduct of Jephthah and Gideon? What madness has possessed you then, to abandon an heavenly governor, for an earthly?”—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 6. c. 6.

^g It is an observation of St Jerome, that this harvest in Judea began about the end of June, or the beginning of July, in which season thunder and rain were never known, but only in the spring and autumn, the one called the former, and the other the latter rain; and therefore Samuel by this preamble, ‘Is it not wheat harvest to-day?’ (chap. xii. 17.) meant to signify the greatness of the miracle God was going to work; that he could, in an instant, and in a time when they least of all expected it, deprive them of all the comforts of life, as they justly deserved, for their rejecting him and his prophet, who was so powerful with him, as by his

A. M. 2888 A. C. 1116; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES. A. M. 4301. A. C. 1119. 1 SAM. I. TO THE END.

this, coming to pass according to his prediction, so terrified the people, that they acknowledged their offence, and entreated Samuel to intercede for them; which he not only promised them to do, but to assist them likewise with his best instructions, so long as they adhered to the observation of God's laws; but if they despised them, they were to expect to be destroyed, both they and their king.

After this victory over the Ammonites, Saul, in the second year of his reign, disbanded all his army, except 3000 men, two of which he kept for his body guard, and the other thousand were to attend his son Jonathan; who being a prince of great bravery, had taken an opportunity, and cut off a garrison of the Philistines in ^a Geba, which in effect was a declaration of war.

The Philistines, upon this occasion, raised a very powerful army, which consisted of ^b 3000 chariots, 6000 horse, and a multitude of foot, almost innumerable, and came and encamped at ^c Michmash. The Israelitish army, which was to rendezvous at Gilgal, came in but very slowly, and of those that did, several were so faint-

prayers, to produce such wonders.—*Patrick's, Calmet's, and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

^a Among the cities of Benjamin, mentioned in Joshua xviii. 24, &c., we read of Gaba, Gibeah, and Gibeon; and in Joshua xxi. 17., we read, that the two cities given to the children of Aaron, out of the tribe of Benjamin, were Gibeon and Geba; whence it is not to be doubted, but that Gaba, mentioned in chap. xviii. was the same with Geba, that we read of in chap. xxi. But then it will no ways follow, that this Geba or Gaba, is the same with Gibeah, because this Gibeah was the royal city where Saul dwelt, and is therefore expressly called 'Gibeah of Saul;' and for that reason it cannot be supposed, that the Philistines at this time had a garrison there.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

^b The words in the original, and in our translation, are, thirty thousand; but the Syriac and Arabic versions, which we have thought proper to follow, make them no more than three thousand: and indeed whoever considers, that Pharaoh king of Egypt when he had mustered all his forces together, could bring no more than 600 of these chariots into the field, and all the other princes whose equipages are related in Scripture, much fewer, must needs think it a thing incredible, that the Philistines, out of their small territories which extended no farther than the two tribes of Simeon and Dan, along the coasts of the Mediterranean sea, could ever be able to raise so vast an armament; no, nor all the nations they could possibly call to their assistance. For besides that, in the account of all armies, the cavalry is always more numerous than the chariots of war, which is different here, the largest armies that we ever read of were able to compass a very few of these chariots, in comparison of the number here specified. Mithridates, in his vast army, had but an hundred; Darius but two; and Antiochus Epiphanes, (2 Mac. xiii. 2.) but three. So that we must either say, that the transcribers made a mistake in the Hebrew copy, or with some other commentators suppose that this 30,000 chariots, were not chariots of war, but most of them carriages only, for the conveyance of the baggage belonging to such a vast multitude of men, or for the deportation of the plunder they hoped to be masters of by having conquered the country.—*Le Clerc's Commentary, and Universal History.*

^c Eusebius and St Jerome inform us, that in their time, there was a large town of this name, lying about nine miles from Jerusalem, near Ramah: and the text tells that it was eastward from Beth-aven. Now Beth-aven which signifies 'the house of iniquity,' is supposed to be the same with Bethel, and was so called after that Jeroboam the son of Nebat had set up his golden calves to be worshipped here; but as Bethel lay to the east of Michmash, and not Michmash to the east of Bethel, as the text seems to say, the translation should be, that they encamped at Michmash, having Beth-aven on the east, that is, they seized on that post which Saul had before in Michmash, on Mount Bethel, ver. 2.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

hearted, as to hide themselves in the rocks and caves; and others, thinking themselves never safe enough, retired even beyond the Jordan. The truth is, that both prince and people were sadly intimidated, because Samuel, whose company at this juncture was impatiently expected, was not yet come; so that the king, fearing that the enemy would fall upon him before he had made his addresses to God for success, ordered sacrifices to be made; and the burnt-offering was just finished, when news was brought him that Samuel was arrived.

Samuel had told him beforehand, that by the expiration of seven days, he would not fail to meet him at Gilgal; and therefore, being offended at his diffidence and impatience, he not only sharply rebuked him, but declared likewise that God, by this way of proceeding, would in time be provoked to remove the kingdom from him and his posterity, and give it to another that better deserved it; and so having left Gilgal, he went to Gibeah, whither Saul and his son Jonathan followed him, with a small army of about 6000, and these so badly provided for action, that they had no manner of weapons, but what they could make out of their working tools, because the Philistines would not, at that time, ^d permit so much as a smith to live among them.

^d The precaution which the Philistines took to hinder the Israelites from providing themselves with weapons is no more than what other conquerors have done to the nations they have vanquished. Porsenna, when he made peace with the Romans, restrained them from the use of all iron but what was necessary in the tillage of their ground. Cyrus, when he subdued the Lydians, for fear of a revolt, took from them the use of arms, and instead of a laborious life spent in war, suffered them to sink into softness and luxury, so that they soon lost their ancient valour; and (to instance in one prince more) Nebuchadnezzar, when he had made himself master of Judea, took along with him into 'Babylon all the craftsmen and smiths, that the poorest of the people, which he left behind, might be in no condition to rebel,' (2 Kings xxiv. 14.) The only wonder is, why the Israelites, after they had regained their liberty, under the government of Samuel, and given the Philistines so total an overthrow at Eben-ezer, did not restore those artificers, and so provide themselves with proper arms against the next occasion? But besides the extreme sloth and negligence which appears in the Israelites' whole conduct during this period, it was not so easy a matter, in so short a time, to recover a trade that was lost; especially among a people that had no iron mines, and were so wholly addicted to the feeding of cattle, that they made no account of any mechanical art. In the famous victory which they gained over Sisera, we are told, that 'there was not a shield or spear seen among fifty thousand men of Israel,' (Judges v. 8.) but notwithstanding this, they had bows and arrows, and slings which the men of Gibeah could manage to a wonderful advantage' (Judg. xx. 16.) And besides these, the Israelites, upon this occasion, might convert their instruments of husbandry, their hatchets, their spades, their forks, their mattocks, &c., into instruments of war; a much better shift than what we read of some, who, in ancient times, had no other arms than clubs and sharpened stakes, hardened in the fire. 'The rural contest is not now carried on with hard clubs and stakes burned at the point.'—*Virgil, Æneid. 7.* [The policy of the Philistines has been imitated in modern times. Mulei Ismael went farther towards a total reduction of these parts of Africa than his predecessors had done. Indeed the vigorous Mulei Rashid, his brother and predecessor, laid the foundation of that absoluteness; but was cut off in the height of his vigour, his horse running away with him in so violent a manner, that he dashed out his brains against a tree. But this sheriff brought multitudes of sturdy Arabs and Africans, who used to be courted by the kings of Morocco, Fez, &c., to such a pass, that it was as much as all their lives were worth to have any weapon in a whole village or community, more than one knife, and that without a point, wherewith to cut the throat of any sheep or other creature, when in danger of dying, lest it should die with the

A. M. 2888. A. C. 1116; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4301, A. C. 1110. 1 SAM. i. TO THE END.

While the Philistine army lay at Michmash, they sent out parties several ways to ravage the country, and met with no manner of opposition; till Jonathan, accompanied with ^a his armour-bearer only, found means to ascend a steep rock where the enemy least of all expected an invasion, and so falling upon them unawares, in a short time killed about twenty of them; which put the rest ^b into such a consternation, that mistrusting friends for foes, they began to slaughter and destroy one another, Saul had soon intelligence of this disorder in the enemies' camp, and therefore, willing to make the most of such an opportunity, he got together what forces he could, and fell upon the Philistines with such fury, that he totally routed and defeated them.

In the heat of the chase, he caused a proclamation to be made, that upon pain of death, none should dare to eat any thing until it was night, that the slaughter of the enemy might not be retarded. But herein he defeated his own purpose; for the people, for want of refreshment, grew faint in the pursuit, so that the enemy escaped into their own country: and what was another grievous consequence of this interdict, his son Jonathan, who had been absent when the proclamation was made, had like to have fallen a sacrifice to his father's rash vow, ^c merely for eating a little honey, when he was

blood in it, and become unlawful for food."—*Morgan's History of Algiers*, p. 196.—Ed.

^a This action of Jonathan's, considered in itself, was doubtless a very rash attempt, and contrary to the laws of war, which prohibit all under command as he was, from engaging the enemy, or entering upon any enterprise, without the general's order; but what may very justly be said in excuse of it is, that he had a divine incitation to it, which he might probably feel upon the sight of the Philistines appearing as if they intended to assault Gibeah, and upon the information which he might receive of the great spoil which the three parties made of the poor people in the country.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b How two men could put the whole army into such a consternation, may seem somewhat extraordinary; but it should be considered, that Jonathan and his armour-bearer, climbing up a way that was never attempted before, might come upon them unawares, and surprise them: that this action might happen, as Josephus thinks, early in the morning, when a great part of the Philistines' army was asleep; that even, had they been all awake, Jonathan might have so posted himself, as Horatius Cocles did on a bridge, so as to be able to maintain his pass against all the force of the enemy; that those who made at him, as only one perhaps could at a time, he with one stroke might lay flat on the ground, and his armour-bearer immediately despatch them; that the rest, seeing them act thus intrepidly, might take them for two scouts, or van-couriers only of a great army that was coming up, and ready to fall upon them; that the army of the Philistines, being made up of different nations, might be in the greater confusion, as either not understanding or else suspecting one another; and what might complete their consternation, that God at this time might send a panic fear upon them, which, whenever he does it, even in the opinion of heathens themselves, is enough to make the stoutest tremble, and the most heroic spirits betake themselves to flight. "In frantic dread even the children of the gods (valiant heroes) fly away."—*Pindar*, Nemea 9.

^c When Saul told his son Jonathan, that for eating this honey, contrary to his interdict, he should surely die, 'because the reverence which he had for his vow, was more to him than all the kindred and tenderness of nature,' Josephus introduces the son making his father an answer, not unlike that which Jephthah's daughter, upon a like occasion, returned to him: "That death, says he, shall be welcome to me, which acquits my father of the obligation of a religious vow, and only befalls me, in consequence of so glorious a victory to him that gave me being. I have lived long enough, since I have lived to see the pride and insolence of the Philistines brought down by the Hebrews, which will serve me for a consolation in all my sufferings." And the historian

ready to die with hunger, had not the people interposed, and pleaded the merit of that young prince, to whom the honour of the day was chiefly owing.

After this victory, Saul ruled the kingdom with an higher hand, and repulsed his enemies wherever they assailed him. He had indeed a very large and flourishing family. Abinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz, was his wife; Jonathan, Ishui, and Melchishua, were his sons; Michal and Merab his daughters; Abner his cousin-german, was general of his forces; and as himself was a warlike prince, God made choice of him to put in execution a sentence, ¹ which, for many years before, he had decreed against the Amalekites, for their opposing the Israelites in their passage out of the land of Egypt.

His commission was utterly to destroy the Amalekites, men, women, and children, and to leave not so much as one creature of any kind alive; but instead of executing this according to the letter of the precept, ^d he saved Agag their king, and the best of their cattle alive; and when Samuel came to expostulate the matter with him, his pretence was, that what he had spared was, in pure respect to God, in order to have them offered to him in sacrifice. But Samuel, who knew very well that this reserve was made out of a principle of avarice more than devotion, first laid before him the iniquity of his conduct, and then declared to him God's immoveable purpose of alienating the kingdom from his family; which made so deep an impression upon him, that he acknowledged his fault, entreated the prophet, who was going abruptly to leave him, to stay, and make intercession for him, and so far to honour him before the

¹ See Exod. xvii. 8, &c. and Deut. xxv. 17, &c.

tells us farther, that the whole multitude was so charmed with the piety and bravery of the young man, that in ecstasy of tenderness and compassion, they took him away out of the hands of his incensed father, with an oath, "that they would not suffer an hair of that person's head to be touched, who had been so instrumental in a victory that tended to the preservation of them all."—*Antiquities*, b. 6. c. 7.

^d Josephus seems to hint, that Saul saved this Amalekite king alive, because he was taken with the comeliness and majesty of his person; but others rather think that he intended him to decorate his triumph. For when it is said of Saul, that he came to Carmel after his victory, and 'set him up a place,' (1 Sam. xv. 12.) the word *Jab*, they say, will signify an arch, as well as any thing else; and thence they conclude, that Saul's purpose was to erect a triumphal arch, in memory of his defeat of the Amalekites; and that he kept their king alive to be led captive in that magnificent procession, wherein he was to make a display of his victory.—*Calmet's Commentary*. ["In this place the LXX. read a hand, probably because the trophy or monument of victory, was made in the shape of a large hand, the emblem of power, erected on a pillar. These memorial pillars were much in use anciently, and the figure of a hand was by its emblematical meaning well adapted to preserve the remembrance of a victory."—Niebuhr, (*Voyage en Arabie*, tom. ii. p. 211. *French Edition*) speaking of Ali's mosque at Mesched-Ali, says, that "at the top of the dome, where one generally sees on the Turkish mosques a crescent, or only a pole, there is here a hand stretched out, to represent that of Ali." Another writer informs us that at the Alhambra, or red palace of the Moorish kings, in Grenada, "on the key-stone of the outward arch (of the present principal entrance) is sculptured the figure of an arm, the symbol of strength and dominion."—*Annual Register for 1779*, *Antiquities*, p. 124.] To this day, in the East Indies, the picture of a hand is the emblem of power or authority. When the Nabob of Arcot, who was governor of five provinces, appeared on public occasions, several small flags with each a hand painted upon them, and one of a large size with five hands, were solemnly carried before him.]—Ed.

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people, from whom he apprehended a revolt, as to join with him in worship to God, which Samuel consented to do: but before he departed, he ordered Agag, who by this time began to hope for mercy, to be brought forth to him, and himself, with his own hands, fell upon him, and slew him.

This was the last interview which Samuel had with Saul: for, after this action, he retired to his house at Ramah, where, though he visited Saul no more, he ceased not to lament the sad condition into which he was fallen. It was not long, however, before God awoke him out of his pensive mood, and sent him to Bethlehem, under colour of sacrificing there, to anoint David, the son of Jesse, king and successor to Saul. Jesse had eight sons, and when Samuel came to his house, seven of them were brought before him, Eliab, the eldest, was a goodly personage, and him the prophet supposed, at first sight, to have been the person whom God had pitched upon to succeed Saul; but being instructed otherwise, and upon inquiry, finding that Jesse had another son, who at that time was in the fields keeping the sheep, he ordered him to be sent for; and as he was a very fair and beautiful youth, immediately upon his entering the room, he perceived that he was the person whom God had made choice of; and accordingly he took an opportunity, and ^a singling him out from the rest of his brethren, poured oil on his head, and anointed him king. Nor was the ceremony useless; for from that time forward David found himself inwardly possessed with a spirit of wisdom, and prudence, and courage, and other qualifications both of body and mind that are requisite in a prince. ^b

Saul, in the mean time, declined more and more in the favour of God; and as he was naturally of a timorous and suspicious temper, an unhappy turn of mind grew

^a Our translation says, that 'Samuel anointed him in the midst of his brethren,' and for this it is pretended, that as this unction was a solemn act, and the only title which David had to the kingdom, it was necessary to have it done in the presence of some witnesses, for which purpose none were more proper than those of his own family. But it is plain, from his brother Eliab's treating him after this, (1 Sam. xvii. 28.) that he was not privy to his being anointed king-elect over God's people; and therefore, since the words will equally bear the sense of 'from the midst,' as well as 'in the midst of his brethren,' it is more reasonable to suppose, that as this was the ceremony of his designation to the kingdom only, few or none except his father perhaps, were admitted to it. And there was the less reason for witnesses upon this occasion, because David never laid claim to the crown till after Saul's decease, and was then, at two several times, first, when he was made king over the tribe of Judah, and second, when made king over all the tribes of Israel, anointed publicly. —*Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Howell's History*, in the notes.

^b They who credit the scripture history in this affair, will easily account for these extraordinary accomplishments and improvements; for that assures us, 'that the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward,' (1 Sam. xvi. 13.) and I should be glad to learn from those who do not credit this circumstance of the history, in the strict sense of the text, how otherwise they can account for these extraordinary effects and endowments which immediately ensued on David's designation to the throne; how a designation to empire, I say, which, in its ordinary course, is too apt to corrupt, debase, and overset with vanity, should raise an obscure youth, uneducated, and little accounted of, even in the esteem of a parent's partiality, in an obscure age and country, without the advantage either of instruction or example, into the greatest musician, the noblest poet, and the most consummate hero of all antiquity. —*The Life of David, by the Author of Revelation Examined.*

upon him, and settled at last in a confirmed melancholy, but such an one as was frequently attended with violent perturbations, and sometimes with direct frenzy. In this condition, some of his courtiers advised him to music, which would be of some use to lull his disturbed mind to rest; and accordingly recommended David, not only as an excellent master this way, but a man of other rare qualifications, both internal and external, enough to engage his favour.

Upon this recommendation he was sent for to court, ^c where Saul was greatly taken with the beauty of his person; but when he heard him exercise his skill upon the harp, he was pleased above measure, and quite transported from all uneasy and melancholy thoughts. ^d Saul, in short, conceived such a kindness for David for having cured him of his malady, that he made him one of his armour-bearers, though David, when he found the king better, returned to his father's house again. ^e

The Philistines not long before had received a remarkable defeat from Saul; but having now recruited their forces, they came and encamped between ^f Succoth and Azekah, while Saul, with his army, took ground upon the hill that is above the valley of Elah, which separated the two camps. While the armies lay thus facing each other a champion named Goliath, of a prodigious gigantic stature, ^g being full ten feet high, with arms

^c 1 Sam. vi. 17. This command of Saul might originate in a desire to obtain such a person as might by his skill in playing equally contribute to his gratification and state. It seems to have formed a part of royal eastern magnificence, to have had men of this description about the court. "Professed storytellers," it may also be observed, "are of early date in the east. Even at this day men of rank have generally one or more, male or female, amongst their attendants, who amuse them and their women, when melancholy, vexed, or indisposed; and they are generally employed to lull them to sleep. Many of their tales are highly amusing, especially those of Persian origin, or such as have been written on their model. They were thought so dangerous by Mahommed, that he expressly prohibited them in the Koran." —*Richardson's Dissertation on the Manners of the East*, p. 69. and *Forbes's Oriental Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 182.—Ed.

^d 1 Sam. xvi. 23. The power of music upon the affections is very great. Its effect upon Saul was no more than it has produced in many other instances. Timotheus the musician could excite Alexander the Great to arms by the Phrygian sound, and allay his fury with another tune, and excite him to merriment. So Eric, king of Denmark, by a certain musician, could be driven to such a fury as to kill some of his best and most trusty servants.—*Is. Vossius de Poematum cantu et rythmī viribus.* —Ed.

^e It seems very doubtful whether this was the case. The text in this part is confused and unsatisfactory, see note on this subject in the following chapter.—Ed.

^f Succoth and Azekah lay to the south of Jerusalem, and the east of Bethlehem, about four leagues from the former, and five from the latter; and the ancient valley of Elah must consequently lie not far distant from them, though later travellers place it at no more than a league's distance from Jerusalem.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^g The words in the text are, 'whose height was six cubits and a span;' so that taking a cubit to be twenty inches and a half, and a span to be three inches, and a little more, the whole will amount to about twelve feet and an half: a stature above as tall again as usual! The lowest computation of the cubit however brings it to near ten feet, which is the standard that we have set it at; though it must not be dissembled, that both the Septuagint and Josephus have reduced it to little more than eight feet, which badly comports with the weight and vastness of his armour, though it might suit their design perhaps, in accommodating their account to the credibility of their heathen readers. But be that as it will, several authors, to show this vast size of the man not to be beyond the bounds of probability, have written,

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and armour proportionable, came out of the camp of the Philistines for forty days successively, and challenged any one of the Israelites to a single combat. ^a This single combat was to decide the fate of the war: but none of the Israelites durst adventure upon it, until David, who happened at this time to come to the camp, ^b with provisions for his three elder brethren, that were then in the service, seeing this great gigantic creature thus vaunt himself, and hearing withal what reward the king had promised to the person that should kill him, namely, that he ^c would give him his daughter in marriage and ennoble his family, was moved by a divine impulse to accept of the challenge, which he some ways discovered to the standers by. His eldest brother, Eliab,

ex professo de gigantibus, among whom Hermannus Conringius, in his book *de antiquo statu Holmstadii*, and in another *de habitis corporum Germanorum*, have demonstrated, that the ancient Germans were of a vast size, even as Cæsar, *de bello Gall.* testifies of them, by calling them 'men of a huge greatness of body.' Nay, even Josephus himself, who is quoted for denying the existence of giants, furnishes us with an argument in their behalf, when he gives us an account of some bones of a prodigious size which were found in Hebron; as Acosta, in his *History of the Indies*, (b. 1. c. 10.) makes mention of bones of an incredible bigness, and of a race of giants of such an height, that an ordinary man could scarce reach their knees.—*Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentary*, *Calmel's Dictionary*, under the word *Goliath*; and *Dissertation of the giants*.

^a The words in which Goliath's challenge is expressed, are these: 'Why are you come out to set your battle in array? Am I not a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me: if he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then ye shall be our servants, and serve us.' (1 Sam. xvii. 8.) Antiquity furnishes us with examples of several such like combats as Goliath here proposes, but with none more remarkable than that between the Horatii and Curiatii, related by Livy, b. 1. c. 23. "In which case," as Grotius expresses himself, (*On the Law of War and Peace*, b. 2. c. 23.) "though the champions perhaps cannot, with all the innocence imaginable, engage in the combat, yet their respective states may, at least allow of it, as a less evil; as an expedient whereby a decision is made, without the effusion of much blood, or any considerable loss on either side, which of the two nations shall have the dominion over the other." "Strabo," says he, "makes mention of this as an ancient custom among the Greeks; and Æneas appeals to the Latins, whether it is not highly just and equitable, that he and Turnus should determine the controversy between them even in this manner." But whether there was any combat stipulated to be decisive of the quarrel between the two contending nations, it is certain that this speech of Goliath's was a mere bravado, proceeding from a high opinion he had of his own matchless strength, as if he had been the whole support of the nation, which was to stand or fall together with him. For that he had no authority from the princes of the Philistines to make any such declaration, is evident from the event; since so far were the Philistines from yielding themselves slaves to the Hebrews, upon the death of this champion, that they made the best of their way into their own country, and there defended themselves, and fought many battles with them afterwards.—*Saurin's Dissertation*, vol. 4. Dis. 32. and *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

^b In those days it was customary for men to serve their king and country in the wars at their own expense; and therefore, Jesse sent a supply of provisions to such of his sons as were in the service: but since he had other sons at home, while David was chiefly in the fields, it seems to be a divine direction that he sent him from the sheep upon this errand.

^c This was no bad policy in Saul to promise largely upon so important an occasion, forasmuch as Caleb won Kirjath-sepher, by offering his daughter in marriage to the person that should take it. And David himself, when he came to the crown, encouraged his soldiers to assault the strong fort of Zion, by promising to make him commander-in-chief of all his forces who should first enter it.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

hearing such words drop from him, took him, and reproved him for his rashness; but, as his declaration, by this time, had reached the king's ears, the king sent for him, and having surveyed his youth, told him with concern, that he feared he would never be able to encounter a man that was so much older and stronger, and a soldier from his cradle. ^d But to this David replied, that he had already done as great things as killing this giant could possibly be; that he had slain a lion and a bear with his bare hands; and therefore did not doubt, but that the same almighty power which delivered him then, would not fail to shield and protect him now.

Saul was not a little pleased with this gallant answer; and, to equip him as well as he could for the combat, offered him his own armour: but when David had put it on, he found it too large and cumbersome; and therefore, taking only his staff, a sling, and ^e five smooth stones, which he picked out of the brook that ran by, he advanced towards the Philistine, who, perceiving him to be but a youth, and of a fair effeminate complexion, took the thing as done in contempt and derision of him; and therefore he cursed him by his gods, Dagon and Ashtaroth, and vowed to cut him in pieces, the very moment he came at him. But David's reply was of another kind, namely, that he came against him, not in any confidence of his own strength, but in the name of that God whose name he had blasphemed, and power defied. ^f And with these words he let fly a stone at him, with such force and direction, that it hit him on his forehead, and ^g piercing his brain, sunk into it, so that he fell flat on

^d Josephus introduces David as reasoning with the king in this manner: "David perceiving," says he, "that Saul took his measures from the common reason of other encounters, gave the king to understand, That this was not so much a challenge to the army, as a defiance to Heaven itself; neither was the combat to be taken, in truth, for a trial of skill between Goliath and David, but between Goliath and the Lord of hosts. 'For it is not my arm,' says he, 'that fights the battle, but the power of a gracious and invincible God, that many times brings to pass, even by the weakest instruments, the noblest of his divine purposes, for his greater glory.'"—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 6. c. 10.

^e Smooth stones, one would think, part best from the sling, and, as they meet with the least obstruction from the air, fly with the greatest rapidity, and in the most direct line; and yet Ludovicus de Dieu, is of a quite contrary opinion, namely, that rough and sharp stones were proper for David's purpose; whereupon he translates the words 'five pieces of stone,' as the Hebrew indeed, without its punctuation, will bear. But it is in vain to be nice and elaborate about trifles, since of what form soever the stone which penetrated Goliath's forehead was, it is plain, that it had both the direction and rapidity of its motion from the hand of God.

^f 1 Sam. xvii. 45. The decision of national controversies by the duels of the chiefs, was frequent in ancient times. That between the Horatii and Curiatii is well known: and even before that, Romulus and Aruns, king of the Ceninenses, ended their national quarrel by the like method; Romulus killing his adversary, taking his capital, and dedicating the spoils to Jupiter Feretrius.—*Val. Max.*, b. viii. c. 2. s. 3. *Chandler's Life of David*, vol. 1. p. 70, note.—Ed.

^g If it should be asked how this possibly could be, when Goliath was armed so completely, and in particular, is said to have had an 'helmet of brass upon his head?' It is but supposing that this arrogant champion, in disdain of his inferior combatant, might come negligently towards him, with his helmet turned back, and his forehead bare. It is highly probable, that when he made his menacing speech to David, he might turn back his helmet, both to speak and be heard more distinctly; and there was no such terror in David's appearance, as might induce him to cover his forehead again. But admitting he did not, it is but

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his face, and David ran up to him, and with the giant's sword cut off his head; ^a at the sight of which the Philistines' army fled, and were pursued by the Hebrews as far as the gates of Ekron with a very great slaughter.

When Saul saw David marching against the Philistines, he inquired of Abner, who he was? which Abner could not resolve him; but upon his return from victory, introduced him to the king, with the champion's head in his hand. The king received him with the highest applauses; and upon his inquiry, David informed him, that he was the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite. Every one entertained indeed a high conception for the author of so great an action, but none expressed so entire a satisfaction as did Jonathan, ^b who, being himself a prince of extraordinary bravery, was so taken with his courage and conduct in this engagement that he ^c

supposing that David levelled his stone so right, as to hit the place which was left open for his adversary's eyes, or threw it with such a violent force, as would penetrate both helmet and head together. To make these suppositions more probable, we need only remember what we read in Judges xx. 16, of no less than *seven hundred men* in one place, who were so expert with their left hands, that every one could sling stones to a hair-breadth, and not miss; or what we read in Diodorus Siculus, b. 5., of some slingers, who threw stones with such violence that nothing could resist their impression; and that when they made use of lead instead of stone, the very lead would melt in the air as it flew, by reason of the rapidity of the motion which they gave it.—(*Patrick's and Calnet's Commentaries*).—^d "The arms which the Achæans chiefly used were slings. They were trained to the art from their infancy, by slinging from a great distance at a circular mark of a moderate circumference. By long practice they took so nice an aim, that they were sure to hit their enemies not only on the head, but on any part of the face they chose. Their slings were of a different kind from the Bælearians, whom they far surpassed in dexterity."—*Polybius*, p. 125.—Ed.

^a 1 Sam. xvii. 51. Niebuhr presents us with a very similar scene in his Description of Arabia, p. 263, where the son of an Arab chief kills his father's enemy and rival, and according to the custom of the Arabs, cuts off his head, and carries it in triumph to his father. In a note he adds, cutting off the head of a slain enemy, and carrying it in triumph, is an ancient custom. Xenophon remarks that it was practised by the Chalybes, (b. iv.) Herodotus attributes it to the Scythians, (b. iv. c. 60).—Ed.

^b The text says, (1 Sam. xviii. 3, 4) 'Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow, and to his girdle.' It was anciently a custom to make such military presents as these to brave adventurers. Besides the present instance of the kind, two others may be quoted: the first is from Homer.

"Next him Ulysses took a shining sword,
A bow and quiver, with bright arrows stored;
A well proved casque, with leather braes bound,
(Thy gift, Meriones,) his temples crown'd."

Il. x. 397. Pope.

The other is from Virgil, in the story of Nisus and Euryalus.

"Nor did his eye less longingly behold
The girdle belt, with nails of burnish'd gold;
This present Cadiceus the rich bestow'd
On Romulus, when friendship first they vow'd,
And absent, join'd in hospitable ties:
He dying, to his heir bequeath'd the prize;
Till by his coug'ring Ardean troops oppress'd,
He fell, and they the glorious gift possessed."—*Æn.* b. 9.—Ed.

^c Plutarch, in his book On Intense Friendship, makes mention of several great men such as Theseus and Pirithous; Achilles and Patroclus; Orestes and Pylades; Pythias and Damon, &c., who were joined together in the yoke of friendship, as he calls it: but none of these were comparable to what we read of Jonathan and David, who entered into the most sacred bonds of mutual

contracted the tenderest and most endearing friendship with him, which lasted as long as they two lived together; but in their return home from this expedition, one thing happened which occasioned Saul's jealousy. Among the crowds that came out to meet them, and to grace their triumph, there was a chorus of women, ^d who sung to the musical instruments upon which they played, a certain song, whose chief burden was, 'Saul has slain his thousands, and ^e David his ten thousands;' which so enraged Saul against David, that from that time he never looked on him with a gracious eye. For though he thought proper to retain him in his service, and, for the present, conferred upon him some command in the army; yet the reward for his killing Goliath, which was to be the marriage of his eldest daughter, ^f he deprived him of by giving her to another.

When Saul returned to his own house, the same spirit of melancholy came upon him as before; and while David was touching his harp before him as usual, in order to alleviate his malady, the outrageous king threw a javelin at him with such fury, as would certainly have destroyed him, had not providence turned it aside. Hereupon David thought proper to withdraw; yet Saul would still continue him in his service, to have the more opportunities against his life.

It happened, too, that by this time his second daughter, whose name was Michal, had entertained kind thoughts of David, which her father was not unconscious of; and therefore he signified to him, that upon condition he would kill him an hundred Philistines, (but not without some hopes of himself falling in the attempt,) he should have the honour to become the king's son-in-law. David accepted the condition, though he could not but perceive the latent malice of it; and taking some choice men along with him, invaded the Philistines, slew double the number of them, and for a testimony thereof, ^g sent their

assistance and defence, to their very death, and of kindness to their posterity, even after either of them should be dead. Jonathan, in particular, through the whole story, shows towards David such a greatness of soul, such a constancy of mind, and disinterestedness of heart, as few romances can produce examples of.—*Calnet's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

^d 1 Sam. xviii. 6. The dancing and playing on instruments of music before persons of distinction, when they pass near the dwelling places of such as are engaged in country business, still continues in the east. This was practised by some persons in compliment to the Baron Du Tott. He says, (*Memoirs*, part 4. p. 131), "I took care to cover my escort with my small troop of Europeans, and we continued to march on in this order, which had no very hostile appearance, when we perceived a motion in the enemy's camp, from which several of the Turcomen advanced to meet us: and I soon had the musicians of the different hordes playing and dancing before me, all the time we were passing by the side of their camp."—*Harmer*, vol. 3. p. 292.—Ed.

^e Namely, in his killing Goliath; for all the conquest gained afterwards was no more than the consequence of his death.

^f This was a high affront to David, and one of the greatest injuries that could be done him; however, for the present, he thought proper to dissemble it. How Jonathan resented this usage, we are nowhere told. It is likely, that his duty to his father made him prevail with David to take it patiently, as coming from a man who was sometimes beside himself, and knew not well what he did: and that David might be the more inclinable to do this, as having some intimations given him of the good esteem which the second daughter began to entertain of him.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^g The reason why Saul exacted the foreskins of David was, to prevent all cheat or collusion in the matter, and that he might

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foreskins, according to covenant, to the king; so that, all things being thus gallantly accomplished, and in so public a manner, the king could not refuse him his daughter, but at the same time laid many other schemes to take away his life.

Nay, to such desperate lengths did his jealousy run him, that he, casting off all disguise, ^a commanded his son Jonathan, and some of the principal men of his court, at any rate to despatch David; which Jonathan all along took care to acquaint him with, and at the same time, advised him to provide himself with some place of safe retreat, until he should have an opportunity of ^b expostulating the matter with his father; which accordingly he did, and with so good success, that his father was, seemingly at least, reconciled to David; and Jonathan next day introduced him into his presence: but the increase of David's fame, upon several defeats given the Philistines, still renewing and increasing Saul's jealousy, would not suffer this reconciliation to last long. Saul was taken with another fit of phrenzy, and David was desired to play to him: but while he was employed in tuning his harp, the other took an opportunity, as he had done before, of darting a javelin at him, which David, having a watchful eye upon him, nimbly declined, and so retired to his own house.

he sure they were Philistines only whom he killed. Had he demanded the heads only of so many men, David he might think, might perhaps cut off those of his own subjects, and bring them instead of the Philistines; but now, the Philistines being the only neighbouring people who were uncircumcised, (for the Arabians, as descended from Ishmael, and all the other nations which sprung from Esau, were circumcised, as well as the Hebrews,) in producing their foreskins there could be no deception. Besides that, this would be a gross insult upon the Philistines in general, to whom Saul was desirous to make David as odious as possible, that, at one time or other, he might fall into their hands.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^a It is strange, that Saul should speak to Jonathan to murder David, if he knew the friendship he had for him; and he could not be ignorant of it, since, in 1 Sam. xviii. 3, 4., he had made so public a declaration of it. But he imagined, perhaps, that his love to a father would overcome his love to a friend; and, taking an estimate from himself, might think it no mean incitement to his son, that David was going to deprive not only the father of the present possession, but the son likewise of the right of succession to the throne of Israel. But whatever Saul's reasons might be for desiring Jonathan's assistance in so vile a fact, it is plain that there was a peculiar providence of God in his disclosing himself so freely on this head, since thereby David came to a right information of his danger.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b The speech which Josephus puts in Jonathan's mouth upon this occasion, is expressed in these terms:—"You have conceived, Sir, a terrible displeasure against this young man, and given orders for his death; but upon what provocation, or for what fault, great or little, I cannot apprehend. He is a person to whom we stand indebted for our safety, and the destruction of the Philistines; for vindicating the honour of our nation from the scandal of a forty days' affront, in the challenge of a giant, whom not a creature, but this innocent youth, had a heart to encounter; a person who purchased my sister for his wife at your own price; and, in fine, a person entitled to your esteem and tenderness, both as a brave man, and a member of your own family. Be pleased to consider, then, what injury you do your own daughter, in making her feel the mortification of being a widow, before she enjoys the blessing of being a mother. Be pleased to remember who it was that cured you of your dark melancholic fits, and by that means laid an obligation upon the whole family; and who it was that, next under God, delivered us from our implacable enemies. These, Sir, are benefits never to be forgotten, without the infamy of the blackest ingratitude."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 6. c. 13.

Thither the king sent his guards, as soon as it was light, to apprehend him; but by the contrivance of his wife Michal, who let him down from a window, he made his escape, and by the benefit of a dark night, came to his old friend Samuel at Ramah, to whom he told all his complaints, and with whom, for the better security of his person, he went to Najoh, which was ^c a school or college of the prophets, and there dwelt.

It was not long before Saul had intelligence of his abode, and ^d sent a party of soldiers to apprehend him; but they, upon their arrival at the place, where they found Samuel teaching and instructing the younger prophets, were seized with a prophetic spirit, and returned not again. After these, he sent fresh messengers, and after them others again; but no sooner were they come within the verge of the place, but they all began to be affected in like manner. Saul at length, impatient of these delays, went himself; but as he drew near to Najoh, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, so that he went along ^e prophesying, until he came to the place where Samuel and David were, and there ^f stripping

^c When these schools of the prophets were at first instituted is nowhere indicated in Scripture: but, as the first mention we find of them is in Samuel's time, we can hardly suppose, that they were much prior to it. It may be presumed, therefore, that the sad degeneracy of the priesthood, at first occasioned the institution of these places, for the better education of those that were to succeed in the sacred ministry, whether as prophets or priests. According to the places that are specified in Scripture, (1 Sam. x. 5, 10, and xix. 20; 2 Kings ii. 5., iv. 38. and xxii. 14.) they were first erected in the cities of the Levites, which, for the more convenient instruction of the people, were dispersed up and down in the several tribes of Israel. In these places the prophets had convenient colleges built, whereof Najoh seems to be one, for their abode; and living in communities, had some one of distinguished note, very probably by divine election, set over them to be their head or president. Here it was, that they studied the law, and learned to expound the several precepts of it. Here it was, that, by previous exercise, they qualified themselves for the reception of the spirit of prophecy, whenever it should please God to send it upon them. Here it was, that they were instructed in the sacred art of psalmody, or, as the Scripture calls it, (1 Chron. xxv. 1, 7.) in 'prophesying with harps, with psalteries, and cymbals.' And hence it was, that when any blessings were to be promised, judgments denounced, or extraordinary events predicted, the messengers were generally chosen: so that these colleges were seminaries of divine knowledge, and nurseries of that race of prophets which succeeded from Samuel to the time of Malachi.—*Stillfleet's Orig. Sacrae; Wheatly on the Schools of the Prophets; and Jacob Abting, de Repub. Heb.*

^d Such was Saul's implacable hatred to David, that it had abolished, not only all respect and reverence to Samuel, under whose protection David then was, but all regard likewise to the college of the prophets, which in those days had obtained the privilege of a sanctuary.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Grotius on the Law of War and Peace*, b. 3. c. 11.

^e This is a word of an extensive signification, and may denote sometimes such actions, motions, and distortions, as prophets, in their inspiration, are wont to express "Things dubious, while led on in an inspired course; for when the spirit is present in the heart, man becomes frantic;" (*Sen. in Medea*;) which, perhaps, may be very justly applied to Saul upon this occasion. But the generality of interpreters, in this place, take 'prophesying' to signify Saul's singing of psalms, or hymns of thanksgiving and praise, which even against his will he was compelled to do, to teach him the vanity of his designs against David, and that in them he fought against God himself.—*Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Sam. xviii. 10; and *Poole's Annotations* on xix. 23.

^f The words in our translation are, 'And he stripped off his clothes also, and lay down naked, all that day, and all that night.' (1 Sam. xix. 24.) In which words, and some other portions of the like import, we are not to imagine that the persons there

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himself of his upper garments, he lay, as it were in an ecstasy, almost naked on the ground, all that day and the next night.

David took this opportunity to make a private visit to his friend Jonathan, with whom he expostulated his father's unkindness, which the other could no ways excuse, only he assured him of his best ^a offices; that he would make what discovery he could of his father's designs against him, and not fail to acquaint him with them. In the mean time he renewed the league of friendship that was between them, and directed him where to conceal himself for a day or two, until he could learn, whether it was proper for him to appear or no; which he was to signify to him by his shooting some arrows, in such a manner as they concluded on, and so mutually embracing, they parted.

^b The feast of the new-moon was now come, which

spoken of were entirely naked, but only that they were divested of some external habit or other, which, upon certain occasions, they might lay aside. For, whereas it is said of some prophets, (Is. xx. 2. and Mic. i. 8.) that they went about naked, we can hardly think that they could be guilty of so much indecency, and especially by the express order of God, who had always testified his abhorrence of nudity, and enjoined his priests the use of several garments to cover the body, that thus they might be distinguished from the pagan priests, who were not ashamed to appear naked. The words in the original, therefore, which we render 'naked,' or 'to be naked,' signify no more, than either to have part of the body uncovered, or to be without a gown or upper garment, which the Romans called *toga*, and, according to the custom of the eastern people, was wont to be put on when they went abroad, or made any public appearance. And therefore it was some such vestment as this, or perhaps his military accoutrements, which Saul, upon this occasion, put off; and that this was enough to denominate him naked, is manifest from what Aurelius Victor, speaking of those who were sent to Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, to bring him to the senate to be made dictator, says, that they found him naked, ploughing on the other side of Tiber; whereas Livy, who relates the same story, observes that he called to his wife Ruca for his gown, or *toga*, that he might appear fit to keep them company.—*Essay towards a New Translation.*

^a The speech which Josephus puts in Jonathan's mouth, upon this occasion is very tender and pathetic:—"That God, who fills and governs the universe, and knows the thoughts of my heart in the very conception of them; that God," says he, "be witness to the faith that is vowed and promised betwixt us; that I will never give over searching into, and sifting the private deliberations and purposes of my father, till I have discovered the bottom of his heart, and whether there be any secret rancour in his thoughts, or not, that may work to your prejudice. And if I shall be able to make any thing out at last, whether it be for or against you, it shall be the first thing I do to give you information of it. The Searcher of hearts will bear me witness that this is true, and that I have ever made it my earnest prayer to Almighty God, to bless and prosper you in your person and designs, and you may assure yourself, that he will be as gracious to you for the future, as he has been hitherto, and lay all your enemies at your feet. In the mean while, pray, be sure to keep these things in memory, and when I am gone, to take care of my poor children.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 6. c. 14.

^b The Jewish months were lunar, and never began before the moon appeared above the horizon; for which purpose there were certain persons placed upon the mountains, some time before the new-moon was expected, to give notice by the sound of an horn, when it first appeared, that so the news thereof might immediately be carried to Jerusalem. But lest there should be any mistake in this method of making their observation, from this example of Saul's, it is supposed, that they celebrated this festival for two days together. Whether the heathens had this rite from the Jews or not, it is certain, that other nations had feasts at the beginning of every month, and that, with the Romans, the calends in particular were festival days, consecrated

Saul returned from Natioth to celebrate; but as he observed that ^c David's seat at the table had for two days been empty, he inquired of Jonathan ^d what was become of the son of Jesse, as he called him in contempt. Jonathan told him that he had given him leave to go to an anniversary feast of his family at Bethlehem; whereupon Saul, suspecting very probably the reality of his answer, fell into a passion with his son, and upbraided him with his friendship for David, which, as he told him, would prove fatal to himself, and injurious to his succession; and therefore he commanded him to produce him; for resolved he was, that this rival of theirs should die. Jonathan was going to interpose something in vindication of his friend, and the unreasonableness of his father's indignation against him, which provoked his father to such a degree, that, forgetting all ties of paternal love, ^e he threw a javelin at him with an intent to kill him. ^f

to Juno, to whom sacrifices, at this time, were offered.—*Calmet's Commentary*. 1 Sam. xx. 5. "[As soon as the new-moon was either consecrated or appointed to be observed, notice was given by the Sanhedrim to the rest of the nation, what day had been fixed for the new-moon, or first day of the month, because that was to be the rule and measure, according to which they were obliged to keep their feasts and fasts in every month respectively. This notice was given to them in time of peace, by firing beacons set up for that purpose, (which was looked upon as the readiest way of communication,) but in time of war, when all places were full of enemies, who made use of beacons to amuse our nation with, it was thought fit to discontinue it, and to delegate some men on purpose to go and signify it to as many as they possibly could reach, before the time commanded for the observation of the feast or fast was expired."—*Levis' Rites and Ceremonies of the Jews*, p. 25.—ED.

^c That sitting at table was an ancient custom than either lying or leaning at meat, is obvious from this passage. The Egyptians, when they ate at Joseph's entertainment, sat at table, and so did the Hebrews. Homer always introduces his heroes in this posture; and that this was the known custom among the ancient people of Italy, Virgil, in these words, testifies: "Our ancestors were always accustomed to sit at their meals."—*Æneid*. 7. It is not to be dissembled, however, that very early, and even in the times of Saul, the use of table beds, or beds to lie or lean upon at meals, had obtained among the Jews, for when the witch of Endor, with much entreaty, prevailed with Saul to take a little refreshment, it is said, that 'he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed,' 1 Sam. xxviii. 23.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d It may seem a little strange, that Saul, who had so often endeavoured to kill David, and was now just returned from an expedition undertaken against his life, should ever expect to see him at his table any more. But he might think, perhaps, that David was inclinable to overlook all that had passed, as the effect of his frenzy and melancholy; that now he had been prophesying at Natioth, he was returned to a sound mind, and become a new man; and that, because after the first javelin darted at him, David had ventured into his presence again, he might, for the future, be guilty of the like indiscretion.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^e If it be asked, how it came to pass that Saul always had a javelin or spear in readiness as on this and other occasions, to execute his evil purposes? The answer is, that spears were the sceptres of those ages, which kings always carried in their hands. That they always carried the sceptres in their hands appears from Homer, and that these sceptres were spears is evident from Justin, (b. 23. c. 3.) where speaking of the first age of the Romans, which Dr Patrick thinks was about the age of Saul, he tells us that as yet, in these times, kings had spears as ensigns of royalty, which the Greeks called sceptres.—*The Life of David*, by the Author of *Revelation Examined*.

^f 1 Sam. xx. 30. 'Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman.' In the east, when they are angry with a person, they abuse and vilify his parents. Saul thought of nothing but venting his anger against Jonathan, nor had any design to reproach his wife personally: the mention of her was only a vehicle by which, according to oriental modes, he was to convey his resentment

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But he avoided the blow, and retired; and the next morning went into the fields, under pretence of shooting with his bow and arrows, to give David the signal. To him he communicated all that had passed between his father and him; that his father was implacable, and determined to destroy him, and therefore he advised him to escape for his life: and so, having made new protestations to each other of perpetual friendship, they embraced and parted.

Ever after this David was banished from court, and lived in the nature of an outlaw. The first place that he betook himself to was ^a Nob, where stood the tabernacle at that time, and where ^b Ahimelech was high priest; but as he had no attendants, he pretended to

against Jonathan into the minds of those about him. (*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 492.) An instance of the prevalence of the same principle in Africa, which induced Saul thus to express himself to Jonathan, occurs in the travels of Mungo Park. Maternal affection is everywhere conspicuous among the Africans, and creates a correspondent return of tenderness in the child. Strike me, said my attendant, but do not curse my mother. The same sentiment, I found universally to prevail, and observed in all parts of Africa, that the greatest affront which could be offered to a negro, was to reflect on her who gave him birth."—*Travels*, p. 264.

^a There is mention made of two cities of this name, one on the east, or further side, and the other on the west or hither side of Jordan. The generality of interpreters will have the city here specified to be that which stood on the west side, and in the tribe of Benjamin. Though it is not reckoned among the number of the cities that were at first assigned to the priests, yet that it afterwards became one of the sacerdotal towns, and especially as we may imagine, when the tabernacle came to be moved thither, is evident from 1 Sam. xxii. 19. and Neh. xi. 32. and some suppose it stood about four leagues from Gibeah.—*Calmet's Commentary*; and *Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

^b The words of our blessed Saviour, in Mark ii. 25. are these, 'Have you never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he and they that were with him, how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him?' Now there are two things which the author of this book of Samuel asserts, quite contrary to what our Saviour declares, namely, 1st, That 'David was alone, and no man with him,' ch. xxxi. 1. and 2dly, that Ahimelech was at that time high priest; whereas our Saviour affirms, both that David had company along with him, and that Abiathar was then in the pontificate. Now, 1st, that David had company with him, and that Ahimelech knew it, is evident from his words in the fourth verse: 'There is no common bread in my hand, but there is hallowed bread, if the young men have kept themselves at least from women;' and therefore Ahimelech's meaning must be, that David had no guards to attend him, as it was usual for persons of his quality to have; or at least those that were with him might be ordered to keep at a distance, and so Ahimelech when he uttered these words, might not see them, though, when he came into a closer conference with David, David might inform him, what retinue he had brought, and consequently that all the show-bread was no more than what they wanted for their present support. 2dly, Though it be granted that the name of high priest, in its strictest sense, did not at this time belong to Abiathar, yet since it is generally agreed, that he was the *sagan*, as the Jews of latter days call him, who is the high priest's vicar, he might well enough, in a qualified sense, be called the high priest; especially considering his immediate succession to his father, and how short his father's continuance in the office was, after this interview with David. Nor can we see any great impropriety in saying, that such a thing was done 'in the days of Abiathar the high priest, though done somewhat before he was invested with that dignity, any more than in saying, that such things happened in the days of Henry VIII., which strictly came to pass some days before he began to reign.'—*Patrick's Commentary*.

Ahimelech, that he was sent by the king upon ^c a business of such despatch that he had time neither to take arms nor provision with him; and therefore obtained of the high priest ^d Goliath's sword, which had been deposited in the tabernacle, and some of the show-bread, which the day before had been taken off from the golden table, and with these he proceeded to Gath, as not thinking himself safe in any part of Saul's dominions.

He had not been long in Gath, however, before he was discovered, and the king informed of his being that great man of war in Israel, who had so often defeated and destroyed the Philistines; so that, to get clear of this information, he was forced to counterfeit madness, ^e and an epilepsy, which he did so artfully, that by this means he evaded the suspicion of the king, and made his escape to ^f Adullam, a town in the tribe of Judah, where his brethren and relations, together with many malcontents, and men of desperate fortunes, met him, and made up a little army of about 400 in number. ^g

^c It must be owned, that David, in this pretence, did not speak direct truth, nor are we from hence to take an example for speaking lies; but one thing may be said in his excuse, that as he saw Doeg there, who he knew would inform Saul of what had passed between him and Ahimelech, his pretence of business was on purpose to furnish the high priest, if he were called to an account, with a better apology for his reception of David, since he knew no other, but that he came express from the king: and accordingly we may observe, that Ahimelech insists on that chiefly. It is a melancholy consideration, however, that the wickedness of the world should be such, as to put even excellent men sometimes on the necessity of lying to preserve their lives, which cannot be safe without it.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d It was an ancient custom not only among the Jews, but the heathens likewise, to hang up the arms that were taken from their enemies in their temples; and in conformity thereunto, the sword wherewith he cut off Goliath's head David dedicated to the Lord, and delivered to the priest, to be kept as a monument of his victory, and of the Israelites' deliverance. And as it was customary to hang up arms in the temples, so when the occasions of the state required it, it was no unusual thing to take them down, and employ them in the public service; from whence came that saying of Senera, "Even temples are sometimes stripped bare for the sake of the state."—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^e David is not the only instance of this kind. Among the easterns, Baihasus the Arabian, surnamed Naama, had several of his brethren killed, whose death he wanted to revenge. In order to it he feigned himself mad, till at length he found an opportunity of executing his intended revenge, by killing all who had a share in the murder of his brethren. Among the Greeks, Ulysses is said to have counterfeited madness, to prevent his going to the Trojan war. Solon also, the great Athenian law-giver, practised the same deceit, and by appearing in the dress and with the air of a madman, and singing a song to the Athenians, carried his point, and got the law repealed that prohibited, under the penalty of death, any application to the people for the recovery of Salamis.—*Plut. Vit. Solon*. p. 82; *Chandler's Life of David*, vol. i. p. 102. note.

^f It was a town in the tribe of Judah, of some considerable note in the days of Eusebius, and about ten miles from Eleutheropolis eastward, where there was a rock of the same name, in which was a cave, naturally strong and well fortified, to which David retreated; as indeed most of the mountains of Palestine were full of caverns, whither the country people generally betook themselves for safety in time of war.—*Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries*; *Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

^g It appears to have been usual in ancient times for such persons as are described in this passage, to devote themselves to the perpetual service of some great man. The Gauls in particular are remarkable for this practice. The common people, who are generally oppressed with debt, heavy tributes, or the exactions of their superiors, make themselves vassals to the great, who exercise over them the same jurisdiction as masters do over

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After his family had thus joined him, he could not but be apprehensive that the wrath of Saul would fall upon his aged parents, and therefore his next care was to provide them with a safe retreat; which he did by putting both himself and them under the protection of the king of Moab, who was then at enmity with Saul. And with his parents he thus continued, until the prophet Gad, who attended him, advised him to leave Moab, and to return into the land of Judah; which accordingly he did, and took up his station in the ^a forest of Hareth, where Abiathar the priest came to him, and upon this sad occasion, brought along with him all the pontifical ornaments.

During David's short stay at Nob, Doeg the king's principal herdsman, was there, and upon his return to court, gave Saul information of all that had passed between the high priest Ahimelech, and David. Hereupon Saul sent for Ahimelech, and the rest of the priests, and having accused them of a conspiracy, and traitorous practices against him, ^b notwithstanding all the high priest could say in vindication of himself and his brethren, he commanded them to be put to death. His guards, who stood by, and heard Ahimelech's defence, ^c would not undertake so barbarous an office; but Doeg,

who had been their accuser, at the king's command, became their executioner, and with his sacrilegious hand, slew no less than ^d eighty-five of them. Nor did Saul's bloody resentment stop here: ^e for, sending a party to Nob, he commanded them to kill man, woman, and child, and even every living creature; so that of all the children of Ahimelech, none escaped but Abiathar, as we said before, who came to David, and told him the dismal tidings of this massacre, which David could not but sadly condole, and in some measure look upon himself as the innocent occasion of it. However he gave Abiathar assurances of his protection, that he should share the same fate with him; and that, with his own life, he would shield him from all danger.

While Saul was embroiling his hands in the innocent blood of his subjects, David was employing his arms in the necessary defence of his country; for, hearing that the Philistines had made an incursion upon Keilah, a city of Judah, ^f he went and relieved the place, repulsed the enemy with a great loss of men, and took from them a considerable booty of cattle. Saul had soon intelligence of this action; and supposing that David would now fortify himself in this stronghold, he sent an army to invest it: but David having consulted the divine oracle upon this emergency, found that the inhabitants of the place would prove perfidious to him, and therefore he left them, and retired into a wood in the ^g deserts of Ziph, whither Saul, for want of intelligence, could not

slaves.—*Cæsar's Commentaries of his Wars in Gaul*, b. vi. c. 13.—Ed.

^a Both St Jerome and Eusebius make mention of a place of this name in the tribe of Judah, lying westward of Jerusalem; of which Rabbi Solomon, upon the credit of some ancient tradition, says, that being before dry, barren, and impassable, upon David's coming, it became fruitful and irriguous, and that, in the 23d psalm, where he considers God as his shepherd, who would lead him into fruitful pastures, and under his protection, keep him safe in the most dangerous scenes, he alludes to this: 'He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth by the waters of comfort:' for surely it is impossible but that this, which was before a barren desert, might now, by a singular blessing from God upon the industry of David and his companions, become a green and well-watered pasture.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.; and the *History of David*, by the author of *Revelation Examined*.

^b The speech which Josephus draws up for the high priest upon this occasion is directed to Saul, and conceived in these words: "I did not receive David as your majesty's enemy, but as the faithfullest of your friends and officers, and, what is more, in the quality of your son too, and a relation in so tender a degree of affinity and alliance. For how should any body imagine that man to be your enemy, upon whom you have conferred so many honours? Or why should not I rather presume such a person, without any further inquiry, to be your singular friend? He told me, that he was sent in haste by yourself, upon earnest business; and if I had not supplied him with what he wanted, it would have reflected an indignity upon yourself, rather than upon him. Wherefore, I hope, that the blame will not fall upon me, even though David should be found as culpable as you suspect him; unless an act of pure commission and humanity, abstracted from the least thought, knowledge, or imagination of any evil intention, shall be understood to make me privy to a conspiracy: for the service I did him, was matter of respect to the king's son-in-law, and the king's military officer, not to the person or interest of David."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 6. c. 14.

^c In this they were to be commended: but much more praise they would have deserved, if they had offered up their petitions for these innocent people; if they had remonstrated to the king, that he was going to commit a thing that was contrary to all laws both divine and human; and if, when they saw that neither their reasons nor petitions availed, they had looked upon this order as the effect of one of the king's distracted fits, and accordingly seized and secured him, until the priests had made their escape, and he returned to a better mind. For to stand wringing their hands, while they saw so many innocent creatures murdered, and foreign soldiers made the instruments of the king's cruelty,

was much the same thing as to betray all divine and human rights, merely to please a tyrant.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*. See *Josephus's Jewish Antiq.*, b. 6. c. 14., who has, upon this occasion, a curious descendant about the use of power in kings, when at once from a low, they come to be exalted to a high station in life.

^d The Septuagint, as well as the Syrian version, makes the number of priests slain by Doeg to be 305, and Josephus 385, which is a large variation from the Hebrew text.—*Millar's History of the Church*.

^e This party, as Josephus informs us, was commanded by Doeg, the vile informer and murderer, who taking some men as wicked as himself to his assistance slew in all 385 persons, and in addition to these, it is thought by some, that the Gibeonites, (upon whose account there was so sore a famine in the days of David) who might now be at Nob, in attendance upon the priests, were at this time slain. It is certain, Saul was now become a mere tyrant, and against those poor people acted more cruelly than he did against the Amalekites, some of whom he spared, even contrary to God's command; but in this case he let none escape, on purpose to deter others from giving the least shelter or assistance to David, and to incite them the rather to come and give him information wherever his haunts or lurking places were.—*Josephus' Antiq.*, b. 6. c. 14.

^f We read of no embassy, that the people of Keilah sent to David, to desire his assistance, nor of any particular affection they had for him; and therefore we may suppose, that David undertook this expedition out of pure love to his countrymen, to let the world see, how serviceable he could be to them, in case he was restored to his dignity again, and that, what ill treatment sower he should meet with from the hand of Saul, nothing should provoke him to abandon his love for his country.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^g In Josh. xv. 55. we read of a town of this name where mention is likewise made of Carmel, and Maon, and therefore it probably was adjacent to them. And here, in the story of David, we find Carmel and Maon mentioned as adjoining to Ziph; so that it is not to be doubted but that by the Ziph in the wilderness, where David now concealed himself, we are to understand the Ziph which was in the neighbourhood of Carmel and Maon, in the southern part of the tribe of Judah, and, according to St Jerome, about eight miles eastward from Hebron.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

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pursue him; but his son Jonathan, having private notice sent him, went to him, and gave him all the comfort and encouragement that he could; assuring him, that his father's malice would never reach him; that he still hoped to see him king of Israel, and himself his second; and with these words, confirming the covenant of friendship between them, they embraced and parted.

The people of the wilderness were very officious in sending Saul intelligence where David was, and, if he would supply them with a sufficient force, undertook to betray him into his hands; but David having taken notice of their intended treachery, retired farther into the desert of Maon, whither Saul pursued him, and pressed him so close, that there was but a valley between the two armies. David's army was so very small, that Saul was thinking of encompassing the mountain, where he encamped, in order to prevent his escape, when news was brought him that the Philistines had invaded the country on the other side, so that he was forced to drop his private resentment for the public weal, and divert his arms another way: but as soon as the Philistines were repulsed, he with 3000 choice men, renewed his pursuit of David, who by this time was retired into the strongholds of *a* Engedi.

As Saul was on his march, he happened to turn into a cave by the way-side, where David and some of his men lay hid. His men, when they saw the king entering alone, thought it a lucky opportunity that providence had put in their hands, and accordingly instigated David to dispatch him. But David rejected the offer with abhorrence: *b* 'God forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed;' and only, to show Saul how much he was in his power, went softly, and *c* cut off the skirt of his robe. When Saul was gone out of the cave, David called to him at a distance, and showing him the skirt of his raiment, declared his innocence in such tender terms, and with such submissive behaviour, that he made the king's heart relent. So that with the

utmost compunction, he acknowledged his guilt in thus persecuting the just; and from the many escapes which God had vouchsafed David, concluding assuredly that he was to succeed in the kingdom, he conjured him, by all that was sacred, *d* not to destroy his family; and having obtained this promise, he returned home: but David, *e* not daring to trust to his fair word, still kept himself close in the fastnesses of the hills.

Much about this time *f* the prophet Samuel died, and was buried at Ramah, the place of his habitation, in great solemnity, and *g* with the general lamentation of

d But how did David absolve his promise, or keep his oath with Saul, when in 2 Sam. xxi. 8. he slew so many of his sons? The reply that is usually made to this, is,—That this promise or oath of David's could never be absolute or unconditional, because, upon supposition that any of Saul's family had become rebellious they had nevertheless been obnoxious to the sword of justice; that though David could bind himself with his oath, yet he could not bind God, to whose will and pleasure all private obligations must be submitted; and what is more, that this execution was not done by David's order, but at the desire of the Gibeonites, to whom God had promised that satisfaction should be made for Saul's bloody endeavours to destroy them.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

e It is an old saying, and a wise one, 'remember not to be too credulous;' and the advice of the son of Sirach is this, 'Never trust thine enemy; though he humble himself, yet take good heed, and beware of him.'—*Eccles. xii. 10, 11*.

f The Jews are of opinion, that Samuel died only four months before Saul. But by the generality of Christian chronologers, he is supposed to have died about two years before the death of that prince, and in the ninety-eighth year of his age, twenty of which had been spent in the government of Israel, (though Sir John Marsham will have it no more than sixteen,) before Saul's inauguration, after which he lived about eighteen. He was indeed, while he lived, an excellent governor, and through his whole administration above vanity, corruption, or any private views. Those that attend to his life may observe, that he was modest without meanness, mild without weakness, firm without obstinacy, and severe without harshness; or as the author of Ecclesiasticus has recorded his actions, and consecrated this eulogy to his memory.—'Samuel the prophet of the Lord, says he, beloved of the Lord, established a kingdom, and anointed princes over his people. By the law of the Lord he judged the congregation, and the Lord had respect unto Jacob. By his faithfulness he was found a true prophet, and by his word he was known to be faithful in vision. He called upon the mighty God when his enemies pressed upon him on every side, when he offered the sucking lamb; and the Lord thundered from heaven, and with a great noise made his voice to be heard. He destroyed the rulers of the Syrians, and all the princes of the Philistines. Before his long sleep, he made protestations in the sight of the Lord, and his anointed, and after his death he prophesied and showed the king his end.'—*Eccles. xli. 13, &c.* But besides the things that are recorded of this prophet in the first book of Samuel, there are some other passages concerning him in the first book of Chronicles; as, that he enriched the tabernacle with several spoils which he took from the enemies of Israel during his administration, ch. xxv. 23. That he assisted in regulating the distribution of the Levites, which David afterwards prescribed for the service of the temple, ch. ix. 22. And, lastly, That he wrote the history of David, in conjunction with the prophets Nathan and Gad. But as he was dead before David came to the throne, this can be meant only of the beginning of that history, which by the other two prophets might be continued and concluded. There is great probability, indeed, that he composed the twenty-four first chapters of the first book of Samuel, which contain the beginning of David's life, and several historical facts wherein he himself had a large share; but as for the latter part of it, it was impossible for him to write it, because, in the beginning of the 25th chapter, there is mention made of his death.

g When they saw the disorders of Saul's reign, they had great reason to lament their loss of Samuel, and their sin in rejecting so great a prophet, and so good a magistrate.—*Millar's History of the Church*.

a Engedi (now called Anguedi) in the days of St Jerome, was a large village, situated in the deserts, which lay upon the western coasts of the Salt or Dead Sea, not very far from the plains of Jericho: and as the country thereabouts abounded with mountains, and these mountains had plenty of vast caves in them, it was a very commodious place for David to retire to, and conceal himself in. Eusebius makes it famous for excellent balm, and Solomon, in his Song, for vineyards, which, in all probability, were planted by his father, during his retirement in this place; and therefore so peculiarly celebrated by the son.—*Cabmet's Commentary*; *Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.; and *The History of King David*, by the Author of *Revelation Examined*.

b This one example of David's, under all the provocations he had received from Saul, abundantly shows us, that the persons of kings are sacred and inviolable. "The authority of powerful kings are for their own flocks, that of Jove is over kings themselves,"—*Hor. Od.*

c If it be asked, how David could do this without Saul's perceiving it? The answer might be, that this possibly might be some upper loose garments, which Saul might put off, and lay aside at some distance from him upon this occasion; and that as there were several rooms, or particular cells, in these large caverns, which might have secret passages from one to another, Saul, at the mouth of one of these cells, might lay down his upper garment, which David perceiving, and knowing all the passages of the place, might go some secret way, and cut off some small part of it. Nor could the noise which David's motion might make be well heard by Saul, because it must have been drowned by a much greater noise which Saul's army, waiting for him at the mouth of the cave, may be supposed to make.—*Poole's Annotations*.

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the people : during which time, David took the opportunity to remove from En-gedi, and to retire farther into the wilderness of Paran, not far from Maon, where he had been once before.

In the neighbourhood of this place, there lived a wealthy man, whose name was Nabal, but himself was of a surly and morose disposition. While David abode in this wilderness the time before, he had taken great care to restrain his men from doing any injury to Nabal's flocks, and now in the time of his sheep-shearing, (which in these countries was always a season of great festivity and entertainment,) he sent messengers to him, that in consideration of the many civilities he had shown him, he would be pleased to send some provisions for the support of his army. But Nabal received the messengers very rudely, and with some opprobrious reflections upon David himself, sent them away empty, which so exasperated David, that in the heat of his resentment, he vowed to destroy all Nabal's family before next morning, and with this resolution he set forward. But Abigail, Nabal's wife, who was a very beautiful woman, and in temper the very reverse of her husband, being informed by her servant of what had passed, took this expedient to divert his ire.

She ordered her servants immediately to pack up two hundred loaves of bread, ^a two bottles of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched corn, an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs ; and with this present she made haste to meet David. David was marching with all speed, to put in execution his rash vow ; but Abigail when she met him, approached him with that respect, and addressed him ^b in such moving language, that she soon disarmed him of his rage, and stopped the effects of his indignation ; so that they both parted with mutual satisfaction ; he, for being thus prevented from shedding of blood, and she, for having thus happily succeeded in her embassy.

When she got home, she found her husband rioting and drinking ; so that she deferred telling him of what had passed until he was a little soberer the next morning. But when he came to understand the danger he had

^a It must be obvious to every reader, that two bottles of wine would bear no proportion to the other parts of the present, nor answer the exigencies which David's army might be in, if they be understood of such bottles as are now commonly in use with us : but in these eastern countries, they used to carry and keep their wine and water in leathern bags, made on purpose to hold liquid things, which vessels they called, or at least we translate, *bottles*. Such were the bottles which the Gibeonites brought to Joshua's camp, which they said were worn out, and torn in their pretended long journey, Josh. ix. 13. And of such as those it is not unlikely, that our Saviour speaks, Mat. ix. 17. where, in the marginal note of our old Bible, bottles are explained by bags of leather, or skins, borachios, wherein wine was carried on asses or camels ; and that two such vessels as these might hold a quantity of wine proportionate to the rest of the present, which Abigail carried with her, needs not to be disputed.—*Howell's History*, in the notes.

^b The speech which the sacred historian puts in Abigail's mouth, upon this occasion, is certainly an artful piece of eloquence, full of fine turns and insinuations ; nor is that of Josephus, especially in the conclusion, much amiss :—' Be pleased, Sir, I beseech you, to accept of the good will of your poor servant in these small presents, and upon my humble request, to pass over the offence of my husband, who has so justly incurred your displeasure ; for there is nothing so well becoming the character of a person, whom providence designs for a crown, as clemency and compassion.'—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 6. c. 14.

been in, he was so terrified at the thoughts of it, that ^c he turned quite stupid, and in the space of ten days died : whereupon David sent for his wife and married her, as he did likewise another woman, whose name was Ahinoam, a Jezreelite ; for his first wife, who was Saul's daughter, by her father's command, ^d was at this time given to another.

The Ziphites, as we said before, were always forward to give Saul information where David and his men were concealed ; and therefore, understanding from them, that he was somewhere about the mountain Hachilah, ^e he took 3000 men, and went in quest of him. David had intelligence where Saul's army lay encamped ; and therefore, going first of all privately himself, to reconnoitre it, he ^f took with him at night his nephew Abishai, and entering the camp, found Saul and Abner, and all the rest of the host fast asleep, Abishai, would have gladly made use of this opportunity to despatch the king, but David would by no means permit him, for the same reasons that he had saved his life in the cave ; only the ^g spear, and cruise of water, that were at his bed's

^c The words in the original are, 'he became a stone ;' but our translation has wisely supplied the particle *as*, which should always be done, when the Scripture affirms something of another that is not absolutely of the same nature. We may observe however, that this manner of expression is very common among profane authors. Thus Ovid brings in Ariadne expressing her griefs and astonishment at the loss of Theseus, who had left her in the island Dia : "Cold and wan I sat on a rock, gazing on the sea, and as much as the stone was my seat so much was I myself a stone."—The like expression is used of Hecuba, when she saw the dead body of her son Polydorus : "Like the hard stone she stood dumb and torpid." But in the case of Niobe, who is said to be turned into a statue of stone, Cicero, in his Tusculan Questions, observes, that this fable only represents her perpetual silence in mourning : and accordingly Josephus tells us of Nabal, that when his wife told him of the danger he had escaped, he was struck with such an astonishment, that he fell into a dead numbness all over his body, of which he soon died.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Dis. de statua salis*.

^d The reason of Saul's putting this indignity upon David, was to extinguish as far as he could, all relation and kindred, and to cut off his hopes and pretences to the crown upon that account : but as the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that this Phalti, to whom she was given, was a very pious man, and would never approach her, because she was another man's wife, and as David had never been divorced from her, he received her again, when he came to the throne.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Calmel's Commentary*.

^e The inconstancy, falseness, and implacable rage of this prince is really inconceivable. Not long ago, he was obliged to David for his life, and acknowledged his error, and made David swear that he would be kind and merciful to his posterity ; and yet now he openly declares himself again his enemy, and goes in pursuit of him to kill him.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^f This may seem a bold and strange attempt for two persons to go into the midst of an army of 3000 chosen men ; but in answer to this, many things may be considered : as that, according to the accounts of many credible historians, several gallant men have attempted things of no less danger and difficulty than this was ; that David had all along assurance given him, that God would preserve him in all dangers to succeed in the kingdom ; and that at this time, he might have a particular impulse and incitement from God to go upon this enterprise, and might possibly be informed by him, that he had cast them into a deep sleep, that he might give him this second opportunity of manifesting to Saul his innocence, and the justness of his cause. Not to say, that as secrecy, at this time, was the great point, David might think himself safer, in this respect, with one single companion, than with more.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *The Life of King David*.

^g That it was customary for warriors, when they laid them down to rest, to have their arms placed in order by them, is evi-

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head, ^a he bid him bring with him, that he might show the king how much his life had been at his mercy: and accordingly when they had got at a convenient distance, David, with a loud voice, called unto Abner, and, in an ^b ironical manner, upbraided him with this neglect of preserving the king's life, since his spear, and the cruise of water that were so near his bed's head, were so easily taken from him: and when Saul, upon hearing his voice, came out of the camp, and spake to him, he expostulated with him, much in the same manner as he did after his escape from the cave, with this additional complaint, that by thus expelling him from his own country, he forced him to converse with infidels, and, as much as in him lay, to embrace their religion. Whereupon Saul, accusing himself of cruelty, and applauding David's generosity, confessed his guilt, and promised, for the future, never to make any further attempts upon his life.

But notwithstanding these specious declarations, David, who knew the instability of Saul's temper, and how impossible it was for him to live in safety, while he continued in his dominions, determined at last to go over to the Philistines; and having obtained from ^c Achish,

dent from what Silius Italicus tells us of Mago, Hannibal's brother. "He, following the warlike custom of his forefathers, lay resting his wearied limbs on a bull's hide, and in sleep forgot the heavy cares of life; not far from the hero was his sword fixed in the earth, and on its hilt was suspended his tremendous helmet, while around him on the ground his shield and coat of mail and spear, and bow, and sling, lay huddled together."—B. vii. But long before Silius, Homer describes the Thracians sleeping in this manner in their tents: "The toil-worn heroes slept and near them their beautiful armour hung in graceful order," &c.—*Il.* x.

^a 1 Sam. xxvi. 7. A description very similar to this is given by Homer of Diomed sleeping in his arms with his soldiers about him, and spears sticking upright in the earth.

Without his tent bold Diomed they found,
All sheath'd in arms, his brave companions round;
Each sunk in sleep, extended on the field,
His head reclining on his heavy shield;
A wood of spears stood by, that fixed upright,
Shot from their flashing points a quivering light.

Iliad, iii. 89.—Pope.—Ed.

^b This speech, which David makes to Abner, according to Josephus, is to this effect. 'Are not you a fit man to be a prince's favourite, a general of his army, to take upon you the guard of his royal person, and under all these honourable obligations, to lie dozing, and stretching yourself at ease, when your master's life is in danger? Can you tell me, what is become of the king's lance, and the pitcher of water, that were this night taken by the enemy out of his tent, and from his very bedside, and you, in the mean time, all snoring about him, without knowing any thing of the matter? Whether this was neglect or treachery, it is the same thing; you certainly deserve to lose your head for it.'—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 6. c. 14.

^c Whether this was the same Achish, mentioned 1 Sam. xxi. 10, with whom David took shelter at his first flight from Saul, or some successor of the same name, is a matter of some conjecture: His being called 'Achish, the son of Maach,' seems to imply that he was a different person; because, in the nature of things, these words can have no use, but only to distinguish this Achish from another of the same name. But whoever it was, it is highly probable, that he either had invited David to come thither for his security, or that David had sent beforehand ambassadors to treat with him, and to obtain his royal promise of protection. And this we are rather induced to believe, because both found their advantage by this alliance: David secured himself against the persecutions of Saul; and Achish, knowing David's valour, and the number of troops which came along with him, thought he should give a powerful diversion to the forces of Israel, if he could at this time attach David to his

king of Gath, a safe-conduct for himself and his retinue, he, for some time, lived in the royal city; but not liking his accommodation here so well, as he grew in favour with the king ever more and more, he obtained of him at last to have the ^d town of Ziklag assigned for his habitation, and, as soon as he was settled here, several of Saul's best officers and soldiers came over to him. David at first had some suspicion of them; but having, for some time, made trial of their fidelity, he received them into his service, and gave them commands: and with this accession to his army he was enabled to make several excursions against the ^e Amalekites, and other nations, in which he was accustomed to kill all, that none might carry information, and, at the same time, ^f by certain ambiguous expressions, made the king believe, that the booty he brought back with him, was taken from the Israelites, which was no unpleasant news.

In short, to such a degree of confidence was he grown with Achish, that he proposed taking him along with him to the war, which the Philistines had at this time declared against Saul; but some of the chief men about him declaring against it, as being apprehensive that in the day of battle he might possibly turn against them, prevailed with the king to dismiss him. This was an agreeable turn to David; yet he so far dissembled the

interest. But whether David did well or ill in either suing for or accepting of the protection of this foreign king, is a point that we shall have occasion to discuss hereafter.—*Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*; and *The Life of King David*.

^d Ziklag was situate in the extreme parts of the tribe of Judah southwards, not far from Hormah, where the Israelites received a defeat while they sojourned in the wilderness. In the division of the land of Canaan, it was first given to the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 31,) and afterwards to that of Simeon, (Josh. xix. 5.) but the Philistines seem all along to have kept possession: so that it never came into the hands of either tribe, until by the gift of Achish, it became the peculiar inheritance of David and his successors. Why David desired of Achish the liberty to retire to this place, was to avoid the envy which the number of his attendants might possibly occasion; to secure his people from the infection of idolatry; to enjoy the free exercise of his own religion; and to gain an opportunity of enterprising something against the enemies of God, without the knowledge or observation of the Philistines.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^e In 1 Sam. xv. 7. we read, that 'Saul smote the Amalekites, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword;' and yet we find here David making frequent incursions upon the Amalekites; and therefore the meaning of the former passage must be, that Saul destroyed as many of them as fell into his hands; for several of them might make their escape from Saul into the deserts that lay towards Arabia Felix, and upon his retreat, return and repossess their old habitation.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^f The words wherein David answered this question of Achish, 'Whither have you made a road to-day?' are these, 'Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites,' (1 Sam. xxvii. 10.) By which nations David, in reality, meant the Geshurites, and the Gezerites, who were both of them relicts of the Canaanites, whom God ordered to be extirpated, and who did, in truth, live to the south of Judah; but Achish understood him in a quite contrary sense, namely, that he had fallen upon his own countrymen. So that since the formality of a lie consists in our imposing upon those with whom we converse, we cannot but allow, that though David's answer may not be called a downright lie, yet it is an equivocation with an intent to deceive, badly comporting with that honesty and simplicity which became David, both as a prince and professor of the true religion, wherein he is no way to be excused, and much less to be imitated.—*Poole's Annotations*.

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matter, that the king, to oblige his nobles, was forced to be very pressing and importunate with him to return to Ziklag; which accordingly he did, and in his march thither, was joined by several of the tribe of Manasseh, as those of Gad and Benjamin had done before, to a considerable augmentation of his forces. And well it so happened; for upon his return to Ziklag, he found that the Amalekites had burned and pillaged the place,^a and carried away his two wives, and all the people that were therein; and, what was no small accession to this misfortune, his soldiers mutinied against him, as if he had been^b the occasion of it. David, however, marching away immediately, and having gained intelligence which way the enemy took, soon came up with them, fell upon them, and cut them to pieces; and not only recovered all the persons and the booty which they had taken, but several rich spoils likewise, that they had robbed others of in this expedition, whereof he made presents to his friends.^c

In the mean time, the Philistine army, lay at^d Shunem, and Saul and his forces were encamped in Mount Gilboa, from whence having a prospect of the enemy's strength,^e his courage failed him, when he saw how much more numerous the Philistines were, and found, at the same time, that God, in this pressing juncture, would not be consulted by him, nor give him any instructions what to do. He had, some time before, banished all the wizards, and such as dealt with familiar spirits, out of the nation; but being now in the utmost perplexity,^f he was

resolved to consult some one of this profession, in order to know what the fate of this war would be. At Endor, about three leagues from Mount Gilboa, he was told there lived a *g* witch or sorceress: and therefore disguising himself, and taking but two servants with him, that he might not be suspected, he came to the woman^h by night, and desired of herⁱ to raise up the ghost of Samuel.

Whether it was the ghost of Samuel, which God, upon this occasion, permitted to appear, or some evil spirit whom the witch, by her enchantments, might raise up; but so it was, that from this spectre^k the woman learned that it was Saul who had employed her; and Saul, when he saw it, bowed his face to the ground. The apparition spake first, and demanding the reason^l why he had

her incantations, and other diabolical arts, was capable of allaying the uneasiness of his mind, or securing him from the apprehensions of danger. It may be observed, however, that he mentions a woman rather than a man to be consulted upon this occasion, because he might mention that the weaker sex might more easily be deceived by evil spirits, and were generally more addicted to these unlawful practices.—*Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

g The Septuagint have called her, 'a woman that speaks from her belly, or stomach,' as most magicians affected to do: and some modern authors have informed us, that there were women who had a demon, which spake articulately from the lower part of their stomachs, in a very loud, though hoarse tone: "The spirit conversing with the witch shrieked loud and dismally."—*Hor. Sat. 8.*

h They could not go the direct way; for then they must have passed through the enemy's camp; and therefore they took a compass, and travelled by night, that they might not be discovered; besides that the night was the properest time to consult those that pretended to magical incantations, it being a common opinion among the Greeks, as perhaps now it might be among the Hebrews, that none of the terrestrial demons did appear in the daytime.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

i It was a common pretence of magicians, that they could raise up ghosts from below, or make dead persons appear to declare unto them future events. "Gore was poured out into a dish that thereby they might draw out the *manes*, those spirits of prophecy."—*Hor. Sat. b. 1.* And therefore Saul addresses the woman, as if he believed her abilities in that way. This however shows, not only the antiquity of necromancy, but the prevailing opinion then, that the soul, after the death of the body, did survive; otherwise it would have been impertinent for Saul to desire the woman to raise up Samuel. Which makes it the greater wonder, that we have nowhere, in the Old Testament, a positive declaration of the soul's immortality.—*Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

k How the woman came to know it to be Samuel, we may thus imagine. She saw an apparition she did not expect; she knew the prophet; she knew the veneration which Saul had for him; she knew that prophets were only sent to kings; and she knew withal, that her art, whatever it was, had never before that time exhibited a person of that figure to her; and from hence she concluded, that the apparition must needs be Samuel, and the person who came to consult her, in all probability was Saul.—*The History of the Life of King David*.

l The words of Samuel are, 'why hast thou disquieted me, and brought me up?' which seem to imply, that Samuel was raised up by the force of this woman's enchantments. But as it is not in the power of witches to disturb the rest of good men, and bring them into the world when they please, it is much more rational to think, that the Scripture here expresses itself in a manner suitable to the prejudice of the vulgar, among whom it was a common notion, that these incantations gave trouble to the souls that were at rest. For which reason, they were either to be appeased by offerings, or constrained by the force of enchantments: for so the tragedian has informed us, "He pours out the magic song, and in a threatening tone hurriedly sings whatever either appeases or constrains the airy spirit."—*Seneca in Æpid.*

a It may seem a little strange, that the Amalekites, who had so often been cut to pieces by David, should not, upon their success, slay, rather than carry away, the people, which they found in Ziklag: but this may be imputed either to their covetousness, who might keep them for sale, and to make money of them as captives; or to their cruelty, who might reserve them for more lingering and repeated torments, or perhaps for the gratification of their brutal lusts; though principally it is to be ascribed to God's overruling providence, who restrained and set bounds to their rage.—*Poole's Annotations*.

b This he might seem to be, in relinquishing his own country, and coming to Ziklag; in provoking the Amalekites by the slaughter of all that came in his way; and in going with Achish to war, while he left the place, where their wives and children were, unguarded.—*Poole's Annotations*.

c His friends were chiefly those of his own tribe; but besides these, we find he sent to others, namely, to the inhabitants of the city of Bethel, which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, and this he did, not only in the acknowledgment of the shelter and support which he had received from them in his banishment, but in prospect of their future favour and interest, in case there should happen a vacancy in the throne.—*Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

d Shunem was a city on the borders of the tribe of Issachar, about five miles to the south of Mount Hermon, according to St Jerome and Eusebius, who tells us likewise, that Gilboa was a ridge of mountains, six miles distant from Scythopolis, anciently called Bethshan; and that Endor was a town in the valley of Jezreel, at the foot of Mount Gilboa.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*; and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

e The Philistines must have had, on this occasion, several hired forces, otherwise Saul had no reason to have been afraid of them, because the small tract which the Philistines inhabited could not possibly supply them with an army any thing equal to the Hebrews, who, in some of their wars, have carried to the field some hundred thousands of men.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

f A strange infatuation of this Saul! He had banished all wizards and sorcerers out of his kingdom, as a dangerous sort of people, who made profession of a wicked and unwarrantable art; and yet he here inquires after one, and puts his whole confidence in what he had so wisely exploded before; as if a witch with

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raised him from the dead, was answered by Saul, that the Philistines, with a powerful army had invaded him, and in his distress, God had forsaken him, and would give no answer ^a which way soever he consulted him. To whom the spirit replied, that for his disobedience in not destroying the Amalekites, God had taken away the kingdom from his family, and given it to David; and as to the fate of the war, the Philistines, ^b the next day, should rout his army, and he and his sons fall in the battle.

Saul had no sooner heard his doom, but he fainted away; and as he had eaten nothing for some considerable time, ^c the woman and his servants, with much ado, prevailed with him to take some refreshment: which when he had done, he went away, and marched all night, that he might come early enough to the camp next morning.

The next morning the two armies met, and engaged; but the Israelites were forced to give way, and maintained a running fight, until they came to mount Gilboa, where, gaining the advantage of the ground, they attempted to rally again, but with as little success as before. Saul and his sons did all that was possible for brave men to do; but the Philistines aiming wholly at them, in a short time, overpowered them with numbers, ^d so that Jonathan and two others of his brothers, Abin-

^a The sacred historian has reckoned up three several ways of inquiring of God, namely, by dreams, by Urim, and by prophets; and it may not be amiss to observe, that there were the same methods of consulting their gods among the Gentiles; as it appears by what Achilles says in the council of the Greeks, when met together to consult about the plague which Apollo sent among them. "Come now let us address some prophet or priest, or interpreter of dreams, for dreams ever are from Jove."

^b The phrase wherein Samuel expresses himself, is thus, 'to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.' Where the word *to-morrow*, as some interpreters imagine, is not to be taken in a strict sense, because, as they conceive, this battle was not fought till some time after; but in the passage before us, there seems to be no reason why to-morrow should not be taken literally. For as Endor was at no great distance from the Israelites' camp, Saul might go that night, consult the witch, stay, and eat with her, and get back to the camp before it was light. The next day the battle begins; Saul is vanquished, and seeing his army routed, despairs, and stabs himself. All this might very well be done in the space of twelve or fourteen hours; and therefore I see no occasion why we should depart from the plain signification of the words.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^c Josephus seems to be very warm in his commendation of this woman's generosity to Saul. 'She received him, treated him, and relieved him; and all this so cheerfully, and so frankly, that she gave him all she had, without any prospect of reward; for she knew that he was doomed to die. And what is more, this she did for the very man whose prohibition had been her ruin.' But he rashly supposes, that in the words of the sacred history, the narration is accurate, and defective in no one circumstance; whereas, for any thing we know, this woman was far from being poor; Saul had amply rewarded her for raising up Samuel, and his attendant might give her a round price for her lamb. And though it must be owned, that her address to the king is tender and respectful enough; yet whether it proceeded from fear or affection, may admit of some debate.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^d It was certainly no small grief to David to hear of Jonathan's death, and a trial it might be of his patience and resignation to the divine will; but still there seems to be a direction of providence in suffering him to be slain, that David might more easily come to the throne. For though Jonathan, no doubt, would have made a voluntary dedication of it, yet as he was the people's great favourite, some there might possibly be, who would not allow of the

adab and Malchishua, were killed upon the spot, and the whole army put in confusion.

Saul defended himself as well as man could do; but the small party that remained with him, being entirely broken, and the ^e enemy's archers pressing hard upon him, he found himself so weakened with his wounds and loss of blood, that for fear of falling into their hands, and being insulted, he fell upon his own sword, and so died. He had requested of his armour-bearer before this to despatch him; but his armour-bearer was startled at the proposal and refused to do it: however, when he saw his master dead, ^f he desperately followed his example, and in the same manner put an end to his life.

The next day, when the Philistines came to take a view of the field of battle, finding the bodies of Saul and his sons among the slain, they stripped them of their armour, cut off their heads, and sent expresses to every place of their victory. ^g Their armour they sent to the temple of Ashtaroth, ^h their heads they fixed up in the

dedition, and so a civil war might have arisen concerning the successor, which, by his dying in this manner, was prevented.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^e There is no mention of archers in any of the Philistines' armies, or battles, before this, in which they are said to have pressed hard upon Saul, as doubtless they were of great advantage to the Philistines in making their attack; 1st, because an assault with this kind of weapon was new and surprising, and therefore generally successful; and, 2dly, because the arrows destroying the Israelites at a distance, before they came to close fight, threw them naturally into terror and confusion. And for this reason some think, that when David came to the throne, he taught the Israelites the use of the bow, (as we read 2 Sam. i. 18.) that they might not be inferior to the Philistines, nor fall into the like disaster that Saul had done; and for this reason it certainly was, that when he had made a peace with the Philistines, he took some of their archers, who in the following books are frequently mentioned under the name of Cherethites, to be his body guards.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *The History of the Life of King David*.

^f The learned and ingenious author of the Historical Account of the Life of King David, seems to make it evident, that Saul and his armour-bearer died by the same sword, namely, that which belonged to the armour-bearer. 'Now, it is an established tradition of the Jewish church,' says he, 'that this armour-bearer was Doeg the Edomite, who, by Saul's command, slew such a number of priests in one day, (1 Sam. xxii. 18.) and if so, then Saul and his executioner fell both by the same weapon wherewith they had before massacred the servants of the Lord. Even as Brutus and Cassius killed themselves with the same swords with which they treacherously murdered Cæsar; I say treacherously murdered, because they lay in his bosom at the same time that they meditated his death.'—Vol. 1.

^g We have taken notice before, that it was an ancient custom among sundry nations to hang up the arms and other spoils taken from the enemy, in the temples of their gods, as trophies and monuments of their victory; and need only remark here, that the custom prevailed among the Greeks and Romans, as appears from this passage of Virgil:—"In the hallowed halls hang many an instrument of war; battle chariots taken from the foe, shattered axes, helmets, huge bars of gates, javelins, shields, and rostra wrenched from war ships."—*Æneid* 7.

^h 1 Sam. xxxi. 10. The custom of dedicating to the gods the spoils of a conquered enemy, and placing them in their temples as trophies of victory, is very ancient. Homer represents Hector as promising that, if he should conquer Ajax in single combat, he would dedicate his spoils to Apollo:—

And if Apollo, in whose aid I trust,
Shall stretch your daring champion in the dust,
If mine the glory to despoil the foe,
On Phœbus' temple I'll his arms bestow.

Iliad.—Pope.

Pausanias says, the architraves of the temple of Apollo at Delphi were decorated with golden armour, bucklers suspended

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temple of Dagon, and their bodies they hung upon gibbets against the walls of Bethshan. But the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, hearing of this indignity, and retaining a grateful sense of the services Saul had done them, sent a party of their best soldiers by night, who took down their bodies, and brought them away to Jabesh, where the people first ^a burned the remains of their flesh; next honourably interred their bones and ashes, in a grove that was near their city; and then for the space of ^b seven days, fasted and made great lamentation for them.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties obviated, and Objections answered.*

IN the fourth chapter of this book of Samuel we read, that upon a defeat which the Israelites had received from the Philistines, the elders of Israel advised together in council what might be the occasion of their ill success; 'Wherefore,' say they, 'hath God smitten us to-day, before the Philistines?' The justness of their cause, they thought, was enough to entitle them to God's favour, how wicked soever they were in their lives; and therefore, without any thought of amending these, they devised another expedient that would not fail of securing them victory: ¹ 'Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord,' say they, 'out of Shiloh, that when it comes among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.'² They had good reason to look upon the ark of the covenant as a certain token of the presence of God among them, and of his protection over them. They had had frequent experience of battles won by virtue of his presence, and lost in the absence of it; and whenever they had this token of the divine assistance along with them, they always esteemed themselves invincible. They re-

membered the story of the walls of Jericho³ falling down by the power of this ark's seven times surrounding them. They had heard⁴ of the defeat which their forefathers had suffered, when they presumed to march against the Canaanites without their leader, and without this ark; and were fond enough to imagine, that God himself might be looked upon as overcome, if the Philistines should have the advantage, when the ark of his presence was with them. By this means, therefore, they thought to interest his honour in the war, and make him responsible, as it were, for any disaster that should befall them; and upon these motives it was that they sent for the ark.

But because they presumed to send for it, without ever consulting God, as they used to do upon all momentous affairs; because the iniquities of the people were become so enormous, as not to deserve any longer the divine presence among them; and because the flagitiousness of the priests, who were killed in defending the ark, had for a long time, called for some judgment upon them; that therefore his predictions concerning the sons of Eli might be fulfilled, he permitted the ark to be taken, as thinking it more inconsistent with his honour to afford assistance to the wicked and presumptuous, than to admit of the profanation even of the most sacred things. What an affliction the loss of this ark was to the people of Israel we may learn from the sad fate of Eli, and his daughter-in-law, who both died for grief at the bare hearing of it; and therefore we may suppose that a farther reason for God's permitting it, might be, to bring his own people to a sense of their apostasy and ingratitude to him, when they came to consider what a damage they suffered in the departure of this symbol of his presence, which was deservedly esteemed⁵ the glory of Israel.

What afflictions the taking or withholding the ark brought upon the Philistines, the fall of their god Dagon, the mice, the emerods, the pestilence, and other sore judgments, do abundantly testify; and therefore we may suppose yet farther, that God's design in permitting this capture of the ark, was to demonstrate his power among the heathens, and to let the Philistines know, that his dominion reached everywhere; that he was equally the Lord both of the conquerors and conquered; and that the pretended deities whom they adored, in comparison of him, were of no avail.

It was from an intent, therefore, to illustrate his almighty power, and not from any inability to preserve it; that God suffered this ark of the covenant to be taken; and though what the Jews call the shechinah, or visible token of God's presence, which abode under the two cherubim upon the propitiatory, or covering of the ark, in the shape of the cloud, might not be so apparent, after it fell into the hands of the Philistines; yet that it had divine and miraculous power attending it, is evident by their own confession, who, upon seeing the destruction that its presence had occasioned, do frankly declare, that ⁶ 'the ark of the God of Israel should not abide with them, because his hand was sore upon them, and upon Dagon their god.'

It was a particular prohibition,⁷ that not only the common people, but even the Levites themselves, should

¹ 1 Sam. iv. 3.

² Calmet's Commentary.

by the Athenians, after the battle of Marathon, and shields taken from the Gauls under Brennus.—*Chandler's Travels in Greece*, p. 262.—Ed.

^a It is certain that the usage among the Hebrews was not to burn, but to embalm the bodies of their dead with aromatic spices; but in this case the people of Jabesh might act otherwise, either because the bodies of Saul and his sons were, by this time, so dried or corrupted, that they were not fit to be embalmed; or because they were apprehensive, that if they should embalm them, and so bury them, the people of Bethshan might, at one time or other, come and dig them up, and fix them against their walls again; and therefore the Jabeshites thought it advisable to recede from their common practice, and for the greater security, to imitate the heathens in this particular: "Weeping for their gentle companion, they gathered up his whitened bones into a golden urn." (*Hom. II. xxiii.*)—*Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^b It seems a little strange, that we nowhere read of any general mourning that was made for Saul and his sons, who died in battle; but the national troubles, which followed upon his death, might perhaps be an obstruction to this. David and his men mourned but one day for Saul: and therefore, when it is said of the Jabeshites, that they fasted seven days, their fasting must not be understood in a strict sense, as if they ate nothing all this time, but in a more large and general signification, as it is used both in sacred and profane writers, namely, that they lived very abstemiously, ate little, and that seldom, and that but mean food, and instead of wine drank water only.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

³ Josh. vi. 4. ⁴ Num. xiv. 44, 45. ⁵ 1 Sam. iv. 22.

⁶ 1 Sam. v. 7.

⁷ Num. iv. 20.

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not dare to look into the ark, or any other of the holy utensils, belonging to the service of God, upon pain of death; and the severity of this law will not seem so unreasonable, when it is considered, that in every nation it was always accounted a great profaneness, and frequently attended with exemplary punishments, for such as were not initiated,¹ to obtrude into the mysteries of religion; and that, if the Philistines, for their irreverence to the ark, were treated with less rigour than the Bethshemites, it was because the former were not instructed in the laws of God, nor obliged to observe them.

It must be acknowledged, indeed, that there is a mistake in our translation, as well as in several others. Bethshemesh is a place of no great note in sacred history, and² by Josephus it is called no more than a village; and therefore it is hardly conceivable, how it could contain such a number as fifty thousand and threescore and ten inhabitants, or why God, who is goodness itself, should make such a slaughter among those who received his ark with so much joy, and testified their gladness, by their oblation of sacrifices. To solve this difficulty, therefore, some have observed, that the words in the original, and according to their natural construction, stand thus:—He smote of the people ‘threescore and ten men, fifty thousand men;’ where there is plainly wanted some particle or other, to make the sense complete. They observe further, that if this is to be taken for a total sum, the order of the words is plainly inverted, and that the thousands should go before the inferior numbers, as is usual in all languages; and therefore, since there is a manifest defect in the copy, they think it not amiss to supply it with the particle *mem*, out of, which in many other instances is known to be omitted, and here makes the sense complete, namely, that of the people of Bethshemesh, for their irreverence to the ark, he smote ‘seventy men out of fifty thousand.’ For though fifty thousand men can hardly be supposed in so small a place; yet, upon hearing of the arrival of the ark, the country might flock in from other parts, and in a few days make up that number; and though possibly most of them might be guilty of the same profane rudeness, yet God, in his great clemency, might punish no more than seventy of them, and that on purpose to deter others from the like irreverence. ^a For it is not unlikely, that these people might hold the ark in more contempt, since the time that it had been conquered, as it were, and led captive by their enemies; and for this reason, God might the rather exert his vindictive arm, on purpose to teach them, that this symbol of his presence had lost none of its miraculous power, by the ill usage it had met with in its absence.

Upon the removal of the ark from Bethshemesh, ³ it is not unlikely that there was a general assembly of the elders of Israel, and that to prevent the like offence, the

ceremony was performed with the greatest order and solemnity; but why it was not carried to Shiloh, and reposed in the tabernacle, the most probable opinion is, that after the death of Eli, the Philistines had destroyed the place, and the tabernacle was removed from thence to Nob, where it continued until the death of Samuel. As Kirjath-jearim therefore stood at no great distance, was a place of considerable strength, and had a remarkable eminence in it, proper for the reception of the ark, thither it was ordered to be removed for the present, with a design, no doubt, to have it restored to its ancient seat, at a convenient season: but through the neglect of religion, as well as the disturbance of the times, its removal was deferred from day to day: so that, though David first brought it to the house of Obededom, and then to his palace at Sion, yet we nowhere read ^b of its being replaced in the tabernacle any more.

When Samuel was highly displeased with the elders of Israel for desiring a king, and thereupon applied himself for advice, the answer which God returned him was this: ‘⁴ Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.’ These are, no doubt, the words of an angry sovereign, resenting the slight upon his government, and the indignity done to his person; and therefore, to give a full answer to the objection, we shall first consider the nature of the government they were under, and of that which they desired, and from thence deduce the several aggravations of their guilt, in being so importunate for a change.

Josephus ⁵ in his book against Apion has these remarkable words: “Several nations have their several forms of government, and their diversities of customs. Some governments are committed to a single person, others to a certain number of select men, and others again to all the people in general; but our lawgiver,” says he, “has declared, that ours shall ^c be a theocracy,

^a 1 Sam. viii.

^b B. 2.

^b The future history of this sacred ark is this. After the building of the temple at Jerusalem, Solomon had it removed from Sion, into a proper place that was consecrated for it, where it remained with all suitable respect, till the times of the latter kings of Judah, who gave themselves up to idolatry, and were not afraid to put the images of their gods in the holy place itself. Hereupon the priests, being unable to endure this profanation, took the ark, and carried it from place to place, that by this means it might escape the fury of these impious princes: but Josiah, who was a good man, and restored the true worship of God, commanded them to bring it back to the sanctuary, and forbade them to carry it into the country, as they had done. The Talmudists, however, have a tradition, that Solomon having learned by revelation, that the Assyrians would one day burn the temple, which he had lately built, and carry away all the rich materials which he had placed there, took care to have a private hole made under ground, where in case of necessity, he might conceal the most valuable things belonging to it from the knowledge of any enemies; and that Josiah, having a foresight of the calamities which were coming upon the Jewish nation, here hid the ark of the covenant, together with Aaron’s rod, the pot of manna, the high priest’s pectoral, and the holy oil; but that during the Babylonish captivity, the priests having lost all knowledge of the place where these things were concealed, they were never seen more, and were not in the second temple.—*Calmet’s Dictionary*, under the word *Ark*.

^c As God’s design in separating the Israelites from the rest of mankind, was to perpetuate the knowledge of himself, and the doctrine of his unity, amidst an idolatrous and polytheistic world;

¹ See Hueti Quæst. Alent. b. 2, c. 12. p. 200.

² Jewish Antiquities, b. 6, c. 2. ³ Calmet’s Commentary.

^a There is without doubt an interpolation in the Hebrew text here, as fifty thousand is too great a number. Boothroyd and Dr Clark follow the reading of Josephus adopted by the author, and makes the whole number 70 men, while Dr Hales contends for the reading of the Syriac and Arabic versions, which have 5070 men. See Clarke and Boothroyd on the passage, and Hales’ Analysis, vol. ii. p. 304. Seventy men out of a small place in a harvest day, was a great slaughter.—*Ed.*

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and has ascribed all rule and sovereign power to God alone." For though it was necessary, for the due execution of his commands, that there should be some visible minister between him and his people, such as Moses and Joshua were in the time of their administration; yet it is certain, that they never ordained any thing of moment without a special command from him. The same direction which was given Joshua, that "he should stand before Eleazar the priest, who should ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim before the Lord," was required of all other persons that presided in public affairs. ² In all cases of weighty concern, they were to have recourse to him, who always reserved to himself the sole power of establishing laws, and appointing magistrates, and making war. Nay, so very desirous was God to show himself to be King of the Hebrews, that there was no ensign of royalty belonging to earthly princes that, by his own appointment, was not provided for him, on purpose to engage the people's attention, (as the Commentator on Maimonides speaks,) and to make them perceive, that their King, who was the Lord of hosts, was in the midst of them.

What design God Almighty had in constituting himself the King of this people, is evident from the instructions which he gives Moses; "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, ye have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

No government can certainly be imagined more happy, more safe, more free, more honourable, than that wherein the fountain of all wisdom and power, of all justice and goodness, presides; and therefore the least that we can say of the Israelites, in desiring to change this form for such a one as was in use in the nations round about them, that is, for an absolute and despotic government, where the princes were tyrants, and the subjects all

slaves, argues at least a great pitch of folly and indiscretion, a baseness of mind, an ingratitude of temper, a spirit of rebellion, and a secret attachment to the idolatrous practices of those people, whose king they were so eager to imitate. For, 'make us a king to judge us,' was equivalent in their mouths, as 'one expresses it, to what their forefathers demanded of Aaron, 'make us gods that they may go before us; because in this manner, he who best knew the secrets of their hearts, in his answer to Samuel, has expounded their meaning: 'They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them; according to all the works which they have done, since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, they have forsaken me, and served other gods.'

We have but one thing more to remark upon this subject, and that is, that the manner in which they demanded a king, was no less culpable than the ends they proposed by it: for instead of consulting God upon an affair of this consequence, they went hastily to Samuel, and when, by fair remonstrances, he is attempting to dissuade them from so dangerous an enterprise, they turn impetuously upon him, and say, 'nay, but we will have a king;' and this may be the reason perhaps why God gave them one in his anger, descended of the meanest tribe in Israel, and of the meanest family in that tribe, to show them, that he himself was not satisfied with their proceedings, nor could be pleased with any thing that was extorted from him by undutiful importunities.

The meanness of Saul's family indeed was the reason that some, who were present at his election, openly despised him, and said, 'How can this man save us?' And therefore it is not unlikely, that as these seditious men refused to submit to his government, he might leave the public affairs in Samuel's hands, and return to his father's house, and there live privately, until some opportunity of better establishing his authority should happen to present itself. But even in this interval, supposing he did betake himself to some rural employment; yet where is the great disparagement of this, when we find the same done in other nations, by persons of the like rank and quality? When we find your Curii, your Attillii, your Cincinnati, and several other illustrious Romans, leaving the plough to assume the reins of government, and afterwards leaving the government to return to the plough.

It must be acknowledged, however, that Saul's external qualifications, namely, the stature and comeliness of his person, was no small recommendation to a people who desired a king, such as their neighbours had. For whatever we may think of the matter, the people of the east had always a regard to these in the choice of their kings; and accordingly Herodotus, having taken a review of Xerxes's whole army, after a short pause declares himself thus; 'that ⁷ among such a multitude of people there was not one, who, for tallness and goodness of person, did deserve the throne so much as he,' and in another place assures us, 'that ⁸ the Ethiopians always esteemed him who was of the most advantageous stature, the fittest to be chosen king;' which cannot but remind us of what Samuel says to the people when he

¹ Num. xxvii. 21.² Patrick's Commentary.³ Saurin's Dissertation 25. vol. 4; Exod. xix. 3, &c.

so was he pleased to stand in two arbitrary relations towards them, in that of a tutelar deity and protector, and in that of a supreme magistrate and lawgiver; besides the natural relation in which he stood towards them and all other nations in common: but how long this theocracy continued among the Jews, the learned are not so well agreed; some thinking, that from the first commencement of regal power, or especially from its settlement in the line of David, it ceased, as God's words to Samuel seem to import, 'they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them,' 1 Sam. viii. 7. Whilst others imagine, that from God's first espousing the cause of the Israelites, in the time of their tribulation in Egypt, even to the coming of his blessed Son our Saviour Christ in the flesh, it all along subsisted, though with some abatements, sometimes with seeming interruptions; and to this they apply that famous prophecy of Jacob, 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come,' Gen. xlix. 10: that is, the theocracy shall continue over the Jews, until Christ come to take possession of his father's kingdom. For what lawgiver was there ever in Judah, until the coming of Christ, but God, by the ministry of Moses.—*Opinions of several Theologians, letter 7. Simon's Critical History of the Old Testament; and Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses, vol. 2. part 2.*

⁴ Saurin's Dissertation 25. vol. 4; Exod. xix. 3, &c.⁵ Exod. xxxii. 1. ⁶ 1 Sam. x. 27. ⁷ Herodotus, b. 6. c. 77.⁸ Ibid. b. vi. c. 20.

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presents Saul to them: ¹ 'See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among the people;' for the historian hath told us before, that ² 'from his shoulders and upwards, he was higher than any of the people.'

Nay, had I leisure to gratify the curious, I might show, that not only in the east, but in the western and most polite countries, this tallness of stature, and gracefulness of appearance were always deemed no unbecoming qualifications for the regal dignity; and therefore we find Pliny, who certainly was a fine speaker, and knew how to single out the proper qualities in any great man, telling his audience, in his panegyric to Trajan, that "the strength and tallness of his body, the nobleness of his aspect, the dignity of his countenance, and the gracefulness of his speech, did everywhere denote and proclaim the prince." As on the contrary, what notions the ancients had of a prince of a low stature, and mean appearance, we may gather from the fine which ³ Plutarch tells us the Lacedemonians set upon their king, for marrying a little woman, who was likely to bring 'not kings, but kinglings,' to reign over them.

It must be remembered, however, that tallness of stature was not the only thing that recommended Saul to the kingdom. His father is said to have been ⁴ 'a mighty man of power;' which though it may not signify his great wealth, and interest in his country, because ⁵ Saul himself declares the contrary, yet it doubtless denotes his strength, and courage, and fortitude of mind, which in a great measure he transmitted to his son. For who in war was more brave and undaunted than he, had he but known how to use his victories as well as acquire them? But here was his great misfortune, that when he was successful, he was too apt to be unmindful of what God had enjoined him. Who in peace was more prudent and politic than he, till his fears and jealousies of David, mixed with an unhappy temper of blood, made him malicious and implacable? Nothing can be supposed more wise and discreet, than his ⁶ 'holding his peace,' and taking no notice of the slights which were put upon him at his first election; nothing more great and generous, than his answer to some who would have prompted him to revenge, after he had established his throne by a glorious conquest; ⁷ 'There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.'

Nothing certainly was more different, than Saul's modestly declining the offer of a kingdom; when elected, passing by indignities, and returning to a private life; when called out to action, mustering his forces, leading out his armies, vanquishing his enemies, relieving his friends; and when settled in peace, forgiving injuries, and conferring benefits; and the same Saul, sullen and discontented with himself, false to his promises, jealous of his friends, listening to sycophants, quarrelling with his relations, attempting the life of his own son, murdering a whole city of God's priests, and instead of consulting the divine oracle, flying to the devil for advice in his distress; and therefore we need less wonder, that we

find the beginning of his reign so prosperous, and the latter part of it ending in so sad a catastrophe.

Whether Saul deserved this fate or no, we may best perceive by a review of some instances wherein he is said to have offended God. In the beginning of the third year of his reign, the Philistines raised so powerful an army against him, that his own forces for fear of them, deserted in great numbers. Gilgal was the place of their rendezvous, and Samuel, who had hitherto transacted matters between God and Saul, had given him assurance, that in seven days' time, he would come thither, ⁸ 'to offer sacrifices and peace-offerings, and to show him what he was to do;' but, as Abarnel has observed, every one of these articles he transgressed. For, besides that he distrusted Samuel's word, or thought it scorn perhaps, that the king should stay for a prophet, instead of waiting till the appointed days were expired, he called for the sacrifices on the seventh morning; instead of ordering a proper person to officiate, himself ventured to offer up the sacrifice; and instead of inquiring of God in a regular way, he was determined to begin the war without any previous consultations: so that, in this behaviour of his, there were all the signs of pride and ingratitude, impatience and distrust, neglect of God, contempt of his prophet, and an apparent invasion of the priestly office; upon which accounts Samuel declares, that ⁹ God would reject him, and not continue the kingdom in his family.

God, no doubt, by his divine omniscience, foresaw what other sins Saul would commit, and might therefore without any breach of his mercy, have pronounced a peremptory sentence against him; but the passage before us implies no such thing. It is no more than a threat, or a simple denunciation of what God would do, if he were not more observant for the future, and might have been revoked, had he not persisted in his disobedience, and committed a much greater offence against the divine Majesty in the war against Amalek.

The opposition which these people gave the Israelites, while they were on their journey to the land of Canaan, provoked God to such a degree, that, as the historian relates the matter, he swore, that ¹⁰ 'he would have war with Amalek from generation to generation;' and therefore commanded Moses 'to write it, for a memorial, in a book, and to rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, that he would utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven: and when they were upon the point of entering upon the promised land, they were reminded of the same divine decree against that wicked people: ¹¹ 'Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt, how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary, and he feared not God: therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.' In this passage we have some reasons assigned, why God was so highly incensed against the Amalekites. ¹² They

¹ 1 Sam. x. 24.

² 1 Sam. ix. 2.

³ In the beginning of his book on the Instruction of Children.

⁴ 1 Sam. ix. 1.

⁵ 1 Sam. ix. 21.

⁶ 1 Sam. x. 27.

⁷ 1 Sam. xi. 13.

⁸ 1 Sam. x. 8.

⁹ 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

¹⁰ Exod. xvii. 13, 14.

¹¹ Deut. xxv. 17, &c.

¹² Gen. xxxvi. 12

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were descendants of Esau, and therefore by pedigree, were allied to the Israelites, and of the stock of Abraham. ¹ They seem to have broke off with the Edomites very early, and to have joined themselves with the old Horites, a nest of idolaters, that lived on Mount Seir; and so turned apostates from the religion of Abraham. These apostates were the first that drew the sword against the Israelites, who were their brethren in blood, and without any manner of provocation, took the advantage, and came upon their rear, while they were feeble, faint, and weary, which was not only a great inhumanity, but done with an intent to defeat God's design in bringing up the people of Israel, and to hinder, if possible, their entrance into Canaan; for which reason the impiety of these people is particularly taken notice of, namely, 'that they feared not God, but that their hand was lifted up against the throne of the Lord, against the throne of the God of Abraham,' their father, which was no small aggravation of their crime. It was for these reasons, then, that God had determined to destroy the whole race of Amalek, and had made choice of Saul to put his decree in execution: and if, to indulge his own covetousness, he thought proper to prevaricate in the matter, he became guilty of the like sin (to use the words of the learned Dr Jackson) "as if a judge or inferior magistrate, being intrusted to do justice in a matter unto which his sovereign had peremptorily and determinately sworn, upon a bribe, or other sinister respect, neglect his duty, and, as much as in him lay, make his master forsworn." And as a judge that would dare to do this, deserves more deaths than one; so, considering the infinite difference between God and man, and the long train of wickedness which Saul afterwards ran into, the severity can hardly be thought excessive, in God's punishing his contempt of this great command, by the alienation of the crown from his family.

"But why should the Amalekites, for offences committed by their forefathers so many years before, deserve this punishment? Or suppose they did, why should young children and infants suffer as guilty, for the crimes of their parents?" Our blessed Saviour, in a case somewhat like this, has helped us to a solution of the former part of this question, when he tells the Jews of his time, that ² 'they built the sepulchres of the prophets, which their fathers had killed: that in so doing, they allowed or approved of their deeds: and that therefore the blood of all the prophets, which had been shed from the foundation of the world, should be required of that generation.' From whence we may draw this inference,—That when any particular people commit the same crimes that their ancestors did; when they approve of them, when they imitate them, and, by the like actions, declare, that if they were in their circumstances, they would pursue the same steps, they are justly punishable, even in virtue of the sentence which passed upon their ancestors; and that the divine suspension of that sentence, in order to try whether they would reform and amend, is so far from being an hardship, that the longer it is continued, the more it is an instance of God's mercy, and patience, and long-suffering.

Now, whoever looks into the conduct of the descendants of these old Amalekites, and considers the several

oppressions which occasioned the exploits of Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, and Saul, will soon perceive, that these later generations were every moment renewing the rancour and hostilities of their forefathers against the children of Israel, and consequently were very justly comprised under the sentence which had originally passed upon them.

³ 'Children indeed shall not be put to death for their fathers:' but this prohibition, we must observe relates to men, and not to God. ⁴ Men, when they put a child to death for the sin of his father, assume an authority that they have no right to. The law which authorizes them to punish the father, gives them no power over the life of the child, ⁵ but God is sovereign Lord and Master of the lives of both. Men who kill the child, to aggravate the punishment of the father can give the child no equivalent for the loss of his life; but God, in the future dispensation of things, can render him an ample compensation for it: and therefore, since in a general devastation, whether of war, famine, or pestilence, without a divine interposition for every particular person, the innocent must necessarily suffer with the guilty, it is satisfaction enough to think, that these innocent persons do not finally perish when they die, but are thenceforward taken under God's immediate care, and in the world to come, will find their retribution. ⁶ Those, of all others who die, in their infancy, in what manner soever it be, have reason to bless God, what grief soever it may give their parents, for being delivered out of the miseries of this life, in order to be made happy in another.

Several of the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that after the death of Eli and his sons, Samuel, by God's particular election, succeeded to the high priest's office; and this they are the rather induced to believe, because they read of his offering sacrifices in places distinct from the tabernacle; of his wearing an ephod, which was a vestment peculiar to the priest; of his consecrating two kings, Saul and David; and find ⁶ the Psalmist placing him among persons of that order and distinction. But the more probable opinion is, that he was no more than a Levite, and, by birth, incapable of the priesthood, which was only annexed to Aaron's family; that there is no mention made in Scripture of his having any particular designation to that office; that there is no reason to think, that God would break through his own laws and ordinances, in favour of him, when there was no occasion for it, since Hophni and Phinehas, when they died, ⁶ might have sons of sufficient age to succeed them; that his putting on an ephod, was no more than what David did; his sacrificing from the tabernacle, what Gideon and Saul

¹ Deut. xxiv. 16.² Saurin's Dissertation 30. vol. 4.³ Le Clerc's Comment. on 1 Sam. xv. 3.⁴ Ps. xcix. 6.

⁵ a God, indeed, in a law given to the Jews, threatens that he will punish the children for their fathers' iniquity; but God hath the highest right of authority both over our affairs as well as our life, since it is but his gift, which he, without any cause, and at any period, can take from man when he pleaseth.—*Grotius on the Right of War*, vol. 2.

⁶ b It is generally supposed, but without any grounds that the exercise of the high priest's function was not entered upon till such an age; and that Eli's grand-children were not as yet qualified for it: but Josephus (*Antiq.* b. 15. c. 2.) informs us, that Aristobulus the brother of Mariamne, was both admitted into that place, and officiated in it, when he was no more than seventeen years old.—*Cabnet's Commentary*, on 1 Sam. xxv. 1

¹ Scripture Vindicated, part 2.² Luke xi. 17, &c.

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did; and his anointing kings, what both Elias and Elisha did: so that these little incidents of his life could never give him that character. And though it be granted that the Psalmist has thought proper to place him in company with Moses and Aaron, yet, at the same time, he has taken care to point us out the difference between them; Moses and Aaron among the priests, and Samuel 'among such as call upon his name,' that is, who sing God's praise, which was the common employment of the Levites. Put the case, then, that Samuel was no priest, yet it seems to be a privilege indulged to some great men, upon some extraordinary occasions, to offer sacrifices, where there was neither the tabernacle, nor any altar, but what they themselves erected. Thus ¹ Gideon and Manoah both, by the directions of an angel, made their burnt-offerings just by their own habitations, and upon no other altar than a rock; and yet, that they were accepted by God, is evident from the miraculous fire that did consume them.

In most countries, indeed, the priesthood was a privilege annexed to the regal dignity, and even in the Jewish economy, where the sacerdotal office was distinct. Thus David, upon the reduction of the ark, sacrificed oxen and fatlings, ² and Solomon, in the beginning of his reign, and before the temple was built, sacrificed in high places. ³ But there is much more to be said for Samuel: he lived in a place that was an academy of the prophets, and whither much people resorted to be instructed in the law. Shiloh was now laid desolate, and the ark, which was the tabernacle's chief furniture, was separated from it; so that till God had declared his choice of some other place, the people were, in a great measure, at liberty where to offer their devotions; and Samuel more especially, in a city of so great concourse, and where he himself presided, was obliged in conscience to provide the people in the best manner he could, with a public place of worship. He himself did but rarely, and upon extraordinary occasions, officiate in the sacrifice, yet that, whenever he did it, he did it with the acceptance and approbation of God, is plain from the testimony of Scripture, and the success which God gave him against his enemies, after he had performed such an act of devotion: for thus the account is, ⁴ 'And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord; and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him, and the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel.'

^a The Jews themselves acknowledge, that a prophet is not subject to the ceremonial law, but may, at any time, himself sacrifice in what place he pleases: and therefore, when Samuel went to Bethlehem to anoint David, it cannot be questioned, but that he had a right to sacrifice there, though there was neither ark nor tabernacle in the place; nor can it be denied, but that one part of his errand was to offer the sacrifice which he carried along with him. He had indeed an affair of greater conse-

quence to transact at the same time; but I cannot see under what obligation he was to discover that. ⁵ Secrecy is of great use in all important negotiations, and the concealing of one design, under the umbrage of another is as just and laudable a practice, as the drawing of a curtain to keep out spies. Acts of religion indeed are sometimes made cloaks for iniquity; but it is hard to conceive, what possible prevarication there could be, in performing one act of obedience towards God, in order to facilitate the performance of another. The short of the matter is, when there are two ends of any action, as there were in the case now before us, a man may, without any injury to truth, declare the one, and conceal the other; nor can any imputation justly fall upon God, for suggesting an expedient to his servant, in the execution of which there confessedly was no sin.

And for the same reason, because it was by God's direction, or the instigation of his Holy Spirit, that Samuel cut Agag in pieces, we cannot say that this resentment carried him beyond the bounds of respect that was due to his sovereign. Agag had been a bloody tyrant, and was now cut off; not for the sins of his ancestors only, but for his own merciless cruelty. His death had been predicted above 400 years before, ⁶ by the prophet Balaam; but Saul, out of a mistimed compassion, and in opposition to the express commands of God, had thought proper to spare him. Here therefore was a fit occasion for Samuel to exert himself, and, notwithstanding the presence of his prince, to vindicate the honour of his God, by expressing a zeal suitable to ⁷ that of Phinehas, in slaying Zimri, or of that noble band of Levites, ⁸ who destroyed the worshippers of the golden calf, though it does not necessarily follow, that he slew him himself, ⁹ because what he commanded might be called his own act, though it was nevertheless done by the public executioner of justice.

Some commentators have been so far carried away with the manner of the Scripture expression, viz., that ¹⁰ 'an evil spirit from the Lord troubled Saul,' as to think that he was really possessed with a devil, which at certain times came strongly upon him, and threw him into all the mad fits whereof we read: but it should be considered, that the word 'spirit,' in the sacred language, is of a very extensive signification, and denotes frequently, not only the dispositions of the mind, ¹¹ but those of the body likewise; that the custom of the Jews was to imagine, that every affliction, whose cause they were ignorant of, proceeded immediately from God; and that it is a very common thing to find the Scripture phrase accommodating itself to this vulgar prejudice. Now, in our interpretation of Scripture, this I think should be a rule:—That when a passage is capable of two senses, whereof the one supposes a miracle, and the other a natural event only, the latter should take place, especially when there are no circumstances to determine us to the contrary. But now in the case before us, ¹² the frequent access of Saul's malady, the symptoms that attended it, and the remedy made use of to assuage it, do sufficiently denote, that it proceeded from a deep melancholy,

¹ Judg. vi. 20. and xiii. 19.

² 2 Sam. vi. 13.

³ 1 Kings iii. 2, 3.

⁴ 1 Sam. vii. 9, 10.

^a The authority of a prophet causes, that whenever he is present, and superintends, sacrifice may be done in the due form; for by the confession of the Jews, the ritual laws are subject to the command of a prophet.—*Grotius* on Sam. xvi. 2.

⁵ Scripture Vindicated, part 2. ⁶ Num. xxiv. 7. ⁷ Num. xxv. 7.

⁸ Exod. xxxii. 27.

⁹ Patrick's Comment. on 1 Sam. xii. 33.

¹⁰ 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

¹¹ See Job xvii. 1. and Hosea iv. 12.

¹² Calnet's Commentary on 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

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or black bile inflamed; and that the man was hypochondriac, rather than possessed. Agreeable to this bad complexion of body was the natural temper of his mind, which through his whole conduct was suspicious, diffident, cruel, passionate, and vindictive. Add to this, that the remorse of his conscience, the menaces of Samuel, God's rejection of him, and his continual apprehensions of being either dethroned or put to death, by his competitor, confirmed still more and more the evil dispositions which his temper engendered, and carried them by fits into downright madness: and as madness is occasioned by an atrabilious humour highly inflamed, and diffused through the blood, and from melancholic vapours which ascend to the brain, and make an alteration in its temperature, it is no hard matter to conceive, that the agreeable sound of a musical instrument, which occasions joy and self-complacency, should dissipate these bad humours, and make the blood and spirits return to their equal and natural motion.

What the power of music is, to sweeten the temper, and allay and compose the passions of the mind, we have some examples from sacred history, but many more from the profane. As this same Saul was returning from Samuel, he met, at the place which is called ¹ 'the hill of God,' a company of prophets, playing on several instruments; and such was the effect of their melody, 'that the Spirit,' as the Scripture expresses it, 'came upon him, and he was turned into another man.' When Elisha was desired by Jehoshaphat, to tell him what his success against the king of Moab would be, the prophet required a minstrel to be brought unto him, ² 'and when the minstrel played, (it is said) that the hand of the Lord came upon him: ³ not that we are to suppose, that the gift of prophecy was the natural effect of music, but the meaning is, that music disposed the organs, the humours, the blood, and in short the whole mind and spirit of the prophet, to receive the supernatural impression. The truth is, common experience, as well as the testimony of the gravest authors, does prove, that there is in music a certain charm, to revive the spirits, mellow the humours, allay the passions, and consequently, to dissipate that rage, or melancholy, which either fumes up into the brain in vapours, or overspreads the heart with grief and dejection. We need less wonder, therefore, that we find ⁴ the Pythagoreans, whenever they perceived, either in themselves or others, any violent passion beginning to arise, immediately betaking themselves either to their flute or guitar; that we find ⁵ Theophrastus declaring that music is an excellent remedy against several distempers, both of the mind and body; ⁶ others, that Asclepiades, a renowned physician among the ancients, was used to cure madness by the power of symphony; and ⁷ others again, that the most violent poison, that of the sting of the tarantula, has been expelled very frequently by this means. The only remaining difficulty is, how David, with his single harp, and unassisted with any other instruments, could effect such a cure upon Saul? And to satisfy this, I must be obliged to inquire a little into the nature of the Jewish music which was possibly in vogue at that time.

Music, though an art of no necessity to human life, was certainly of a very early invention. Before the deluge, Jubal is called the father, or master of those who played upon the harp, and ^a ancient organ, as the two Hebrew words ⁸ in that place are generally translated. In the time of Jacob, we find his father-in-law complaining of him, ⁹ that he had stolen away from him, and not given him an opportunity of dismissing him honourably, with mirth, and with song, with tabret, and with harp.

¹⁰ Moses, upon his passage over the Red Sea, composed a song, which was sung in parts by himself, at the head of the men, and by ¹¹ his sister, with timbrels and dancing, leading up the women. Samuel, upon his institution of the schools of the prophets, introduced several kinds of music: so that before Saul's election to the kingdom, ¹² we read of the psaltery, and tabret, the pipe, and the harp, in use among them. The kings of the east made it a point of their grandeur and magnificence, to have men to play to them upon several occasions; and therefore we may suppose, that Saul, when he came to the throne, in some reasonable time, conformed to the mode. David, who was himself a great master of music, kept in his house ¹³ some companies of singing men and singing women, as the words of old Barzillai seem to imply; and Solomon, who denied his heart no pleasure, came not behind his father in this respect; for he had his ¹⁴ men-singers and women-singers likewise, and musical instruments of all sorts. Josephus tells us, that he had made four hundred thousand, merely for the use of the temple; and therefore we may well suppose, that he had no small variety of them, for the use of the musicians that attended his person.

M. Le Clerc seems to be of opinion, that the music of the ancient Hebrews was not very regular: "They were a nation," says he, "entirely given to agriculture, and had neither theatres nor any public diversions of this kind; all the use which they made of their music, consisted in singing some sacred hymns, which David instituted; but we have no reason to think, that their performances of this kind were either harmonious or methodical;" but now the learned Kircher has confuted all this. For ¹⁵ "it is not probable," says he, "that such an innumerable quantity of musical instruments, made by the most skilful hands, should serve only to produce some rude and inartificial sounds. Among the Hebrews there was certainly a wonderful order of songs and chanters, a wonderful distribution of the singers, and a wonderful agreement of words fitted to harmonious notes; neither is it likely that all the instruments of one choir, did perform their parts in unison, but that they made a various harmony, with an admirable and accurate contexture of the upper parts with their respective basses."

But suppose we, as some imagine, that they wanted the harmony of a concert, or several parts of music going on at the same time; yet it is much to be questioned, whether that simplicity of composition, which resembles nature most, is not a greater beauty and perfection than

⁸ Gen. iv. 21.⁹ Gen. xxxi. 27.¹⁰ Exod. xv.¹¹ Exod. xv. 30.¹² 1 Sam. x. 5.¹³ 2 Sam. xix. 35.¹⁴ Ec. ii. 8.¹⁵ Musurgia Univer. b. 2. c. 4.¹ 1 Sam. x. 5, &c.² 2 Kings iii. 15.³ Calmet's Commentary on 1 Sam. xxvi. 17.⁴ Ælianus Var. Hist. b. 14. c. 27. ⁵ In a book on Frantic Fits.⁶ Censorinus de Die Natali, b. 12.⁷ See Saurin, vol. 4. dissertation 33.

^a This instrument in Hebrew is named *Hugah*, and was a kind of flute composed of several pipes, of a different bigness, joined to one another.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Music*.

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that combination of several voices and tunes, which constitutes our concerts. For, to use the words of another author, in a science wherein I profess to be no adept, "The ancients," says he, "had as great a number of instruments as we; they had their symphonies, and voices of all sorts, as well as we; but then they had this advantage above us, that their singing voices and instruments neither drowned the words nor destroyed the sense of what they sung. While their ears were charmed with the melody, and their hearts touched with the delicacy of the song, their minds were transported with the beauty of the words, with the liveliness, grandeur, or tenderness of the sentiments. So that, at one and the same time, they had all the pleasurable impressions and sensations that the most exact imagery of thoughts and sentiments, joined with symphony, or a true harmony, could produce in their breasts;" and for this reason, it is rightly supposed by Josephus, that while David played upon his harp, he sung psalms and hymns to king Saul, whose words very probably were adapted to the occasion, and that both these put together were conducive to his cure; though God without doubt, who gave a blessing to his endeavours, was the principal cause of the removal of the malady.

That David's skill in playing upon the harp, in a great measure removed Saul's melancholy, is manifest from his retiring from court to his father's house, and betaking himself to his usual occupation of a shepherd. How long he continued with his father, the Scripture is silent; but a short time might be sufficient to impair the king's remembrance of him, especially when he appeared in another dress than what he wore at court, and was just now come off rough from a journey. He had played to the king indeed, and happily relieved his disorder: but who knows, but that he then wore an habit proper for his profession as a musician, and, as clothes make a great alteration in a man, appeared now quite another creature in his plain shepherd's garb? Who knows, but that the minister, whoever he was, that recommended him to the king, finding that his music proved medicinal to him, might take the freedom to send to his father, and request that his son might continue a little longer at court, even without the king's knowledge or direction? And it seems not unlikely, that the office of armour-bearer, whatever it imported, was a place of honour and respect, more than strict duty and attendance, because we find David sometimes retiring to his father's house, as not obliged always to reside at court.

Without our supposing then, as some commentators have done, that Saul's distemper had disturbed his head, and impaired his memory, we need but consider the humour and fashions of a court, the hurry of business, the multitude of servants, the variety of faces, and the shoals of comers and goers, that are every day seen there; and withal, consider the momentous issue of a battle lost or won, and what full employ the king or his chief commander must have for all his thought and attention, when an army is drawn up in array, and ready to engage; and then we may easily account both for Saul and Abner's wanting recollection, when they saw David disguised in his shepherd's coat, and now entering upon

an action that was quite contrary to the character of a musician.

But after all, the words in the text say nothing of Saul's forgetfulness of David, or that he inquired who he was. They only intimate, that he was ignorant of his family, and desired to be informed from what parent he was descended; and considering how many servants there are in every court, especially in a lower station, whose pedigree the king knows nothing of, and how apt we are all to forget the names of those that live at a distance, as Jesse did from Saul, and with whom we hold little or no intercourse, we need not much wonder, that Saul, who had no concern for David's family before this adventure, should quite forget the name of his father, living in another country, and which he had cursorily heard perhaps, but never once fixed in his mind: but now that the son was going upon a desperate enterprise, and was to have great riches, as well as the king's daughter, if he came off victorious, it did not a little behove the king to know something more of the parentage of this young champion, and into what family he was to match his daughter: and upon this presumption, there is no madness, no absurdity, no incongruity, in his bidding Abner to inquire whose son the stripling is. "It is a brave and gallant youth. I am charmed with his behaviour. If he falls in the attempt, he shall have an honourable interment; if he succeeds, and slays the giant, he shall be my son-in-law." ^a

The Jews give a very romantic reason for David's going to Achish, the king of the Philistines, namely, that it was to demand an execution of the treaty, whereby the conqueror was to have a sovereign power and dominion over the conquered, which Goliath proposed when he challenged the Israelites; and that upon this account, the chief ministers about that king were so alarmed at his arrival, 'Is not this David, the king of this our land?' ^b as some take the words. It is apparent, however, from the context, that the land, to which these words relate, is Judea, and that David, at this time, was in no condition to make any high demands.

Saul's rancour and rage against him were so implacable, and now that so many were turned informers against him, his power to apprehend him was become so great, that there was no staying any longer in his dominions;

^a Saurin's Dissertation on the Combat of David. ¹ 1 Sam. xvii. 25.

^b 1 Sam. xvii. 56.

^c See Sol. Jarchi on 1 Sam. xxi. 12.

^d The suppositions of our author to account for Saul's inquiry who David was, after we are told in the text, that he had been made Saul's armour-bearer, and had played for a time before him, is perhaps the best that could be made in the circumstances, but is by no means satisfactory. In fact, the whole account in the text is so incoherent, that we can hardly record it as a part of the original. Accordingly we find, that in the Septuagint, ver. 12—31, ver. 41 and ver. 54 to the end of chap. xvii. are wanting, as also, verses 1—5, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19, of chap. xviii.; and if the narrative is read, omitting the verses, it will be seen that nothing is wanting to complete the sense, and make it connected. These verses are all wanting in the Vatican copy of the Septuagint; and though they are found in the Codex Alexandrinus, Kennicott has shown, that, in all probability, they were not there till Origen inserted them. See Kennicott's Gen. Diss. p. 9, and Pilkinton's remarks on this passage. Michaelis, Dathe, Houbigant, Boothroyd, Dr A. Clarke, and other critics, consent that these passages are interpolated. Dr Clarke has quoted a considerable part of Kennicott's remarks, and some most judicious observations will be found in Boothroyd's English Translation, and also in his Hebrew Bible.—Ed.

¹ Calmet's Dissertation on the Music of the Ancients.

² Le Clerc's Commentary on 1 Sam. xxvii. 55.

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and therefore David's business was to find out some safe retreat. All the other neighbouring princes were at peace with Saul, and must have delivered him up, had Saul demanded him. Achish was the only one in hostility with him, and therefore his kingdom the most proper place for David's refuge, where, though he might not hope to lie long concealed, yet he might nevertheless promise himself kind quarter, from the advantages that would accrue to Achish, in attaching to his interest a person that was evidently the strength of the Jewish, and terror of the Philistine, army. Hard was the fate of David, it must be owned, when he was forced to fly for protection to those whom he had reason to believe were his bitterest enemies; but many great men have been compelled to the same thing; Themistocles to go over to the Persians, and Alcibiades to the Lacedæmonians, without turning apostates to the interest of their country.

Self-preservation is one of the first laws of nature, and therefore, if David, when he came to the court of Achish, found his life in manifest danger, I cannot see why he might not make use of any means, consistent with a good conscience for the preservation of it. He chose to personate the fool, because he presumed that Achish would readily conclude, that the troubles he had suffered under Saul's persecution of him, had stupified his senses, and turned his head. But he was not the last wise man who put on that disguise; for ¹ did not Solon, when he found that the Athenians were going to surrender Salamine, his native country, into the hands of the people of Megara, counterfeit the madman, that he might with more impunity take the freedom to divert them from it? And ² Lucius Brutus, that wise imitator of the fool, as he is called, made use of the same artifice, to escape the suspicion of Tarquin, who had already murdered his father and eldest brother, in order to seize on their great riches.

But supposing that there were no examples of other wise men to countenance this practice of David's; yet wherever did we read, in the word of God, that stratagems were not allowable against an enemy? When the Israelites besieged Ai, God himself gave them orders to make a feint, as though they fled, that they might thereby draw the people out of the city; and can the difference be so great, in pretending to a want of courage, and in counterfeiting a deprivation of reason? A divine direction indeed was in the one, and we do not read that it was in the other case; but why might not God, who had David always under his immediate care and protection, put him upon this expedient, as the only escape he had for his life? Or if the expedient was matter of his own invention, since the circumstances he was in did absolutely require it, it cannot deserve our blame, according to that common distich, that goes under no less a name than Cato's:

Insipiens esto, cum tempus postulat, aut res;

Stultitiam simulare loco, prudentia summa est. *a*

This might be some apology for David's conduct at th's critical juncture, supposing that he personated the fool or madman. But if we look into the Scripture ac-

count of this transaction a little more narrowly, we may possibly perceive, that David did not dissemble or act a part upon this occasion, but that he was really seized with a distemper; and that distemper, in all probability, was an epilepsy, or falling-sickness.

For whereas it is said of David, that ³ 'he was struck to the heart (for so it should be rendered) at the words which the officers of Achish said to their master, and thereupon was sore afraid of the king, lest, at their instigation, he should put him to death;' nothing is known to cause an epilepsy sooner ^b than a sudden and violent fright. Whereas it is said in our translation, that ⁴ 'he changed his behaviour before them;' the words in the Hebrew are 'his taste,' whereby some understand his reason, 'was changed;' but the Septuagint seem to have hit upon the right sense, 'his visage, or countenance, was changed;' for every one knows what a sudden alteration a fit of this distemper occasions in any one's looks. Whereas it is said in our translation, that he 'feigned himself mad in their hands,' the Septuagint render it, 'he trembled, and was convulsed in his hands,' as having no power to direct their motions, which is another known effect of an epilepsy. Whereas, again, our translation says, 'that he scrambled, or according to the marginal note, made marks 'upon the doors of the gate,' the Septuagint render the words, 'he fell down against the door of the gate, and the Hebrew word *tava* implies, with such force and violence, as even to leave marks or prints upon them; so that he could not but bruise and hurt himself very much by these falls. Nor is this all; for there is something in the words of Achish, if we will but adhere to the version of the Septuagint, that shows David's distemper to have been the falling-sickness, beyond all controversy. For, whereas our translation is, 'Lo, you see the man is mad, wherefore then have you brought him to me? I have no need of madmen;' the words of the Septuagint are, 'Why did ye bring this man before me? Ye see that he is in an epilepsy, and epileptic men I do not want. Why then did ye bring him to be taken with a fit in my presence?' Had David all this while been only playing the fool, as our translation makes him, he might possibly have given Achish some diversion (as ^c fools in great houses were often kept to give diversion) by his awkward or frantic tricks; ⁵ but the horror wherewith the king was struck at the first sight of him, and his indignation against his officers, for bringing him into his presence, are enough to make

³ 1 Sam. xxi. 12.

⁴ 1 Sam. xxi. 13.

⁵ Saurin, vol. 4. Dissertation 34. in Mr Dumont's Letter.

^b The author of the book, which goes under the name of Hippocrates, written professedly upon this subject, *περί τῆς ἐκείνου νόσου*, among many other causes of this distemper, makes mention of a sudden fright as one: "It passes away by reason of an unexpected fright."

^c Tarquin the Proud kept L. Junius Brutus as a fool, for so he pretended to be, to divert his children with his absurd discourse and actions. But Anacharsis, who lived about three hundred years after David, complains of this custom among the Grecians, by telling us, that a man was a creature too serious to be designed for so ridiculous a purpose; and to show the continuance of this custom, Pliny, writing to one of his friends, who had complained to him, that at a great entertainment, he had passed his time but very disagreeably, by reason of the kept fools, who were always interrupting conversation, tells him, that every one has his taste, but, as for himself, he could never be delighted with such extravagancies, though some complaisance was due to those of another way of thinking.—*Epist.* 17.

¹ Diogenes Laertius, b. 1. in Solone.

² Dionysius Halicarn. Antiq. Rom. b. 4.

^a Be foolish, when time or circumstance demands; seasonably to pretend foolishness, is the highest wisdom.

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one believe, that his distemper had made him a frightful object; and therefore the king commanded immediately to have him removed out of his presence, and out of the palace.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that as David had the true symptoms of an epilepsy upon him, which, in all probability, was occasioned by a violent fright; God, in his good providence, might permit this distemper to befall him at this juncture, in order to facilitate his escape out of the hands of Achish, and as soon as the danger was over, restored him to his former health again. For this reason we find him, in those psalms, which he is thought to have composed upon this occasion, alluding both to the nature of his distemper, and to God's goodness, in preserving him in it, and delivering him from it: ¹ 'Great are the troubles of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones, so that none of them is broken;' and therefore ² 'unto thee, O God, will I pay my vows, unto thee will I give thanks; for thou hast delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living.'

David, upon his escape from the court of Achish, not knowing of any other place of retreat, betook himself to the cave of Adullam, where he found it necessary to provide for his security, by putting himself upon some foot of defence. Jonathan, from full conviction, had told him, (as himself from frequent experience had found,) that his father, at all adventures, would endeavour to take away his life. His family by this time were fallen under the displeasure of Saul, and were in danger of being all cut off (as lately were the priests of Nob) under pretence of a conspiracy against him; and therefore it is no wonder, that his brethren, having this apprehension of danger before their eyes, resorted to him for their own security; no wonder, that in ^a times of national discord, refugees of all kinds, either through their private wants, or the oppression of their enemies, a disaffection to the government, or a zeal for the next successor, should flock to David: nor was David any ways blamable, for receiving them, ³ since we have abundant reason to presume, that he took none under his protection, but such as were forced to fly from Saul's injustice and oppression, nor screened any debtors, but such as were under a real inability to satisfy their creditors, and were therefore necessitated either to

leave their country or lose their liberty. The submission and discipline wherein he kept his people, and the high notions of respect and reverence which he always infused into them, for the government and person of the king, are an ample testimony that he meditated no defection or revolt; and the debtors whom he secured from cruel prosecutions or slavery, he put in a condition to pay their creditors, by leading them against the enemies of Israel, from whom, in several expeditions, they returned laden with rich spoils.

There is one part, however, of David's conduct, that cannot so well be vindicated; and that is, what passed between him and Achish, upon his second retreat to his court. We may suppose, indeed, that during this interval, an alliance was made between Achish and him, (though the sacred historian makes no mention of it,) and that this new ally, hearing how violently Saul persecuted him, might in hopes of making the breach wider, and of exasperating David against him, voluntarily invite him into his dominions; but certainly we cannot but say, that David should by no means have gone. God had expressly commanded him by his prophet to return into the tribe of Judah, and, at the same time, gave him assurance, that he would be his safeguard and protector. It was therefore an apparent diffidence of God's providence, which had been so long employed in his preservation, to make an enemy's country the place of his refuge; and a breach it was of truth and fidelity to his new ally, to make him believe that he was fighting against his foes, when all the while he was destroying his confederates.

But what can we say for his conduct, when he joins forces with the enemies of his country, takes the field with them, promises to act offensively, and looks upon it as a kind of slight and indignity to be dismissed? ⁴ 'What have I done,' says he to Achish, 'that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?' One would really suspect, by his asking the question, that he had an intention, not unlike that of the famous Martius Cariolanus, who, to revenge himself of the ingratitude of his country, joined with the Volsci to destroy it. But if his intention was either to stand neuter, or to turn against the Philistines in the day of battle, his perfidy and ingratitude to Achish must be open and conspicuous.

In short how well soever we may wish David's character, there is no vindicating his conduct in this particular. Which party soever he had taken, he must have been culpable; and one party he must have taken, had not Providence so timely interposed to preserve his honour, without injuring his conscience. However, if we would suppose any thing in extenuation of his fault, we must represent to ourselves a fugitive, pursued by a formidable enemy, and every moment in danger of falling into his hands; this fugitive kindly received at a foreign court, and protected by a prince that was in hostility with his persecutor; this prince expecting of his refugee, in consideration of the favours he had conferred on him, that he should attend him to the war, and espouse his cause against their common enemy; and all this while the other bound in gratitude not to be unconvicted, and considering the dangerous situation of his own affairs, not daring to discover his real purposes. If we imagine this, I say, we

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 18.

² Ps. lvi. 12, 13.

³ Calmet's Commentary on 1 Sam. xxii. 2.

^a Though there be no comparison between the proceedings of a very righteous and a very wicked man, David and Catiline, yet it may not be amiss, upon this occasion, to take notice of what Sallust says of Manlius, Catiline's agent and ambassador. In Etruria Manlius was engaged in collecting those individuals who, oppressed by poverty and grief in having by the tyranny of Sylla lost their property and effects, were become desirous of revolution; robbers also of every description, and in no scant numbers, flocked around his standard, &c. It is not improbable, however, that the usage now prevailed among the Jews, which Cæsar tells us, anciently obtained among the Gauls, for those that were in debt, oppressed by tributes, or the tyranny of the great, to betake themselves to the service of some eminent man for protection. By him they were maintained, and to him they devoted themselves, under a solemn obligation to live and die with him. These were called in the Gallic language, *Soldarii*, from whence the word soldier is derived; and as they might be honest and good men, though they had the misfortune to be in debt, or could not submit to tyrannical treatment; so, in all probability, David's companions were.—See the *Life of David*, by the author of *Revelation Examined*.

⁴ 1 Sam. xxix. 8.

⁵ Ibid. xiii. 14, and xv. 28.

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must allow, that if in any case, what they call a finesse in policy were allowable, it was in this of David's, when he had unhappily brought himself into these circumstances.

It may seem a little strange, perhaps, that David, who in these and several other grosser instances, could not but be culpable in the eyes of God, should nevertheless be styled in Scripture, ¹ 'the man after his own heart;' but, whoever observes the occasion of that expression, will find that it ought to be taken in a comparative sense only, and in derogation indeed to Saul, whose transgression, in sparing Amalek, the prophet Samuel was then reproofing; that in executing his decrees upon the idolatrous nations round about him, David would be more punctual, and not so remiss as Saul had been; and in this respect would conform to the divine will, or be the man after God's own heart. This seems to be the primary sense of the words, though the common solution, viz. that though David was a great and grievous sinner, yet the severity of his repentance cleared him in the sight of God, and made an amends for the enormity of his transgressions, be not much amiss.

It cannot, however, with justice be said, that David was any ways culpable in sparing the life of Saul, even when Providence seems to have put it in his hand. This trial God made of his virtue and clemency; and a glorious conquest it was, not only to overcome his own resentments, which were justly enough founded against Saul, but the arguments and instigations likewise of those about him: ² 'Behold the day, of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him, as it shall seem good unto thee.' God had delivered him into his hand, indeed; but had given him no order, or permission to slay Saul. ³ He had promised him the kingdom likewise, but would by no means allow him to ascend the throne by blood. His title to the succession was real and incontestable, but not allowed to be put in force, or himself to attempt, by ways of violence, the possession of the crown, as long as Saul was permitted by God to reign, and recognised as sovereign by the people. David, as yet, being only a private man, had no authority to wage war against Saul; and though it be allowable for any one to defend himself against any unjust aggressor, and to repel force by force, yet this must be done only in order to secure his own life, and not to take away that of his adversary; for what the apostle says of judging, or censuring, is much more forcible in the matter of killing: ⁴ 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth, or falleth; for there is one lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy: who art thou then that judgest another?' And these rules, which ought to be observed by private persons, are much more extensive when they relate to a prince and his subject. The subject is obliged in duty, even though he be innocent, to bear patiently the ill-treatment of his prince. David, no doubt, was conscious of his own integrity; but were it not for the preceding promises of God in his favour, and the orders which, from time to time, he received from the high priest's oracle, it would not have been so easy a matter to justify some part of his conduct. His

flying from his country, enlisting men, and putting himself in a condition of defence, would, even under our mild government, be looked upon as seditious and rebellious proceedings. And therefore we may suppose, that David himself might not have so favourable an opinion of the course of life he was compelled at that time to follow; might think that he gave some umbrage to Saul's jealousy, and suspicion of him; and might thereupon be more inclinable to excuse the violence of his persecution, and to make no other use of the advantages he had against him, than to demonstrate his own innocence, and the groundlessness of the other's suspicions; for such seems to be the sense of his own words: ⁵ 'Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? For, what have I done, or what evil is in my hand? Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold this day thine eyes have seen how the Lord hath delivered thee into mine hand in the cave, but mine eye spared thee; therefore cursed be they before the Lord, who make this difference betwixt us; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord.' For herein he not only pleads his own innocence, and good intentions towards the king, but, in some measure, excuses the king's conduct towards him, as being under the influence of evil counsellors, who both imposed upon the king's credulity, and compelled him to such a method of life as was far from being agreeable to his interest or inclination.

Upon many accounts, therefore, it was an act of his great and generous soul, for David to spare the life of his severest enemy. But though we cannot, in like manner, justify his indignation against Nabal, and the oath which he swore to destroy his whole family; yet something may be offered in excuse of it, if we attend a little to what occasioned it, and the too common effect which such treatment, as Nabal's was, is apt to have upon such spirits as we may suppose David's to have been. David while he continued in the wilderness of Paran, had given his men charge, not only to do no injury to Nabal's shepherds and herdsmen, but even to protect and assist them, in case they were invaded by any of the neighbouring Arabians; and now that their master was shearing his sheep, which was always a festival season, not far from the place where David was encamped, to show him the greater respect, he sent no less than ten young men of his company to make his compliments to him, and, in the most civil manner, to request something of him, as it was the custom to be generous and liberal at such a time as that, for the relief of himself and his followers, in this form: ⁶ 'Peace be to thee,' as the young men's instructions were, 'and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all thou hast.' Peace, in the sacred language, comprehends all manner of blessings, both spiritual and temporal; and therefore a higher compliment, as he say, or a more affectionate salutation, could not have been devised: 'And now I have heard that thou hast shearers, and thy shepherds, which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while that they were in Carmel:' a sufficient argument, one would think, to engage Nabal's grateful acknowledgment: because it certainly was a matter of no small courtesy, for a body of men in arms, and in

¹ 1 Sam. xiii. 14. and xv. 28. ² 1 Sam. xxiv. 4.³ Calmet's Commentary on 1 Sam. xxiv. 4.⁴ Rom. xiv. 4. and Jam. iv. 12.⁵ 1 Sam. xxiv. 9, 10.⁶ 1 Sam. xxv. &c.

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want of the common necessities of life not to take by violence what they could not be hindered from. Such men claim a kind of license to do injuries with impunity; and therefore it ought to be deemed a great favour, when they do them not. David and his men, however, are so far from magnifying their services to Nabal, that they only say, 'they did them no hurt;' whereas his own servants acknowledge, 'that they were a defence, and a wall to them both by night and by day, all the while that they were with them keeping sheep.' Upon this presumption, the matter of their request was, 'Let the young men find favour in thine eyes, (for we come in a good day;) give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh unto thine hand unto thy servants, and thy son David.' Words can hardly be invented more full of respect and humility; ² for he pays a deference to Nabal, either upon the account of his seniority, or descent from the same tribe, and desires no rarities, no delicates, but any thing that first came to hand, and what he could most conveniently spare.

Nabal, as we just now hinted, was of the same tribe with David, and could not therefore be supposed ignorant either of his exploits in defence of his country, or of the true cause of Saul's indignation against him: and yet, observe the rudeness and insolence of his answer to such a civil message and humble request: ³ 'Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants now-a-days, that break every man from his master. Shall I take the provisions I have made, for my shearers, and give them unto men, whom I know not whence they are?' Nothing certainly could be more provoking than such an answer as this. The charging David with being a vagabond, and rebel to his prince, was a reproach insufferable to a man of a liberal spirit, who knew himself innocent: and therefore no wonder that David, upon the report of the messengers, who were themselves brought under the same predicament, and therefore had no reason to alleviate matters, was resolved, in his passion, to be revenged upon Nabal. For ⁴ there were four things in the matter before us that seem to have inflamed his resentment, and put him upon this sanguinary design. 1st, The want which both he and his companions, at present laboured under, but hoped to have relieved out of the abundance of a wealthy man, who might easily have done it without hurting himself. 2dly, the deception he was under, in finding no compensation made him, for the care which he and his people had taken of Nabal's cattle, though perhaps he had given them his word and assurance that something of this kind would be done. 3dly, The resentment which easily rises in the breast of any generous man, when, instead of thanks, and a grateful acknowledgment, he meets with contumely and opprobrious language. And 4thly, The vexation which an innocent man, conscious of his own merits, and the services he had done his king and country, must necessarily feel, when he perceives himself vilified and treated as a scoundrel. ⁵ Fugitive and slave are imputations of the grossest nature; and when retorted by an ungrateful person upon his guardian and benefactor, are provocations past bearing.

Any one of these things singly was enough to irritate

a man of a lofty spirit; but all put together, could hardly fail of inflaming his mind to such a degree, as to make him lose the government of his passions, and fall into the most vindictive rage, which is generally more observable in military men, whose courage and spirits run high, and being too much accustomed to blood and slaughter, even in lawful wars, have not that dread and abhorrence of cruel and outrageous executions, as the rest of mankind have, who live more retired and peaceable lives.

It was to the sudden transport of David's passion then, and perhaps that exasperated by the instigations of his own men, that we are to impute his vow, and design of destroying Nabal's family: and though in this we cannot commend him, yet certainly there is something praiseworthy in his speedy reconciliation upon Abigail's first address and application to him, in the room of her husband: ⁶ 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to me; and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.' ⁷ In a word, the resolution against Nabal, as one elegantly expresses it, was the resolution of a mortal, not to say a military man, too much injured and provoked, and urged by necessity and self-preservation: the change and the thanksgiving, upon being averted from evil, were the sentiments of an hero and a saint.

The Jews indeed, as we quoted the objection from Josephus, give us an high commendation of Saul, and seem to prefer him before David himself, in regard to the magnanimity of his death. But it is much to be questioned, whether self-murder, which was certainly Saul's case, be an act of magnanimity or not. For besides that the laws of all nations have condemned it, as abhorrent to the dictates of nature and reason, of self-love and self-preservation, the wisest of the heathen world ever looked upon it as an instance of madness and brutality, and with great wisdom have concluded, that such an action is so far from savouring of true courage and generosity, that ^a it is the sure effect of a weak and pusillanimous temper of mind; since true greatness of soul as they justly argue, consists in supporting the evils of adversity, and not in shifting them off, which is a mark of a poor impatient spirit, sinking under the common calamities of life, and not knowing how to bear the blows of bad fortune. ⁸ 'Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest the uncircumcised come and mock, or abuse me,' ^b was the request which Saul made to his armour-bearer, and shows that it was not bravery and courage, but the fear of insults, and a conscious

⁶ 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33. ⁷ Life of King David. ⁸ 1 Sam. xxxi. 4.

^a By the proper understanding of the right rules of reason, that is not reckoned a true greatness of soul when any one, in not being able to endure the calamities of life, undertakes to end them by laying violent hands on himself; for it is rather a display of weakness of mind when a man cannot endure either the oppressive slavery of his own body, or the sneer of a dastardly world, and surely greater magnanimity must deservedly be said to belong to him who would rather fight than fly from the struggle of a calamitous life.—*Aug. de Civit. Dei*, b. 1. c. 22. And to the same purpose is that in an heathen author: 'It is an easy matter to despise a life of adversity; he is the true hero who can be miserable.'—*Martial*, Epig.

^b How much nobler was that resolution of Darius, who, finding himself betrayed, and that he was either to be murdered by his own subjects, or delivered into the hands of Alexander, would not however be his own executioner. 'I had rather,' says he, 'die by another's guilt, than my own.'—*Curtius*, b. 5.

1 Sam. xxv. 16. ² Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

³ 1 Sam. xxv. 10, 11. ⁴ Le Clerc's Comment. in locum.

⁵ The Life of King David.

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inability to bear them with a becoming superiority of mind, that made him shun the storm, when he saw it approaching, by withdrawing from the stage of life.

Saul's case indeed was very dolorous; but he had not therefore any authority to destroy himself. His life was a sacred depositum of God's, and not to be taken away without invading his right, and violating his laws at the same time. For whatever some may think of the silence of the Scripture concerning self-murder, there is no question to be made, but that it is included in the sixth commandment, under which Saul then lived. ¹ The commandment forbids murder in general; and it is certainly as much murder, to kill ourselves, as to kill another man: and the reason which the Scripture gives, why we are not allowed to do it, in both cases, is the same, because ² 'in the image of God, made he man.' For if I must not shed the blood of another, because he is made in the image of God; I must not shed the blood of mine own self, because I also am a man, and made in the image of God, as well as he. The reason therefore why we have not more frequent prohibitions against this sin is plainly this, ³ that whatever sins or offences God, as a lawgiver, prohibits, he prohibits with a penalty, that is, he affixes such a punishment to such a crime, and he who commits the crime, is to undergo the punishment in this world, whether it be restitution, loss of limb, or loss of life itself. But now this can never happen in the case of self-murder, because self-murder prevents all punishment, the man being dead, before any cognizance can be taken of his offence, and therefore prevents all laws concerning it; and can, consequently, only be included under general commands, and forbidden as a sin, whereof God alone can take cognizance in the world to come.

Since, upon the whole then, Saul may be said to have died in an act of cowardice, and in the violation of God's law, whereof he had no space to repent, it has been a matter of some inquiry, what we are to think of his salvation. The Scripture indeed tells us, that ⁴ 'Saul died for his transgression, which he committed against the Lord, and also for asking counsel of one who had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it, and inquired not of the Lord; and therefore the Lord slew him.' But it is doing a manifest violence to the sense of these words, to apply them as some have done, to his final perdition, when they plainly relate to no more than his temporal death. The dangerous and destructive nature of self-murder is, that it makes repentance, the only revealed condition of man's salvation, impossible; but then we are to know, that in that inexhaustible fountain of goodness, there may be some uncovenanted mercy, some sovereign and prerogative grace, that may make favourable allowances for the distraction of men's thoughts or passions, the violence of their fears or troubles, or the over-bearing weight of any other temptation.

But to determine this question more preemptorily, though it certainly be consonant to the mercy and goodness of God, to think, that no man shall answer for any miscarriage which is wholly occasioned by the power of a disease, or the distraction of the brain, because whatever is committed, in such a case, is not the man's free

act, and consequently cannot be his guilt; yet we have no reason to presume, that the case is not so with those, who, out of pride, or haughtiness, fear of miseries to come, or impatience under present sufferings, distrust of God's providence, or despair of his mercy, lay violent hands upon themselves; because the act was both voluntary and vicious, and not to be amended by repentance: but without limiting thy goodness, O Lord, unto thy mercy we commit their souls!

Thus we have endeavoured to satisfy most of the popular objections which have been raised against several facts, occurring in the first book of Samuel; and for the farther confirmation thereof, we shall only instance in one or two ancient traditions among the heathens, which in all probability derived their original from this part of sacred history. The Scythians, upon their return out of Egypt, passing through the country of the Philistines, robbed the temple of Venus at Askalon, and for their punishment (as ⁵ Herodotus tells us) they, and their posterity, were for a long while afflicted with emerods. Whereupon ⁶ the learned Prideaux remarks, that the Philistines had till then preserved the memory of what they had formerly suffered on account of the ark of God. The Athenians when the mysteries of Bacchus were brought out of Beotia, having not received them with all the pomp and solemnity that the god expected, were smitten ⁷ with a disease in their secret parts, which resembled the malady of the people of Ashdod, and so did their cure too; for having consulted the oracle, they were informed, that the way to get rid of their plague, was to offer unto Bacchus golden figures of the part wherein they were afflicted. The Grecians, at the taking of Troy, discovered an ark dedicated to Bacchus; and when Eurypilus, as Pausanias ⁸ tells us, adventured to open it, he found therein the image of the god, but was immediately deprived of his senses for daring to look into it; which seems to be a plain transcript from the irreverence and fate of the Bethshemites. ⁹ Clemens Alexandrinus has observed, that the fable of Æacus's praying for rain in a great drought, and when Greece was sadly distressed for want of corn, was borrowed from that part of Samuel's history, where he is said to have called down thunder and rain, in the time of wheat harvest, when the sky was all serene and clear: and therefore we need less wonder at the story between Saul and the witch of Endor, when we read of Circe, Medea, Erichtho, Manto, Antonoe, and several other women, who, in the heathen world, became famous for their necromancy, and of the many votaries that resorted to them; when we find Statius introducing Tiresias, as raising altars, making libations, and offering sacrifices, ¹⁰ with solemn invocations to the infernal gods; and Homer himself, spending a great part of ¹¹ one book of his poem, in representing Ulysses as invoking the ghost of his same Tiresias, and attending to the oracles which proceeded from his mouth. These things had their foundations in some early traditions, which at first

⁵ B. 1. ⁶ Connection of the Old and New Testament, part 1. b. 1. p. 44. ⁷ See Aristoph. Scholiast, in Acham. act. 2.

⁸ In Achaic. c. 19. p. 572. ⁹ Stromat. 6. ¹⁰ Odys. 11.

¹¹ The words of his invocation are these: "To him that knocks unfold the silent dens, and from their abodes of gloom call forth the aerial subjects of the cruel Persephone's murky realms, that the Stygian ferryman may return with a full cargo."

¹ Fleetwood against Self-murder.

² Gen. xi. 6.

³ Fleetwood against Self-murder.

⁴ 1 Chron. x. 13, 11.

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arose from the facts contained in the sacred writings, which are confessedly the most ancient records we have; and in this respect are an argument of their veracity, since we find them alluded to by subsequent authors, who had no regard to their authority.

CHAP. III.—*On the Jewish Theocracy.*

SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.

It is of great importance to have a right understanding of the nature and design of that government under which the Israelites were placed on their departure from the land of Egypt. This has been called a Theocracy, that is, a government of which God is the immediate Head. The persons to whom the administration of this government was committed, were neither legislators nor sovereigns; but merely officers who acted under the authority of God, whose duty it was to see the laws which he had enacted put in force.

It is evident that the fundamental principle of the Mosaic law was the maintenance of one true God, and the prevention, or rather proscription, of polytheism and idolatry. The covenant of Jehovah with the Hebrew people, and their oath by which they bound their allegiance to Jehovah their God and King, was, that they should receive and obey the laws which he should appoint as their supreme Governor, with a particular engagement to keep themselves from the idolatry of the nations around them. In keeping this allegiance to Jehovah, as their immediate and supreme Lord, they were to expect the blessings of God's immediate and particular protection, in the security of their liberty, peace, and prosperity, against all attempts of their idolatrous neighbours; but if they should break their allegiance to Jehovah, or forsake his covenant, by going and serving other gods, then they should forfeit these blessings of God's protection.¹ In this constitution, it will be observed, that it is enforced chiefly by temporal sanctions, and with singular wisdom, for temporal blessings and evils were at that time the common and prevailing incitements to idolatry; but by thus taking them into the Hebrew constitution, as rewards to obedience and punishments for disobedience, they became motives to continuance in the true religion, instead of encouragements to idolatry.²

In the theocracy of the Hebrews, the laws were given to them by God, through the mediation of Moses, and they were to be of perpetual force and obligation, so long as their policy subsisted. The judges by whom these laws were administered, were represented as holy persons, and as sitting in the place of God.³ These judges were usually taken from the tribe of Levi, and the chief expounder of the law was the high priest. In difficult cases of law, however, relating both to government and war, God was to be consulted by Urim and Thummin; and in matters which concerned the welfare of the state, God frequently made known his will by pro-

phets, whose mission was duly attested, and the people were bound to hearken to their voice. In all these cases, Jehovah appears as sovereign King, ruling his people by his appointed ministers.

A subordinate design of this constitution of the Hebrew government was, the prevention of intercourse between the Israelites and foreign nations. The prevalence of the most abominable idolatry among those nations, and the facility with which the Israelites had, on more than one occasion, adopted their idolatrous rites, during their sojourning in the wilderness, rendered this seclusion necessary, in order to secure the fundamental principle of the Mosaic law above-mentioned; and many of the peculiar laws will, on this principle, be found both wisely and admirably adapted to secure this design.⁴

The form of the Hebrew republic was unquestionably democratic. When Moses promulgated the laws, he convened the whole congregation of Israel, to whom he is repeatedly said to have spoken; but as he could not possibly be heard by six hundred thousand men, we must conclude that he only addressed a certain number of persons, who were deputed to represent the rest of the Israelites. By comparing Deut. xxix. 9. with Joshua xxiii. 2. it appears that these representatives were the heads of tribes, of families, and judges, and officers.

All the various branches of Abraham's descendants, like the ancient Germans, or the Scottish clans, kept together in a body according to their tribes and families; each tribe forming a lesser commonwealth, with its peculiar interests, and all of them at last uniting into one great republic. The same arrangement, it is well known, obtained among the Israelites, who appear to have been divided into twelve great tribes, previously to their departure from Egypt. By Moses, however, they were subdivided into certain great families, which are called *families* by way of distinction: each of whom, again, had their heads, which are sometimes called, *heads of houses of fathers*, and sometimes simply heads. These are likewise the same persons, who in Josh. xxiii. 2. and xxiv. 1. are called *elders*. It does not appear in what manner these heads or elders of families were chosen, when any of them died. The princes or heads of tribes did not cease with the monarchy; for it is evident that they subsisted in the time of David;⁵ and they must have proved a powerful restraint upon the power of the king.

It will now be readily conceived how the Israelitish state might have subsisted not only without a king, but even occasionally without that magistrate who was called a judge. Every tribe had always its own chief magistrate, who may not inaptly be compared to the lords lieutenants of our British counties: subordinate to them, again, were the heads of families, who may be represented as their depute-lieutenants, and if there were no general ruler of the whole people, yet there were twelve smaller commonwealths, who in certain cases united together, and whose general convention would take measures for their common interest. In many cases particular tribes acted as distinct and independent republics, not only when there was neither king nor judge, but even

¹ Deut. xix. 25—27.

² Lowman on the Civil Constitution of the Hebrews; Dr Graves's Lectures on the Pentateuch, v. 2. pp. 141—185.

³ Deut. i. 17; xix. 7.

⁴ Michaelis's Commentaries, &c. vol. 1.

⁵ 1 Chr. xvii. 16—22.

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during the times of the kings. Instances of wars being carried on by one or more particular tribes, both before and after the establishment of the regal government, may be seen in Josh. xvii. 15—17. Judg. iv. 11. and xviii—xx. 1 Chron. iv. 18—23. It appears from 1 Chron. xxiii. 11. that a certain number of persons was necessary to constitute a family, and to empower such a family to have a representative head: for it is there said, that the four sons of Shimei had not a numerous progeny, and were therefore reckoned only as one family. Hence we may explain why, according to Micah v. 1. Bethlehem may have been too small to be reckoned among the families of Judah. It is impossible to ascertain, at this distance of time, what number of individuals was requisite to constitute a house or family.¹

The judges who were appointed by Moses, had also a right by virtue of their office, to be present in the congregation, or convention of the state. After the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, Moses, for some time, was their sole judge. Jethro, his father-in-law, observing that the daily duties of this office were too heavy for him, suggested to him the institution of judges, or rulers of tens, of fifties, of hundreds, and of thousands, who determined every affair of little importance among themselves, but brought the hard causes to Moses.² Of the judges of tens, therefore, there must have been sixty thousand; of the judges of fifties, twelve thousand; of the judges of hundreds, six thousand; and of the judges of thousands, six hundred. These judges seem to have been a sort of justices of the peace in several divisions, probably taken from the military division of a host into thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens; this was a model proper for them as an army marching, and not unsuitable to their settlement as tribes and families, in a sort of counties, hundreds, and tithings.

After the Hebrews were established in the land of Canaan, Moses ordained that judges should be appointed in every city,³ and it should seem that they were chosen by the people. In succeeding ages these judicial offices were filled by the Levites, most probably because they were the persons best skilled in the law of the Hebrews.

During the sojourning of the Israelites in the wilderness, Moses established a council or *senate* of seventy, to assist him in the government of the people. The Jewish rabbinical writers, who have exercised their ingenuity in conjecturing why the number was limited to seventy, have pretended that this was a permanent and supreme court of judicature; but as the sacred writers are totally silent concerning such a tribunal, we are authorized to conclude that it was only a temporary institution. After their return from the Babylonish captivity, it is well known that the Jews did appoint a Sanhedrim or council of seventy at Jerusalem, in imitation of that which Moses had instituted. In the New Testament, very frequent mention is made of this supreme tribunal, of which an account will be found in a subsequent part of this work.

Thus, the form of the Jewish government was, as Josephus very properly terms it, a theocracy, under which sins as well as crimes were punished, and piety and

private virtue, as well as public services to the state, rewarded even in this world. No other government, at least since the earliest ages, has been, or indeed could be, administered in this manner, for no government administered by mere man can either punish or reward any thing but overt acts; nor do ordinary civil governments concern themselves with the practice of religious duties or private virtues, farther than those duties and virtues affect the peace of society. Without taking cognizance of these things, however, the civil constitution of the Israelites would not have answered the purpose for which that people was separated from the rest of the world; for their minds in general were too grovelling to have been restrained from the universal propensity to polytheism and idolatry which then prevailed, by any thing but immediate rewards for duties performed, and immediate punishment for impiety and vice.

That this theocratic government continued until the elevation of Saul to the throne is unquestionable. From the death of Joshua to that period, the highest permanent officer in the state as well as in the church was evidently the high priest: and this was the natural consequence of God himself being the supreme civil governor of the nation. Occasional magistrates were indeed raised up from time to time under the denomination of judges; but from their history it appears that their office was rather military than civil; that most of them were employed in leading armies to battle against the oppressors of their country rather than in dispensing justice to the people; that they were raised up by an immediate impulse from heaven, and not by the choice of the nation; and that when they were not themselves supernaturally enlightened by the Spirit of God, they were to undertake nothing of importance, either in peace or in war, but by the direction of the high priest, after he had consulted God for them by Urim.

Such was the theocratic government of Israel in the time of the judges; but when, toward the end of Samuel's administration, the people mutinously demanded a king to reign over them, and God directed the prophet to comply with their request, the general opinion till very lately, was, and perhaps still is, that the government of Israel ceased to be theocratic, and became such a monarchy as other civil governments which are administered by one man. Such indeed they wished it to be; for their demand was to "have a king over them, that they also might be like the nations;" and in this sense their demand was understood both by God and by the prophet. 'They have not rejected thee, said the Lord to Samuel, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them;' and had their demand been granted to the utmost extent of their wishes, they would very quickly have proceeded to abrogate the law, and to reject Jehovah as their only God.

The magistrate called a king in those days and countries around them, was supreme and absolute. His edicts were laws, which he could enforce, suspend, or abrogate, at his pleasure; but such authority never was possessed by Saul, by David, or by any other king, either of Israel or of Judah. All writers on politics have agreed, indeed all men capable of reflection must agree, that in every government there is necessarily a power, from which the constitution has provided no appeal, and which may therefore be termed absolute,

¹ Michael. Commentary, vol. I. p. 244. ² Exod. xvii. 14, 26.³ Deut. xvi. 18.

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omnipotent, and uncontrollable. But this power can be nothing else than the legislature; and where the right of enacting and executing the laws is vested in different bodies, the government is more or less free according to circumstances. The sole legislator of Israel was God; and therefore, as the kings could neither enact a new law nor repeal an old one, the government continued to be a theocracy, as well under their permanent administration, as it was under the occasional administration of the judges; and the only difference that we can discover between the two species of government, is, that the conduct of Judges was generally directed by him, and that of the kings either by the inspiration of God vouchsafed to themselves, or by prophets raised up from time to time to reclaim them when deviating from their duty as laid down by the law. That the theocracy ended not with the judges, has been proved by Bishop Warburton in so masterly a manner, that I should do my reader injustice were I not to lay before him an abstract of that learned and ingenious prelate's reasoning on the subject.

I. "Though the people's purpose, in their clamours for a king, was indeed to live under a Gentile monarchy, like their idolatrous neighbours; yet in compassion to their blindness, God, in this instance, as in many others, indulged their prejudices, without exposing them to the fatal consequences of their project, which, if complied with in the sense in which they had formed it, would have been a withdrawing from them of his extraordinary providence, at a time when they could not support themselves without it. He therefore gave them a king; but such a one as was only his viceroy or deputy; and who, on that account, was not left to the people's election, but chosen by himself, and chosen for life, which it does not appear that all the judges were.

II. "This king had an unlimited executive power as God's viceroy, for which he was amenable to God alone, whom David therefore repeatedly calls his own King, as well as the King of Israel.

III. "He had no legislative authority, which every king then had, but which no viceroy could possibly have. David and Solomon indeed appointed the courses of the priests; but the latter is said to have done so according to the order of the former, who is expressly styled 'the man of God,' who, therefore, acted under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

IV. "The king was placed and displaced by God at pleasure, of which as viceroy, we see the perfect fitness; but as sovereign, by the people's choice or by any other right, we cannot easily account for. No doubt God is by inherent right the sovereign Dispenser of all things both in heaven and in earth; but in the establishing of the government of Israel, he appears to have treated with that people, as men equally independent treat with each other, and to have left it at first to their own option whether they would have himself for their King.

V. "The very same punishment was ordained for cursing the king as for blaspheming God, namely, stoning to death; and the reason is intimated in these words of Abishai to David:—'Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?' the common title of the kings of Israel and of Judah.

VI. "The throne and kingdom of Judea is all along expressly declared to be God's throne and God's kingdom. Thus, in the first book of Chronicles, it is said,

that Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father. And the queen of Sheba, who had doubtless been informed by Solomon of the true nature of his kingdom, compliments him in these words, 'Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighteth in thee to set thee on his throne, to be king for the Lord thy God.' In like manner, Ahijah says to the house of Israel, on their defection from Rehoboam; 'And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hands of the sons of David.'¹

VII. "The penal laws against idolatry were still in force during their kings, and put in execution by their best rulers; which alone is a demonstration of the subsistence of the theocracy; because such law would be absolutely unjust under any other form of government.²

VIII. "It appears that a certain degree of inspiration was vouchsafed to their several kings, or at least to the first of each dynasty of kings, to enable them to discharge properly the duties of God's vicegerents, and that this gift was not withdrawn till they were rejected from their high office, or had rendered themselves unworthy of it. Thus when Saul was anointed to be captain over the Lord's inheritance, as soon as he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart, and turned him into a new man, to qualify him, as Bishop Patrick observes, for the government of his people; but when he had rendered himself, by his rebellions against his divine sovereign, unworthy of the office, that spirit was withdrawn from him, and conferred on David, who was anointed to succeed him. In like manner, when Solomon succeeded to the kingdom, God bestowed on him 'a wise and understanding heart, to enable him to govern and judge the people,' who are expressly called not Solomon's, but God's people."³

It is justly observed by Warburton, that had the people's demand of a king been complied with in the sense and to the extent that they meant it, the equal and extraordinary providence, rewarding piety and virtue in this world, and punishing idolatry and vice, must have been withdrawn from them; and that they could not then have supported themselves under an ordinary providence in which 'all things here come alike to all,' surrounded as they were by exasperated enemies, more powerful than themselves. But it is of more importance perhaps to consider the equal and extraordinary providence as necessary at that period, and long afterwards, to check their propensities to idolatry, and to prepare them gradually for the reception of that future Messiah, promised to their forefathers, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. A long succession of prophets was accordingly sent to open up gradually the nature of that dispensation, which Moses had taught them to expect from a prophet to be raised up among them like unto him; and to remove, by little and little, the shadows of their law, as they became more and more able to bear the splendour of the light within. That splendour, however, the nation at large was never considered fully able to bear; and therefore the extraordinary providence was never wholly withdrawn from them till some time after their return from their Babylonish captivity, by which they appear to have been completely cured of

¹ 1 Sam. ix. 8.

² Div. Leg. b. 5. sec. 3.

³ 2 Sam. iii. 5—15.

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their propensities to polytheism, and led to turn their attention more steadily to the prospect of that future state, which had been presented to them by some of their later prophets.

During the captivity Bishop Warburton supposes that the administration of the theocracy lay, as it were, in abeyance, but it appears that the Jews were there permitted to live as far as possible, that is, to regulate their own private concerns, by their own laws; and we are sure that they were protected by a miraculous interposition of providence, from the tyranny of those who attempted to compel them to worship idols or to neglect the worship of their own God.¹ On their return to their own country, however, the theocratic government was again administered, as is evident from the declaration of the Almighty, by the prophet Haggai: 'yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech the high priest; and be strong all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth amongst you: fear ye not.'² "What was that covenant?" asks the Bishop. "That Israel should be his people, and he their God and King. It cannot barely mean, that he would be their God, and they should be his people; for this was but part of the covenant. Nor can it mean that they should be conducted by an extraordinary providence, as at their coming out of Egypt, and during the first periods of the theocracy, for this was but the effect of the covenant, which soon ceased after their re-establishment in their own country."

Then indeed the extraordinary providence was wholly withdrawn from the Jews, among whom, as among other nations, there was thenceforth, 'one event in this world, to the righteous and to the wicked,' whose prosperity or adversity appeared no longer to be the result, as formerly, of their righteousness or their sins. Still, however, their government continued to be a theocracy; for they were governed by laws which, as they were given by God, none but God could repeal or change. If then, as all writers on political philosophy agree, every government receives its denomination from the supreme or sovereign power of the state; and if no power can be supreme, but that in which resides the power of legislation, it is obvious that the government or constitution of the Jewish state continued to be a theocracy till the coming of that prophet, who was to be a lawgiver like unto Moses; for none else had, or could have authority to repeal, or in any way change those laws which they had received from God, by his ministry. Jesus the promised Messiah erected, indeed, a new and spiritual kingdom, to be governed by a new and spiritual law; and proved the divine origin of that kingdom, by miracles equally numerous and stupendous with those by which the theocracy had been originally established; whilst he completely abolished the Mosaic dispensation, by rendering it impossible to administer even the form of the theocratic government.³

CHAP. III.—Of Samuel's appearing to Saul at the Witch of Endor's.

How long the profession of necromancy, or the art of raising up the dead, in order to pry into future events, or to be informed of the fate of the living, has obtained in the world, we have no indications from history. We perceive no footsteps of it in the ages before the flood; and yet it is strange, that a people, abandoned to all kinds of wickedness in a manner, could keep themselves clear of this: but our account of these times is very short. The first express mention that we meet with of magicians and sorcerers, is almost in the beginning of the book of Exodus, where Moses is soliciting the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt; and therefore Egypt, which affected to be the mother of most occult sciences, is supposed to have been the inventress of this. From Egypt it spread itself into the neighbouring countries, and soon infected all the east: for as it undertook to gratify man's inquisitiveness, and superstitious curiosity, it could not long want abettors. From Egypt it is certain that the Israelites brought along with them no small inclination to these detestable practices; and were but too much addicted to them; notwithstanding all the care that the state had taken to suppress them, and the provision which God had made, by establishing a method of consulting him, to prevent their hankering after them.

The injunction of the law is very express. ⁴ 'When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or ^a a con-

⁴ Deut. xviii. 9, &c.

^a What our English translation makes a *familiar spirit*, the Septuagint and Vulgate render the *spirit of Python*; but the Hebrew calls it the *spirit of Ob*. The word *Ob*, or *Oboth*, in its primary signification, is a *bottle* or *vessel of leather*, wherein liquors were put; and it is not unlikely that this name was given to witches and wizards, because, when they were in their fits of enthusiasm, they swelled in their bellies like a bottle. The occasion of this swelling is said by some to proceed from a demon's entering into the sorceress per partes genitales, and so ascending to the bottom of her stomach, from whence at that time, she uttered her predictions; and for this reason the Latins call such persons 'ventriloqui,' and the Greeks *ὑγροσπελμβοί*, 'people who speak out of their bellies.' That there have been such people as these, might be shown by several examples both in ancient and modern history; but at present, we shall content ourselves with one taken from Cælius Rhodiginus, (Lecti. Antig. b. 8. c. 10.) his words are to this effect. "While I am writing," says he, "concerning ventriloquous persons, there is, in my own country, a woman of a mean extract, who has an unclean spirit in her belly, from whence may be heard a voice, not very strong indeed, but very articulate and intelligible. Multitudes of people have heard this voice, as well as myself, and all imaginable precaution has been used in examining into the truth of this fact. Quando futuri avida portentus mens, sæpe accersitam ventriloquam, ac exutam amictu nequid fraudis occultaret, inspicere et audire concupivit. This demon," as our author adds, "is called Cincinnatulus, and when the woman calls upon him by his name, he immediately answers her." In like manner several ancient writers have informed us, that in the times of paganism, evil spirits had communion with these ventriloqui per partes secretiores; but at present, we shall only take notice of a remarkable passage in St Chrysostom, which we choose to give the reader in Latin. "Traditur Pythia femina fuisse, quæ in Tripodes sedens

¹ Dan. iii. 6.

² Haggai ii. 4, 5.

³ Warburton, Horne, Gleig.

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sulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer; for all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord; and therefore their punishment was this. ¹ 'A man, or a woman, that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death. They shall stone them with stones, their blood shall be upon them.' Nor was it only the practisers of such vile arts, but those likewise that resorted to them upon any occasion, were liable to the same punishment; for ² 'the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards to go a-whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people,' saith the Lord.

Such was the severity of the Jewish laws against those who either practised, or encouraged, any manner of magical arts; and it must be said in Saul's commendation, that he put the laws in execution against such vile people; he had destroyed and driven away ³ 'those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land;' and yet, observe the weakness as well as the wickedness of the man! when himself fell into distress, and had abundant reason to believe that God had forsaken him, he flies to one of these creatures for relief, and requests of her to raise up his old friend Samuel, as expecting, very probably, some advice from him. But whether this was really done or no, or if done, in what manner it was effected, are points that have so much exercised the heads and pens, both of ancient and modern, both of Jewish and Christian, writers, that little or nothing new can be said upon them; and therefore all that I shall endeavour to do, will be to reduce their several sentiments into as narrow a compass, and to state them in as fair a light, as I can, by inquiring into these three particulars:

1. Whether there was a real apparition.
2. What this apparition, if real, was; and,
3. By what means, and for what purposes, it was effected.

1. It cannot be denied indeed but that those who explode the reality of the apparition, and make it to be all nothing but a cheat and juggle of the sorceress, have found out some arguments, that at first sight make a tolerable appearance. They tell us, ⁴ that the sacred history never once makes mention of Saul's seeing Samuel with his own eyes. It informs us, indeed, that Saul knew him by the description which the woman gave, and that he held, for some considerable time, a conversation with him; but since it is nowhere said that he really saw him, "Why might not the woman counterfeited a voice, and pretend it was Samuel's? When Saul asked her to ^a raise him up Samuel, that is, to disturb

the ghost of so great a prophet, she might think he was no common man; and when ⁵ 'he sware unto her by the Lord,' that he would defend her from all danger, he gave her intimation enough that he was the king. ⁶ The crafty woman, therefore, having picked up the knowledge of this, might retire into her closet or cell, and there, having her familiar, that is, some cunning artful man, to make proper responses, in a different voice, might easily impose upon one who was distracted with anxious thoughts, and had already shown sufficient credulity, in thinking there was an efficacy in magical operations to evocate the dead.

"The controversy between Saul and David every one knew; nor was it now become a secret, that the crown was to devolve upon the latter: and therefore that part of the discourse which passed between Saul and Samuel, any man of a common genius might have hit off, without much difficulty. Endor was not so far distant from Gilboa or Shunem, but that the condition of the two armies might easily be known, and that the Philistines were superior both in courage and numbers; and therefore his respondent, without all peradventure, might prognosticate Saul's defeat; and though there were some hazard in the last conjecture, viz. that he and his sons would die in battle; yet there was this advantage on the side of the guess, that they were all men of known and experienced valour, who would rather sacrifice their lives, than turn their backs upon their enemies." Upon the whole, therefore, the maintainers of this hypothesis con-

⁵ 1 Sam. xxviii. 10.⁶ See Le Clerc's Commentary on 1 Sam. xxviii. passim.

she uses for this purpose, are thus described in our excellent translator of that poet.

This said; she runs the mangled carcass o'er,
And wipes from every wound the crusty gore;
Now with hot blood the frozen breast she warms,
And with strong lunar dews confirms her charms.
Anon she mingles ev'ry monstrous birth,
Which nature, wayward and perverse, brings forth.
Nor entrails of the spotted lynx she lacks,
Nor bony joints from fell hyænas' backs;
Nor deers' hot marrow, rich with snaky blood,
Nor foam of raging dogs, that fly the flood.
Her store the tardy remora supplies,
With stones from eagles warm, and dragons' eyes;
Snakes that on pinions cut their airy way,
And nimble o'er Arabian deserts play, &c.
To these she joins dire drugs without a name,
A thousand poisons never known to fame;
Herbs, o'er whose leaves the hag her spells had sung,
And wet with cursed spittle, as they sprung,
With every other mischief most abhorr'd,
Which hell, or worse Erichtho, could afford.

Having thus prepared the body, she makes her invocation in these words:—

Ye furies! and thou black, accursed hell!
Ye woes, in which the damn'd for ever dwell!
Chaos, the world's and form's eternal foe!
And thou, sole arbiter of all below,
Pluto! whom ruthless fates a god ordain,
And doom to immortality of pain,
Ye fair Elysian mansions of the blest,
Where no Thessalian charmer hopes to rest!
Styx! and Persephone, compelled to fly
Thy fruitful mother, and the cheerful sky!
Third Hecate! by whom my whispers breathe
My secret purpose to the shades beneath!
Thou greedy dog, who at th' infernal gate,
In everlasting hunger still must wait!
And thou, old Charon, horrible and hoar!
For ever lab'ring back from shore to shore, &c.
Hear all ye powers! if e'er your hell rejoice
In the lov'd horrors of this impious voice, &c.
Hear, and obey, &c.

Pharsalia, 8. 6.

¹ Lev. xx. 27. ² Lev. xx. 6. ³ 1 Sam. xxviii. 3.⁴ Scot and Webster upon Witchcraft.

expansa malignum spiritum per interna immisum, et per genitales partes subeunt expiciens, furore repletur, ipsaque resolutis crinibus baccharetur, ex ore spumam emittens, et sic furoris verba loquebatur," &c.—*Saurin*, vol. 4. Dissertation 36.

^a What forms of enchantment were anciently used in the practice of necromancy, we are at a loss to know; because we read of none that the Pythoness of Endor employed; but this might probably happen, because the ghost of Samuel came upon her sooner than she expected, and before she had begun her incantations. That however there were several rites, spells, and invocations used upon these occasions, we may learn from almost every ancient author; but from none more particularly than from Lucan, who brings in Erichtho animating a dead body, in order to tell young Pompey the fate of the civil war. The ceremonies

A. M. 2888. A. C. 1116; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4301. A. C. 1110. 1 SAM. i. TO THE END.

clude that as there is no reason, so there was no necessity for any miraculous interposition in this affair, since this is no more than what any common gypsy, with another in confederacy to assist her, might do to any credulous person who came to consult her.

They who undertake to oppose this opinion, lay it down for a good rule in the interpretation of Scripture, that we should, as far as we can, adhere to the primary sense of the words, and never have recourse to any foreign or singular explication, but where the literal is inconsistent either with the dictates of right reason, or the analogy of faith. Let any indifferent person then, say they, take into his hand the account of Saul's consulting this sorceress, and upon the first reading it, he must confess, that the notion which it conveys to his mind, is that of a real apparition; and since the passages that both precede and follow it, are confessedly to be taken in their most obvious meaning, why should a strange and forced construction be put upon this? ¹ Have we not as much reason to entertain a good opinion of the author of this history, his ability, his integrity, his knowledge of what he wrote about, and his undesigning to deceive us, as we can have of any critic or commentator upon it? And therefore when he gives us to understand that the woman saw Samuel, upon what presumption are we led to disbelieve it? Saul and his companions might possibly be deceived by an impostor in Samuel's guise; but was the sacred historian therefore deceived, or did he mean to deceive us, when he gives us this plain account of an apparition? Saul was a bold man, and too sagacious to become a dupe to a silly woman. He and his two attendants came upon her by night, and before she was prepared to act any juggle or imposture. They were too well acquainted with the voice, and stature, and figure of Samuel, for any other to personate him, without being detected. But admitting the cheat passed upon them, how can we think but that the author of this account, who pretends to relate the transaction as it really happened, and is supposed to have written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, would in some measure, have let us into the secret of this imposture? His business doubtless was to expose such practices, as far as truth would allow; and therefore it is unaccountable (unless he meant to delude us with a false persuasion) that he should admit every thing that tended to discover the fraud, and in his narration, insert every thing that tended to confirm the reality of the prophet's appearance.

² That spirits of another world may assume such vehicles as may admit them to a sensible commerce with us, in like manner as our spirits are clothed with these bodies of ours, the best philosophy will admit; and that they have done so upon extraordinary occasions, ³ the appearance of Moses and Elias, and their conversing with our Saviour on the mount, do abundantly testify. And therefore if God, for wise reasons of his providence, thought fit either to appoint, or permit Samuel to appear to Saul upon this occasion, there seems to be no more difficulty in the thing, than his appearing to him at any other time, while he was alive, and subsisting in the

world: for Saul saw his spirit then no more than he did now, and his spirit was every whit as able to bear a body as it was then.

It is owned, indeed, that according to the series of the narration, Saul did not see the apparition, be it what it will, so soon as the woman did, because probably the woman's body, or some other object, might interpose between him and the first appearance; or perhaps because the vehicle, which Samuel assumed upon this occasion, was not, as yet, condensed enough to be visible to Saul, though it was to the woman: but that he did actually see him is manifest, because when he *perceived*, which word in the original signifies *seeing so as to be assured of our object*, that it was Samuel, ^a 'he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself;' which a man is not apt to do to bare ideas or imaginations.

Persons of this woman's character, who are under the displeasure of the government, generally affect obscurity, live privately, and are little acquainted with affairs of state. But suppose her to have been ever so great a politician, and ever so intimate with what had passed between Saul and Samuel heretofore, ever so well assured that God had rejected him, and elected David in his stead; yet how could she come to the knowledge of this, namely, that the battle should be fought the next day, the Israelites be routed, Saul and his sons slain, and their spoils fall into the enemy's hands; since each of these events, even in the present situation of Saul's affairs, was highly casual and uncertain? For might not this prince lose a battle, without losing his life? Or, if he himself fell in the action, why must his three sons be all cut off in the same day? Whatever demonstrations of innate bravery he had given in times past, after such severe menaces as he now received from the apparition; prudence, one would think, would have put him upon providing for his safety, either by chicaning with the enemy, or retiring from the field of battle, without going to expose himself, his sons, and his whole army, to certain and inevitable death. These are things which no human penetration could reach, and which only he, who is the absolute and almighty Ruler of all causes and events, could either foresee or foretell. And how unlikely is it, that God Almighty should make use of this sorceress ⁴ as a prophetess, and give her the honour of revealing his counsels, when, at the same time, he concurred with her in the imposition put upon Saul, by making him believe that Samuel appeared and talked, when there was no Samuel there?

⁴ Waterland's Sermons, vol. 2.

^a That 'Saul's stooping to the ground,' and 'bowing himself,' was a certain indication of his seeing Samuel, is apparent from several expressions of the same nature in the sacred history. Thus, when Jacob met Esau, the text tells us, that the 'hand-maids, and Leah, and Rachel, and their children bowed themselves,' Gen. xxxiii. 6, 7. When David arose out of his hiding-place, upon the signal that Jonathan gave him, the text tells us, that 'he fell with his face to the ground, and bowed himself,' 1 Sam. xx. 41. And when the messenger from Saul's camp came to David at Ziklag, the text tells us, that 'he fell to the earth, and did obeisance,' 2 Sam. i. 2. But the text takes no notice, either of the messenger's seeing David, or David's seeing Jonathan, or Jacob's family seeing Esau. This is sufficiently implied in their making their obeisance to them; because it is incongruous to suppose, that any would bow, and show other tokens of outward reverence and respect, to persons they did not see.—*The History of the Life of King David*, vol. 1.

¹ The History of the Life of King David.

² The History of the Life of King David, vol. 1.

³ Mat. xvii. 3.

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But the truth is, those menacing predictions, how proper soever for a messenger sent from God to utter, were highly imprudent, either in this witch's, or her accomplice's mouth. For, since they knew nothing of futurity, and were, at the best, but put to conjecture, it is much more reasonable to believe, that at such a juncture as this, ¹ they would have bethought themselves of flattering the king, and giving him comfort, and promising success, and not of thundering out such comminations against him, as might probably incense him, but could do themselves no good. They could not but know, that the temper of most kings is to hate to hear shocking truths, and to receive with the utmost despite those that bring them ill news. And therefore it is natural to suppose, that had these threatening replies been of the woman's or her confederate's forming, they would have given them quite another turn, and not run the hazard of disobliging the king to no purpose, by laying an additional load of trouble upon him. In short, ² the whole tenor of Samuel's speech to king Saul is too rough and ungrateful, too grave and solemn, I may also add, too full of truth and reality, ever to have proceeded from their contrivance and invention only.

The woman, by her courteous entertainment of Saul, seems to be a person of no bad nature; and therefore, if she had any accomplice, who understood to make the most of his profession, his business at this time must have been to soothe and cajole the king, which would have both put money in his pocket, and saved the credit of his predictions. For, had he foretold him of success and victory, and a happy issue out of all his troubles, he and the woman had been sure of reputation, as well as farther rewards, in case it had happened to prove so; and if it had not, since no one was privy to their communion, the falsehood of the prediction, upon Saul's defeat and death, must, in course, have been buried with him.

From these reasons, then, we may infer, that the woman in this transaction did not impose upon Saul, since he had a plain sight of the apparition. What the apparition foretold him was above human penetration; and upon the supposition of a juggle, the witch and her confederate would have certainly acted clean contrary to what they did. And so the next—

2. Inquiry meets us, namely, what this apparition was? Some of the ancient doctors, both of the Jewish and Christian church, have made an evil angel the subject of this apparition, in pure regard to the honour of God. "God," say they, "had sufficiently declared his hatred against necromancy, and all kinds of witchcraft, in the severe laws which he enacted against them; but it is certainly denying himself, and cancelling his own work, to seem in the least to countenance or abet them, as he necessarily must do, if, on the evocation of an old hag, any messenger is permitted to go from him. Far be it from us, therefore, to have such conceptions of God. He is holy, and just, and uniform in all his ways; and therefore this coming at a call, and doing the witch's drudgery, must only appertain to some infernal spirit, who might possibly find his account in it at last. It was one of this wicked crew, that either assumed a phan-

tom, or a real body, appeared in a mantle like Samuel, spake articulately, and held this conversation with Saul; which, considering his knowledge and foresight of things, he was well enough qualified to do, notwithstanding the sundry predictions relating to future contingencies, which are contained in it."

How far the honour of God is concerned in this transaction, will more properly fall under our next inquiry. In the mean time, I cannot but observe, that whatever incongruity may be supposed in the real appearance of Samuel, it is not near so much, as to find one of the apostate spirits of hell expressing so much zeal for the service of the God of heaven, and upbraiding Saul with those very crimes which he himself tempted him to commit; as to find this wicked and impure spirit making use of the name of God, that sacred and tremendous name whose very pronunciation was enough to make him quake and shiver, no less than seven times in this intercourse with Saul, without any manner of uneasiness or hesitation; as to find this angel of darkness and father of lies prying into the womb of futurity, and determining the most casual events positively and precisely. ³ We do not indeed deny, but that the devil's knowledge is vastly superior to that of the most accomplished human understanding; that his natural penetration, joined with his long experience, is such, that the greatest philosophers, the subtlest critics, and the most refined politicians are mere novices in comparison of him: yet what genius, however exalted and improved, without a divine revelation, could, as we said before, be able to foretell things that were lodged in God's own breast, namely, the precise time of the two armies engaging, the success and consequence of the victory, and the very names of the persons that were to fall in battle? This is what the apparition plainly revealed to Saul: and yet this, we dare maintain, is more than any finite understanding, by its own mere capacity, could ever have been able to find out.

But without this multitude of arguments, if we are to take the Scripture in its plain and literal sense, read we over the story of Saul and the witch of Endor ever so often, we shall not so much as once find the devil mentioned in it. And therefore it is somewhat wonderful, that he should be brought upon the stage by many learned men, merely to solve a difficulty, which, upon examination, appears to be none at all. But now on the other hand, it appears, that, through the whole narration, Samuel is the only thing that is mentioned. It is Samuel, whom Saul desires to be called up; Samuel, who appeared to the woman; Samuel, whom the woman describes; Samuel, whom Saul perceives, and bows himself to, with whom he converses so long, and because of whose words he was afterwards so sore afraid.

The Scripture indeed speaks sometimes according to the appearance of things, and may call that by the name of Samuel, which was only the semblance or phantom of him: but, that this cannot be the sense of the matter here, we have the testimony of the wise son of Sirach, an excellent interpreter of canonical scriptures, who tells us expressly, that ⁴ Samuel, 'after his death, prophesied, and showed the king his end;' pursuant to what we read in the version of the Septuagint, namely, that ⁵ Saul

¹ Calmet's Dissertation on the Apparition of Samuel.

² Waterland, *ibid*.

³ Saurin, vol. 4. Dissertation 36.

⁴ Ecclus. xlv. 20.

⁵ 1 Chron. x. 13.

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'asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, and Samuel answered him.' So that, upon the whole, we may be allowed to conclude, that it was the real soul of Samuel, clothed in some visible form, which at this time appeared to the king of Israel: but by what means, or for what purposes it appeared, is the other question we are now to determine.

3. Several of the ¹ fathers of the Christian church were of opinion, that the devil had a certain limited power over the souls of the saints, before Jesus Christ descended into hell, and rescued them from the tyranny of that prince of darkness. ² St Austin, in particular, thinks, that there is no absurdity in saying, that the devil was as able to call up Samuel's soul, as he was to present himself among the sons of God, or to set our Saviour on one of the pinnacles of the temple; and a ³ learned Jewish doctor supposes, that devils have such a power over human souls, for the space of a year after their departure, as to make them assume what bodies they please; and thereupon he concludes, but very erroneously, that it was not a year from the time of Samuel's death to his appearance. But these are such wild and extravagant fancies, as to deserve no serious confutation. It is absurd to say that the souls of saints, such as we are now speaking of, were ever in hell, and more absurd to say, that if they are in heaven, it is in the power of any magical, nay, of any diabolical incantations to call them down from thence. ⁴ Great, without all doubt, is the power of apostate angels; but miserable, we may say, would the state of the blessed be, if the other had any license to disturb their happiness, when, and as long as they pleased: for "God forbid," ⁵ says Tertullian, "that we should believe, that the soul of any holy man, much less of a prophet, should be so far under his disposal, as to be brought up at pleasure by the power of the devil."

Since the devil then has no power to disturb the happiness of souls departed, this apparition of Samuel could not proceed from any magical enchantments of the sorceress, but must have been effected by the sole power and appointment of God, who is the sovereign Lord both of the living and of the dead: and accordingly, we may observe, from the surprise which the woman discovered upon Samuel's sudden appearing, that the power of her magic was not concerned therein, but that it was the effect of some superior hand. The scripture relates the matter thus: ⁶ "When the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice; and the woman spake unto Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul? And the king said unto her, be not afraid: what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth." Now, it is plain from this narration, that the woman saw something she was not accustomed to see. ⁷ Her necromancy had ordinarily power over demons only, or such wretched spirits as were submitted to the devil's tyranny; but on this occasion, she saw an object so august, so terrible, so majestic, so contrary indeed to any thing she had ever raised before,

and that coming upon her before she had begun her enchantments, that she could not forbear being frightened, and crying out with a loud voice, as being fully satisfied that the apparition came from God.

"But since the scripture assures us, that God had wholly withdrawn himself from Saul, and would answer him neither by prophets nor by dreams; how can we imagine that he should, all on a sudden, become so kind, as to send Samuel to him, or that Samuel should be in any disposition to come, when it was impossible for him to do any good by his coming."

⁸ Now there seems to be some analogy between God's dealing with Saul in this particular, and his former treatment of the prophet Balaam. Balaam was for disobeying the orders which God had given him to bless the Israelites; and was searching into magical secrets for what he could not obtain of God, namely, a power to change into curses the blessings which God had pronounced by his mouth. In this case there was but small likelihood, that God would continue to communicate himself to a person so unworthy of any extraordinary revelation; and yet he did it: but then it was with a design to reveal to him those very miseries, from which his mercenary mind was so desirous to rescue the Midianites. The application is easy: and it farther suggests this reason, why God appointed Samuel at this time to appear unto Saul, namely, that through him, he might give him a meeting where he least of all expected one; and might show him, that the fate which his own disobedience had brought upon him, was determined; that there was no reversing the decrees of Heaven, no procuring aid against the Almighty's power, no flying, though it were to hell, from his presence, no hiding himself in darkness from his inspection, ⁹ "with whom darkness is no darkness at all, but the night is as clear as the day, and the darkness and light are both alike."

¹⁰ That the souls of men departed have a capacity, and, no doubt, an inclination, to be employed in the service of men alive, as having the same nature and affections, and being more sensible of our infirmities, than any pure and abstracted spirits are, can hardly be contested; that, in their absent state, they are imbodied with aerial or ethereal vehicles, which they can condense or rarefy at pleasure, and so appear or not appear to human sight, is what some of the greatest men, both of the heathen and Christian religion, have maintained; and that frequent apparitions of this kind have happened since the world began, cannot be denied by any one that is conversant in its history. If therefore the wisdom of God, for reasons already assigned, thought proper to despatch a messenger to Saul upon this occasion, there may be some account given, why the soul of Samuel, upon the supposition it was left to its option, should rather be desirous to be sent upon that errand: for whatever may be said in diminution of Saul's religious character, it is certain, that he was a brave prince and commander; had lived in strict intimacy with Samuel; professed a great esteem for him, in all things; and ¹¹ was by Samuel not a little lamented, when he had fallen from his obedience to God. Upon these considerations, we may imagine, that the soul of Samuel might have such a kindness

¹ Justin Martyr, in Dial. cum Tryph. and Origen on 1 Sam. c. 28.

² De Diver. Quest. b. 2. p. 4.

³ R. Manas. Ben. Israel, de Resur. Mort.

⁴ Saurin, vol. 4. Dissert. 36. ⁵ De Anima, c. 57.

⁶ 1 Sam. xviii. 12, 13.

⁷ Calmet's Dissertation on the Apparition of Samuel.

⁸ Saurin, vol. 4. Dissertation 36. ⁹ Ps. cxxxix. 12.

¹⁰ See Glanville's Sadducismus Triumphatus. ¹¹ 1 Sam. xvi. l.

A. M. 2888. A. C. 1116; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4391. A. C. 1110. 1 SAM. i. TO THE END.

for him, as to be ready to appear to him in the depth of his distress, in order to settle his mind by telling him the upshot of the whole matter, namely, that he should lose the battle and he and his sons be slain; that so he might give a specimen, as the Jews love to speak in commendation of him, of the bravest valour that was ever achieved, by any commander; fight boldly when he was sure to die; and sell his life at as dear a price as possible; that so in his death, he might be commemorated with honour, and deserve the Threnodia which his son-in-law made on him: ¹ 'The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places. How are the mighty fallen! From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!'

CHAP. IV.—*On the Witch of Endor.*

SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.

I AGREE with the author in the opinion, that it was the spirit of Samuel himself, wearing, as Dr Hales observes, the same mantle in appearance, which was rent at the final rejection of Saul from the kingdom, which appeared on this occasion. Many authors of reputation maintain that this was a mere imposition practised upon Saul by the witch; but it is evident, that the witch herself expected not to see such a spectre as presented itself before her; and that the spectre made its appearance before it was called.

"I have myself," says Bishop Gleig, "conversed with a ventriloquist, who performed the most extraordinary feats in his art, who was extremely communicative on the subject of his art, and ready to answer every question which I put to him; but he was unfortunately so very illiterate as to speak a language which was hardly intelligible. I found no difficulty whatever in tracing his art to the principles on which it was founded, but he would not tell me in language which I could understand, by what means he produced his acoustic deceptions. That he was a great master of his art, however, he gave me, and thousands besides me, the most complete proofs, making his voice appear to come sometimes from the roof of the room, sometimes from without the door, sometimes from below the floor, and once from the pocket of a gentleman who was sitting close by me. Had this man combined with his ventriloquism that *phantasmagoric* art, by which some of our modern jugglers frighten the vulgar in a darkened room, he easily could have exhibited such a ghost as I have no doubt the witch of Endor meant and expected to exhibit to Saul."

The ghost, however, which really came was sent by a different and a higher power, and sent for the same purpose that the dumb ass was, for the ass was made to reprove the madness of Balaam, and that enchanter himself made to bless Israel. Necromancy was among the arts forbidden by the law of Moses. Saul had in obedience to that law, lately exterminated, as he thought, all such impious diviners from Israel; and yet, finding him-

self, in his capacity of king, forsaken by God, he had recourse in his extremity to one of those wretched beings who had escaped from the effects of his righteous zeal. But even Saul himself, conscious as he was of being forsaken of God, could not expect from her the information which he wanted, but through some means forbidden by that law which it was his duty to enforce; and if she was not aided by a familiar spirit, she must have practised arts calculated to persuade the people that she was. These arts were of heathen invention, and led to that idolatry which Saul was bound to root entirely out of the land; and no method can be conceived better calculated to confound the impious monarch, and to prevent the wretched woman from practising her impious arts for the future, than that which the supreme Disposer of events adopted on this occasion. Before she commenced her incantations, the real Samuel appeared before her, and gave to the infatuated king such an answer as there is no reason to suppose he would have received from any pretended Samuel exhibited by her.

It has been maintained by some respectable writers that the apparition was an evil angel, who appeared in the mantle and in the shape of Samuel. As the ground of this opinion, they mention the abhorrence which God had shown against those who practised the arts of necromancy and witchcraft, and its being inconsistent with this declared hatred, so far to countenance these arts as to send a messenger from the invisible state, at the moment when this woman was engaged in them. To this it may be answered, that if the appearance of Samuel on the present occasion be deemed inconsistent with the divine procedure, there is much greater difficulty in believing that the apparition was an evil spirit, since the whole strain of his address to Saul is at variance with the character of an angel of darkness.

It may indeed seem strange, that God, who had rejected Saul, and who answered him not when he consulted him, should now send a departed prophet, to tell him his fate. But the reason is plain. To have answered his inquiry when he consulted him, not in a private capacity, but as the king of Israel, not with the view of obtaining reconciliation, but of ascertaining his fate, would have been an acknowledgment of him in this character; whereas he had been for many years rejected and disowned of God as his deputy: when, however, he applied not to him, but to another, for the purpose of learning his future destiny, and had, for the time, ceased to be king, God gave him through his servant such an answer as he had not expected.

SECT. IV.

CHAP. I.—*From the Death of Saul, to that of Absalom. In all thirty-three years.*

THE HISTORY.

DAVID was at Ziklag when news was brought him of the defeat of the Israelitish army, and of the death of Saul. The messenger was an Amalekite, ^a who pretended that

^a By the account which we have of king Saul's death, in the conclusion of the foregoing book, namely, that he 'fell upon his own sword, and expired,' (1 Sam. xxxi. 4.) it seems very evident,

A. M. 2949. A. C. 1055; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4341. A. C. 1070. 2 SAM. i.—xix.

he was the person who despatched the king after he found himself mortally wounded; and, however he came by them, produced Saul's crown and bracelet to verify what he said. He expected, no doubt, an ample compensation for this message and present; but instead of that, David ordered his guards to fall upon him, because, according to his own declaration, he had been accessory to the king's death. ^a

Upon this conjuncture, David, ^b by God's directions, removed with his family and forces ^c to Hebron, whither the princes of Judah in a short time, came to congratulate his return into his native country, and to offer him the crown of their particular tribe; for, by this time, Abner the late king's uncle, and general of his army, who had proclaimed his son Ishbosheth successor to the throne, had taken up his residence at ^d Mahanaim, on

that the whole story of this Amalekite was a mere fiction of his own inventing, on purpose to ingratiate himself with David, the presumptive successor to the throne. But then the question is, how he came by Saul's crown and bracelet, since it is incongruous to think that he would ever wear them in the time of action, and thereby expose himself as a public mark? As therefore it is presumed, that they were carried into the field of battle by some of his attendants, in order to put on, in case he had obtained the victory, and returned in triumph; so the Jews have a conceit, that Doeg, the infamous murderer of the priests at Nob, 1 Sam. xxii. 18. who at this time was his armour-bearer, had them in his possession, and before he killed himself, gave them to his son, this young Amalekite, and ordered him to carry them to David, but, to his cost, found that David's reception was quite different to what he expected. For being shortly to ascend the throne himself, he was willing to have it believed, that to slay the Lord's anointed, upon any account whatever, was in itself an execrable crime, and therefore, to clear himself from the imputation of being any ways accessory to so foul a fact, as his enemies would have been apt to imagine, had he given countenance to this pretended king-killer, he ordered him immediately to be put to death, and therein at least, acted the part of a good politician, if not of a righteous judge.—*Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*, on 2 Sam. i.

a 2 Sam. i. 16. The malediction expressed in this passage occurs in the same sense in other passages of Scripture, particularly Josh. ii. 19. 1 Kings ii. 37. It appears to have been customary so to speak, both with the Jews and Greeks, as repeated instances of it are found in the best writers of the last mentioned people. It was usual with the Romans to wash their hands in token of innocence and purity from blood. Thus the Roman governor washed his hands, and said respecting Christ, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person,' (Mat. xxvii. 24).—*Ep.*

b Though David, after Saul's demise, had a right to the kingdom by virtue of God's designation; yet as God had nowhere declared, at what time he was to make use of this right, he would not enter into possession, nor take the administration of public affairs upon him, without having first consulted him.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

c Hebron was situate in the midst of the tribe of Judah; and as it was a very ancient city, the metropolis of the whole tribe, and the possession of those priestly families who espoused David's interest, it was a very commodious city for him to make the place of his residence at this juncture, as being not insensible, that the determination of the metropolis in his favour would be of great weight to influence the whole tribe. And accordingly we find, that he was soon invested with the sovereignty thereof. 'For the men of Judah,' saith the text, 'came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah,' 2 Sam. ii. 4.—*The History of the Life of King David*, vol. 2.

d This was a place in the tribe of Gad, which had its name from the appearance of an host of angels to Jacob, as he came with his family and all his substance to Padan-aram, (Gen. xxxii. 1.) and the reasons for Abner's retreating hither, in the beginning of the new king's reign, were, that he might secure the people on that side of the Jordan, and especially the gallant inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, who were great lovers of Saul, and attached to his family; that he might prevent the Philistines

the other side of Jordan, and by his interest and great authority, prevailed with all the other tribes to recognise him.

David, however, at the request of the princes of his own tribe, was anointed king of Judah. For two years there were no hostilities on either side; but not long after this, a war commenced between the two rival princes, in which there were several engagements, but none so remarkable, as that which was occasioned by Abner's sending Joab who was the general of David's forces, a challenge ^e to fight twelve men, with an equal number of his, in single combat. The men met, and to a man killed one another upon the spot; whereupon a fierce battle ensued, in which Abner and his men were defeated, and put to flight. In the pursuit, Asahel, a younger brother of Joab's, being very nimble and swift of foot, made after Abner. When he came up with him, Abner, who knew him, desired him to desist, and not pretend to attack him, because he was loath to kill him; but the young man, ambitious of taking a general prisoner, pressed so hard upon him, that, ^f with a back-stroke of his spear, Abner gave him a wound, whereof he immediately died.

The victorious army, when they came to the place where Asahel's body lay slain, stood still, and ceased their pursuit; so that Abner had an opportunity to rally his scattered forces, and making a stand upon an advanced ground, where he could not well be attacked, sounded a parley, and reminded Joab, that they were all brethren, of the same nation, of the same religion, so that if they persisted in hostilities, both armies would have reason to rue it. Whereupon they parted, Abner who had lost three hundred and sixty men in the engagement to Mahanaim, on the other side of Jordan, and Joab, who, except his brother Asahel, had lost no more than nineteen, to Hebron.

During the course of this civil war, which lasted for some years, David's forces, in most rencounters, had the advantage, and his interest in the nation increased, as that of Ishbosheth sensibly declined. Abner indeed, as being both a brave and experienced warrior, and a man of a great power and influence in all the tribes, more especially in that of Benjamin, was his main support; but with him he unhappily differed, upon account of Rizpah, one of Saul's concubines, whom Abner had debauched. To have any commerce with the relicts of princes of what denomination soever they were, was, in

from falling upon the king, whom he had under his protection, in the infancy of this reign; and chiefly, that he might be at a great distance from David, have the new king more absolutely under his command, and a better opportunity of raising recruits among a people, not only brave and courageous, but very well affected to the cause which he had espoused.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

e The expression in the text is, 'let the young men now arise, and play before us.' By which Abner seems to have meant, not that they should fall upon, and destroy one another, but merely that they should practise a little their military exercises, or play at sharps, as gladiators anciently at Rome, and now among us, are wont to do, not with any purpose to kill one another, but only to divert the spectators.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

f The expression in the text is, 'that with the hinder part of the spear, he smote him under the fifth rib;' which Virgil, speaking of a mortal wound, has not unhappily imitated: "Immediately he seized his spear and hurled it at the very life's citadel, where the ribs guard the heart."—*Æneid*, l. 2.

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these days, looked upon as an indignity offered to the royal family, and an ^a affectation of the kingdom. For this reason Ishbosheth remonstrated the matter to Abner; but Abner, who was a hot man, and impatient of reproof, was so incensed at what he said, that he upbraided him with ingratitude, and threatened not only to ^b withdraw his own allegiance from him, but, as far as in him lay, to carry all Israel over to David's interest. And as he threatened, so he did. From that very moment he entered into a private correspondence with David, and not long after, had a public interview with him. At this interview David entertained Abner and his attendants which were in all but twenty persons, very splendidly; and, in return, Abner assured him, that he would use his utmost endeavours to prevail with the other tribes to come over to his side. But no sooner was he gone, than Joab, returning from an expedition against the Philistines, wherein he had been successful and taken abundance of spoil, and being soon informed that Abner had been there, and how kindly the king had received him, not only expostulated the matter with the king in high terms, as having entertained a man that came only as a spy upon him, but sent likewise a messenger after Abner, desiring him to return, because the king had something more to communicate to him; and so, having waylaid him, under pretence of saluting him, he stabbed him to the heart, ^c out of jealousy partly, and partly in revenge of the blood of his brother Asahel.

David was extremely displeased at this cruel and inhospitable action; but his affairs were in so unsettled a

^a What notion the world, at this time, had of marrying any royal relict, is evident from the case of Adonijah, whom Solomon put to death for desiring but to ask for Abishag, one of David's concubines, though he had employed Bath-sheba, the king's mother, to be his intercessor, and was himself his brother, (1 Kings ii. 17.) It may be said perhaps, that Adonijah was at this time aspiring at the throne, which Solomon perceiving, took occasion from this his request, to fall out with him, and prevent it. But however this be, a general rule it was, not among the Jews only, but among other nations, that no private person should presume to marry the king's widow; for this made him appear as a rival and competitor for the crown.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b Abner is an instance of what a strange alteration the study of revenge will work in a man. It was but just lately that we found him going about the country to confirm the Israelites in their attachment to the house of Saul, and opposition to David; but now, upon a slight disgust, he is not only for deserting himself, but for carrying all the strength of his interest over to the opposite party. For, "such is the genius of many great ministers," says one, "that upon slight occasions, they are irritated, and do rather rule over kings, than are ruled by them."—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c Abner was a man longer versed in military affairs than himself, who, in the time of Saul's distraction, had been regent of the nation, and, since the time that he had set up Ishbosheth to be king, prime minister. And therefore Joab had reason to suspect, that in case he once got into David's favour, as the service he was able to do him, gave him a title to it, it would not be long before he would gain a superior ascendant; and therefore he took this wicked method to prevent him. For to use the reflection which Josephus makes upon this occasion. "What will men not dare to do, who are covetous, ambitious, and will be inferior to none? They press forward to the end, without ever considering the means, and will commit a thousand crimes in pursuit of what they desire. Nor are they less bold in maintaining, than they were in acquiring their places and preferments by evil practices; insomuch that, rather than suffer the disgrace of losing what they have unjustly gotten, they will plunge themselves still deeper and deeper in wickedness, to retain it."—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 7. c. 1.

state, and Joab, at that time, had so much credit with the army, that he could not call him to an account for what he had done. And therefore contented himself with declaring publicly ^d his detestation of it, and with making a magnificent funeral for Abner, wherein he himself followed the corpse as chief mourner.

David indeed had reason to lament the death of Abner, which, in all probability, had defeated the measures that were concerted for the union of the two kingdoms, had not the sudden and untimely death of Ishbosheth paved the way for it afresh. Ishbosheth, upon the loss of Abner, began to despair of his affairs, grew negligent of himself, and fell under the contempt of his subjects; so that Rechab and Baanah, ^e two Benjamites, that were of his household, came upon him, as he was asleep in the heat of the day, and having cut off his head, ^f carried it as a present to David at Hebron; but instead of the reward which they expected, he ^g rebuked them

^d And good reason he had to express his detestation of so foul a fact. For besides that Abner was himself a man of great power and authority, and at this time, the head of the contrary party, it carried an air of suspicion, that David might have some concern in the murder; especially since Joab, his first minister, and general of his forces, was the wicked instrument of it. Abner had been reconciled to David indeed; but this made the matter still worse, and added the breach of faith and hospitality to the sin of murder, which was enough to alienate the minds of the Israelites from him for ever. And therefore Josephus gives us this account of David's behaviour upon so critical an occasion, not only to testify his abhorrence of so base a practice, but to purge himself likewise, upon the strictest niceties of faith and honour, that he had been true to Abner. 'The moment he heard of Abner's death, he stretched out his right hand towards heaven in an appeal and protestation, that he was neither privy, nor consenting to the fact, and cursed most bitterly the assassin, whoever he was, his family, and accomplices. He appointed, by proclamation, a public mourning for him, with all the solemnities of tearing garments, and putting on sackcloth, &c. Himself, with his great ministers, and officers, assisted at the funeral, and gave sufficient demonstration, by wringing their hands, beating their breasts, and other expressions of sorrow, both of the veneration they had for Abner's memory, and the sense they had of so inestimable a loss; so that, in the conclusion, all the people were perfectly satisfied that David was far either from approving or consenting to so execrable a deed.'—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 7. c. 1; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^e This is added, to show us, that these two regicides were not only officers in the king's army, but of the same tribe with Saul, and therefore had more ties than one upon them, to be honest and faithful to his family. For there is reason to believe, that Saul, who lived in the borders of Benjamin, conferred more favours upon that tribe than any other, and might therefore justly expect, both to him and his, a greater esteem and fidelity from those of his own tribe, than from others. 'This patronymic is therefore very properly prefixed to the names of Rechab and Baanah, to show what vile ungrateful villains they were, and how justly they deserved the severe and exemplary punishment which David inflicted on them.'—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^f It may seem a little strange, that these two ruffians were not discouraged by David's punishing the Amalekite for killing Saul, and by the detestation he had publicly shown of Joab's baseness in murdering Abner; but the former of these cases, they might think, was not parallel to theirs; because Saul was anointed king by God's immediate direction, whereas Ishbosheth, having never had such sacred unction, was no more than a usurper; and as for the latter, they might think, that David's conduct in relation to Abner's death, proceeded from art and policy, rather than any serious dislike of the thing itself; and in this opinion, they might the rather be confirmed, when they saw Joab, instead of being punished, continuing in the very same post and power that he had before.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^g The manner in which Josephus makes David express himself upon this occasion, is to this effect:—"Wicked wretches

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severely, and ordered their hands and feet to be cut off, and themselves hung up in a public place, for the terror of all regicides; but the head of Ishbosheth was honourably interred in Abner's tomb.

When Ishbosheth was dead, all the tribes of Israel sent their deputies to David, acknowledging his title, and promising him their allegiance, upon condition that he would reign righteously ^a over them; so that now he was anointed king over all the tribes, after that he had reigned at Hebron, over that of Judah only, for the space of seven years and six months.

Being thus invested with full regal power, and having ^b a multitude of brave and gallant officers to attend him, he made his first expedition against Jerusalem, to dispossess the Jebusites of the fort of Zion, which commanded the city, and was thought so impregnable, that when he summoned the besieged to surrender, they, in

that you are! prepare yourselves immediately to receive the just reward of your villany. Do not you know that I required the murder of Saul, when he, who had taken away that sacred life, had the confidence to bring me his golden crown, for an ostentation of the service he had done me in it? And yet it was at the instance of Saul that he did it, and to prevent the indignity of his being taken alive by his enemies. And am not I the same man now that I was then? or do you think that I am turned so abandoned a wretch since, as to countenance the most profligate of men and actions, or to account myself under any obligation to you, for dipping your hands, upon my account, as you would have it thought, in the blood of your lord; for cutting the throat of a person, and in his bed too, so just, that he never did any man wrong, and so generous a patron and benefactor to your ungrateful selves, that all the advantages you can pretend to in this world, are but what you stand indebted for to his bounty and goodness? You shall therefore now be sure to pay, both for your breach of faith to your master, and the scandal you have cast upon me. For what greater wound can any man give me in my reputation, than to expose me for a person that can take pleasure in the tidings, or give countenance to the committing of so barbarous an assassination." (*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 2.) Which speech of David's has a good deal of the spirit of Alexander the Great in it, whose exacting of punishment of Bessus for his murder of Darius, drew from the historian this reflection: "For he thought that Darius had not been so much the foe as the friend of him by whom he was slain."—*Justin*, b. 12. c. 6.

^a This was David's part of the covenant, which the elders of Israel suggested to him in a very elegant metaphor, which here occurs the first time, though afterwards it is frequently used in sacred writ, especially in the prophets, as well as some profane authors. The expression is 'Thou shalt feed my people Israel;' which was the rather made use of, to put David in mind that he was created a king, not so much for the advancement of his own honour and interest, as for the good and benefit of the community, which he was to rule with all tenderness, and watch over with all diligence. The very manner of the expression implies, that kings ought to have the same care for their people, as the shepherd has over his flock; and that, as the shepherd is not the owner of the sheep he keeps, so should no king look upon his subjects as his own peculium, but as a flock committed to him by the only true Lord of all mankind, and to whom he must give an account of his administration. "For this is the greatest grace of a king, that he certainly believes himself to be made a king by God, for the sake of the people; and let him often call to mind, that the people were not created, or ordained, by God for the king," says Conradus Pelicanus upon these words.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^b In this account of David's worthies, which are mentioned both in the second book of Samuel, and the first of Chronicles, there is a great difference of names; and the reason is, because the catalogue in Chronicles was made in the beginning of David's reign, that in Samuel, at the latter end; and so the former mentions those men who had helped David to his settlement in the kingdom, whereas the latter takes notice of those who had stuck to him all the time of his reign, and died in his service.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 5. c. 5.

derision, replied, that the meanest of them all, ^c their blind and lame, were able to defend it against all he could do. This incensed David to such a degree, that he caused proclamation to be made through the camp, that whoever first took the fort, should be made captain-general of all his forces; whereupon Joab, who was a bold, pushing man, undertook to storm it, and carried it sword in hand. After this, David, for the reception of his guards and domestics, enlarged the buildings of the place, and made it his royal palace; while Joab repaired and beautified the old city Jebus, or Jerusalem, for the more commodious habitation of his subjects.

^d Hiram, who had lately made himself king of Tyre and Sidon, hearing how prosperous David was in all his affairs, sent an embassy to congratulate his accession to the throne, and withal a present of cedar trees, with carpenters and other artificers to assist him in his buildings. But the Philistine princes had other notions of David's growing greatness, which they took for a sure presage of their own downfall; and therefore to put a stop to it as soon as possible, they raised one great army, which, as they approached to Jerusalem, he defeated; and the next year, when they came ^e with a much larger, God manifestly interposed in his favour. For instead of advancing directly upon them, he ordered him to take a

^c The blind and the lame, says Luther upon this place, were the idols of the Jebusites, which, to irritate David, they set upon their walls, as their patrons and protectors; and these they call blind and lame sarcastically, and with respect to David's opinion: as if they had said, "These gods of ours, whom ye Israelites reproach as blind and lame, and so unable to direct or defend us, will secure us against you, and to your cost, make you find that they are neither blind nor lame, but have eyes to watch for us, and hands to fight against you, so that you must conquer and subdue them, before you take this place." But this interpretation seems to be a little too metaphorical and forced, for which reason we have rather chosen the construction which Josephus (b. 7. c. 2.) puts upon this passage, namely, that they imagined their fortress to be so impregnable, that by way of contempt, they told David that their very blind and lame would be able to defend it against him and all his forces: and this is a sense so extremely plain and obvious, that the renowned Bochart wonders why any man of learning should seek for any other. The only exception to it is, that these blind and lame (which were rather objects of compassion) are said to have been extremely hated by David. But we may observe, that David here retorts the sarcasm upon them; 'the lame and blind,' that is, those who are said to defend the place, and who, as they pretended, were to be only the lame and the blind. And these were hateful to David, because they had wickedly and insolently defied the armies of the living God.—*Poole's Annotations*; *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

^d Abibajus was his primitive name, but before he entered into a league of amity with David, he changed it to Hiram, that so it might be the standing name of him and his successors, as Pharaoh, and after that Ptolemy in Egypt, Abimelech among the Philistines, and Caesar among the Roman emperors. The name in their language signifies, "he lives that is exalted;" or, "let him live who is exalted," that is, "let the king live for ever;" and his sending to David only under this name, is the true reason why no other name is mentioned in Scripture.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 5. c. 4.

^e It cannot well be supposed, that the Philistines, out of their small territories, could produce such vast numbers of men as they brought against the Israelites; and therefore the remark, which Josephus makes, helps to explain this matter, namely "That Syria and Phœnicia, as well as several other warlike nations, were engaged in the confederacy;" but this cannot be meant of Hiram, who was in a league of the strictest amity with David, but of such Phœnicians only as would not submit to him, and therefore joined with the Philistines, first to subdue his ally, and then to subdue him, before his government could be settled.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 5. c. 4.

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compass round by a wood of mulberry trees, which would cover and conceal his march, and when he heard a sound, or rushing in the trees, which would affrighten the Philistines, then to fall upon them; which he accordingly did, and gave them so total a defeat, that for many years after, they never pretended to give Israel any more disturbance.

This time of rest, and public security, David thought a proper season, wherein to bring home the ark of God, which for almost fifty years had continued in the house of Abinadab, into a place which he had prepared for it in his own city. To this purpose, attended with the ^a principal men of the nation, and the chief officers of his court, together with a strong guard for the convoy of the ark, in case any enemy should attempt to surprise them, he came to Kirjath-jearim: but, either through inadvertency, or neglect of the ¹ divine law, which obliged them to carry it upon men's shoulders, they in imitation of the Philistines, put it in a cart, and when the cart had like to have been overturned, Uzzah, who was one of its drivers, taking hold of the ark to prevent its falling, was immediately struck dead upon the spot; so that David, terrified at this judgment, durst not at that time carry it into Jerusalem, but left it near the city, in the house of Obed-Edom, a Levite, whom God blessed with a large increase of all his substance, for the little time that it continued with him. In the space of three months, the king, recollecting that none were to carry the ark but the Levites, though they themselves were expressly forbidden ² to touch it, he adventured to remove it from Obed-Edom's, which he did in great form and solemnity. The Levites, who were to bear the ark on their shoulders, he caused to be sanctified; himself, clothed in a linen ephod, and ^b dancing before it, brought it into a convenient place which he had prepared for it; offered a great quantity of ^c sacrifices upon

this occasion; and, with the rest of the company that attended this solemnity, feasted and rejoiced.

^d His wife Michal, who was Saul's daughter, and proud perhaps on account of her pedigree, ^e upbraided him upon this occasion with his humility, as a diminution of his regal dignity; but he, in reply to the sarcastic manner wherein she spake it, only told her, "That what he had done was in honour of that God, who had chosen him to govern Israel rather than any of her family; and that such condescensions as these would never bring him under any just contempt."

that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings,' (2 Sam. vi. 13.) From which words some would infer, that David, having measured the ground between Obed-Edom's house, and the place he had built for the reception of the ark, had altars raised at the distance of every six paces, wherein he caused sacrifices to be offered, as the ark passed by. But it is easy to imagine, what a world of confusion this would create in the procession; and therefore the more rational construction is, that after those who carried the ark had advanced six paces, without any such token of divine wrath as Uzza had undergone, then did they offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, which might consist of several living creatures, all sacrificed and offered up at once. But, even supposing, that, at set distances, there were sacrifices all along the way that they went; yet we are to know, that it was no unusual thing for heathens to confer on their gods, nay, even upon their emperors, the same honours that we find David here bestowing upon the ark of the God of Israel. For in this manner, as Suetonius tells us, was Otho received, "when during all the journey on his right and left, victims were slain by the inhabitants of towns." And the like he relates of Caligula: "When he left Misenum, he proceeded through a dense body of persons meeting him, and surrounded by altars, and victims, and burning torches."—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d After that David was by Saul banished from court, and forced to seek for shelter in foreign countries, Saul, to cast the more contempt upon him, gave his wife away to one Phalti, or Phaltiel, son of Laish of Gallim; but David, when he came to the crown of Judah, had her restored to him again; for which purposes he sent messengers to Ishbosheth, who then reigned over the eleven tribes at Mahanaim, to demand her, and who, according to that demand, took her from Phaltiel, and sent her back to David. The Hebrews pretend that Phaltiel never came near Michal, who, in strictness, could not be his wife, because she had never been divorced by David; but others believe, that she had five sons by Phaltiel, which were given up to the Gibeonites to be executed, (2 Sam. xxi. 8, 9.) But, in this place there seems to be an error crept into the text, which should be read *Merob* instead of *Michal*.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Michal*.

^e The words of Michal, wherein she upbraids David, are these: 'How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day, in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself;' (2 Sam. vi. 20.) At first reading, they seem to intimate, that David, in his dancing, had exposed his naked body, and acted some way or other immodestly. But these words, we are to consider, were spoken in a fit of passion, and when Michal was minded to aggravate matters; for it is not to be doubted, but that David kept himself within the bounds of modesty, how joyous soever he might be. It was a command which God gave the Israelites, that they should rejoice in their feasts, (Deut. xii. 7.) but then, their joy was not to be lascivious or petulant, but pious and moderate. In the case before us, David was in the more immediate presence of God, and about a very sacred business; and therefore it is incongruous to think, that he would commit any thing immodest. And, that he could not expose his nakedness, as his wife would insinuate, is evident from his having not only an ephod on, but being clothed with a robe of fine linen, besides his usual under garments, (1 Chron. xv. 27.) and therefore, though his putting off his regal robes might give some occasion to Michal's expression of his 'uncovering himself,' yet it must be owned, that this opprobrious term proceeded from nothing but the overflowing spleen of a proud passionate woman.—*Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

¹ Num. iv. 15.² Num. iv. 15; xviii. 3.

^a It is supposed by some, that this bringing back of the ark was appointed to be one of the great festivals; and the reason why David might summon so many of his principal ministers and officers to accompany him in the expedition, might be, to possess the young people, who perhaps had heard little or nothing of the ark, by reason of its having been absent so long, with a mighty veneration for it when they saw the king, and so many of the chief nobility waiting on it, with such a variety of music, and such public declarations of joy.—*Miller's History of the Church*.

^b Strabo tells us, that it was customary among the Greeks, as well as other nations, to use music and dancing in the processions before their gods, (b. 10.) Callimachus mentions the chori, and dancings of the youth at the altar of Apollo; Plato observes that among the Egyptians, all kinds of music, songs and dances were consecrated to their gods; (De legibus, b. 3.) And even Lucian (De Saltatione) expressly says that among the ancients, no ceremonial of religion, no expiation, no atonement was accounted rightly accomplished without dancing. So that David was far from being singular in his behaviour upon this occasion; nor was his behaviour, in this particular, any disparagement to his regal dignity. His dancing, that is, his moving in certain serious and solemn measures, suited to music of the same character and tendency, was an exercise highly conducive to the purposes of piety, and his mixing with the public festivities of his people, was a condescension, as Tacitus relates of Augustus the Roman emperor, not unbecoming the greatest monarch. Policy taught Augustus to put himself upon a level with his subjects in the public rejoicings; piety taught David, that all men are upon a level in the solemnities of religion. So that David was not singular in his behaviour upon this occasion.—*Patrick's Commentary, and The History of the Life of King David*, vol. 2.

^c The words in the text are, 'And it was so, that when they

A. M. 2949. A. C. 1055; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4311. A. C. 1070, 2 SAM. i.—xix.

By this time the palace, which Hiram king of Tyre had furnished David with men and materials to build, was finished; and, as he was reflecting upon the meanness of God's habitation in comparison of his own, it came into his mind to build a noble fabric for his religious worship, which design he communicated to ^a Nathan. Nathan at first approved of it; but the night following, he was commanded to forbid it, with this assurance, that God accepted of his sincere intentions; promised that his son should succeed him, and build him a temple; and that his posterity should reign ^b for many generations.

David was a man of war, and therefore, since God had refused him the privilege of building him a temple, and had reserved that work for his son Solomon, whose name denotes *peaceable*, to execute, he thought himself bound to subdue all his enemies on every side, that, when his son came to undertake that great affair, he might meet with as little molestation as possible.

In the beginning of his reign, the Philistines had twice invaded him, and therefore he began with them. Their royal city of Gath, which was called *Metheg-Ammah*, or the *bridge of Ammah*, because it stood upon a hill of that name, and was a bridle to curb the tribe of Judah, and keep them in obedience, he took and made it a barrier against themselves. The Moabites he utterly subdued; and, having dismantled all their strong places, he ^c slew the greater part of them, reserving such only as were requisite to till the ground. From hence he

^a At what time this prophet began to appear in Israel, we are nowhere informed. This is the first time that the scripture makes mention of him. He was a man of great temper, prudence, and fine address, who knew to mitigate the rigour of his reproofs with a great deal of sweetness and wisdom, which qualified him so well for the conversation of kings, and other great persons. He was always equally esteemed and beloved by David, and, in his conduct towards him, maintained a just medium between an inflexible austerity and a servile flattery.—*Cabnet's Commentary*.

^b The words in the text are, 'I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever;' which, in their primary sense, do relate to the terrestrial kingdom of David's family, and the long duration of it, enough to justify the expression 'for ever,' taken in a less strict signification. But if we take it in a more sublime and absolute sense, it can belong to none but that Son of David, to whom God the Father gave an eternal kingdom, properly so called, over all things both in heaven and earth, which though it was not so well known in the times when this prophecy was uttered, was, by the event afterwards, made plain and evident.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^c There is no small obscurity in the words of the text, which are these: 'He smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even in two lines measured he to put to death, and with one line to keep alive.' Which words seem to allude to a custom among the kings of the east, when they were thoroughly incensed against any nation, namely, to make the captives all come together in one place, and prostrate themselves upon the ground; that, being divided into two parts, as it were with a line, their conqueror might appoint which part he pleased either for death or life, which was sometimes determined by casting of lots. Some are of opinion, that David made three lots or parts of these Moabites, two of which he ordered to be slain, and one part only to be kept alive. The reason of this severity against this miserable people, the rabbins assure us, was, because they had slain his parents and brethren, whom he had committed to the custody of the king of Moab during his exile. But of the reality of this motive there is no manner of appearance; and since this execution which David inflicted may relate either to the whole nation, or the army only, to clear David from the imputation of too much cruelty we should rather conceive it of the third, or half part at most, of the army. *Le Clerc's and Cabnet's Commentaries*.

marched his army to secure his territories, which bordered upon the Euphrates. The Syrians of Zobah, under the command of ^d Hadadezer, came with a strong force, and gave him battle: but he soon routed them, and, besides a great number of foot prisoners, took a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen that attended them; but, reserving to himself no more horses than were necessary for an hundred chariots, the rest he hamstringed, to make them unserviceable for war. ^e The Syrians of Damascus, hearing of Hadadezer's ill success, came to his assistance. But David put them to the rout likewise, and having slain two and twenty thousand of them, he became master of their country; put garrisons into their fortified cities, and made them tributary; and (what was another victory in this expedition) in his return from Syria, he engaged a great body of Edomites ^f in the valley of salt, slew eighteen thousand of them, and brought them under the like subjection.

Thus loaded with honour and spoils David returned from this campaign; but all the rich materials that he had compiled together, namely, gold, silver, and brass, he dedicated to the Lord, or laid them up for the future use of the temple. And, what was no small addition to his store, Toi, the king of Hamath, hearing of his victories, sent his own son to congratulate him thereupon, and, in a large present of vessels of gold, and vessels of silver, &c., to acknowledge his kindness in breaking the power of his most inveterate enemies.

All the while that David was thus engaged in foreign wars, he took care to have justice administered to his subjects at home, and a certain number of very great

^d In the fragment of Nicolaus Damascenus, which Josephus has preserved, this prince is simply called *Adad*, which was the common name of the kings of Syria, who, according to the manner of other eastern princes, took their titles from the celestial bodies, and, in their language, *Adad* signifies the sun. The fragment, recorded by Josephus is to this effect. "A long time after, one Adad, a valiant man, and a native of the place, had the command of Damascus and Syria, Phenicia only excepted. There happened to be a war between the same Adad and David the king of the Jews, and several encounters between them; but, in the end Adad was overcome at Euphrates, behaving himself with the resolution of a brave prince and a great captain." The same author, speaking further of his posterity, says, "That the government was handed down from father to son to the tenth generation, and that the successor still received the father's name with the empire, as the Ptolemies did among the Egyptians."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 6.

^e Aram Damasek, which we translate Syria of Damascus, was that part of Syria which lay between Libanus and Antilibanus, whose chief city was Damascus, situate in a valley, called by several names in Scripture, and watered by five rivers, the two principal of which, namely, Abana and Parphar, (mentioned in 2 Kings v. 12.) descended from mount Hermon; whereof the latter washed the walls of Damascus, and the other ran through it, and divided the city into two parts.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^f The valley of salt here is thought by many to be the place adjoining to the Dead sea. But, as the country of the Edomites, whom David subdued in his return from his expedition into Syria, must necessarily lie towards the east of Canaan, we must look for some other valley of salt in the confines of that country. Now, about a league southward from the city of Palmyra, or Tadmor, in the road to Edom, we find a large plain abounding with salt pits, whence a great part of Syria is furnished with that commodity; and therefore it is very probable, that the battle between David's generals and the Edomites was fought in this plain: which is about two days' journey from Bozrah, the capital city of the eastern Edom, whence the people might march out to meet David's forces, and oppose them in their return home.—*Cabnet's Commentary*.

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men employed in the highest offices of trust. Joab, as we said before, was captain-general; Jehoshaphat, ^a chancellor of the kingdom; Abiathar, was high priest; Seraiah, secretary of state; Benaiah, ^b captain of his guard; and his own sons, the prime ministers of his household, such as lord chamberlain, lord treasurer, lord steward, as we call them; and to these he added one more, Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, to whom he restored all his grandfather Saul's estate; and though he was a cripple, ^c and lame of both his feet, yet, for the love he had for his father, he entertained him with great kindness, and ordered him to sit with his own sons at the royal table every day.

David, not long after this, hearing that his ^d old friend

^a The word in our translation is *recorder*, which in the marginal note, is *remembrancer*, or *writer of chronicles*; an employment of no mean estimation in the eastern world, where it was customary with kings to keep daily registers of all the transactions of their reigns; and a trust, which, however discharged to purpose, must be let into the true springs and secrets of action, and consequently must be received into the inmost confidence. For whether the office of a lord chancellor was consistent with the constitution of the Jewish state, a modern author seems to doubt.—*History of the Life of King David*, vol. 2.

^b These guards are called in the text 'the Cherethites and the Pelethites'; but who they were, is variously conjectured. That they were soldiers, is evident, from their being mentioned as present at the proclamation of king Solomon, against Adonijah, which could not conveniently have been done without some armed force, to protect the persons who proclaimed him; and that they were not common soldiers, but the constant guards of David's person, is manifest from the title of *Σαματοφύλακες*, *keepers of the body*, which Josephus gives them. Some are of opinion, that they were men of a gigantic stature; but we find no ground for that, though they were doubtless proper and robust men, as we speak, and of known fidelity to their prince, (2 Sam. xv. 18. and xx. 7.) Others again, think that they were Philistines; but it is hardly supposable, that David would have any of these hated uncircumcised people to be his body guard, neither can we believe, that the Israelitish soldiers would have taken it patiently, to see foreigners of that nation put in such places of honour and trust. Cherethite, however, is certainly but another name for Philistine, as appears from Zephaniah ii. 5.; and therefore the question is, how came any of David's subjects to be called after that name? And the answer to this is obvious.—They were so called, because they went at first with him into Philistia, and continued there with him, all the time that he was under the protection of Achish. These were the persons who accompanied him from the beginning, in his utmost distress, and clave to him in all calamities; and therefore it is no wonder, if men of such approved fidelity were made choice of for his body guards; nor is it any uncommon thing in history, for legions, or bands of soldiers, to take their names, not from the place of their nativity, but their residence, and very frequently from the name of their captain or commander. Since therefore, in 1 Chron. xii. 3. we find mention made of one Pelet, the son of Azmaveth, who resorted to David while he was at Ziklag, but still under the protection of Achish, it is but supposing him to be their captain, and then we come to the reason why they were called Pelethites, unless we suppose them rather denominated from Peleth son of Jonathan, who was of the king's own tribe.—*Patrick's Commentary*; *Poole's Annot.*; and *The History of the Life of King David*.

^c Mephibosheth was very young when his father Jonathan was killed at the battle of Gilboa, which put his nurse into so great a consternation, that she let the child fall, as she was making haste to escape with him, and from that time he was lame of both feet for ever after.—2 Sam. iv. 4.

^d What the particular benefits which David had received from Nahash were, we are no where told in Scripture; but some of the Jews say, that he fled to him, when he durst stay no longer with Achish king of the Philistines, and that he received him very kindly; others, that he entertained his relations when the king of Moab, to whom he had committed them, slew some of them: but the most likely opinion is, that as he was a bitter enemy to Saul, who had given him a great overthrow, he, for that very

Nahash was dead, sent his compliments of condolence to his son and successor Hanun; but the great men that were about the young king, made him believe, that the sole intent of David's sending this embassy was to spy out the weakness of the city, and in what place it might most advantageously be assaulted: so that the too credulous prince ordered the ambassadors to be treated in the most ignominious manner, and with ^e their beards half-shaved, and their clothes cut short, even to the middle of their buttocks, to be sent about their business.

The ambassadors being ashamed to return home, were ordered to continue at Jericho, until their beards grew again; but as for the indignity put upon them, David gave them assurance that he would resent it in a proper manner. Accordingly he sent an army under the command of Joab, to call these unhospitable Ammonites to an account. The Ammonites were apprised of his design, and therefore provided against the worst, by procuring 33,000 mercenaries of the Syrians, who lay encamped at some distance in the fields, whilst their own forces covered the city.

Upon this situation of the enemy, Joab divided his army into two bodies, one of which he gave to his brother Abishai, to keep the Ammonites in play, while himself with the other, which consisted of his choice men, attacked the Syrians. Their agreement was, to relieve each other, in case there was occasion: but Joab, at the first onset, charged the Syrians so home, that as they were but mercenaries, and thought not the cause their own, they soon gave way, which made the Ammonites, who depended much upon their courage, endeavour to secure themselves by retreating into their city; for the season of the year being too far advanced, made it impracticable for Joab to besiege it.

Hadadezer had assisted the Ammonites, with some forces the last campaign; and being apprehensive that David would fall foul upon him, he resolved to be be-

reason, became a friend to David, when he perceived how Saul persecuted him, and thereupon might send him relief and assistance, and perhaps offer him protection in his kingdom.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^e This was one of the greatest indignities that the malice of man could invent, in those countries where all people thought their hair so great an ornament, that some would rather have submitted to die than part with it. What a foul disgrace and heavy punishment this was accounted in ancient times, we may learn from Nicolaus Damascenus, as mentioned by Stobæus, (tit. 42.) who says, that among the Indians, the king commanded the greatest offenders to be shaven, as the heaviest punishment that he could inflict upon them; and to the like purpose Plutarch (in *Agesil.*) tells us, that whenever a soldier, among the Lacedæmonians, was convicted of cowardice, he was obliged to go with one part of his upper lip shaved, and the other not. Nay, even at this day, no greater indignity can be offered to a man of Persia, than to cause his beard to be shaved; and therefore Tavernier, in his travels, relates the story, that when the sophi caused an ambassador of Aureng-zebe's to be used in this manner, telling him that he was not worthy to wear a beard, the emperor, even in the manner that David here did, most highly resented the affront that was done to him in the person of his ambassador. And as shaving David's ambassadors, was deservedly accounted a grievous affront, so the cutting off half the beard, which made them look still more ridiculous, was a great addition to it, where beards were held in great veneration; and where long habits down to the heels were worn, especially by persons of distinction, without any breeches or drawers, the cutting their garments, even to the middle, thereby to expose their nakedness, was such a brutal and shameless insult, as would badly become a man of David's martial spirit, and just sentiments of honour, to have tamely passed by.—*Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

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forehand with him. To this purpose levying a vast army, not only in Syria, but in Mesopotamia likewise, he sent it, under the command of Shobach his general, over the river Euphrates, as far as Helam, a town in the borders of the half tribe of Manasseh. This David had soon intelligence of, and therefore uniting all his forces, he marched with the utmost expedition, and coming upon the enemy sooner than was expected, slew seven thousand men, who attended seven hundred chariots; which so disheartened the rest, that he soon despatched forty thousand more, together with their general, who fell in the action, and died upon the spot. Upon this success, several petty kings who had assisted Hadadezer in this expedition, fearing some worse consequence, made a peace with David, and became tributary to him; and even Hadadezer himself, being thus forsaken by his confederates, gave him assurance that he would no longer espouse the cause of the Ammonites, but leave them to shift for themselves. Whereupon David sent Joab against them with a powerful army, who laid the country waste, destroyed all that came in his way, and to make short of the matter, laid siege to their royal city of Rabbah.

While Joab was carrying on the siege of Rabbah, David continued in Jerusalem, and walking one evening ^a on the top of his palace to take the fresh air, he chanced to ^b espy a beauteous woman bathing herself in her garden. The unguarded king, as soon as he saw her, was smitten; and inquiring who she was, was informed that she was Bathsheba, the daughter of Ammiel, and wife of Uriah ^c the Hittite, an officer in his army, who was then with Joab at the siege of Rabbah. David sent for her, lay with her, and dismissed her. But, in a short time, finding herself with child, she apprized him of it, and desired him withal to consult her honour and

safety in devising some means to conceal it. Hereupon he sent a despatch to Joab for Uriah to come to him, as if he had something particular to inquire of him; but his whole intent was to give him an opportunity of lying with his wife, that so the child, when it was born, might be reputed his. Uriah came; and after the king had asked him some few questions concerning the condition of the army, and the advances of the siege, he ordered him to go home, ^d and refresh himself after his journey, and sent a handsome collation after him for his entertainment. But so it was, that instead of going near his wife, he chose to sleep in the guard room.

David was informed of this the next morning; and was therefore resolved to make use of another expedient. He invited him to sup at his own table, and prevailed with him to drink to such a pitch, that he did not doubt but that the heat of the liquor would have inflamed his appetite, and made him go home to his wife; but still he lay in the guard room, and in excuse to the king, said, that he thought it was his duty so to do, while the rest of the soldiers were encamped. So that finding himself still disappointed, the king ordered him at last back to the army, and ^e sent him with letters to Joab, wherein he commanded him to manage matters so, that Uriah might be killed by the Ammonites, which accordingly came to pass: for in an assault upon the town, Uriah,

^d The words in the text are, 'go down to thy house, and wash thy feet,' (2 Sam. xi. 8.) for in these countries, where it was not the custom to wear shoes, but sandals only, and, in some places to go barefoot, washing the feet was a great refreshment after a journey, and a common compliment that the master of the house usually made to any stranger at his first entrance. But this custom of washing the feet, was not only after a journey, to cleanse them from dirt and dust, but very much used likewise, before people sat down to meat; and therefore David's meaning in the expression is, that Uriah should go down and feast with his wife, for which reason he sent a collation to his house, and after so long an absence, indulge himself in her company. For David's intention hitherto was, neither to murder Uriah, nor marry his wife, but only to screen her honour and his own crime.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^e It may be thought perhaps, that Uriah suspected something of his wife's adultery, and therefore, resolving that it should be discovered, would not be persuaded to go down to his house. But if he did, he certainly acted the part of a trusty servant, when he would not open the king's letter to know what was in it, though, upon supposition that he suspected his criminal commerce with his wife, he had reason to expect no good. This puts one naturally in mind of the story of Bellerophon's carrying letters from Proetus to his father-in-law Jobates, king of Lycia, with an order to kill him; from whom it came into a proverb, to carry Bellerophon's letter or a death warrant against one's self, according to that passage in Plautus: "Aha! thy son hath now made me a Bellerophon, I myself have brought the warrant for my bondage."—*Bacchid.* For the fable of Uriah and Bellerophon are so very much alike, that the fable of the latter seems to be founded upon the story of the former. Bellerophon, who, as some scholiasts think, should be read Boulephoron, a *council carrier*, was a stranger at the court of Proetus, as Uriah being a Hittite, was at the court of David. He declined the embraces of Sthenoboea, as Uriah did the bed of Bathsheba; and was for that reason, sent to Jobates, general of Proetus's army, with letters, which contained a direction to put him to death, as Uriah was sent to Joab, David's general. By Jobates he was sent, with a small guard, upon an attack, in which it was intended, he should be slain, as Uriah was by Joab to that in which he fell. The main of the history is the same in both; the similitude of Jobates and Joab's name is very remarkable; and the variation in the whole only lies in some such ornamental embellishments, as might well be expected in a poetical composition.—*Calmet's Commentary, and The History of the Life of King David.*

^a The manner of building, in all eastern countries, was to have their houses flat-roofed, with a terrace and parapet wall, for the convenience of walking in the cool air; and as David's palace was built on one of the highest places of Mount Sion, he might easily look down upon the lower parts of the town, and take a view of all the gardens that were within due distance.—*Le Clerc's Commentary.*

^b Thus Jupiter is said to have seen Proserpina washing herself, and exposing her whole body to his view, which inflamed his lust after her. But whether it was in her garden, or courtyard, overlooked by the palace, or in some apartment in her house, whose windows opened that way, that this woman bathed herself, it is not so certain. Tradition points out the place of a fountain still called after her name, which would make it probable that she bathed in a garden, did not Josephus expressly declare that it was in her own house, as indeed the natural modesty and decency of her sex, as well as the circumstance of the time, for then it was evening, make his account more probable; nor can it be doubted, but that the declining rays of the sun, shooting into the inmost recesses of her chamber, and throwing a great lustre around her, might discover her very clearly to very distant eyes, without the least suspicion on her part, of any possibility of being seen, and consequently with all the reserve of modesty proper to her sex.—*The History of the Life of King David*, vol. 3.

^c Uriah, though an Hittite by nation, was proselyted to the Jewish religion, and so marrying with a Jewish woman, lived in Jerusalem; or as he was one of the king's lifeguard, which for reasons above mentioned, seem to have been all natives, and of the tribe of Judah, this additional name might perhaps be given him, for some gallant action achieved against the Hittites, in the same manner as a Roman, in after ages, came to be called Africanus, Germanicus, Parthicus, &c., upon account of the victories obtained over the Africans, Germans, or Parthians.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

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being deserted by the other soldiers, who had private orders to retire when the onset began, ^a fell immediately by the enemy's sword.

As soon as Uriah was dead, Joab sent an express thereof to the king, who returned him orders to carry on the siege with more vigour, until he had made himself master of it; and then to raze it even to the ground, and to put all the inhabitants to the sword, without sparing so much as one man. Upon this order Joab advanced his approaches, and renewed his assaults every day, until he had got possession of ^b the water works which supplied the town; and then sent a courier to acquaint the king, that the city was reduced to the utmost extremity; was in no condition to hold out much longer, and therefore he desired him to come in person, that he might have the honour of taking it. The king, according to his general's desire, went with a strong reinforcement, took the place by storm, gave the plunder of it to his soldiers, but reserved to himself what belonged to the king, among which was the crown of inestimable value. Having thus wasted the city and divided the spoil, he put the men who had held it out against him, to the most exquisite torments; and other places that would not immediately surrender, he treated with the same severity.

Upon the death of Uriah, his wife ^c Bathsheba pretended to mourn for him; but it was not long before David sent for her, ^d and declared her his wife: and in

^a The fate and fall of the gallant Uriah is thus related by Josephus:—"Joab put Uriah upon a desperate forlorn, and to cover his design, gave him several brave men to back him, with a promise to support him with the whole army, in case there was any possibility of entering the town; and at the same time recommended it earnestly to him, to maintain the reputation he had already acquired with the king and the army, by acquitting himself gallantly upon this occasion. Uriah with great cheerfulness undertook the post, while Joab gave his companions private orders to withdraw, and leave him, as soon as they found themselves in danger. The Hebrews pressed hard upon the wall, and put the Ammonites under a dreadful apprehension, that they would force the town; whereupon the besieged threw open their gates, and made a desperate sally, which was as good as a signal to those that were with Uriah, to abandon him; which accordingly they did, and left him to be cut to pieces. He did all the execution that was possible to be done by one single man against numbers, and after several wounds received, fell like a man of honour, with his face to the enemy."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 7.

^b Some learned men are of opinion, that this royal city of Rahbah was likewise called the 'city of waters,' either because it stood upon a river, or was encompassed with water both for its defence and delight. But Junius renders it, that "he cut off the waters which supplied the town;" which translation not only Josephus seems to favour by telling us, that Joab seized on all the aqueducts which led into the city; but Polybius (b. 5.) likewise, speaking of the siege of this same place by Antiochus, relates the story, how a certain deserter discovered to that prince a subterraneous passage through which the besieged came to draw water, which Antiochus stopped up, and by reason of their thirst compelled them to surrender.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Cabnet's Commentary*.

^c How long widows were to mourn for their husbands, there is no express precept in the law; but the usual time for common mourners was no more than seven days; and we cannot suppose that Bathsheba was much longer, considering the reason we have to apply to her the words of Lucan: "Unwilling she shed the trickling tears, and from a heart of joy heaved forth groans."

^d According to the Jewish doctors it was utterly unlawful for any to marry another man's wife in case he had defiled her before. The canonical law declares such marriages null and void, as are contracted between an adulterous man, and a woman that was partner with him in the crime; and though the law of Moses

this state he continued without any molestation, or apprehension of having done wrong, for the space of several months, till at length God sent ^e Nathan the prophet to rouse him out of his adulterous lethargy, and, by ^f an

does not expressly forbid them, yet we may not thence infer that they were permitted among the Jews. For these reasons some have thought that this marriage of David and Bathsheba was null and invalid; but others, upon better grounds, have supposed that though there were many criminal circumstances attending it, yet these did not vacate its effect, and in short, though it ought not to have been done, yet being done, the marriage was good, and the children, which were afterwards born, were legitimate.—*Cabnet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

^e We learn little more of this great man in the sacred writings, but that he was David's prophet, intimate counsellor, and historiographer. Josephus says of him, that he was a polite and a prudent man, one who knew how to temper the severity of wisdom with sweetness of manners. And Grotius compares him to Manius Lepidus, of whom Tacitus says that he had a talent of turning away Tiberius's mind from those cruel purposes, to which the vile flattery of others inclined him, and was, at the same time, in equal favour and authority with him. Nathan certainly knew the art of reproving kings with authority, and yet without giving offence. So far from that, he grew in his prince's favour and estimation, as long as he lived; insomuch, that David, as tradition tells us, called one son after his name, and committed another, even his beloved Solomon, to his care and tuition.—*The History of the Life of King David*, vol. 3.

^f There is a passage of Seneca, (*Epist.* 59.) where he treats of the style fit for philosophic writing, which suits so well with this parable of Nathan's, that I choose to give it in his own words, as a fit preamble to the short comment which follows it:—"I find," says he, "images, which if any one forbids us to use, and deems that they ought to be allowed to poets only, yet it is my opinion, that none of the ancients ever read them who was not captivated with the beautiful diction. Those who spoke in a simple manner, and with the view of proving something, made great use of parables, which I think necessary, not for the same reason that poets use them, but that they might be of assistance to our weakness, and further both teacher and listener to the point in hand." For parables, like histories, wherein we have no concern, are heard with more attention, and are so contrived, as to give no offence, even though they provoke the man to whom they are addressed, to condemn himself. 'There were two men in one city, the one rich, and the other poor; and the rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds;' as David had many wives and concubines, with whom he might have been well satisfied, without violating another man's bed; 'but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up.' Bathsheba, very likely, was the only wife that Uriah had, with whom he was highly pleased and delighted, and she very probably with him, till David's temptations, had perverted her mind. 'And it grew up together with him and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.' Nathan, in his resemblance, cannot be said to have surpassed the truth, considering how fond many persons were anciently, not only of lambs, but of several other creatures, which they suffered to eat with them at their tables, and lie with them in their beds; and that even at this day it is a custom in Arabia, which is contiguous to Judea, to have one of the finest lambs in the flock brought up in the house, and fed with the children. 'And there came a traveller to the rich man;' this denotes David's straggling appetite, which he suffered to wander from his own home, and to covet another man's wife: and of this appetite the Jewish doctors have this observation, that "in the beginning it is but a traveller, but in time it becomes a guest, and in conclusion is the master of the house." 'And he spared to take of his own flock, and his own herds,' wherewith he might have satisfied his appetite, 'but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the wayfaring man that was come to him.' Most commentators here take notice, that Nathan did not go so far in the parable, as to say any thing of the rich man's killing the poor man. This certainly would have made the resemblance more complete, but it is therefore omitted, that David might not so readily apprehend Nathan's meaning, and so be induced unawares to pronounce a sentence of condemnation upon himself; whereupon the prophet

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elegant parable, to represent the baseness and wickedness of what he had done, and to make him pronounce sentence against his guilty self.

David accordingly condemns himself, and confesses his guilt, and humbly begs pardon for what he had done: Whereupon Nathan was sent again to inform him, that ^a God had pardoned his transgression, namely, the eternal punishment due to his transgression God had remitted, but the ^b temporal should be inflicted on him. That

had a fair opportunity to show him, that if the rich man, who took away the poor man's lamb, deserved death, according to his own judgment, how much more did he deserve it, who had not only taken another man's wife, but caused him to be slain likewise by the enemies of Israel.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^a It may very well be asked, how God so readily came to forgive David, when he acknowledged his transgression, and yet did not forgive Saul, though he made the like confession. "I have sinned." But the answer is obvious, that, be the form of expression what it will, unless it proceeds from the sincerity of the heart, the great Searcher of hearts will not regard it. The true reason, therefore, why Saul could not obtain a revocation of his sentence of rejection, was, because his repentance was not sincere; it did not proceed from an humble and contrite spirit. At the same time that he acknowledged his sin, he desired Samuel "to honour him before the people," and persisted in his disobedience ever after. Whereas David, on the contrary, humbled himself, wept and lamented for his sin, and of his penitence has left us a perpetual and eternal monument in Psalm li. "Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; according to the multitude of thy mercies, do away mine offences; wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin," &c.

^b In the threats, which God orders Nathan to denounce against David, the expressions are, "I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of the sun; for thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun;" (2 Sam. xii. 11—12.) Where the words, "I will raise up, I will take, I will do," do not denote any positive actions of God, as if he prompted wicked men to do the same things, wherewith he threatens David, inasmuch that, without such prompting, they would not have done them, but by it were necessitated to do them. Such a construction as this is injurious to the divine attributes, and makes God the author of evil. But the true meaning is, that God, at that time, saw the perverse disposition of one of his sons, and the crafty williness of one of his counselors, which, without restraining them, would not fail to create David no small uneasiness. And therefore, because David had violated his law, and, to gratify his lust, had committed both adultery and murder, God would not interpose, but suffered the tempers of these two wicked persons to follow their own course, and have their natural swing; whereupon the one, being ambitious of a crown, endeavours to depose his father, and the other, willing to make the breach irreparable, advised the most detested thing he could think of. This indeed was the very thing that God had foretold, but, without any imputation upon his attributes, we may say, that God can so dispose and guide a train of circumstances, that the wickedness of any action shall happen in this manner rather than another, though he do not infuse into any man the will to do wickedly. "To the torrent of iniquity, if I may so speak," for I give you the commentator's own words, because there is something very accurate in them, "he adds no strength, but prevents its outbreking to one side rather to another, and all the circumstances (which have no vice in themselves) he so directs and regulates that they may attain to some certain issue. But there are innumerable circumstances of such a nature, having no real evil in themselves, but in which however the events are varied according to the will of God, and the Almighty hath many methods by which he overrules all things without any diminution of his glory, and all in such a manner as to leave to men the liberty either of breaking or obeying his commandments." So that from such scripture phrases as these, we may not infer, that God either does, or can do evil, but only, that he permits that evil to be done, which he foreknew would be done, but might have prevented had he pleased; or, in other

therefore the son, for by this time Bathsheba was brought to bed of a son, begotten in this adulterous congress, should not live; that several of his family should come to an untimely death; that some one of his sons should rise up in rebellion against him; and his own wives be defiled publicly, and in the sight of all the world, because he had given such scandal to his own people, and ^c such occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme.

Nor was it long before part of this sentence began to be executed upon him. For the child, which he had by Bathsheba, was taken sick and died. While it was sick, ^d David fasted and prayed, if possibly he might appease the divine wrath, and intercede for its life; but when it was dead, he acknowledged the justice of God, and, cheerfully submitting to his will, made his ardent supplications to him, that the remainder of his afflictions might be mixed with mercy. This in some measure was done; for, in a proper space of time, he had another son ^e

terms, that he suffers men, naturally wicked, to follow the bent of their tempers, without any interposition of his providence to restrain them.—*Le Clerc's Commentary.*

^c David's crime, which at first was secret, was in time discovered, and the report of it carried to the neighbouring nations. The Syrians, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Philistines, people whom he had subdued, and who, out of pure malice, had always a jealous eye upon his conduct, would not fail upon this occasion to murmur, and say, "How could God thus favour an adulterer and murderer? Where is his justice and his providence? Is this the God who is said to be so equitable in his dealings with men, and so severe an avenger of iniquity, and yet makes choice of such a monster as this to govern his people! This is the David, the man after God's own heart, whom he preferred before Saul, on whom he hath poured down innumerable blessings, and for whom he hath many rich promises in reserve; and yet did Saul ever commit such horrid enormities as this man has done, and still continues to be the favourite of God?" Such reflections we may reasonably imagine would David's transgressions have occasioned among strangers and enemies, who might thence be induced to despise a religion they were acquainted with, and which he, who should have been its main support, so little regarded.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^d David's acts of humiliation for his sins are thus described by Sylvian, On the Government of God. "He put off his purple, threw away his royal ornaments, laid down his diadem, wholly stripped himself of his kingship, and appeared as a penitent, in a squalid, rueful garb, fasting, lying on the ground, confessing, mourning, repenting, deprecating, &c., and yet, with all his humiliation and compunction, he could not obtain a revocation of this punishment." But why should the death of this child, who, had he lived, would have been a perpetual monument of guilt, and a brand of infamy upon his parents, be accounted by David so great a punishment? The true way to account for this, is to ascribe it to David's excess of passion for Bathsheba, which so strongly attached him to every offspring of hers, and made him forget every thing in this child, but that motive of endearment. Besides this, there is something in human nature, which prompts us to rate things after a manner seemingly unaccountable; and to estimate them, not according to their real worth, but according to the expense or trouble, or even the distress they cost us. Nor should it be forgot, that this excessive mourning did not proceed simply from the fear of the loss of the child, but from a deep sense of his sin, and of the divine displeasure manifested in the child's sickness, and particularly from a just apprehension of the injury which he had done the infant by his sin, and which he thought himself bound in justice, by prayer and intercession, as much as he was able, to repair.—*Patrick's Commentary, and Poole's Annotations.*

^e It is very observable, that in the whole compass of this story, there is not a word said either of Bathsheba's guilt or punishment; but this might be, because, as to the matter of her husband's death, she was innocent: to the adultery which she committed, she was enticed by the offers of a powerful king: and in the calamities which befell him, she, no doubt, had her share, and felt her punishment.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

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by Bathsheba, who was named ^a Solomon, in confidence of the promise which God had made, that his reign should be crowned with peace: but this did not hinder the divine justice from being true to its threats, as well as its promises.

David had several sons, but only one daughter, that we read of, whose name was Tamar, sister to Absalom, by Maacha, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur, ^b a princess of excellent beauty, and with whom Amnon, his eldest son by another queen, fell desperately in love, and pined away with a ^c hopeless desire of obtaining her, till at length, by the advice and contrivance of Jonadab, his intimate friend, and ^d cousin-german, he found means to decoy her into his apartment, where, ^e

^a The word *Solomon* is properly derived from *Scholam*, which signifies *peace*, intimating that his reign should be peaceable; but, by God's appointment, Nathan gave him another name, viz. *Jedidiah*, that is, *the Beloved of God*. The Scripture, however, never calls him by this name, but only by that of *Solomon*, for what reason we cannot tell, unless we may suppose, that the people being long harassed in war during his father's reign, might be pleased with this name, and use it rather than the other, to intimate their hopes and longing desire of peace. And for this reason (among others) it may be inferred, that Solomon was born after the conclusion of the Ammonitish war, though the sacred history takes occasion, from the death of Bathsheba's first-born, to relate that event first. Not long after this, David had another son by Bathsheba, (2 Sam. v. 14. and 1 Chron. iii. 5.) whom he called *Nathan*, after the name of the prophet; and of these two Christ was born, though in different lines: for Joseph, his supposed father, came from Solomon, as Matthew (chap. i. ver. 6, 7. relates it); and Mary, his real mother, came from Nathan, as it is in Saint Luke, chap. iii. ver. 34.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*; and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 5. c. 4.

^b The borders of the Geshurites and Maachathites (as we read Josh. xiii. 11, 13.) were given by Moses to the Israelites that seated themselves on the east of Jordan; nevertheless 'the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites and Maachathites, but they dwell among the Israelites unto this day.' from whence it is evident, that the cities of Geshur and Maacha, the two capitals of two small kingdoms, lay within the borders of the land of Israel: and though it does not appear how they were situated in respect of each other, yet it is certain that they both lay on the south side of Mount Libanus, in the north part of the half tribe of Manasseh, and on the east side of the river Jordan.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

^c Virgins of the blood royal were kept seclude in apartments, separate from the commerce of men, into which not only strangers, but even their own fathers, were not permitted to enter. Amnon, however, at some time or other, had seen the beautiful Tamar, or otherwise he could not have conceived so strong a passion for her. Upon some certain ceremonial occasions, indeed, it was customary for the young women to walk out, and show themselves; but, considering their close confinement at other times, it was hardly possible for Amnon to find an opportunity of declaring his passion, much more of gratifying it; and therefore, out of pure despair, he pined himself into a consumption.—*Calmel's Commentary*.

^d Jonadab was the son of Shimeah, the brother of David.

^e There is something so moving, and the arguments are so strong in Tamar's speech to Amnon, that one would almost wonder why it did not prevail with him to desist. 'Nay, my brother, do not force me.' Here she reminds him of his relation to her, for which she hoped he would have such a reverence as not to meddle with her, though she herself were willing, much less to offer violence to her, which it was abominable to do even to a stranger, much more to one of the same blood. 'For no such thing ought to be done in Israel.' Whatever other nations did, who had not the knowledge of God's laws, she begs of him to consider, that they both belonged to a nation which was God's peculiar people, had been instructed better, and therefore should act otherwise. 'Do not thou this folly.' She prays him, besides the scandal it would give, to reflect with himself on the heinousness of the crime, and how highly offensive it would be to the

notwithstanding all her entreaties and expostulations with him, he first ravished her, and when his brutish passion was satisfied, in a sullen humour ^f bid her begone; and when she remonstrated the ill usage, had her turned out by main force.

^g In this mournful and distracted condition, Tamar repairs to her brother Absalom, and tells him the whole transaction of her rape: but her brother, though naturally a man of a high spirit, advised her to be silent in point of prudence, because her ravisher was heir-apparent to the crown; and himself so ^h artfully concealed

divine Majesty. 'And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?' She beseeches him, 'besides the sin against God,' to consider the disgrace it would be to her, who, after such a foul act, must be ashamed to look any one in the face. 'And as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel.' Lastly, she puts him in mind of his own reputation, which so vile an action would tarnish for ever, and make him be looked upon as a man void of all sense, religion, honour, and humanity. 'Now therefore, I pray thee, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.' It is a common opinion among the Jewish doctors, that in the war which king David had with the king of Geshur, he took Maacha his daughter captive, and, as they fancy their law allows, (Deut. xxi. 11.) lay with her for once only, and then begat this daughter; but that, upon her becoming a proselyte to the Jewish religion, he married her, and afterwards had Absalom. Tamar, therefore, being born while her mother was a Gentile, they suppose that she was not David's legal child, and that Amnon consequently might marry her: but all this is mere talk, without any shadow of proof. The most probable opinion is, that she was neither ignorant of the law (Lev. xviii. 11.) which prohibited such incestuous marriages, nor thought her father's power so great, as that he might dispense with the law upon this occasion, but merely that she said any thing which she thought would please him, to stop his solicitations, and rude attempts, and to escape for the present out of his hands.—*Patrick's Commentary*; and *Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 8.

^f Interpreters seem to be at a great loss to find out the reason, why Amnon's love to his sister should so soon be converted into such an hatred, as to make him act so rudely, so brutally towards her; but it is no uncommon thing for men of violent and irregular passions, to pass from one extreme to another. The shame, which accompanies every base action, the remorse and repentance, and many bad consequences, that immediately pursue it, make a recoil in every man's temper; and therefore it is no wonder, that a libidinous young man, who would not spare so much as his own sister, should after fruition, and when the ardour of his lust was satisfied, be seized with a contrary passion, and hate the object he loved so much before, when he came coolly to compare the pleasure and the sin together, the shortness of the one, and the heinousness of the other. He hated his sister, when he should have hated himself; and as this outrageous treatment of her made it impossible for his guilt to be concealed, so God seems to have abandoned him to the tumult of his intemperate mind, on purpose to make this punishment of David's adultery more flagrant, and the prophet's prediction of 'raising up evil to him out of his own house,' (2 Sam. xii. 11.) more conspicuous.—*Calmel's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*; and *The History of the Life of King David*.

^g The manner of Tamar's signifying her vexation for the injury and disgrace which her brother had put upon her, is expressed by her putting ashes upon her head, (2 Sam. xiii. 19.) And that this was an ancient custom, whereby to denote one's grief and concern for any great loss or calamity, is evident from that passage of the prophet concerning the people of Tyre: 'They shall cry bitterly, cast dirt upon their heads, and wallow themselves in the ashes,' (Ezek. xxvi. 30.) from Achilles's behaviour upon the death of Patroclus, as we have it in Homer:—"With both his hands he grasped the burning sand, pouring on his head and defiling his fair face." (*Iliad* 18.) And from what Mezentius did upon the death of his Lausus, according to Virgil:—"With filthy dust he pollutes his hair, and to the heaven high stretches out both his hands."—*Æneid*, 10.

^h By this means Amnon was lulled asleep into a belief that Absalom would not trouble him for what he had done, because he

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his own resentment that every one believed he had taken no notice of it. But about two years after, under the pretence of a sheep-shearing entertainment, which in those countries used to be attended with great mirth and jollity, he invited his friends and relations, and with the king's consent, though himself declined going, all the princes of the blood, and more especially his brother Amnon, to his country seat at Hazer; where while they were engaged in feasting and drinking, his servants, by his direction, and through the promise of an impunity, fell upon Amnon, as Absalom gave the signal, and immediately despatched him. This put the rest of the princes into such a consternation, that they made the best of their way from the house, as expecting the like fate, and the king, when he heard the first news of the thing, supposing that Absalom had killed all the rest of his brothers, was thrown into the utmost grief and despair, till, by the information of Jonadab, who seems to have been privy to the design, and the safe arrival of the other princes, he was certified that Amnon only was dead; but his death alone was matter of sorrow and lamentation enough.

Absalom, who knew very well how highly his father would resent this treacherous and barbarous murder, ^a fled to his mother's relations, and was entertained by his grandfather, Talmai, at Geshur, for three years. But, length of time having worn out David's grief, and Joab perceiving that he had a secret desire to see Absalom again, if he could but find out a handsome excuse for such a purpose, procured a good artful woman ^b from Tekoah, who ^c in a speech, which he had contrived for

did not threaten, nor so much as expostulate with him, or take any notice of what had passed, though, in reason he ought to have been more afraid that he was meditating a terrible revenge: according to the lesson which the mouse gave her young one, when she perceived her affrighted at the noise of the crowing cock, but regardless of the sly approaches of the cat, namely, "That there was no danger to be feared from the fluttering cock, but from the silent cat present death."—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^a In the case of wilful murder, the law is, 'That the avenger of blood shall slay the murderer; when he meeteth him he shall slay him,' (Num. xxxv. 21.) from whence it seems to follow, that it was not in any man's power to protect the wilful murderer, because the avenger of blood, that is, the nearest relation of the person murdered, might, with impunity, wherever he met him, kill him. As Absalom therefore had committed a designed murder, his own life was every moment in danger; and as there were no cities of refuge in his own country, that, in this case, would yield him protection, he was forced to fly out of the kingdom to his mother's father.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^b Tekoah was a city in the tribe of Judah, which lay south of Jerusalem, and about twelve miles distant from it. And herein does Joab's cunning appear not a little, that he made choice of a woman rather than a man, because women can more easily express their passions, and sooner gain pity in their miseries; a widow, which was a condition of life proper to move compassion; a grave woman, as Josephus calls her, which made her better fitted for addressing the king; and a woman not known at Jerusalem, but living at some distance in the country, that the case which she was to represent, might not too readily be inquired into.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^c The art and contrivance of this widow of Tekoah's speech is very remarkable. 'When the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king! And the king said to her, What aileth thee? And she said, I am indeed a widow woman, and my husband is dead, and thy handmaid had two sons, and the two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other and slew him; and behold the whole family is risen against thy handmaid, and they say, deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his

her, was to convince the king, that in some cases the life of a murderer might be saved. The woman Joab introduced; and when she had told her tale, so as to induce the king to a compliance with her feigned petition, she gave him at length to know, that the case she had been stating was Absalom's: and that if, in a private man, the king was disposed to be merciful, there was much more reason for his pardoning his own son, whose absence the people lamented, and for whom they had so general an affection.

The king, being apprized that Joab had put the woman upon this artifice, ordered him to recall Absalom, but ^d confined him to live in his own house, and, as yet, would not seem so far reconciled to him, as to admit him into his presence. But, at the end of two years, Absalom prevailed with Joab to intercede further for a full pardon, and to introduce him to the king, who, upon his humbling himself and begging pardon, took him up from the ground, where he lay prostrate, and gave him a kiss, as a token of his forgiveness and royal favour.

Absalom was certainly one of the most comely persons in all Israel, without the least blemish from top to toe, and with a head of hair, which in those days was thought a great beauty, prodigiously long and thick, so that his person drew every one's eye to him, as soon as he was restored to favour at court. But as Amnon, his eldest brother, was slain, and Chileah, his second, by this time dead, he began to look upon himself as presumptive heir to the crown, and thereupon to affect a state and equipage greater than usual. He provided himself with chariots and horses, and had a guard of fifty men to attend his person: but, notwithstanding this, he would be ^e so obsequious and humble, as to stoop to the meanest

brother whom he slew, and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal that is left,' that is, deprive me of the little comfort of my life which remains, and is, as it were, a coal buried in the ashes, 'and leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth,' (2 Sam. xiv. 4, &c.) Now the scope of all this speech was to frame a case as like to David's as she could devise, that, by prevailing with him to determine it in her favour, he might be convinced, how much more reasonable it was to preserve Absalom. But, how plausible soever the likeness might be, there was a wide difference between her case and his: for her son, as she pretended, was slain in a scuffle with his brother; whereas Amnon was taken off by a premeditated murder: he was slain in the field, where there were no witnesses, whether the fact was wilfully done or no; whereas, all the king's sons, saw Amnon barbarously murdered by his brother: and, lastly, he was her only son, by whom alone she could hope to have her husband's name perpetuated; whereas David's family was in no danger of being extinct, even although he had given up Absalom to justice. But there was a great deal of policy in not making the similitude too close and visible, lest the king should perceive the drift of the woman's petition, before she had obtained a grant of pardon for her son, and came to make the application to the king: and though, upon her making the application, the king might have argued the disparity of the two cases, yet he thought proper to waive this, and admit her reasoning to be good, because he was as desirous to have Absalom recalled as were any of his subjects.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^d This small severity to Absalom, small in comparison of the heinousness of his crime, David might think necessary, not only to put upon him a sincere humiliation and repentance for what he had done, when he found that the king, indulgent as he was, had not fully pardoned him, but to convince the people likewise, how detestable his crime was in the king's esteem, and how averse he would be to pass by the like in another person, who could not endure the sight of a son, whose hand was defiled with a brother's blood.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^e It is an observation of Plato, that when any one intends to

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people that had any thing to say to him; would offer his service to solicit every one's cause that had any business at court; and, upon proper occasions, not fail to instil into the people's minds a bad opinion of the present administration, as if the public affairs were neglected, but that, if he were at the helm, things should be conducted at an other-guise rate.

^a By these arts and insinuations, which were advantageously seconded by the comeliness of his person, as we said, and the familiarity of his address, he gained to himself the affections of the people, and insensibly alienated them from David. ^b When therefore he imagined that matters were ripe for his purpose, he desired leave of his father to go to Hebron, pretending that he had vowed a vow, in his exile, that whenever it should please God to bring him back to Jerusalem, he would offer in that place a solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving.

make himself a tyrant in a popular state, he no sooner enters on the government, but "he smiles upon, and kindly salutes, all sorts of people, wherever he meets them;" avowing that he hates tyranny, promising great things both in private and public, "and making as if he would be mild, and gentle, and fatherly to all;" even as Tacitus relates of Otho, "that he used to kiss, and shake hands with any one, court and adore the mob, and do every little servile thing, to get possession of the government."—*Plato de Republica*, b. 8; and *Tacitus's History*, b. 1.

^a It is an observation of Aristotle, in his *Politics*, (b. 5. c. 4.) that all changes and revolutions in government are made by one of these two ways, "either by force and violence, or else by deceit and craft." Nor ever was there a man better formed by nature to manage matters in this latter way, than was Absalom, who was a person of courage and gallantry, of civility and courtesy, young, and wonderfully beautiful, descended from kings, both by father's and mother's side, and prodigal enough of large and magnificent promises, if ever he came to be king; a character not unlike that of Turnus in Virgil: "The well formed shape influences one, royal ancestry another, and chivalry another."—*Æneid*, b. 7.

^b This is said in the text to have been 'after forty years,' (2 Sam. xv. 7.) but where to date the beginning of the forty years has occasioned much disagreement among commentators. Some compute them from the time that the Israelites demanded a king of Samuel; others, from the first time that David was anointed king; others, from the first commencement of his reign over Judah; and others again, from the time that he took possession of the whole kingdom. The two latter of these opinions are insupportable, because David reigned but forty years in all, and was now so hale and hearty, as to be able to walk on foot; whereas in the latter end of his life he was very infirm and bed-ridden. The learned Usher indeed makes these forty years to commence from the time of David's first unction; and therefore he was threescore years old when this rebellion broke out, and lived ten years after it. But with all due deference to so great authority, both this and the other opinion, that computes from the time that a demand of a king was made, are forced and unnatural; have no affinity to the text, nor do they suggest any reason why the sacred historian should begin his account of this unnatural rebellion with an 'and it came to pass, that after forty years;' whereas, if we consider the account of what went before, how Absalom, by all the arts of popularity, a splendid equipage, condescensive behaviour, large promises, and flattering speeches, had alienated the hearts of the people from his father, we cannot but be tempted to think that there is an error crept into the text; that instead of *arba'im*, forty, as our copies have it, the word should be *arba*, four only, that is, four years after that Absalom was re-established in Jerusalem, and had used all his alluring arts to gain the nation's affections, the first step that he took, was to go to Hebron. This makes the sense easy and entire, and is confirmed by the authority of the Syriac and Arabic versions, the judgment of several able critics, and the testimony of Josephus himself, whose words are, that "four years after his father was reconciled to him, this conspiracy broke out."—*Calmet's Commentary*, *Howell's History in the notes*; and *Josephus' Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 8.

The king, little suspecting his hidden design, and being desirous that all religious services should be punctually performed, gave him free leave to go, and wished him a good journey. Hebron was the place of his own nativity, and where the royal seat had been, in the beginning of David's reign; and therefore he thought it the properest for his wicked enterprise. And no sooner was he settled there, but he sent his emissaries about to sound the inclinations of the several tribes, and to exhort those whom they should gain over to his party, to be ready to take up arms ^c as soon as they should hear that he was proclaimed king.

This occasioned a general insurrection. Absalom was the nation's darling; and, upon this summons, ^d people flocked to him from every part: so that David, who had intelligence of all this, thought it not safe for him to continue any longer in Jerusalem, ^e but leaving the

^c The expression in the text is, 'as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet,' (2 Sam. xv. 10.) which looks as if Absalom had planted trumpeters at proper distances to take the sound from one another, and disperse it over all the kingdom, that so they, who were lovers of his cause, might instantly resort to his assistance and support; to which they were encouraged, no doubt, by the suggestions of his emissaries, who might persuade the people, that all this was done by the king's consent and approbation, who, being aged and infirm himself, was willing to resign his kingdom to his eldest and most noble son, who was descended from a king by both parents.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^d It would really make one wonder, how any people could so easily abandon a prince, so brave, so happy, and successful as David had been; how they could forget his excellent qualities, or be unmindful of the services he had done the nation; but for this there may be some reasons assigned. In every nation there are always some turbulent and discontented spirits, who are uneasy with the present state of things, and promise themselves some benefit from a change. Saul's party was not as yet entirely extinct, and Joab, who was David's prime minister, behaved with an insufferable pride and insolence. His crimes, which were very black, and which the king durst not punish, redounded upon him; and the king himself had given his enemies umbrage enough against him, in living with Bathsheba, after he had murdered her husband. But, what gave the fairest pretence of all, was the obstruction of justice in the civil administration: for had there not been something of this, Absalom could have had no grounds for making such loud complaints. These were some of the causes of so general a revolt in the people. And yet, after all, there might be something in what Abarbanel imagines, namely, that neither Absalom, nor the elders of Israel, nor the rest of the people who were misled by them, had any intention to divest David of his crown and dignity, much less to take away his life; but only to substitute Absalom, as coadjutor to him, for the execution of the royal authority during his lifetime, and to be his successor after his death. For, as it would have been monstrously wicked in Absalom to have designed the destruction of so kind a father, so it is hard to conceive, how he could have gained to his party such a multitude of abettors in so villainous an enterprise. This however we may observe, that David looked upon their proceedings, (2 Sam. xv. 14. and xvi. 11.) as an attempt upon his life; and that, whatever their first intentions were, they came at last to a resolution to have him killed, to make way for their own better security. Which may be a sufficient warning to all men, never to begin anything that is wrong, for fear that it should lead them to the commission of that, which they at first abhorred, when they find they cannot be safe in one wickedness without perpetrating a greater.—*Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

^e Though the fort of Zion was very strong and impregnable, yet there are several reasons, which might induce David to quit Jerusalem. He had not laid in provisions for a long siege, nor was Jerusalem, in every part of it, defensible; and if Absalom had once taken it, as it was the capital, he would soon have been master of the whole kingdom. There was some reason to suspect likewise, that the inhabitants were faulty, and so much addicted

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place, with a design to retire beyond Jordan, he was attended by his guards, his best troops, and principal friends. ^a Zadok and Abiathar the priests, understanding that the king was departed from Jerusalem, brought the ark of the covenant to accompany him in his distress; but ^b he desired them to carry it back, and to continue in Jerusalem, because they might be of use to gain him intelligence of the enemy's motions and designs, and their character was too sacred, to fear any violence from the usurper. Hushai, ^c the Archite, his faithful friend and counsellor, came likewise to attend him, and, with all expressions of sorrow, to see his royal master in such distress, offered to share his fortune: but David enjoined him to return, and told him, that he would be more serviceable to him in the city, by pretending to adhere to Absalom, and by defeating the counsels of Ahithophel, who, as he understood for certainty, was ^d engaged in his son's measures, and whose great abilities, which the

king was not unacquainted with, gave him no small uneasiness.

David had scarce passed over Mount Olivet, which lies to the eastward of Jerusalem, when Ziba, whom he had made steward to Mephibosheth, his friend Jonathan's son, came, and presented him with a ^e considerable quantity of wine, and other provisions; but, upon the king's inquiring for his master, who he thought above all men, in point of gratitude, should have kept firm to his interest, the perfidious wretch accused him of staying behind in Jerusalem, in hopes that himself might be made king; and the too credulous king, in this general distraction of his affairs, believing the accusation to be true, made a hasty grant of all Mephibosheth's estate to this base servant and treacherous sycophant.

As David drew near to Bahurim, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, ^f one Shimei, a descendant from the family of Saul, and who dwelt in that place, came out, and threw stones at him, and, in the hearing of the whole company, loaded him with the bitterest reproaches and execrations, so that Abishai desired leave of the king to go and despatch the insolent rebel: but by no means would the king permit him, but bore all with an admirable patience, ^g and resignation to the will of God, as being conscious of his own guilt in the case of Uriah, and of the divine justice in thus afflicting him.

While David continued at Bahurim, Absalom and his party entering Jerusalem, were received with the general acclamations of the people, and Hushai, not forgetful of the king's instructions, went to compliment him, and offered him his service. Absalom knew that he was his father's intimate friend and counsellor, and therefore bantered him at first, upon his pretending to desert his

to the contrary party, that had he stood a siege, and been reduced to straits, they might possibly deliver him up to Absalom. Nor was the preservation of the city itself, which David had beautified, and adorned with a fine and stately palace, and where God had appointed to put his name and worship, the least part of his concern; and therefore he thought it more conducive to his interest in all respects, rather than be cooped up in a place which he desired to preserve from being the seat of war, to march abroad into the country, where he might probably raise a considerable army, both for his own defence, and the suppression of the rebels.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^a 2 Sam. xv. 30. 'And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered; and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.' This was an indication of great distress: for in ancient times the shoes of great and wealthy persons were made of very rich materials. When any great calamity befell them, either public or private, they not only stripped themselves of these ornaments, but of their very shoes, and walked barefoot. In this manner prisoners taken in war, were forced to walk, both for punishment and disgrace.—*Burder's Oriental Customs*, vol. 1. p. 231.

^b This he might do for several reasons; for either he might think it not decent to have the ark wander about with him he knew not whither, and to expose it to all the hazards and inconveniences which he himself was like to undergo; or he might suppose that this would be a means to expose the priests to the violence of Absalom's rage, as he had before exposed them to Saul's fury upon another occasion, if God, in his judgment, should permit him to prevail; or this might look as a distrust of the divine goodness, and that he placed more confidence in the token of God's presence, than he did in God himself, who had preserved him in the long persecution of Saul, when he had no ark with him. But what seems the chief reason at that time, for his sending back the ark, was,—That the priests and Levites, of whose fidelity he was sufficiently satisfied, by giving him intelligence of the enemies' motions, might do him more service in Jerusalem, than they could do in his camp.—*Poole's Annot.*

^c This man might be of the ancient race of the Archites, descendants from Canaan, of whom Moses speaks, (Gen. x. 17.) but since the name of these ancient people is differently written, I should rather think that this additional name was given him from the place of his nativity, namely, Archi, a town situated on the frontiers of Benjamin and Ephraim, to the west of Bethel.—*Joshua xvi. 2.*

^d The Jews are of opinion, that Ahithophel was incensed against David, and therefore ready to go over to the adverse party, because he had abused Bathsheba, whom they take to have been his grand-daughter, because she was the daughter of Eliam, (2 Sam. xi. 3.) and Ahithophel had a son of that name, (2 Sam. xxiii. 34.) for this reason they imagine, that he advised Absalom to lie with his father's concubines, that he might be repaid in kind; though the Scripture assigns another, namely, that he and his father might thereby become irreconcilable enemies.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^e And yet the text tells us, it was but one bottle: but what we render bottle, was, in those times, a bag, or vessel made of leather, which might contain a great deal of wine; because we cannot suppose, but that the liquor was proportionate to the rest of the present.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^f Whether this man had been a personal sufferer in the fall of Saul's family, or what else had exasperated him against David, it nowhere appears; but it seems as if he had conceived some very heinous offence against him, when neither the presence of a king, nor the terror of his guards, could restrain him from throwing stones, and bitter speeches, at him: and it looks as if the king were fallen into the utmost contempt, when one private man could think of venting his malice at him in so gross a manner with impunity.—*Howell's History* in the notes.

^g The words of David upon this occasion are, 'So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, curse David: let him alone, let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him;' not that God commanded it by his word, for that severely forbids cursing, (Exod. xxii. 28.) nor moved him to it by his Spirit; for neither was that possible, because God tempteth no man (Jas. i. 13.) But the meaning is, that the secret providence of God did overrule and determine him so to do, that is, God did not put any wickedness into Shimei's heart, for he had of himself an heart full of malignity and venom against David, but only left him to his own wickedness: took away that common prudence, which would have restrained him from so dangerous an action; directed his malice, that it should be exercised against David, rather than any other man; and brought him into so distressed a condition, that he might seem a proper object of his scorn and contempt, which is enough to justify the expression, 'The Lord hath bidden him,' in the same manner that we read of his 'commanding the ravens,' (1 Kings xvii. 4.) and sometimes inanimate creatures, (Ps. cxlvii. 15, 18.) The short is, David looked upon Shimei as an instrument in God's hands, and therefore took all his abuses patiently, out of a consciousness of his sinfulness, and a reverence to that Deity who had brought him so low, as to deserve the insults of this vile Benjaminite.—*Poole's Annot.*

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old master; but Hushai^a excused himself in such a manner, and answered all his questions with that subtlety, that he passed upon the prince for a worthy friend, and accordingly was received into his privy council.

A council was presently called, wherein Ahithophel, who was president, and stood highest in Absalom's esteem, spake first; and the two chief things which he advised him to do, were, first to place a tent on the top of the palace, (for by this time he had taken possession of his father's palace,) and to lie publicly with his father's concubines, that all the soldiers might see, and conclude that, after such an indignity, there could be no hopes of a reconciliation, and thereby be incited to fight more desperately to secure him in the possession of the throne. This advice was suitable perhaps to the young man's vicious inclinations, and therefore he delayed not to put it in execution: but, as for the second thing which Ahithophel proposed, viz. "To take twelve thousand choice men, and pursue after David that^b very night, and to fall upon his guards, which were fatigued with their march, and unable to make resistance, and so surprise the king, and kill him," he desired to consult Hushai herein; who, seeming not to slight Ahithophel's proposal, advised rather to delay the attempt, until he had got all the forces, of the kingdom together. "For, as David and his men were known to be brave, and, at that time, both exasperated,^c and desperate, in case they should worst the party, sent against them, this would be a means to discourage others, and be thought a very inauspicious beginning: whereas if they staid till a

^a The manner in which Josephus makes Hushai answer Absalom, is artful enough, though hardly becoming an honest man. "There is no contending," says he, "with the will of God, and the consent of the people; and so long as you have them on your side, you may be secure of my fidelity. It is from God that you have received your kingdom; and if you can think me worthy of a place in the number of those you will vouchsafe to own, you shall find me as true to yourself as ever I was to your father. No man is to account the present state of things uneasy, so long as the government continues in the same line, and a son of the same family succeeds to the throne.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 8.

^b It is a wise observation in Tacitus, "In civil discords nothing is more appropriate than haste, for in them there is more need for action than deliberation." Ahithophel therefore thought it highly necessary to make despatch upon this occasion; because he knew, that if he should give the people, that had revolted from their allegiance, leisure to think of what they were doing against their lawful prince, he would give that prince time to raise some regular troops, and those that were about him space to recover from their first fright, Absalom's party would dwindle into nothing, and David's grow stronger and stronger:—"He would grant repentance to the wicked, agreement to the good—for crimes strengthen by impetuosity, and good counsel by delay." (*Tacitus*, *Hist.* b. 1.) And therefore he advised marching immediately against him, without giving him a moment's time to recover himself.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^c There is something very plausible, and elegant too, in the advice which Hushai gives Absalom, not immediately to pursue and fall upon David: "Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field." (2 Sam. xvii. 7.) Every one knows, that a bear is a very fierce creature; but she-bears, as Aristotle tells us, are more fierce than the male, particularly when they have young ones, but, most of all when these young ones are taken from them. For this reason the Scriptures make frequent use of this similitude: "I will be unto them as a lion," says God, in relation to the people of Israel, "and as a leopard by the way; I will meet them as a bear, that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rent the caul of their hearts," (Hosea xiii. 7, 8. See Prov. xvii. 12, &c.) So that the purport of Hushai's advice

numerous army, were come together, ^d they might be assured of victory." Absalom, and the rest of the council approved of this last advice, and Hushai immediately despatched two messengers to David, acquainting him with what had passed in council, and advising him instantly to pass the Jordan, lest Absalom should change his mind, and come and fall upon him on a sudden.

The messengers, as they were making the best of their way, happened to meet some of Absalom's party, but had the good fortune to conceal themselves in a well, until their pursuers were returned; and then proceeding on their journey, came and delivered their despatches to the king, who decamped by break of day, passed the Jordan, and came to Mahanaim, a city of Gilead, where he was kindly received. As soon as Ahithophel heard that David was out of danger, either taking it amiss that his counsel was slighted, or perceiving by Absalom's weak conduct that things were not likely to succeed, and he consequently^e liable to be exposed to David's hottest indignation, for the counsel he had already given; partly out of pride, and partly out of fear of worse torments, he went to his own house, where he first made his will, and then hanged himself.

David had not been long at Mahanaim, before Absalom, having got together a numerous army, which was commanded by Amasa, the son of Ithra, a relation of Absalom's by marriage, left Jerusalem and passed the Jordan, in pursuit of his father. The king hearing of the approach of his rebel son, and foreseeing that a battle was unavoidable, divided his army into three bodies. The first to be commanded by Joab, the second by his brother Abishai, and the third by^f Ittai the Gittite,

is founded on this maxim, "That we should not drive an enemy to despair, nor attack those who are resolved to sell their lives at as dear a rate as possible."—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d The benefits which Hushai suggests, from Absalom's having a large army, are thus expressed in an hyperbolical way, suitable to the genius of that insolent young man, to whom he gave his advice; and therefore more likely to prevail with him; "Moreover if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there," (2 Sam. xvii. 13.) Where his meaning is, that if David should quit the open field, and betake himself to the strongest of their cities, encompassed with high walls and deep ditches, such a numerous army, as he proposed, would be sufficient to begirt it round, and by ropes put about the walls, draw them down, and all the houses of the city, into the ditch that ran about it: not that any such practices were ever used in war, and therefore the words must be looked upon as merely thraasonical, and calculated to please Absalom; unless we will say with some, that the word in the original may denote such machines as are worked by ropes, and were at that time in use to batter down walls.—*Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

^e Josephus thus relates the matter:—"When Ahithophel was come home to Galmon, he called his family together, and told them the advice which he had given Absalom, but that he would not follow it; and that in a short time that refusal would be his ruin: for David would certainly baffle him, and soon recover his kingdom. "Now it is more honourable for me," says he, "to die asserting my liberty like a man, than to wait sneaking till David comes in again, and to be slain at last for the services I have done the son against the father."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 9.

^f In 2 Sam. xv. 18, we read, that 'all the Gittites, six hundred men, which came after him,' namely, David, 'from Gath, passed on before the king;' but who these Gittites were, it is hard to determine; because we have no mention made of them in any other part of Scripture. Some imagine that they were natives of Gath, who, taken with the fame of David's piety, and happy success,

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and himself intended to go in person with them. But by the importunity of the people about him, he was prevailed with not to hazard his person in battle; and perhaps was more easily dissuaded from it, because the battle was to be against a son, for whom he still retained so tender an affection, that he gave the three generals a strict charge, in the hearing of the soldiers, that for his sake, they should use Absalom kindly, in case he should fall into their hands.

The two armies met in the ^a wood of Ephraim, which belonged to the tribe of Manasseh, where Absalom's army, though much superior in number, was defeated, and put to flight: for the loyalists, upon this occasion, behaved so gallantly, that they killed ^b twenty thousand of the rebels upon the spot, and would doubtless have carried the slaughter farther, had not Absalom, the chief cause of all this mischief, been taken and slain.

His hair, as we said before, was of a prodigious length and largeness; and as he was now in flight from the enemy, and riding with great speed under the trees, it happened to ^c entangle itself on one of the boughs in

came along with Ittai, whom the Jews suppose to have been the son of Achish, king of Gath, and being proselyted to the Jewish religion, became a part of David's guard, and attended him in his wars. But others rather think, that they were men of Jewish extract, but had this additional name, from their flying unto David, probably under the conduct of Ittai, while he was at Gath, and accompanying him ever after, not only in the time of Saul's persecution of him, but even after his accession to the united kingdoms of Judah and Israel.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^a This wood was so called, as some imagine, because the Ephraimites were wont to drive their cattle over Jordan to feed them in it; but others with more probability, suppose, that it had its name from the great slaughter (related in Jud. xii.) which Jephthah had formerly made of the Ephraimites in that place.—*Howell's History*, in the notes.

^b The expression in the text is, 'The wood devoured more people that day, than the sword devoured,' (2 Sam. xviii. 8.) which some think was occasioned by their falling into pits, pressing one another to death in strait places, creeping into lurking holes, and there being starved to death, or otherwise devoured by wild beasts, which met them in their flight: but the most easy and simple meaning of the passage is, that there were more slain in the wood than in the field of battle. The field of battle, (as Josephus tells us, *Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 9.) was a plain, with a wood contiguous to it; and therefore, when Absalom's army was put to the rout, and betook themselves to the wood for refuge, their pursuers made a greater slaughter of them there, than they otherwise would have done, because they could not run away so fast in the wood, as they might have done in the open field.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^c The words in the text, indeed, make no mention of Absalom's hair in this place. They only inform us, that 'Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth, and the mule, that was under him, went away,' (2 Sam. xviii. 9.) From whence some infer, that the meaning of the historian is, not that Absalom hung by his hair, but that his neck was so wedged between the boughs, by the swift motion of the mule, that he was not able to disengage himself. For it is hardly to be questioned, say they, but that when he went to battle, he had an helmet on; and an helmet, which covered his head, would have hindered his hair from being entangled in the boughs: but it is only supposing, either that his helmet was such, as left a great deal of his hair visible and uncovered, or that, if it was large enough to enclose the whole, he might, upon this occasion, throw it off, as well as his other heavy armour, to make himself lighter, and expedite his flight; and then there will be no incongruity in the common and received opinion, to which the authority of Josephus adds some confirmation, namely, "That as Absalom was making his escape, upon the whiffing of the air, a snagged bough of a tree took hold of his hair, and the mule, running forward from under him, left him dauling in the air."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 9.

such a manner, that it lifted him off his saddle, and his mule, running from under him, left him there hanging in the air, and unable to disengage himself.

In this condition a private soldier found him, and told it unto Joab, who blamed him for not having killed him: and when the man in excuse urged the command which he heard the king give the generals, to be very tender and careful of his son's life, Joab, looking upon all this as nothing, or as a command fitter for a parent than a king, went to the place where he was ^d hanging, and having first given him his death's wound himself, ordered the people, which were by, to despatch him; and so went and sounded a retreat, to prevent any farther effusion of blood, and to give Absalom's party an opportunity of escaping to their respective homes.

Thus died the wicked and rebellious Absalom, and instead of an honourable interment, fit for a king's son, his body was taken down, and thrown into a pit, and covered with an ^e heap of stones.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties obviated, and Objections answered.*

DAVID, no doubt, was a very fond father to his children, and a tender husband to his wives: of these, it must be owned, he had too many, eighteen in number, if we will reckon his concubines into that relation, which, in those days did not much differ from the other, except in some rites and solemnities of marriage. But as polygamy

^d Commentators have observed the justice of God, in bringing Absalom to a condign punishment, and such a kind of death, as was ordained by the law for offences, like unto his. For whereas, in the first place, he was hanged as it were, this was declared by the law to be an accused death, (Deut. xxi. 23.) and was afterwards, in some measure, stoned; this was the particular kind of death that the law prescribed for a stubborn and rebellious son.—Deut. xxi. 21.

^e In the description of the Holy Land, some geographers tell us, that this heap of stones remained even to their days, and that all travellers, as they passed by it, were wont to throw a stone to add to the heap, in detestation of his rebellion against his father. For though it became a custom among the Greeks, to raise an heap of stones in the place where any great person was interred, as a monument of honour and respect; yet it is plain, that none of David's army intended any honour to Absalom's memory in accumulating stones upon him; nor can we think, that David himself, though too fond of this rebel son, made any alteration afterwards in the form of his burial, for fear of enraging the people against him. Some, however, are of a quite contrary opinion, namely, that David, who lamented him with such excess, removed him from this pit, in order to have him laid in the sepulchre belonging to the kings, or perhaps somewhere about the place where the monument now goes under his name, and even to this day, is shown to travel to, was dug in a rock. It is a little chamber wrought with a chisel, out of one piece of rock, which stands at some distance from the rest of the mountain, and is a square of eight paces from out to out. The inside of this chamber is all plain, but the outside is adorned with some pilasters of the same kind of stone. The upper part, or covering, is made in the form of a conic pyramid, pretty high and large, with a kind of flowerpot on its top. The pyramid is composed of several stones, but the monument itself is square, and all cut out of one block. In the time of Josephus, the monument, which was said to be Absalom's, was nothing more than one marble pillar, widely different from what, at present, goes under his name; and which therefore must be accounted a more modern building.—*Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries; Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 9; and *Calmel's Dictionary*, under the word Absalom.

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was then tolerated among the Jews,¹ and the prohibition of a king's multiplying wives to himself does nowhere limit the number of them, David might conceive, that this polygamy was no transgression of the law, and thence be induced more readily to comply with it, in order to enlarge his family, and attach the principal nobility, of his own nation, as well as some foreign potentates, more closely to his interest.² For it was always looked upon as a piece of political wisdom in princes, to endeavour to have many children, that by matching them into several powerful families, they might have more supporters of their authority, and more assistance, in case of any invasion of it.

This however is no part of David's commendation, how much soever it might tend to his security; but that a father should be fond of a son, and in some instances carry that fondness to excess; that he should be blind to his lesser faults, and always inclinable, upon proper tokens of repentance to forgive the greater; that he should love to see every thing look gay and handsome about him, be liberal to his decent expenses, and ready to overlook some little extravagancies; that he should be uneasy in his absence, joyous to see him, and when he is in any imminent danger, very solicitous for his preservation, which are all the articles brought against David in relation to his son Absalom. These are faults, if faults they be, which every good-natured parent, who feels the tender propensities of human nature towards those of his own flesh, will easily be induced to forgive: and well were it for David, if we could make the like apology for that great enormity of his, in the matter of Uriah; but³ instead of attempting any extenuation of it, we shall rather take notice of the several aggravations which moralists have discovered in it, and of the reasons for which the Spirit of God thought proper to record it in holy writ.

To this purpose, some have observed, 1st, That⁴ as David tarried at Jerusalem at the time when kings went forth to battle, he there indulged himself in ease and luxury, which are the bane and rust of the mind, and so insensibly fell into those loose desires which drew him into such vile perpetrations; so that the first cause of his sin was idleness. 2d, They observe it as an aggravation of his crime,⁵ that he certainly knew that Bathsheba was another man's wife, and yet deliberately and advisedly committed the sin; nay, that she was the wife of one who was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and therefore added scandal to his wickedness, or, as the text expresses it,⁶ gave great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.⁷ 3d, They observe that there was perfidy added to this guilt, and a sinful

contrivance,⁸ in causing Uriah to be sent for home; in receiving him with great tokens of his favour, and entertaining him with good cheer, that he might be the more desirous to enjoy the company of his wife, and so have the child, which was got in adultery, reputed his own. 4th, They observe,⁹ from Uriah's answer, that had not David's heart been seared, he could not but have felt a strong remorse, upon thinking how he had abused so brave a man, and how he indulged himself in sinful pleasures, while this man, and the rest of his army, gloriously endured all manner of hardships, for the service of their country. 5th, They observe,¹⁰ from his design upon Uriah's life, when he could not otherwise conceal his lewdness, how naturally one sin paves the way to another, and how, in a small compass of time, the fascination of sensual appetites is enough to change the very nature of mankind; since even he, who formerly spared Saul, unjustly seeking his life, is now put upon contriving the death of a very faithful servant, in a very base and unworthy manner. 6th, They observe it, as a farther aggravation of his crime of murder, that he not only exposed an innocent and faithful servant to be killed, but that, together with him,¹¹ several more brave men, set in the front of the battle, where the service was hottest, must necessarily have fallen in the attack; so blind was he to the public good, and so prodigal of his subjects' lives, if he might but cover his guilt, and gratify his lust. 7th, They observe¹² from his answer to the messengers sent by Joab to acquaint him with Uriah's death, namely, 'the sword devoureth one as well as another,' the vile hypocrisy and obdurateness of his heart, imputing that to the chance of war, or rather to the direction of divine providence, which his conscience could not but tell him was of his own contrivance. 8th, and lastly, they observe,¹³ from his marriage with Bathsheba, even before her husband was cold in his grave, how the eagerness of his indulged appetite had now extinguished, what in some sinners is last of all parted with, and for which he himself had lately imbrued his hands in blood, all sense of shame, and regard to reputation or decency.

These are some of the aggravations observable in David's crime, which besides his lust and cruelty, is loaded with too just an imputation of perfidy, of ingratitude, of hypocrisy, of deliberation, of obstinacy, and of shamelessness in sin. And for these purposes were they recorded in Scripture, that they might teach us the frailty of human nature, and how liable the best of men are, in some instances of their lives, to be overtaken with very gross faults: that they might show us the natural gradation of one sin to another, and that, when once we have suffered our appetites to break loose from the restraints of duty, in a short time it will not be in our power to set bounds to them, however much we may be inclined to do so: that they might caution us against sloth and idleness, against indulging any inordinate passion, or gazing upon any objects that may endanger our innocence: that they might remind us all how much we stand in need continually of the divine assistance, and therefore how much we are concerned to pray with all prayer and supplication, and to watch, as

¹ Deut. xvii. 17. ² Patrick's Commentary on 2 Sam. v. 13.³ 2 Sam. xi. 1.⁴ 2 Sam. xi. 1.⁵ 2 Sam. xii. 14.

⁶ But contrary to this, the Jewish writers have endeavoured to justify David in this whole transaction; and to this purpose have invented laws and customs, that are nowhere to be found, either in the books of Moses, or in the compass of their history. They pretend that David was married to Bathsheba before her husband was dead, because it was a custom, as they say, for soldiers, whenever they went to the wars, to give their wives a bill of divorcement, and consequently a full license to marry whom they pleased. But it is vain to attempt to excuse this black and crying sin in David, for which God so severely punished him, and for which he himself was always ready to acknowledge the divine justice in so doing.—*Calmet's Commentary* on 2 Sam. xi. 27.

⁸ 2 Sam. xi. 6, &c.⁹ 2 Sam. xi. 11.¹⁰ 2 Sam. xi. 15.¹¹ 2 Sam. xi. 15.¹² 2 Sam. xi. 25.¹³ 2 Sam. xi. 27.

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well as pray, that we fall into no temptation. And, lastly, that they might inculcate that excellent precept which the apostle has laid down in these words: ¹ 'Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.'

One pernicious consequence of David's transgression very likely was, that it made him timorous in inflicting punishments upon others; but the reason which Josephus assigns for his not chastising Amnon for his incestuous rape, namely, 'because he was his eldest son, and he loved him, and would not displease him,' is a groundless calumny, and mere fiction; for, ² since the sacred history has thought fit to be silent in this matter, no one can tell what his father either said or did to him: the true reason, therefore, as we suppose, why his father did not proceed with severity against him, was, because the case, as it then stood, was intricate and perplexed, and such as the law had made no provision for. The law concerning rapes is worded thus:—³ "If a damsel; that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; then ye shall bring them both out of the gate of the city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die: the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he humbled his neighbour's wife.' And again, 'If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found, then the man that lay with her, shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her; he may not put her away all his days.' These are the two principal laws concerning this matter, but neither come up to the case now before us. For had David punished Amnon's crime with death, as the former law requires, Tamar in like manner must have suffered too, even though she was innocent, because she cried not out; ⁴ and though she was not a betrothed damsel, as the case is put in the latter law, yet David could not compel Amnon to marry her, because such a marriage would have been incestuous; and therefore we may suppose, that though David might reprimand his son very severely, for having wrought folly in Israel; yet he could not bring him before a public judicature, because the law did not properly extend to his case, or if he had made it extend, the innocent must have suffered with the guilty; and ⁵ a rule of equity, I think it is, rather to let the guilty escape, than that the innocent and injured should be destroyed.

The sacred historian has taken care to clear David from any base connivance at Absalom's wickedness in murdering his brother Amnon, by telling us, that as soon as he had done it, ⁶ 'he fled, and went to Talmai,' his grandfather, by his mother's side, who was then king of Geshur. Geshur was a city in Syria, which lay on the other side of Jordan; and Absalom, who meditated the murder of his brother, and could not but foresee that it would be an act of high displeasure to his father, invited the princes of the blood to his country seat, which was ⁷ near the city Ephraim, not far from the river Jordan,

that he might have a better opportunity, not only for putting in execution his wicked design, but of making his escape likewise; so that David, had he been ever so much minded, could not possibly have apprehended him, before he had got to a safe retreat: and where, it is easy to imagine, he would tell his tale so well, as to gain his grandfather's protection, if not approbation of the fact, which, with a small share of eloquence, might be so set off, as to appear a necessary vindication of the honour of their family, which had been so grossly violated.

The law of God indeed is very express:—⁸ 'Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; ⁹ neither shall he take any satisfaction for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death.' Whereby it appears, that the supreme magistrate was obliged to execute justice upon all wilful murderers, without any reservation; nor had David any power to dispense with God's laws, or to spare those whom he had commanded him to destroy. But then it must be considered, that the affront which Amnon put upon Absalom, was very great and heinous; that Absalom, at this time, was out of the reach of David's justice, and so would have continued, had he not obtained a promise of impunity; that, by living an exile in a heathenish country, David had reason to apprehend, that his son was in danger of being infected with their wicked and idolatrous practices, and was therefore the rather inclined to recall him; and that the clamours and importunities of the people, which Joab procured this woman of Tekoah to represent to the king in a very free and artful manner, did almost compel him to do it: for, what he said in the case of Joab's murder of Abner, namely, that he could not revenge it, because ¹⁰ 'the sons of Zeruiah, were too hard for him;' the like, very probably, might have been said in this case, where the people's hearts were so strongly, and so universally, set upon Absalom; and that the rather, because his long banishment moved their pity, and his absence made them more impatient for his return. The eyes of all, in short, were upon him, as the next heir, as a wise and gallant, and amiable prince, unhappy only in this instance of killing Amnon, for which he had a sufficient provocation; and therefore, to satisfy the cries of the people, as well as to provide for the security of his kingdom, which seemed to depend on the establishment of the succession in Absalom, David was obliged to forgive him, and recall him. And when he was recalled, and reinstated in the king's favour, it is no wonder that a young prince, of his gay temper, should multiply his attendants, and set up a rich equipage, to attract the eyes and admiration of mankind; or that his father, whose riches so well enabled him to bear the expense of this magnificence, and whose heart rejoiced, perhaps, to see his son the favourite of the people, did not restrain him in it; because a man of an open spirit himself loves to see his children make a figure in life, which, in all eastern countries, was a thing customary, and might here more especially be expected in the eldest and heir presumptive to the crown.

¹⁰ Some of the Jewish doctors tell us, that how indulgent soever David might be to his son Absalom, he never

¹ Gal. vi. 1. ² Le Clerc's Commentary on 2 Sam. xiii. 21.

³ Deut. xxii. 23, &c. ⁴ History of the Life of King David.

⁵ 2 Sam. xiii. 37. ⁶ 2 Sam. xiii. 23. See John xi. 54.

⁷ It is not said that she cried not, the probability is, that she did, though she was not heard.—*Bishop Gleig*.—Ep.

⁸ Gen. ix. 6.

⁹ Num. xxxv. 31.

¹⁰ 2 Sam. iii. 39.

¹¹ Poole's Annotations on 2 Sam. xv. 7.

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intended him for his successor in the kingdom; that he had all along made a promise to Bathsheba, his favourite queen, which promise, though ¹ recorded later in the history, might at first come to Absalom's ear, that her son Solomon should succeed in the regal dignity; and that Absalom, both from a consciousness of his own demerits, and of the superiority of wisdom and piety that appeared in Solomon, perceiving that his father intended to postpone him, and instate the other, entered into this rebellion, in order to assert his birthright to the crown. But the fault in David was not any exclusion of right, but too blind an indulgence to his son, even while he was in arms against him, ready to kill, and resolved to depose him. 'Spare ye the young man,' says he, and this he might desire, partly from a consciousness of his own sin in the case of Uriah, which was the meritorious and procuring cause of the rebellion, in which his son was unhappily engaged; partly from a consideration of his youth, which is commonly foolish and giddy, and subject to evil counsels, and therefore deserves pity; and partly from a sense of piety in himself, as being unwilling that he should be cut off in a sinful rebellion, without any space or means of repentance.

These might be some of the reasons that made David give his army so strict a charge not to kill his son, in case they should take him. But Joab had quite different sentiments of the matter. He perceived, that there could be no safety to the king, nor peace to the kingdom, no security to himself, or other loyal subjects, as long as Absalom lived; that, notwithstanding this unnatural rebellion, the king was still inclinable to forgive him, and that there would always be some unquiet people, that would be moving fresh disturbances, in order to set him on the throne. Looking upon this charge, therefore, as an order more proper for a parent than a prince, he adventured to disobey it. For he thought with himself, ² that the king ought not to be observed in an affair, wherein he showed more regard to his private passion, than to the public good; that fathers should always sacrifice their paternal tenderness to the interest of the government; and that as Absalom had forfeited his life to the laws upon several accounts, it was but justice now to take this opportunity of despatching him, as an enemy to his king and country: but whether, in this act of disobedience to the royal command, Joab is perfectly to be vindicated, we shall not pretend to determine. It is certain that he was a person of a bold temper, high passions, and fiery resentments; that valued himself upon the services he had done the king, and seemed not to be much afraid of his authority.

The complaint which David makes to some of his courtiers, upon this general's murdering the famous Abner, declares the true reason why he could not, at that time, put the laws in execution against him: ³ 'Know ye not,' says he, 'that there is a prince, and a great man fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me. The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.' Joab was David's sister's son, or nephew, 'who had stuck close to him in all his adversity, an excellent soldier

himself, and a man of great power and authority among the army; so that had David immediately called him to justice for this vile act against Abner, such was his interest among the soldiery, that he soon would have caused a mutiny or revolt, and found a means to shock or unhinge the government that was not as yet sufficiently established. It was a point of prudence therefore in David, to delay the punishment of so powerful and so perilous a man, until a more convenient season, and only, for the present, to express his detestation of the deed, by commending the deceased, condemning the murder, and commanding the murderer by way of penance, to attend the funeral in sackcloth, and other signs of mourning.

So far is David from winking at Abner's murder, that we find him burying him with great solemnity, and making mournful lamentation over his grave; praising his valour, and other great qualities, publicly, and cursing the author of his untimely death. ⁴ 'I, and my kingdom,' says he, 'are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner. Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house, and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread.'

But what apology shall we make for his treating the Ammonites so inhumanly, and putting them to such exquisite torments, only for a small indignity, which a young king, at the instigation of some evil counsellors, put upon his ambassadors, since there seems to be no proportion between the affront and the revenge, between the one's having their beards and clothes cut a little shorter, and the other's being put under saws and harrows, or thrown into hot burning furnaces? Had David indeed been the inventor of such frightful punishments, we might have justly reckoned him a man of the same cruel and brutal spirit, as was Caligula, who, in after ages, as ⁵ Suetonius tells us, was wont to take a great delight in inflicting them. But the truth is, that these were the punishments which the Ammonites inflicted upon the Jews, whenever they took them prisoners; and therefore David, when he conquered their country, and reduced their capital city, used them with the like cruelty: not every one of them indiscriminately, but such only as appeared in arms against him, and had either advised, or approved the advice of putting such a disgrace upon his messengers.

The Ammonites, it is certain, were early initiated into all the cruelties of the people of Canaan. When they invested Jabesh-Gilead, and the besieged made an offer to surrender, the easiest condition that they would grant them, was, that they might ⁶ 'thrust out all their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon Israel for ever;' which one instance, as I take it, is in the room of ten thousand proofs, to demonstrate, that these Ammonites were monsters of barbarity; and that therefore king David was no more culpable for retaliating upon them the same cruelties that they used to inflict on others, than the people of Agrigentum were, for burning Phalaris in his own bull, or Theseus the hero, for stretching Procrustes beyond the dimensions of his own bed. For even the heathen casuists have determined, that no law

¹ 1 Kings i. 30. ² Calmet's Commentary on 2 Sam. xviii. 14.³ 2 Sam. iii. 38. ⁴ Patrick's Commentary on 2 Sam. iii. 39.⁵ 2 Sam. iii. 28, 29.⁶ Chap. 27⁷ 1 Sam. xi. 2.

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can be more just and equitable, than that which decreed artists of cruelty to perish by their own arts.

The particular punishment of passing through the brickkilns, an ingenious ¹ author seems fairly to account for, by making this conjecture. "It is very well known," says he, "that the Jews were slaves in Egypt, and particularly employed in brickmaking. Now it is natural for all people at enmity, to reproach one another with the meanness and baseness of their original. As therefore the Ammonites were a cruel and insolent enemy, and nothing could be more natural for men of their temper, when they had got any Jews in their power, than to cry out, send the slaves to the brickkilns, and so torture them to death; so nothing could be more natural than for the Jews, when they got an advantage over them, to return them the same treatment." However this be, it is certain that the siege of Rabbah began before David had any criminal commerce with Bathsheba, and if the town was not taken till after Solomon's birth, as the sequel of his history seems to imply, the siege must have lasted for about two years; in which time, upon the supposition that David continued in an obdurate state of sin and impenitence, ^a and was therefore deprived of that mild and merciful spirit for which he had formerly been so remarkable; there is no wonder, if, being now become cruel and hardhearted, as well as exasperated with the length of the siege, he treated the Ammonites in the same outrageous manner that they were accustomed to treat his subjects, not only to retaliate the thing upon them, but to deter all future ages likewise from violating the right of nations, by treating the persons of public ambassadors with contempt.^b

That the rights of ambassadors are guarded by all laws, both divine and human, and that therefore a violation of these rights is not only unjust, but impious, is the general sentiment of all the most able ² writers upon the laws and constitutions of civil government. So tender were the Romans in this particular, ³ that they appointed twenty *feciales*, as they called those officers, to inspect

their good usage, and preserve their immunities; to make them immediate reparation, when any injury was done them; and, in case of a personal affront or indignity, to deliver up the offender, even though he were a noble or a patrician by birth, into the hands of the nation from whence the ambassador came, to be treated by them as they thought fit. And therefore, we need less wonder, that king David, who, in all his actions, was a nice observer of every punctilio in public honour, should resent in so high a manner an indignity, the greatest that could be offered, put upon his ministers, and from them reflecting upon his own majesty, merely for sending a kind compliment of condolence to a foolish prince, as he proved, upon the death of a very worthy father.

A man so zealous for his own honour, as well as for the rights of nations, in his public capacity, can hardly be presumed to be an abettor of perfidy in his more private. We must therefore suppose, that, notwithstanding his war with Ishbosheth, wherein there might happen some skirmishes, he still kept his promise with his father Saul, not to destroy any of his family; and therefore in the whole compass of the war (in which, though it lasted seven years, we nowhere read of one battle fought) he acted in the defensive, not offensive, part, and kept an army by him, not to destroy Saul's posterity, but merely to maintain himself in the possession of that regal dignity wherewith Samuel, by God's order and appointment, had invested him.

Ishbosheth knew very well, that Samuel had anointed David, and that God had appointed him to be his father's successor in the whole kingdom of Israel. And therefore his opposing him in a hostile manner, was provocation enough, one would think, had not David remembered ⁴ his oath made to Saul, and thereupon overlooked this ill treatment of his son, and pronounced him a ⁵ 'righteous person.' The removal of an adversary, and dangerous competitor for a crown, might be thought a meritorious piece of service by some ambitious princes; but David was of another sentiment. His soul and his notions were the same as what inspired the great Alexander, when he took vengeance on Bassus for having killed his enemy Darius; ⁶ for he did not consider Darius so much in the capacity of an enemy, as Bassus in that of a friend to the person whom he had basely murdered. And it is not improbable, that his reflection upon the sad fate of Saul's unhappy family, and the solemn promise he had given for their preservation, as well as the design ⁷ of clearing himself from the least suspicion of having any hand in this barbarous regicide, prevailed with David to inflict upon the authors of it, the exemplary punishment of hanging them upon gibbets, to be a spectacle of abhorrence; of cutting off their right hands, ⁸ wherewith they might have committed this execrable deed, and of cutting off their feet, wherewith they had made their escape from justice.

Abner indeed acted very basely, very treacherously, in deserting Ishbosheth, the king whom he had set up, upon a very slight provocation; but David had no concern in all this. The kingdom belonged to him by divine donation; Abner knew this before he proclaimed Ishbosheth;

¹ The History of the Life of King David.

² See Grotius, Selden, Puffendorff, &c.

³ Grotius on the Law of War, b. 2. c. 18.

^a This supposition cannot be admitted. Nathan had made David sensible of his sin, and truly penitent even before Bathsheba bare Solomon's elder brother.—*Bishop Gleig*.—ED.

^b This vindication of David for his conduct towards the Ammonites, had his treatment of them been such as represented in the ordinary translation followed by our author, would be by no means satisfactory. Fortunately the heavy charge urged against David from this part of sacred history, needs no such vindication. Dr A. Clarke, on 2 Sam. xii. 31, says:—"I believe this interpretation was chiefly taken from the parallel place, 1 Chr. xx. 3, where it is said, he cut them with saws and with axes, &c. Instead of *vaiyasar*, he *sawed*, we have here (in Samuel *vaiyasem*, he *put them*; and these two words differ from each other only in a part of a single letter *resh*, for *mem*. And it is worthy of remark that in 1 Chr. xx. 3, six or seven MSS. collated by Dr Kennicott, have *vaiyasem*, he *put them*. Nor is there found any various reading in all the MSS. yet collated for the text in this chapter, that favours the common reading in Chronicles. The meaning therefore is, he made the people *slaves*, and employed them in *sawing*, *making iron harrows*, or *mining*, (for the word means both) and in hewing of wood, and making of brick. Sawing asunder, hacking, chopping, and hewing human beings, have any place in this text, any more than they had in David's conduct towards the Ammonites. See also Boothroyd on the passage, and the supplement on the objections to the credibility of the Old Testament, p. 393 of this edition.—ED.

⁴ 1 Sam. xxiv. 21.

² Sam. iv. 11.

⁶ For he considered that Darius was not so much the friend as the foe of that man by whom he was slain.—*Justin*, b. 12. c. 6.

⁷ Le Clerc's Commentary.

⁸ Patrick's Commentary

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and therefore all the mischiefs of the civil war are chargeable upon him: nor can David be blamed for receiving his own right, even though it was tendered to him by the hand of a bad man. The truth is, David did not delude Abner from his master, but Abner made the first overture of his service to him; and as this was no unfavourable opportunity of uniting the two contending kingdoms, which providence seemed to have thrown in his way, David had been perfidious, not only to his own interest, but to the establishment of the general peace of the nation, had he not fallen in with it. ¹ He, no doubt, was privy to the cause of Abner's disgust: but, without approving either of his crime or his treason, he might lawfully make use of the traitor; nay, and confer on him some tokens of his favour too, in consideration of the benefits he had received from him, and of some commendable qualities, either natural or political, that he had observed in him. The instrument is not to be regarded in all actions, and even a bad man, when he does good services, may merit a reward, and be received with some approbation.

No man indeed should engage another in a base or wicked action; ² because, whether he commits the thing himself, or employs another to do it, the crime is the same; but it is not so, says ³ Grotius, if a person freely offers himself, without any solicitation or persuasion to it. In this case, it is not unlawful to use him as an instrument, in order to execute what is confessedly lawful for us to do: and, as it is not contrary to the law of arms to receive a deserter, who quits the enemy's party and embraces ours, so we cannot conceive how David could become culpable in taking the advantage of Abner's quarrel with Ishbosheth, when, without any application of his, he voluntarily sent to him, and offered him his service, and when the good providence of God seems to have employed the passion and angry resentment of that haughty general, in order to bring about his wise designs, and by the union of the two kingdoms, prevent the effusion of much blood.

But what shall we say in excuse for his perfidy, when we find him putting his friend Hushai upon acting such a part as but badly became a man of honour; upon going, and offering his service to his son Absalom, on purpose to betray him, or give him bad counsel? The words of David are these:—⁴ 'If thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant; then mayest thou for me defeat the counsels of Abithophel.' But David, by these words, say some interpreters, did not advise Hushai to betray Absalom, or, for his sake, to violate the laws of friendship, but purely to go and join himself to Absalom, who, by this time, had assumed the title of king, and could not properly be addressed without calling him so, in order to destroy the counsels of Abithophel, just as a general sends his spies into the enemy's camp, to know what passes there; or as a king keeps, in foreign courts, his envoys, to gain intelligence of the designs

that may be formed against him, and to defeat the resolutions that may be taken to his prejudice. But whether these comparisons may come up to the case before us or no, it was certain, at this juncture, Absalom's business was to be upon his guard. The unjust war which he had declared against his father, gave his father a right to treat him as an open enemy, and to employ either force or artifice against him; nor can this conduct of his be blamed, unless we should say, that when kings are engaged in war, they are forbidden to disguise their true designs, even though it be a thing notorious, that upon this disguise the practice of stratagems in war, which were never yet accounted unlawful, is entirely founded.

The truth is, ⁵ Absalom, as a traitor, a murderer, a rebel, and, as far as in him lay, a parricide, had forfeited all the rights of society, but more especially as a rebel: for a rebel, who sets himself to overturn the established government, order, and peace of any community, does, by that hostile attempt, actually divest himself of all social rights in that community. And consequently David could be no more guilty of perfidy, in forming a design to supplant Absalom, nor Hushai guilty of villany in undertaking to put it in execution, than that man can be said to be guilty of sin, who deceives a madman, and turns him away from murdering his best friends.

The short of the matter is, Hushai's instructions were to negotiate David's interest among the rebels as well as he could. This he could not do without seeming to act in a contrary character; and in order to effect this, there was a necessity for his concealing himself; and conceal himself he could not, without some degree of dissimulation; and therefore the end which he proposed in what he did, namely, the prevention of that long train of mischiefs which always attends a civil war, was sufficient to justify the means which he took to accomplish it. For, though it is to be wished with ⁶ Cicero, that all lying and dissimulation were utterly banished from human life; yet, as others have maintained, that a beneficial falsehood is better than a destructive truth, a case may be so circumstantiated, as to make dissimulation, which as ⁷ Lord Bacon says, "is nothing else but a necessary dependant upon silence, highly necessary; and a lie, which otherwise would be blamable in a slave, will deserve commendation (says ⁸ Quintilian) when a wise man makes use of it, to save his country by deceiving his enemy." Now, as Hushai's whole design was to deceive an open and declared enemy, who can doubt, but that he was at full liberty, by his address and subtilty, to disconcert the measures of those, whom all agree, that had he been so minded, he had license to attack with open violence? ⁹ To overcome an enemy indeed by valour, rather than art, sounds more gallant, and by some has been thought a more ^a reputable way

⁵ The History of the Life of King David, vol. 3.

⁶ Offic. b. 3. c. 15. ⁷ Serm. Fidel. b. 6.

⁸ Quintil. Instit. Orat. b. 12. c. 1.

⁹ Puffendorf's Law of Nature, b. 4. c. 1; and Grotius's Rights of Peace, b. 3. c. 1.

¹ Calmet's Commentary on 2 Sam. iii. 12.
² It signifies nothing whether you yourself commit crime, or engage another person to do it on your account.—August. in *moribus Manicheæ*.

³ On the Law of War, b. 3. chap. 1. By the right of war we shelter a deserter.

⁴ 2 Sam. xv. 34.

^a Thus when Perseus, the Macedonian king, was deceived by the hopes of peace, the old senators disallowed the act, as inconsistent with Roman bravery; saying that their ancestors prosecuted their wars by valour, not craft, not like the subtle Carthaginius, or cunning Grecians, among whom it was a

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of conquest, but since the laws of nature and arms have made no difference, and those of humanity and mercy seem to incline to that side wherein there is likely to be the least blood shed, Hushai may be said to have acted the worthy patriot, as well as the faithful subject, in breaking the force of an unnatural rebellion, and in putting it into his royal master's mouth to say, 'the Lord is known to execute judgment; the ungodly are trapped in the work of their own hands. They are sunk down in the pit that they made; in the same net, which they hid privily, are their own feet taken.'

Thus, though we are not obliged to vindicate David in every passage of his life, and think some of the crying sins he was guilty of utterly inexcusable; yet if we except these, we cannot but think, that although he was a very tender and indulgent parent, yet he was no encourager of vice in his own family, or a tame conniver at it in others, had he not been restrained by reasons of state, sometimes, from punishing it; that he was true to his promises, just in his distributions, and prudent, though not crafty, in his military transactions; "of a singular presence of mind, (as ² Josephus speaks of him,) to make the best of what was before him; and of as sharp a foresight for improving all advantages, and obviating all difficulties, that were like to happen;" tender to all persons in distress, kind to his friends, forgiving to his enemies; and when at any time he was forced to use severity, it was only in retaliation of what other people had done to him.

Happy were it for us, if we could account for the operations of God with the same facility that we can for the actions of his saints; but his counsels are a great deep, and his judgments, just though they be, are sometimes obscure, and past finding out. For what shall we say to the fate of Uzzah? Or what tolerable cause can we assign for his sudden and untimely end. It was now near seventy years since the Israelites had carried the ark from place to place, and so long a disuse had made them forget the manner of doing it. In conformity to what they had heard of the Philistines, they put it into a new cart or wagon; but this was against the express direction of the law, ³ which ordered it to be borne upon men's shoulders. It is commonly supposed, that Uzzah was a Levite, though there is no proof of it from Scripture; but supposing he was, he had no right to attend upon the ark; that province, by the same law, ⁴ was restrained to those Levites only who were of the house of Kohath: nay, put the case he had been a Kohathite by birth, yet he had violated another command which prohibited even these Levites, though they carried it by staves upon their shoulders, ⁵ upon pain of death, to touch it with their hands: so that here was a threefold transgression of the divine will in this method of proceeding. The ark, as some say, by Uzzah's direction, was placed in a cart; Uzzah, without any proper designation, adventures to attend it; when he thought it in danger of falling, officiously he put forth his hand, and laid hold on it, all violations of the divine commands,

and this, as is supposed, not so much out of reverence to the sacred symbol of God's presence, as out of diffidence of his providence, as unable to preserve it from overturning.

The truth is, this ark had so long continued in obscurity, that the people, in a manner, had lost all sense of a divine power residing in it, and therefore approached it with irreverence. This is implied in David's exhortation to Zadok and Abiathar, after this misfortune upon Uzzah. ⁶ "Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves therefore, both ye, and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel, unto the place that I have prepared for it; for because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order." What wonder, then, if God being minded to testify his immediate presence with the ark, to retrieve the ancient honour of that sacred vessel, and to curb all licentious profanations of it for the future, should single out one that was the most culpable of many, one, who in three instances was then violating his commands, to be a monument of his displeasure against either a wilful ignorance or a rude contempt of his precepts, be they ever so seemingly small; that by such an example of terror, he might inspire both priests and people with a sacred dread of his majesty, and a profound veneration for his mysteries?

God indeed is left to his own pleasure, what signs he shall think fit to give to his people, upon any occasion for their good; but the more arbitrary and uncommon any sign is, the more it seems to have proceeded from God. Though therefore the sound of people's going upon the tops of trees, be a thing not so congruous to our conceptions, yet it will not therefore follow, that it was not the real sign which God gave David, because the stranger the phenomenon was, the greater assurance it conveyed of the divine interposition in his favour. Nor can the practicableness of the thing be disputed, since it was confessedly an host of angels (who could move on the tops of trees, as well as plain ground) that made this noise of an army's marching.

There is no reason, however, to acquiesce in this construction only. ⁷ The word *beroeche*, which we render *tops*, in several places in Scripture, signifies the *beginning* of things likewise; and in this acceptance, the sense of the sign which God gave David will be this,—"When thou hearest a sound, as it were of many men marching at the entrance of the place where the mulberry trees are planted, then do thou make ready to fall upon thine enemy; for this noise, which is occasioned by the ministry of my angels, goes before thee, both to conduct thee in thy way, and to inject terror into thine adversaries."

But how plausible soever this interpretation may seem, there is some reason to suspect, that the other word *bochim*, which our translation calls *mulberry trees*, is in reality the proper name of a place. ⁸ The prophet Isaiah has a plain allusion to this piece of history, and seems to confirm what we here suggest. 'The Lord,' says he, 'shall rise up as in mount Perazim; he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon; that is, he shall de-

¹ Ps. ix. 15, 16.² Jewish Antiquities, b. 7. c. 12.³ Num. vii. 9.⁴ Num. vii. 9.⁵ Num. iv. 15.

greater glory to overcome their enemies by treachery, than true valour.—*Living*, h. 42. c. 47. And it was a known principle of Alexander's, that he scorned to steal a victory.—*Plutarch de Alexandro*, and *Q. Curtius*, b. 4. c. 13.

⁶ 1 Chron. xv. 12, 13. ⁷ Patrick's Commentary, in locum.⁸ Is. xxxiii. 21.

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stroy his enemies, as he did the Philistines at Baal-Perezim, under David, and the Canaanites at Gibeon, under Joshua: what hinders then, but that *Beroche Bochim* may signify the mountains of *Bochim*? And so the sense of the words will be,—“When thou hearest a noise, as of many people marching upon the hills, or high places of *Bochim*, then thou hast nothing to do, but to fall immediately upon the enemy.” Either of these interpretations clears the text from any seeming absurdity; and I shall only observe farther, that from the passage of the above cited prophet, as well as some expressions in the 18th psalm, such as, ¹ ‘He sent out his arrows, and scattered them; he cast forth lightnings, and destroyed them,’ it seems very likely that a mighty storm of thunder and lightning, of hailstones, and coals of fire, as the psalmist calls it, was assistant to David in the acquisition of this victory.

In the account of David’s conquest of the Ammonites, the weight of their king’s crown seems not a little monstrous. The weight of a talent, which, upon the lowest computation, amounts to no less than 123 pounds, is allowed to be too much for one neck to sustain; but then we should consider, that besides the crown that was usually worn it was customary, in some nations, for kings to have a vast large ones, even to a size equal to this, either hung, or supported over the throne, where, at their coronation, or upon other solemn occasions, they were wont to sit.

The Jewish doctors indeed have a very odd conceit, namely, that David, when he took this crown from the king of Ammon, hung it up on high by a certain loadstone that he had, as if the power of the magnet were to attract gold as well as iron. But let that be as it will, it is but to suppose, that the crown here under debate, was of this larger kind, and that, by some means or other, it was supported over the king’s head while he was sitting on his throne, and then there will be an apparent reason for taking the crown from off, or, as the Hebrew words will bear it, ‘from over the king’s head, and placing it, in like manner, over David’s head, even to indicate the translation of his kingdom to David.

² It is a common thing, however, in Hebrew, as well as other learned languages, to have the same word signify both the weight and value of any thing. And that the price or worth of the crown is here the meaning of the phrase we have the more reason to think, because mention is made of an addition of precious stones, which are never estimated by the weight of gold. ³ Josephus tells

us of one stone of great value in the middle of the crown, which he calls a sardonix; and as we may suppose that there were other jewels of several kinds placed at their proper distances, these, in proportion as they heightened the value, must lessen the weight of the crown, and verify what the same historian tells us of it, namely, “that David wore it constantly on his head afterwards, for an ornament.”

There is another difficulty still behind, which relates to the weight of Absalom’s hair, that in the words of the text is thus expressed:—⁴ ‘And when he polled his head, for it was at every year’s end that he polled it; and because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it, he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king’s weight.’ In the explication of which words, the sentiments of the learned have been so many and various, that, we shall content ourselves with commenting upon some of the chief of them.

Those who are of opinion that the words related only to the cuttings of Absalom’s hair, make the two hundred shekels the price, and not the weight of them: and to this purpose they suppose, that though Absalom himself might not sell his hair, yet some persons about him might do it, in complaisance to the ladies of Jerusalem, who might not think themselves in the fashion, unless they wore a favourite lock of the prince’s. But besides the absurdity of the king’s son suffering any of his domestics to sell his hair, the very words of the text are a confutation of this notion, where they tell us, that ‘he weighed the hair of his head;’ whereas, had it been sold, the buyer must have weighed the money, even ⁵ as Abraham did when he purchased the field of Ephron.

Others again pretend, that there is a manifest mistake crept into the text, which has been occasioned by an ignorant transcriber’s inserting one numerical letter for another, the *resch* instead of the *daleth*, that is, two hundred instead of four: but, besides the uncertainty, whether the former Hebrews made use of their letters instead of figures, whereof there is not the least sign or token in any ancient copies, wherein, I pray, would the great wonder be, if what was cut off from Absalom’s head, to thin and shorten his hair, when it grew too weighty and troublesome to him, amounted to no more than four shekels, which is much about two ounces? And yet the whole design of this narration seems to portend something more than usual, in this prodigious increase of Absalom’s hair.

The text, however, does not speak of the cuttings of the hair, but of the head of hair itself, when it talks of the weight of two hundred shekels; and therefore those who take it in this larger sense, are not forgetful to remind us, that in those days, hair was accounted a very great ornament, and the longer it was, the more it was esteemed; that Absalom, to be sure, would not fail to nourish his with the utmost care, and to let it grow long enough, because it contributed so much to the gracefulness of his person; that in after ages, as perhaps they did then, men were wont to use much art with their hair, and dress it every day with fragrant ointments, in order to make it grow thick and strong; that the noble guards which attended Solomon, as Josephus ⁶ informs us, had

¹ Ps. xviii. 14.

² Poole’s Annotations, and Patrick’s Commentary in locum.

³ Jewish Antiquities, b. 7. c. 7.

⁴ The ancients make mention of several such large crowns as these, which were made for sight more than any thing else. Juvenal, exposing the pride and vanity of some of the chief magistrates at Rome, describes the pomp and splendour of their appearance in these words: “What if he had seen the pretor stand erect in his lofty chariot, and towering above the surrounding dust of the circus, magnificently dressed in an imperial coat, wearing pendant from his shoulders the purple epaulettes of his dædal-wrought gown, and on his head a golden crown so vast, that scarce can a human neck support it.” (*Sat.* 10.) Athenæus (b. 5. c. 8.) describes a crown made of gold, that was four and twenty feet in circumference, and mentions others, that were two, some four, and some five feet deep; as Pliny (b. 33. c. 3.) in like manner, takes notice of some that were of no less than eight pounds’ weight.—*Cabnet’s Commentary* in locum.

⁵ 2 Sam. xiv. 26.

⁶ Gen. xxiii. 16.

⁶ Jewish Antiquities, b. 8. c. 12.

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their long hair flowing about their shoulders, which they powdered with small particles of gold, to make it sparkle, and glisten against the sun; and that therefore it is not improbable, that Absalom, who himself was a gay young man, and wanted none of these helps or improvements, might, in process of time, bring his hair up to the weight that the Scripture records, which, according to the gold shekel, that was but half as much as the silver, came to no more, as the learned Bochart endeavours to prove, than three pounds and two ounces.

But since the Scripture says nothing of any such additions, as ointments, or gold dust, to enhance the weight of the hair; others, who think this too much for a man that polled his hair once every year, if not oftener, have observed, from the words which we render at 'every year's end,' that in the original they imply no particular designation of time; and thence infer, that Absalom did not weigh his hair so often as once every year, but at this particular time only, when he returned to Jerusalem. "He in his exile," say they, "which lasted about three years, pretending great sorrow for his sin, seems to have taken upon him the vow of a Nazarite, until his return; one part of which was, that he should not suffer his hair to be cut for such a determinate time: but upon his recall home, being now discharged from his vow, he ordered his hair to be cut all clean off, because it was grown very cumbersome to him; which being of so long a growth, amounted to the weight that the sacred history relates of it." But this notion of Absalom's Nazaritism has no foundation in Scripture,¹ except that lying pretence to his father, when under the cloak of religion, he was minded to conceal his intended rebellion; and therefore all the superstructure built upon it must necessarily fall.

Others, perceiving that none of these inventions would answer the purpose, have endeavoured to solve the difficulty, by attending to the latter words in the text, 'two hundred shekels, after the king's weight:' and, to this purpose,² they lay it down as a principle, that, during the reigns of the kings of Judah, there was no variation in the Hebrew weights, nor were there any that were called the king's: that the difference between the king's and the common weight did not commence, till after some continuance of the Babylonish captivity; that, towards the end of this captivity, whoever he was that revised these books of Samuel, made mention of such weights as were not properly Hebrew, but such as (after sixty or seventy years' captivity) the Jews only knew, and these were the Babylonish; and that therefore, when he comes to mention the weight of Absalom's hair, and tells us, that it was two hundred shekels, he adds, by way of explanation, that it was after the king's weight, that is, after the weight of the king of Babylon, whose shekel was but the third part of a Hebrew shekel,³ as the best writers upon weights and measures are generally agreed. So that, according to this hypothesis, Absalom's hair, which weighed two hundred Babylonish shekels, came but in our weight, to about thirty-three ounces; a quantity which those who deal in that commodity have not unfrequently met with upon several women's heads; and therefore what brings this long contested story, at least, within the bounds of a fair probability.

Thus have we attempted to solve most of the remarkable difficulties, that either affect the character of David, or other parts of Scripture account, during this period of its history; and may now begin to wave the testimony of heathen authors, in confirmation of what we may think strange and unaccountable in the sacred records; because facts of that kind will not so frequently occur; and the Jewish nation begins now, in the reign of king David, to make so considerable a figure, as to have their affairs either mentioned or alluded to, by the most remarkable historians, both Greek and Latin.

CHAP. III.—Of the Sacred Chronology, and Profane History during this Period.

BEFORE we enter upon the foreign history of this period, it may not be improper to take notice of some chronological difficulties, that are to be found in the Scripture account of it. The space of time, from the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, to the laying the foundation of the temple at Jerusalem, is so exactly stated, that it will admit of no dispute: 'For⁴ it came to pass,' says the text, 'in the four hundred and fourscore year, after the children of Israel were come up out of the land of Egypt, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that Solomon began to build the house of the Lord:' but then the manner of computing this number of years has been various.

⁵ The generality of the Jews who make it 450 years from the death of Joshua to the time of Samuel, "suppose

⁴ 1 Kings vi. 1. ⁵ Bedford's Scripture Chronology, b. 5. c. 1

a The chronology of the period here treated of, namely, from the death of Joshua to the building of the temple, has been much corrupted in the common Hebrew text; in fact the various parts are totally irreconcilable, as the efforts of our author to this end in the foregoing portion of this chapter clearly shows. The great alterations made in the chronology at a late period by the Jews, and their reasons for so doing, have already been stated, note pages 65, 66, on the period from the creation to the deluge. And for the shortening of this period they had the very same motive; it was indeed a part of the same scheme for raising prejudices in the minds of their countrymen against the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. Dr Hales, vol. 1. pp. 221, 222, second edition, gives from one of the Jewish rabbis, David Ganz, a table of the period from the exode to the building of the temple, in which they have contrived to crowd the various events within the space of 480 years; but, he adds, the Jewish chronologers were hard set to make out this detail, as Ganz honestly confesses:—For, 1. "By a curious invention, they included the first four servitudes in the years of the judges, who put an end to them, contrary to the express declarations of Scripture, which represent the administrations of the judges, not as synchronizing with the servitudes, but as succeeding them, (Judges ii. 18.) 2. They were forced to allow the fifth servitude to have been distinct from the administration of Jephthah, because it was too long to be included therein; but they curtailed a year from the Scripture account of that servitude, making it, instead of eighteen, only seventeen years; and they curtailed another year from Iban's administration, making it only six, instead of seven years. 3. They sunk entirely the sixth servitude, to the Philistines, of forty years, because it was too long to be contained in Samson's administration; and, to crown all, 4. They reduced Saul's reign of forty years, (Acts xiii. 21.) to two years only! The dishonesty of the whole contrivance could be equalled only by its absurdity: furnishing internal evidence that the period of four hundred and eighty years, foisted into the Hebrew text of 1 Kings, is itself a forgery." We have given, at page 396, Dr

² 2 Sam. xv. 7, &c. ³ Calmet's Commentary in locum. ⁴ Ibid.

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the difference, from the departure out of Egypt, to the first beginning of the temple, to be 597 years; but this account is 117 more than what we find in Scripture. ¹ Josephus expressly tells us, that when Solomon began that mighty work, it was 592 years from the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt; but then it is presumed, that he (as well as the other Jews) reckons the years of the oppressors apart; whereas they ought to be included in the years of the judges, who delivered the people from that bondage; for, it is but looking into the Scripture account, and we shall see that, ² before Othniel, Israel was oppressed eight years; before Ehud, eighteen; before Deborah, twenty; before Gideon, seven; before Jephthah, eighteen; and before Samson, forty; now, adding all these together, we shall find that they amounted to 111 years; which, if joined to the years of the judges will make the particular years of this period far exceed the general; but, by being included in the time assigned for the government of the judges, they make that particular and general account of the years agree very rightly.

There is another difference between this account in the first book of Kings, and what the apostle affirms in the Acts of the Apostles, namely, that, ³ 'after the time

that Joshua divided the land to them by lot, God gave them judges for about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.' But now, if there be 450 years from the division of the land of Canaan, which happened in the seventh year of Joshua's government, to the time of the government, or even of the death of Samuel, there must be many more than 480 years in the whole interval from the departure out of Egypt to the building of the temple.

To solve this difficulty, some have imagined, that the words *μετὰ ταῦτα*, *after that*, which are found in the twentieth verse, should be placed at the beginning of the seventeenth, and then the sense will be, that, from God's choosing our fathers, to the time of the judges, were 450 years; for, from Isaac's birth, say they, to the departure of Israel out of Egypt, are 405 years; they wandered in the wilderness 40 years; and the land was divided by lot seven years after that; so that all these put together, make 452 years, which the Apostle expresses by the round sum of 450. But this apparently is not the sense of the apostle, who, in his discourse to the people, goes on gradually and methodically thus: 'God chose our fathers; he brought them out of Egypt; he led them in the wilderness forty years; he divided the land; and then he gave them judges,' &c. ⁴ Others therefore have fallen into a different way of computation, by making the years of the judges and oppressors distinct; for, the years of the judges, say they, until Samuel's time, are 339; the years of the tyrants are 111; which, put together, make exactly 450: and this kind of reckoning the apostle might mention, though he did not entirely approve of it; and therefore we find him introducing it with an *ὥς*, that is, *after a manner*, or, *as some will have it*, who compute the years of the oppressors as distinct from the years of the judges, though in reality they ought to be included in one another.

There is still a farther difficulty, which arises from comparing the scripture chronology, with the genealogies in the book of Ruth. From the entrance into the land of Canaan to the building of the temple, were 440 years: now, if out of this, we subtract for David's life, 70 years, and for that part of Solomon's reign which was before the foundation of the temple, four years, the remainder will be 366; and yet for these 366 years, we have four generations only, for Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab; Boaz begat Obed of Ruth; Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David, which at a time ⁵ when the age of man was reduced to the compass of seventy or eighty years, is a thing almost impossible. But, as it is not certain, that the lives of all men were shortened at the time when the Israelites murmured in the wilderness, forasmuch as the reason for cutting them off so soon (even to prevent their entering into the land of promise) was peculiar to that generation, and might not affect others; so the lives of others might be extended much longer, until the days of David, and especially in that family, which God had honoured so highly as to appoint, that in it his blessed Son should be born.

⁶ According to this account, we may suppose that Salmon might be about twenty years old when he entered into Canaan, and Rahab, whom he married to be

¹ Jewish Antiquities, b. S. c. 2.² Millar's History of the Church, c. 1. p. 4. ³ Acts xiii. 20.

Hales' table and computation of the period from Joshua to the election of Saul to the kingdom, which is there shown to be 498 years, and we now subjoin his table of the succeeding period, from the commencement of the regal state till the revolt of the Ten Tribes, 120 years:—

	Years.	B. C.
1. Saul	40	1110
Samuel Judge	38	
Saul defeats the Ammonites		1110
— his first offence		1108
Jonathan defeats the Philistines		1106
Saul's second offence		1100
David born		
— kills Goliath		1080
— marries Michal		1075
— first flight to Gath		1074
— second flight to Gath		1071
Saul's third offence		1070
2. David	40	1070
— takes Jebus		1063
Philistine war		1061
Ark brought home		1060
Nathan's prophecy of the Messiah the son of David		1055
David's first offence		1052
Solomon born		1050
Absalom's and Sheba's rebellions		1036
David's second offence		1032
Adonijah's rebellion		1030
3. Solomon		1030
Temple begun		1027
— finished		1020
Tadmor built		1006
Temples on the mount of corruption		996
The revolt	120	990

The reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, were forty years each, (Acts xiii. 21; 2 Sam. v. 4; 1 Kings xi. 42.) which determines the length of the period. But the dates of detail are not noticed in Scripture. They may, however, be collected from incidental circumstances, and from the series of events, to a considerable degree of exactness, not differing, perhaps, above a year more or less from the truth.—*Hales' Analysis*, v. 2. pp. 508, 509, second edition.—Ed.

⁴ See Grotius and Usher.⁵ Ps. xc. 10.⁶ Bedford's Scripture Chronology, b. 5. c. 1. and Millar's Church History, c. 1. period 4.

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about the same age; and that Rahab might bear Boaz in the sixty-second year of her age, which in those days was no extraordinary thing: and then it is but supposing farther, that Boaz was 102 years old before he begat Obed; Obed 111 before he begat Jesse; and Jesse of the same age before he begat David; and the whole difficulty is removed: only it may be thought a little strange, that men, above 100 years old, should be capable of begetting children, until it be considered, that Moses and Aaron, and Joshua and Caleb, were all vigorous men at this age; that, long after this, Jehoiada, the high priest, was 130 years old when he died; and that, almost in our own remembrance, our countryman, Thomas Parr, lived to 152, and had a son when he was 105 years old.

This may suffice for settling the chronology; and now to proceed to the history of this period. Our last connexion of the sacred and profane history we concluded with the life and adventures of Sesostris, ^a who reigned in Egypt, and made a very distinguished figure in several parts of the world, while the Israelites were sojourning in the wilderness; but from the time that they entered into Canaan, ^b they seem to have had no intercourse with the Egyptians, nor do their several histories at all interfere.

All history, indeed, in this period of time, is so defaced and corrupted with fables, that it is a hard matter to discern any lineaments of truth in it; and yet it may not be amiss to take notice of some of its remarkable events.

About the thirty-ninth year of Ehud's government in Israel, in the time of Deucalion son of Prometheus, there happened such a deluge in Thessaly, ^c as gave ¹ the poets an occasion to say that all mankind were therein destroyed, and that Deucalion, and Pyrrha his wife, re-peopled the world, by throwing stones behind them, which were instantly changed into men and women.

Much about this time lived Phaeton, a prince of the Ligurians, and a great astrologer, that applied himself chiefly to the study of the course of the sun; and because, in his days, the country of Italy, near the river Po, was

so incommoded with extraordinary heats, that the earth became dry, and barren for several years, ² it hence became a renowned fable among the poets, that by his misguidance of the horses of the sun, who is said to have been his father, he set the earth on fire.

About the fourteenth year of Tolah's judging Israel, Ganymede, the son of Tros, king of Phrygia, being beloved by Jupiter, as the poets fable, was by him carried up to heaven in the shape of an eagle, and much against Juno's will made cupbearer to the gods.

About the sixth year of Jair's government, Perseus appeared in the world, and of him the fabulous writers have many strange stories; as, that he was begot by Jupiter on Danae in a golden shower; that when he came to be of age he conquered the Gorgons, with their queen Medusa, whose hair was interwoven with snakes; that he subdued the inhabitants of Mount Atlas, and first delivered Andromeda, by killing the sea monster sent to devour her, and then married her; that afterwards he fought against the kings of Mauritania and Ethiopia, and, returning to Greece, overcame his uncle Prætus, and Polydectes king of the island Seriphus. ^d

Few things are more famous in the songs of the poets than the expedition of those valiant Greeks that accompanied Jason to Colchos; ^e and the foundation of the story is conceived to be this:—That the Argonauts sailed to some part of Scythia, to carry off a share of the riches of that country, where the inhabitants gained a great deal of gold out of the rivers that ran from Mount Caucasus, by using sheep skins with the wool on, in order to take up that precious metal, from whence it was called the golden fleece. But the poets, out of their fruitful brains, have made large additions to the story, namely, that Jason fell in love with Hypsipyle at Lemnos; and that at Colchos he married Medea, the king's daughter, who, being a famous witch, taught him how to kill the dragon that kept the rich fleece; how to conquer the bulls, that vomited fire; and how to sow the serpent's teeth, out of which there arose an army of men; with many more fictions of the like nature.

But, of all the occurrences in this period, that which has been most celebrated by the poets is the siege of Troy; and the probable occasion is supposed to be this:

Not long before this remarkable event happened, the seas were very much infested with pirates, who, landing on the shores, seized upon all the women and cattle they could meet with; and so carrying them off, either sold them in some distant country, or kept them for their own use. Hereupon Tyndarus, the father of Helena, considering the beauty of his daughter, caused all her lovers, who were some of the principal men of Greece, to bind themselves by a solemn oath, that, if at any time she should be taken from her husband, they

¹ Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, b. 1. fab. 7.

^a See note on this subject, p. 336.—*Ed.*

^b We have formerly taken notice, (b. 3. c. 5. in the notes,) of the series of the Egyptian kings, written by Eratosthenes, and preserved by Syncellus; and here to proceed with that catalogue. In the year of the world 2523, reigned in Egypt Echtesius Caras one year. In the year 2524, began Nitocris, and reigned six years. In the year 2530, began Myrtæus, and reigned twenty years. In the year 2552, began Thyosimares, the same that Herodotus calls Myris, or Myrios, and reigned twelve years. In the year 2564, began Thyrillus, and reigned eight years. In the year 2572, began Semiphucæres, and reigned eighteen years. In the year 2590, began Chuter Taurus, and reigned seven years. In the year 2597, began Cheres Philosphus, and reigned twelve years. In the year 2609, began Chomo Ephtha, and reigned eleven years. In the year 2620, began Anchurius Ochus, and reigned sixty years. In the year 2680, began Penteathyris, and reigned sixteen years. In the year 2696, began Stamenes, and reigned twenty-three years. In the year 2719, began Sistosichemes, and reigned fifty-five years. In the year 2774, began Maris, and reigned forty-three years. In the year 2817, began Siphous Hermes. In the year 2826, began Phurron, or Nilus. In the year 2843, began Amurrhæus, and reigned sixty-three years, or to the year of the world 2906.—See *Millar's Church History*, c. 1. period 4.

^c This flood occurred B. C. 1518, or twelve years before the commencement of Ehud's administration.—*Hales.*—*Ed.*

² Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, b. 2. f. 1.

^d With respect to the era of Phaeton and Ganymede there is no evidence whatever; no good evidence indeed that such personages ever existed. Perseus is supposed to have been the most ancient of all the Grecian heroes, and founder of the city of Mycenæ, of which he was the first king. According to most chronologists, he flourished in the year 1348 B. C. and was contemporary with the Hebrew judge Gideon. Sir Isaac Newton, however, brings him down to the year 1028 B. C.—*Bp. Gleig.*

^e The Argonautic expedition was made, according to Hales, in the year 1225 B. C. during the administration of the judge Abdon.—*Bp. Gleig.*

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would join all their forces together to recover her. And so, being left to choose whom she would have for her husband, she made choice of Menelaus king of Mycenæ, and brother to Agamemnon. Paris, one of the youngest sons of Priamus, king of Troy, upon the report of her beauty, came into Greece to see her, and was kindly entertained by Menelaus; but he soon took an opportunity to debauch his wife, and having robbed the husband of a great deal of treasure, found means to make his escape both with her and it.

Menelaus, as soon as his wife was gone, complained of the injury that had been done him, to all the Grecian princes, and required the performance of their oath; which they readily consented to, and made his brother Agamemnon general of the forces, that were to be employed in this expedition. The Greeks, however, being unwilling to enter into a war, if matters could be accommodated by a treaty, sent Ulysses and some others, as ambassadors to Troy, to demand Helena, and all the things of value that were taken with her. What answer the Trojans made to this demand, we are nowhere informed; but sure it is, that the ambassadors returned back so very much offended with their ill treatment, that, in a short time, they fitted out a vast armament.

But there was an unhappy accident, which mightily retarded the siege of the city, and that was a difference which fell out between Agamemnon and Achilles. Agamemnon, as general, had the preoption of what part of the booty he pleased, and had then taken to himself a captive woman, the daughter of Chryses, the priest of Apollo, as Achilles, and the other commanding officers, had made choice of others; but, being obliged to give up the priest's daughter, in atonement for the pestilence that was fallen upon the army, he sent and took Achilles's captive from him, which so exasperated this gallant warrior, that, to revenge himself effectually, he took up a resolution, neither to fight himself, nor suffer any forces under him to engage; and this gave the enemy so great an advantage, that Hector, at the head of his forces, broke through the Grecian trenches one day, and set fire to the ships.

In the midst of this extremity, Patroclus, the bosom-friend of Achilles, not being able to stand neuter any longer, begged of Achilles to let him have the use of his armour, and the command of his troops, in order to repulse the Trojans; which he bravely attempted, but, in the engagement fell by the hands of Hector, who took from him the arms of Achilles, and carried them off.

This conjuncture Agamemnon made use of to be reconciled to Achilles; and to this purpose, sent him back his captive maid, with many very valuable presents, and made an excuse for his former behaviour as well as he could. Achilles, in order to be revenged for the loss of his friend, laid aside all resentment, and joined the Greeks in the next battle, wherein he vanquished the Trojans; and, singing out Hector, never left pursuing him, wherever he went, until he had killed him. ^a With

^a Homer indeed gives us this account of the taking of Troy; but Virgil has informed us, that it was done by a large wooden horse, in which were enclosed several of the chief commanders of the Greeks; that the rest setting sail to the island of Tenedos, left Sinon to persuade the Trojans, that this horse was built upon a religious account, and was necessary for them to take into the city; that, by his craft and instigation, they pulled down part of

Hector fell the city, which was soon reduced to ashes, and its inhabitants forced to undergo a military execution.

But, how severe soever the Greeks might be to their conquered enemies, several historians have observed, that in their return home, they suffered almost as much misery as they had brought upon the Trojans. For this is the account which Thucydides gives of them. "By reason of their long absence, they found many alterations when they returned, so that some of them were driven by their neighbours from their ancient seats; many were expelled their countries by faction; others slain, soon after their arrival; and others deposed from their kingdoms by such as had staid at home." Nestor and Pyrrhus got safe home indeed, but were slain by Orestes. Idomeneus and Philoctetes, upon their return, were soon driven away to seek for new habitations. Agamemnon was, upon his first arrival, slain by his wife, and her adulterer Ægisthus, who had usurped his kingdom. Menelaus, having long wandered upon the sea, was forced into Egypt, before he could return to Sparta. Ulysses, after ten years' peregrination, and the loss of his whole company, came home in a poor condition, and had much difficulty to recover the mastership of his own house. Ajax, the son of Oileus, was drowned; Teucer fled into Cyprus; and Diomedes to king Daunus. Some of the Locrians were driven into Africa, others into Italy, others into Sicily, and settled themselves in such numbers in these parts, that Greek became the current language of this island, and most of the east part of Italy obtained the name of Magna Græcia.

Thus the wise Ruler of the world was pleased to make one wicked nation the instrument of punishing another. But, whatever they severally suffered, the succeeding generations obtained this advantage by it, that the dispersion of the Greeks occasioned a fuller peopling of distant countries, by an accession of these new inhabitants: and the taking of Troy became, in some years, the settled epocha, whereby all that were acquainted with the story of it, might agree in their account of time. ^b

SECT. V.

CHAP. I.—*From the death of Absalom to the Building of the Temple.*

THE HISTORY.

As soon as David was informed of his son's death, all

the wall for that purpose; and so the Greeks, returning on a sudden, and entering the breach, opened the horse, and seized on the gates, and burned the city. But another author, who perhaps might know the truth as well as Virgil, gives us a different account of this matter, namely, that Æneas, Antenor, and Polydamus, having taken some disgust at king Priamus, agreed with the Grecians to betray the city to them, upon condition, that they might retire with their men wherever they thought fit, provided they did not settle in Phrygia. To this purpose it was concerted, that the Grecians should set sail the day before to the island Tenedos, as if they were quite gone, but return in the dark of the night, when the Trojans thought themselves secure, and so he let in at the Scæran gate, over which was a large image of an horse, which gave the first rise and occasion to all this story.

^b Troy was taken in the year B. C. 1183, and consequently just at the termination of Samson's administration. See Hales, vol. i. p. 216, and vol. ii. p. 257.—Ed.

A. M. 2981. A. C. 1023; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4375. A. C. 1036. 2 SAM. xix—1 KINGS viii.

the joy of the victory was turned into sorrow. The king himself withdrew to a ^a private apartment, where he vented his grief in such a ^b mournful exclamation, as

^a The place to which David withdrew, in order to vent his grief, was, as Josephus tells us, (b. 7. c. 10.) to the top of one of the highest towers in the city; but the sacred history calls it 'the chamber over the gate,' (2 Sam. xviii. 33.) For the gate was a spacious place, and much of the same form with the *forum* among the Romans, not only the market for all commodities, but the place where all great assemblies of the people were likewise held. There were several buildings, where the chief magistrates sat to administer justice, (Ruth iv. 1, 2,) and where the other affairs of the state were transacted; so that it is not improbable, that this chamber over the gate, where David went to weep, might be some withdrawing room in the place where the privy counsel was wont to meet. (*Calmet's Commentary.*) The death of this favourite but unprincipled son, was a grievous blow to the heart of his royal father—and the intense anxiety with which he waited for intelligence of the fate of the day's engagement, and especially of Absalom, may be judged of from the position he occupied when the messengers arrived. To understand his situation, it is necessary to remind the reader that he was then in the provincial town of Mahanaim, in the tower that overhung the gates of which a sentinel was posted, as usual in cases of emergency, to hail the approach of any emissary from the seat of war. By this scout, communications of every thing important he discovered were ever and anon made to the impatient monarch, who sat in an adjoining chamber—one of those which served as halls of justice—and which, in ancient times, were always situated on the gates of the city. It was in this apartment, the nearest in the city to the scene of action, and commanding, from its elevated position, an extensive view of the country, that David watched, in the most painful suspense, the tidings of the civil contest that involved the fate of his crown. It was in this chamber at the gate, that, according to the practice of remotest antiquity on the most solemn occasions, he continued to indulge his pathetic lamentations over the death of his profligate son. It was out of a window in the same place of public resort, that when roused by the remonstrances of Joab, he returned his thanks to the army for their gallant defence of his life and his kingdom. And it was in the same apartments that he appeared afterwards before the people of the city, distributing justice to all who came with cases for his decision. That it was the practice of the ancient kings of Israel, as well as of other Oriental monarchs, to decide cases while sitting openly at the gate, appears from many passages of the sacred history; and, in many parts of the East, we are informed that the same practice prevails to this day. Mr Campbell describes an interesting scene of this nature at which he happened to be present. "While in Kurreechare," says he, "a city twelve or thirteen hundred miles up from the Cape of Good Hope, he was told that a cause was going to be brought before the king. Being anxious to witness it, I was led in haste to the gate, where I saw the king sit down at the right side of it, with his secretary on his right hand, and the prosecutor, or complainor, on his left, who stated his case across to the secretary. During his narrating his case, the king was looking about, as if not attending to what was said, but I saw from his eyes that he was attending to what, for form's sake, was addressed to the secretary. When the party had finished what he had to say, the secretary repeated the whole to the king, as if he had been entirely ignorant of the matter, after which he pronounced his judgment. This picturesque description gives us a lively idea of the scenes in which the chiefs and kings of sacred history are frequently represented as placed among their dependents or their people; and accounts for the universal joy that pervaded the whole city of Mahanaim, when it was known that their afflicted monarch had resumed his daily custom of meeting with, and taking an interest in the affairs of the people at the gate of the city. *Jamieson's Eastern Manners.*—Ed.

^b Nothing certainly can be more moving and pathetic, than the words which David utters upon this sad occasion; but whether it was David's deliberate wish, that he had died in Absalom's stead, or only the effect of his excessive love and grief for him, is not so easy a matter to determine. St Austin seems to be on the affirmative side, and gives this reason for it:—That Absalom died impenitent, but might have lived to become a better man; whereas, if David had died, he had reason

this: ¹ 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!' And as for the army, instead of returning in triumph, they stole silently into the city, as if they had done amiss, and had lost, instead of gaining, the battle.

This Joab perceiving, and being sensible that such excessive grief, at this juncture of affairs, would be of great prejudice to the king, went boldly in to him, ^c and expostulated the matter with him in terms that might perhaps be necessary on that occasion, but did not so well become a subject's mouth. However they had this good effect upon the king, that they roused him from his melancholy, and made him appear in public, to the great satisfaction of all his loyal subjects, ^d but as he thought himself very insolently used by Joab, upon several occasions, from that time he made it his resolution to take the first opportunity of ^e dismissing him from being his general.

Those of his subjects, who had appeared in arms against him, being now made sensible of the folly of their

¹ 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

to hope well of his salvation: but this supposition, as I take it, is not so well founded, since there is much more probability that if Absalom had survived his father, he would have grown more profligate than ever, triumphed in his good success; insulted and persecuted all his father's friends; and proved a wicked and abominable tyrant. But whether David's wish was deliberate or no, it is certain, that his grief might be increased from this reflection, that himself, by his own sin in the case of Uriah, had been the unhappy instrument and occasion of his son's death; though some learned men have observed, that the oriental people were accustomed to express their passions with more vehemence than we, in these parts of the world are wont to do; and that the repetition of the same word, 'My son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son,' is a style proper for mournful lamentation. "To the stars we will extol thy Daphnis, Daphnis to the stars we will praise, for Daphnis also loved us." (*Virg. Eccl. v.*) "I am grieved for Adonis, Adonis the fair is dead, Adonis the beautiful is gone." (*Bion. Id. 1.*)—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

^c Josephus concludes the speech which he supposes Joab to have made to David upon this occasion, in words to this effect:—"Pray, Sir, does not your conscience, as well as your honour reprove you for this intemperate tenderness for the memory of so implacable an enemy? He was your son, it is true, but a most ungracious one; and you cannot be just to God's providence, without acknowledging the blessing of his being taken away. Let me entreat you therefore to show yourself cheerful to your people, and let them know, that it is to their loyalty and bravery that you are indebted for the honour of the day; for if you go on, as you have begun, your kingdom, and your army will most infallibly be put into other hands, and you will then find something else to cry for."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 10.

^d 2 Samuel xix. 8. "And the king arose and sat in the gate." The custom noticed in this passage appears to have been very ancient, and is found in other writings than the sacred books. Homer thus represents Nestor:—

The old man early rose, walk'd forth, and sat
On polish'd stone before his palace gate.
With unguents smooth the lucid marble shone,
Where ancient Neleus sat, a rustic throne;
But he descending to the infernal shade,
Sage Nestor fill'd it, and the sceptre sway'd.

Odys. i. 518.—Ed.

^e For he had sufficient reason to think of depressing a man, who was grown so insufferably insolent and imperious. He had slain Abner most perfidiously in cool blood; had killed Absalom against the king's express command; in his late bold reproof had insulted over his sorrow, and, if we may believe Josephus, threatened to depose him, and give his kingdom to another. To such a state of arrogance will ministers sometimes arrive, when they find that their service is become necessary to their prince. —*Patrick's Commentary.*

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rebellion, became the forwardest for his restoration; but, what grieved him much, his own tribe, the tribe of Judah, seemed a little indifferent as to the matter; which made him send to Zadok and Abiathar the chief priests, not only to remind them of their own duty, but to authorize them likewise to treat with Amasa, who though he had commanded Absalom's army was still a man of great authority, in the tribe, to offer him his pardon, and in case he would come fully into his interest, to promise him the generalship in the room of Joab.

Thus all things conspiring to his happy restoration, the king left Mahanaim, and set forward on his journey to Jerusalem, when the chiefs of the tribe of Judah came to meet, and conduct him over the Jordan. Old Barzillai, who had been very kind to the king in his exile, and supplied him with provisions while he continued at Mahanaim, hearing that he was upon his return, came to take his leave of him; and see him safe over the river, and when the king in gratitude for his kindness gave him an invitation to go with him to Jerusalem, the good old man modestly excused himself, upon the account of his age, as having now lost the relish of the pleasures of a court, and desired rather to retire to his own estate, where he might spend the remainder of his days in quiet: but as he had a son, whose age was more proper to attend him, if his majesty would be pleased to confer any favour on him, the obligation would be the same; ^a which David promised to do, and so with much mutual blessings and salutations, they parted.

Among the many others who came to meet David upon this occasion, Shimei the Benjamite, who not long before had loaded him with curses and imprecations, came, ^b with a thousand men of his tribe to beg pardon for his fault; and when Abishai would have persuaded the king to have him killed, he resented the motion as an indignity put upon himself: and being unwilling to eclipse the public joy with the blood of any one, gave him his royal word and oath that he should live.

Another remarkable person that came to wait upon David at this time, was the perfidious Ziba, with his fifteen sons and twenty servants. He had again imposed upon his master, and, when he ordered him to make ready his ass that he, among others, might go and meet the king, slid away himself to make his court first; so that Mephibosheth, being lame, was forced to stay at Jerusalem, where he had all along ^c mourned for the

king's absence, until the king arrived: but when he was admitted into his presence, and the king seemed to be angry with him for not having accompanied him in his exile, he charged this seeming neglect upon the perfidy of his servant, and ^d set his case in so fair a light, that the king revoked the hasty grant he had made in favour of Ziba, and put his estate upon the same foot of possession that it was before.

When David was passed the Jordan, he was willing to make all possible haste to Jerusalem; and, as the tribe of Judah was the first that came to conduct him home, he, very probably to gratify them, marched on without waiting for the great men of Israel, who, in all parts of the kingdom, were making ready to join him. This occasioned some hot disputes between the princes of Israel and those of Judah: and, as the king was loth to displease either party, and therefore did not care to intermeddle in the controversy, several of the tribes of Israel took an outward unbrage at this, which occasioned a fresh insurrection. Sheba, a Benjamite, ^e and not unlikely one of Saul's family, made public proclamation by the sound of trumpet, that "since the tribe of Judah had engrossed David to themselves, they might even take him; and, since all the other tribes he had visibly deserted, their wisest way would be to stand to their arms, and in like manner desert him." Whereupon a great many of the other tribes followed Sheba; but the men of Judah persisted in their loyalty, and conducted the king to Jerusalem. As soon as he arrived in the city, the first thing he did was to declare Amasa his general, and

since no one, who neglected himself to this degree, could be supposed ambitious of a crown. Not dressing his feet, may signify, either not cutting his toe nails, or his not washing his feet, which the Jews were accustomed very frequently to do, because of the bad smell which was natural to them, as well as the Arabians, and some other nations; and therefore his omission of this could not but make him offensive to himself. Not trimming his beard was letting his hair grow negligently, and without any order. For the manner of the Jews was, to cut the hair from the lip upwards, and what grew likewise on the cheek; but what was on the chin, and so backwards to the ear, that they suffered to grow; and not washing his clothes must denote his putting on no clean linen, but wearing the same shirt all the while.—*Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

^a Josephus brings in Mephibosheth pleading his excuse to David for not attending him, and expressing a grateful sense of his favours, in such like words as these:—"Nor has he only disappointed me in the exercise of my duty, but has been doing me spiteful offices to your majesty likewise: but you, Sir, are so just and so great a lover of God and truth, that I am sure your generosity and wisdom will never entertain a calumny to my prejudice. Our family has had the experience of your piety, modesty, and goodness, to a degree never to be forgotten, in passing over and pardoning the innumerable hazards and persecutions that you were exposed to, in the days, and by the contrivance of my grandfather, when all our lives were forfeited, in your power, and at your mercy. But then, after all this gracious tenderness, your superadding the honour of taking me to your table, a person so obnoxious in regard of my relations, as a friend, and as a guest, nothing could be either greater, or more obliging than this."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 7.

^e In the text, Sheba is called 'a man of Belial.' The expressions 'sons of Belial,' 'men of Belial,' and 'children of Belial,' occur frequently in Scripture, and seem to imply wicked, worthless men; those who refuse to submit to any restraint; rebels, licentious and disobedient persons. (See Deut. xiii. 13. Judg. xix. 22. 1 Sam. ii. 12, x. 27.) The primary meaning of the word Belial, is uselessness, worthlessness, according to Gesenius; and the Septuagint renders the phrase *αὐτοὶ μακαροφρονες, lawless men*. In the New Testament, Belial is applied to Satan, as the patron and epitome of licentiousness, (2 Cor. v. 15.)—Ed.

^a What David did for Chimham is uncertain; but as he had a patrimony in Bethlehem, which was the place of his nativity, it is not improbable, that he gave a great part of it to Chimham, and his heirs for ever; and that this was afterwards called 'the habitation of Chimham' in the days of Jeremiah, (Jer. xii. 17.)—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 5. c. 4.

^b The reason why Shimei came with so large a retinue, was to let David see that he was a man of some considerable rank, and capable of doing him great service among the people, which might be some inducement to the king to grant him his pardon; or, very likely, he was one of the captains of a thousand in his own tribe, and might carry them along with him, to make the stronger intercession for his pardon.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^c The words in the text are, that 'he had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day that the king departed,' (2 Sam. xix. 24.) These were some of the instances wherein the Jews were wont to express their mourning; and they are here mentioned by the historian, as evidences of the falsehood of Ziba's information against his master,

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to order him to get together a sufficient body of forces, as fast as he could, to pursue after Sheba. ^a Amasa, however, found more difficulty in executing this order than was expected; which when David understood, he sent Abishai with his guards, for he was resolved not to employ his brother Joab any more, in quest of Sheba, until Amasa, with the rest of the army, could join him. Exasperated at this, Joab, without any order went along with his brother; and when Amasa came up with them, which was at Gibeon, and was going to take upon him the command of the whole army, he advanced, with all seeming friendliness to salute him; but when he came within reach, he ^b took him by the beard, and stabbed him to the heart; and so, leaving him to wallow in his blood, proclaimed himself general in chief, and taking the army with him, pursued after Sheba, ^c leaving orders for the forces that were coming up, to follow after.

Sheba had gone about all the tribes of Israel to see if he could prevail with them to take up arms against David; but finding very few, that, upon second thoughts, were willing to engage in his measures, he was forced at last, with the few forces he had got together, to shut himself up in Abel, a fortified town in the tribe of Naphtali, in the northern part of Judea. But Joab was soon at his heels, and having besieged the town, and battered the walls, was making preparations for an assault, when a ^d woman of great prudence called to the

^a The people having been harassed in the late civil war, were not perhaps so forward as to engage in another. Some of them might not like to serve under a man who had lately headed a rebellious army against the king, and others might have conceived so high an opinion of Joab, as not easily to be brought to serve under any other general. Any of these things might very well retard Amasa's recruits, and yet he might be loath to make such a report to the king, for fear that it might diminish his authority, and make him appear not so well qualified for the office wherein he had placed him.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b It was an ancient custom among the Grecians, to take the person, to whom they had any address to make, by the chin, or beard: it was the custom of the ancient Greeks, in their prayers, to touch the chin, says Pliny, (b. 11. c. 45.) and even to this day, the Turks, in their salutations, do very frequently take one another by the beard, (See *Thevenot's Travels*, c. 22.) The Arabians have a great regard to the beard: the wives kiss their husbands, and the children their father's beard, when they come to salute them; and, when two friends meet together, their custom is, in the course of their compliments, to interchange kisses in this manner, (See *Darvieux on the Customs of the Arabs*, c. 7.) as the like custom is still preserved among the eastern people, the Indians, who take one another by the chin, when they would give an hearty salute, and say, *bobba*, that is, *father*, or *brother*, as the author of the voyage to the East Indies relates.—See *Peter de Valles's Travels*.

^c So insolent was Joab become, upon the presumption that David durst not punish him, that as he ventured upon this bloody fact, so he imagined, that though the sight of Amasa's dead body might stop the march of those that came by it, yet upon its being given out that he was again become their general, their love for him was such, that they would not scruple to follow him.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d It seems not unlikely, that this woman was a governess in this city; for though that office was most commonly occupied by men, yet there want not instances of women, as in the case of Deborah, (Judg. iv. 4.) and queen Athaliah, (2 Kings xi.) who have been employed in the administration of civil affairs. If she was invested with any such authority, she was the properest person to desire a parley with the general; and reason good she had to desire it, because she knew the present temper and fear of the citizens and soldiers, namely, that considering the imminent danger they were in, they were generally desirous of peace, and restrained from it only by Sheba's power and authority.—*Poole's Annotations*.

besiegers from off the walls, and desired to speak with their general. When Joab was come within hearing, the woman addressed herself to him in a very handsome manner, and told him, "that ^e by a long prescription of time, it had always been a custom, founded ¹ on the law of God, whenever the Hebrews came before any city, to offer peace in the first place, even though the inhabitants were of another nation; much more then ought this to have been done to a people, that were all of the same blood, and the greatest part of them loyal subjects to the king." To which Joab replied, "that he had no ill design against the people of the city, only as they harboured a rebel and a traitor, whom he demanded of them:" whereupon the woman persuaded the inhabitants to cut off Sheba's head, and throw it over the wall, which when they had done, Joab raised the siege, and withdrew with his army to Jerusalem; where his services, upon this occasion, were thought to be such that the king found himself obliged to restore him to his post of captain-general.

Not long after this, there happened a sore famine in the land, and the long continuance of it, which was for three years, made David suspect that it did not proceed from any common cause, but was inflicted by the immediate hand of God; and when he consulted the divine oracle to know the occasion of it, he was given to understand, that Saul's cruelty to the Gibeonites, in slaying so many, contrary to the treaty then depending between him and them, was the cause of it. Hereupon David sent to the Gibeonites, to know ^f what satisfaction they desired; and when he was told, that they expected seven of Saul's posterity to be delivered to them, he complied with their demand, and sent two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, and ^g five of Merab, his eldest daughter, but

¹ Deut. xx. 10.

^e In the beginning of this woman's speech to Joab, there is something that seems both abrupt and obscure. 'They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They should surely ask counsel at Abel, and so they ended the matter,' (2 Sam. xx. 18.) according to this translation, the sense of the words is, "This city, which thou art about to destroy, is no mean and contemptible one, but so honourable and considerable for its wisdom, and the wise people in it, that when any difference did arise among any of the neighbouring places, they used proverbially to say, We will ask the opinion and advice of the men of Abel about it, and we will stand to their arbitration; and so all parties were satisfied, and disputes ended." So that her words, according to this sense, are an high commendation of the city of Abel, for its being a place time out of mind, very eminent for the wisdom and prudence of its inhabitants. But there is another translation in the margin of our Bibles, which seems to be more natural, and makes the woman speak in this manner. "When the people saw thee lay siege to the city, they said, Surely he will ask, if we will have peace; for the law prescribes, that he should offer peace to strangers, much more then to Israelitish cities; and if he would once do this, we should soon bring things to an amicable agreement; for we are peaceable people, and faithful to our prince." So that, according to this interpretation, the woman both modestly reproved Joab for the neglect of his duty, and artfully engaged him in the performance of it.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^f This may seem strange, unless we suppose, as Josephus does, that when David consulted God, he told him, not only for what crime it was that he sent this punishment, but that he should take such a revenge for it as the Gibeonites should desire: and there was this farther reason for humouring the Gibeonites herein, because they had been modest under their sufferings, and never made any complaint to David of the injuries that had been done them.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^g Michal is put in the text indeed, (2 Sam. xxi. 8.) but not by

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spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan for the love which he had for his father when alive. These seven the Gibeonites took, and hung upon gibbets; and there they intended them to hang, ^a until God should send rain upon the earth, for the want of this occasioned the famine. But Rizpah, being informed of this, had a tent made of sackcloth pitched near the place, for her to live in, that so, by the help of her servants, she might ^b keep watch day and night, to fright away the birds and beasts from doing any hurt to the dead bodies. It was not long, however, before God sent plentiful showers of rain, so that Rizpah had the liberty to take down the bodies. And, when David was informed of this her pious care, he was moved thereby to take up the bones of Saul, and Jonathan his son, who, for five and thirty years before, had been buried under a tree at Jabesh-Gilead, and together with these seven sufferers of the same family, gave them an honourable interment in the tomb of Kish, the father of Saul, at Zelah, in the country of Benjamin.

David, in the beginning of his reign, had so humbled the Philistines, that they were not able to bring any great numbers into the field; but still, as long as they had men among them of a gigantic stature, ^c and such as were fit to be their champions, they did not cease to disturb the peace of Israel, insomuch that David, in the latter end of his reign, had four engagements with them. In the first of which, himself had like to have been slain by one of these monstrous large men, had not Abishai come timely in to his aid, and killed the Philistine; upon which occasion, it was unanimously agreed in the army,

mistake, as some will have it; for though Michal was not the wife of Adriel, but Merab; yet those children which Merab had by Adriel, Michal brought up; and the Jews observe, upon this occasion, that whoever brings up a pupil in his house, is in Scripture said to have begotten him. Nor is it in Scripture only, that this form of expression takes place, but in heathen authors likewise. For Agamemnon and Menelaus are called *sons of Atreus*, because Plisthenes, who was their father, being dead, he took care to bring them up.—*Howell's History*, in the notes; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

^a It was a positive law to the Israelites, (Deut. xxi. 22, 23.) that if any man was hanged, he should be buried before night; but the Gibeonites being not of that nation, thought themselves not obliged by that law. They are remarked indeed to have been a remnant of the Amorites, (2 Sam. xxi. 2.) and among them, as some have imagined, it was a barbarous custom in those days, as it certainly prevailed in after ages, to hang up men, in order to appease the anger of the gods in time of famine.—*Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

^b It is an obvious remark from hence, that crosses and gibbets, whereon malefactors were executed, did not stand high from the ground, since the dead bodies of such were in danger of being torn by carnivorous creatures; and what we may farther observe is, that it was an ancient custom for the relations of such as were thus executed, to watch their dead bodies. Thus Homer (*Iliad*, 23.) mentions Venus, as taking care of Hector's body; and the story of the Ephesian matron every one can tell.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^c This is not a solitary instance. Taverner informs us, that the eldest son of the emperor of Java, who reigned in 1648, had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot. And Maupertius, in his seventeenth letter says, that he met with two families near Berlin, where sedigitism was equally transmitted on both sides of father and mother. I once saw a young girl, in the county of Londonderry in Ireland, who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, but her stature had nothing gigantic in it. The daughters of Caius Horatius, of patrician dignity, were called *sedigila*, because they had six fingers on each hand. Volcanius a poet, was called *sedigitus* for the same reason.—See *Pliny's Natural History*, b. xi. c. 43; *Dr A. Clarke*.—ED.

that the king should never more go into the battle, lest a ^d life so precious should be lost.

In the other three engagements, nothing remarkable happened, but the death of four of these huge men, by the hands of some of David's chief officers; except we may mention here another valiant act, ^e which might probably be done at this time.

The Philistines' army lay in the valley of Rephaim, between David's camp and Bethlehem, where they had likewise a garrison. But notwithstanding this, upon David's intimating a desire to have some of the water of Bethlehem, three of his chief captains broke through the enemies' camp, and having drawn some water out of the well, brought it to David; but he, understanding at what price it had been purchased, even at the hazard of all their lives, would not drink it, but offered it to the Lord.

About two years before David's death, whatever might be the occasion of it, so it was, that ^f he was desirous to know the number of his people, and accordingly gave his chief officers orders to go through the whole kingdom, and bring him an account of all the people. Joab endeavoured to remonstrate against it, in a manner more modest than was customary with him; but the king's orders were positive; and therefore Joab, with other officers to assist him, beginning on the east side of Jor-

^d The expression is very beautiful, and significant in the text, 'Thou shalt no more go out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel,' (2 Sam. xxi. 17.) For good kings are in Scripture justly called the light of the people, (1 Kings xi. 36. and Ps. cxxxii. 17.) because the beauty and glory, the conduct and direction, the comfort, and safety, and welfare of a people, depend upon them, and are derived from them.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^e It is commonly observed, by the Jewish commentators, that though David expressed a desire for some of the water of Bethlehem, because it was the place of his nativity, and the water not improbably very excellent in its kind, yet he did not do this with any intent, that any should venture their lives to fetch him it. In this action, however, they have remarked three wonderful things, namely, That three men could break through the whole host of the Philistines; and when they had so done, durst stay to draw water out of the well, and then carry it away with an high hand, through the same host to David. But they might have added a fourth remark, namely, That they attempted this at the gate of Bethlehem, where a garrison of the Philistines kept a strong guard.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^f The words in the text are, 'And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah,' (2 Sam. xxiv. 1.) But in the original there is no nominative case at all. We find it however supplied in 1 Chron. xxi. 1. where it is said, that 'Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.' But then, by the word *Satan*, there is no necessity why we should understand the *devil* properly so called, because any evil minister, or counsellor, that advised David to number the people, will answer the signification of the word as well. And that there was some such counsellor, who prompted David to this action, seems to be implied in these words of Joab, 'Now the Lord thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundred fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it; but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?' (2 Sam. xxiv. 3.) Whereby it seems plain, that the matter had been debated in the king's council before, and that, though Joab was one who opposed it, David was more influenced by the persuasion of some other.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.—Dr Boothroyd translates this passage as follows, "And the anger of Jehovah was again kindled against Israel, because an *adversary* stood up against Israel, and moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah." This translation represents the meaning of the original as compared with the parallel place, 1 Chron. xxi. 1. and gets rid of the difficulty involved in the received text.—ED.

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dan, came round by the north parts of Canaan, and returned to Jerusalem, at the end of nine months and twenty days, with an estimate, that in Israel there were eight hundred thousand men fit to bear arms, and ^a five hundred thousand in Judah; but of the men that belonged to the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, there was no list given in.

David had no sooner received the account, but his heart misgave him, that he had done wrong; and it was not long, before the prophet Gad was sent to bring his sin to remembrance, and to offer him the choice of three punishments, ^b famine, pestilence, or war, which he liked best.

Where every punishment was so destructive, it was hard to tell which to prefer; but David at last made choice of the pestilence; which accordingly was sent, and, in ^c a very short time, destroyed no less than seventy thousand men. The plague began in the extreme parts of the kingdom, but every moment made advances nearer and nearer to Jerusalem; which when the king and inhabitants of the city heard, they clothed themselves in sackcloth, and, with all humility, cried unto God for mercy. A little before the offering up of the evening sacrifice,

^a If we compare this account with what we meet with in 1 Chron. xxi. 5. we shall find a great difference; for there the men of Israel are said to be three hundred thousand more than they are here, and, on the other hand, the men of Judah are said to be thirty thousand less. But as for the former difference it is but supposing, that in this account recorded in Samuel, the standing legions, which amounted in all to two hundred and eighty-eight thousand, that is, twenty-four thousand with their officers, upon guard every month, are not here mentioned, though they be in Chronicles: and as to the latter difference, it is but adding twenty-four thousand legionary soldiers to the tribe of Judah, and the difficulty is removed. Though some are apt to think, that in this case, there is no need of this supposition, because it is a common thing in Scripture to mention a round sum, either of men or years, though upon a strict computation, there may be some wanting.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^b There is another difference in this account, and what we meet with in the book of Chronicles. There the famine is said to be for three years only, but here it is said to be for seven. The Septuagint indeed make it no more than three; and for this reason some have imagined, that the seven is an error crept into the text, especially considering that three years of famine agree better with three days' pestilence, and three months' flight before an enemy. But there is no reason to suppose any error in the text; it is but saying, that in Chronicles, the author speaks of those years of famine which were to come for David's sin only, but in Samuel, of those three years of famine likewise, which were sent for Saul's sin, (2 Sam. xxi.) Now, within one year after the famine that was sent for Saul's sin, was David's sin in numbering the people; the intermediate year then was either the sabbatical year, wherein the people were not allowed to sow nor reap, or a year of such excessive drought, that the crop came to little or nothing. Upon either of these accounts we may properly enough say, that there were four years of famine before, and three more being now added to them, make up the seven that are here mentioned.—*Pool's Annotations.*

^c The words in the text are: 'So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel; from the morning, even to the time appointed.' The time appointed was the space of three days; and therefore some are of opinion, that the plague lasted so long: but then others urge, that this does not agree with what follows, namely, that 'God repented him of the evil, and commanded the angel, who smote the people, to stay his hand. They therefore conclude, that as the word *Moed* properly signifies an assembly, the "time Moed" must be, when the people met together at the time of the evening sacrifice, that is, about the ninth hour of the day; and consequently, that the plague continued from the morning to this time, which is about nine hours, or the eighth part of three days; God, in his mercy, having been pleased to mitigate the rigour of his judgment, upon the sincere repentance of his people.—*Patrick's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

or before the time of evening prayer, there appeared an angel over Jerusalem brandishing a flaming sword in his hand, as if he were going to destroy it; whereupon David implored God's mercy for the people, what vengeance soever might light upon him, who was chiefly guilty: but as he was expecting some heavy stroke, the angel sent Gad to him, with orders to go immediately, and build an altar in the thrashing-floor ^d of Araunah the Jebusite, which accordingly he did, and having purchased the place, and some oxen for sacrifice, ^e for ^f fifty shekels of silver, he offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, whereof the Lord declared his acceptance by fire from heaven; and so the plague ceased.

It is not improbable, that God at this time revealed to David the exact frame and fashion of the temple; that from the acceptableness of his sacrifices, he perceived that this thrashing-floor was the place which God had designed for the situation of his temple; that therefore he not only purchased that, but the whole top of the mount of Moriah likewise, at the price of ^g six hundred shekels of gold, ^h for the ground-plot of this temple; and that all the remainder of his time was employed in providing whatever was necessary for the purpose of building it; in settling the number of the officers, and the manner of the daily service of those that were to attend it; next to this, in settling his civil affairs, and appointing ⁱ judges, magistrates, and all inferior officers, whose business it was to punish offenders, and to keep all others to their duty, then in settling his ^j military matters, particularly the twelve captains, for every month, with their legions, to attend on the king in their turns; then ^k the princes of the twelve tribes, and afterwards ^l several other officers.

But while he was contriving these things in the best manner, he seems to have been taken, either with a dead palsy, or some other distemper, which chilled his blood, so that he could not be warm in his bed. His physicians therefore advised, that to supply him with ^m a natural

¹ 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. ² 1 Chron. xxi. 25. ³ Ibid. xxvi. 29 to the end.

⁴ Ibid. xxvii. 1—15. ⁵ Ibid. ⁶ Ibid. xxix. 1—20.

^d 2 Sam. xxiv. 18. A thrashing-floor among the ancient Jews, was only, as it is to this day in the east, a round level plot of ground in the open air, where the corn was trodden out by oxen. Thus Gideon's floor (Judges vi. 37.) appears to have been in the open air; as was likewise this of Araunah the Jebusite; else it would not have been a proper place for erecting an altar and offering sacrifice. In Hosea xiii. 3. we read of the chaff which is driven by the whirlwind from the floor.—*Shaw's Travels*, p. 139, second edition.—Ed.

^e There is again another difference in the account which we have in the Chronicles, and this in Samuel. In the Chronicles it is said, that David bought the thrashing-floor, &c., for six hundred shekels of gold; but in Samuel it is said, for fifty shekels of silver. Now a shekel of gold being of twelve times more value than a shekel of silver, it makes the disparity very large; and therefore, to account for this, it is generally supposed, that in the whole David made two purchases: first he bought the thrashing-floor and oxen, for which he gave fifty shekels of silver; but that afterwards all the ground about it, out of which the courts of the temple were made, cost him six hundred shekels of gold.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^f It is the observation of Galen, in his fifth book "Of the power of simple medicines," that nothing so effectually procures heat and health as the application of any thing young to the stomach: the advice of David's physicians therefore was not amiss; but it had been sinful advice, and such as he could not have followed, had not this young woman, whom he took to bed to him, been his concubinary wife. In those days such wives were allowable; and that she served him in this capacity, is very

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heat, a virgin should lie in the same bed with him; for which purpose Abishag of Shunem, in the tribe of Issachar, was brought to him, and made concubinary wife, though he had never any carnal knowledge of her.

Adonijah, who, next after Absalom, was David's eldest son, taking the advantage of his father's age and infirmity, began to entertain thoughts of making himself king, presuming that his father either could not, or would not obstruct him. He was indeed a prince of exquisite beauty, admired by all, and so indulged by his father, that he ^a never contradicted him in any thing; but as he had a great deal of Absalom in his complexion, he failed not to imitate him in his equipage, attendants, and splendid manner of life.

By some means, however, he had gained Joab the general of the forces, and Abiathar the high priest, over to his party; and by their advice it was, that he invited all the king's sons, except Solomon, and all the great men of Judah, except Nathan the prophet, Benaiah captain of the guards, and the officers of the army, (who, with Zadok the other high priest, were not for him,) to a sumptuous entertainment at En-rogel, where the purpose of the meeting was, as soon as the company had well feasted, to proclaim him king in the room of his father. Nathan, who knew ^b God's designation, David's choice, and the people's interest in the matter, having got intelligence of this, went and acquainted Bathsheba with it, and advised her by all means to go and press the king ^c to declare Solomon his successor, since things were now come to that extremity, that without her doing this, all their lives must certainly be in danger. Bathsheba pursued her instructions; went to the king, and, having acquainted him with Adonijah's conspiracy, desired him to name her son his successor, according to the oath that he had formerly made to her. While she was thus talking with the king, Nathan came in, and confirmed what

manifest from the account we have of her in Scripture, for whereas it is said, that 'the king knew her not,' this certainly implies, that he might have had carnal knowledge of her without sin or scandal; whereas it is said, that 'she lay in his bosom,' this phrase everywhere in Scripture denotes what was the sole privilege of a wife, concubine, (Gen. xvi. 5. Deut. xiii. 6.) Nor can we imagine why Adonijah's desiring her in marriage had been so heinous a crime in Solomon's account, had she not been the king's wife, and he, by this means, had designed to revive his pretensions to the crown.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^a It is remarked of David, that one of his great faults, and what had led him into many premunures, was his extraordinary indulgence to his children, of whom he was so fond, that he seems to have overlooked their errors, and not reproved them, though he was bound to do it, by a plain law, (Lev. xix. 17.) and could not but know, that the high priest Eli was severely punished for this neglect.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^b In 2 Sam. vii. 12. God had promised David by Nathan, that he would set upon his throne a son that should proceed from him, which plainly signified, that none of his sons already born were to be the person; and in 1 Chron. xxii. 9, &c., he declared by the same prophet, that after his father, Solomon should reign, and build him an house. This Adonijah could not but know; and therefore his setting himself against the decree of heaven made his sin the greater.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^c This power of naming a successor was here assumed by David, and for some time afterwards, as it appears by the story of his grandson Rehoboam, was continued in the Jewish state. It was a privilege that, in after ages, was granted to several good princes; but among the Israelites it did not prevail long, because the constitution of other nations, to which the Israelites affected to conform themselves, was different.—*Poole's Annotations, and Patrick's Commentary.*

she had said; so that David immediately declared Solomon his successor, and thereupon commanded Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the captain of his guards, with the other officers and ministers of state, to mount him ^d on the mule that he himself used to ride, and having in this manner ^e conducted him to Gihon, there to let Zadok and Nathan anoint him, and then, by sound of trumpet, to proclaim him king of Israel. All this was accordingly done, and the people of Jerusalem, by their loud shouts and acclamations of joy, gave testimony of their approbation of David's choice.

But how thunderstruck was Adonijah and his company, when, being just upon the point of proclaiming him king, they heard the sound of the trumpet, and the shouts of the people attending Solomon! As soon as they were informed of the occasion, each man thought proper to shift for himself; but, as for Adonijah, he ^f fled to the altar for sanctuary, till, having obtained of Solomon a promise of life, upon condition that he would never attempt any thing for the future against his government, he was conducted into the king's presence, where he

^d All the rest of David's sons were wont to ride upon mules, when they went abroad, (2 Sam. xiii. 29,) but David had a mule peculiar to himself, and the mounting Solomon upon it was a sufficient declaration in his favour. For, as it was capital, according to Maimonides, to ride upon the king's mule, or sit on his throne, or handle his sceptre without his order; so, on the contrary, to have the honour to ride upon the king's horse, by his appointment, was accounted the highest dignity among the Persians, as appears by the story of Mordecai, in the book of Esther.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^e Some commentators are of opinion, that Gihon was the same with the fountain of Siloam; but this is a gross mistake, since Gihon was manifestly to the west, and Siloam to the east of Jerusalem. There is little or no certainty likewise in the notions of some rabbins, who pretend that, in ancient times, kings were always anointed by the side of a fountain, by way of good omen, or that the perpetual running of the stream might be an emblem of the perpetuity of the king's reign. In the history of Saul, who was their first king, and of David, who was three times anointed, we find no mention made of any spring or fountain. As these fountains, however, were places of great concourse, for there were not many in Jerusalem, the chief reason, we may imagine, why David ordered Solomon to be anointed at one of these, was, that the thing might be done as publicly, and in the presence of as many spectators as possible.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^f There is no precept in the law to make the altar a privileged place: but, in conformity to the customs of other nations, the Jews seem to have done it. Other nations had certainly this custom, as appears from that passage in Virgil, "In such words he prayed, grasping the altars." (*Æneid* 6.) And it seems not unlikely, that as the people, when they came into the land of Canaan, had cities appointed by God, wherunto the manslayer might fly; so while they continued in the wilderness, the camp of the Levites might serve for the same purpose. Nay, from the words in Exodus xxi. 14, where God orders the wilful murderer "to be taken from his altar, that he may die," it seems unquestionably true, that, even in the land of Canaan, the altar continued a sanctuary for those who fled unto it: but then the question is, to what altar Adonijah fled? Whether to the brazen one which Moses made, and which was now at Gibeon, or that which his father had lately erected in the thrashing-floor of Araunah? It is expressly said, (1 Kings i. 50,) that 'he caught hold of the horns of the altar;' but we can hardly suppose, say some, that the altar in the thrashing-floor, which was run up in such haste with stones and turf, was made in that figure. But what should hinder us from supposing, that as David had built a place for the reception of the ark of the covenant on mount Sion, he had likewise built there an altar for the oblation of the daily sacrifices, in the exact form of the original one that was then at Gibeon, and that it was to this altar, and neither of the others, that Adonijah betook himself for refuge.—*Le Clerc's, Patrick's, and Calmet's Commentaries.*

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made his obeisance to Solomon, in token of thankfulness for his preservation, and in acknowledgment of his superiority.

This inauguration of Solomon, however, was a little too hasty and private; and therefore David, intending a more public coronation, ordered all the princes of Israel and Judah, and all the officers of his court and army to attend him: when, having recovered a little from his late indisposition, he stood up, and ^a in a solemn oration, put them in mind of God's goodness to him, and of his designation of Solomon to succeed in his throne, and to build him a temple. And therefore since he had reserved that honour for his son, he earnestly recommended to him a strict fidelity and piety towards God, and a zealous discharge of this important trust. To this purpose he gave him the plan which he had made for the execution of this undertaking, and an account of the treasures which he had provided for the perfecting of this great work. He gave him also a list of the priests and Levites, and the courses in which they were to wait in the temple: he gave him likewise the schemes, and regulations of the officers of his court, of the civil officers, of the treasures, and of the superintendents of the revenues, belonging to the crown; and, having made a large oblation of money out of his own private estate for the building of the temple, by his example and persuasion, he prevailed with the princes and the people to contribute according to their abilities, to so good and pious a work. And when he found himself successful herein, for what they gave upon this occasion amounted to an immense sum, he concluded all with a solemn thanksgiving to God, and a prayer, that he would enable Solomon to perfect what he had thus designed and recommended.

^a The speech which Josephus puts in David's mouth upon this occasion, is to this purpose:—"I am now to inform you, my countrymen and brethren, that I have had it a long time in my thoughts to erect a temple to the Lord, and have treasured up a mighty mass of gold and silver toward the charge of the undertaking; but it has pleased God, in his providence, by the mouth of his prophet Nathan, to put a stop to my design, upon this consideration, that he would not have the foundation of his holy house laid by hands that have been dipped in blood, which mine inevitably have been, though in the blood of your enemies, in the wars I have been forced to engage in, for the necessary defence of your liberties: but, at the same time that he forbade me to do this, the prophet informed me, that God had transmitted the care of the whole work to my son and successor. Our father Jacob, as you all well know, had twelve sons, and yet Judah was chosen by common consent to be ruler of all the rest. You know likewise, that I myself, though there were then six brothers of us, was advanced by God to the government, and that none of the rest thought themselves injured: wherefore I must now, in like manner, require it of you, and of all your sons, that you submit cheerfully and dutifully to my son Solomon, and that ye do it without any grumbling or civil dissension, because it is from God's immediate command and commission that he derives his authority. Put the case now, that God should have set a stranger over you, how great a folly and madness would it have been for you to murmur at it? But how thankful ought you to be, for the choice of so near a relation, when you yourselves are partakers of the honour that is done to your brother. There is nothing I so much long for, as to see God's gracious promises take a speedy effect, and the whole people put into a lasting possession of the blessings they are to enjoy under the reign of Solomon. And all this, my dear son, (says he, turning to Solomon,) will be made good, and every thing succeed to your wish, so long as you govern according to piety and justice, with a respect to your duty both towards God and man, upholding a reverence to the laws, and treading in the steps of your forefathers: but whenever you pass these bounds, there is nothing but ruin and misery to be expected.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 11.

The next day there was a very great and solemn sacrifice, and much rejoicing among the people. David, upon this occasion, had Solomon anointed a second time, in a more public manner; ordered that Zadok should be the high priest in the room of Abiathar, who had publicly espoused the interest of Adonijah, and, to put an end to all disputes after his decease, had him for the future seated on a royal throne, and made sole regent of the kingdom during his lifetime.

Not long after this, David, perceiving his end approaching, called for Solomon, ^b and gave him his last exhortation, which was, to be constant in his duty to God, ¹ 'to walk in his ways, and ^c keep his statutes, and his commandments, his judgments, and his testimonies, that he might prosper in all that he did;' and then descending to some particular affairs relating to the state, he charged him to do justice to Joab, for the many murders he had been guilty of; to show kindness to the sons of Barzillai, for the support their father had given him in his distress; and though he himself had not put Shimei to death for his past offences, yet whenever he should prove guilty again, not to spare him.^d Having

¹ 1 Kings ii. 3—11.

^b Josephus introduces David as taking his last leave of his son Solomon in these words: "And now, son, I am going to my fathers, and you, that I leave behind me, are in due time to follow, which is no more than paying a common debt to nature. There is no returning from the grave, and, when we are once gone, we have done with this world for ever. Wherefore, while I am yet among the living, and before it be too late, pray let me remind you of the same things once more. Govern your subjects according to justice. Worship that God from whom you have received your dignity as well as your being, as you are bound to do. Observe his precepts, and keep his laws, as they have been handed down to you from Moses, and have a care that you never forsake them, either for fear, flattery, or any passion or interest whatsoever; for otherwise you can never hope for the blessings of God's favour and providence. But if you behave yourself with reverence and submission towards God, as you ought to do, and as I wish you may do, your kingdom will be established to yourself, and the succession of it continued to your family from generation to generation.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 7. c. 12.

^c Under these four words are comprehended all the laws of Moses. Statutes were such constitutions as had their foundation, not in reason, but in the will and pleasure of God; such was the prohibition of sowing seeds of different kinds together, &c. Commandments were moral duties, that were founded in the nature of things, and carried their reason along with them; as, not to steal, not to murder, &c. Judgments were the laws belonging to civil government, and the dealings of one man with another; such are all those laws that are recorded in the 21st and following chapters of Exodus; and testimonies were such laws as preserved the remembrance of some great events, and testified to men the loving-kindness of the Lord; such as the sabbath, the passover, and the rest of the feasts.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d 1 Kings ii. 9. David is here represented in our English version, as finishing his life with giving a command to Solomon to kill Shimei. The behaviour thus imputed to the king and prophet, should be examined very carefully, as to the ground it stands upon. When the passage is duly considered, it will appear highly probable that an injury has been done to this illustrious character. It is not uncommon in the Hebrew language to omit the negative in a second part of a sentence, and to consider it as repeated, when it has been once expressed, and is followed by the connecting particle. The necessity of so very considerable an alteration, as inserting the particle not, may be here confirmed by some other instances. Thus Ps. 1. 5. ix. 18. xxxviii. 1. If then there are in fact many such instances, the question is, whether the negative, here expressed in the former part of David's command, may not be understood as to be repeated in the latter part; and if this may be, a strong reason will be added why it should be so interpreted. The passage will run thus: 'Behold, thou hast with thee Shimei, who cursed

A. M. 2961. A. C. 1023; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4375. A. C. 1036. 2 SAM. xix.—1 KINGS viii.

thus ended his exhortation to his son, in a short time after he died, in the seventy-first year of his age, after he had reigned forty years in all, ^a seven in Hebron, and three and thirty in Jerusalem; and ^b was buried in that part of the city which himself had taken from the Jebusites, and called after his own name.

me, but I swore to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death by the sword. Now therefore hold him not guiltless, for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him, but bring not down his hoary head to the grave with blood.' Now, if the language itself will admit this construction, the sense thus given to the sentence derives a very strong support from the context. For, how did Solomon understand this charge? Did he kill Shimei in consequence of it? Certainly he did not. For, after he had commanded Joab to be slain, in obedience to his father, he sends for Shimei, and knowing that Shimei ought to be well watched, confines him to a particular spot in Jerusalem for the remainder of his life. 1 Kings ii. 36—42.—*Kennicott's Remarks*, p. 131.—Ed.

^a In 2 Sam. v. 5. it is said, that he reigned seven years and six months in Hebron, which, together with the three and thirty in Jerusalem, will make his reign to be in all forty years and a half. To solve this difficulty, as some of the Jews esteem it, they have devised a conceit, that, to punish David for his adultery with Bathsheba, God sent upon him a leprosy which continued for six months, in all which time he was looked upon as dead, and not accounted to reign. But they never considered, that these months were part of his reign in Hebron, before he committed that adultery in Jerusalem. The true account of the matter therefore is, that it is very usual in Scripture computation, to omit smaller sums, and only reckon by a round number; for which reason these six months, which were but part of a year, are not taken notice of in the account both of Kings, 1 Kings ii. 11. and Chronicles, 1 Chron. xxix. 26, 27.—*Patrick's Commentary*; and *Paole's Annotations*.

^b After this account which Josephus gives us of David's several speeches before his death, he informs us, "That he was buried at Jerusalem with a solemnity of royal pomp and magnificence, that was glorious to the highest degree, and that, over and above the splendour of the ceremony, his son Solomon deposited in his monument an inestimable treasure, from which, when Antiochus, surnamed the Pious, besieged Jerusalem, Hircanus, the high priest, took the sum of three thousand talents, and therewith bribed them to raise the siege; and that, many years after this, Herod, surnamed the Great, took another immense sum from thence, which enabled him to rebuild the temple." Among several nations indeed it was customary to bury, along with princes and other great men, various things of value, that they took delight in while they lived. The Egyptians were used to this; and about their mummies are frequently found very precious ornaments. When Alexander the Great had Cyrus's tomb opened, there was found therein a bed of gold, a very rich table, drinking cups, and many fine vestments; but notwithstanding all this, several learned men look upon this whole account of Josephus as a mere fable. For to what purpose, say they, did Solomon bury all this treasure under ground, when he had so much occasion for it, when he was forced to borrow money of the king of Tyre, and burden his people with so many heavy taxes to supply his excessive expenses? How came it, that the other kings of Judah, who were frequently put to the necessity of stripping the temple of its precious furniture to satisfy their greedy enemies, never once adventured to lay hold on this treasure? How came it to escape the hands of the Chaldeans, and other nations, that so often had the plundering of Jerusalem? Or why should Hircanus violate this deposit, which his predecessors esteemed more sacred than the holy vessels of the Lord? These are questions that cannot easily be resolved; and what is a farther confutation of this story, in that very book, from whence Josephus is supposed to have taken it, it is never once said, that Hircanus broke open David's tomb. The words of that spurious author are that "Hircanus, while he was besieged by Antiochus, opened a treasure chamber which belonged to some of David's descendants, and that, after he had taken a large sum of money out of it, he still left a great deal in it, and sealed it up again." But this is a quite different thing, and has no manner of relation to the sepulchre of David. As to the real sepulchre of David,

When David was dead, Solomon succeeded to the throne; and to secure his possession, took an occasion, in a short time, to rid himself of his adversaries. Adonijah, in his father's lifetime, had made bold pretensions, but was defeated, and pardoned by Solomon upon condition that he would become a good subject, and give him no farther molestation; but, by the persuasion of Joab and Abiathar, he was now put upon another bold project, which was to desire Abishag, the late king's concubine in his old age, in marriage, hoping thereby to strengthen his interest, and to be able to play an after game for the crown. To this purpose he prevailed with Bathsheba, the queen-mother, to speak to the king; but the king was so far from granting his request, that he was shocked at the boldness of it, and suspecting some treasonable design at the bottom, sent immediately and had him put to death. In the next place he banished Abiathar; and, having inhibited him from the exercises of his priestly office, confined him to his country house, and put Zadok in his place; and when he heard that Joab was fled into the tabernacle for sanctuary, upon his refusing to come out at his command, ^c he ordered Benaiah, whom he

it is certain, that it was always held in great veneration among the Jews. It was in being in St Peter's time, for so he tells the people, (Acts ii. 29.) Dio (in *Adriani vita*) informs us, that part of it was fallen down in the emperor Adrian's reign. St Jerome relates, that he himself used frequently to go and pray at it; and modern travellers, as we took notice before, describe some magnificent monuments hewed in a rock, not far from Jerusalem, which are doubtless very ancient; but they themselves do not agree that they were the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. It is somewhat unaccountable, however, that the place of this prince's sepulchre, which both the Chaldeans and the Romans, when they took Jerusalem, thought proper to spare, should now be so entirely lost that we cannot find the least remains of it. But though providence has so ordered it, that the place of David's sepulchre should not at present be known, yet there does not want an eternal monument of his most excellent genius. The book of Psalms, which for the most part was composed by him, does publish the glory of its author, more than the most pompous eulogies; and the author of Ecclesiasticus (chap. xlvii. 2, &c.) has consecrated this epitaph to his memory, which is more durable than either marble or brass:—"As the fat is taken away from the peace-offering, so was David chosen out of the people of Israel. He played with lions as with kids, and with bears as with lambs; he slew a giant when he was young, and took away reproach from the people; for he called upon the most high Lord, and he gave strength to his right hand to slay this mighty warrior, and to set up the horn of his people. So the people honoured him with ten thousands, and praised him in blessings of the Lord, for he destroyed the enemies on every side, and brought to nought the Philistines, his adversaries:—In all his works he praised the Holy One most high, and blessed the Lord with words of glory:—He set singers also before the altar, that by their voices they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs. He beautified their feasts, and set their solemn times in perfect order:—The Lord took away his sins, and exalted his horn for ever; he gave him a covenant of kings, and a throne of glory in Israel."—*Cabnet's Commentary*, and his *Dictionary* under the word *David*.

^c It was formerly very customary among princes, to employ their officers, or greatest confidants, in such like executions. Among the Romans, the soldiers were always the persons who carried to prison, to torture, or to execution, such as were found guilty of any offence; and this Tertullian makes an argument to dissuade Christians from engaging in the wars, lest thereby they should be obliged to imprison, punish, or execute malefactors. In Dan. ii. 24. we read that Nebuchadnezzar 'sent Arioch, who was chief commander of his troops, to destroy the wise men of Babylon,' because they could not interpret his dream; and therefore we need less wonder, that we find Solomon employing Benaiah, the captain of his guard, on the like office. But whether

A. M. 2981. A. C. 1023; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4375. A. C. 1036. 2 SAM. xix—1 KINGS viii.

afterwards made general in his room, to go in, and kill him there. But when Shimei, who deserved the like fate for his gross abuse of the late king, was brought before him, he only ^a confined him to Jerusalem as a prisoner at large, but with a strict injunction not to move out of the place, upon pain of death. Upon this condition he thankfully accepted of his life, and, for some time, kept within the bounds of his confinement; but having some slaves, who had run away, and had entered themselves into ^b the service of Achish, king of Gath, he imprudently went to reclaim them, and, upon his return, by Solomon's order was put to death.

Having thus secured his kingdom at home, by confining, or cutting off the heads of the faction that was against him, Solomon bethought himself of strengthening his interest abroad by foreign alliances; and to this purpose, married the daughter of ^c Pharaoh king of Egypt, and appointed her at first an apartment in his own palace; but after he had finished the temple, built her a very stately palace adjoining to his own, which she badly deserved; for, in process of time, this woman,

he did not first drag Joab from the altar before he slew him, for fear of polluting the holy place with blood, or whether Solomon did not rather think fit to have him killed even at the altar, and let all men see, that no place, though ever so sacred, should secure any man from the hand of justice, commentators have not agreed.—*Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

^a Shimei, as we read, was a very powerful man. When he came to meet king David, and to beg pardon for his offence, he had a thousand of his own tribe to accompany him, (2 Sam. xix. 17.) and therefore Solomon might think proper to confine him to the city of Jerusalem, that being removed from the place where his family and interest lay, to one where he was but a stranger, and sufficiently odious for his former ill treatment of the late king, he might be incapable of raising any tumults or seditions; and that, being in this public theatre, all his words and actions might be narrowly observed, which, considering his busy and wicked temper, might give Solomon a fair advantage against him; and as the manner of some is, the very prohibition itself might probably inflame his desire to transgress it.—*Poole's Annot.*

^b Achish had been so great a friend to David, that, though David had conquered the Philistines, he suffered him still to retain the title of a king, and only to be tributary to him; so that there was a friendly correspondence between this city and Jerusalem, inasmuch that Shimei might easily hear, by somebody or other that had been at Gath, that his servants were there. These servants, in all probability, were such as he had purchased with a considerable sum of money, and their running away was not only a loss but a great affront likewise to their master; and therefore partly out of rage, and partly through covetousness, he undertook this dangerous journey, presuming that a thing which might be done secretly and speedily, would never come to Solomon's ears; that in the space of three years' time, Solomon might have forgot his injunction; or that if he remembered it he would not be so rigid as to put it in execution; especially since he went out of Jerusalem, not through wantonness, or any contempt of authority, but merely to recover what he had lost, which, he might think, was a thing excusable.—*Poole's Annotations, and Patrick's Commentary.*

^c It may seem somewhat strange, that in all the history of the Jews, from the time of Moses to this of Solomon, no mention should be made of the kings of Egypt, as if they had no concern in the affairs of Canaan, but were wholly diverted some other way: but for this, their own historians account, when they tell us, that, during this space of time, the Egyptian kings did nothing worth recording. (*Diodor. Biblioth. b. 1. p. 29.*) All these kings of Egypt were called Pharaohs; but Pharaoh was not a proper name, but a title of dignity only, which imported the same as sultan or emperor. They had, besides this, other names; and Clemens Alexandrinus, in a passage taken from Alexander Polyhistor, tells us, that the proper name of this Egyptian king, whose daughter Solomon married, was Vaphres.—*Le Clerc's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

among others, contributed not a little to the perversion of Solomon.

He began his reign however with a good sense of religion upon his mind; for which end, taking the chief of the officers and nobility along with him, he went to Gibeon, where the original tabernacle and altar, that were made in the wilderness, were kept, and there offered a thousand sacrifices, in acknowledgment of God's kindness to him, in placing him upon his father's throne. In the night following, when God appeared to him in a vision, and promised to grant whatever he should ask, he begged him to give him ^d a wise and understanding heart, and ^e considering his youth and inexperience, such qualities as were necessary for the due government of the people committed to his charge; which petition God was so well pleased with, that, over and above the wisdom which he asked, he promised to give him such affluence of riches and honour, as no king in his days should be able to equalize. When Solomon awaked out of sleep, he perceived that this was a dream sent from God; and therefore returning to Jerusalem, he presented himself before the ark of the covenant, which was placed in a tabernacle, that David had made for it, and there he offered sacrifices in abundance.

Solomon, as we said, had obtained of God a promise of the gift of wisdom; and it was not long before he had an opportunity of showing it, to the great satisfaction of all his subjects. ^f Two women, who both lived together

^d Hereupon some Jewish annotators have observed that though Solomon, in his great modesty, might request of God no more than the gift of government, or, as he expresses it, 'an understanding heart to judge the people, and to discern between good and evil,' (1 Kings iii. 9.) yet God, out of his abundant grace, gave him a general knowledge of all other things, as the following history informs us; and that, whereas other men gather their knowledge from study and observation, Solomon had his by an immediate inspiration from God; inasmuch that 'he, who went to bed as ignorant as other men, awaked in the morning like an angel of God.' But though his knowledge of things was, in a great measure infused, yet he did not therefore neglect his study. 'He gave his heart to seek, and search out by wisdom, concerning all things under the sun;' in which search, as he himself testifies, (Eccles. i. 13.) he took no small pains: so that his gifts extraordinary did not supersede the use of other means in the acquisition of knowledge; but by application and experience he perfected what he had so advantageously received from the hands of God.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

^e The words of Solomon himself are, 'I am but a little child; I know not how to go out, or how to come in, (1 Kings iii. 7.) From whence some have inferred, that he was not above twelve years old when he spake them, but this must be a gross miscomputation. His father, when he left the kingdom to him, calls him 'a wise man,' (1 Kings ii. 6, 9.) The foregoing story shows, that he had already sat some time on the throne; and therefore he calls himself a child, not in respect of his years, for most agree that he was twenty when he began to reign, but his skill in governing the people, and managing the affairs of state. This was a modest expression in Solomon; but it is an observation of Aristotle, in his book of politics, that young men are unfit for government, because their consultative power is imperfect; which though it may not be a general rule, was delivered by Solomon himself, in his more mature years, for a maxim: for 'Wo to the land,' says he, (Eccles. x. 16.) 'whose king is a child.'—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^f These two women are said in the text to be *harlots*; but the Hebrew word, as we took notice in the case of Rahab, may equally signify a hostess, or one who kept a house of public entertainment; and that it is so to be taken here, we have these reasons to presume:—That as all public prostitution was severely forbidden by the law, Deut. xxiii. 17. women of this infamous character durst not have presented themselves before so just and

A. M. 2081. A. C. 1023; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 1375. A. C. 1036. 2 SAM. xix.—1 KINGS viii.

in one house, were brought to bed about the same time, and one had overlaid her child. She who found the dead child by her, accused the other of having stolen away her living child, and left her dead one in its place: the other pertinaciously denied the thing; so that the question was, 'To whom did this living child belong?' And to determine this, Solomon commanded some that stood by, to take and ^a cut the child in two, and to give to each woman a half; whereupon the real mother begs that the child may be saved, even though it be given to her adversary; but the pretended one is clearly for dividing it; which gave Solomon a full conviction, that she who expressed a tenderness and compassion for the child, was its true mother, and accordingly ordered it to be given her.

The wisdom of the king soon shed a happy influence over all his dominions, and every subject was, in some degree or other, made partaker of it. All Judah and Israel lived in the greatest security; and all the neighbouring nations either paid him tribute, or were his friends and allies. He ruled over all the countries and kingdoms ^b from the Euphrates to the Nile, and in many

so wise a king; that women of this lewd behaviour seldom do become mothers of children, and when they chance to have any, are not so solicitous for their preservation, but rather rejoice when they have got rid of them. There is no reason to suppose then, that these women were common harlots; and yet it is generally thought that they were both unmarried persons and guilty of fornication, because no mention is made of their husbands, whose office it was, if they had any, to contest the matter for their wives.—*Poole's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^a Solomon knew at once that the only sign that would discover the true mother, would be her affection, and compassion, and tenderness for her child; and therefore, in order to distinguish between the two, his business was to make trial of this; and if we suppose, that when he commanded the child to be divided, he spake with a sedate countenance, and seeming earnestness, as the true mother's petition to the king makes it apparent that he did, then we may suppose farther, not only the two women, but all the people present with horror and admiration, expecting the execution, of the thing; which, when it ended in so just a decision, quite contrary to what they looked for, raised joy in every breast, and gave a more advantageous commendation to the judge: and yet Abarinell, the Jewish commentator, thinks, that all this was no great proof of Solomon's extraordinary wisdom, nor could it beget that fear or reverence which the text says (1 Kings iii. 28.) it procured to his person. His opinion therefore is, that Solomon made a discovery of the truth antecedent to this experiment; that by observing the countenance, the manner of speech, and all the motions of the women, he discerned the secret of their heart, and penetrated to the bottom of the business; and that his commanding the child to be divided afterwards, was only to notify to the company, what he before had discovered. However this be, it may not be improper, upon this occasion, to mention an instance or two out of profane history, of a singular address, though much inferior to this, in discovering such secrets as seemed to be past finding out. To this purpose, Suetonius, in his life of Claudius, chap. 15., tells us, how that emperor discovered a woman to be the mother of a young man, whom she would not own for her son, by commanding her to be married to him; for the horror of committing incest obliged her to declare the truth; and in like manner, Diodorus Siculus relates, how Ariopharnes, king of the Thracians, being appointed to arbitrate between three men, who all pretended to be sons of the king of the Cimmerians, and claimed the succession, found out the true son and heir, by ordering them to shoot each man his arrow into the dead king's body; which one of them refusing to do, was deemed the true claimant.—*Poole's Annotations*; *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

^b The words in the text are, 'And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt,' (1 Kings iv. 21.) for the bounds of his kingdom were to the east, the Euphrates, which is here,

places his dominions extended beyond the Euphrates. He had a great number of horses and chariots of war. Instances of his wisdom were as numerous as the sands of the sea, and in learning and knowledge he ^c surpassed all the orientals, and the Egyptians. In a word, he was the wisest of mankind, and his reputation was spread through all nations. He composed, or collected, ^d three thousand proverbs, and a ^e thousand and five poems.

and in other places of Scripture, called *the river*, without any addition: to the west, the country of the Philistines, which bordered upon the Mediterranean sea; and to the south, Egypt. So that Solomon had tributary to him the kingdoms of Syria, Damascus, Moab, and Ammon, which lay between Euphrates and the Mediterranean; as indeed, without such a number of tributary kingdoms, we cannot conceive how the country of Israel could have furnished such a constant supply of provisions and other things necessary for the support of this prince's grandeur.—*Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

^c There were three nations in the east of Canaan, that were very famous for their wisdom and erudition; the Chaldeans, beyond the Euphrates; the Persians, beyond the Tigris; and the Arabians on the nearer side of the Euphrates; a little towards the south. But whether the Persians and Chaldeans were remarkable for their learning in Solomon's day, is much doubted among commentators. The book of Job sufficiently shows, that the Arabians, for of that nation was Job and his friends, were famous for their learning in ancient times; and, as to the Chaldeans and other oriental people, since the sons of Noah took up their habitation about Babylon, and the neighbouring countries, it is reasonable to suppose, that where mankind, first began to settle themselves into regular societies, there arts and sciences first began to appear. The Egyptians however pretend to a precedence in this, and several other accomplishments. They say, that the Chaldeans received the principles of philosophy at first from a colony that came from Egypt, as Diodorus indeed makes mention of such a colony, conducted by Belus. But the Chaldeans, on the other hand, maintain, that from them it was, that the Egyptians received their first instructions, and according to some, that Abraham was the person who first communicated to the Chaldeans the knowledge of astronomy, and other sciences. However this be, Solomon received from God a perfect knowledge of all that useful and solid learning, for which the eastern people, and the Egyptians, were justly famed; for, as it follows, he was a great moral philosopher, a great natural philosopher, and an excellent poet.—*Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

^d Josephus, who loved to magnify every thing that concerned Solomon, instead of three thousand proverbs, tells us, that Solomon composed three thousand books of proverbs. The greater certainly is our loss, if the thing were credible, because all the proverbs of Solomon, that we have now, are comprised in the book that goes under that name, and in his Ecclesiastes; and yet some learned critics are of opinion, that the nine first chapters of the book of Proverbs were not of Solomon's composition, and that the number of proverbs which properly belong to him, is no more than six hundred and fifty.—*Grotius's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^e These, one would think, were poems enough for a person that had so much other business as king Solomon had; but Josephus, who is never content, makes him the author of so many volumes of poetical compositions; and the Septuagint indeed, as well as other interpreters, make the number of them to be no less than five thousand songs or odes. But of all this number, we have none remaining but the Song of Songs, as it is called, except the hundred and twenty-sixth psalm, which in its Hebrew title, is ascribed to Solomon, may be supposed to be one of these. The Psalter of Solomon, which contains eighteen psalms, a work that was found in Greek in the library of Augsborg, and has been translated into Latin by John Lewis de la Cerda, is supposed by the learned to be none of Solomon's, but of some Hellenistical Jew, much conversant in reading the sacred authors, and who had composed them in imitation of the Psalms of David, whose style he closely pursued, and had inserted several passages of the prophets, especially of Isaiah and Ezekiel, which he accommodated well enough to his purpose. However this be, these eighteen psalms were not unknown to the ancients; for they

A. M. 2981. A. C. 1023; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4375. A. C. 1036. 2 SAM. xix.—1 KINGS viii.

He knew the virtue of all plants and trees, from the highest to the lowest; and in his books treated of the nature of ^a all kinds of beasts, and birds, and reptiles, and fishes; inasmuch, that ^b there was a concourse of strangers from all countries to hear his wisdom, and ambassadors from the most remote princes that had heard of his fame.

As soon as Hiram, king of Tyre, understood that Solomon was ^c made king of Israel, ^d he sent ambassadors

were formerly in the famous Alexandrian manuscript, which is with us, as may be seen by the index which is still to be found at the end of the New Testament, though the psalms themselves have either been torn out of the book, or lost by some accident. *Le Clerc's and Calmet's Commentary*, and his *Dictionary*, under the word *Solomon*.

^a The several books which treated of the nature and virtue of animals, as well as plants, are supposed to have been lost in the Babylonish captivity; but Eusebius, as he is quoted by Anastasius, informs us, that king Hezekiah, seeing the abuse which his subjects made of Solomon's works, by placing too much confidence in the remedies which he prescribed, and the natural secrets which he discovered, thought proper to suppress them all. Notwithstanding this, since his time, many books, concerning the secrets of magic, medicine, and enchantments, have appeared under the name of this prince; and several pieces have been quoted, such as 'The instructions of Solomon to his son Rehoboam; The testament of Solomon; The books of the throne of Solomon; The books of magic, composed by the demons, under the name of Solomon; The Clavicula, or key of Solomon; The ring of Solomon; The contradiction of Solomon,' &c., which were most of them very wicked and pernicious tracts, to which the authors prefixed this great name, to give them more credit and sanction. It is somewhat strange, however, that Josephus should inform us, that Solomon composed books of enchantments, and several manners of exorcisms, or of driving away devils, so that they could return no more; and that he should further assure us, that himself had seen experiments of it by one Eleazar, a Jew, who, in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, and the officers of his army, cured several that were possessed.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 8. c. 2. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Solomon*.

^b It is a conceit of one of the Jewish interpreters, that all the kings of the neighbouring countries went to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and that, upon their return, their subjects came to them to hear what he had said; but as we hear of none but the queen of Sheba who came to visit Solomon, we cannot but think, that if any other crowned heads resorted to him, the history would have recorded them as well as her. The words denote no more, than that the kings of all the neighbouring nations sent their ambassadors, and people of every land, that had heard of Solomon's fame, came to see him; for "no spectacle" says an ingenious author, "is more lovely and grateful, than a wise and good king; all men flock to see him, and to partake of his pious and prudent mind. They that see him are loath to leave him, and they that hear of him are as desirous to see him as children are to find their unknown father."—*Dion Pruseus Orat. de Regno*.

^c The fourth chapter of the first book of Kings is chiefly taken up in recording the prime ministers and officers of Solomon's court, the compass and extent of his kingdom, the happiness and security of his subjects, the pomp and magnificence of his living, and the excellence of his own wisdom and erudition.

^d This Hiram was doubtless the son of that other Hiram, who sent David timber and artificers wherewith to build his palace: for if, according to Josephus, the temple was built in the twelfth year of Hiram's reign, and the fourth of Solomon's, this Hiram could not be the same with him who sent David men and materials; because that Hiram was upon the throne when David took Jerusalem, which happened to be three and thirty years, before Solomon began his reign. There are two letters which passed between this Hiram and king Solomon, recorded by Josephus, and for the authenticity of which he appeals both to the Jewish and Tyrian records, that are to this effect:

"King Solomon to King Hiram, greeting.

"Be it known unto thee, O King, that my father David had it a long time in his mind and purpose, to erect a temple to the

to him to condole his father's death, and congratulate him upon his accession to the throne; and, in a short time after, Solomon, in return sent an embassy to him, desiring him to supply him with wood and workmen, and to lend him his assistance in building the temple of the Lord. Hiram very readily complied with his desire, and sent him word, that he would order cedar trees, and fir trees to be cut down upon mount Libanus; that his people should put them on floats, and bring them by sea to the harbour of Joppa; and that from thence Solomon (who contracted to give Hiram such a quantity of wheat, and wine, and oil, &c., every year, for the maintenance of his household and workmen) might send and fetch them to Jerusalem.

All things being thus agreed on, the preparations for the building of the temple went on apace. Seventy thousand proselytes, who were the remains of the ancient Canaanites, Solomon employed in carrying burdens upon their shoulders; fourscore thousand in cutting stone out of the quarries; and three thousand six hundred in overseeing the work. Of his own subjects, he sent thirty thousand to work with the king of Tyre's men in the quarries of Libanus: and, to finish the inner part of the temple, as well as frame some of its choicest vessels, Hiram ^e sent him a most skilful artist of his own name,

Lord; but being perpetually in war in his days, and under a necessity of clearing his hands of his enemies, and making them all his tributaries, before he could attend this great and holy work, he hath left it to me, in a time of peace, both to begin and finish it, according to the direction, as well as prediction, of the Almighty. Blessed be his great name for the present tranquillity of my dominions! And, by his gracious assistance, I shall now dedicate the best improvements of this liberty and leisure to his honour and worship. Wherefore I make it my request, that you will let some of your people go along with some servants of mine to mount Libanus, to assist them in cutting down materials towards this building; for the Sidonians understand it much better than we do; and as for the workmen's reward or wages, whatever you think reasonable shall be punctually paid them."

"King Hiram to King Solomon.

"Nothing could have been more welcome to me, than to understand, that the government of your blessed father is by God's providence, devolved into the hands of so excellent, so wise, and so virtuous a successor. His holy name be praised for it! That which you write for shall be done with all care and good will: for I will give orders to cut down and export such quantities of the fairest cedars, and cypress trees as you shall have occasion for. My people shall bring them to the sea side for you, and from thence ship them away to what port you please, when they may be ready for your own men to transport them to Jerusalem. It would be a great obligation, after all this, to allow us such a provision of corn in exchange, as may stand with your convenience; for that is the commodity that we islanders want most." (*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 8. c. 2. But notwithstanding all his appeal to the Tyrian records, some have suspected Josephus, as to the genuineness of these two letters, especially where they find him bringing in Hiram, speaking of Tyre, as if it had been an island; whereas it is plain that the old Tyre, which was then standing, and must be the place here spoken of, was situate on the continent.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^e In former times, among the Hebrews, there had been very excellent workmen, who knew how to cut and engrave precious stones, to cast and work among metals, &c.; but this was before they came into the land of Canaan, in the time of Moses, when Bezaleel and Aholiab were excellent in many different arts, which were necessary for the work of the temple; but, as the Scripture acquaints us, that they had their skill by inspiration from God, it does not appear that they had any successors: and, after the people had got possession of Canaan, they neglected all manufactures, and applied themselves wholly to agriculture and feeding of cattle; so that, in the time of Solomon, there was no

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whose mother was of the tribe of Dan, but his father a Tyrian; and, what was prodigious, his abilities extended to all kind of works, whether in gold, silver, brass, or iron, whether in linen, tapestry, or embroidery; and by his direction all the curious furniture of the temple was both designed and finished.

And now all things being in readiness, the foundation of the temple was laid in the ^a fourth year of king Solomon's reign, in the year of the creation 2992, 480 years after the Israelites' escape from the Egyptian bondage; and, in the ^b space of seven years and a half was completed with such dexterity, that neither ^c hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron was heard in it, all the while that it

professed artists that could undertake the work of the temple; but in Tyre and Sidon there were many, for both in his Iliad and his Odyssey, Homer gives the people of these two places this character, whom, upon every turn, he calls Πολυτεχνους, *excellent artists in several kinds of works*.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^a If it be asked, why Solomon did not begin the building of the temple sooner, and even in the first year of his reign, since his father had left him a plan, and all things necessary for the undertaking? Abarbanel's answer is this,—That Solomon would not make use of what his father had prepared, but was resolved to build this temple all at his proper cost and charge. He therefore put into the treasure of the Lord's house all that David had dedicated to the work; and, to gather together as much gold and silver as was necessary to defray so vast an expense, four years can be counted no unreasonable time. Nay, even suppose that he had made use of the treasure which his father had amassed, yet, if the materials that his father had provided lay at a considerable distance, and were left rude and unfashioned, it would cost all this time to form them into the exact symmetry, wherein the Scripture represents them before they were brought together, especially considering, that the very stones which made the foundation, were very probably vast blocks of marble, or porphyry. (1 Kings v. 17;) and all polished in the most exquisite manner. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^b The temple itself was indeed but a small edifice, but the many courts and offices that were about it, made the whole a vast pile, and the exquisiteness of the art, and the fewness of the artists that could be employed about it, made a longer time requisite. It must be owned, however, that, considering all things, Solomon made an extraordinary despatch: for, if the building of Diana's temple at Ephesus employed all Asia for the space of 200 years, and no less than 360,000 men, for twenty years together, were taken up in erecting one pyramid, as Pliny, (b. 36. c. 12.) affirms, no reasonable man can wonder, that this temple was seven years and a half in building.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^c The Jewish doctors have entertained a very odd conceit, upon the occasion of this passage in the sacred history, wherein the temple is said to have been built without noise. They tell us, that the Dæmon Asmodeus drove Solomon once from his throne, and reigned in his place, while that prince was forced to travel over the several kingdoms and provinces of the world; but that at his return to Jerusalem, he defeated Asmodeus, and having chained him so that he could do no hurt, he compelled him to teach him the art of cutting stones for the temple, without making any noise, which was done, as they say, not with any tool or instrument, but by the help of a worm, called *samir*, which cuts and polishes stone with a marvellous facility. But the foundation of all this fiction, (as Bochart Hieroz. p. 2. b. 6. c. 11.) has observed, is laid in somebody's mistaking the sense of the word *samir*, which signifies a very hard stone, called *smiris*, that is of use to cut and polish other stones, and which Solomon's workmen might possibly have recourse to upon this occasion. But the true reason why no noise was heard in the building of the temple was, that the stones, and other materials, were hewn and squared, and fitted at a distance; so that when they were brought to the place where the temple was to stand, there was nothing to do but to join them together. And this might be done, not only for the ease and convenience of the carriage, but for the magnificence of the work, and the commendation of the workmen's skill and ingenuity.—*Poole's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Solomon*.

was building. Such admirable care and contrivance was used, in preparing and adjusting the materials, before they were brought together.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.*

THERE is hardly any one passage in Scripture more difficult to give a satisfactory account of, than this relation of Saul's cruelty to the Gibeonites; because we have little or no intimation, either when, or where, or why their slaughter was committed.

The Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but the remains of the Amorites, who, upon Joshua's taking possession of the promised land, imposed upon him and his counsellors, and cunningly drew the Israelites into a league with them, which was instantly confirmed by an oath; and because it was so confirmed, for above three hundred years, was reputed inviolable. But though the Gibeonites, by their craft and fallacy, saved their lives, yet it was upon this condition, that they should ¹ become hewers of wood and drawers of water, for the service of the tabernacle. Now while the tabernacle was at Nob, which was a city of the priests, and where some of the Gibeonites, their attendants, may be supposed to reside, the sacred history informs us, that Saul ² in revenge to the priests, whom he took to be favourers of David's cause, destroyed the city, and massacred all the inhabitants thereof; so that several of the Gibeonites must have been slain upon this occasion, and for shedding of their blood this famine was sent. This is the account which some learned men give us of the matter: but they never considered, ³ that as Saul's sin in murdering the priests was greater than in slaying the Gibeonites, God should have inflicted this severe punishment upon the land for the greater sin, rather than the less. It has been said indeed, that for the slaughter of the priests, God had avenged himself on Saul before, by suffering him and his sons to be slain in battle by the Philistines, but that the slaughter of the Gibeonites was not as yet expiated; yet it will be difficult to conceive, why there should be two different and distinct punishments for one and the same sin, committed at the self-same time.

When, or by whom, or on what occasion, the tabernacle and altar of burnt-offerings, which were made by Moses in the wilderness, were removed from Nob to Gibeon we cannot tell, because the Scripture is silent: but it is the conjecture of ⁴ some learned men, that it was not long after the murder of the priests at Nob; and that Saul, very probably, to regain the favour of the people, which he found he had lost by being so barbarous to men of their sacred character, quarrelled with the Gibeonites, and banished them out of their city, in order to make room for the tabernacle of the Lord.

The Scripture indeed acquaints us, that ⁵ 'he sought to slay the Gibeonites in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah;' where the expression seems to denote

¹ Josh. ix. 23.

² 1 Sam. xxii. 17.

³ Le Clerc's Commentary on 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

⁴ Calmet's Commentary on 1 Sam. xxii. 19.

⁵ 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

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¹ that the children of Israel envied these miserable people, inasmuch that Saul thought he could not do a more popular act, than to cut them off:

But by the children of Israel, ² some rather understand the tribe of Benjamin in particular, namely, that very tribe from whence king Saul descended: and thence they infer, that his zeal or earnest desire to promote his own tribe to riches and grandeur, made him seek occasion to fall foul upon the Gibeonites, in order that the three cities which they possessed in the territories of Benjamin might fall into his hands, and so be divided among his own family. That he either had, or intended to advance and enrich his own tribe, is manifest from these words of his: ³ 'Hear now, ye Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds?' that is, will he do for you, as I have, and mean to do? Now, if we look into the actions of Saul, we do not find, that he made any purchase of the possessions of another tribe, or that he took from his enemies any considerable territories, in order to accommodate his Benjamites; and are therefore left to suppose, that the fields and vineyards wherewith he enriched them, he unjustly acquired by destroying and dispossessing the Gibeonites. It is but supposing, then, that some of the chief of these Gibeonites had, in some instance or other, offended Saul, for which he was minded to destroy the whole race; or, that he had cast a greedy eye upon their lands and possessions, which, in case of their excision, would be forfeited to the crown, and so might be given to his own family; and then he had allegations plausible enough against them, pretending, "That it was not for the honour or interest of God's people, to nourish any of that viperous brood in their bosoms; and that however Joshua and the princes, who then bore sway, had by their fraud been drawn into an oath to preserve them, yet, in truth, that oath was contrary to God's command, which required them ⁴ 'to smite them, and utterly destroy them;' and therefore, ought not, as he thought, to be observed."

Thus Saul might set up for a restorer of the divine laws to their ancient rigour, and strictness of execution, and a supplier of the default of Joshua, and the princes of Israel, in sparing the Gibeonites, even though they were comprised in the general ordinance of extirpation; and, under this character, he might easily draw in his own subjects to abet and assist his cruelty against a poor people, for whom they had never any good liking. After the king's fashion is the known maxim; and therefore we may easily suppose, that a wicked and hard-hearted people, who had assisted Saul in the persecution of David; had adhered to his son Absalom in his rebellion against his own father; and who at the beck of so many impious princes, left the true worship of God, and fell into idolatry; would not be backward to assist Saul in putting in execution any of his contrivances against the poor Gibeonites. And if so, we cannot but admire the wisdom and justice of God, in making the punishment national, when the whole nation, for aught

we know, was confederate with Saul in murdering the Gibeonites, or guilty at least in not hindering it; when the next generation was involved in the guilt, by not repairing the injury as much as possible, or not expressing the horror and detestation of it by some public act; when an act of discipline might, at this time, be necessary, to preserve the remaining Gibeonites from insults, to beget in the Israelites a proper respect for them, to prevent the like murders for the future, and the like breaches of national compacts.

Nay, supposing the people, who lived in that time when the famine prevailed, to be never so innocent of the blood of the Gibeonites; yet it cannot be denied, but that God, who is the author and giver of life, has an absolute right over the lives of all, and can recall that gift whenever he pleases. And ⁵ therefore, if, in the case before us, he made a demand, as certainly he had a right to do it, of so many lives at such a time, and in such a manner, as might best answer the ends of discipline; then, that which was just in other views, and without any such special reason, could not become unjust, by having that additional reason to recommend it. In a word, if the thing was righteous, considered merely as an act of dominion in God, it could not but be both righteous and kind, by being made, at the same time, an act of discipline for the punishment of sin and perfidy, and the promotion of justice and godliness among men.

We must all allow, that God, as he is a most just and righteous being, can never require, that the innocent should die for the guilty; and therefore we have reason to believe, that, when Saul for reasons above mentioned, was so outrageous against the Gibeonites, his sons and grandsons, might be instruments of his cruelty, and very probably bear some part in the military execution. For it frequently so happens, that whatever a king commands, be it never so abominable, is generally approved and executed by his family; and therefore, ⁶ when we are told from the mouth of God, that the plague, sent upon the people, was 'for Saul and his bloody house, because he ^a slew the Gibeonites,' it seems to be evident, that it was for their guilt as well as his; nor can we imagine, that this guilt of theirs could be any thing less than that of being the executioners in this slaughter. It is plain, that they were his captains of thousands and captains of hundreds; and it is as plain, that as such, they must be the instruments of his cruelty; for if they were not, why are they called *bloody*? They refused indeed ⁷ to slaughter the priests at his command; but there is no reason to believe, that they were so scrupulous in regard to the Gibeonites; and if they were not, is there less equity in God's destroying their sons for the sins of their fathers which they adopted and shared in, than there was in his destroying Jehoram, the son of Ahab, for that vineyard which the father had cruelly and unjustly acquired, and the son as unjustly detained?

Without calling then to our assistance God's great prerogative, ⁸ 'of visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation,' we may

¹ Le Clerc in locum.² The History of the Life of King David, vol. 3.³ 1 Sam. xxii. 7.⁴ Deut. vii. 2.⁵ Scripture Vindicated, part 2.⁶ The History of the Life of King David, vol. 3.⁷ 1 Sam. xxii. 17.⁸ Exod. xx. 5.^a The words which we render *he slew*, might as properly be rendered *they slew*.

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fairly say, that if these descendants of Saul did either concur in this murder of the Gibeonites, when doing, or avow and defend it when done, they became culpable upon their own, as well as their ancestors' account, and thereupon justly deserved to be delivered up to the resentment of a people that had suffered so much by their inhumanity.

Upon this supposition then, for it is by supposition that we must go in this obscure part of history, that both the people and the princes of the blood were accessory or instrumental to Saul's cruelty, the reason why God delayed their punishment so long is obvious; even because his infinite goodness waited for their repentance, which goodness we badly requite, if we pervert it as an argument against his providence. For may not God be gracious and merciful as long as he pleases? Or have we any right to set bounds to his patience and long-suffering? It is but supposing then, that while God continued in this state of expectance, upon some special occasion or other, to us unknown, both the people of Israel and Saul's posterity might discover, that they were so far from repenting, that they gloried in the murder of the Gibeonites, and this would determine God, who had hitherto waited for their penitence in vain, to pour out his indignation, upon them, and exact a severe punishment both for their cruelty and obstinacy.

Whether the Gibeonites did right or wrong in exacting so severe a retaliation, as that of hanging up seven of Saul's progeny, for the injury that he and his family had done them, the sacred history is no ways concerned. It relates the transaction just as it happened; but to show us from whence this barbarous custom of hanging up men to appease the anger of the gods did proceed, it prefaces the account of the matter with this observation:—¹ 'These Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel,' for among them they learned no such practice, 'but a remnant of the Amorites,' who were addicted to this horrid superstition, of which the Gibeonites, notwithstanding their abode among people of better sentiments, still retained some tincture, and propounded it to David, as an expedient to make the earth become fruitful again: ² 'Let seven of Saul's sons be given unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord.'

The Scripture, you see, speaks in the dialect of these people; but from thence we make a wrong conclusion, if we think that God can be delighted with human sacrifices, which so frequently, and so vehemently, we find him, declaiming against, and professing his utter detestation of. He desires the death or punishment of no man, except it be in pursuance of the ends of his wise providence, or when the criminal, by his bad conduct, has forfeited his life to the government he lives under; nor would he have required the execution of any of Saul's posterity, had it not been to procure the poor distressed Gibeonites, who were true drudges to their Hebrew masters, a kinder treatment, and better quarter for the future; and had it not been to testify his abhorrence of all oppression and violence; to show that the cries of the meanest slave, as well as of the mightiest monarch, enter the ears of the Most High; that with him there is no respect of persons, but the rich and the poor to him are

both alike; ³ had it not been to repair the injury done to his most holy name, in the violation of the compact which both Joshua and the princes of Israel made with this people, and confirmed with the solemnity of an oath; had it not been by this exemplary punishment, to give mankind a lesson of instruction concerning the sacredness of oaths and treaties, and how religiously they ought to be observed, even towards those that are in the lowest state and circumstances of life.

Under these considerations only could the death of Saul's sons be acceptable to God; and how far David, in like manner, came to be concerned in it, we shall now proceed to consider.

Both the Septuagint and vulgar Latin translation make the demand of the Gibeonites, when David sent to offer them satisfaction, run in this strain:—⁴ 'The man who consumed us, and oppressed us unjustly, we ought utterly to destroy, so as not to leave one of his race remaining in the coasts of Israel;' and, in this demand, we may presume that they persisted, until David, partly by his authority, and partly by kind entreaties, prevailed with them to be content with seven only. Here then was a fair opportunity for David, had he been so minded, to have cut off the whole race of Saul, as it were at one blow, and to have avoided all the odium of the action, by but barely saying, 'That the Gibeonites demanded all, and his instructions from God were, to grant whatever they demanded.' But instead of that, we find him, before this happened, making inquiry for such ⁵ 'as were left of Saul's family, that he might show kindness to them for Jonathan's sake;' interposing his good offices here with the Gibeonites, to have them abate the keenness of their resentment, and make the slaughter of Saul's devoted house as moderate as possible; and, after that slaughter was over, ⁶ giving them a public and solemn interment, with the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son, in the sepulchre of their ancestors, and himself attending them in person to the grave.

The death of Saul's posterity, procured by the Gibeonites, had it not proceeded from God's positive command, but been only a plausible pretence for David to get rid of his rivals in empire, ⁷ we cannot imagine why he should slay no more than seven of these descendants, why he should cut off only collateral branches, and spare all those who were in a direct line of succession to the throne; why he spared Ishbosheth, his competitor for the kingdom, whom, by Abner's means, he might have despatched, and according to their desert punished the two traitors, who had officiously murdered him; and why he spared Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, and Micah his son, and Micah's four sons, whom in all probability he lived to see, and in them ⁸ a long generation, all descended from Saul's family, and all related to the crown.

Had this affair of the Gibeonites happened indeed about the beginning of David's reign over all Israel, soon after the death of Ishbosheth, and when he had reason to apprehend, that some other rival might, perchance spring up in his stead, there might then be some umbrage to think, that the branches of Saul's family were to be

¹ Calmet's Commentary in locum.

⁴ 2 Sam. xxi. 5.

² 2 Sam. ix. 1.

⁶ 2 Sam. xxi. 12, 13.

⁷ The History of the Life of King David, vol. 3.

⁸ See 1 Chron. viii. 33, &c.

¹ 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

² 2 Sam. xxi. 6.

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cut off for reasons of state, and to make his possession of the crown more safe : but, since these things came to pass very near the conclusion of his reign, when, as he himself acknowledges ¹ in the very next chapter, God had not only 'covered him with the shield of his salvation, and so enlarged his steps under him, that his feet could not slip, but given him likewise the necks of his enemies, and made him the head over many strange nations ;' he could have no just conception of danger from any quarter, and consequently no necessity to establish his throne by blood.

It could not be then for any private end, that David delivered these children of Saul into the hands of the Gibeonites, but purely in obedience to the will of God, who had both directed, and warranted him to do so. For we cannot but suppose, as Josephus does, that, when David consulted the oracle concerning the famine, God informed him, not only for what crime it was inflicted, but by what means likewise it was to be removed : and therefore being let into all this, he was not at liberty to do what he pleased, but compelled rather to give up the children as so many victims, notwithstanding his promise and oath to their father ; because a superior power interposed, and in so doing, cancelled the prior obligation.

His making a grant of Mephibosheth's estate to a vile miscreant of a servant, without giving his master a fair hearing, is another exception that is commonly made to the justice of king David's proceedings in this period of time. But how could David have leisure to send for Mephibosheth from mount Olivet to Jerusalem, and inquire into the merits of the cause depending between him and his servant, when he was in so great a hurry, and under flight from the arms of his rebel son ? Or how could he suppose that Ziba could have dared to have told him so notorious a lie, when it might in a short time be disproved ? Every circumstance, in short, on Ziba's side looked well ; but none on the master's. To him David had been extremely kind in restoring him to the forfeited estate of his grandfather Saul, and in allowing him ² to eat at his own table, as one of the king's sons ; and now at the general rendezvous of his friends, David might well have expected, that the person to whom he had extended so many favours, should not have been so negligent of his duty, as to absent himself, unless it had been upon some extraordinary business ; and therefore, when Ziba acquaints him with the occasion of his absence, though it was a mere fiction, yet with David it might find a readier credence, because at this time he had reason to mistrust every body, and seeing his own family disconcerted and broken, might think the crown liable to fall to any new claimant, that could pretend to the same right of succession that Mephibosheth might.

On the contrary, every thing appeared bright and plausible on Ziba's side. He, though but a servant, came to join the king, and, instead of adhering to his master's pretended schemes of advancement, had expressed his duty to his rightful sovereign, in bringing him a considerable present, enough to engage his good opinion. The story that he told of his master likewise, though utterly false, was cunningly contrived, and fitly accommodated to the nature of the times ; so that, in this situation of affairs,

as wise a man as David might have been induced to believe the whole to be true, and upon the presumption of its being so, might have proceeded to pass a judgment of forfeiture (as in most eastern countries every crime against the state was always attended with such a forfeiture) upon Mephibosheth's estate, and to consign the possession of it to another.

All therefore that David can be blamed for in this whole transaction, is an error in judgment, even when he was imposed upon by the plausible tale of a sycophant, and had no opportunity of coming at the truth ; but upon his return to Jerusalem, when Mephibosheth appears before him, and pleads his own cause, we find this the decision of it. ³ 'Why speakest thou any more of thy matters ? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land : ' which words must not be understood, as if he appointed, at that time, an equal division of the estate between Mephibosheth and his servant, for where should the justice of such a sentence be ; but rather that he revoked the order he had given to Ziba, upon the supposed forfeiture of his master, and put things now upon the same establishment they were at first. ⁴ 'I have said,' that is, 'my first grant shall stand, when I decreed that Mephibosheth should be lord of the whole estate, and Ziba his steward to manage it for him.'

The words of the grant are these : ⁵ 'Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house. Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son, may have food to eat,' that is, may be enabled to maintain himself and family in plenty ; 'but Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread always at my table.' From whence it seems manifest, that this Ziba had been an old steward in Saul's family, and had managed his private estate, which lay at Gibeah of Benjamin. ⁶ This estate, upon one account or other, had come into David's possession, either in right of his wife, upon the death of Saul's son, or by forfeiture to the crown, upon Ishbosheth's rebellion ; but he, being willing now to do a generous act to Saul's family, in memory of his friendship to Jonathan, passed a free grant or dedition of it to his son, and that he might make a provision for all his dependants at once, put Ziba into the same place he had enjoyed before, constituting him ⁷ a steward of the royal manor of Gibeah, even as he had been in the life of Saul. So that David's sentence or determination, ⁸ 'thou and Ziba divide the land,' refers us to this original grant, and consequently implies no more, than that all things should be in the same situation they were in before, namely, that Ziba, and his sons, should manage the estate, and support themselves out of it, as usual, and that the remainder of the profits which accrued from thence, they should bring to Mephibosheth, for him to dispose of as

¹ 2 Sam. xix. 29.⁴ Selden de Successionibus, 25.² 2 Sam. ix. 10, 11.⁶ Poole's Annotations in locum.⁷ 2 Sam. xix. 29, 30.

⁸ a The ancient way of tenancy, nor is it yet quite disused, was that of occupying the land, and giving the proprietor a certain annual proportion of the fruits of it. When the tenant paid one half of the annual produce, he was called 'colonus partarius ;' and such, in the judgment of the best critics, was Ziba to Mephibosheth, as he had been before to Saul.—*The History of the Life of King David*, vol. 3.

¹ 2 Sam. xxii. 36, &c.² 2 Sam. ix. 11.

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he pleased; and to this sense of the words the following reply seems to be accommodated, 'yea let him have all,' namely, to his own use and property, 'since my lord the king is come again in peace.'

That which leads many into a misconception of David, as if he left the world in a vindictive and unforgiving temper, because we find him giving his son some instructions concerning two persons who had grossly misbehaved towards him, has been nothing else but the want of distinguishing between the same person, when acting or advising in a public, and when in a private capacity. Shimei curses David in the time of his troubles, and yet David forgives him, and promises he shall not die. Joab does many valorous and brave acts for the honour of his king, and the enlargement of his dominions; but then he sullies all with his insolent behaviour, and barbarous murders. They both had committed crimes enough to forfeit their lives; David, however, for reasons of state, thought it not advisable to seize either of them for the present, but directed his son, if ever they should give him a sufficient provocation not to spare them. 'Thou hast Shimei with thee,¹ and some share perhaps he may have in thy favour; but trust him not, he is no friend to kings, or kingly power. Remember what he did to me in my distress; how bitterly, how virulently, he cursed me to my face; and I make no doubt, but that he would be the same to thee in the like circumstances. I forgave him in my exile, because I looked upon him as an instrument in God's hands to humble me for my great offence. I forgave him in my return home, because he came to me when my heart was open, and unwilling to damp the joy of my restoration with the effusion of any blood. I promised him his life; and let not that promise be violated in my days: but what I did is no rule or obligation to thee. Let him not die however for his offence against me, but rather watch his conduct, and if he should chance to give thee a fresh occasion, be sure to lay hold of it, because it is not in his nature to be a good subject.'^a

¹ Patrick's Commentary on 2 Kings ii. 8.

^a The way in which this passage here commented upon, should be understood and translated, has already been noticed, p. 393, but for the satisfaction of the curious and inquiring reader we here subjoin Dr Kennicott's criticism on the text. He says 'David is here represented in our English version as finishing his life, with giving a command to Solomon to kill Shimei, and to kill him on account of that very crime for which, as David here says, he had sworn to him by the Lord he would not put him to death. The behaviour thus imputed to the king and prophet, and which would be justly censurable, if true, should be examined very carefully as to the ground it stands upon; and when the passage is duly considered, I presume it will appear highly probable that an injury has been here done to this illustrious character. The point to which I now beg the reader's attention is this: that it is not uncommon in the Hebrew language to omit the negative in a second part of the sentence, and to consider it as repeated when it has been once expressed: and is followed by the connecting particle. And thus on (Is. xlii. 22,) the late learned annotator says, 'the negative is repeated or referred to by the conjunction *vau*, as in many other places.' So also (Is. xxiii. 4.) The necessity of so very considerable an alteration as inserting the particle *not*, may be here confirmed by some other instances. (Ps. i. 5.) 'The ungodly shall not stand in judgment *nor* (the Hebrew is *and*, signifying *and not*) sinners in the congregation of the righteous.' (Ps. ix. 18.) 'The needy shall not always be forgotten: (and then the negative understood as repeated by the conjunction now dropped,) the expectation of the poor shall *not* perish for ever.' (Ps. xxxviii. 1.) 'O Lord,

'Thou rememberest likewise what Joab did unto me; with what insolence he treated me in the time of the war against Absalom; how, contrary to my orders, he slew him, and afterwards talked to me in a menacing and imperious manner. Thou rememberest what he did to Amasa, whom I intended to have put in his place, and made the general of all my forces; and what to Abner, who was then endeavouring to gain over to my party all that adhered to the house of Saul. The injury done to these two brave men redounds upon me, since they were both under my protection, and both murdered, basely murdered, because I had an esteem for them; and till justice be done to their murderer, which I, in my lifetime, had not power to do,² their innocent blood will not depart from my house.' Do thou therefore take care to assail it; and whenever he commits any transgression against thee, let the blood of these two valuable men be charged to his account, and let him, as he has long deserved, be put to death.

This is the sense of David's words to his son concerning these two men; and it is easy to observe, that in these dying instructions of his,³ he is not to be considered as a private man, acting upon principles of resentment, but as a king and governor, giving advice to his son and successor in affairs of state. It was for the public good, that such offenders, as Shimei and Joab, should suffer at a proper time, and as prudence should direct: and therefore, since his promise and oath to one of them, and the formidable power and interest which the other had usurped, restrained him, in his lifetime, from punishing them as they deserved; and since it would have been an unjust thing in itself, and a derogation to the glory of his reign, to suffer such public and crying sins to go unpunished, he recommended the consideration of these things to his son, and,⁴ like a wise magistrate, laid a scheme for the punishment of wickedness, without regard to any private revenge.

David, as we said, durst not call Joab to an account,

² 1 Kings ii. 31.

³ Scripture Vindicated, part 2. p. 106.

⁴ Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries on 1 Kings ii.

rebuke me not in thy wrath, *neither* (and, for *and not*) chasten me in thy hot displeasure.' (Ps. lxxv. 5.) 'Lift *not* up your horn on high: (and then the negative, understood as repeated by the conjunction, now dropped,) speak *not* with a stiff neck.' (Prov. xxix. 12.) Our version is this: 'Doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth the soul, doth *not* he know it? and shall *not* he render to every man according to his works?' And (Prov. xxx. 3.) 'I neither learned wisdom, *nor* (and, for *and not*) have the knowledge of the holy.' If then there are in fact many such instances, the question is, whether the *negative here*, expressed in the former part of David's command, may not be understood as to be repeated in the latter part; and if this may be, a strong reason will be added why it should be so interpreted. The passage will run thus: 'Behold thou hast with thee Shimei, who cursed me; but I swore to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death by the sword. Now, therefore, hold him *not* guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him, but bring *not* down his hoary head to the grave with blood.' Now if the language itself will admit of this construction, the sense thus given to the sentence derives a very strong support from the context. For how did Solomon understand this charge? Did he kill Shimei in consequence of it? Certainly he did not; for after he had immediately commanded Joab to be slain, in obedience to his father, he sends for Shimei, and knowing that Shimei ought to be well watched, confines him to a particular spot in Jerusalem for the remainder of his life: 1 Kings ii. 36—42: see also Job xxiii. 17; xxx. 20; xxxi. 20 'This is the best mode of interpreting this text.—ED.

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because his power and interest was so great in the army (and it was the army that David in a great measure depended on) that it might have occasioned an alteration in the government, had he pretended to do it: but when Solomon came to the throne, Joab was not that mighty man he had formerly been. He was at least of an equal age with David; had commanded the armies of Israel for twenty years, and upwards; and as he was only formidable at the head of his troops, and in the times of war and public disorder; so ¹ the profound peace which had subsisted for some time, both before and after the beginning of Solomon's reign, had impaired his power, and made him in a manner useless. Upon this account, Solomon had not the like reason to fear him that his father had; nor did he lie under the like obligations to spare him. He had done David great services indeed, and a sufficient recompense it was, that he had been indulged for so many years, with an impunity for his crimes; but whatever the father might be, the son was under no ties or obligations, especially when he found him conspiring to take away his kingdom, and translate it to another.

Wherein the formality of David's sin in numbering the people, which, at first view, seems not to be so very heinous, did consist, it is not so well agreed among interpreters. ² 'When thou takest the number of the children of Israel,' says God to Moses, 'after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them:' upon which passage Josephus, and some others, have founded this conjecture:—That David had quite forgot to demand of every man that was mustered, an half shekel, which was appointed by the law, and is here called 'a ransom for his soul;' and therefore God sent among the people a pestilence; because, amidst the great plenty and abundance which they now enjoyed, it was a very impious and provoking thing not to pay him his dues. ³ But where do we find, that upon every numbering of the people, a half shekel was ordered to be paid? It was in this case only, when the people were to contribute towards the building of the tabernacle, and God threatens those who should refuse to do it; but this has no manner of relation to what David did, who nowhere stands charged with such an omission, ⁴ any more than with a design of raising a capitation tax, as others conceive, upon every poll through the kingdom.

Others are of opinion, that this numbering of the people was a thing contrary to the fundamental promise which God made Abraham, namely, that his seed should so increase, as even to exceed the stars in multitude; and therefore since God had promised to increase them beyond number, it savoured of infidelity and distrust in God, for any one to go about to number them: but quite contrary to this, the Scripture in another place tells us, that David, out of a religious regard to the promise of God, never intended to take an exact number of all, but of such only as were fit to bear arms; for so the words are ⁵ 'He took not the number of them, from twenty years old and under, because the Lord hath said, he would increase Israel like to the stars of the heavens.'

The most common therefore, and indeed the only probable opinion is, that this act of David's proceeded ⁶ from pride and ambition, and a foolish curiosity to know the number of his subjects, the strength of his forces, and the extent of his empire: as if all these had greatly contributed to his glory and renown; as if they had been of his own acquiring, and more proper to place his confidence in, than the power and assistance of him whose protection he had so long experienced; whom, upon other occasions, he was wont to call 'his rock, his shield, and castle of defence;' and who was able at all times, to save with a handful of men, as well as a multitude.

Pride then, and an arrogant conceit of himself, which is always attended with a forgetfulness of God, was at the bottom of David's numbering the people; and indeed so visible to others, as well as to the all-seeing eye of God, that we find Joab, who was then of his privy council, thus remonstrating against it: ⁷ 'Now the Lord thy God add unto thy people, how many soever they be, an hundred-fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it; but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?'

It is a judicious observation of the apostle, ⁸ 'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away with his own lust, and enticed;' and therefore it may justly be reckoned a peculiar elegance in the Hebrew tongue, that it frequently leaves out the nominative noun to a verb active, which, when it happens, the accusative following supplies the place of the nominative that is wanting. This shows that our translators have made a gross mistake in rendering the passage, 'the Lord moved David to number Israel and Judah,' because in the original there is no such thing as 'the Lord;' for the nominative is omitted, as I said, and the accusative supplying its place makes the sense simply 'David was moved, (by what is not named, but by his pride and vanity, we may say, as well as ⁹ the instigations of the devil) to number the people.' So that there is no contradiction in the Scripture account of this transaction, no appearance of a confederacy between God and Satan; nor was God any further concerned in it, than as his providence, for wise ends, thought proper to permit it.

"But if David only was culpable in this affair, why did not God immediately punish him for it, instead of falling upon the people, who were confessedly innocent?"

The generality perhaps were innocent as to the affair of numbering the people: that might be chiefly David's sin; but in other respects they were not. They had many great and grievous sins, which justly deserved punishment, and for which probably they would have been punished before, had it not been for God's tenderness to David, who must have been a sufferer in the common calamity; but now, when both king and people had deserved correction, God was pleased to let loose his anger upon both. David, indeed, was not smitten in person, but a king is never more sensibly punished than when the judgment of God falls upon his people and dimin-

¹ Calmet's Commentary.² Exod. xxx. 12.³ Calmet's Commentary in locum.⁴ Patrick in locum.⁵ 1 Chron. xxxii. 23, 24.⁶ Calmet's Commentary in locum.⁷ 2 Sam. xxiv. 3.⁸ Jas. i. 13, 14.⁹ 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

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ishes their number, and their strength, for the body politic is not unlike the body natural; no sooner does the head suffer, but all the members suffer with it; nor can the least part of the body be in pain, but the head is immediately affected: and therefore we need not doubt but that David, when he saw ¹ ‘the angel stretching out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it,’ and thereupon broke out into this exclamation, ‘Let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father’s house,’ had his heart as full of grief and anxiety as any one that lay languishing in the plague.

Thus, in all the afflictions of his people, David was afflicted: and if this sore judgment befell the nation a little while before Absalom’s rebellion, as some have suspected a mislocation in this part of the history, this may suggest a reason why God might think fit to preserve David, and not cut him off, as he deserved, for his sin; ² that the dissension which might have arisen among his sons, about the right of succession, in case of his death, and the foreign and domestic wars that would thereupon have ensued, and ^a proved more fatal to the Israelites, than this destroying pestilence, might, by David’s life, and interposition, be prevented. And from the sense of this, very probably, it is, that we find him commemorating his deliverance from this public calamity, in such exalted strains, as make it disputable, whether their piety or poetry are more remarkable. ³ ‘He that dwelleth in the secret places of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, or for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee.’

It must be owned indeed, that there is a very large difference, in the Scripture accounts of the number of men, fit to bear arms, that were found in David’s dominions: ⁴ In Samuel it is said, that they were in Israel eight hundred thousand, and in Judah five hundred thousand; but in ⁵ Chronicles, they of Israel were a thousand thousand, and a hundred thousand, and they of Judah four hundred threescore and ten thousand: and various have been the attempts to adjust and settle this disagreement. Some suppose, that, as Joab undertook this office with no small reluctance, and David, very probably, might repent of the thing, before it was fully executed, though the commissioners might make an exact review, ⁶ yet they thought proper to lay before the king no more than what the sum in Samuel amounts to; but that the author of the book of Chronicles might, from some of these commissioners, receive the complete sum, which occasioned the difference.

⁷ Others imagine, that this difference arises from the

legionary soldiers, as they are called, or those companies of militia which attended the king’s person by turns, and might make the number either greater or less, according as they were numbered or not numbered in the account: but this solution is purely arbitrary, and such as has no foundation in Scripture. It supposes withal, that the real number was what is recorded in Chronicles, which, taking in the several articles that are said to be omitted, surpasses all faith.

Since there is then no possibility of reconciling these different computations, the question is, which of the two we are to receive? And this, without all controversy, must be that in Samuel, not only because the Arabic translators in their version of the Chronicles, have inserted it, but because there is nothing excessive, or extravagant, in the supposition, that, in a fertile and well cultivated country of sixty leagues in length, and thirty in breadth, a multitude of people, to the number of six or seven millions, which taking in the other articles, will be the sum total, might very comfortably be maintained. ⁸ Rather, then, than have recourse to such solutions as do but more embarrass the matter, we may adventure to say, without any diminution to the Scripture’s authority, that the excessive number in the Chronicles was a mistake of the person, who, after the captivity, transcribed this part of the sacred writ; ‘For I do hesitate to say,’ says Sulpicius, ⁹ in his sacred history, ‘that truth had been corrupted rather by the carelessness of transcribers during a course of so many ages, than that the prophet erred.’

It must be acknowledged, that in most nations where the regal power was at this time established, the right of succession was generally hereditary, and the eldest son seldom, except in cases of incapacity, postponed. This is what Adonijah, urges to Bathsheba; ¹⁰ ‘thou knowest that the kingdom was mine by right of primogeniture, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign:’ but then, there was this peculiar to the Jewish constitution, that as God had been their only king from the time that they first became a nation, so when they thought fit to have that form of government altered, he still reserved to himself the right of nominating the successor, when the throne became vacant: ¹¹ ‘when thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are about me, thou shalt by all means make him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose.’ So that when God had declared his pleasure concerning the person that was to succeed him, as he did by the prophet Nathan, David was not at liberty to make choice of any other.

We do not dispute at all, but that Bathsheba, who was his favourite wife, had a great ascendancy over her husband; but Solomon’s title was not founded upon her interest and management with the king, but upon the ordination and appointment of God. ¹² ‘Of all my sons,’ says David, ‘for the Lord hath given me many sons,’ he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel; and therefore Adonijah himself acknowledges, ¹³ ‘that it was of the

¹ 2 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17.

^a Le Clerc’s Commentary in locum. ³ Ps. xci. 1, &c.

⁴ 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. ⁵ 1 Chron. xxi. 5. ⁶ 1 Chron. xxvii. 24.

⁷ See Calmet’s Commentary on 2 Sam. xxiv. 9.

^a The character which Livy gives us of such factions and dissensions, is conceived in these words:—‘They ended, and brought to many people more destruction than foreign wars, famines, or pestilences, or any other calamity inflicted by the wrath of an angry Deity,’ b. 4.

⁸ Le Clerc’s Commentary in locum.

⁹ Book I.

¹⁰ 1 Kings ii. 15.

¹¹ Deut. xvii. 14, 15.

¹² 1 Chron. xxviii. 5.

¹³ 1 Kings ii. 15.

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Lord, that the kingdom was turned about and became his brother's.'

Nathan indeed put Bathsheba upon another argument, namely, the sacredness of the king's oath, in order to prevail with him in behalf of her son: 'Didst not thou swear unto thy handmaid, saying, Surely Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?' But at what time this promise was made, is a matter of some dispute. The generality of interpreters are of opinion, that after the death of the first child which David had by Bathsheba, he comforted her for her loss, and gave her assurance, that, if God should give him another son by her, he would not fail to make him his successor. But it is much more probable, that David did not make any declaration of a promise to Bathsheba, until God had revealed it to him,² that he should have a son, distinct from what he had already, who should succeed him in the kingdom, and have the honour of building him a temple; and no sooner was Solomon born, but David was convinced that this was the child to whom the promise belonged, by Nathan's being sent to give him a name, denoting his being³ 'beloved of the Lord:' and it was at this time, most probably, that David gave his mother a promise, confirmed upon oath, that, since God had so manifestly declared in favour of the child, he, for his part, would do his utmost to facilitate his succession. But, upon the whole, he did not choose for himself,⁴ neither was his declaration to Bathsheba previous to Nathan's information, but rather the effect and consequence of it.

But even suppose there had been no divine interposition in favour of Solomon, why might not David, who had done such signal service in his reign, nominate his successor? ⁵ Several great princes in most nations have claimed this privilege. Among the Romans, Aurelius named Nerva, and Nerva chose Trajan, and so did Augustus appoint his successor. And that this was a prerogative belonging to the crown of Israel, and what continued with it for some time after David, is evident from the story of his grandson Rehoboam,⁶ who though a prince of no great merit, took upon him the authority of nominating his successor, and to the prejudice of his eldest son, made one of his youngest king.

Far are we from vindicating Solomon in all his actions, any more than David in the matter of Uriah. His severity to his brother for a seemingly small offence looked like revenge, and as if he had taken the first opportunity to cut him off, for his former attempt upon the kingdom; and yet we cannot but imagine,⁷ from Solomon's words to his mother, 'Why dost thou ask Abishag for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also, for he is mine elder brother,' that there was some farther conspiracy against him, though not mentioned in holy writ, whereof he had got intelligence, and wherein Joab and Abiathar were engaged; and that he looked upon this asking Abishag in marriage as the prelude to it, and the first overt act, as it were, of their treason. It is certain that they thought to impose upon the king, as they had done upon his

mother, and carry their point without ever discovering the malevolent intent of it.

The wives of the late king, according to the customs of the east, belonged to his successor, and were never married to any under a crowned head. ⁸ Abishag was doubtless a beautiful woman, and, by her near relation to David might have a powerful interest at court; Adonijah might therefore hope, by this marriage, to strengthen his pretensions to the crown, or, at least, to lay the foundation for some future attempt, upon a proper opportunity, either if Solomon should die, and leave a young son, not able to contest the point with him, or if at any time he should happen to fall under the people's displeasure, as his father had done before him.

This might be Adonijah's design, and Solomon accordingly might have information of it: but supposing that his brother's design was entirely innocent, yet since his request, according to the customs then prevailing, was confessedly bold and presumptuous, and had in it all the appearance of treason,⁹ it was none of Solomon's business to make any farther inquiry about it, or to interpret the thing in his brother's favour. It was sufficient for him that the action was in itself criminal, and of dangerous consequence to the state; for it is by their actions, and not intentions, that all offenders must be tried.

Adonijah indeed, had he lived under our constitution, would have had a fair hearing before conviction; but we ought to remember, that, in the kingdoms of the east, the government was absolute, and the power of life or death entirely in the prince; so that Solomon, without the formality of any process, could pronounce his brother dead: and, because he conceived, that, in cases of this nature, delays were dangerous, might send immediately, and have him despatched; though we cannot but say, that it had been more to his commendation, had he showed more clemency, and spared his life.

And in like manner, had he not married his Egyptian queen, there might be less objection to his character; for, whatever augmentation of power he might promise himself from that alliance,¹⁰ he certainly ran the hazard of having his religion corrupted by this unlawful mixture. Others, however, have observed that as the sacred Scriptures commend the beginning of Solomon's reign, in all other respects, except the¹¹ 'people's sacrificing in high places,' which might be the rather tolerated, 'because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord in those days;' and as they give him this character,¹² that 'he loved the Lord, and walked in all the statutes of David his father,' he would never have done an act so directly contrary to the laws of God, as marrying an idolatrous princess, had she not been first proselyted to the Jewish faith. The Scripture indeed takes notice of the gods of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Sidonians, for whom Solomon, in compliance to his strange wives, built places of worship: but as there is no mention made of any gods of the Egyptians, it seems very likely that this princess, when she was espoused to Solomon, quitted the religion of her ancestors, to which these words in the psalm, supposed to have been written upon this

¹ 1 Kings i. 13. 2 Sam. xii. 24.² 1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10.³ The name was Jedidiah, 2 Sam. xii. 25.⁴ Calmet's Commentary in locum.⁵ Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings i. 20. ⁶ 2 Chron. xi. 21, 22.⁷ 1 Kings ii. 22.⁸ Poole's Annotations on 1 Kings ii. 22.⁹ Calmet's Commentary in locum.¹⁰ See 1 Kings xi.¹¹ 1 Kings iii. 2.¹² 1 Kings iii. 3.

A. M. 2981. A. C. 1023; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4375. A. C. 1136. 2 SAM. xix.—1 KINGS viii.

occasion, ¹ 'Hearken, O my daughter, forget thine own people, and thy father's house, so shall the king have pleasure in thy beauty, for he is the Lord,' are thought by some to be no distant allusion. However this be, it is certain, that we find Solomon nowhere reprov'd in Scripture for this match; ² nor can we think, that his book of Canticles, which is supposed to be his epithalamium, would have found a place in the sacred canon, had the spouse, whom it all along celebrates, been at that time an idolatress; though there is reason to believe that she afterwards relapsed into her ancient religion, and contributed, as much as any, to the king's seduction, and the many great disorders that were in the latter part of his reign.

How far the high priest, Abiathar, was concerned in the plot against Solomon, the sacred history does not particularly inform us; but such was the reverence paid to the sacerdotal character, that Solomon would have hardly dared to have deposed such an one from his office, had not the constitution of the nation authorized him so to do: The kings in the east, indeed, soon found out ways to make themselves absolute; but it looks as if, at the first establishment, the king was at the head of the Hebrew republic, and the high priest his subject, and in all civil affairs submitted to his correction; ³ inasmuch, that when any one abused the power of his office to the prejudice of the commonweal, or endangering the king's person, the king might justly deprive him of his honours and titles, of his temporalities and emoluments, and even of life itself. And therefore, when Abiathar, by his conspiracy, had merited all this, whatever was dependent on the crown, as all the revenues of this place, as well as the liberty of officiating in it, were dependent, Solomon might lawfully take from him; but the sacerdotal character, which he received from God, and to which he was anointed, this he could not alienate: and therefore we may observe, that after his deprivation, and even when Zadok was in possession of his place, he is nevertheless still mentioned ⁴ under the style and title of the priest.

The truth is, there is a great deal of difference between depriving a man of the dignity, and of the exercise of his function in such a determinate place; and between taking from him an authority that was given him by God, and the profits and emoluments arising from it, which were originally the gift of the crown. The former of these Solomon could not do, and the latter it is probable he was the rather incited to do, out of regard to the prophecy of Samuel, wherein he foretold Eli, from whom Abiathar was descended, that he would translate the priesthood from his to another family, as he did in the person of Zadok, who was of the house of Eleazar, even as Eli was of that of Ithamar; so that, by this means, the priesthood reverted to its ancient channel.

In the account which we have of Solomon's sumptuous manner of living, ⁵ we read in the book of Kings, that he had 'forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots;'⁶ but in that of Chronicles it is said, that he had no more than four; and yet in this some will acknowledge no

disagreement at all. The author of Samuel, say they, speaks of the horses; the author of the Chronicles of the stalls or stables, which, supposing every one to contain ten horses, answer the number exactly. It is observable, however, that the history makes mention ⁷ of chariot cities, that is, cities, wherein Solomon kept chariots and horsemen in several parts of his kingdom, for the security of his government, and the suppression of any disorder that might happen to arise; and therefore others have thought, that in the Chronicles the author speaks of those stalls which Solomon had at Jerusalem for his constant lifeguard, and were no more than four thousand; but in Kings, of all those stalls which were dispersed up and down in the several parts of his kingdom, which might be forty thousand: because, upon the account of the conquests, which his father had made on the east side of Jordan, it was necessary for Solomon to have a stronger armament of this kind than other kings before him had, in order to keep the people, that would otherwise be apt to rebel, in due subjection.

But without any prejudice to the authority of the Scriptures, why may we not own, that an error has possibly crept into the text through the negligence of some transcriber, who has inserted *arbahim*, that is, forty, instead of *arbah*, four, and so made this large disparity in the number? Four thousand stalls, supposing each stall for a single horse, are moderate enough; but forty thousand is incredible: and therefore, to proportion the horses to the chariots, ⁸ which were a thousand and four hundred, we may suppose, ⁹ with the learned author, from whom we have borrowed this conjecture, that of these chariots some were drawn with two, some with three, and some with four horses. Now if the chariots were drawn with a pair only, the number of Solomon's chariot horses must be two thousand eight hundred; if by two pair, then it must be five thousand six hundred; but the medium between these two numbers is very near four thousand; and therefore it seems most likely, that the horses which the king kept for this use only, might be much about this number. Too many for the law to tolerate; ¹⁰ but the king perhaps might have as little regard to this clause in the law, as he had to the following one, which forbade him ¹¹ 'to multiply wives and concubines to himself, or greatly to multiply silver or gold.'

The only remaining difficulty, except the divine vision vouchsafed Solomon, which has not been mentioned, is the great quantity of sacrifices which he is said to have offered on one altar only; but without recurring to any miracle for this, or without supposing that this fire, which originally came from heaven, was more strong and intense than any common fire; and therefore, after the return from the captivity the altar, as some observe, was made larger, because there wanted this celestial flame: without any forced solution like this, we have no reason to think, that all these sacrifices were offered in one day. The king, we may imagine, upon one of the great festivals, went in procession with his nobles, to pay his devotion at Gibeon, where the tabernacle was, and the brazen altar which Moses had made. Each of the great

¹ Ps. xlv. 10, 11. ² Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings iii. 1.³ Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings ii. 27. ⁴ 1 Kings iv. 4.⁵ 1 Kings iv. 26.⁶ 2 Chron. ix. 25.⁷ 2 Chron. ix. 25.⁸ 1 Kings x. 26.⁹ See Bochart Hieros. P. I. b. 2. c. 9. ¹⁰ Deut. xvii. 16.¹¹ Le Clerc's Commentary on 1 Kings iv. 26.

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festivals lasted for seven days; but Solomon might stay much longer at Gibeon, until, by the daily oblations, a thousand burnt-offerings were consumed; and at the conclusion of this course of devotion, he might offer up his ardent prayer to God, for wisdom, and God, for the confirmation of his faith, might appear to him in a dream by night, and have that converse with him which the Scripture takes notice of.

¹ Sleep indeed is like a state of death to the soul, wherein the senses are locked up, and the understanding and will deprived of the free exercise of their functions; and yet this is no impediment to God in communicating himself to mankind: for ² 'God speaketh once, yea twice,' says the author of the book of Job, 'in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction:' for God, no doubt, has power, not only to awaken our intellectual faculties, but to advance them above their ordinary measure of perception, even while the body is asleep.

³ A very eminent father of the Greek church, speaking of the different kinds of dreams, has justly observed that the organs of our body, and our brain, are not unlike the strings of a musical instrument. While the strings are screwed up to a proper pitch, they give a harmonious sound, if touched by a skilful hand; but as soon as they are relaxed, they give none at all. In like manner, while we are awake, says he, our senses, touched and directed by our understanding, make an agreeable concert; but when once we are asleep, the instrument has done sounding, unless it be, that the remembrance of what passed when we are awake, comes and presents itself to the mind, and so forms a dream, just as the strings of an instrument will for some time continue their sound, even after the hand of the artist has left them. It is no hard matter to apply this to Solomon's dream. He had prayed the day before with great fervency, and desired of God the gift of wisdom. In the night-time God appeared to him in a dream, and bid him ask whatever he would. Solomon, having his mind still full of the desire of wisdom, asked it, and obtained it: so that the prayer or desire which he uttered in his dream, was but the consequence of the option he had made the day before, when he was awake.

In a word, though we should allow that the soul of man, when the body is asleep, is in a state of rest and inactivity; yet we cannot but think, that God can approach it in many different ways; can move and actuate it just as he pleases; and when he is minded to make a discovery of any thing, can set such a lively representation of it before the eyes of the man's understanding, as shall make him not doubt of the reality of the vision.

Solomon indeed, at the consecration of the temple, owns, that ⁴ 'the heaven of heavens could not contain God, and much less then the house that he had built him:' but it will not therefore follow, that there is no necessity for places appropriated to divine worship, nor any occasion for making them so magnificent and sumptuous. That God, who is the author and giver of our being, and to whom we are indebted, for every thing we have, and every

thing we hope for, should be constantly attended with the homage and adoration, with the praises and acknowledgments of his creatures, his own dependant creatures, is a position that will admit of no controversy; and that there should be some places appointed for this purpose, that all the offices of religion may be performed with more decency, and more solemnity, is another position, that seems to arise from the nature of the thing. These buildings we style, the 'houses of God;' but it is not to defend him, as Arnobius ⁵ speaks, from heat or cold, from wind or rain, or tempests, that we raise such structures, but to put ourselves in a capacity of paying our duty to him, and of nourishing in our hearts such sentiments of respect and reverence, of love and gratitude, as are due from creatures to their great Creator.

In these places, God is said to be more immediately present to hear our supplications, receive our praises, and relieve our wants; and therefore, to make his habitation commodious, David exhorts his subjects to a liberal contribution, and 'because I have a joy,' says he, 'in the house of my God, I have of mine own gold and silver, given three thousand talents of gold, even the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of fine silver.' "He indeed makes mention," as the learned ⁶ Hooker, with whose words I conclude this argument, has observed, "of the natural conveniency that such kind of bounteous expenses have, since thereby we not only testify our cheerful affection to God, which thinks nothing too dear to be bestowed about the furniture of his service, but give testimony to the world likewise of his almightiness, whom we outwardly honour with the chiefest of outward things, as being, of all things, himself incomparably the greatest. To set forth the majesty of kings, his vicegerents here below, the most gorgeous and rare treasures that the world can afford are procured; and can we suppose, that God will be pleased to accept what the meanest of these would disdain? In a word, though the true worship of God," says he, "be to God in itself acceptable, who respects not so much in what place, as with what affection he is served; yet manifest it is, that the very majesty and holiness of the place where God is worshipped, hath, in regard of us, great virtue, force, and efficacy, as it is a sensible help to stir up devotion, and, in that respect, bettereth, no doubt, our holiest and best actions of that kind."

CHAP. III.—Of the ancient Jerusalem, and its Temple.

It is an opinion vulgarly received, and not without much probability, that Jerusalem is the same city which ⁷ elsewhere is called Salem, and whereof Melchizedek is said to have been king. Not that Salem, or the city of Melchizedek, was of equal extent with Jerusalem in after times; but Jerusalem was no other than the city of Salem, enlarged and beautified by the kings of all Israel at first—David and Solomon, and after that, by the succeeding kings of Judah, when the monarchy came to be divided into two distinct kingdoms.

¹ Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings iii.² Job xxxiii. 14.³ Gregory de Opificio Hominis, c. 13.⁴ 1 Kings viii. 27.⁵ Contra Gent., b. 6.⁶ Eccles. Polity, b. 5.⁷ Gen. xiv. 18.

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The word *Salem*, in the Hebrew language, ¹ signifies *peace*: and as the city of Melchizedek, called *Salem*, is probably thought to be the same with *Jerusalem*; so it is certain, that *Jerusalem* was ² otherwise called *Jebus*, and therefore, as it preserves the name of *Salem* in the latter, so it is thought to preserve the name of *Jebus* in the former part of it, and to be nothing else but a compound of *Jebus* and *Salem*, which, for the better sound's sake, by the change of one letter, and the omission of another, is softened into *Jerusalem*.

Whether this city stood in the centre of the world or no, we shall not pretend to determine, though some ^a very zealously contend for it; since it is a matter of more material disquisition, in what tribe it may be supposed to have been situated. In the conquest of the land of Canaan, and at the famous battle of Gibeon, ³ *Joshua* put to death the king of *Jerusalem*, and, very probably, took the city, though, by some means or other not mentioned in Scripture, the *Jebusites* afterwards got possession, and continued their possession even till the days of *David*. In the division of the land, it was apparently one of those cities which ⁴ were given to the tribe of *Benjamin*; and yet when we read, that at one time ⁵ 'the children of *Judah* could not drive out the *Jebusites*,' and, at another, ⁶ 'that the children of *Judah* took and burnt *Jerusalem*,' one would be tempted to think, that it lay within the limits of that tribe. But then this difference may be easily reconciled, if we will but consider, that as this city was built on the frontiers of both tribes, it is sometimes made a part of the one, and sometimes of the other; that, by *Joshua's* division of the country, *Benjamin* had most right to it, but, by the right of conquest, *Judah*; however, when it came to be made the metropolis of the whole nation, it was thought to belong to the *Israelites* in common, and therefore was claimed by neither.

The city of *Jerusalem* was built upon two hills, and encompassed all round with mountains. It was situated in a barren and stony soil; but the places adjacent were well watered, having the fountains of *Gihon* and *Siloam*, and the brook *Kidron* at the foot of its walls. *Jebus*, or the ancient city which *David* took, was seated on a hill towards the south; and, on the opposite quarter, towards the north, was *Mount Zion*, where *David* built a new ^b city, and called it after his own name, and where

stood his royal palace likewise, ^c and the temple of the Lord; for the temple was built upon *Mount Moriah*, which was one of the hills belonging to *Mount Zion*. ^d

Between these two mountains lay the valley of *Millo*, which formerly separated ancient *Jebus* from the city of *David*, but was afterwards filled up by *David* and *Solomon*, to make a communication between the two cities. But, besides this valley of *Millo*, we read in Scripture

art or nature, out of a natural rock. This trench was defended by a wall of great strength, erected upon its inner edge, and this wall was, in like manner, defended and beautified with strong and square towers, at regular distances; which towers are said to have been built of white marble, the lowest 60, and the highest 120 cubits high, but all exactly of one level on the top, although in themselves of very different heights, according to the declivity of the ground on which they stood.—*The History of the Life of King David*, vol. 2.

^c The tower which went under the name of *David*, was situated upon the utmost angle of *Mount Zion*, and the beauty and fine proportion of this fabric, as well as the use that was made of it, may be fairly inferred from that famous comparison of *Solomon's*: 'Thy neck is like the tower of *David*, built for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men,' (Cant. iv. 4.) 'The tower of furnaces,' which probably had its name from the many fires that were lighted up in it at once, answered all the ends of a *Pharos*, or watch tower, both to land and sea. By the advantage of its situation, it could not fail of being an excellent light-house both to the Mediterranean and Red sea, and was probably so contrived, as to illuminate a great part of the city likewise, and in that respect, was not only a glorious ornament, but of excellent use. The 'house of the mighty' was a palace erected by *David*, in honour of his worthies, or chieftains in war, in which they had apartments, according to their reputation and merit in arms, were always ready at hand, for counsel or aid, as the king's affairs required, and at leisure hours, by superintending and instructing the youth in their military exercises, answered all the purposes of a royal academy for the science of war.—*The History of the Life of King David*, vol. 2.

^d Dr *Clarke* and Mr *Buckingham*, who have investigated more closely than other travellers the topography of *Jerusalem*, suppose a hill on the south of that generally considered as *Mount Zion*, and from which it is separated by the valley taken for that of *Hinnom*, to be the true *Zion*. This hill is the one usually described as the mountain of Corruption, or of Offence, so called from *Solomon's* idolatry; and the valley which separates it from the supposed *Zion*, as that of *Hinnom*, or *Gehinnom*. But as *Josephus* describes but one valley after the filling up of that between *Acra* and *Moriah* by the *Asmoneans*, namely, that of the *Cheesemongers*, or *Tyropæon*, which united at the fountain of *Siloam* with the valley of *Jehoshaphat*; and as this supposed valley of *Gehinnom* is the only one which answers to that description; and further, as this hill alone has the distinct outline, and superior elevation, which we are universally given to understand the citadel of *Zion* possessed; it has certainly very strong claims to be considered as such. Every representation of *Zion* in Scripture implies a hill distinct from, and loftier than the ground on which the lower city stood. It was the hill or citadel of *Jebus*, the "castle" or "stronghold of *Zion*," which, from its insulated and impregnable nature, the *Israelites* were unable to take for 400 years after they had gained possession of the lower city (2 Sam. v. 1 Chron. xi.) it was the crowning eminence of the ridge on which the city stood; and from which the whole was denominated after its name. (Ps. cxxii. 13, 14.) But no marked division or superiority of height which can explain such a pre-eminence of character, and such an uncommon power of defence, as are here represented, distinguishes the hill commonly received as that of *Zion*. It is further to be remarked, that *Josephus* describes the city as seated on two principal hills only, with one principal intervening valley, namely, that of the *Cheesemongers*, or *Tyropæon*, joining the valley of *Jehoshaphat* at the fountain of *Siloam*, as already stated. He also expressly mentions the upper city as situated on the one, and the lower city on the other, relative terms certainly, but of little meaning when applied to the slight inclination of the uneven ground on which the modern city, with its allotted part of *Zion*, stands.—*En*

¹ Heb. vii. 2. ² Compare Josh. xv. 8, with 1 Chron. xi. 4.

³ Josh. x. 23—40, and xii. 10. ⁴ Josh. xviii. 28.

⁵ Josh. xv. 63.

⁶ Judg. i. 8.

^a To this purpose they observe, that the sacred writers are very well acquainted with this, as appears by that passage of *Ezekiel*, c. v. 5, 'Thus saith the Lord God, this is *Jerusalem*: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries round about her.' For what purpose he did this, the Psalmist has not been wanting to inform us: 'Out of *Zion*,' says he, 'the perfection of beauty, God hath shined,' (Ps. l. 2.) Here the Almighty kept his court, and from hence he sent out his ambassadors, the prophets, to publish his decrees to the whole world around him, with more ease, and speedier conveyance, than could possibly be done from any other region of the habitable world. From hence, as from a central point, the light of the law at first, and the gospel afterwards shone out to the surrounding nations; and therefore we find *Jerusalem* emphatically called 'the city of our God, the mountain of his holiness, beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth,' (Ps. xlviii. 1, 2.)—*The History of the Life of King David*, vol. 2.

^b This city was of a circular form, situated on a much higher hill, and surrounded with a broad deep trench, hewn whether by

A. M. 2981. A. C. 1023; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4375. A. C. 1036. 2 SAM. xix.—1 KINGS viii.

of ¹ the house of Millo, which is said to be ² in the city of David, and therefore was built either upon Mount Zion, or some adjacent place. Let us then inquire a little what this house of Millo might possibly be.

Millo, considered in its etymology, is thought to be deduced from a root which signifies to be full, and is therefore, in the sacred history, supposed to denote a large capacious place, designed for public meetings, or, in short, a senate-house. That this was some public edifice, I think may be inferred from the notice that is taken of it among some other of Solomon's public buildings, where the reason of the tax, which he levied upon his subjects, is said to be this, ³ 'That he might build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the walls of Jerusalem,' &c., for, since we find it joined with the 'house of the Lord, and the walls of Jerusalem,' we cannot but suppose, that it was a building of the same public nature; and we since find farther, that ⁴ 'the servants of king Joash arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew him in the house of Millo, very probably when he was come thither to debate, and consult with his princes, and other chief men, the thing seems to be incontestable, that this house of Millo was erected for a public senate-house, though there is some reason to imagine that it was employed likewise for other purposes.

In the reign of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib came against Jerusalem with a purpose to besiege it, the king took counsel with his princes, and among other things, that were thought proper for his defence, it is said, ⁵ 'that he built up all the wall that was fallen, and repaired Millo, and made darts and shields in abundance.' From whence we may infer, that this Millo was a place of great consequence to the strength of Jerusalem, and was very probably made to serve two purposes, that is, to be both a parliament-house and an arsenal.

The palace which David built for himself, to which was adjoined that which his son built for the king of Egypt's daughter, must needs have been a very magnificent structure, since he had both his ⁶ workmen and materials sent him ^a from Tyre, which, at that time, surpassed all other nations in the art of building: but of this we can give no other account, than that it stood westward from the temple, and consisted of a large square court, defended by flankers, from one of which was the descent by stairs into the gardens, which, in all probability, were watered by the fountain of Siloam.

This fountain of Siloam, rises just under the walls of Jerusalem, on the east side thereof, between the city and the brook Kidron; and in all probability, was the same with the fountain Enrogel, or the Fuller's fountain, whereof we find mention ⁷ in Joshua, and in the books of Samuel and the Kings. Some travellers will have it that the water of this fountain is brackish, and has not a good taste; but the prophet Isaiah, when he utters the complaint of God against the Jews, ⁸ 'forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah, which go softly,'

&c., seems to denote the contrary. However this be, St Jerome himself affirms, that the waters of this fountain made the valley through which they ran, as watering the gardens and plantations that were there, very pleasant and delightful.

The fountain of Gihon, which springs very probably from an adjacent hill of the same name, was on the west side of Jerusalem; and as king Hezekiah ⁹ ordered the upper channel of this fountain to be conveyed into Jerusalem, that when the city was besieged, the enemy might not have the benefit of its waters; so we need not doubt, but ¹⁰ that the other spring of Siloam was, in like manner, conveyed into the city, and that, for the convenience of its inhabitants, they were both, in several places, distributed ¹¹ into pools; though some make that of Siloam to be without the walls.

The brook Kidron runs in the valley of Jehoshaphat on the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives. It has usually no great quantity of water in it, and is frequently quite dry; but, upon any sudden rains, it swells exceedingly, and runs with great impetuosity. It was indeed of singular service to the ancient city, as it received its common sewers, and, upon every such violent flood, emptied them into the Dead Sea.

The mount of Olives, which doubtless had its name from the great quantity of olive trees that grew there, was situated to the east of Jerusalem, and parted from the city only by the valley of Jehoshaphat, and the brook Kidron; for which reason it is said to be a Sabbath-day's journey, that is, about a mile from it. It was on this mountain that Solomon built temples to the gods of the Ammonites and of the Moabites, in complaisance to his wives, who were natives of these nations; and for this reason it is likewise called in Scripture, ¹² 'the mount of corruption,' because such as follow vain idols are frequently said in Scripture to corrupt themselves. ¹³ Some indeed have imagined, that this mount of corruption was a distinct place, but the matter of fact is, that Mount Olivet had three summits, or was made up of three several mountains, ranged one after another, from north to south. The middle summit was that from which our Lord ascended; toward the south was that whereon Solomon ¹⁴ set up his abominations; and towards the north was the highest of all, ¹⁵ which was commonly called Galilee.

Mount Calvary, which, in all appearance, had its name ^b from the similitude it bore to the figure of a skull, or a man's head, was to the west of the ancient Jerusa-

⁹ 2 Chron. xxxii. 30.¹⁰ Lamy's Introduction, b. 1. c. 3.¹¹ John ix. 7.¹² 2 Kings xxiii. 13.¹³ Wells' Geography of the Old Testament. ¹⁴ 2 Kings xxiii. 13.¹⁵ See Reland's Palæst.

^b Some formerly have been of opinion, that this mount was called Calvary, because the head of the first man in the world was buried there, and that our Saviour was crucified in the same place; and that his blood running down upon the body of this person, might restore him to life, and procure him the favour of a resurrection. To support this tradition, they tell us that Noah, having preserved Adam's body in the ark, distributed the several parts of it to his children, and, as a particular favour, gave the skull or head to Shem, who was to be the parent of that holy stock, from whom the Messias was to come; and that Shem, with a spirit of foresight, buried the skull in Calvary, where he knew the Messias would be crucified. But neither the ancient fathers nor any modern authors that mention this tradition, were ever persuaded of its truth; and, without any disrespect to them, we may look upon all this as mere fiction.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Calvary*.

¹ 2 Kings xii. 20. ² 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. ³ 1 Kings ix. 15.⁴ 2 Kings xii. 20. ⁵ 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. ⁶ 1 Chron. xiv. 1.⁷ Josh. xv. 7; 2 Sam. xvii; and 1 Kings i. 9. ⁸ Is. viii. 6.

^a This must be understood of the Old Tyre, which was situated upon the continent, and where the temple of Hercules stood, of whose antiquity Herodotus talks so much; and not of the New Tyre, which stood upon a neighbouring island, but was not built until the days of Solomon.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

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Jerusalem, just without the gates: and, as our Saviour suffered there, we may presume it was the common place where criminals of all kinds were generally executed. ^a

The valley of Hinnom, or the sons of Hinnom, lay to the south of the city, and was remarkable for the cruel and barbarous worship of Moloch, where parents made their children pass through the fire, or be burned in the fire, by way of sacrifice to that idol; and where it was usual to have musical instruments, from whence it obtained likewise the name of Tophet, the Hebrew word *Toph*, signifying the same as *Tympanum* in Latin, and *Timbrel* in English, to drown the lamentable shrieks of the children thus sacrificed. In this place there were afterwards kept a perpetual fire, to consume the dead carcasses and excrements, which were brought from Jerusalem; and therefore our Saviour alluding to this, calls hell by the name of Ge-henna, or the valley of Hinnom.

The valley of Jehoshaphat, which is likewise called the valley of Kidron, because of the above mentioned brook which runs through it, lies on the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the mount of Olives. Our Saviour, indeed, ascended from this mount; but the notion is very

^a Mr Buckingham, who is satisfied of the identity of the present hill shown as Calvary, imagines that it was at the time of the crucifixion, as it is now, within the city. Of the arguments by which this opinion is supported, the following is an abstract:—The objections commonly urged against the position of Calvary within the walls are—that the term Golgotha, which is interpreted ‘the place of a skull,’ implies a place of public interment; that it was contrary to the custom of the east to bury in cities; and that it would be considered as defiling by the Jews to have a place of execution in the heart of the town. To the first of these objections it is answered, on the part of Mr Buckingham, that the word Golgotha thus translated a place of skulls, implies merely *a skull*; and is so used by St Luke, who, without mentioning Golgotha, writes, ‘And when they were come to a place called *skull*,’ &c.; that the name applies rather to a tradition that the skull of Adam was found in this spot; or, which is more probable, that it was derived from the figure of the eminence itself, which was a mound of small elevation, consisting of a round nodule of rock, which, from a resemblance which it bore to the shape of a skull, obtained that name for it. To the second objection it is replied, that whatever the general custom of the east may be, it was the common practice of the Jews to bury in their own gardens, whether within or without the town. The third objection is endeavoured to be removed, by showing, that Calvary was not, as is generally supposed, a place of public execution; but was merely seized on by the enraged and impatient multitude, as a convenient spot for carrying their mad purpose into speedy effect. This opinion is considered to be corroborated, by the singular fact, that it is nowhere said that Christ was led out of the city to be crucified; and by the no less extraordinary circumstance of Joseph of Arimathea having, on this same spot, a garden and a tomb, which he would not be likely to have had in a place defiled by public executions. Wherever Calvary was, it does not seem probable that it was a place of common execution for malefactors. It is quite inconceivable that a wealthy Jew like Joseph of Arimathea, should make choice of a place of public execution, where these horrid exhibitions must have been frequent, as the scene of his recreation while alive, and of his interment after death. The choice of this spot may rather be considered as accidental—as the first convenient one which offered itself to the impatient Jews, on which to immolate their victim, and to which he was hurried lest he should again escape them. This spot or mount is a rock, the summit of which is ascended to by a steep flight of eighteen or twenty steps from the common level of the church, which is equal with that of the street without; and besides this, there is a descent of thirty steps from the level of the church to the chapel of Helena; and eleven more to the place where it is said the cross was found; making in all sixty-one steps, or, if the last eleven be considered as subterraneous, fifty; equal to at least thirty-five feet of perpendicular height—sufficient to give this little eminence the character of a mound or mount.—Ed.

extravagant, that when he returns again he will judge the world in this valley, merely because the prophet Joel hath said, ¹ ‘I will gather all nations, and will bring them into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them for my people;’ for what is there called the valley of Jehoshaphat, is not a proper, but an appellative name, and denotes no more than the judgment of God.

There is another valley that the Scripture makes early mention of, and that is ² ‘the valley of Shaveh,’ which is likewise called the king’s dale, where Melchizedek met Abraham in his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer. According to Josephus, it was, in his time, but about two furlongs distant from Jerusalem, and for this reason, perhaps, it has been thought by some, to be no other than the valley of Jehoshaphat; though others make it different, yet so, as to come up near to the said valley, and to lie on the south-east part of the city, not far from the king’s gardens. ³ Why it obtained the name of the king’s dale, whether it was from its near situation to the king’s palace and gardens, or from its being the place where the kings were wont to exercise themselves, or at least to entertain themselves, with seeing others perform their exercises of running, riding, and the like, is not agreed, and very likely will never be determined.

There were several gates, belonging to the ancient Jerusalem, ⁴ that are mentioned in Scripture; but it is

¹ Joel iii. 2.

² Gen. xiv. 17, 18.

³ Wells’ Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 3.

⁴ The present style of building in Jerusalem will, perhaps, in the unchanging character of eastern customs, best enable us to understand its ancient structure. The streets of almost every eastern city are narrow, for the purpose of excluding the sun and wind between the deep and almost blank walls of the houses, having small and but few windows towards the street; their fronts, properly speaking, being towards the central quadrangle. The entrance into the principal houses is by a porch, having benches on each side, where visits are received and business is despatched; few guests being permitted to penetrate further into the mansion. This porch communicates with the court in the centre: which, with persons of rank or wealth, is paved with marble, and laid out with fruit-trees and fountains. This court is surrounded with a cloister; over which is a gallery, having a balustrade or latticed work on the side towards the court, and on the opposite one the entrances to the chambers. Whoever has travelled in Spain or Portugal, where, by their Moorish possessors, many eastern customs were introduced, may have seen houses of this construction: the convents almost universally answer to it exactly. The open space in the quadrangle is the place where company is received on festive occasions; and is the same as the *το μέσον*, the “midst” or the middle of the house into which the paralytic was let down, when our Saviour was preaching to a numerous assembly. (Luke v. 18, 19.) The stairs are placed either in the porch itself, or at the entrance into the court; from whence they are continued up one corner of the gallery to the top of the house, which is made flat to walk on, and surrounded by a parapet or balustrade. Thus a person may ascend from the porch to the top of the house without having any communication with its interior: and to this arrangement our Lord alludes, in his directions to his disciples respecting the troubles which were approaching, and their flight from Jerusalem. ‘Let him who is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house.’ (Matt. xxiv. 17.) Of the present state and appearance of Jerusalem, M. Chateaubriand gives the following account: “When seen from the mount of Olives, on the other side of the valley of Jehoshaphat, Jerusalem presents an inclined plane descending from west to east. An embattled wall, fortified with towers and a Gothic castle, encompasses the city all round; excluding, however, part of mount Zion, which it formerly enclosed. In the western quarter, and in the centre of the city towards Calvary, the houses stand very close; but in the

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no easy matter to discover where their particular situation was. There is reason to believe likewise, that their names have been varied, or that one and the same gate has gone under different appellations; and as there were several circuits of walls in the city, which had their respective gates, it is more than probable, that some of

these gates did not lead out of the city into the country. The gate of the valley, which doubtless had its name from leading into some valley, and ^a as travellers will have it, to the valley of Jehoshaphat, was situate on the east side of the city.

The dung gate, which seems to have taken its name

eastern part, along the brook Cedron, you perceive vacant spaces; among the rest, that which surrounds the mosque erected on the ruins of the temple, and the nearly deserted spot where once stood the castle of Antonia and the second palace of Herod. The houses of Jerusalem are heavy square masses, very low, without chimneys or windows: they have flat terraces or domes on the top; and look like prisons or sepulchres. The whole would appear to the eye one uninterrupted level, did not the steeples of the churches, the minarets of the mosques, the summits of a few cypresses, and the clumps of nopsals, break the uniformity of the plane. On beholding these stone buildings encompassed by a stony country, you are ready to inquire if they are not the confused monuments of a cemetery in the midst of a desert. Enter the city, but nothing will you there find to make amends for the dullness of its exterior. You lose yourself among narrow, unpaved streets, here going up hill, there down, from the inequality of the ground; and you walk among clouds of dust or loose stones. Canvass stretched from house to house, increases the gloom of the labyrinth; bazaars roofed over, and fraught with infection, completely exclude the light from the desolate city. A few paltry shops expose nothing but wretchedness to view; and even these are frequently shut, from apprehension of the passage of a cadi. Not a creature is to be seen in the streets, not a creature at the gates, except now and then a peasant gliding through the gloom, concealing under his garments the fruits of his labour, lest he should be robbed of his hard earnings by the rapacious soldier. Aside, in a corner, the Arab butcher is slaughtering some animal, suspended by the legs from a wall in ruins: from his haggard and ferocious look, and his bloody hands, you would rather suppose that he had been cutting the throat of a fellow creature than killing a lamb. The only noise heard from time to time, in this decide city, is the galloping of the steed of the desert: it is the Janissary who brings the head of the Bedouin, or returns from plundering the unhappy Fellah." The following is Mr Buckingham's description of Jerusalem, as seen from the Mount of Olives:—"Reposing beneath the shade of an olive-tree, upon the brow of this hill, we enjoyed from hence a fine prospect of Jerusalem on the opposite one. This city occupies an irregular square of about two miles and a half in circumference. Its shortest apparent side is that which faces the east; and in this is the supposed gate of the ancient temple, now closed up, and the small projecting stone on which Mohammed is to sit when the world is to be assembled to judgment in the vale below. The southern side is exceedingly irregular, taking quite a zigzag direction; the south-west extreme being terminated by a mosque, built over the supposed sepulchre of David, on the summit of Mount Zion. The form and exact direction of the western and northern walls are not distinctly seen from hence; but every part of this appears to be a modern work, and executed at the same time. The walls are flanked at irregular distances by square towers, and have battlements running all around on their summits, with loop-holes for arrows or musquetry close to the top. The walls appear to be about 50 feet in height, but are not surrounded by a ditch. The northern wall runs over slightly declining ground; the eastern wall runs straight along the brow of Mount Moriah, with the deep valley of Jehoshaphat below; the southern wall crosses over the summit of the hill assumed as Mount Zion, with the vale of Hinnom at its feet; and the western wall runs along on more level ground, near the summit of the high and stony mountains over which we had at first approached the town. As the city is thus seated on the brow of one large hill, divided by name into several smaller hills, and the whole of these slope gently down towards the east, this view from the Mount of Olives, a position of greater height than that on which the highest part of the city stands, commands nearly the whole of it at once. On the north, it is bounded by a level and apparently fertile plain, now covered with olive-trees, particularly near the north-east angle. On the south, the steep side of Mount Zion, and the valley of Hinnom, both show patches of cultivation and little garden enclosures. On the west, the sterile summits of the hills there barely lift their outlines above the dwellings.

And on the east, the deep valley of Jehoshaphat, now at our feet has some partial spots relieved by trees, though as forbidding in its general aspect, as the vale of death could ever be desired to be, by those who have chosen it for the place of their interment. Within the walls of the city are seen, to the north, crowded dwellings, remarkable in no respect, except being terraced by flat roofs, and generally built of stone. On the south, are some gardens and vineyards, with the long red mosque of Al Sakhara, having two tiers of windows, a sloping roof, and a dark dome at one end, and the mosque of Zion, on the sepulchre of David, in the same quarter. On the west, is seen the high square castle and palace of the same monarch, near the Bethlehem-gate. In the centre, rise the two cupolas of unequal form and size, the one blue and the other white, covering the church of the holy sepulchre. Around, in different directions, are seen the minarets of eight or ten mosques, and an assemblage of about 2000 dwellings. And on the east, is seated the great mosque of Al Haram, or, as called by Christians, the mosque of Solomon, from being supposed, with that of Al Sakhara near it, to occupy the site of the ancient temple, of that splendid and luxurious king." The same author describes Jerusalem, as seated on unequal ground, on a range of high hills, which he computes at 1500 feet above the sea; some of the eminences being higher than those on which the city itself stands. The whole country around is represented as a rocky and barren space, which almost defies the efforts of human labour to fertilize by any common process. The fixed inhabitants he estimates at about 8000; but the continual arrival and departure of strangers make the total number of those present in the city from 10 to 15,000 generally, according to the season of the year. These are made up of a mixed multitude of Turkish and Arabian Mohammedans, who are the most numerous, Greeks, Latins, Armenians, Copts, Abyssinians, Syrians, Nestorians, Maronites, Chaldeans, and Jews; amongst whom, the poor Jews, in their own city, are the most degraded, and "are more remarkable from the striking peculiarities of their features and dress, than from their numbers as contrasted with the other bodies."

Mr Joliffe, however, who visited Jerusalem in 1817, states, that the highest estimate makes the total number of inhabitants amount to 25,000: of which there are supposed to be—

Mohammedans	13,000
Jews	from 3 to 4,000
Greeks	2,000
Roman Catholics	800
Armenians	400
Copts	50

Dr Richardson, who was at Jerusalem in 1818, estimates the population at 20,000; whom he distributes into:—

Mussulmans	5,000
Christians	5,000
Jews	10,000

Which, probably, judging from other estimates, increases the number of the Jews in the same proportion as it diminishes that of the Mohammedans.

There is very little trade in Jerusalem, and few manufactures; the only one that at all flourishes, is that of crucifixes, chaplets, and relics; of which, incredible as it may seem, whole cargoes are shipped off from Jaffa for Italy, Portugal, and Spain.—Ed.

^a Our countryman, Mr Sandys, is of opinion, that the gate of the valley was formerly the same with what is now called St Stephen's gate, not far from the golden gate, or great gate, which leads into that which was formerly the court of the temple. He likewise supposes, that this gate of St Stephen's was formerly called the sheep gate; but into this opinion perhaps he might be led by the nearness of St Stephen's gate to the pool of Bethesda, there the sacrifices were washed before they were brought to the priest to be offered; and therefore, since the valley gate, and the sheep gate, are distinctly mentioned by Nehemiah, we cannot but think, that they must have been different gates.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

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from the dung and filth of the beasts that were sacrificed at the temple, being carried out of it, was probably the same with what is now so called, and stands on the east side of the city likewise.

The water gate, which took its name from its use, because through it was the water brought to serve the city and the temple, was ¹ on the same side; and so was

The gate of the fountain, so called from its nearness to the fountain of Siloam, only inclining a little towards the south.

The gate of Ephraim, which opened to the main road, leading to the tribe of Ephraim, and from it derived its name, stood on the north side of the city, because on that side was that tribe seated; ² though others had rather place it on the west.

The horse gate, sheep gate, and fish gate, are supposed by some to have had their denominations from the several markets of these creatures, that were kept there. The horse and sheep gates were both on the east side, not far from the palace and the temple; and the fish gate was on the north, though some, who think it had its name from the fish that were brought from the Mediterranean sea, had rather place it on the west side.

Lastly, the high gate, or the gate of Benjamin, so called from its situation towards the land or tribe of Benjamin, is supposed by some to have been the principal gate of the royal palace; but from what we read ³ concerning Jeremiah's being grossly abused near this gate, it appears to have been situated by the house of the Lord.

Thus we have passed through most of the gates of this ancient city; and on the north side of it, without the walls now, but then probably within them, we meet with some subterraneous chambers, that are wonderfully magnificent, and at present called the sepulchres of the kings, ⁴ of which some late travellers give us a description to this effect. "When you come to the place, you pass through an entry hewed out of a rock, which admits you into an open court about twenty-six feet square, all cut out of the rock, which is of solid marble, and serves instead of walls. On the left hand of this court is a portico nine paces long, and four broad, with a kind of architrave running round its front, cut out of the same rock, as are likewise the pillars that support it. At the end of this portico there is a passage into the sepulchres, which when you have crept through it with some difficulty, lets you into a large chamber of above four and twenty feet square. Its sides and ceiling are so exactly square, and its angles so just, that no architect, with levels and plummets, could build a room more regular. From this room you pass into six more, one within another, and all of the same fabric with the first, except that the two innermost are deeper than the rest, and have a descent of about six or seven steps into them. In every one of these rooms, except the first, were coffins of stone, placed in niches, along the sides of the room, and amount in all to about fifty."⁵

This perhaps is the only real work that now remains of the old Jerusalem; and what makes it justly looked

upon as a wonder, is, that the ceiling, the doors, as well as all the rest, their hinges, their posts, their frames, &c., are all cut out of the same continued rock. It may therefore be worth our inquiring a little in what manner these structures were employed, and who possibly might be the persons that were repositied in them.

That these subterraneous structures were not the sepulchres of the kings of Judah, the generality of those that have inspected them are agreed, because the Scripture tells us, that David and Solomon, and most of their successors were ⁶ buried in the city of David; and yet these grots lie without the gate of Damascus, as it is now called, at a considerable distance from the city of David: but how far this city of David did formerly extend, or where we shall find any other signs of ^a the places, where David and the other kings his successors were buried, we have no hints given us. The Rev. Mr Maundrell, from this passage in Scripture, ⁶ "And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David," is of opinion, that this was the place where Hezekiah, and the sons immediately born to David, that were not repositied in the royal sepulchres, were buried: but it is much more probable, and what both the Syriac and Arabic versions seem to confirm, that by the sons of David here, we are not to understand his immediate sons, properly so called, but the kings rather that succeeded him. This is a form of speech frequently made use of by the sacred writers: and therefore the sense of 'Hezekiah's being buried in the sepulchres of the sons of David,' must be, that he was buried in the sepulchres of the kings descended from David.

The more probable opinion, therefore, is that of Le Bruyn, who supposes, that these grots were the sepulchres of Manasseh, his son Amon, and his grandson Josiah, kings of Judah. Of Manasseh the Scripture tells us expressly, that ⁷ "he was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza;" and of Amon it is said, that "he was buried in the garden of Uzza;" which garden Manasseh might very probably purchase, and being taken with the pleasantness of it, might there build him a house, which is here called 'his own house,' in contradistinction to the royal palace, which was built, and inhabited by his ancestors, on Mount Zion. Of Josiah indeed the sacred history does not say expressly, that he was buried here; all that it tells us is, that he ⁸ was 'buried in the sepulchres of his fathers;' but whether

⁵ 1 Kings ii. 10. and xi. 43.

⁶ 2 Chron. xxxii. 33.

⁷ 2 Kings xxi. 18, 26.

⁸ 2 Chron. xxxv. 24.

^a Benjamin of Tudela, who wrote about the year 1173, relates, that not above fifteen years before, a wall belonging to mount Sion, fell down, and the priests set twenty men to work upon it. Two of these workmen being one day left alone, took up a stone, which opened a passage into a subterraneous place, into which they entered. There they found a palace, supported by marble pillars, and crusted over with gold and silver. At the entrance was a table, and upon this table a golden crown and sceptre. This, say the Jews, was David's monument, and opposite to it was Solomon's, adorned in the like manner. As they were attempting to penetrate farther, they were overset by a whirlwind, and remained senseless till the evening, when they heard a voice, bidding them arise, and begone. Benjamin assures us, that he had this story from the mouth of one Abraham, a Pharisee, who, as he said, had been consulted about this event by the patriarch of Jerusalem, and declared that this was David's monument. But the whole of this account has so much the air of a fable, that it is needless to confute it.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *David*.

¹ Neh. iii. 26.

Explication du nouveau plan de l'ancienne Jerusalem, par M. Calmet.

³ Jer. xx. 2.

⁴ See Thevenot's Voyages, part 1. b. 2. c. 4. and Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.

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in the city of David, or in the garden of Uzza, it makes no mention : and therefore, since both his father and grandfather were buried in this garden, there is reason to think, that Josiah was here buried likewise ; especially considering, that in one of these subterraneous rooms, as Le Bruyn tells us, which seemed to be more lofty than the rest, there were three coffins curiously adorned with carved works, which he took to be the coffins of these three kings.

But of all the buildings that ancient Jerusalem had to boast of, the temple which David designed, and Solomon perfected, was the most magnificent. We are not, however, to imagine, that this temple was built like one of our churches ; for it did not consist of one single edifice, but ^a of several courts and buildings, which took up a great deal of ground. The place whereon it was erected, was on the top of Mount Moriah, and the building altogether made an exact square of 800 cubits, or 1460 feet long on each side, exactly fronting the east, west, north, and south.

¹ To make this building more firm and secure, it was found necessary to begin the foundation at the bottom of the mount ; so that the sides were 333 cubits, or about 608 feet high before they were raised to the level of the temple, and this afforded a most noble prospect towards the chief part of the city which lay westward. It is impossible to compute the labour of laying this foundation, because it is impossible to tell how much of the mountain must in some places be removed, and others filled up, to bring it to an exact square for so great a height : but when we consider that there were 180,000 workmen, for seven years and a half constantly employed, we cannot but admire what business could be found for so many hands to do ; and yet, when we reflect on the vastness of this fabric, it would make one no less wonder, how in so short a time it could possibly be completed. "For the foundation," as Josephus tells us, "was laid prodigiously deep, and the stones were not only of the largest size, but hard and firm enough to endure all weathers, and be proof against the worm. Besides this, they were so mortised into one another, and so wedged into the rock, that the strength and curiosity of the basis was not less admirable than the intended superstructure, and the one was every way answerable to the other."

The ground plot upon which the temple was built was a square of 600 cubits every way. It was encompassed with a wall of six cubits high, and the same in breadth, and contained several buildings for different uses, surrounded with cloisters, supported by marble pillars. Within this space was the court of the Gentiles, fifty cubits wide, and adorned, in like manner, with cloisters and pillars. To separate this court from the court of the Israelites, there was a wall of 500 cubits square. The

court of the Israelites was 100 cubits. It was paved with marble of different colours, and had four gates, to every quarter one, and each rising with an ascent of seven steps. To separate this court from the court of the priests, there was a wall of 200 cubits square ; and the priests' court was 100 cubits, encompassed with cloisters and apartments where the priests, that attended the service of the temple, were used to live. This court had but three gates, to the east, to the north, and to the south, and were approached by an ascent of eight steps. These courts were all open, and without any covering, but in case of rain, or other bad weather, the people could retire under the cloisters, that were supported with rows of pillars, and went round every court. In the Israelites' court, over against the gate of the priests' court, was erected a throne for the king, which was a magnificent alcove, where he seated himself when he came to the temple. In the priests' court was the altar of burnt-offerings, a great deal larger than that of the tabernacle, having ten brazen lavers, whereas the tabernacle had but one, and a sea of brass, which the tabernacle had not, supported by twelve oxen.

On the west side of the altar of burnt-offerings, there was an ascent of twelve steps, to what we may properly call the temple ; and this consisted of three parts, the porch, the sanctuary, and the holy of holies. The porch was about twelve cubits long, and twenty broad, at the entrance of which stood the two famous pillars, Jachin and Boaz, whose names import, that 'God alone was the support of the temple ;' and its gate was fourteen cubits wide, the sanctuary or nave of the temple, was forty cubits long, and twenty broad, wherein were the altar of incense, and the table of shewbread ; but because the temple was larger and wanted more light than the tabernacle, instead of one, it had ten golden candlesticks. The holy of holies was a square of twenty cubits, wherein was placed the ark of the covenant, containing the two tables of stone, wherein God had engraven his ten commandments ; but instead of two cherubim, as were in the tabernacle, in the temple there were four.

Round about the temple, and against the walls thereof, as Josephus tells us, were built thirty cells, or little houses, which served in the way of so many buttresses, and were, at the same time, no small ornament to it ; for there were stories of these cells, one above another, whereof the second was narrower than the first, and the third than the second, so that their roofs and balustrades being within each other, made three different terraces, as it were, ^b upon which one might walk round the temple.

^b The temple itself, strictly so called, had two stories, the upper of which was raised quite above these little houses and their roofs ; for their roofs reached no higher than the top of the first story. The second story, which had no building adjoining to its side, made a large room over the sanctuary and the holy of holies, of equal dimensions with them ; and it is no improbable opinion that this was the upper chamber, in which the Holy Ghost was pleased to descend upon the apostles in a visible manner. This upper room was appropriated to the pious laity as a place for them to come and pay their devotions in ; and therefore it seems very likely that the apostles were here with other devout persons, while the temple was full of Jews of all nations, who were come to celebrate the feast of the Pentecost, and that thereupon they below, hearing the noise, which was occasioned, by the shaking of the place, ran up to see the cause of it, and, to their great surprise, found the apostles distinguished from the other Jews about them, both by the cloven tongues which sat upon each of

¹ Bedford's Scripture Chronology, b. 4. c. 5.

^a These several parts of the temple the Greeks are very careful to distinguish by different names. What was properly the temple, they called *ἱερόν* ; and the courts and other parts of the temple, *τὰ ἱερά*. Thus when Zacharias is said to have gone into the temple to burn incense, (Luke i. 9.) which was done in the sanctum, the word is *ναὸς* ; but when it is said that Anna the prophetess departed not from the temple, (Luke ii. 37.) that is, lived in that part of the court of the Israelites which was appropriated to religious women, the Greek word is *ἱερά*. And this observation holds good all through the New Testament.—*Lamy, De Tabern.* b. 5. c. 5.

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Within, these little houses were ceiled with cedar, their walls were wainscoted with the same, and embellished with carving and fretwork, overlaid with gold, which, with their dazzling splendour made every thing about them look glorious.

Upon the whole then, we may observe, ¹ that the glory of this temple did not consist in the bulk or largeness of it, for in itself it was but a small pile of building, no more than an hundred and fifty feet in length, and an hundred and five in breadth, taking the whole of it together from out to out, and is exceeded by many of our parish churches, but its chief grandeur and excellency lay in its out buildings and ornaments, in its workmanship, which was everywhere very curious, and its overlappings, which were vast and prodigious; for the overlaying of the holy of holies, only, which was a room but thirty feet square, and twenty high, amounted to six hundred talents of gold, which comes to four millions three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of our sterling money.

To conclude this chapter then, ² in the words of the Jewish historian, "The whole frame, in fine," says he, "was raised upon stones, polished to the highest degree of perfection, and so artificially put together, that there was no joint to be discerned, no sign of any working tools being upon them, but the whole looked like the work of providence and nature, than the product of art and human invention. And as for the inside, whatever carving, gilding, embroidery, rich silks, and fine linen could do, of these there was the greatest profusion. The very floor of the temple was overlaid with beaten gold, the doors were large, and proportioned to the height of the walls, twenty cubits broad, and still gold upon gold." In a word, it was gold all over, and ^a nothing was wanting, either within or without, that might contribute to the glory and magnificence of the work.

CHAP. IV.—On the Temple.

SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.

DIANA's temple at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world. It is said that almost all Asia was employed in the building of it for about two hundred years; but it was certainly more extensive than the

temple at Jerusalem, for it may be justly questioned, notwithstanding the profusion of gold, silver, precious stones, &c., employed in the temple of Solomon, whether it cost any thing like the money expended on the temple of Diana.

Pliny informs us, that ³ in order to build one of the pyramids in Egypt, no less than three hundred and sixty thousand men were employed for the space of twenty years. But neither was the temple any such work as this. We may also observe that the temple was never intended to hold a vast concourse of people; it was only for the service of the Lord, and the priests were those alone who were employed in it. The courts, chambers, and other apartments, were far more extensive than the temple itself; it was never designed to be a place to worship at. There God was known to have a peculiar residence, and before him the tribes came, and the priests were a sort of mediators between him and the people. In short, the temple was to the Jews in the promised land what the tabernacle was to the Hebrews in the wilderness; the place where God's honour dwelt, and whither the people flocked to pay their adoration.

"Solomon laid the foundation of the temple, A. M. 2992, B. C. 1008, before the vulgar era 1012; and it was finished A. M. 3000, and dedicated in 3001, B. C. 999, before the vulgar era 1003; ^b Kings viii. 2 Chron. v. vii. viii. The place that was pitched on for erecting this magnificent structure was on the side of Mount Zion called Moriah. Its entrance or frontispiece stood towards the east, and the most holy or most retired part was towards the west. The author of the first book of Kings, and of the second of Chronicles, has chiefly made it his business to describe the temple properly so called, that is the sanctuary, the sanctum, and the apartments belonging to them, as also the vessels, the implements, and the ornaments of the temple, without giving any description scarcely of the courts and open areas, which however made a principal part of the grandeur of this august edifice.

"But Ezekiel has supplied this defect by the exact plan he has delineated of these necessary parts. Indeed it must be owned that the temple as described by Ezekiel was never restored after the captivity of Babylon, according to the model and the mensuration that this prophet has given of it. But as the measure he sets down for the sanctum and the sanctuary are, within a small matter, the same as those of the temple of Solomon; and as this prophet, who was himself a priest, had seen the first temple; it is to be supposed that the description he gives us of the temple of Jerusalem is the same as that of the temple of Solomon.

"The ground-plot upon which the temple was built was a square of six hundred cubits, or twenty-five thousand royal feet; (Ezek. xlv.) This space was encompassed with a wall of the height of six cubits, and of the same breadth. Beyond this wall was the court of the Gentiles, being fifty cubits wide. After this was seen a great wall, which encompassed the whole court of the children of Israel. This wall was a square of five hundred cubits.

³ Hist. Nat. b. xxxvi. c. 12.

^b These dates are according to the commonly received chronology. According to Dr Hales, the temple was begun A. M. 4384, or B. C. 1027, and finished B. C. 1020.

¹ Prideaux's Con. part 1. b. 3. ² Jewish Antiq. b. 8. c. 2. them, and by the several different languages that they spake.—Lamy's Introduction, b. 1. c. 4.

^a It is not to be doubted, but that Solomon made all the utensils and ornaments of the temple proportionable, both in number and richness, to that of the edifice; and yet Josephus seems to have carried his account beyond all credibility, when he tells us, that there were 10,000 tables besides those of the shewbread; 10,000 candlesticks besides those in the holy place; 80,000 cups for drink-offerings; 100,000 basins of gold, and double that number of silver: when he tells us that Solomon caused to be made 1000 ornaments for the sole use of the high priest, 10,000 linen robes and girdles for that of the common priests, and 200,000 more for the Levites and musicians: when he tells of 200,000 trumpets made according to Solomon's direction, with 200,000 more, made in the fashion that Moses had appointed, and 400,000 musical instruments of a mixed metal, between gold and silver, called by the ancients electrum—concerning all which we can only say, that the text is either silent or contradicts this prodigious account.—Universal History, b. 1. c. 7.

A. M. 2981. A. C. 1023; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4375. A. C. 1036. 2 SAM. xix.—1 KINGS viii.

The court of Israel was an hundred cubits square, and was encompassed all round with magnificent galleries supported by two or three rows of pillars. It had four gates of entrance, one to the east, another to the west, a third to the north, and the fourth to the south. They were all of the same form and largeness, and each had an ascent of seven steps. The court was paved with marble of divers colours, and had no covering; but the people, in case of need, could retire under the galleries that were all round about. These apartments were to lodge the priests in, and to lay up such things as were necessary for the use of the temple. There were but three ways to come in, to the east, to the north, and to the south, and they went to it by an ascent of eight steps. Before, and over against the gate of the court of the priests, in the court of Israel, was erected a throne for the king, being a magnificent alcove, where the king seated himself when he came into the temple. Within the court of the priests, and over against the same eastern gate, was the altar of burnt-offerings, of twelve cubits square, according to Ezek. xliii. 16, or of ten cubits high and twenty broad, according to 2 Chron. iv. 1. They went up to it by stairs on the eastern side.

"Beyond this, and to the west of the altar of burnt-offerings, was the temple properly so called, that is to say, the sanctuary, the sanctum, and the porch of entrance. The porch was twenty cubits wide, and six cubits deep. Its gate was fourteen cubits wide. The sanctum was forty cubits wide, and twenty deep. There stood the golden candlestick, the table of shewbread, and the golden altar, upon which the incense was offered. The sanctuary was a square of twenty cubits. There was nothing in the sanctuary but the ark of the covenant, which included the tables of the law. The high priest entered here but once a year, and none but himself was allowed to enter. Solomon had embellished the inside of this holy place with palm trees in relief, and cherubim of wood covered with plates of gold, and in general the whole sanctuary was adorned, and as it were, overlaid with plates of gold.

"Round the sanctum and sanctuary were three stories of chambers, to the number of thirty-three. Ezekiel makes them but four cubits wide; but the first Book of Kings, vi. 6, allows five cubits to the first story, six to the second, and seven to the third.

"Since the consecration or dedication of the temple by Solomon A. M. 3001, this edifice has suffered many revolutions, which it is proper to take notice of here.

"Shishak, king of Egypt, having declared war with Rehoboam, king of Judah, took Jerusalem, in A. M. 3033, B. C. 967, before the vulgar era 971, and carried away the treasures of the temple; 1 Kings xiv. 2 Chron. xii.

"In 3146, Jehoash, king of Judah, got silver together to go upon the repairs of the temple; they began to work upon it in earnest, in 3148, B. C. 852, before the vulgar era 856; 2 Kings xii. 4, 5, and 2 Chron. xxiv. 7, 8, 9, &c.

"Ahaz, king of Judah, having called to his assistance Tilgath-Pileser, king of Assyria, against the kings of Israel and Damascus, who were at war with him, robbed the temple of the Lord of its riches, to give away to this strange king; 2 Chron. xxviii. 21, 22, &c. A. M. 3264, B. C. 736, before the vulgar era 740; and not contented

with this, he profaned this holy place by setting up there an altar like one he had seen at Damascus, and taking away the brazen altar that Solomon had made; 2 Kings xvi. 10, 11, 12, &c. He also took away the brazen sea from off the brazen oxen that supported it, and the brazen basins from their pedestals, and the king's throne or oratory, which was of brass. These he took away to prevent their being carried away by the king of Assyria. Nor did he stop here, but carried his wickedness so far as to sacrifice to strange gods, and to erect profane altars in all the corners of the streets of Jerusalem; 2 Chron. xxviii. 24, 25. He pillaged the temple of the Lord, broke the sacred vessels, and, lastly, shut up the house of God. This happened A. M. 3264, B. C. 736, before the vulgar era 740, to his death, which happened in 3278, B. C. 722, before the vulgar era 726.

"Hezekiah, the son and successor of Ahaz, opened again and repaired the gates of the temple which his father had shut up and robbed of their ornaments; 2 Chron. xxix. 3, 4, &c. A. M. 3278, B. C. 722, before the vulgar era 726. He restored the worship of the Lord and the sacrifices, and made new sacred vessels in the place of those that Ahaz had destroyed. But in the fourteenth year of his reign, (2 Kings xviii. 15, 16,) A. M. 3291, B. C. 709, before the vulgar era 713, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, coming with an army into the land of Judah, Hezekiah was forced to take all the riches of the temple, and even the plates of gold that he himself had put upon the gates of the temple, and give them to the king of Assyria. But when Sennacherib was gone back into his own country, there is no doubt that Hezekiah restored all these things to their first condition.

"Manasseh, son and successor of Hezekiah, profaned the temple of the Lord, by setting up altars to all the host of heaven, even in the courts of the house of the Lord; 2 Kings xxi. 4, 5, 6, 7; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 5, 6, 7; A. M. 3306, and the following years. He set up idols there, and worshipped them. God delivered him into the hands of the king of Babylon, who loaded him with chains, and carried him away beyond the Euphrates; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, 12, &c.; A. M. 3328, B. C. 672, before the vulgar era, 676. There he acknowledged and repented of his sins; and being sent back to his own dominions, he redressed the profanations he had made of the temple of the Lord, by taking away the idols, destroying the profane altars, and restoring the altar of burnt-offering, upon which he offered his sacrifices.

"Josiah, king of Judah, laboured with all his might in repairing the edifices of the temple, 2 Kings xxii. 4, 5, 6, &c., 2 Chron. xxxiv. 8—10; A. M. 3380, B. C. 620, before the vulgar era 624, which had been either neglected or demolished by the kings of Judah, his predecessors. He also commanded the priests and Levites to replace the ark of the Lord in the sanctuary, in its appointed place; and ordered that it should not any more be removed from place to place, as it had been during the reign of the wicked kings, his predecessors, 2 Chron. xxxv. 3.

"Nebuchadnezzar took away a part of the sacred vessels of the temple of the Lord, and placed them in the temple of his god, at Babylon, under the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6, 7; A. M. 3398, B. C. 602, before the vulgar era 606. He also carried away others, under the reign of Jehoiachin, 2 Chron.

A. M. 2981. A. C. 1023; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4375. A. C. 1036. 2 SAM. xix.—1 KINGS viii.

xxxvi. 10; A. M. 3405, B. C. 595, before the vulgar era 599. Lastly, he took the city of Jerusalem, and entirely destroyed the temple, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, A. M. 3416, B. C. 584, before the vulgar era 588; 2 Kings xxv. 1, 2, 3, &c.; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 18, 19.

"The temple continued buried in its ruins for the space of fifty-two years, till the first year of Cyrus at Babylon, A. M. 3468, B. C. 532, before the vulgar era 536. Then Cyrus gave permission to the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and there to rebuild the temple of the Lord, Ezra i. 1, 2, 3, &c. The following year they laid the foundation of the second temple; but they had hardly been at work upon it one year, when either Cyrus or his officers, being gained over by the enemies of the Jews, forbade them to go on with their work; Ezra iv. 5; A. M. 3470, B. C. 530, before the vulgar era 534. After the death of Cyrus and Cambyses, they were again forbidden by the Magian, who reigned after Cambyses, and whom the Scripture calls by the name of Artaxerxes; Ezra iv. 7, 17, 18, &c.; A. M. 3483, B. C. 517, before the vulgar era 521. Lastly, these prohibitions being superseded under the reign of Darius, son of Hystaspes, Ezra vi. 1, 14; Hag. i. 1, &c.; A. M. 3485, B. C. 515, before the vulgar era 519; the temple was finished and dedicated four years after, A. M. 3489, B. C. 511, before the vulgar era 515, twenty years after the return from the captivity.

"This temple was profaned by order of Antiochus Epiphanes, A. M. 3837. The ordinary sacrifices were discontinued therein, and the idol of Jupiter Olympus was set up upon the altar. It continued in this condition for three years; then Judas Maccabæus purified it, and restored the sacrifice and worship of the Lord; 1 Mac. iv. 36; A. M. 3840, B. C. 160, before the vulgar era 164.

"Herod the Great undertook to rebuild the whole temple of Jerusalem anew, in the eighteenth year of his reign, A. M. 3986.¹ He began to lay the foundation of it A. M. 3987, forty-six years before the first passover of Jesus Christ, as the Jews observe to him, by saying, ² 'Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?' This is not saying that Herod had employed six and forty years in building it; for Josephus assures us, that he finished it in nine years and a half.³ But after the time of this prince, they all continued to make some new addition to it; and the same Josephus tells us that they went on working upon it even to the beginning of the Jewish war.⁴

"This temple, built by Herod, did not subsist more than twenty-seven years, being destroyed A. M. 4073, A. D. 73, of the vulgar era 69. It was begun by Herod in 3987, finished in 3996, burned and destroyed by the Romans in 4073.

"This temple of Herod's was very different from that

of Solomon, and from that which was rebuilt by Zerubabel after the captivity. This is the description that Josephus has left us of it, who himself had seen it:—

"The temple, properly so called, was built sixty cubits high, and as many broad; but there were two sides of front, like two arms or shoulderings, which advanced twenty cubits on each side, which gave in the whole front an hundred cubits, as well as in height. The stones made use of in this building were white and hard, twenty-five cubits long, eight in height, and twelve in width.⁵

"The front of this magnificent building resembled that of a royal palace. The two extremes of each face were lower than the middle, which middle was so exalted that those who were over against the temple, or that approached towards it at a distance, might see it though they were many furlongs from it. The gates were almost of the same height as the temple; and on the top of the gates were veils or tapestry of several colours, embellished with purple flowers. On the two sides of the doors were two pillars, the cornices of which were adorned with the branches of a golden vine, which hung down with their grapes and clusters, and were so well imitated, that art did not at all yield to nature. Herod made very large and very high galleries about the temple, which were suitable to the magnificence of the rest of the building, and exceeded in beauty and sumptuousness all of the kind that had been seen before.

"The temple was built upon a very irregular mountain, and at first there was hardly place enough on the top of it for the site of the temple and altar. The rest of it was steep and sloping.⁶ But when king Solomon built it he raised a wall towards the east, to support the earth on that side; and after this side was filled up, he then built one of the porticos or galleries. At that time this face only was cased with stone, but in succeeding times, the people endeavouring to enlarge this space, and the top of the mountain being much extended, they broke down the wall which was on the north side, and enclosed another space, as large as that which the whole circumference of the temple contained at first. So that, at last, against all hope and expectation, this work was carried so far that the whole mountain was surrounded by a treble wall. But for the completing of this great work, whole ages were no more than sufficient; and all the sacred treasures were applied to this use, that the devotion of the people had brought to the temple from all the provinces of the world. In some places these walls were above 300 cubits high, and the stones used in these walls were some forty cubits long. They were fastened together by iron cramps and lead, to be able to resist the injuries of time. The platform on which the temple was built was a furlong square, or 120 paces." Thus far Calmet and Josephus.⁷

⁵ Joseph. de Bell. b. vi. p. 917.

⁶ Joseph. de Bell. b. vi. p. 915; Antiq. b. xv. c. 14.

⁷ Clarke's Commentary.

¹ Joseph. Antiq. b. xv. c. 14.

² John ii. 20.

³ Joseph. Antiq. b. xv. c. 14.

⁴ Joseph. Antiq. b. xx. c. 8.

THE

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK VI.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THINGS, FROM THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE, TO THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY, IN ALL ABOUT 400 YEARS,—ACCORDING TO DR HALES, 422 YEARS FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEMPLE, AND OF COURSE 414 YEARS AND SIX MONTHS FROM ITS BEING FINISHED.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE division of the history of God's chosen people, on which we are now entering, extends nearly from the close of David's reign to the Babylonish captivity, a period of about four hundred and twenty-seven years. The sacred books in which this history is contained, are usually called "the first and second books of the Kings;" and in some versions, "the third and fourth books of the Kings." It is evident, as Mr Scott remarks, that they contain an abstract of the history, compiled from much more copious records, which seem to have been collected and preserved by contemporary prophets,¹ and indeed, a considerable part of the transactions of their own times, is recorded in connexion with the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. It is, however, uncertain by whom this compilation was made: but if Ezra, as it is generally and probably supposed, compiled the books of Chronicles; it is not likely that he compiled these also; as they form a distinct history of the same times. If, therefore, they were arranged in the present manner, principally by one sacred writer, they who ascribe them to Jeremiah, seem to have adopted the more probable opinion. Indeed, the second book of the Kings and his prophecy end with the narrative of the same events; though perhaps both were added after his death by another hand; and it is not unlikely that some other trivial alterations were made in the days of Ezra, to render the narrative more perspicuous to the Jews after the captivity.

They have, however, been constantly received, both by Jews and Christians, as a part of the Sacred Canon, the holy Scriptures; and the events recorded are frequently referred to in the New Testament.² They contain many prophecies; especially that of Josiah, who was foretold by name, three hundred years before his birth. After the death of David, the sacred historian

records the principal transactions of Solomon's long and peaceful reign; which, however, was covered with a dark cloud toward the close; and under his successor, the nation was divided into two distinct kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The descendants of Solomon reigned over that of Judah till the captivity, for about three hundred and eighty-seven years: so that from the accession of David, during a course of four hundred and sixty-seven years, the throne was filled by his descendants, in lineal descent, except as the sons of Josiah succeeded one another. During this long term of years there was not a single revolution, or civil war; and but one short interruption, by Athaliah's usurpation. Perhaps it would be difficult to find, in universal history, any thing equal to this permanent internal order and tranquillity. Above half the kings of Judah supported true religion, and many of them were eminently pious men; and it is remarkable that their reigns were much longer than those of the wicked princes.³

The kingdom of Israel continued about two hundred and fifty-four years, till the Assyrian captivity. The nineteen kings, of seven families, who, during this period, reigned in succession, were all idolaters, and most of them monsters of iniquity: yet the Lord by his prophets, especially by Elijah and Elisha, preserved a considerable degree of true religion in the land, till the measure of their national wickedness was full; and then they were finally dispersed among the Gentiles, except as a remnant of them was incorporated among the Jews.

Connected with the peace and prosperity of Solomon's reign, and the fame of his wisdom, a full account is given of the temple having been built by him. God had commanded Israel to offer all their sacrifices at one place; Shiloh had for some time been that place; and the ark had been removed to Zion, by David, in order that a temple might there be built, which Solomon his son accomplished. Now a large portion of the subsequent parts of the Old Testament relate to this temple; to the sins of the people in sacrificing elsewhere; to

¹ 1 Kings xi. 41. xiv. 29. xv. 31. xxii. 39, 45. 2 Chron. ix. 29. xii. 15. xiii. 22. xx. 34.

² Mat. i. 7—12. vi. 29. xii. 42. Luke iv. 25—27. Acts ii. 20. vii. 47—50. James v. 17, 18.

³ 1 Kings xi. 42. xv. 10. xxii. 42. 2 Kings xv. 2, 33. xviii. 2. xxii. 1.

A. M. 3001. A. C. 1003; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4391. A. C. 1020. 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON.

their profanation of the temple; to the judgments of God upon them for their crimes; especially to the destruction of the temple by the Chaldeans; and to the rebuilding of it by Zerubbabel. These things so run through all the subsequent history and prophecies, that if Solomon did not build the temple by the express command of God, it must follow, that God punished the nation with tremendous judgments for violating merely human appointments. When the Samaritans preferred Mount Gerizim, our Lord told the woman of Samaria, that they "knew not what they worshipped, for salvation was of the Jews:" and this declaration, with his own constant attendance at the ordinances there administered, sufficiently attest the divine inspiration of those records, in which alone it is expressly declared that Solomon built the temple by the direction and appointment of God.

The temple was a type of Christ,—of his church,—and of heaven. The tabernacle seemed rather to represent the church in its moveable, changeable state, in this world: but the temple, fixed to one place, appears to have been intended to represent the church in heaven.—This was the house in which Christ dwelt, till he assumed human nature. Here was the place that God chose, where his people offered up their sacrifices, till he came, who by the sacrifice of himself finished transgression, made an end of sin *offering*, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. Here the messenger of the covenant often delivered his heavenly doctrine; and here his church was gathered by the pouring out of his Spirit after his ascension: the sound of the gospel went forth from hence over the world.

It may also be observed, that the Jewish church was, in the reign of Solomon, in a state of great external prosperity. Israel was exceedingly multiplied, so that they seemed to have become like the sand on the sea shore. They were now in the peaceful possession of the promised land, and of all the abundance, which, through the divine blessing, it yielded to them. Their king was a typical representation of Christ, glorious in his apparel, exalted, triumphing, and reigning, in his kingdom of peace. The happy state of the Jewish church at that time, shadowed forth the condition of the church in the latter day, when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more;—at that blissful period, when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain, because the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. There were considerable additions made to the canon of Scripture by Solomon, who wrote the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, probably near the close of his reign. The Song of Songs, which was also written by him, has always been considered as representing the high and glorious relation which subsists between Christ and his redeemed church.

The reader should remark the care which God exercised in the course of this period, in upholding the true religion. When the ten tribes had generally forsaken the worship of God, he preserved the true religion in the kingdom of Judah; and when that people corrupted themselves, as they often did, God still kept the lamp of heavenly truth burning, and was often pleased, when things seemed to come to an extremity, to grant blessed

revivals of religion, by remarkable outpourings of his Holy Spirit, particularly in Hezekiah and Josiah's time. The preservation of the book of law in the time of the great apostasy, during a considerable part of the long reign of Manasseh, which lasted fifty-five years, and also in the reign of Amon his son, is a remarkable instance of the care which God exercised over the interests of true religion.

The intelligent reader will also observe, that amid the apostasies and calamities by which this period was characterized, the tribe of Judah, from which the Redeemer was to come, was preserved from ruin by the special interposition of God. As instances of deliverance by the arm of God, we need only mention their preservation when Shishak king of Egypt came against Judah with a great force; when Jeroboam brought an army of eight hundred thousand men against the members of this tribe; and when, again, in Asa's time, Zerah the Ethiopian came against him with a yet larger army of a thousand thousand and three hundred chariots.¹ And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power.² His prayer was heard; and God himself gave him the victory over this mighty host. When the children of Moab, and the children of Amon, and the inhabitants of mount Seir, combined together against Judah with a mighty army, a force greatly superior to any that Jehoshaphat could raise, God assured Jehoshaphat and his people by one of the prophets, that they need not be afraid, for that he himself, without their instrumentality, would destroy their armies. But it is unnecessary to allude to more examples of this kind. It was the purpose of God, a purpose often referred to by the prophets, that the Messiah should spring from the tribe of Judah, and the family of David, and that therefore this tribe and family should be preserved till that illustrious descendant appeared, to whom should be given the throne of his father David, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

Nor should we fail to notice the goodness of God to his church and people, in raising up eminent prophets, who committed their prophecies to writing, for the instruction and edification of the church in all ages. From the time of Samuel there had been a constant succession of prophets in Israel, who had added to the canon of Scripture by their historical writings. But now in the days of Uzziah, God raised up great prophets, who added to the canon not only by their historical compositions, but by books of their prophecies. Of these, we need only mention Isaiah, Amos, Jonah, Micah, and Nahum. They were divinely qualified to exercise the prophetic office for the purpose of bearing testimony to the great Redeemer: for the testimony of Jesus and the spirit of prophecy are the same.³ Accordingly, we find, that the main things insisted on by the prophets are Christ, his redemption, the establishment of his kingdom among men, and the glories of the latter day. In what exalted strains do they allude to these heavenly themes. How plainly and fully does Isaiah, the *evangelical prophet*, describe the manner and circumstances, the nature and end, of the sufferings and sacrifice of Christ!³ In what chapter of the New Testament are these more fully set forth

¹ 2 Chron. xiv. 9—11.

² Rev. xix. 10.

³ 1s. lii.

A. M. 3001. A. C. 1003; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES. A. M. 4391. A. C. 1020. 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 3 CHRON.

This, then, forms an important era in the history of the discovery of human redemption. The way of salvation for fallen man was more clear than at any former period by the great increase of gospel light communicated by inspired prophets: 'Of which salvation the prophets inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.'¹

SECT. I.

CHAP. I.—*From the finishing of the temple, to the reign of Jehoshaphat.*

THE HISTORY.

WHEN Solomon had finished the temple, which was in the eleventh year of his reign, and in the eighth month of that year,^a even when all the solemn feasts were over, he thought it advisable to defer the dedication of it until the next year, which was a year of jubilee, and determined to have it done some days before the ^b feast of tabernacles. To this purpose, he sent all the elders of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the heads of the families, notice to repair to Jerusalem at the time appointed; when accordingly, all being met together, the priests and Levites carried into the temple, first, all the presents that David had made to it: then set up, in their several places, the vessels and ornaments appointed for the service of the altar, and the sanctuary; and lastly,

¹ 1 Peter i. 10—13.

^a Solomon deferred the dedication of the temple to the following year after it was finished, because that year, according to Archbishop Usher, was a jubilee. "This," he observes, "was the ninth jubilee, opening the fourth millenary of the world, or A. M. 3001, wherein Solomon, with great magnificence, celebrated the dedication of the temple seven days, and the feast of tabernacles other seven days; the celebration of the eighth day of tabernacles being finished, upon the twenty-third day of the seventh month, the people were dismissed, every man to his home. The eighth day of the seventh month, namely, the thirtieth of our October, being Friday, was the first of the seven days of dedication; on the tenth day, Saturday November 1, was the feast of expiation or atonement held; whereon, according to the Levitical laws, the jubilee was proclaimed by sound of trumpet. The fifteenth day, Friday November 6, was the commencement of the feast of tabernacles; the twenty-second, November 13, being also Friday, was the termination of the feast of tabernacles, which was always very solemnly kept, (2 Chron. vii. 9; Lev. xxiii. 36; John vii. 37;) and the day following, November 14, being our Saturday, when the Sabbath was ended, the people returned home.—*Usher's Annals*.—Ed.

^b This feast was appointed in commemoration of the children of Israel's dwelling in booths, whilst they were in the wilderness, and of the tabernacle, which at that time was built, where God promised to meet them, to dwell among them, and to sanctify the place with his glory; and might therefore be well reckoned a very proper season for the dedication of the temple, which was to succeed in the tabernacle's place.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 6. c. 2.

brought the ^c ark of the covenant, together with the ^d tabernacle of the congregation, into its new habitation with great solemnity; the king and elders of the people walking before, while others of the priests offered an ^e infinite number of sacrifices, in all the places through which the ark passed.

^c The sacred history tells us, that 'in this ark there was nothing save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb,' (1 Kings viii. 9.) and yet the author to the Hebrews affirms, 'that in this ark was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, as well as the tables of the covenant,' (Heb. ix. 4.) Now, to reconcile this, some imagine, that before the ark had any fixed and settled place, which is the time the apostle refers to, all these things were included in it, though it was chiefly intended for nothing but the tables of the covenant; but that, when it was placed in the temple, nothing was left in it but these two tables; all the other things were deposited in the treasury of the temple, where the book of the law (as we read in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.) was found in the days of king Josias. Others however pretend, that in the time of the apostle, that is, towards the end of the Jewish commonwealth, Aaron's rod, and the pot of manna were really kept in the ark, though, in the days of Solomon, they were not. But this answer would be more solid and satisfactory, if he knew for certain, that, in the time of the apostle, the ark of the covenant was really in the sanctuary of the temple which Herod built; whereas Josephus (*On the Jewish War*, b. 6. c. 6.) tells us expressly, that, when the Romans destroyed the temple, there was nothing found in the holy of holies.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d But the question is, what tabernacle, whether that which Moses made, and was then at Gibeon, (2 Chron. i. 3.) or that which was made by David, and was then at Jerusalem? To end this dispute, some have imagined, that both these tabernacles were at this time carried into the temple, and laid up there, that all danger of superstition and idolatry might thereby be avoided, and that no worship might be performed anywhere, but only at the house which was dedicated to God's service. But it is observed by others, that the convenience which David made for the reception of the ark, was never called the 'tabernacle of the covenant;' it was no more than a plain tent, set up in some large room of the royal palace, until a more proper receptacle could be provided for it; but the tabernacle that was at Gibeon was the same that sojourned so long in the wilderness. The tent was the same, the curtains the same, and the altar the same that was made by Moses; or, at least, if there was any alteration in it, as things of this nature could hardly subsist so very long without some repair, the reparation was always made according to the original model, and with as little deviation as possible. It is not to be doubted, then, but that the Mosaic tabernacle is the tabernacle here intended, which for the prevention of schism, and to make the temple the centre of devotion, was now taken down, and reposit in the treasury, or storehouse, where it continued until the time that Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, when Jeremiah, as Josephus informs us, (*Jewish Antig.* b. 8. c. 2.) was admonished by God, to take it and the ark, and the altar of incense, and hide them in some secret place, from whence it is doubted, whether they have ever yet been removed, for fear of profanation.—*Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

^e The number of sacrifices which, upon this occasion, are said to be offered, was 'two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep,' (1 Kings viii. 63.) But we must not suppose, that these were offered all on one day, much less on one altar. The continuance of this meeting was for fourteen days, seven in the feast of tabernacles, and seven in that of the dedication; and because the brazen altar, before the door of the temple, was not sufficient to receive all these sacrifices, Solomon, by a special license from God, ordered other altars to be erected in the court of the priests, and perhaps in other places, which were to serve only during this present solemnity, when such a vast number of sacrifices were to be offered: for at other times no other altar was allowed but this brazen one, which Moses had made. It is no bad observation, however, of Josephus, (b. 8. c. 2.) that, during the oblation of so many sacrifices, the Levites took care to 'perfume the air with the fragrant of incense, and sweet odours, to such a degree, that the people were sensible of it at a distance;' otherwise the burning of so many beasts at one time, must have occasioned an offensive smell.—*Patrick's Comment.*

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When the ark was placed in the sanctuary, and the priests and Levites, in their turns, were celebrating the praises of God, the temple was filled with a ^a miraculous cloud, insomuch that the priests could not continue to officiate. This Solomon observing, took occasion from thence to infer, that the Lord had taken possession of the place; and having for some time fallen prostrate ^b with his face to the ground, he raised himself up, and turning towards the sanctuary, ^c addressed his prayer to God, and 'beseeched him graciously to accept of the house which he had built for his sake, to bless and sanctify it; and to hear the prayers of all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who, upon any occasion, either of public or private calamity, might direct their supplications to him ^d from that holy place. He beseeched him likewise to

fulfil the promise which he had been pleased to make to his father David, in favour of his family, and the kings his successors;' and having thus finished his prayer, he turned to the people, and after he had blessed them, gave them a strict charge to be sincere in their duty towards God, to walk in his statutes, and observe his laws.

While Solomon was thus addressing his prayers to God, and his exhortations to the people, a victim was laid upon the altar, and God, to testify his acceptance of what was doing, sent immediately a fire from heaven, which consumed it, and all the other sacrifices that were about it; which, when the people, who were witnesses of the miracle, perceived, they fell upon their faces, and worshipped the God of Israel: and it was, very probably, on the ^e night following, that he appeared to Solomon again in a dream, and ^f signified to him, 'that he had

^a When Moses had finished the tabernacle according to the pattern which God had showed him, and set it all up, it is said, that 'a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, so that Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle,' (Exod. xl. 34, 35.) And therefore, when the temple was finished, and the ark brought into the sanctuary, God gave the like indication of his presence, and residence there. Hereby he testified his acceptance of the building, and furnishing the temple, as a service done to his name; and hereby he declared, that as the glory of the ark, that sacred symbol of his presence, had been long eclipsed by its frequent removes, and mean habitations; so now his pleasure was, that it should be looked upon with the same esteem and veneration as when Moses conducted it into the tabernacle. For this cloud, we must know, was not a heavy, thick, opaque body, such as is engendered in the air, and arises from vapours and exhalations, but a cloud that was dark and luminous at the same time, whose darkness was awful and majestic, and whose internal part was bright and refulgent, darting its rays upon occasion, and exhibiting its light through its obscurity; so that, according to its different phasis, or position, it became to the Israelites a pillar of a cloud by day, to screen them from the heat, and at night a pillar of fire to give them light, (Exod. xiii. 21.) Whatever it was that constituted this strange appearance, it is certain this mixture of light and darkness was looked upon as a symbol of the divine presence; for so the Scripture has informed us, that he who dwelleth in light that is inaccessible, 'made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him, with dark water, and thick clouds to cover him, (Ps. xviii. 11.)—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^b Although it is not improbable that Solomon may have prostrated himself on the appearance of the cloud of glory that filled the temple, the text makes no mention of his having done so, but immediately after this divine manifestation, we are told that he spake and blessed the people. It may seem unnecessary to take notice of so trifling a matter, but to mix up with the sacred narrative assertions which are founded on mere conjecture, we consider neither safe nor warrantable.—*Ep.*

^c The prayer which Josephus puts into Solomon's mouth upon this occasion, is to this effect:—"O Lord, thou that inhabitest eternity, and hast raised out of nothing the mighty fabric of this universe, the heavens, the air, the earth, and the sea; thou that fillest the whole, and every thing that is in it, and art thyself unbounded, and incomprehensible; look down graciously upon thy servants, that have presumed to erect a temple here to the honour of thy great name. Lord, hear our prayers, and receive our sacrifices. Thou art everywhere, vouchsafe also to be with us. Thou that seest and hearest all things, look down from thy throne in heaven, and give ear to our supplications in this place. Thou that never failest to assist those that call upon thee day and night, and love and serve thee as they ought to do, have mercy upon us." There is another prayer, in the same historian, addressed to God on the same occasion, wherein Solomon blesses him for the exaltation of his family, and implores the continuance of his goodness and peculiar presence in the temple, well worth the reader's perusal, though too long to be inserted here.

^d It is the same thing, no doubt, to God, wherever we pray, so long as we pray with a pious mind and a devout heart, and

make the subject of our prayers such good things as he has permitted us to ask; but it was not consistent with the preservation of the Jewish state and religion that he should be publicly worshipped in every place. For since the Jews were on every side surrounded with idolaters, led away with divers superstitions, but ignorant all of the true God, it was highly necessary, that in all divine matters, there should be a strict union between them all both in heart and voice, and consequently, that they should all meet together in one place to worship God, lest they should run into parties, and fall into idolatry, as it happened when the kingdom became divided into two. And therefore, though Solomon, knew very well that in every place, God was ready to hear the prayers of every devout supplicant, yet, for the preservation of peace and unity, he was minded to give the people a notion, that God would be found more exorable to the prayers which were offered in the temple of Jerusalem, and thereby excite them to a frequentation of that, rather than any other place.—*Le Clerc's Commentary* in locum.

^e It is thus that we have placed the time of God's second appearance to Solomon; but some are of opinion, that it did not happen till two and twenty years after God's first appearance, and after that Solomon had accomplished all his buildings; to which the connexion of the discourse seems to give some countenance; 'and it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all that he was pleased to do, that the Lord appeared to him a second time,' (1 Kings ix. 1, 2.) It seems a little strange, however, that God should delay answering this prince's prayer for thirteen years together, and then, when he appeared to him, tell him, 'I have heard thy prayer, and the supplication that thou hast made before me, and I have hallowed this house which thou hast built.' Ver. 3. And therefore to solve this difficulty, it is reasonable to think, that the division of this 9th chapter is wrong; that the first verse of it should be annexed to the conclusion of the preceding chapter, and so terminate the account of what Solomon had done; and that the next chapter should begin with the second verse, where the historian enters upon a fresh subject, namely, the answer that God returned to Solomon's prayer, which he continues to the tenth verse, and presents us with it all at once, that he might not break the thread of his narration.—*Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Kings ix. 2.

^f Josephus has made a very handsome comment upon the answer which God made Solomon in his dream. The voice told him farther, says he, 'that in case of such an apostasy, as he had before mentioned, his new-erected fabric should, by divine permission, come to be sacked, and burned by the hands of barbarians, and Jerusalem itself laid in rubbish and ashes by a merciless enemy; insomuch that people should stand amazed at the very report of so incredible a misery and distress, and be wondering one to another, how it could come to pass, that a nation which was but yesterday the envy of mankind for riches, external glory, and renown, should now, all on a sudden, be sunk and lost to the last degree of wretchedness and contempt, and reduced to this despicable state too by the same hand that raised them. To which questions their own guilty consciences shall make this answer: "We have forsaken our God; we have abandoned the religion of our forefathers, and of our country, and all this is justly befallen us for our sins."—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 8. c. 2.

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heard his prayer; did accept of the temple which he had built for him; and would not fail to listen to the petitions that proceeded from thence; that if he persevered in his obedience to him, as his father David had done, he would establish his throne, and perpetuate a race of successors in his family; but that, if either he, or his children prevaricated in this matter, he would cut them off, overturn his kingdom, and destroy the temple.'

The feast of the dedication, in conjunction with that of tabernacles, lasted for fourteen days; and when all things were thus performed with the greatest order and solemnity, on the morrow the king dismissed the people, ^a who returned to their respective homes with glad and joyful hearts.

Solomon, it must be observed, had a singular taste for building; therefore, after he had finished and consecrated the temple, he undertook a palace for himself,^b which had all the magnificence that can be imagined, another for his Egyptian queen, and a third, that was called ^c 'the house of the forest of Lebanon,' where he

^a In 1 Kings viii. 66, we are told that 'on the eighth day he sent the people away;' that is, the day after the latter feast of tabernacles, which lasted seven days. It is said, (2 Chron. vii. 10,) that, 'on the three and twentieth day he sent the people away,' which Houbigant thinks cannot be reconciled. He is of opinion, that something has been omitted here which should have been supplied from the parallel place; but it is probable that these fourteen days of rejoicing were not kept without intermission, particularly as the day of expiation, or atonement, was celebrated on the tenth of Tisri, or Ethanim. (See Lev. xxiii. 27; and *Calendar of the Jews, in Prolegom.* p. 66.) By admitting therefore a sufficient interval of time to complete the number of days, these two texts may be satisfactorily reconciled.—*Hewlett's Commentaries*.—Ed.

^b The description of this palace, which we may gather from Josephus, Lamy, and others, that have treated of Solomon's buildings, is in this manner related:—^c Upon several rows of pillars, there was erected a spacious pile of building, in the nature of a common hall, for the hearing of causes. It was an hundred cubits in length, fifty in breadth, and in depth thirty, supported by fifteen square columns, covered with Corinthian work in cedar, and fortified with double doors, curiously wrought, that served both for the security and ornament of the place. In the middle of this hall was another edifice of thirty cubits square, and underest with strong pillars, wherein was placed a throne of state, on which the king himself used to sit personally in judgment. On the right hand of this court of justice stood the king's own palace, and, on the left, that which he built for Pharaoh's daughter, both fitted up with cedar, and built with huge stones of ten cubits square, which were partly plain, and partly overlaid with the most precious marble.—The rooms were hung with rich hangings, and beautified with images, and sculptures of all kinds, so exquisitely finished, that they seemed to be alive, and in motion. It would be an endless work, says Josephus, to give a particular survey of this mighty mass of building: so many courts and other contrivances, such a variety of chambers and offices, great and little, long and large galleries, vast rooms of state, and others for feasting and entertainment, set out as richly as could be, with costly furniture, and gildings; besides, that all the services for the king's table were of pure gold. In a word, the whole house was in a manner made up from top to bottom, of white marble, cedar, gold, and silver, with precious stones, here and there intermingled upon the walls and ceilings, after the manner of the adorning of the temple.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 8. c. 2.

^c Some commentators are of opinion, that this house was the same with the palace which Solomon built in Jerusalem, and that it had its name from the tall pillars that supported it, which looked like the cedars in the forest of Lebanon; but the contrary is manifest, because the holy Scripture speaks of it as a distinct building, though perhaps it might not be far distant from the other on some cool shady mountain, which made it resemble Mount Lebanon. For it is an idle fancy to think, that this house

chiefly chose to reside. These were the works of thirteen years: and as Hiram, king of Tyre, was very kind in supplying him with men, money, and materials, to carry on these, and many more stately structures, Solomon, to express his gratitude, or to clear off the debt which he had contracted with him, ^d offered him twenty cities in the land of Galilee, adjoining to his own country. But as these places ^e did not suit his convenience, he refused to accept of them; and therefore Solomon, having made him, no doubt, some other recompense more to

was really built on Lebanon, since we read of Solomon's having his throne, (1 Kings vii. 7.) and the golden shields, that he made, placed in it, (1 Kings x. 17.) which he scarce would have removed to the very extremity of his kingdom: and therefore we may conclude, as indeed it appears from 1 Kings vii. 2., that this house was near Jerusalem, and called by the name of the 'Forest of Lebanon,' just as many pleasant and delightful places in that country were called Carmel, because it was in a lofty place like Lebanon, and the trees which grew upon it made it very shady and cool, and consequently proper for Solomon to dwell there in summer, as he did in his palace in Jerusalem in winter.—*Patrick and Calnet's Commentary* on 1 Kings vii. 2.

^d It is an express injunction which God gives the Israelites, that the land wherein the people had a right by divine lot, and himself a right, as being the sole proprietor thereof, was not to be sold or alienated for ever, (Lev. xxv. 23.) How then could Solomon, without violating this law, pretend to give Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee? Now to this some have replied, that Solomon did not give Hiram a property and perpetual right to those cities, but only assigned him the possession of them for a time, until the debt which he had contracted for the several supplies he had from him, while he was building the temple, was satisfied. Others think that upon supposition that these cities were inhabited by Israelites, Solomon did not give Hiram, as indeed he could not, their particular possessions, but only his own royalties over them, which he might justly do, and all the profits he received from them, which, according to the taxes then imposed, (1 Kings xii. 4.) were not inconsiderable. But there is no reason for these far fetched solutions, when the Scripture expressly tells us, that these cities were not in the territories of Israel, nor inhabited at that time by the Israelites, (2 Chron. viii. 2.) There were indeed some of them conquered by the king of Egypt, who gave them to Solomon as a portion with his daughter, and others by Solomon himself, who, as Selden observes, (*On the Law of Nature and Nations*, b. 6. c. 16.) had "a right to dispose of those lands which he had conquered in voluntary war, without the consent of the senate." And this may be one reason why he gave these, rather than other cities, because these were certainly in his own power to give, when others perhaps were not. A learned author upon this subject, has given a quite different turn to the sense of the passage. For his opinion is, that Hiram did not return these cities, because he thought them not good enough, but because he was unwilling to receive so large a remuneration for the few good offices he had done Solomon, and was minded rather that his favours of this kind should be all gratuitous. He therefore makes the word *Calul*, which is the name that Hiram gives to the country where these cities stood, a title of respect, and not of contempt; for he derives it from the Hebrew *Chebes*, which signifies a bond or chain, intimating that these two neighbouring kings had mutually bound themselves in a bond of friendship, Solomon by giving, and Hiram by returning the cities now under consideration. This is very pretty: but it is carrying the point of generosity in the king of Tyre a little too high, in my opinion, considering his acceptance of, if not express stipulation for, such a quantity of corn and oil, in lieu of the timber which he sent Solomon, (1 Kings v. 10, 11.)—*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries*; and *Poole's Annotations*.

^e The reason is, because the Tyrians being very commodiously situated for that purpose, were in a manner, wholly addicted to merchandise: and therefore would not remove from the sea coasts, to live in a soil which was fat and deep, and consequently required a great deal of labour to cultivate it, which was a business that they were very little accustomed to.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 6. c. 2.

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his satisfaction, took and repaired these cities; and having built store cities likewise in the country, he sent colonies of his own subjects to inhabit them, that they might be a curb and restraint on the Syrians of Zobah, who had formerly been conquered by David, and, upon their revolt, but lately reduced by Solomon.

To conclude the account of Solomon's public buildings. He built the walls of Jerusalem, and a senate-house in the same city, called Millo. He repaired and fortified Hazor, Megiddo, the two Beth-Horons, Baalah, ^a Tadmor in the wilderness of Syria, and Gezer, which

^a Tadmor, which, by the Greeks, is called Palmyra, is situated in the wilderness of Syria, upon the borders of Arabia Deserta, inclining towards the Euphrates. Josephus places it two days' journey from the Upper Syria, one day's journey from the Euphrates, and six days' journey from Babylon. And the reason he gives why Solomon was inclined to build a city in this place, was, because in all the country round about, there was no such thing as a well or fountain, but in this spot only, to be found. If we may guess by the ruins, which later travellers give us the description of, this city was certainly one of the finest and most magnificent in the east, and it is somewhat surprising, that history should give us no account, either when or by whom it was reduced to the sad condition in which it lies at this day. But the true reason for his building this town in so desolate a place, was the commodiousness of its situation, to cut off all commerce between the Syrians and Mesopotamians, and to prevent their caballing and conspiring together against him, as they had done against his father David.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*. [It is probable that Tadmor was originally a watering station between Syria and Mesopotamia, with perhaps some indifferent accommodation suited to the mode of travelling in those times. The mere circumstance of wholesome water being found on any spot in such a country, was sufficient to give it importance. It lay in the direct line of communication for the Indian trade, by way of the Euphrates and Persian Gulf, and must have been an important station, not only for rest and refreshment, but as a point of exchange with the Armenian merchants, who would meet the Indian convoy here with their own merchandise, as the nearest point to them, as they thus carry on a direct traffic, independent of the great merchants of Tyre and Sidon. It is no wonder therefore, that the efforts of Solomon should be directed to obtain possession of a place from whence so great a profit might be drawn, either by a tax on the articles of trade, or by turning a portion of it, which would otherwise have gone to the ports of Phœnicia, into those of his own dominions. To strengthen this design he built Tadmor; that is, he converted it from a mere caravansera to a proud city; furnished it with every necessary and convenience as a place of trade; and made it one of the greatest of the many emporia of eastern commerce: advantages which it enjoyed, and under which it continued to flourish, for more than a thousand years, as may be gathered from the mention made of its strength and prosperity at the time of the Parthian wars.]—*Mansford's Scripture Gazetteer*.—Ed. The original name was preserved till the time of Alexander, who extended his conquests to this city, which then exchanged Tadmor for the title of Palmyra. It submitted to the Romans about the year 130, and continued in alliance with them during a period of 150 years. When the Saracens triumphed in the east, they acquired possession of this city, and restored its ancient name of Tadmor. Of the time of its ruin there is no authentic record; but it is thought, with some probability, that its destruction occurred during the period in which it was occupied by the Saracens. Of its present appearance Messrs Wood and Dawkins, who visited it in 1751, thus speak:—"It is scarcely possible to imagine any thing more striking than this view. So great a number of Corinthian pillars, mixed with so little wall or solid building, afforded a most romantic variety of prospect." Captain Mangles, who travelled more recently, observes, "On opening upon the ruins of Palmyra, as seen from the valley of the tombs, we were much struck with the picturesque effect of the whole, presenting the most imposing sight of the kind we had ever seen." But on a minute inspection, the ruins of this once mighty city do not appear so interesting as at a distance. Volney observes, "In the space covered by these ruins, we sometimes find a palace of which nothing remains but the court and walls; sometimes a temple, whose

the king of Egypt took from the Canaanites, and gave it in dower with his daughter. He fortified all the cities which he made his magazines for corn, wine, and oil, and those where his chariots and horses were kept. He subdued all the Hittites, and Hivites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, that anywhere remained in the land of Israel, and laid on them all the drudgery, and servile labour. But ^b as for his own subjects, he appointed them either to be surveyors of his works, or guards to his person, or commanders in the army, or traders and merchants, that so he might make his nation as famous, and as rich and flourishing, as it was possible to be effected by human policy.

But it was not only a multitude of hands, but a large supply of wealth likewise, that was necessary to carry on so many expensive buildings; and therefore Solomon took care to cultivate the trade to Ophir, which his father had begun from Elam and ^c Ezion-Geber, two ports in the Red sea, whether himself went in person to inspect the building of the ships, and to provide them with able and experienced seamen, which his good friend and ally Hiram was never backward to furnish him with. So that by this means his subjects, who soon attained to the art of navigation, were enabled to make several advantageous voyages; and particularly in one fleet,

peristyle is half thrown down; and now a portico, a gallery, a triumphal arch. If from this striking scene we cast our eyes upon the ground, another almost as varied presents itself. On which side soever we look, the earth is strewed with vast stones half buried, with broken entablatures, mutilated friezes, disfigured reliefs, effaced sculptures, violated tombs, and altars defiled by the dust." It is situated under a ridge of barren hills to the west, and its other sides are open to the desert. The city was originally about ten miles in circumference; but such have been the destructions effected by time, that the boundaries are with difficulty traced and determined. In the Modern Traveller, there is a very excellent description of the present aspect of this ruined city, by Mr Josiah Conder.—*Calmet's Dictionary* in locum.

^b History indeed takes notice of the same temper in Sesostris, king of Egypt, who, upon his return home from his several expeditions, took it into his head to build temples in all the cities of Egypt, but would suffer no Egyptian to do any servile work therein. All the work of this nature was performed by the captives that he brought with him from the wars; and therefore, to perpetuate the remembrance of his kindness to his subjects, as well as remove some possible odium from himself, upon every temple he ordered this inscription to be set up, "No native was ever a labourer here."—*Diodorus Bibliot.* b. 1.

^c Josephus will needs have it, that Ezion-Geber is the same with Berenice, which lies indeed upon the Red sea, but then it is upon the western or African shore thereof; whereas the Scripture is positive, that it was a port of Idumæa, or Arabia Deserta, situate upon the gulf of Elam, which is on the opposite shore. Elam, or Elath, or Elath, for it was called by all these names, was situate upon the same, and might possibly have its name from thence. When David conquered Edom, or Idumæa, he made himself master of this port, (2 Sam. viii. 14.) His son, we see, built ships here, and sent them from hence to Ophir for gold, (2 Chron. viii. 17, 18.) It continued in the possession of the Israelites about an hundred and fifty years, till, in the time of Joram, the Edomites recovered it, (2 Kings viii. 20.) but it was again taken from them by Azariah, and by him left to his son, (2 Kings xiv. 22.) His grandson Ahaz however lost it again to the king of Syria, (2 Kings xvi. 6.) and the Syrians had it in their hands a long while, till, after many changes under the Ptolemies, and the Seleucidæ, it came at length into the possession of the Romans. It was formerly a small town, with fruitful fields about it, but now there is nothing left but a tower, which serves as an habitation for the governor, who is subject to the governor of Grand Cairo, and no signs of fruitfulness to be seen in any parts adjoining to it.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Elam*.

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^a brought him home no less than ^b four hundred and twenty talents of gold, with many other commodities, and curiosities of great value. ^c In short, Solomon was one of the richest, and most magnificent princes, that was then on the face of the earth. In his time, silver was no more regarded than stones in the street: his annual revenues were six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, besides the tributes he received from the kings and nations that were in subjection to him; the subsidies which his subjects the Israelites paid; and the sums arising from the merchants for his customs. The bucklers of his guards were of gold; the ^d ivory throne, whereon he sat, was overlaid with it; and all the utensils of his

palaces, and vessels of his table, which ^e for magnificence, and sumptuousness of provision, exceeded all that was ever known before, were of the same metal. Presents of gold, of rich stuffs, of spices, of arms, of horses, and mules, were sent to him from every quarter; and to see the face, and hear the wisdom of the renowned Solomon, was the prevailing ambition of the great men of that age.

Captivated with this desire the queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem, attended with a great retinue, and brought with her rich presents of gold, spices, and precious stones. Her purpose was, to try if Solomon's wisdom was answerable to the high commendations she had

^a As great a king as Solomon was, we find he turned merchant, and yet the imperial laws forbid noblemen to exercise trade and commerce, as a thing below them; and much less then (as Bodinus de Republica, b. 6. c. 2.) does it become a king. But we must not measure antiquity by our own times: what might be then commendable may now have a different appearance. But the same author is very right in one concession that he makes, namely, that though he would not have kings now to be merchants yet, if he might have his choice, "I had rather a prince should be a merchant," says he, "than a tyrant, and that noblemen should rather trade than oppress, and make a prey of their tenants."

—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^b In 2 Chron. viii. 18, the number of talents brought home to Solomon, are said to be four hundred and fifty: but this is a matter that is easily resolved, if we will but suppose, that the charges of the voyage to and fro cost thirty talents; or that Solomon gave Hiram's servants, for conducting his fleet, thirty talents; or that in refining the whole mass of gold, the waste might be thirty talents; so that, though Solomon's fleet brought him home four hundred and fifty talents, yet by one or more of these deductions, there came clear to his coffers no more than four hundred and twenty.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^c 1 Kings x. 22. Ellis, in Cook's last voyage, speaking of the people of Otaheite, says, "They expressed great surprise at the Spaniards, who had lately made them a visit, because they had not red feathers as well as the English, which they had brought with them in great plenty from the Friendly Isles, for they are with these people the summum bonum and extent of all their wishes." (Vol. i. p. 129.) As these islands border so closely upon Asia, and have among their manners and customs many which bear a resemblance to those of the Asiatics, may not these people, of high esteem for red feathers throw some light upon this passage, where we find peacocks ranked amongst the valuable commodities imported by Solomon.—Ed.

^d We never read of ivory till about Solomon's days, who perhaps brought elephants out of India, or at least took care to have a great deal of ivory imported from thence; for, in after ages, we read of ivory beds, and ivory palaces, &c. Cabinets and wardrobes were ornamented with ivory, by what is called marquetry; (Ps. xlv. 8.) these were named 'houses of ivory'; probably because made in the form of a house or palace; as the silver *naoi* of Diana, mentioned Acts xix. 24, were in the form of her temple at Ephesus; and as we have now ivory models of the Chinese pagodas or temples. At this time, however, ivory was every whit as precious as gold, and therefore we must not suppose, that this throne of Solomon's was entirely overlaid with gold, for then it might as well be made of wood, but only in particular places, that so the mixture of gold and ivory, which gave a lustre to each other, might make the throne look more beautiful. The like to this, the text says, 'there was not made in any kingdom,' (1 Kings x. 20.) and perhaps it was so in those days; but, in after ages, we read, that the throne of the Parthian kings was of gold, encompassed with four golden pillars, beset with precious stones; and that the Persian kings sat in judgment under a golden vine, and other trees of gold, the bunches of whose grapes were made of several sorts of precious stones.—*Patrick's Commentary.* To this article may be very properly annexed the following account of the famous peacock throne of the great Mogul:—"The great Mogul has seven thrones, some set all over with diamonds; others wth rubies, emeralds, and pearls. But the largest throne is erected in

the hall of the first court of the palace; it is in form like one of our field beds, six feet long and four broad. I counted about a hundred and eight pale rubies in collets about that throne, the least whereof weighed a hundred carats; but there are some that weigh two hundred. Emeralds I counted about a hundred and forty, that weighed some threescore, some thirty carats. The under part of the canopy is entirely embroidered with pearls and diamonds, with a fringe of pearls round the edge. Upon the top of the canopy, which is made like an arch with four panes, stands a peacock, with his tail spread, consisting entirely of sapphires and other proper coloured stones; the body is of beaten gold, encased with numerous jewels; and a great ruby adorns his breast, to which hangs a pearl that weighs fifty carats. On each side of the peacock stands two nose-gays, as high as the bird, consisting of various sorts of flowers, all of beaten gold enamelled. When the king seats himself upon the throne, there is a transparent jewel, with a diamond appendant, of eighty or ninety carats weight, encompassed with rubies and emeralds, so suspended that it is always in his eye. The twelve pillars also that uphold the canopy are set round with rows of fair pearls, and of an excellent water, that weigh from six to ten carats apiece. At the distance of four feet, upon each side of the throne, are placed two umbrellas, the handles of which are about eight feet high, covered with diamonds, the umbrellas themselves being of crimson velvet, embroidered and fringed with pearl. This is the famous throne which Timur began and Shah Johan finished, and is really reported to have cost a hundred and sixty millions and five hundred thousand livres of our money." (*Tavernier's Indian Travels*, vol. iii. p. 331. edit. 1713.) Mr Morier, describing his interview with the king of Persia, says:—"He was seated on a species of throne, called the takht-e-taous, or the throne of the peacock, which is raised three feet from the ground, and appears an oblong square of eight feet broad and twelve long. We could see the bust only of his majesty, as the rest of his body was hidden by an elevated railing, the upper work of the throne, at the corners of which were placed several ornaments of vases and toys. The back is much raised; on each side are two square pillars, on which are perched birds, probably intended for peacocks, studded with precious stones of every description, and holding each a ruby in their beaks. The highest part of the throne is composed of an oval ornament of jewellery; from which emanate a great number of diamond rays. Unfortunately we were so far distant from the throne, and so little favoured by the light, that we could not discover much of its general materials. We were told, however, that it is covered with gold plates, enriched by that fine enamel work so common in the ornamental furniture of Persia. It is said to have cost one hundred thousand tomanis.—*Travels through Persia*, p. 19. See also *Forbes's Oriental Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 84.—Ed.

^e The provisions of Solomon's table, for one day, were thirty measures, which, according to the Hebrew word *cor*, as Goodwin has computed it, are six gallons, above an hundred and sixty-eight bushels of fine flour, and sixty of meal, or coarser flour for inferior servants, ten stall-fed oxen, twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, besides harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl," or, as Bochart translates the word, "the choicest of all fatted things." (1 Kings iv. 22, 23.) and this, according to the calculation which some have made from the quantity of bread that was every day consumed, must make Solomon's family consist, at least, of forty or fifty thousand souls.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

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heard of it; and therefore in discourse she proposed to him several enigmatical questions. But when she heard his clear and satisfactory solutions, she was not a little amazed at the profoundness of his judgment; and when she had seen the beauty, and worship of the temple, the magnificence of his court, and the sumptuousness of ^a his table and attendants, she was quite astonished, and frankly owned to him, that what herself had seen did far surpass any of the most extravagant reports she had ever yet heard of him: and so, having made him very ^b great and noble presents, and received others from him, that were not inconsiderable, she took her leave, and returned to her own country, highly pleased and satisfied with her visit.^c

Hitherto we have seen nothing in Solomon but what was truly great and wonderful; but the latter actions of his life so sadly tarnish and disgrace his character. For he gave himself up to the love of strange women, such as were descended from idolatrous nations, and, besides Pharaoh's daughter ^d mentioned before, married wives from among the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Hittites, the Idumeans, and the Sidonians. ^e Nay, so unbounded

^a Our excellent commentator, Bishop Patrick, tells us, that a very great man of our own, but is silent as to his name, has observed, that such things, as the difference of apparel, the order of sitting at table, and the attendance of Solomon's servants and ministers, were justly admired by the queen of Sheba, as an indication of his wisdom; "for they are the outworks," as he calls them, "which preserves majesty itself from approaches and surprisals; and whatsoever prince departs from these forms and trappings, and ornaments of his dignity, and pre-eminence, will hardly be able at some time, to preserve the body itself of majesty from intrusion, invasion, and violation."

^b After a very complimentary speech, in which Josephus makes this queen address king Solomon, among other valuable presents, recorded in Scripture, "they speak also," says he, "of a root of balsam, which she brought with her, which, according to a tradition we have, was the first plant of the kind that ever came into Judea, where it hath propagated so wonderfully ever since."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 8, c. 2.

^c 1 Kings x. 21. The magnificence of Solomon, particularly with respect to his drinking vessels, has not been exceeded by modern Eastern princes. The gold plate of the kings of Persia has been much celebrated, and is taken notice of by Chardin. He observes, that the plate of the king of Persia is of gold, and that very fine, exceeding the standard of ducats, and equal to those of Venice, which are of the purest gold. Shah Abas caused seven thousand two hundred marks of gold to be melted for this purpose. Now the two hundred targets of gold which Solomon made, weighed but little less than the drinking vessels which Shah Abas made. (1 Kings x. 16.) We may therefore believe that his royal drinking vessels were of equal, if not greater weight.—*Harmer*, vol. i. p. 384.—Ed.

^d Pharaoh's daughter is generally supposed to have been a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and therefore Solomon, in marrying her, incurred no fault; but, in marrying so many women besides, and these of a different religion, he committed two sins against the law; one in multiplying wives, and another, in marrying those of strange nations, who still retained their idolatry: and therefore the wise son of Sirach, amidst all the encomiums that he heaps upon Solomon, could not forget this heinous iniquity, and terrible flaw in his character. "Thou didst bow thy loins to women, and by thy body, thou wast brought into subjection. Thou didst stain thine honour, and pollute thy seed, so that thou broughtest wrath upon thy children, and wast grieved for thy folly." (Ecclesi. xlvii. 19, 20.)—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^e 1 Kings xi. 3. It appears to have been the manner of eastern princes to have a great number of wives, merely for pomp and state. Father La Compe tells us in his History of China, (part 1. p. 62.) that there the emperor hath a great number of wives, chosen out of the prime beauties of the country. It is also said, that the great Mogul has as many wives as make up a thousand. Habesci (*Present State of the Ottoman Empire*,

was his lust, that he had 700 wives, and 300 concubines, who conspired not a little to pervert his heart, and seduce him, in his old age, to the worship of their several idols.

Provoked at this his sad apostasy, God sent a prophet to upbraid him with his ingratitude, and to pronounce this heavy judgment upon him:—"That as he had revolted from his worship, so the major part of his kingdom should revolt from him, and put themselves under the government of one of his servants, though not in his days, yet in those of his immediate successor:" and, to make him sensible, that this judgment began already to operate, he raised up several enemies to the disturbance of his peace, which, as long as he continued in God's service, he enjoyed without interruption.

^f The first of these was Hadad of the blood-royal of Edom, who having fled from Joab, when he ravaged the country, and put the male children to death, escaped to Pharaoh king of Egypt, where he married his sister Tephneh; but, upon David's death, returned to his country, and recovered the kingdom. ^g The second was Rezon, who flying from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah, gathered together a great number of men, over whom he made himself captain, and with their assistance, seizing on Damascus, he there reigned as king of Syria, and confederated with Hadad to distress Solomon in the declining part of his reign. But ^h the most dan-

p. 166,) says that the number of women in the harem of the grand seignor depends on the taste of the reigning monarch. Sultan Selim had nearly 2000; Sultan Mahomet had but 300; Achmet the fourth has pretty near 1600. See also *Knolles's History of the Turks*, p. 1368, *Hanway's History of the Revolutions of Persia*, part 7. c. 31. p. 208.—Ed.

^f Hadad was a young prince of the royal family of Idumæa, who fled into Egypt when David conquered that country: for David, having obtained a signal victory under the conduct of Abishai, who, at that time, commanded in chief, sent Joab afterwards with an order to kill all the males that should be found in the land. But Hadad had escaped into Egypt, where, finding favour in the eyes of the king, he married his wife's sister, and there settled. But, after the death of David, he returned into Idumæa, and gave Solomon no small molestation. For, entering into a league with Rezon, a fugitive from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah, but who had now made himself king of some part of Syria, he, by his assistance, made so many inroads upon the land of Israel, that all things were in the utmost confusion, even before Solomon died; *Catmet's Commentary*,—and *Josephus's Jewish Antiq.* b. 8, c. 2.

^g When David made war against Hadadezer, Rezon, one of his generals, escaped from the field of battle, with the troops under his command; and having lived for a little while by plunder and robbery, at length seized on Damascus, and reigned there. But his reign was not long. For David took Damascus, as well as the other parts of Syria, and left it in subjection to his son Solomon, till God was pleased to suffer this Rezon to recover Damascus, and there re-establish himself, to the great disturbance of the latter part of Solomon's reign.—*Catmet's Commentary*.

^h As Solomon was engaged in several great buildings, he took care to set proper persons over the works, among whom Jeroboam was one, and the workmen under his command seem to be chiefly of the tribe of Ephraim. How he acquitted himself in this capacity, we are not told; but the pretence of his being angry with Solomon, and fomenting jealousies among the people, was the building of Millo. Millo was a deep valley, between the old Jerusalem and the city of David, part of which David filled up, and thereupon made both a fortress, and a place for the people to assemble. Another part of it Solomon filled up, to build a palace for his queen, the daughter of Pharaoh. The prodigious expense which this work cost, gave Jeroboam an opportunity to infuse a spirit of sedition into his brethren of the tribe of Ephraim; to complain heavily of hard labour they were forced to submit to, and the taxes they were obliged to pay; and to represent the

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gerous enemy of all was Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, a bold and enterprising man, whom Solomon had made overseer of his buildings, and who, for his great abilities, was the chief ruler in the house of Joseph, that is in the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. ^a The prophet Ahijah, as he was walking in the fields, happened to meet him; and, having acquainted him from God, that he had appointed him to be Solomon's successor in ten tribes out of twelve, and that, if he would adhere to his service, the government should be established in his family: as he was but ill affected to Solomon before, and now encouraged by the prophet's promises, he began to stir and solicit the people to a revolt. ^b The king having intelligence of this, was thinking to take him into custody; but he made his escape, and fled ^c unto Shishak king of Egypt, where he continued for the small remainder of Solomon's life, ^d who having reigned forty years, died

whole thing as a work of vanity, merely to gratify a proud foreign woman, and a silly doating king: and, by these insinuations, he wrought in the people a disaffection to Solomon, and his government; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Millo*.

^a Ahijah was a native of Shiloh, and one of those who wrote the annals of king Solomon's reign, (2 Chron. ix. 29). He is thought to have been the person who spake twice to Solomon from God; once, while he was building the temple, at which time he promised him his protection, (1 Kings vi. 12.) and at another time, when he had fallen into all his irregularities, and God expressed his indignation against him in bitter threats and reproaches, (1 Kings xii. 6.) His prediction to Solomon, that he would one day be perverted by women; and that to Jeroboam, that heifers (meaning the two golden calves which he set up) would alienate him from the service of God, are both taken notice of by Epiphanius, in his *Life and Death of the prophet*.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Abijah*.

^b How Solomon came to know what was thus transacted between Ahijah and Jeroboam alone, is a question of no great difficulty: for perhaps the prophet made no scruple to report what he had delivered in the name of the Lord; perhaps Jeroboam himself, being puffed up with this assurance, could not contain, but told it to some of his confidants, who spread it abroad; or perhaps his servants, though they heard not the words that the prophet spake, yet, seeing him rend the garment into twelve parts, and give ten to him, might speak of this strange and unaccountable action, which Solomon, as soon as he came to hear of it, might easily understand, because the same prophet, very likely had told him but just before, that the *kingdom should be rent from him*, and given to his servant (1 Kings xiv. 8).—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c All the kings of Egypt, from the time of Abraham, are in the sacred history, called by the name of Pharaoh, unless Rameses, that is mentioned in Gen. xlvii. 11, be the name of a king, not a country; so that this is the first we meet with, called by his proper name from the rest of the Pharaohs. Who this Egyptian prince was, the learned are not agreed. The opinion is pretty general, that it was the famous Sesostrius, mentioned in Herodotus, and of whom we have spoken before; but his life could hardly be extended to this period. Our great Usher sets him a vast way backward, even to the time of the Israelites' peregrination, and some chronologers carry it farther: but, be that as it will, it is very probable, that the prince had taken some offence at Solomon, otherwise he would hardly have harboured such seditious refugees as Jeroboam was.—*Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

^d Josephus indeed tells us, (*Antiq.* b. 8. c. 3.) that Solomon lived to a great age, that he reigned eighty years, and died at ninety-four; but this is a manifest error in that historian, which our saying, that the Scriptures give us only an account of Solomon while he continued in a state of piety, but that Josephus's computation takes in the whole of his life, is a poor and forced way of reconciling. The authority of Josephus must never be put in balance with that of the holy Scriptures, from whence may be learned that Solomon lived to the age of fifty-eight, or thereabout; because we may very well presume, that his immoderate

about the fifty-eighth year of his age; was buried in the city of David; and was succeeded by his son ^e Rehoboam.

Rehoboam, as soon as his father was dead, went to ^f Shechem, where all the chief of the people were met together to proclaim him king; but as the nation had been burdened with some heavy taxes during his father's reign, before they would agree to recognise him, they ^g desired a redress of their grievances, and in hopes of awing him into a compliance, sent for Jeroboam out of Egypt to appear at the head of the assembly.

pursuit of sensual pleasures both shortened his life, and left an eternal stain upon his memory: otherwise the character, which the author of Ecclesiasticus gives of this prince, is very beautiful:—'Solomon reigned in a peaceable time, and was honoured; for God made all quiet round about him, that he might build an house in his name, and prepare his sanctuary for ever. How wise wast thou in thy youth, and as a flood filled with understanding! Thy soul covered the whole earth, and thou fillest it with dark parables. Thy name went far into the islands, and for thy peace thou wast beloved. The countries marvelled at thee for thy songs, and proverbs, and parables, and interpretations. By the name of the Lord, which is called the Lord God of Israel, thou didst gather gold as tin, and didst multiply silver as lead: but thou didst bow thy loins unto women,' &c.—Eccles. xlvii. 13, &c.

^e Notwithstanding the vast multitude of wives that Solomon had, the Scriptures make mention of no more than three children, this son, and two daughters, that are spoken of 1 Kings vi. 11, 15, and, what is strange, in the beginning of his story, it takes no notice as usually it does, of his mother's nation, or family, though in the conclusion of it, (1 Kings xiv. 21—31,) it twice reminds us, that she was an Ammonitess by birth, and that her name was Naamah. Rehoboam was born in the first year of his father's reign, and was therefore much about forty-one when he entered upon the government; but he was an unskilful and imprudent man, and therefore made a very false step at his first accession to the throne. The author of Ecclesiasticus gives us no advantageous character of him, when he terms him 'A man void of understanding, who turned the people away with his counsel,' (ch. xlvii. 23.) Nay, his own son makes but a faint apology for him, when he tells the people, that he was 'young' (young in understanding,) 'and tender hearted, and could not withstand his enemies,' (2 Chron. xiii. 7.) and therefore some have imagined, that his father Solomon had him in his thoughts, when he said, in his Preacher, 'I hated all my labour, which I had taken under the sun, because I was to leave it to a man that should come after me; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man, or a fool; yet shall he have rule over all my labour, wherein I have laboured: this also is vanity,' ch. ii. 18, 19.—*Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

^f This city stood not only in the centre of the kingdom of Israel, but in the middle of the tribe of Ephraim, wherein there was the greatest number of malcontents. It was therefore very probably by the management of Jeroboam, or some of his friends, who durst not perhaps venture themselves at Jerusalem, that this city was made choice of for the place of a general convention, because they might more securely propose their grievances, which they were resolved to do, and use a greater freedom of speech than they could at Jerusalem, where the family of David was more powerful, more numerous, and better supported.—*Calmet's Commentary*; and *Poole's Annotations*.

^g What the particular grievances were that these people desired to have redressed, we may gather from 1 Kings iv. 7, &c., namely, the tribute Solomon exacted for his buildings, the expenses of his family, and the maintenance of his chariots and horses, which being for the honour of the nation, ought to have been borne more contentedly by a people enjoying such a large share of peace and plenty, and from a prince who had brought in such vast riches to his subjects, as made silver to be of no value at all in his days, (ch. x. 21,) but people are more sensible of their pressures than of their enjoyments, and feel the least burdens when they are most at ease. It is observable, however, that among all their complaints, they take no notice of Solomon's idolatry, or the strange worship which he had introduced, though this, one would think, should have been reckoned among the greatest of their grievances.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

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The people accordingly presented their address; but instead of a gracious answer, which his father's old counsellors by all means advised, as the only way to engage them to his interest for ever, some ^a young politicians, that had been ^b brought up with him, were of a contrary opinion, namely, that such concessions would look like fear and pusillanimity; that hard words would frighten them into obedience; and that, instead of redressing, his business was to tell them, that he intended to increase their grievances. This counsel Rehoboam had the imprudence to follow; which so disgusted the people, that they threw off all allegiance, and declared for another king. When Rehoboam came to understand this, he ^c sent Adoram his collector, to appease them, and probably to assure them that their taxes should be abated; but this pacification came too late. Their passions were so exasperated, that they fell upon the collector, and stoned him to death, without so much as once hearing what he had to say. Rehoboam seeing this, thought it high time to consult his own safety, by ^d hastening to his chariot, and fleeing to Jerusalem;

^a They were not so young, but they might have known better; for as Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he entered upon his kingdom, so these gentlemen having been brought up with him, must have been much about the same age; but they were raw and unexperienced, and unacquainted with the humours of the people; and therefore they gave the king such unseasonable advice.—*Patrick's Commentary*. [Houbigant, however, thinks he was but sixteen years old when he began to reign; and brings many forcible arguments to prove that the number, forty-one, must be a mistake. Capellus was the first who notified the number forty-one as an error. Boothroyd follows Houbigant in adopting the reading of the Greek appendix to 1 Kings xii., and observes, Rehoboam is said to have been young on his accession; if he had been forty-one, Solomon must have been married before his father's death, and married to an Ammonitess before he took Pharaoh's daughter, which is contrary to the narrative. Compare 2 Chron. x. 8. and xiii. 7. Dr A. Clarke also coincides in this reading. And we may add, if Solomon is allowed to refer to his own son in Eccles. ii. 18, 19, 'Yea I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun; because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet he shall have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured.' Then the conclusion is, that Rehoboam was still a youth, and had not arrived at that age when it could be known whether he would prove a wise man or a fool, and this work is generally admitted to have been penned only a short time before Solomon's death.]—ED.

^b It was a common custom among the kings of the east, to have their sons educated among other young lords that were of the same age, which, as it created a generous spirit of emulation, and both endeared the prince to the nobles and the nobles to the prince, could not but tend greatly to the benefit of the public. Sesostri, the most famous prince that ever Egypt produced, is said to have been educated in this way. And by the gallant youths that were his cotemporaries and fellow pupils, it was, that he afterwards did so many surprising actions. The same custom was in use among the Persians, as we may learn from the life of Cyrus; and of Alexander the Great we are told, that his father Philip had him trained up in his youth, among those young noblemen who became his great captains in the conquest of all Asia. So that Solomon's method and design, in the education of his son, was wise and well concerted, though it failed of success.—*Cabnet's Commentary*.

^c It was certainly a piece of great imprudence to send any one to treat with them, when they were so highly exasperated; but to send him that was an obnoxious man, as having the principal care of the very tributes they complained of, was downright infatuation; because nothing is so natural, as to hate those that are the instruments of our oppression, or any ways employed in it.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d This is the first time that we read of a king's riding in a chariot. Saul, David, and Solomon, rode in none; but after the

by which means he secured the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; but all the rest of the Israelites made choice of Jeroboam. And thus was this great and goodly kingdom, almost in its infancy, split into two parts; and, for ever afterwards, went under different denominations, the kingdom of Judah, and the kingdom of Israel, though the latter included the whole before.

As soon as Rehoboam was got safe to Jerusalem, he began to meditate revenge for the affront put upon himself in the person of Adoram his collector; and therefore, to reduce the rebel tribes by force of arms, he put himself at the head of an hundred and eighty thousand chosen troops of the two tribes, which continued faithful to him. But while they were on their march, the ^e prophet Shemaiah, by the direction of God, advised them to desist and return every one to his own home; because by the divine will and pleasure it was, that this division of the kingdom came to pass. Hereupon all the army, with Rehoboam's consent, was disbanded; and he, to secure the dominions that were left him, repaired and fortified fifteen frontier towns; built several strongholds in the heart of his country; furnished them with good garrisons and provisions; and erected magazines in several cities, out of which the soldiers might, on all occasions, be supplied with arms.

Jeroboam, on the other hand, was not idle, but enlarged and beautified Shechem, and made it a royal city. After he had resided there for some time, he went to the other side of Jordan, and repaired Penuel, which was anciently a fortified place, and there resided likewise, in hopes of gaining the affections of the two tribes and a half. Amidst all these endeavours to settle himself firm on the throne, there was one thing he thought he had reason to apprehend, namely, that his subjects might return to their allegiance to the house of David, in case they were permitted to go up, thrice every year, as the law directed, to worship at Jerusalem; he therefore made a bold alteration in religion, and set up two golden calves, with altars belonging to them, the one in Bethel which was the most southern, and the other in Dan, which was the most northern part of the country, the better to suit the conveniency of all their votaries. The regular priests, however, would not comply with him in these idolatries, and therefore he inhibited them the exercise of their own religion, banished them his kingdom, seized on their possessions, and appointed ^f any,

division of the kingdom, mention is frequently made of the use of them, both by the kings of Judah and Israel.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^e This prophet was very well known in the reign of Rehoboam: he is supposed to have wrote the annals of that prince; and of what authority he was in Judah, we may gather from this passage, where he is said to have prevailed with the king, and an hundred and fourscore thousand men, to lay down their arms, and return home, merely by declaring, that the division which had happened was by the order and appointment of God.—*Cabnet's Commentary*.

^f The Hebrew words *Miketzoth Haam*, do properly signify out of all the people, and not the lowest of the people. This exposition Bochart has justified by a great many examples of the uses of these words in other places: so that their meaning must be, not that Jeroboam employed the refuse of the people only, but that he employed any, though they were not of the tribe of Levi, though they had no previous qualifications to recommend them to officiate as priests about his idols. To employ the meanest of the people only in this office, had been bad policy, and exposing his new institution to contempt; but to admit any that

A. M. 3001. A. C. 1043; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4391. A. C. 1020. 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON.

who was so minded, to officiate about these new erected idols: by which means a great accession of strength accrued to Rehoboam's party; for the priests that were banished resorted all to Jerusalem, and as many of the other tribes as had any regard to the true worship of God, followed them.

To give the better countenance to his new-invented religion, Jeroboam himself was accustomed sometimes to officiate; and therefore, on a ^a solemn feast, which he had appointed at Bethel, as he stood by the altar for that purpose, a certain ^b prophet, who came from Judah, foretold him, that that very altar which he had erected, should one day be polluted, and destroyed by a child, born of the house of David, ^c whose name, in future

offered themselves of what rank or quality soever; to lay open the priesthood, and destroy the needless distinction of men and things, as the modern phrase is, this had in it the air of free-thinking, and must therefore be a very grateful thing, and ingratiate himself, no doubt with the people.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^a As the Jews had their feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, so Jeroboam had a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, which he instituted of his own accord. Some suppose indeed, that as this feast was appointed by God to be observed after the gathering in of the fruits, which might be sooner ripe in Jerusalem than in the northern parts of the country, so Jeroboam might pretend, that the eighth would be a better time for it than the seventh, because then he might have this farther design in the alteration of this month, namely, that the people of Judah, when their own feast was over a month before at Jerusalem, might have an opportunity to come to him, if their curiosity led them. But the plain case is, that he did every thing he could in opposition to the established religion, and his chief intention was to alienate the people from Jerusalem.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 6. c. 2.

^b Who this prophet was, commentators are not agreed. The Jews would generally have it to have been Iddo; but unless we may suppose that what is here related fell out in the latter end of Jeroboam's reign, Iddo could not be the person; because Iddo was alive in the days of Ahijah, son of Rehoboam, whereas the prophet here spoken of, died, in a manner, as soon as he had delivered his prophecy. Others therefore have thought, that this prophet who came to rebuke Jeroboam was Ahijah, the same who had foretold him of his exaltation to the crown of Israel: but besides that Ahijah was alive after the time that this prophet was slain, Ahijah was certainly a native of Shiloh, and lived in Shiloh, which is in the tribe of Ephraim, and part of Jeroboam's dominions; whereas it is expressly said of this prophet, that he came from Judah: so that there is no foundation, so much as for a conjecture, what the name of this man of God was.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

^c This is one of the most remarkable prophecies that we have in sacred writ. It foretells an action that exactly came to pass above three hundred and forty years afterwards. It describes the circumstances of the action, and specifies the very name of the person that was to do it; and therefore every Jew, who lived in the time of its accomplishment, must have been convinced of the divine authority of a religion founded upon such prophecies as this; since none but God could foresee, and consequently none but God could foretell events at such a distance.—*Le Clerc's and Calmet's Commentaries.* The Jews on whose behalf this prophecy was delivered, would guard it most sacredly; and it was the interest of the Israelites, against whom it was levelled, to impugn its authenticity, and expose its falsehood, had this been possible. This prediction not only showed the knowledge, but also the power of God. He gave, as it were, this warning to idolatry, that it might be on its guard and defend itself against this Josiah, whenever a person of that name should be found sitting on the throne of David; and no doubt it was on the alert, and took all prudent measures for its own defence: but all in vain, for Josiah in the eighteenth year of his reign, literally accomplished this prophecy, as we may read, 2 Kings xxiii. 15—20. And from this latter place we find that the prophecy had three permanent testimonials of its truth. 1. The house of Israel; 2.

ages, should be Josias; and for the proof of the truth of his prediction, he added, that immediately it should be split. Incensed at this freedom of speech, Jeroboam stretched out his hand, and called to those that stood by, to seize the prophet; but as he stretched it out, his arm grew so stiff, that he could not pull it back again, and the altar, being split asunder, let the fire, and the ashes that were thereon, fall to the ground.

Jeroboam by this means was sensibly convinced of his impiety, and entreated the prophet to intercede with God for the restoration of his hand. The prophet in this particular complied with his request; but when the king desired his company to dine with him, on purpose to make him a recompense for his miraculous cure, he declined the invitation, upon account of a positive divine injunction, that he should make no stay in the place, not so much as to eat or drink in it, or ^d return by the same way.

In the town of Bethel there lived an old prophet, who, when his sons came and told him what the man of God from Judah had done, ^e what had passed between him and the king, and what way he had taken in his return home, went in pursuit of him; and under the pretence of a fresh revelation which he had had, countermanding the injunction which the other thought himself under, invited him to his house. ^f After some small demur the

The house of Judah; and, 3. The tomb of the prophet who delivered this prophecy, who being slain by a lion, was brought back, and buried at Bethel. The superscription on whose tomb remained till the day on which Josiah destroyed that altar, and burned dead men's bones upon it.—*Dr A. Clarke.*—Ep.

^d Why this prophet was forbid to eat or drink with the people of Bethel, the reason is obvious, because he was to have no familiarity with idolaters; but why he should not 'return by the same way that he went,' is not so very evident. There is a passage in Isaiah concerning Sennacherib, which helps, as some think, to elucidate this matter, where God tells him, that 'he would turn him back by the same way that he came.' (Isaiah xxxvii. 29, 34.) that is, he should return home without doing any thing: all his threats, and all his great projects should have no effect against Jerusalem. And in like manner, when God commanded the prophet not to return by the same way, it was as much as if he had said, 'See that thou be constant, and steadfast in executing the charge committed to thee; let nothing hinder or divert thee, but take abundant care, that thou do thy business effectually.' But this construction is a little too much strained; nor can I see, why we may not say, that God enjoined his prophet not to return by the same way, lest Jeroboam, or any other of the inhabitants of Bethel, either to satisfy their curiosity upon an occasion so uncommon, or to do him some mischief for his severe denunciations against their altar and way of worship, might send men after him to bring him back.—*Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

^e By this it appears, that these sons of the old prophet were present when Jeroboam stood at the altar, and therefore joined in that idolatrous worship, though their father did not, and yet was too timorous to reprove it.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^f In 1 Kings xiii. 20, it is said that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back. "A great clamour," says Dr Kennicott, "has been raised against this part of the history, on account of God's denouncing sentence on the true prophet, by the mouth of the false prophet: but if we examine with attention the original words here, they will be found to signify either, *he who brought him back*; or, *whom he had brought back*; for the very same words, אשר השיבו *asher heshibo*, occur again in verse 23, where they are translated, *whom he had brought back*; and where they cannot be translated otherwise. This being the case, we are at liberty to consider the word of the Lord as delivered to the true prophet thus brought back; and then the sentence is pronounced by God himself, calling to him out of heaven, as in Gen. xxii. 11. And that this doom was thus

A. M. 3901. A. C. 1003; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4391. A. C. 1020. 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON.

young prophet believed him, went with him, sat down to meat, and refreshed himself; but in his return, he paid dear for his disobedience; ^a for ^b a lion met him and slew him, but when it had so done, it neither tore his body, nor meddled with his ass; which, when the old prophet understood, he took, and buried him in his own sepulchre, and gave his children in charge, that whenever he died, they should lay him in a place contiguous to this prophet; because he was confident, that whatever he foretold concerning the altar of Bethel, and ^c that form of idolatry, which Jeroboam had set up, would most certainly come to pass.

Not long after this, Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, a young ^d prince of promising hopes, fell sick: whereupon Jeroboam prevailed ^e with his queen to disguise herself

pronounced by God, and not by the false prophet, we are assured in verse 26. 'The Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him.' Josephus expressly asserts that the sentence was declared by God to the true prophet. The Arabic asserts the same.—Ed.

^a 1 Kings xiii. 26. Disobedience in special cases has commonly been punished by those in authority. The Athenians put their ambassadors to death, whom they had sent into Arcadia, though they had faithfully performed their business, because they came another way than that which had been prescribed to them.—*Ælian. Var. Hist. b. vi. c. 5.*—Ed.

^b Not far from Bethel there was a wood, out of which the two she-bears came that destroyed two and forty children, for mocking the prophet Elisha, (2 Kings ii. 24.) And it is not unlikely that out of the same wood came the lion which slew this prophet.

—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^c There is something particular in the expressions of the text: 'The saying, which he cried by the word of God against the altar of the Lord, against the altar of Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places, which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass,' (1 Kings xiii. 32.) But how can they be called the cities of Samaria, when Samaria itself was not now built, nor had the separate kingdom of Jeroboam as yet obtained that name? But this only shows that the author or compiler of these books of Kings, whether it was Ezra or Jeremiah, lived long after the time of Jeroboam, and writes of things and places as they were in his own days. He knew full well, that Samaria was built by Omri, fifty years after Jeroboam, since himself had given the account of its foundation; but he was minded to speak in the phrase then current, and to make himself intelligible to those that read him; and for this reason no doubt it is, that in 2 Kings xxiii. 18, the false prophet of Bethel is said to have come from Samaria, though at that time there was no city of that name.—*Calmel's Commentary.*

^d In 1 Kings xiv. 13, it is said, that 'in him there was found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel;' from whence the Jewish doctors have devised the story, that he broke down an hedge (it had better been a wall, I should think) which his father had made, to keep people from going up to Jerusalem at the three great feasts. But however this be, we may be permitted fairly to infer thus much from the words:—That he was the only person in the family who expressed a dislike of the worshipping of calves, an inclination and intention to abolish it, whenever he should come into power, and to permit, if not oblige his subjects to go up to Jerusalem, to worship according as the law prescribed.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^e Jeroboam might be for having his wife go to consult the prophet at Shiloh, because this was a secret not to be intrusted with any body else; a secret which had it been divulged, might have endangered his whole government: because, if once his subjects came to understand, that he himself had no confidence in the calves which he had set up, but in any matter of importance had recourse to the true worshippers of God, it is not to be imagined what an inducement this would have been for them to forsake these senseless idols, and to return to the worship of the God of Israel, whom they imprudently had forsaken. The queen then was the only person he could have confidence in. As a mother, he knew, that she would be diligent in her inquiry; and, as a wife, faithful in her report; but there were sundry reasons why

in the dress of an ordinary woman; to go to the prophet Ahijah, who was then at Shiloh; and to inquire concerning the fate of the child. The prophet, at that time was blind; and therefore they thought that they might very easily impose upon him: but before the queen came, God had discovered the whole matter to him; and therefore as soon as she entered the door, he called her by her name, and then delivered the message which God had directed him to do. ^f Therein he upbraided Jeroboam

he might desire her to disguise herself. For though Shiloh, lay within the confines of Ephraim, yet there is sufficient ground to think, that it was subject to the house of David, and belonged to the kingdom of Judah. It was certainly nearer Jerusalem than Shechem, which Rehoboam had lately fortified, and made his place of residence: and therefore Jeroboam thought it not safe to venture his queen, in a place that was under his rival's government, without her putting on some disguise. He knew too, that the prophet Ahijah was greatly offended at him, for the gross idolatry he had introduced; and therefore he thought, as justly he might, that, if the prophet perceived her to be his wife, he would either tell her nothing, or make things much worse than they were. The only way, therefore, to come at the truth, was (as he thought) to do what he did: but herein appears his infatuation, that he should not think the person, whom he held capable of resolving him in the fate of his son, able to see through this guile and disguise.—*Calmel's Commentary, and Poole's Annotations.*

^f It is mentioned in the text, that Jeroboam's wife carried with her a present to the prophet, and we learn from several passages of Scripture, that it was customary on consulting a prophet, to present him with a gift generally consisting of some kind of provisions, which the condition of that class of persons might render more acceptable than any money or other kind of present. What the wife of Jeroboam carried was certainly unsuitable to the dignity and resources of a queen, and had she gone openly in that character, her present would in all probability have been rejected. Instances of presents not being accepted, when they are considered inferior to what the rank and ability of the offerer could have produced, are mentioned by many travellers. An ambassador at the court of Persia, once abruptly took leave, on the ground that he had been insulted by the trifling presents the Schah had given him; in consequence of which the royal presents were ordered to be set down in a catalogue, alongside of those of the ambassador; each article was rated at an extravagant value, and the whole was made to be worth double the money of the ambassador; but he, conscious of the imposition, refused to accept it, as unworthy of the rank of a king. Lander, too, mentions an African from whom he had expected to obtain important service to the cause of his mission, but was unexpectedly and grievously disappointed, to find that the sable monarch gave him a very cold reception. The reason was, that the king had been persuaded by some of his attendants, that the present of Lander was far inferior to what Captain Clapperton had made him a few years before, and, therefore, sending notice to the traveller that he considered his gift below the character of one who was in the service of the king of Britain, refused to see him. Had the wife of Jeroboam then gone to the prophet with the present she had selected, there is every reason to conclude, that its trifling nature would have led to its rejection; but it must be remembered that she went to Ahijah personating a country woman, and that nothing could be more suitable to such a character than the articles of which her present consisted. Few and simple as they appear to be, they were very nearly the same as those which D'Arvieux received from the mother and sister of an Arab Emir, whom he visited, and from whom he received, early in the morning after his arrival in their camp, a present of pastry, honey, fresh butter, with a basin of sweet meats of Damascus. Whatever the origin of the custom which authorized that the presents made to prophets should consist always of provisions for their table, it is evident, from the experience of D'Arvieux, that the present made to Ahijah by the wife of Jeroboam, was quite in unison with the character she had assumed, and, although presents have frequently been refused in the east, on account of their value being disproportionate to the ability of the donor, no objection could have been found on this account to the present of Jeroboam's queen, had not her real condition been supernaturally

A. M. 3001. A. C. 1003 ; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4391. A. C. 1020. 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON.

with ingratitude to God, who had made him king ; charged him with impiety and apostasy, in setting up images for the objects of religious worship ; foretold the expiration of his race, ^a and the death of the child then sick ; threatened sore judgments to the people of Israel, for their conforming to the idolatry which had begun, and, with this doleful message, he sent her away, who as soon as she entered the palace door, according to the prophet's prediction, found the child dying. But all these judgments and miraculous events wrought no reformation in wicked Jeroboam.

Nor was his rival Rehoboam king of Judah, much better. He, for three years indeed, kept up the true worship of God at Jerusalem, but it was more out of a principle of state policy than of true religion. For, when the time of Jeroboam's subjects coming over to him upon that account was at an end, he threw off the mask, and discovered his inclination to idolatry. And as his example was followed by his subjects, they soon exceeded all that went before them. For they not only set up images and groves upon every hill, and under every green tree, but to add to their gross impiety, introduced the detestable ^b sin of Sodom, and all the other wickednesses that the ancient Canaanites were expelled for.

Under these provocations it was not long before God sent against them Shishak, king of Egypt, who, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, ^c invaded his dominions with a

revealed to the mind of the prophet.—*Jamieson's Eastern Manners*.—Ed.

^a 1 Kings xiv. 10. Sometimes, when a successful prince has endeavoured to extirpate the preceding royal family, some of them have escaped the slaughter, and secured themselves in a fortress, or place of secrecy, while others have sought an asylum in foreign countries, from whence they have occasioned great anxiety to the usurper. The word, shut up, strictly speaking, refers to the first of these cases ; as in the preservation of Joash from Athaliah, in a private apartment of the temple, (2 Kings xi.) Such appears also to have been the case in more modern times. "Though more than thirty years had elapsed since the death of Sultan Achmet, father of the new emperor, he had not in that interval, acquired any great information or improvement. Shut up, during this long interval, in the apartments assigned him, with some eunuchs to wait on him, and women to amuse him, the equality of his age with that of the princes who had a right to precede, allowed him but little hope of reigning in his turn ; and he had besides, well grounded reasons for a more serious uneasiness." (*Baron Du Tott*, vol. i. p. 115.) But when David was in danger, he kept himself close, (1 Chron. xii. 1.) in Ziklag, but not so as to prevent him from making frequent excursions. In later times, in the east, persons of royal descent have been left, when the rest of a family have been cut off, if no danger was apprehended from them, on account of some mental or bodily disqualification. Blindness saved the life of Mohammed Khodabendeh, a Persian prince of the sixteenth century, when his brother Ismael put all the rest of his brethren to death. (*D'Herbelot*, p. 613.) This explanation will enable us more clearly to understand 2 Kings xiv. 26 ; Deut. xxxii. 36.—*Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 211.—Ed.

^b There are several passages in Scripture, such as 1 Kings xv. 12. 2 Kings xxii. 7. Rom. i. 26, 27, &c., from whence it appears that this kind of wickedness did frequently attend idolatry. Among the heathen, the most filthy things were committed in their groves, those places of darkness and obscurity, by the worshippers of Venus, Bacchus, and Priapus ; and when the Israelites fell into the same religion, they must, of course, have fallen into the same practices ; because, whatever they did of this kind was done in devotion, and honour to their gods, who, as they imagined, were highly delighted with such obscenities.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c It may seem something strange, that Shishak, who was so nearly allied to Rehoboam, should come up against him, and

very numerous army ; and, having ravaged the country, taken most of the fortified places, and entered Jerusalem without opposition, plundered the temple and palace of their rich furniture and moveables, he took away all the money that was found in the king's treasure, and the treasure of the sanctuary, and, at the same time, carried off the golden shields which Solomon had made ; in the room of which, Rehoboam, by this depredation, was reduced so low, that he ^d was forced to make brazen ones, for the use and ornament of his guards.

We have little or nothing more recorded of Rehoboam, but that he reigned twelve years after this conquest and devastation by Shishak ; that he had eighteen wives, and threescore concubines, and by them eight and twenty sons, and threescore daughters ; that most of these sons who were grown to maturity in his lifetime, he made governors in the chief of the fenced cities in his kingdom ; that he appointed Abijah, who was the eldest by his favourite wife ^e Maachab, to succeed him in his throne, and, ^f after a continued war with his rival Jeroboam, died in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and in the

take his royal city ; but Rehoboam, we must remember, was not the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and therefore no relation to Shishak. But, even had he been never so nearly related, as kingdoms, we know, never marry, so it is likely that Jeroboam, who had lived long in Egypt, stirred him up to invade his rival, that thereby he might establish himself in this new kingdom : and for this reason it was, that, when the armies of Egypt had taken the fenced cities of Judah, they returned, without giving Jeroboam or his dominions any the least disturbance.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d This shows to what low condition the kingdom of Judah was reduced. These shields were a matter of state and grandeur ; and therefore it concerned them, if they were able, to have them of the same value that they were before. And, as they were carried before the king to the house of the Lord, it seemed likewise to be a matter of religion, that their value should not be diminished. Now in making these three hundred shields we are told, that three pounds of gold went to one shield, (1 Kings x. 17.) This, at four pounds per ounce, or forty-eight pounds sterling to the pound, amounts to no more than £432,000, and therefore it was a miserable case, that they were reduced from so much wealth to so much poverty, that neither reasons of state, nor religion, could raise so small a sum on so great an occasion.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 6. c. 2.

^e 1 Kings xv. 2. It has been conjectured by Mr Taylor, that the phrase "and his mother's name was," &c., when expressed on a king's accession to the throne, at the beginning of his history, does not always refer to his natural mother, but that it is a title of honour and dignity, enjoyed by one of the royal family, denoting her to be the first in rank. This idea appears well founded from the following extracts. "The oloo kani is not governess of the Crimea. This title, the literal translation of which is, great queen, simply denotes a dignity in the harem, which the khan usually confers on one of his sisters ; or if he has none, on one of his daughters, or relations. To this dignity are attached the revenues arising from several villages, and other rights." (*Baron Du Tott*, vol. ii. p. 64.) "On this occasion the king crowned his mother Malacotawit, conferring upon her the dignity and title of iteghe, that is, as king's mother, regent and governess of the king when under age."—*Bruce's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 551. *Fragments to Cabinet*.—Ed.

^f But how does this agree with what we read in 1 Kings xii. 23, &c., namely, that God commanded Rehoboam, and his people, not to fight against the Israelites, and they obeyed ? Very well, if we will but observe, that though the Jews were commanded not to make war upon the Israelites, yet they were not commanded not to defend themselves, in case the Israelites should make war upon them ; and, considering that they were now become two rival nations, they might, upon the borders, be continually endeavouring to gain ground upon each other, and so run into frequent acts of hostility, without ever once engaging in a pitched battle.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

A. M. 3001. A. C. 1003; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4421. A. C. 990. 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON.

seventeenth year of his reign, and was buried in the city of David.

^a Abijah, who succeeded his father in the kingdom of Israel, in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, was a prince of an active and martial spirit; and therefore resolving to put an end to the long dispute between the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, he raised an army of four hundred thousand men, while Jeroboam, whose territories were of larger extent, had got together one of eight hundred thousand. This notwithstanding, Abijah determined to give him battle; but, before they came to the onset, he thought it not improper to get upon an eminence, and ^b to expostulate with the Israelitish army the injustice of their cause in revolting from his father Rehoboam; the right he claimed on his side, since God had given the whole kingdom to David, and his sons for ever; and the reasonable expectance he had of the divine assistance in what he was going about, since the religion of Jeroboam was false and idolatrous, whereas he, and the men of Judah, had the pure worship of the living God, his temple, and his ordinances, among them.

Jeroboam was no wise solicitous to answer him in those points; but while he continued speaking, ordered a detachment to march round, and intercept his retreat: which when the men of Judah perceived, they addressed themselves to God in prayer for success, and, while the priests blew the trumpets, the soldiers gave a great shout, and charged the Israelites so vigorously, that they soon gave way, and as the enemy gave no quarter lost, in the whole action, no less than five hundred thousand men, the greatest slaughter that ever was heard of. ^c

^a Dr Kennicott observes that the name of this king of Judah is expressed three ways; in 1 Kings xiv. and four other places it is Abijam or Abia; in two others it is Abihu; but in eleven other places it is Abiah, as it is expressed by St Matthew (i. 7.) 'Ῥαββοὺμ δὲ ἐγενήθησαν τὸν Ἀβιά'; and this is the reading of thirteen of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., and of thirteen respectable editions of the Hebrew bible. The Syriac is the same. The Septuagint in the London Polyglot has Ἀβιου, Abihu, but in the Complutensian and Antwerp Polyglot it is Ἀβία, Abiah. Though the common printed Vulgate has Abiam, yet the Editio Princeps of the Vulgate, some MSS., and the text in the Complutensian and Antwerp Polyglot, have Abia; which without doubt is the reading that should in all cases be followed.—Ed.

^b None of the great captains and commanders, whose speeches are recorded in heathen authors, ever expressed themselves more movingly than this king of Judah did. But some have found fault with him for speaking not so honourably of his father's military skill and courage, which he might as well have omitted, because, allowing it to be true, he seems to have served no purpose in mentioning it. But this notwithstanding, the speech is very lively, and excellently well calculated to cause a revolt in Jeroboam's army.—*Patrick's Commentary*. See the speech at large in 2 Chron. xiii. 4, &c.

^c The numbers here given from 2 Chron. xiii. 3, 17, seem almost incredible. It is very possible that there is a cipher too much in all these numbers, and that they should stand thus: Abijah's army, 40,000; Jeroboam's 80,000; slain 50,000. Calmet, who defends the common reading, allows that the Venice edition of the Vulgate, in 1478; another in 1489; that of Nuremberg in 1521; that of Basil, by Froben, in 1538; that of Robert Stevens, in 1546; and many others, have the smaller numbers. Dr Kennicott says: "On a particular collation of the Vulgate version, it appears that the number of chosen men here slain, which Pope Clement's edition in 1592, determined to be 500,000, the edition of Pope Sixtus, printed two years before, determined to be only 50,000; and the two preceding numbers in the edition of Sixtus, are 40,000, and 80,000. As to different printed editions, out of fifty-two from the year 1462 to

This victory Abijah took care to improve by pursuing Jeroboam, and taking from him so many strong cities, among which Bethel, where one of the golden calves had lately been set up, was one, that he was never thenceforward able to make head against his adversary, who by this, and some other successful achievements, grew great and powerful. But his reign was but short: he reigned not quite three years, before he died, and was buried in the city of David; and the reason that some have assigned for God's thus shortening of his days, was his not destroying of idolatry, when, by taking of Bethel, he had it in his power. For, however he might plead his possession of the temple and priesthood, to make his argument good against Jeroboam; yet the character which the sacred historian gives him, is ¹ 'that he walked in all the sins of his father; nor was his heart perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of his great grandfather David.'

Asa, however, who in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, succeeded his father in the throne of Judah,

1 Kings xv. 3.

1592, thirty-one contain the less number. And out of fifty-one MSS., twenty-three in the Bodleian library, four in that of Dean Aldrich, and two in that of Exeter College, contain the less number, or else are corrupted irregularly, varying only in one or two numbers."

This examination was made by Dr Kennicott before he had finished his collation of Hebrew MSS., and before De Rossi had published his *Varia Lectiones Veteris Testamenti*; but from these works we find little help, as far as the Hebrew MSS. are concerned. One Hebrew MS. instead of ארבע מאות אלף *arba meoth eleph*, 400,000, reads ארבע עשר אלף *arba eser eleph*, 14,000. In all printed copies of the Hebrew, the numbers are as in the common text, 400,000, 800,000, and 500,000. The versions are as follows:—The Targum or Chaldee, the same in each place as in the Hebrew. The Syriac in verse third has 400,000 young men for the army of Abijah, and 800,000 stout youths for that of Jeroboam. For the slain Israelites, in verse 17th it has 500,000, falsely translated in the Latin text *quinque milia*, 5000, both in the Paris and London polyglots; another proof among many that little dependance is to be placed on the Latin translation of this version in either of the above polyglots. The Arabic is the same in all these places with the Syriac, from which it has been translated. The Septuagint, both as it is published in all the polyglots, and as far as I have seen in MSS., is the same with the Hebrew text. So also is Josephus. The Vulgate or Latin version is that alone that exhibits any important variations; we have had considerable proof of this in the above mentioned collations of Calmet and Kennicott. I shall beg liberty to add others from my own collection. In the Editio Princeps of the Latin bible, though without date or place, yet evidently printed long before that of Fust, in 1462, the places stand thus: ver. 3. 'With him Abia entered into battle; and he had of the most warlike and choice men 40,000; and Jeroboam raised an army against him of 80,000 men.' And in ver. 17: 'and there fell down wounded 50,000 stout men of Israel.' In the Glossa Ordinaria, by Strabo Fuldensis, we have 40,000 and 80,000 in the two first instances, and 500,000 in the last.—*Bib. Sacra*. vol. ii. Antv. 1634. In six ancient MSS. of my own, marked A, B, C, D, E, F, the text stands thus. In A we have 40,000 for the army of Abijah, and 80,000 for that of Jeroboam, and 50,000 for the slain of the latter. B, 40,000, 80,000, 50,000. The numbers being here expressed in words at full length, there can be no suspicion of mistake. C, 400,000, 800,000, 500,000. This is the same as the Hebrew text very distinctly expressed. D, This in the first two numbers is the same as the others above; but the last is confused, and appears to stand for 55,000. E, 40,000, 80,000, 50,000. F, 400,000, 800,000, 500,000. This also is the same as the Hebrew. The reader has now the whole evidence which I have been able to collect, before him, and may choose; the smaller numbers appear to be the most correct. Corruptions in the numbers in these historical books we have often had cause to suspect and complain of.—*Dr A. Clarke*, 2 Chron. xiii. 3—17.—Ed.

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was a prince of a different temper. As he enjoyed the felicity of a settled peace for the ten first years of his reign, he wisely made use of it in reforming many abuses that had been tolerated in former reigns. He expelled the Sodomites, broke down the idols, and demolished their altars in all the cities of Judah;^a but he had not yet power and authority enough to destroy the high places. The vessels of silver and gold which^b both he and his father had consecrated to the service of the temple, he presented to the priests; and by all the enforcements of regal authority, compelled his subjects to be religious.

This time of peace he likewise made use of, to fortify several cities on the frontier parts of his kingdom, and to train up his subjects in the art of war; insomuch that, in a short time, he had an army of three hundred thousand men of Judah armed with shields and pikes, and two hundred and fourscore thousand men of Benjamin, armed with shields and arrows, all persons of courage, and resolved to defend their country.

In this situation of affairs, Zerah, the^c king of Arabia

^a This seems to be contradicted by a passage in 2 Chron. xiv. 3, where we are told, 'that Asa took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places;' but, for the right understanding and reconciling of this, we may observe, that there were two kinds of high places, the one tolerated for religious purposes, the other abominable from their first institution; the one frequented by devout worshippers, the other made the receptacle of the wicked and idolatrous only. Now these were the altars and high places which Asa took away, even where the people sacrificed to strange gods; but those where God alone was worshipped had obtained so long, and were looked upon with so sacred a veneration, that, for fear of giving a general offence, though he knew they were contrary to a divine injunction, he durst not adventure to abolish them. The truth is, these high places were famous either for the apparition of angels, or some other miraculous event; had either been places of abode for the ark of the Lord, or such as some prophet or patriarch of old had been accustomed to pray and sacrifice in; and therefore they were looked upon as consecrated to the service of God; nor was there strength enough in the government to overcome this inveterate prejudice, till Hezekiah arose, who, to prevent the calamities that were coming upon the nation, had the courage to effect a thorough reformation.—*Patrick* on 1 Kings xv. 14; and *Calmet* on chap. xiv. 23.

^b According to the piety of ancient times, his father had devoted some part of the spoils he had taken in the war against Jeroboam to the service of the temple, but had not time to make good his vow, or, upon some account or other, had neglected it, so that his son took care to supply that defect. And forasmuch as himself had taken large booty in his war with the Arabians, of this he likewise bestowed a considerable part upon holy uses.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c The Scripture takes no notice of what was the cause of this war between Zerah and Asa, nor are interpreters well agreed what the country was from whence this enemy came. The country, in the original, is called Cush, though we translate it Ethiopia. Now, there are three countries, different from one another, all called by the name of Cush; 1. the land of Cush upon the river Gihon; 2. Cush upon the eastern shore of the Red Sea; and, 3. Cush, situated above Thebais, and in the Upper Egypt. It is very probable, then, that the country here spoken of must not be Ethiopia, properly so called, because we can hardly imagine, how an army of a million of men should be permitted to march through Egypt, as they must have done to invade Judea, without some opposition: and therefore the country must be the land of Cush, which lay in Arabia Petraea, upon the east shore of the Red Sea, and, at the extremity to the point of that sea, inclining towards Egypt and Judea. And whereas some have made a doubt, how so small a country could have produced so large an army, it is no hard matter to suppose, that a great part of the army might perhaps have been mercenaries.—*Calmet's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xiv. 9; and *Dictionary*, under

invaded Judea with an almost innumerable army, but was vanquished by Asa with a much inferior force. For, as soon as the battle began, God struck the Arabians with such a panic fear, that they began to flee; and Asa and his army pursued them, took the spoil of their camp, carried away their cattle, smote the cities that were in league with them, and so returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

After so signal a victory, Asa continued in peace for the space of five years more; in which time he thought himself obliged, both in gratitude to God, and in compliance to the encouragement¹ which his prophet Azariah had given him, to set himself about a thorough reformation in religion. To this purpose he executed all that could be convicted of sodomy: he destroyed all the idols that were to be found, not only in Judah and Benjamin, but in any of the conquered countries likewise: he repaired the altar of burnt-offerings, and summoned, not only the natives, but strangers likewise, to the worship of the true God. On a solemn festival, which he had appointed, he ordered seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep, part of the spoil which he had taken from the Arabians, to be sacrificed; and, at the same time, engaged in a covenant with his subjects, which was confirmed by oath, that whoever should forsake the true worship of God should have.² the sentence of the law executed upon him, and be infallibly put to death.

His own mother had been a patroness of idolatry; and therefore, to show his impartiality, he removed her from court, and forbade her coming near the queen, for fear of infecting her; and understanding that she had set up an idol in a grove consecrated to an obscene deity,^d he

¹ 2 Chron. xv. throughout.

² Deut. xvii. 2, &c.

the word Cush; and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. i. c. 4. [Dr Hales, however, is of opinion that Zerah was king of the African Ethiopia, now long known by the name of Abyssinia, and that his immense army, amounting to a million of men, and three hundred chariots, but which Josephus reduces, more probably, to 90,000 infantry, and 100,000 cavalry, (*Ant.* viii. 12.) consisted of Abyssinians and Lybians, called in Scripture Lubim.—*Analysis*, vol. ii. p. 380, second edition.]—Ed.

^d The words in the text, both in 1 Kings xv. 13, and 2 Chron. xv. 16, according to our translation, are to this effect.—That 'Asa removed his mother Maachah from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove, both of which he cut down and burnt.' The word which we render idol is in the original Mipheletseth; but then the whole difficulty turns upon this,—what the proper signification of this word is. The Vulgate translation has cleared this matter pretty well, by rendering the passage, that this queen-mother 'was the high priestess in the sacrifices of Priapus;' and when the Septuagint, according to the Vatican copy, informs us, that she held an assembly in this grove, and that her son Asa cut down all the close arbours or places of retreat, as the word *Σύκας*, which we render *assembly*, may have a more carnal meaning, and the other *Κατάδους*, properly signifies *hiding places*, or *places of retirement for wicked and obscene purposes*: we may from hence infer, that both the Latin and Greek translators took the Mipheletseth of Maachah to be some lewd and lascivious deity, which loved to be worshipped in filthy and abominable actions; and that this could be no other than the Roman Priapus, whose worshippers were chiefly women, seems to be implied in the very etymology of the word, which properly signifies *terribilementum*, or, a *device to frighten other things away*; for this was exactly the office of Priapus in all gardens. "Let Priapus be placed as a guardian in the fruitful gardens, that with his keen pruninghook he may frighten the birds." (*Tibul. Eleg.* 1.) But then the question is, who the patriarch was, for most idols were made for some patriarch or other, that the Roman Priapus is thought to represent? And the learned

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burned the idol, and the grove both, and threw their ashes into the brook Kidron,¹ as Moses did before by the molten calf.

The fame of this reformation, and the blessings where-with God had hitherto distinguished Asa's reign, made the subjects of Baasha, who was now king of Israel, come over in great numbers to Jerusalem; which Baasha perceiving, was resolved, if possible, to put a stop to it; and therefore he fortified Raamah, a town in the tribe of Benjamin so conveniently situated, that, by keeping a good garrison there, he might hinder all passing to and fro without leave, and so cut off all communication between his people and the people of Judah.

Asa hearing of this, and knowing the intent and purpose of the stratagem, was resolved to give him a diversion, if he possibly could, on the other side. To this end he took all the ^a silver and gold that was in the

¹ Exod. xxxii. 20.

author, from whom I have compiled this note, is of opinion, that it might properly enough denote Lot, who lay with his two daughters when he was drunk, and of the former begot Moab, the primogenitor of that nation, who were the greatest worshippers of this obscene deity; though, for several reasons that he there enumerates, upon presumption that Priapus was the same with Baal-Peor, which signifies *a naked or uncovered god*, he is more inclinable to think it was Noah, of whom it was said, that 'he was an husbandman, and planted a vineyard, and that he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and uncovered within his tent,' (Gen. ix. 20, 21.; *Jurieu's History of Doctrines and Worship*, part 4. c. 2. and 3.) Most of the ancients are of opinion, that Asteroth, which all allow to be the same with Astarte, was the Greek *Kúreis*, and the Roman Venus. Tully, in his third book On the Nature of the Gods, tells us expressly, that Astarte, among the Tyrians, was the fourth Venus, who was married to Adonis, and upon his, and some other authorities, many moderns have gone into the same sentiment; but, as it is certain, that the Tyrians had their theology from the Phœnicians, the testimony of St Austin cannot but have some weight in this case, since he affirms, with the greatest assurance, that Juno without all doubt, was, by the Carthaginians, called Astarte; (*Quæst. 26, indices.*) That Juno was the great deity and patroness of Carthage, is the received opinion of the Gentile world. "Which Juno is said to have preferred to all other regions of the earth, with the exception of Samos." (*Virg. Æn. 1.*) And therefore, since we find Baal, who is the same with Jupiter, so frequently in Scripture joined with Ashtaroth, which is the same with Astarte, we can hardly refrain thinking, that she must be the Roman Juno; and they, consequently, husband and wife; how extravagant soever, therefore, the frolic of Heliogabalus, mentioned by Herodotus, was, in sending for the goddess of the Carthaginians to be married to his god, who was the Jupiter of the Phœnicians; yet, from this piece of history, we may inform ourselves, that the goddess of the Carthaginians was no other than Juno, the supposed wife of Baal, or Jupiter; and therefore we find her, by the Phœnician historian Sanchoniatho called Baaltis, which is a feminine substantive, formed from the word *Baal*, and by the sacred writers, 'the queen of heaven,' (Jer. vii. 18. and xlv. 18.) We have sufficient grounds therefore to suppose, that this Astarte was Juno; but then what particular woman this Juno was, before she came to be deified, we are at a loss to know: only the conjecture of the learned author, from whom I have extracted this note, seems to be preferable to any other I have yet me with, viz. that as both Baal and Jupiter are generally allowed to be the patriarch Ham, so this Juno or Astarte, in all probability, was one of his wives, from whom the Canaanites and Phœnicians were descended. But in this we have the less certainty, because the sacred history says nothing of the adventures of the postdiluvian matrons, whereby we might be enabled to form a comparison between them and these fabulous goddesses.—*Jurieu*, *ibid.* p. 4. c. 5.

^a In cases of extreme danger, it was always held lawful to employ sacred things in the defence of one's country: but there was no such necessity in this case. God had appeared wonderfully in Asa's defence, against an enemy much more powerful

temple, as well as what was found in his own exchequer, and sent it as a present to Benhadad king of Syria, requesting his assistance against Baasha. The largeness of the present soon had its effect: for Benhadad immediately attacked several cities in Israel with such success, that Baasha was forced to abandon his new designs of fortifying his frontiers towards Judah, in order to defend the other parts of his kingdom that were thus furiously invaded; which gave Asa an opportunity to demolish the works that were begun at Ramah, and with the materials that Baasha had prepared to build him two cities in his own dominions, Gebah and Mizpah.

This applying however to Benhadad for assistance was, in Asa, a thing inexcusable. It implied a distrust of God's power or goodness to help him, of which he had so lately so large an experience; and therefore the prophet Hanani was sent to reprove him for it: but instead of receiving his reproofs with temper and thankfulness, he was so exasperated with them, that he put the prophet in chains, and gave orders, at the same time, for the execution ^b of several of his subjects.

The truth is, towards the close of his reign, he grew very peevish and passionate, and uneasy with those that were about him; which, charity would be apt to think, proceeded from his distemper, a severe gout, in all probability, whose humour rising upwards, killed him in the one and fortieth year of his reign. He was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat: but instead of being interred, as the manner of the Jews was, ^c he ordered his body to be

than Baasha was. Nay, he had promised him his protection at all times, and success in all his undertakings, if he would but adhere to his service; and yet, forgetting all this, he strips the temple of its treasure, and bribes a heathen prince to come to his assistance, and break his league with another to whom he stood engaged: so that here were three offences in this one act of Asa's. For, 1st, he alienated things consecrated to God without necessity. 2dly, he did this out of a carnal fear and distrust of that God whose power and goodness he had lately experienced. And, 3dly, he did it with an intent even to hire Benhadad to a breach of his league and covenant with Baasha.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^b It is not said that he gave orders for the execution of his subjects, but that he oppressed them, or became a tyrant.—*Bp. Gleig.*

^c The words in the text are these,—'They laid him on the bed, which was filled with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices, prepared by the apothecaries' art; and they made a great burning for him,' (2 Chron. xvi. 14.) But then the question is, whether the body itself was burned, or only some spices and odiferous drugs, to prevent any bad smell that might attend the corpse. The Greeks and Romans indeed, when they burned any dead bodies, threw frankincense, myrrh, cassia, and other fragrant things into the fire, and this in such abundance, that Pliny (*Nat. Hist. c. 18.*) represents it as a piece of profaneness, to bestow such heaps of frankincense upon a dead body, when they offered it so sparingly to their gods. The Jews, however, say the maintainers of this side of the question, were accustomed to inter, and not to burn their dead, though they might possibly learn from the Egyptians the usage of burning many spices at their funerals, as we find they did at the funeral of Zedekiah king of Judah, (Jer. xxxiv. 5.) but notwithstanding this, some very able commentators are of opinion, that all these spices and perfumes were burned along with Asa's body; and they remark, that among his other offences, the sacred history takes notice of this vanity of his, in ordering his body to be disposed of according to the manner of the Gentiles, and not of his own people. Though therefore they suppose that Asa was the first who introduced this custom; yet, in after ages, it became very frequent, and was thought the more honourable ceremony of the two, (2 Chron. xxi. 19, *ibid.* xvi. 14. Amos vi. 10.)—*Patrick's and Calnel's Commentaries* on 2 Chron. xvi. 14.

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burned ^a with great quantities of perfumes and spices, and his bones and ashes to be collected, and buried in a sepulchre which he had provided for himself in the city of David.

During the long continuance of Asa's reign, sundry successions and revolutions happened in the kingdom of Israel, whereof the sacred history has given us but a short account. In the first or second year of Asa, died Jeroboam, of some acute disease, which the Scripture does not specify. His reign was famous, or infamous rather, for the revolt of the ten tribes, the public institution, of idolatry, and the terrible defeat which Abijah gave him, and which he himself seems not long to have survived. He was succeeded by his son Nadab, a person who took care to imitate his father in all his wickedness; but his reign was not long. In less than two years he was treacherously killed by Baasha, his captain general, who usurped his crown, and to maintain himself in that usurpation, put every one that was related to his predecessor to death; which was certainly a very wicked and barbarous act, though it proved the accomplishment of the prophecy ^b which Abijah had denounced against Jeroboam's house.

^c In the six and twentieth year of king Asa, Baasha

^a There is however no evidence from the text that Asa's body was burned. The aromatics and duly prepared ointments with which it was surrounded were most probably placed along with it in the sepulchre. The burning then must have been of other aromatic woods, most likely at the mouth of the sepulchre, or some little distance from it. This was evidently a ceremony of respect, and designed to do honour to the dead.—*Boothroyd* on 2 Chron. xvi. 14.—Ed.

^b 1 Kings xiv. 10, 11. The prophecy runs thus:—'Therefore behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung till it be all gone. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city, shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat; for the Lord hath spoken it.' The only difficulty here is, how Baasha's exaltation to the kingdom of Israel can be ascribed to God, (as it is 1 Kings xvi. 2.) 'Forasmuch as I have exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel,' when it is manifest that he got it by his own treachery and cruelty.' But to this it may be replied, that though the manner of invading the kingdom was from himself, and his own wicked heart; yet the translation of the kingdom from Nadab to Baasha, simply considered, was from God, who by his decree and providence, ordered it, and disposed of all occasions, and of the hearts of all the soldiers and the people so, that Baasha should have opportunity of executing his judgments upon Nadab, and such success thereupon as should procure him a present and quiet possession of the kingdom. So that his accession to the kingdom was from the divine decree, but the form and manner of his accession was from himself, from his own ambition and covetousness; and as it was wicked and cruel, is therefore charged upon him as a wilful murder, ver. 7.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^c And yet Baasha's expedition against Asa, in order to build Rama, is said to be in the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, (2 Chron. xvi. 1.) Now to reconcile this, some would have that six and thirtieth year to relate, not to Asa's reign, but to the date of the kingdom of Judah, from the division of the kingdom of Israel, at Rehoboam coming to the crown, and to be in fact no more than the fourteenth year of the reign of Asa. But that cannot be, since this expedition of Baasha was some time after Asa had defeated the king of Ethiopia, or Arabia, and yet this defeat happened in the fifteenth year of king Asa's reign: so that that six and thirtieth year of Baasha's going up to build Ramah, can, by no good computation, be the fourteenth year of king Asa's reign. And therefore, without any more to do, we may, with Josephus, and others, adventure to say, that the oc-

died and was succeeded by his son Elah, a vicious and debauched prince, that, in the second year of his reign, as he was carousing in his steward's house, was assassinated by Zimri, a considerable officer of horse, who, to secure the kingdom to himself, ^d cut off all Baasha's friends and relations: but he had not taken care, as Baasha did, to gain the army which was then besieging ^e Gibbethon, over to his interest, so that when they heard of the news of the king's death, they declared for Omri their general. He immediately raised the siege, and marching to Tirzah, the then royal city, soon made himself master of it; so that Zimri seeing all lost, and despairing of any quarter from the enemy, retired to the palace, ^f which he set on fire, and, after a reign of seven days only, was consumed in it.

Omri, however, found it not so easy a matter to get the throne, as he expected. Half the Israelites declared for Tibni, the son of Ginah, which occasioned a civil war for four years, till having vanquished and slain his rival Tibni, he came to reign without a competitor. But his reign must be acknowledged to have been very wicked, when we find it recorded of him, that he not only walked in the way of Jeroboam, ¹ 'but did worse than all before him.' He very probably began to introduce other and more abominable idolatries than were then in use, which are therefore called ² 'the works of the house of Ahab.' He compelled the people to worship the golden calves; and by severe laws, which are called ³ 'the statutes of Omri,' restrained them from going up to Jerusalem: and because the royal palace at Tirzah was destroyed, he bought of one Shemer a piece of rising ground, whereon he built a palace for his own habitation, which, in a short time increasing to a city, was, from its first owner, called in Hebrew Shomerom, but, according to the Greek and our translation, ^g Samaria, and was ever after made a place of the king's residence, and the metropolis of the Israelitish kingdom.

¹ 1 Kings xvi. 25.

² Micah vi. 16.

³ Micah vi. 16.

casion of this difference proceeds from the mistake of some transcriber.—*Hewell's History* in the notes.

^d One part of the threat which the prophet Jehu denounces against Baasha is, as we see, that God would, 'make his house like the house of Jeroboam,' (1 Kings xvi. 3.) and that exactly came to pass. For as Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, reigned but two years, so Elah, the son of Baasha, reigned no more: and as Nadab was killed by the sword, so was Elah: so wonderful a similitude was there between Jeroboam and Baasha, in their lives and in their deaths, and in their sons and in their families.

—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^e This was a city in the tribe of Dan, and given to the Levites for their habitation, (Josh. xix. 44, and xxi. 23.) but they seem to have quitted it, as they did the rest of the cities, when Jeroboam would not suffer them to exercise their office, and the Philistines, it is likely, then seized upon it, as being adjoining to their country. It seems, however, to have been a place of no inconsiderable strength, since we find, that it maintained a siege for three kings' reigns successively, though with some interruption, 1 Kings xvi. 15, 16.

^f Some interpreters would rather have it, that Omri set the royal palace on fire, in order to burn Zimri in it, who had retired thither. The Hebrew words indeed will bear that construction; but the other sense seems more likely. Nor has profane history forgot to preserve the memory of some princes, who have chosen to die in this manner, rather than fall by the sword, whereof Sardanapalus is one of the most ancient and most notorious examples.—*Calmel's Commentary*.

^g It is somewhat wonderful, that when Omri bought this place of Shemer, whereon he intended to build a city, he did not call it by his own name, unless we may suppose, that when Shemer

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In the eight and thirtieth year of king Asa, Ahab succeeded his father Omri, and in wickedness excelled all his predecessors. But of him we shall treat at large in our next chapter, and choose to conclude here with this observation,—That though, while Asa reigned in Judah, Israel was in the hands of seven or eight several princes, namely, Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Omri, and Ahab; yet such was their hardness in sin and idolatry, that in all these changes, they never once thought of returning to the house of David, or the worship of the true God at Jerusalem.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.*

THE Jewish doctors have a tradition, that after Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, had left Shechem in haste, and made the best of his way to Jerusalem, Jeroboam called a council, consisting partly of pious, and partly of wicked men; that, in this council, he proposed whether they would agree and subscribe to all that he should appoint; that to this they declared their assent, and he thereupon constituted himself king; that when he proposed farther, whether, if he should establish idolatry, they would agree and consent to it, the pious party were shocked, and began to express their indignation; but that their wicked neighbours in the council, pacified them by whispering in their ears, “that Jeroboam had no intention to set up idolatry, but only mentioned it in a comparative sense, and with a design to try the extent of their obedience.” So that by this fraud, the pious people in the council were drawn in, and even Abijah himself prevailed on to subscribe implicitly, to whatever Jeroboam should think fit to enact; by which means he took an occasion, as the iniquity of the times favoured him not a little, to establish idolatry by a law.

Solomon, we all agree, was a man of great fame for his knowledge, and yet in the very maturity of his age, he discovered a strong inclination to idolatry, which could not but make a bad impression upon the minds of his subjects, when they saw the preference that was given to it by so wise a prince. His son Rehoboam was the issue of a woman that sprung from an infamous nation, an Ammonitess by birth, who, as far as it appears, was never a proselyte; and, having a great hand in her son’s education, might give him a deep tincture of her own

sold it, he let him have the greater bargain of it, upon condition that it should be continued in its first owner’s name. However this be, it is certain, that as Samaria was situated in the midst of the tribe of Ephraim on a fruitful and pleasant hill, it soon became the regal and capital city of the kingdom of Israel; nor did its king omit any thing to make it as strong, as fine, and as rich as possible. What fate it underwent by Benhadad king of Syria; by Salmanassar king of Assyria; and by one of the Maccabean family; by Herod the Great, who rebuilt and beautified it; by Augustus Cesar, and by the Emperor Adrian, under whom it finally fell; we shall see, in a great measure, in the course of this history. It is conjectured by Bochart, who traced the ruins of it, to have been once larger than Jerusalem; but now it consists of nothing but a few cottages and convents, inhabited by some Greek monks.—*Wells’s Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

sentiments: for, in his reign, we read, that ¹ ‘the people built them high places, on every green hill, and under every green tree, and did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel;’ which they durst not have done, had the king discountenanced them by his own example.

After a succession of such idolatrous princes, in the reign of king Josiah, ² ‘the book of the law’ was found in the house of the Lord, at which Hilkiah, the high priest, seemed to express an uncommon joy and wonder: and though this might possibly be the authentic copy, ³ which, by God’s command, was laid up in the sanctuary, yet how much the reading of it in any copy was at any time disused, we may gather, from what the historian tells us of the king, namely, that ⁴ ‘when he had read the words of the book of the law, he rent his clothes;’ and by a parity of reason we may infer, that what through the bad example of their kings, who gave life and encouragement to idolatrous practices, and what through the negligence of the people, in not perusing the books wherein the transactions of former times were recorded, the generation we are now speaking of might have forgot the history of Aaron’s molten calf, and the punishment pursuant thereupon, and might therefore be induced to worship another without any dread or apprehension of danger.

How the figure of a calf, or any other animal, can be a symbol of a deity, it is difficult to conceive. But a certain learned ⁵ author, who seems a little singular in his opinion, will needs have it that the golden calves which Jeroboam made, were an imitation of the cherubim, in his account these were winged oxen, Moses had placed upon the ark of the covenant, whereon the glory of the Lord sat enthroned. These cherubim in the tabernacle of Moses, and afterwards in Solomon’s temple, were placed in the sanctuary, and secreted from vulgar sight: but Jeroboam, to make his religion more condescensive, placed his calves in open view, so that every one who looked on them might, through them, worship the God of Israel, without repairing to the temple of Jerusalem.

This notion, if it were true, would make the transition easy from the worship at Jerusalem to the worship at Dan or Bethel; but we can hardly imagine, that Jeroboam had either so harmless or so conformable a design in setting up these golden images. Whatever his design was, it is certain that the Scripture, all along, represents him as of all others, the principal person that ⁶ ‘made Israel to sin; that ⁷ drew Israel from serving the Lord, and made them sin a great sin.’ And therefore we may observe, that whenever it describes a bad prince, one part of his character is, that he imitated the son of ⁸ ‘Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who,’ as the prophet upbraids his wife, ‘went and made him other gods, and molten images to provoke me to anger, and to cast me behind his back,’ saith the Lord.

The truth is, Jeroboam had lived a considerable time in the land of Egypt, had contracted an acquaintance with the king thereof, and formed an interest among the people; and therefore finding himself under a necessity

¹ 1 Kings xiv. 23, 24.

² 2 Kings xxii. 8.

³ Deut. xxxi. 26.

⁴ 2 Kings xxii. 11.

⁵ Mousæus, in Aarone purgato, b. 1. c. 8.

⁶ 1 Kings xiv. 16

⁷ 2 Kings xvii. 21.

⁸ 1 Kings iv. 9.

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of making an alteration in the established religion of his country, he thought it the wisest method to do it upon the Egyptian model, that thereby he might endear himself to that nation; and in case he met with opposition from his rival Rehoboam, might hope for assistance from that quarter. For as the Egyptians had two oxen which they worshipped, one called *Apis*, at Memphis, the metropolis of the Upper Egypt; and another called *Mnevis*, at Hierapolis, a principal city of the Lower; so he made two calves of gold, and placed one of them in Bethel which was in the south, and the other in Dan, which was in the north part of the country of Israel.

There were these farther reasons likewise that might determine him in the choice of these two places. Dan was a town famous¹ for the Teraphim of Micah, unto which there had been a great resort for many ages; and Bethel was, in every one's opinion, a holy place, that which Jacob had consecrated after he had been vouchsafed the vision of the ladder, and where God had so frequently appeared to him, that he thought he had reason to call it² 'the gate of heaven.'

Jeroboam, no question, was not insensible of the advantage his rival enjoyed, in having the temple in his possession; and might many times wish that he had been able to have built one that might have stood in competition with it; but this was impossible. Seven years and a half had Solomon been in completing the temple at Jerusalem, notwithstanding the multitude of hands that he employed, and the vast preparations of money and materials that his father had left him. To build one less magnificent, had been inglorious to Jeroboam; and to build one any ways adequate, was more than he could hope to see finished in his days. The people were grown weary of such public expensive works. The tax had been heavy and burdensome to them.³ 'Thy father made our yoke grievous,' was the complaint they brought against Rehoboam. 'Upon this the whole revolt was founded. And therefore, in the present state of Jeroboam's affairs, a new temple was, of all projects, the most unpopular, and the likeliest to create a total defection; since it was running directly into his rival's error, and, in effect, declaring, that⁴ his little finger should be found heavier than Solomon's loins had ever been.

In the mean time his subjects deserted apace; and, for want of a place of religious worship to resort to, were returning to Jerusalem, and to their allegiance to the house of David at once. Something therefore was necessary to be done, in order to remedy this growing evil; and, because Jeroboam readily foresaw, that, to support himself in his usurpation, he might possibly want the assistance of the Egyptians, the best policy that at present occurred to his thoughts, was, to do a courtesy to them, in setting up a form of worship much like theirs, and, at the same time, to gratify his own subjects in the choice of such places of worship as had been famous in

the days of old, and whose reputed sacredness,⁵ as well as proximity, might commute for the want of a temple.

Gezer, we own, lay at a considerable distance from Egypt, which, since the time of Sesostris, had seldom extended its conquests into foreign lands; and therefore, to account for its conduct here, we must observe, that Gezer was so ancient a town in Canaan, that when Joshua⁶ conquered it, it had a king of no small note; that in the division of the land,⁷ it fell to the tribe of Ephraim, was bordering upon the northern part of the country of the Philistines, and not far from the Mediterranean sea; that it was one of the eight and forty cities which, together with their suburbs, were given to the Levites; an inland town, but at no great distance from the sea-port of Joppa; that when the Ephraimites took possession of it,⁸ they suffered the Canaanites to cohabit with them, who gave them no small disturbance, and towards the latter end of David's reign, expelled them thence; that when Solomon came to the throne, he applied himself chiefly to the building of the temple, nor thought it worth while to disturb the peace of his reign for the recovery of a few revolted cities; that when a match was proposed between Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, Pharaoh thought he could not do a more acceptable service, or show the benefit of his alliance better, than in taking Gezer, and some adjacent places; that, for this purpose, he set out with a large fleet of ships, landed at Joppa, besieged Gezer, and because it made an obstinate defence,⁹ burned it to the ground, and slew all the Canaanites that were in it, but that not long after he began to rebuild it; and when his daughter was espoused to Solomon, gave him this, and some other places he had taken along with it, as part of her portion; for it is a mistaken notion, that princes' daughters had no portion in those days.

Among the Jews, indeed, the custom was for the men to give the dower, or to make some present to the parents, for the favour of having their daughter in marriage. But this custom prevailed only among the inferior sort: ladies of the first distinction were, in all nations, wont to bring their husbands fortunes proportionate to their quality: for Saul, we read, declared that the man who should slay Goliath, should not only have his daughter in marriage, but together with her, plenty of riches and other valuable emoluments. Antiochus the great promised to settle upon his, the kingdoms of Judea and Samaria, as a dowry to Ptolemy king of Egypt; and to name no more, Agamemnon, in times of an elder date, though not so great affluence, offered no less than⁹ seven good towns with his, without any reserved rent,

¹ Josh. x. 33. ² Ibid. xvi. 5. ³ Ibid. xxi. 20, 21. ⁴ 1 Kings ix. 16.

⁵ Iliad 9. line 141.

⁶ The speech which Josephus makes for Jeroboam, upon this occasion, is to this purpose:—"I need not tell you, my countrymen, that God is everywhere, and not confined to any certain place, but wherever we are, he hears our prayers and accepts our worship, in one place as well as another; and therefore I am not at all for your going up to Jerusalem at this time, to a people that hate you. It is a long tedious journey, and all this only for the sake of religion. He who built that temple was but a man, as every one here is, and the golden calves that I have provided for you, the one in Bethel, and the other in Dan, are consecrated, as well as the temple, and brought so much nearer to you, on purpose for the convenience of your worship, where you may pay your duty to God, in such a manner as best pleases you," &c.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 8. c. 3

Judg. xvii. ² Gen. xxviii. 17. ³ 1 Kings xii. 4. ⁴ Ibid. ver. 10.

⁵ In 1 Kings xii. 11, Rehoboam tells the people that his father had chastised them with whips, but he would chastise them with scorpions. In order to understand what is meant by scorpions here, we must observe that the Jews sometimes, in inflicting the punishment of whipping for notorious offences, tied sharp bones, pieces of lead, or thorns to the end of the thongs, which from the pain and torture they occasioned were termed scorpions.—*Burder's Oriental Literature*.—Ed.

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or other deduction from her husband. So that Pharaoh did no more than conform to the practice of other great princes, in endowing his daughter with the places he had taken from the Philistines, in all probability, for that very purpose.^a

How he came to swerve so soon from this alliance, as to give protection and countenance to his son-in-law's avowed enemies, need be no wonder at all to him who considers by what various springs kingdoms are governed; how the interest of nations shifts about, according to the different situation of their affairs, and of how little weight and validity all leagues and treaties are, when once national interest comes to be thrown into the counterbalance.

But this is not all. The Pharaoh who received Jeroboam in his exile, in all probability, was not the king whose daughter Solomon had married, but a prince of another line, and of different views. The woman whom Solomon married, was one of the dynasty of the Diospolites, whose ancestors had lived at Thebes; but in the year that Solomon finished the temple, there happened a revolution in Egypt, wherein this dynasty, or race of kings, lost the throne, and was succeeded by that of the

Taanites, of whom Semendis, the father of Shishak, was the first king.^b These kept their court at Zoan, an ancient town not far from the borders of Canaan, and therefore very convenient for the reception of any refugees that should come from thence. For as it was the interest of the former kings of Egypt to keep up a good understanding with the house of David; so now it became equally the interest of the present race to make use of all instruments to embarrass them, lest, by joining with the deposed family, that might, at any time, occasion another revolution in Egypt. And this, by the by, suggests the reason whereof the Scripture is silent, why Shishak invaded the kingdom of Judah with a vast army, but never pretended to annoy Israel; namely, because he thought it advisable to disable Rehoboam from assisting the deposed family in Egypt, but to encourage Jeroboam, who being an usurper himself, was unquestionless a friend and ally to those princes that were in the like circumstances.

Who the queen of Sheba was, and in what climate the country from whence she came to visit Solomon lay, are points wherein the learned are not so well agreed: but whether her name was Nicaule, Candace, Marqueda, or Balkis, for different authors give her these several names, it matters not much, if we can but find out what this Sheba was, whereof she is said to have been queen.

Josephus, and, from his authority, many more are of opinion, that Sheba was the ancient name of Meroe, an island, or rather peninsula in Egypt, before Cambyses, in compliment to his sister, (other historians call her his mother,) gave it her name. He tells us likewise, that she was queen both of Egypt and Ethiopia; ^c and the Ethio-

¹ Bedford's Scripture Chronology, b. 6. c. 2.

^a It does not, from all this, follow, that ladies of the first distinction were, in that age and in all nations, wont to bring their husbands fortunes in proportion to their quality, or that such was the general practice even of great princes. Saul's declaration shows that he meant to give his daughter, in reward for the most important service, which could be rendered to the state; but he kept not his promise. Afterwards he gave a younger daughter to David, but it was for a price, even for the slaughter of 200 of his enemies. It was of the utmost importance to Antiochus and Agamemnon to conciliate, at any price, Ptolemy and Achilles; and therefore they offered great dowries with their daughters to purchase the friendship of these formidable enemies; but this was not the case with respect to Pharaoh and Solomon. Pharaoh's giving up Gezer, therefore, to Solomon, as a dowry with his daughter, is a proof that David and Solomon were two of the greatest monarchs of their age; that he thought himself honoured by the alliance; and that the sacred historical account of Solomon's glory is not exaggerated. Among the Jews, and generally throughout the east, marriage was considered as a sort of purchase, which the man made of the woman he desired to marry; and therefore in contracting marriages, as the wife brought a portion to the husband, so the husband was obliged to give her or her parents money or presents in lieu of this portion. This was the case between Hamor, the father of Shechem and the sons of Jacob, with relation to Dinah, (Gen. xxxiv. 12.) and Jacob having no money offered his uncle Laban seven years' service, which must have been equivalent to a large sum, (Gen. xxix. 18.) Saul did not give his daughter Michal to David, till after he had received an hundred foreskins of the Philistines (1 Sam. xviii. 25.) Hosea bought his wife at the price of fifteen pieces of silver, and a measure and a half of barley, (Hos. iii. 2.) The same custom also obtained among the Greeks and other ancient nations, (*Potter's Antig.* vol. 2. p. 279.) and it is to this day the practice in several eastern countries, particularly among the Druses, Turks, and Christians, who inhabit the country of Hauran, and also among the modern Scenite Arabs, or those who dwell in tents. (See *Burkhardt's Travels in Syria, De La Roque Voyage dans la Palestine, and Burder's Oriental Customs.*) Young girls, Mr Buckingham informs us, are given in marriage for certain sums of money, varying from 500 to a 1000 piastres, among the better order of inhabitants, according to their connexions or beauty; though among the labouring classes it descends as low as 100 or even 50. This sum being paid by the bridegroom to the bride's father adds to his wealth, and makes girls, particularly when handsome as profitable to their parents, as boys are by the wages they earn by their labour.—*Buckingham's Travels among the Arab Tribes.*—Bp. Gleig, *Horne's Introduction.*—Ed.

^b I know not on what authority this is said, but it seems to be a mistake. There can be no doubt but that it was Shishak, who afterwards invaded Judah, that gave shelter to Jeroboam when obliged to flee from the vengeance of Solomon; but if Shishak was the Chephrenes of Herodotus, which is by much the most probable opinion, neither he nor his immediate predecessor was either the first or the last of any dynasty of Egyptian kings. Solomon had indeed married either his sister, or, which is more probable, his aunt; but, as Bishop Patrick judiciously observes, "kingdoms never marry;" and therefore there was nothing unnatural or uncommon in his conduct on this occasion.—Bp. Gleig. See also *Hales' Analysis* v. 4. p. 446, second edition.—Ed.

^c The Ethiopians, who held that this queen of Sheba was of their country, tell us, that she returned big with child of a boy which she had by Solomon; that when this child was of age to learn, she sent him to Solomon, who brought him up as his own son; that in his education, he took care to provide the ablest masters for him, and then sent him back to his mother, whom he succeeded in the kingdom; that the kings of Ethiopia were descended from Solomon by this young prince, whom they call Meilie, or Menilehec; and that of his family there were four and twenty emperors, down to Basilides, who reigned about the middle of the seventeenth age. (See *Ludolph's History of Ethiopia.*) [Mr Bruce confirms this report of Ludolph's, bringing sufficient proofs that the Abyssinians believe their present royal family to be lineal descendants of Solomon and the queen of Sheba. The tradition of the country certainly accounts better than any other hypothesis that could be easily framed, for that mixture of Judaism with Christianity which characterizes the religion of Abyssinia; and our author justly observes, that the trade carried on by the Israelites with the Cushites and shepherds on the coast of Africa, would naturally "create a desire in the queen of Azab, the sovereign of that country, to go herself, and see the application of the immense treasures that had been exported from her country for a series of years, and the prince who so magnificently employed them." The Abyssinians, he says, "call this queen Maqueda;" but the Arabians, who contest with them the honour of having had this woman for

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pians indeed have a tradition, that upon her return, she had a son by Solomon, whose posterity reigned there many years, and, to this very day, they have preserved a continual list of their names and successors.

There are these exceptions however to be made to the opinion of the Jewish historian, namely, that whereas he cites Herodotus, as speaking of his queen Nicaule, Herodotus makes mention of none but only Niconis, queen of Egypt; nor does he say one syllable of her pretended journey to Jerusalem. Whereas he says of this Nicaule, that she was queen of Egypt and Ethiopia both; the sacred history is plain, that in the time of Solomon there reigned in Egypt that Pharaoh, whose daughter he married, and in his son Rehoboam's time, Shishak. Whereas he tells us, that the ancient name of Meroe, before the time of Cambyzes, was Sheba; for this he seems to want authority, since ¹ Diodorus, and other historians, represent this city as built new from the ground, and not repaired by Cambyzes.

The more probable opinion therefore is, that this queen of Sheba came from a country so named, which lay not in Ethiopia nor Africa, but in the southern part of Arabia Felix; because it is generally allowed, that the Sabæans lived in Arabia, and that their country was usually called by the Orientalists the kingdom of the south, in allusion to which, our Saviour styles this princess ² 'the queen of the south;' because their country borders upon the southern ocean, beyond which the ancients knew no farther land; and therefore our Saviour, according to the common mode of speaking, says of this princess, that 'she came from the utmost parts of the earth;' because, in this country, ^a women were known to govern as well as men; because the common produce of it was gold, silver, spices, and precious stones, the very presents which this princess made Solomon; and, if any popular traditions may be credited, ³ because the Arabians talk of their queen Balkis, who went to visit Solomon, and show travellers the place of her nativity to this very day.

Now if this princess came from Arabia, there is reason to believe, that she was originally descended from Abraham, by his wife Keturah, one of whose sons ⁴ begat Sheba, who was the first planter of this country; and consequently that she might have some knowledge of revealed religion, by tradition at least, from her pious ancestors. To this purpose the Scripture seems to intimate, that the design of her visit to Solomon was, not so much to gratify her curiosity, as to inform her understanding in matters relating to piety, and divine worship. It was Solomon's fame, ⁵ 'concerning the name of the

Lord,' that is, concerning his knowledge of the Supreme Being, and the proper manner of worshipping him, that excited her to take so long a journey; and therefore, our Saviour says, that as she came so far to hear his wisdom (his wisdom concerning what? Concerning the nature and worship of Almighty God,) she would, at the day of judgment, 'rise up against that generation' which refused to listen to him.

Now, if this was the end of this queen's visit to Solomon, who can say, but that she left her country to good purpose, since it was to 'find ⁶ wisdom, and to get understanding, the merchandise of which is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gains thereof than fine gold; ⁷ the price which is above rubies, ⁸ and all that can be desired is not to be compared to it?' But even upon the supposition, that her errand was to acquire knowledge of an inferior kind, or even to make trial of Solomon's sagacity, by proposing some enigmatical questions to him; yet, who knows not, that it was the practice in those days for persons of the first rank and figure in life to exercise their wits in this manner?

⁹ Josephus, from some writers of the Phœnician history tells us, that Solomon used frequently to send to his friend Hiram problems and riddles, upon the forfeiture of a great sum of money, if he could not expound them; and that one Abdemonus, a Tyrian, not only unriddled Solomon's difficulties but sent back some new propositions of his own, which, if Solomon could not resolve, he was to incur the like forfeiture. Now the Scripture remarks of Solomon, that ¹⁰ 'his wisdom excelled the wisdom of the east country,' and by the east country some do understand the seat of the ancient Arabians, who in the days of Pythagoras, were so renowned for their wisdom, that ¹¹ that philosopher thought it worth his while to go and reside among them for some time. They were great masters of wit and ingenuity; and valued themselves upon their sagaciousness and dexterity, both in propounding and solving problems; and therefore no wonder that this queen of Sheba, who, as Josephus informs us, was a woman of exquisite understanding herself, should fall in with the humour of the times, and carry with her some problems of her Arabian sages, on purpose to make a trial of Solomon's parts: nor can we imagine, but that, in complaisance to so royal a visiter, as well as regard to his own reputation, Solomon would take care to answer her questions, and, as the Scripture expresses it, satisfy ¹² 'all her desire whatsoever she asked.'

Without knowing the custom of the princes of the east, their pomp, and sumptuousness of living, one might be tempted to wonder, what possible use Solomon might make of this milliad of wives and concubines that he had: but as he was between forty and fifty years old before he ran into this excess, we cannot but think, that he kept this multitude of women more for state than any other service. ¹³ Darius Codomannus was wont to carry along with him in his camp, no less than three hundred and fifty concubines in time of war; nor was his queen at all offended at it, because these women used to reverence

¹ B. i. et Luc. Ampel. de Cambyse.² Mat. xii. 42.³ Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings x. 1. and his Dictionary, under the word Sheba.⁴ Gen. xxv. 1, 3.⁵ 1 Kings x. 1.

their sovereign, tell us, that her name was Balkis, the daughter of Hadhad, son of Scharhabil, the twentieth king of Jemen, or Arabia Felix, and that she reigned in the city of Mareb, the capital of the province of Sheba. Their histories are full of fabulous stories concerning her journey to Solomon's court, and her marriage with him, but more particularly concerning the bird hudhud, in English a *lupwing*, which Solomon made use of to send into Arabia upon occasion, and to bring him despatches from thence.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Nicaule*.

^a It is generally supposed, that these words of Claudian relate to these people: "this sex rules over the Medes and the effeminate Sabæans, and a great part of Barbary is subject to the arms of queens."

⁶ Pro. iii. 13.⁷ Job xxviii. 18.⁸ Pro. viii. 11.⁹ Jewish Antiq. b. S. c. 2.¹⁰ 1 Kings iv. 30.¹¹ Porphyry, apud Cyril. b. 10. contra Julian.¹² 1 Kings x. 13.¹³ Athen. b. 13. c. 1.

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and adore her as if she had been a goddess. F. Le Comte, in his history of China, tells us, that the emperor there has a vast number of wives chosen out of the prime beauties of the country, many of which he never so much as saw in his whole life; and therefore, it is not improbable, that Solomon, as he found his riches increase, might enlarge his expenses, and endeavour to surpass all the princes of his time in this, as well as all other kinds of pomp and magnificence.

A man of Solomon's great wisdom, one would think, should have converted those women that were about him to the true religion rather than have suffered himself to be perverted by them to a false one. The Scripture tells us, indeed, that ¹ 'he went after Ashtaroth the goddess of the Zidonians and ^a Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites, and ^b Chemosh the abomination of Moab;' but surely he could never be so far infatuated, as to prefer those idols before the God of Israel. These women, no doubt, as they had got an ascendant over him, ² might abate his zeal against idolatry, and prevail with him for a public toleration of their religion: they might obtain money of him for the making of their idols, the support of their priests, and expense of their sacrifices; nay, and perhaps might sometimes persuade him, in compliance, to go with them to their worship, or to partake of their lewd and riotous feasts; but that they should ever be able to alter his notions concerning the true God, or prevail with him to believe, that the images they worshipped were informed with any kind of divinity, is a thing incredible.

In the course of this prevarication, however, he continued so long, that it is now become a famous question, Whether he be in a state of salvation or no? Those that maintain the negative, are apt to suggest, that though the Scripture gives us a particular account of his fall, yet it takes no notice of his recovery; that without the grace of God he could not repent, and yet his actions were such as justly deserved a forfeiture of that grace; that had he repented, he would have pulled down the idolatrous temples which he had erected, whereas we find them standing many years after him; and therefore they conclude, that as he did not ³ 'sorrow after a godly sort,' for his impieties, because in his whole behaviour to the very last, they can discern no carelessness wrought in him,

no clearing of himself, no indignation, no fear, no vehement desire, no zeal, no revenge, which the apostle has made the proper characteristics of a true repentance. The promise, however, which God makes to David concerning his son Solomon, may incline us to think favourably of his salvation: ⁴ 'I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, but my mercy shall not depart away from him.' And therefore we may presume, that towards the conclusion of his life he grew sensible of his transgressions, ⁵ though the sacred writer takes no notice of it, on purpose to leave a blot on his memory, and a frightful example of human weakness to all posterity; that the temples which he had built to heathen idols, he pulled down and demolished, ⁶ though they were afterwards raised again upon the same places, by other impious princes; and that, after his fall, he wrote his book of Ecclesiastes as a monument of his repentance, and acknowledgment of his own apostasy, and a warning and admonition to all others, that, however they may think of ⁷ 'doing whatever their eyes desired, of keeping nothing from them, and of withholding their hearts from no joy,' yet in the event, they would find, what his experience had taught him so late, that all 'was vanity and vexation of spirit;' that there was no profit in any kind of wickedness under the sun, but ⁸ 'that to fear God, and keep his commandments, was the whole duty of man.'

It is making a wrong judgment of things, to think, that the customs of ancient times, and of different countries, should agree with those of our own age and climate. We, indeed, when we have any thing to declare or relate, do it, for the most part, in express words: but the people of the east, especially those who took upon them the character of prophets, were fond of discovering their minds in ^c signs and emblematical actions; because they

⁴ 2 Sam. vii, 14, 15. ⁵ Patrick's Commentary.

⁶ Calmet's Dissertation on the Salvation of King Solomon.

⁷ Eccles. ii, 10, 11. ⁸ Ibid. xii, 13.

^c This is the first symbolical action that we meet with in any prophet; but, in after ages, instances of this kind became more frequent. Thus Jeremiah 'made himself bonds and yokes, and put them upon his neck,' (Jer. xxvii, 2.) to signify the near approaching captivity of Jerusalem. Isaiah, to denote the captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia, walked naked, that is, without his upper garments on, 'and barefoot for three years, in the streets,' (Is. xx, 2, 3.) Ezekiel, to make the people sensible that they were to be carried away into a strange land, was ordered to make a breach in the wall of his house, and through that, to remove his household goods, 'in the daytime, and in their sight,' (Ezek. xii, 3, 4.) The false prophet Zedekiah made himself a pair of iron horns, and said to Ahab, 'With these shalt thou push the Syrians,' (1 Kings xxii, 11.) And the like practice continued under the New Testament likewise; for Agabus having bound his hands and feet with St Paul's girdle, told the company, that, 'so should the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man unto whom it belonged,' (Acts xxi, 11.) Samuel having exhorted the people to return to the Lord with all their hearts, and to put away the strange gods from among them, said, 'Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto the Lord. And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord.' (1 Sam. vii, 5, 6.) The sacred historian does not explain in words the meaning of this drawing of water and pouring it out, nor was there any occasion for his doing so; the action of itself expressing with sufficient clearness that a deluge of tears was due for their offences. But it is not in Israel alone that information was given by action, or that when words were employed, action was added, to fix their meaning,

¹ 1 Kings xi, 5, 7. ² Poole's Annotations. ³ 2 Cor. vii, 11.

^a This god is the same with Moloch, which, both in Hebrew and Æthiopic, signifies, a king; but then there are various sentiments concerning the relation which this God had to the other pagan deities. Some believe, that Moloch was Saturn, others Mercury, others Venus, and others again Mars or Mithra. But F. Calmet, in his dissertation before his commentary upon Leviticus, has made it more than probable, that this god was the sun, who is called 'the king of heaven,' as the moon may be said to be the queen thereof, for its make and manner of worship.—See vol. ii, p. 460, in the notes.

^b Chemosh, or Chamos, comes from a root, which, in Arabic, signifies to make haste; and from hence some have imagined, that he is the same with the sun, whose motion is supposed to be so hasty and rapid; though some, from the Hebrew root, which signifies, *contractatus*, or *huddled*, will have him the same with the Roman Priapus, who is called 'Pater contractationum nocturnarum;' while others from the near resemblance of the Hebrew Chamos with the word Comos, have rather thought it to be Bacchus, the god of drunkenness; but in either acceptation it may be supposed to represent either Noah or Lot.—*Jurieu's History of Doctrines and Worship*, part 4.

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looked upon such representations more lively and affecting than any that proceeded from the mouth only could be.

When the prophet was sent to anoint Jehu to be king of Israel, the question which the rest of the captains put to him, ¹ 'Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?' sufficiently indicates their scorn and contempt of him: and, in like manner, Ahijah might have addressed himself to a man of Jeroboam's haughty spirit to small purpose, had he not, by some previous action, drawn his observation, and made him attentive to the message he was going to deliver. Now, if any such symbolical act was necessary at this time, the tearing of his garment was more proper than any, because, in the case of Saul, Samuel had applied it to denote the alienation of his kingdom: ² 'The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou:' and if rending the garment was no insignificant symbol upon this occasion, the newer the garment was, the more it would declare, that what the prophet did was by a divine command, and upon mature deliberation.

This may, in some measure, suffice to rescue Ahijah from the imputation of madness, in tearing his garment to pieces. And to come now, in the last place, to the case of the other prophet who came from Judah to denounce judgments against the altar of Bethel, and was slain in his return, for disobeying the divine injunction, this we may think was a small offence, that hardly deserved so severe a fate; but then we should do well to consider, that ³ whenever God, in an extraordinary manner discovers his will to a prophet, he always makes

such a sensible impression upon his mind, that he cannot but perceive himself actuated by a divine spirit; and, consequently, cannot but be assured of the evidence of his own revelation. This evidence the prophet that was sent to Bethel had; for as he was able, by the power that was given him, to work miracles, he could not but be sensible of his divine mission, and that the particular injunction, of 'his not eating or drinking in the town of Bethel,' was as much the will of God as any other part of his commission.

Now, the design of God, in this prohibition, was, to express his abhorrence of that idolatrous place; and therefore the other pretended revelation of the ^b old prophet who lived therein, was justly to be suspected, not only because it was repugnant to God's main design, but because it came from a person who had given no great testimony of his sincerity in choosing to live in a place notoriously infected with idolatry, and yet making no public remonstrances against it. The consideration of this one circumstance should have made the young prophet diffident of what the other told him, at least till he had shown him some divine testimony to convince him; for it argued a great deal of levity, if not infidelity of his own revelation, to listen to that of another man, in contradiction to what he had abundant reason to believe was true.

The short of the matter is:—The prophet from Judah had sufficient evidence of the truth of his own revelation; had sufficient cause to suspect some corrupt ends in the prophet that came to recall him; and had sufficient reason to expect an interposition of the same power that gave him the injunction to repeal it. And therefore his crime was an easy credulity, or complying with an offer merely to gratify a petulant appetite, that he knew was repugnant to a divine command; and the lesson we are to learn from God's severity in this instance is:—Not to suffer our faith to be perverted by any suggestions that are made against a revelation that is of uncontested divine authority, but ⁴ 'if an angel from heaven,' as the Apostle puts the case, should preach any other gospel,

⁴ Gal. i. 8, 9.

¹ 2 Kings ix. 11. ² 1 Sam. xv. 28. ³ Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacrae. and to impress it on the memory. Herodotus informs us (b. iii. c. 46.) that the Samians, in their distress, having arrived at Sparta, and obtained an audience of the magistrates, made a long speech in the language of suppliants; to which they received for answer, that "the beginning of their discourse was already forgotten, and the conclusion of it not understood." At a second interview the Samian orators simply produced an empty leathern bag, saying, that it contained no bread; to which the Spartans replied, that they observed the bag and determined to assist them. Again, we are told by Clemens Alexandrinus, as quoted by Bishop Warburton, that "Identhura, a king of the Scythians, as Pherecydes Syrus relates the story, when ready to oppose Darius, who had passed the Ister, sent to the Persian a symbol instead of letters, namely, a mouse, a frog, a bird, a dart, and a plough," or, as it is otherwise reported, five darts, without the plough. This symbol was understood by Gobryas, one of the Persian chiefs, to signify that the army of Darius should never recross the Ister, unless like birds they could fly into the air, like mice burrow in the earth, or like frogs take refuge in marshes. (See *Herodotus*, b. iv. c. 13.) As the symbol is mentioned by Clemens, I should think its meaning was, that the Scythians would dispute every inch of ground, and at last leave the country a barren desert to the Persians, rather than submit to their yoke. But whatever be the precise meaning of this particular symbol, it is obvious, that in those ages all important messages were at least accompanied by significant actions. They still are so among all savage nations; and Bishop Warburton has clearly traced the practice from its origin in necessity. Where languages are rude and confined, speakers are obliged to call in the aid of significant actions to make themselves understood; and as every impression made through the eye takes a faster hold of the mind than impressions made through the medium of the other senses, orators have in all ages, and in every country, given force to their speeches, by what was originally necessary to make scanty and equivocal languages understood.—See *Divine Legislation*, b. iv. sect. 4; and b. vi. sect. 5. with the note G. at the end of that book.—Bishop Glog. —Ed.

^b The learned are divided in their sentiments concerning this prophet at Bethel. Some will needs have him to have been a false prophet, highly in esteem with king Jeroboam, because he prophesied to him soft things, and such as would humour him in his wickedness. To this purpose they tell us, that going to visit the king one day, and finding him in a deep concern upon account of the menaces and reproaches which the man of God from Judah had denounced against him, he undertook to persuade him, that that prophet was an impostor, and to elude the force of the miracle he had wrought, by telling him, that there was nothing extraordinary in his altar's falling down, considering that it was new built, not thoroughly settled, loaded with sacrifices, and heated with fire. And as for the matter of his arm, that was occasioned only by his having overwrought himself in pulling the sacrifices along, and lifting them up upon the altar, which might make his hand numb for a while, but, upon a little rest, it came to itself again; and so, with plausible distinctions, and loose insinuations, he shuffled off the miracle, and made the king more obdurate in wickedness than ever. Others think more favourably of the old prophet, namely, that he was a true prophet of God, though some say a wicked one, not unlike the famous Balaam, who sacrificed every thing to his profit. Whilst others say, he was a weak one, who thought he might innocently employ an officious lie to bring the prophet of Judah back, who was under a prohibition indeed, but such a one, as in his opinion, related only to the house of Jeroboam, and such others as were of an idolatrous religion.—*Josephus's Jewish Antiquities*, b. 8. c. 3.

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than what we have received, to detest and denounce him accused.'

Here, however, we may take occasion to admire the unsearchable secrets of the divine justice. Jeroboam revolts from his lawful sovereign, forsakes the worship of the true God, engages the people in gross idolatry, and is himself hardened with the menaces and miracles of the prophet that was sent to him. A false prophet deceives an innocent man with a lie, and draws him into an act of disobedience, contrary to his inclination; and yet this wicked Jeroboam, and this seducing prophet, go unpunished, while the other, who might mean no ill perhaps in turning back, is slain by a lion, and his body deprived of the sepulchre of his fathers. We must acknowledge indeed, that the depths of the judgments of God are an abyss that our understandings cannot fathom. But nothing certainly can be a more sensible proof of the truth of another life, and of the eternal recompenses or punishments that attend it, than to see the righteous so rigorously treated here for very slight offences; Moses excluded the land of promise¹ for a diffident thought; ² Lot's wife changed into a statue of salt for her looking back; and ³ David, for a vain curiosity, punished with the death of no less than seventy thousand of his subjects. And if God be thus severe to his own servants; 'if judgment thus begins at the house of God, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' As sentence against every evil man, therefore, is not speedily executed, this is our proof, this is our assurance, that ⁴ 'God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'

CHAP. III.—Of Solomon's Riches, and his Trade to Ophir.

He who only looks into the map, and there observes, in how small a compass the land of Canaan is comprised, may be apt to think that the kings of that country were petty princes, ruling over an indigent obscure people, unable to bear any great expense, and incapable of making any considerable figure, except now and then, at the head of their armies. But he will soon perceive his mistake, when he comes to reflect on the immense riches which David left his son Solomon; on the vast expense of Solomon's magnificent living; and on the several branches of his revenue, which enabled him to sustain that expense.

The Scripture informs us, that out of the revenues of the crown, David left Solomon, merely for the purpose of building the temple, 'a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver;' out of his privy purse, 'three thousand talents of gold, and seven thousand talents of silver;' and out of the benevolence of the princes, 'five thousand talents, and ten thousand drams of gold, and ten thousand talents of silver.' Now, since it is generally agreed, that a talent of silver was equivalent to three hundred and forty-two pounds, three shillings, and ninepence; and a talent of

gold amounted to no less than five thousand four hundred and twenty-five pounds sterling, what an immense sum must all these talents of gold and silver amount to? Some of the best authors of weights and measures have computed, that if all the walls, pavements, lining, and covering of the temple had been made of massy gold, even with the wages of the workmen and vessels belonging to it, they would not have come up to the value here specified; and therefore, upon this supposition, they have advanced a notion, that the Hebrews had two kinds of talents; a larger, which was called 'the talent of the sanctuary,' and a smaller, which was the common talent, and one half less than the other, by which all such exorbitant sums, as they say, ought to be reckoned. But what grounds they have for this distinction we cannot perceive,⁵ since it nowhere appears, either in the Scriptures, or in any other history, that the Jews, especially before the captivity of Babylon, had any more talents than one; and that their talent, whether of silver or gold, arose to a sum tantamount to what we have stated it at, there are several instances in the Old Testament, that may convince us.

To this purpose we may observe, that when Amaziah, king of Judah, hired a hundred thousand men out of Israel, to fight against the Edomites, he gave no more than ⁶ an hundred talents of silver for them, which would have been but a very trifling price indeed, had the talent here been of less value than three thousand shekels: that when Omri, king of Israel, bought the mountain whereon was built the city of Samaria, he paid for it no more than ⁷ two talents of silver; and yet these two talents were ten thousand nine hundred and fifty pounds, a proper sum for such a purchase; that when Sennacherib king of Assyria had obliged Hezekiah to pay him ⁸ three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, that good king exhausted, not only his own treasure, and the treasure of the house of the Lord, but was forced likewise to cut the gold off from the doors and pillars of the temple; and to name no more, that when Pharaoh Necho ⁹ 'put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold,' Jehoiakim was necessitated to levy a tax extraordinary upon his subjects, that every one might contribute according to his power: but neither of these remarks, namely, that these two kings were thus straitened about the payment, would the sacred historian have made, had the talent in his days, been of considerably less value ¹⁰ than Moses is known to rate it at. So that, upon the whole, we may conclude, that the Hebrew talent continued always the same, and amounted to a much greater sum, than those who are for debasing its value are willing to allow.

But, if the talent must be reckoned at so high a rate, how can we imagine, that David, who had no estate from his family, and whose dominions were far from being extensive, could ever be able to amass such an immense quantity of wealth? Now, in answer to this, we should do well to consider, that, even before the death of Saul, David was at the head of some brave troops, with whom he used to make inroads into the enemies' country, and frequently bring from thence

¹ Num. xx. 11, 12. ² Gen. xix. 26. ³ 2 Sam. xxiv. 15.

⁴ 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. ⁵ Eccles. xii. 11. ⁶ 1 Chron. xxii. 14.

⁷ 1 Chron. xxix. 1.

⁸ Ibid. xxix. 7.

⁹ Calmet's Dissertation on the Riches that David left to Solomon.

¹⁰ 2 Chron. xxv. 6. ¹¹ 1 Kings xvi. 24. ¹² 2 Kings xviii. 15.

¹³ 2 Kings xxiii. 33.

¹⁴ Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26.

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large booty; that, after Saul's death, he reigned forty years in all, and, in that space, made it his business to heap up riches, especially when he came to understand, that God had appointed his son and successor to build him a temple; that, in the time of his reign, he had wars with the Syrians, the Philistines, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and several other nations, from whom he returned always victorious, and always laden with their treasures, and a rich spoils; that, by this means, he enlarged his dominions, as far as ¹ the promise made to Abraham extends, even from the river Euphrates to the Mediterranean sea, on the one side, and to the Nile on the other; that the countries which he subdued, and made tributary to him, such as Arabia, Phœnicia, Mesopotamia, Idumæa, &c. were exceedingly rich, and productive of several mines of gold and other metals; and that the tributes which were wont to be exacted upon such occasions, were either annual imposts, or vast sums of money at once: if we may consider, I say, the spoils which he took from conquered nations, and the tribute which he raised from such as submitted to his empire, we shall have no cause to wonder at his leaving such immense treasures to his son.

But, besides these revenues from abroad, he had a large income from the taxes which his own subjects annually paid him, and the improvements he made of his own estates; which in those days were accounted, not only lawful and allowable, but even honourable and commendable in princes, as well as others. The sacred history has preserved ² the names of the officers whom he employed in this capacity; and, from the different provinces wherein they acted, we may, in some measure, form a judgment of the largeness of this branch of his income. He had officers set over the labourers, who were to till his grounds; officers to take care of the dressing of his vines, olive, and fig-trees; officers to inspect the gathering of his fruits, and the managery of wine and oil cellars; officers to look to the feeding of his camels and asses, his herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep; and officers who were to attend to the selling and exportation of all these. For David, we must know, had the command of the Mediterranean sea, and had established a commerce with the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Syrians, Philistines, and other nations, who took off his camels, asses, oxen, sheep, wine, corn, oil, fruits, and other commodities, in large quantities, and at very advantageous prices: all which, being put together, will make the amount of what David left his son no less than what the sacred writer has recorded.

³ And indeed, considering the vast expenses Solomon

was at in his chariots, in his horses, in his camels, in his armies, in his shipping, in his buildings, in his furniture, in his servants, for his table, and for his women, which came at length to no less than a thousand, and all to be maintained in the port of queens, we can hardly think, that a small revenue would ever have been sufficient to answer all these demands.

The Scripture indeed informs us, that Solomon's annual income was ⁴ 'six hundred, threescore and six talents of gold, besides what he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of spice-merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of all the governors of the country:' but these six hundred threescore and six talents of gold ⁵ are thought, by most interpreters, to be no more than what arose from the tribute which he imposed upon conquered nations; over and above which he had a yearly tax paid by his own subjects; duties upon the import or export of all merchandise; mines of gold and silver, and other metals; the voluntary presents of other princes; and a trade to Ophir and Tarshish, which brought him in riches inestimable.

These were two branches of profit which his father had not, at least not in the same extent. Of the former it is said, that ⁶ 'every man that came to hear Solomon's wisdom, brought his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, and horses, and mules,' and continued to do the same every year; and of the latter that he sent ⁷ vessels to Ophir, which, in one voyage, 'brought him four hundred and fifty talents of gold, together with almug-trees, and precious stones;' and to Tarshish likewise, 'which brought gold, and silver, and ivory, and apes, and peacocks;' and as, by this means, he came to surpass all the kings of the earth for riches, it may be worth our while to inquire a little where the places, which produced such plenty of wealth, were in ancient times situated, and both how, and by whom, a trade so very advantageous might probably be carried on.

Amidst the vast variety of opinions concerning the situation of these two famous places, Ophir and Tarshish, ⁸ the learned Grotius has suggested a good expedient, one would think, how to find them out; namely, by considering what commodities were brought from thence, and then inquiring of merchants, who have been in the remoter parts of the world, where not only gold and precious stones, but ivory likewise, and almug-trees, and whatever else we read of, was brought from thence, and is now to be found. But this expedient will not do; not only because the seats of traffic are frequently changing, and any country may, in time, be exhausted of the commodities it once abounded with; but because it is no easy matter to tell by the imperfect description we have of them, of what distinct species some of these commodities were. ⁹ The almug-tree, for instance has been a puzzle to most interpreters; nor are they yet agreed, whether it was the coral, ebony, Brazil, pine, or citron wood; nay, some will have it to have been no particular tree at all, but only a general name for any wood whatever, that was excellent in its kind:

¹ Gen. xv. 7.

² 1 Chron. xxvii. 26, &c.

³ Calmet's Dissertation on the Riches that David left to Solomon.

⁴ Besides the personal ornaments worn by those who went to battle in the eastern nations, it was customary to adorn their weapons and utensils of war with the richest metals. We learn from the history of David, that the Syrians, whom he subdued and slew in vast multitudes, wore shields of gold; and therefore we need not doubt, but that their quivers, the handles of their swords, &c., were of the same metal. He was victorious in about twenty battles over the richest enemies in the world; and therefore their personal spoils, rich arms, military chests, and goods of gold and silver, always carried to battle with them, could not but amount to an immense sum; and, in all probability, the spoils of their cities and countries to a much greater.—*The History of the Life of King David.*

⁵ 1 Kings x. 14, 15.

⁶ Calmet's Dissertation on the Riches that David left to Solomon.

⁷ 1 Kings x. 24.

⁸ 2 Chron. ix. 10, 21, 22.

⁹ Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings.

¹⁰ Calmet and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

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and how then can those commodities, that are of so indefinite a signification, be any characteristic to the situation of any country?

Nor is there much more certainty to be gathered from the names of the places we are in quest of; for, though it be allowed, that Ophir was the country which at first was peopled by Ophir, one of Joktan's sons, who are said¹ to have inhabited the country from Mesha to Sephar, a mountain in the east; yet, where Mesha and Sephar are to be placed, we know no more than we do where Ophir lies. And, in like manner, though Tarshish may be supposed by some, to be a town or country, not far distant from Ophir, yet others will have it to be no proper name at all, but by ships of Tarshish, or from Tarshish, understand no more than vessels able to bear a long voyage, that is, large merchant ships, in opposition to small craft, intended for home trade in navigable rivers. So incompetent are the marks whereby we may descry the true situation of these unknown places! And therefore we can expect no other, but that the conjectures of learned men about them should be widely distant.

In relation to the land of Ophir, which is more particularly under our inquiry, Josephus and from him many others, places it in the Indies, in a country which he calls the golden coast, not unlikely the Chersonesus Aurea, known now by the name of Malacca, and is a peninsula opposite to Sumatra. The learned Bochart contends hard for the isle Taprobane, so famous among the ancients, which is now called Ceylon, and lies in the kingdom of Malabar, because this place (as he tells us) abounds with gold, ivory, and precious stones. Arius Montanus will needs remove it into Armenia; and when Christopher Columbus at first discovered the island Hispaniola in 1492, he used to make his boast, that he had found the Ophir of Solomon, because he perceived deep caverns in the earth, from whence he supposed that prince might have dug his gold. F. Calnet is no less singular in his opinion. He places Ophir somewhere in Armenia, not far from the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates;² and, to obviate the objection of the country's not bordering on the sea, and not being at distance enough for a three years' voyage, he supposes, that Solomon's fleet made a trading voyage of it; that in no one place it met with all the commodities it brought home; but, on the coast of Ethiopia, took in apes, ebony, and parrots; in Arabia, ivory and spices, and at Ophir, or the place of traffic where the people of Ophir resorted, gold: and though this Ophir might be no maritime country, yet this hinders not, says he, why the gold which it produced might not be brought by land carriage to some part of the Tigris or Euphrates, which, at that time, were a great way navigable. Grotius, as well as Calnet, is of opinion, that Solomon did not send his fleet to any part, either of the East or West Indies, but only to a part of Arabia, by Arian called Aphar, by Pliny, Saphar, and by Ptolemy, Sapphera, situate on the main ocean; and that the Indians brought down their merchandises thither, to be bought by Solomon's factors, and shipped on board his fleet. And to name no more,

Huetius, in his dissertation upon the subject, endeavours to persuade us, that Ophir lay upon the east coast

of Africa, and more particularly, was that small country which is called Sophala; that Solomon's fleet went out of the Red sea, and from the harbour of Ezion-Geber, entered into the Mediterranean, by a canal of communication which joined the two seas; and that, having doubled the Cape of Guadarfay, and coasted along the African shore, it came at length to Sophala, and there met with plenty of all the merchandises and curiosities that the sacred history specifies.

Which of these conjectures, for conjectures they are all, make the nearest approaches to truth, it is hard to determine; only we may adventure to say,³ that, if any part of Arabia did furnish the world, in those days, with the best gold, and in the greatest quantity, as some good authors seem to say, they who would have the Ophir of the Holy Scriptures to be there situated, seem of all others, to have the best foundation for their conjecture; especially considering that the use of the compass not being then known, the way of navigation was, in those days, by coasting, which would carry a ship into Africa much better than either into the East or West Indies.

Before the reign of king David, to inquire a little into this history of the Ophir trade among the Hebrews, the Hebrews did not much apply themselves to maritime affairs. From the time of Joshua they had been almost perpetually engaged in wars, and had therefore had no leisure or opportunity to think of navigation. The Tyrians and Phenicians were then in possession of all the commerce of the Mediterranean; and on the main ocean the Hebrews had not the least footing until David made a conquest of Idumea, and thereby became master of two sea port towns on the Red sea, Elah and Ezion-Geber; and seeing the advantage that might be made of the situation of these two places, wisely took the benefit of it, and there began this traffic.

After the death of his father, Solomon continued the trade to Ophir from these two ports, whither himself went in person; and having ordered more ships to be built, and the harbours to be repaired and fortified, he settled every thing else that might tend to the effectual carrying on of this traffic, not only to Ophir, but to all other parts to which the sea whereon those ports lay opened him a passage. But his chief care was to plant in those two towns such inhabitants as were best qualified to carry on his design; for which reason he brought thither, from the sea coasts of Palestine, as many sailors as he could get, but especially of the Tyrians, with whom his good friend and ally, king Hiram, supplied him in great numbers: so that in a short time he drew to these two ports, and from thence to Jerusalem, all the trade of Africa, Arabia, Persia, and India, which was the chief fountain of the immense riches for which his reign was so renowned.

After the division of the kingdom, the kings of Judah, who kept possession of these ports in Idumea, still carried on the trade, especially from Ezion-Geber, which they chiefly made use of until the time of Jehoshaphat; who having prepared a fleet to go to Ophir, in conjunction with Ahaziah king of Israel, had the misfortune to have them destroyed and dashed to pieces against a ridge of rocks which lay at the mouth of the harbour, before they could get to sea, which gave him such a

¹ Gen. x. 30. ² Dissertation on the country of Ophir.

³ Calnet's Dictionary, under the word Ophir.

⁴ Prideaux's Connexion, part 1. b. 1.

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distaste against the place, that, from thenceforward, the station of his ships was at Elah, for from thence we read of his sending out a fleet next year for Ophir.

¹ When Jehoram succeeded his father Jehoshaphat, God, for the punishment of his exceeding great wickedness, suffered the Idumeans to revolt from him; who, having expelled his viceroy, chose them a king of their own, and, under his conduct, regaining their ancient liberty, they soon recovered the two ports of Elah and Ezion-Geber: but even while they had them, there was an interruption in the Ophir trade, until Uzziah king of Judah having retaken Elah, in the beginning of his reign, fortified it anew, peopled it with his own subjects, and restored the old traffic to Ophir, which continued all along until the wicked reign of Ahaz.

In the reign of Ahaz, Rezin king of Damascus, being assisted by Pekah king of Israel, took Elah by surprise; and having driven out the Jews that were settled there, put Syrians in their place, and was thinking of carrying on this trade, which the kings of Judah had been so enriched by, to his own advantage; when, the very next year, Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, having by the procurement of Ahaz, invaded Damascus, and conquered Rezin, took possession of Elah, and reserved the property of trade to himself: so that the Jews, from thenceforward, had never any portion in it, which proved a great diminution to their wealth.

How the Assyrians managed this traffic, while it continued in their hands, or where they fixed their principal mart for it, we are nowhere told. In process of time, we find it wholly engrossed by the Tyrians, who, from the same port of Elah, by way of a ² town on the confines of Egypt and Palestine, made it all centre in Tyre, and from thence furnished all the western part of the world with the wares of Persia, India, Africa, and Arabia, to the great enriching of themselves, as long as the Persian empire subsisted, under the favour and protection of whose kings they enjoyed the full possession of this trade. ³ But when the Ptolemies prevailed in Egypt, by building several ports on the Egyptian or western side of the Red Sea, for Elah and Ezion-Geber lay on the eastern, and, by sending from thence fleets to all those countries where the Tyrians traded from Elah, they soon drew all this trade into their kingdom, and there fixed the chief mart of it at Alexandria, where it continued for a great many ages, until a way was found out, ⁴ about two centuries and a half ago, of sailing to those parts by the way of the Cape of Good Hope; after which, the Portuguese, for some time, managed this trade; but now the greatest share of it is fallen into the hands of the English and Dutch.

SECT. II.

CHAP. I.—From the Reign of Jehoshaphat to the Siege of Samaria.

THE HISTORY.

AFTER the death of Asa, ^a Jehoshaphat his son, when

¹ Prideaux's Connexion, part I. b. 1.

² The town's name was Rhinocolura, Strabo, b. 16.

³ Prideaux's Connexion, *ibid.* ⁴ Anno Dom. 1497.

^a 1 Kings xvii. 1. "We are deceived by not seeing titles

five and thirty years of age, succeeded him in the kingdom of Judah, and, in all acts of piety, as well as the reformation of religion, imitated, if not excelled, ^b the former part of his father's reign. At his first accession to the throne, he expressed his zeal for God's service, in the extirpation of those Sodomites, and the destruction of those idolatrous ^c high places and groves which remained in his father's reign; and perceiving that the people were grossly ignorant of the law, after he had fortified his frontier towns, and put his kingdom in a good posture of defence, he sent itinerant priests and Levites through all his dominions, with letters to the princes, and heads of each family, to receive them kindly, and to encourage them in expounding the law, and instructing his subjects in the knowledge of their duty.

By these means, he soon gained the hearts of his people, who, to support the dignity of his government, ^d

among the Israelites, like those of our nobility. Every one was called plainly by his own name: but their names signified great things, as those of the patriarchs. The name of God was part of most; which was in a manner a short prayer. Elijah and Joel are made up of two of God's names, joined in a different way. Jehoshaphat and Shephatiah signify the judgment of God: Jehozedek and Zedekiah, his justice: Johanan, his mercy, Nathanael, Elnathan, Jonathan and Nathaniah, all four, signify, God given, or the gift of God. Sometimes the name of God was understood, as in Nathan, David, Obed, &c., as is plain by Eliezer, God my helper: Uzziel, God my strength; and Obadiah, the Lord's servant. The Greek names also are of the same import; many are composed of the names of their gods; as Diodorus, Diogenes, Hermodorus, Haphestion, Athenais, and Artemisia. ^e—*Fleury's History of the Israelites*, p. 20.—Ed.

^b In 2 Chron. xvii. 3. mention is made of the first ways of his father David; but it may very well be questioned, whether the word David be not slipped in here by the fault of some transcriber, in the place of Asa, because in 1 Kings xxii. 43, as likewise in 2 Chron. xx. 32, Asa is named, and not David. Now it is very well known, that in the beginning of his reign, Asa was very religious, but fell from his piety towards the conclusion of it; and therefore the sacred historian, by observing that Jehoshaphat followed his father in what he was in his first days, and not in his old age, might intend a just reflection upon Asa for his growing more negligent and remiss in the service of God, towards the decline of his life.—*Patrick's Commentary*; and *Howell's History* in the notes. [The word David is wanting in the Septuagint and six MSS. Boothroyd omits it, and considers it most probable that Asa is the true reading.—Ed.]

^c It is said of his father Asa likewise, that he removed the high places, together with the idols and the groves, which his father and mother had made, 1 Kings xv. 12, &c.; but then we are to observe, as we have noted before, that there were high places and groves of two sorts; some for the worship of the true God, which continued in Judah even under religious princes; and others for the worship of idols, which good kings took away, even though they left the other standing. The high places and groves of this latter kind, were those which Asa destroyed; but because towards the conclusion of his reign, when he grew more infirm in body, and more remiss in God's cause, some of his subjects, out of their vile attachment to idols, had made new ones, Jehoshaphat, upon his accession to the throne, had occasion enough to begin a reformation in this particular as well as many others.—*Patrick's Commentary* on 1 Kings xviii. 30; and *Poole's Annotations* on 2 Chron. xvii. 6.

^d It was customary for subjects to make their oblations to their princes, especially at the commencement of their reigns. It is said of some disaffected people, that they brought Saul no presents, even though he had been recognised as king, (1 Sam. x. 27.) But by the presents here spoken of, we may not improperly understand the tribute and customs which his subjects were obliged to pay him; only it was thought proper to call them presents, or voluntary gifts, as a name of a less odious sound and import, than that of tributes.—*Calmet's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xviii. 5.

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brought him presents from every quarter, ^a and struck such a terror into his enemies, that instead of invading his dominions, the Philistines came voluntarily, and paid him a tribute, which had been suspended for some years, and the Arabians, whose riches consisted in cattle, sent him always seven thousand seven hundred rams, and an equal number of he goats, as an annual acknowledgment of their homage. For Jehoshaphat took care to make himself strong in arms, as well as wealth, having an army of above eleven hundred thousand men, ^b besides those that were in garrisons, and such fortified places as he had well furnished with plenty of all military stores.

In short, Jehoshaphat was rich and happy, great and honourable, beloved by his subjects, and revered by his enemies; only there was this great blemish in his reign, that he ^c married his son Jehoram to Athaliah, daughter to Ahab, king of Israel, which both displeased God, and involved him and his family in sundry troubles: but of these hereafter.

This Ahab, as we said, was one of the wickedest princes, and the most abominable idolaters, that ever sat on the throne of Israel: for he not only continued the worship of the calves which Jeroboam had set up, but having married Jezebel, the daughter of ^d Eth-baal, king of Tyre, to pleasure this woman he introduced the idolatry paid to the ^e god Baal, built him a temple in Samaria,

^a His enemies could not but be sensible, that it was in vain to assault him, while he continued firm in his religion; for they must have observed, that the prosperity of all the kings of Judah depended on that, and that they never fell into the hands of their enemies, but when they had first fallen from God.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^b This is such a prodigious number that no judicious critic will attempt to defend it, and besides if Jehoshaphat was possessed of so great a force, it is not easy to account for the alarm which he felt when told that the Moabites and Ammonites were coming against him. Also in his prayer, uttered on that occasion, he says, 'We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do.'—See *Kennicott's Dissertation.*—En.

^c The only shadow of excuse that can be alleged in behalf of Jehoshaphat's marrying his son in this manner, might be a fond conceit, that in case Ahab should die without issue male, he might have a chance to reunite the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah; but in this piece of worldly policy he found himself sadly disappointed.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^d Eth-baal, or Ithobalus, as he is called by profane writers, does equally signify the strength of Baal. In the catalogue of the kings of Tyre, he is said to be the eighth; and as both Tyre and Sidon were, from the beginning, subject to the same king, it is not improbable, that their kings resided sometimes at the one, and sometimes at the other city, and were therefore called the kings of Tyre or Sidon promiscuously. As the character of king and priest were frequently united in the same person, so is he supposed to have been the high priest of Astarte or Ashtaroth, the goddess of the Sidonians; and for this reason perhaps his daughter was so violently attached to that kind of idolatry, that when she came into power, she was for utterly extirpating all the priests and prophets of the Lord. The truth is, this queen was a monster in her kind; and therefore the name of Jezebel has passed into a proverb, to denote any cruel, impious, and impetuous woman.—*Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Kings xvi. 31.

^e Baal, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies Lord, and as Selden observes, was anciently the name of the true God, until the world grew wicked, and came to apply it to the sun; in after ages, to other stars; and in process of time, to any of their kings whose memory was dear to them. The same author observes, that the Phœnician Belus, or Baal, was the same with the European Jupiter, and as Sidon was situate on the sea side, their Baal was called by the Greeks the Jupiter of the sea. But more of

erected an altar, and ^f made a grove, where all kinds of impurities were committed, the more effectually to proselyte the vicious and debauched to a religion so agreeable to their lusts; and as an instance of the daring impiety of this age, one Hiel, who lived at Bethel, the famous seat of all idolatry, ^g adventured to rebuild Jericho, in defiance of the curse which Joshua had pronounced above four hundred and fifty years before, against any man that should attempt it. But the presumptuous wretch found to his cost, that Joshua's prediction was verified in him, when he saw his eldest son die, as soon as he had begun the work, the rest of his children drop off, as he continued it, and his youngest son taken away at last, when he had completed it.

In the midst of this bold impiety, Israel however had the happiness to be blessed with an eminent prophet, Elijah, the ^h Tishbite, an inhabitant of Gilead, on the other side of Jordan; who being grieved to see such a general apostasy from the true religion, ⁱ prayed ear-

this you may see in the writings of that great man.—*Selden* on the gods of Syria.

^f The Jewish law was so far from permitting men to plant any such groves, that it enjoins all its professors to destroy them: 'Ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire,' (Deut. vii. 5;) and therefore, though Josephus imputes the erection of these to the impiety of his wife Jezebel, who (as he tells us, *Jewish Antiq.* b. viii. c. 7.) "was a woman of a bold, enterprising humour, and of so impetuous and ungovernable a spirit, that she had the confidence to build a temple to Baal, the god of the Tyrians, to plant groves, for superstition, of all sorts of trees, and to appoint her priests and false prophets expressly for that idolatrous service;" yet her husband was nevertheless culpable for giving her that indulgence.

^g Jericho was one of the first places that Joshua took in the land of Canaan; and when he took it, he laid it under a *Cherem*, that it should never be rebuilt: but it is presumable, that as the sacred history was then very little read, Hiel might either be ignorant of this interdict, or being a professed idolater himself, might probably, at the instigation of Jezebel, or to gain the favour of the court, do it in defiance of God, and to let the world see, that whatever was denounced in his name was of no significance at all, and for this reason met with his condign punishment.—*Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries.*

^h Thesbe was a town on the other side of Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and in the land of Gilead, where this prophet was born, or at least inhabited for some time. Since the Scripture makes no mention, either of the quality of his parents, the manner of his education, or his call to the prophetic office, some Jewish doctors have been of opinion, that he was an angel sent from heaven, in the midst of the general corruption of the world, to preserve the true worship of God. Others pretend, that he was a priest descended from the tribe of Aaron; that his father's name was Sabaca, and his birth altogether miraculous: whilst others again will needs have it, that he was Phinehas, the son of Aaron, who after having lived a long while concealed, appeared again in the world under the name of Elijah. But where the Scripture is silent, all particulars of this kind are of small authority. This, however, may be said with safety of him, that he was one of the chief, if not the prince of the prophets of his age; a man of a great and elevated soul, of a generous and undaunted spirit, a zealous defender of the laws of God, and a just avenger of the violation of his honour.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

ⁱ St James's words are these:—'Elias was a man subject to the like passions as we are; and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months.' Our blessed Saviour makes mention of the like compass of time, (Luke iv. 25,) and yet neither of these are contradictory to what the sacred history tells us, namely, 'That the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year,' (1 Kings xviii. 1.) For we must remember, that as Egypt had no rain, but was watered by the river Nile; so the land of Canaan had generally none, except twice a year, which they called 'the

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nestly to God, that he would lay bare his arm, and show some visible token of his displeasure against so wicked a people: and accordingly, in a short time, he was sent to Ahab to let him know, that God intended to bring a sore famine, occasioned by want of rain,^a upon the land, which should last for above three whole years.

When the drought had continued some time, and the divine threat began to operate, Elijah retired to the ^b brook Cherith, where he concealed himself for the space of a whole year, and was miraculously fed by the ravens, which brought him bread and flesh twice every day, and for his drink he had the water of the brook; but when the water of the brook began to fail, God directed him to go to ^c Zarephtha, a town belonging to the territories of Sidon, where he had appointed a widow woman to entertain him.

early and latter rain.' The former of these was in the month Nisan, which answers to our March; and the other in the month Marchesvan, which answers to our October. Now, at the beginning of the drought, Ahab might very probably impute the want of rain to natural causes; but when, after six months, neither the former nor the latter rain fell in their season, he then began to be enraged at Elijah, as the cause of the national judgment, and forced him, at God's command, to save his life by flight: and from that time the three years in the historian are to be computed, though from the first notice which Elijah gave Ahab of this approaching calamity, to the expiration of it, were certainly three years and a half. This calamity is said to have been procured by Elijah's prayers; but we must not therefore imagine, that his prayers were spiteful and malicious, but necessary rather, and charitable to the offenders; that by the sharp and long affliction which they produced, God's honour, and the truth of his word and threatenings, which was now universally contemned, might be vindicated; and that the Israelites, whose present impunity hardened them in their idolatry, might hereby be awakened to see their wickedness, their dependence upon God, and the necessity of their returning to his religion and worship.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 6. c. 2; and *Poole's Annotations*.

^a It is worthy of remark, that according to Menander, there occurred in the reign of Eth-baal, king of Tyre an extremely severe drought, which lasted from the month Hyperberetæus till the same month in the following year. After prayers were put up for averting the judgment with which the land was threatened, there ensued mighty claps of thunder, and, we may presume, a copious rain. As Eth-baal was contemporary with Ahab, the reader cannot fail to identify the drought now mentioned, with that which gave celebrity to the ministerial functions of the prophet Elijah.—*Russell's Connection*, b. 2. c. 2.—Ed.

^b The brook Cherith, and the valley through which it runs, are both very near the river Jordan; but whether on the east or west side of the river, it is not so well agreed. Eusebius, or at least St Jerome, places it beyond Jordan, and so on the east side of it, but others generally agree in placing it on the west side, because God, in sending away Elijah, says to him, 'Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan,' (1 Kings xvii. 3,) where the expression 'turn thee eastward,' seems to imply, that Elijah was on the west side of Jordan, for had he been on the east side, then to have gone to the brook, which ran on that side Jordan, would have been to have turned westward.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

^c Zarephtha, or as it is called in the New Testament, Sarepta, was a town which lay between Tyre and Sidon, but somewhat nearer to the latter. Mr Maundrell, in his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, observes, that it is the same with what is now called Sarphan, distant about three hours' travel from Sidon, in the way to Tyre. Whatever it was formerly, the same author tells us, that at present it consists of no more than a few houses, on the tops of the mountains, about half a mile from the sea; though there is reason to believe, that the principal part of the city stood below, in a space between the hills and the sea, because there are still ruins there to be seen of a very considerable extent.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, part 1. c. 5. s. 2.

The famine had spread itself over the country of Sidon, as well as the land of Israel; and therefore, when the prophet drew near the town, he met the widow to whom he was directed; and when he requested of her to give him a little water, and withal a morsel of bread, she solemnly protested to him, that she had but an handful of meal in a barrel,^d and a little oil in a cruise, and was come out to pick up some sticks, wherewith to bake a cake ^e for her and her son, which was to be the last meal they were ever like to eat. But the prophet, encouraging her to do as he bid her, gave her assurance, that her meal and her oil should not fail as long as the famine lasted; which accordingly proved true: for of that little store, she, and her son, and the prophet, lived for the space of two years; and when, in this space, her son fell sick and died, Elijah by his prayers restored him to life again, which ^f gave the mother full conviction, that he was a person extraordinary sent from God.

After he had lived in this obscurity for above two years, God commanded him to return to the land of Israel, and to present himself before Ahab, because in a short time, he intended to send rain upon the earth. At this time the famine was so extreme about Samaria, that the king commanded ^g Obadiah, one of the officers of his household, and some others with him, to go all over the country in quest of some forage for the subsistence of his cattle; and to see that his orders were fully ex-

^d 1 Kings xvii. 12. As corn is subject to be eaten by worms, the easterns keep what they are spending in long vessels of clay, (*Sandys' Travels*, p. 117.) So it appears the woman of Zarephtha did. The word translated barrel, properly signifies a jar; and is the same with that used for the vessels in which Gideon's soldiers concealed their torches, and which they brake when they blew with their trumpets.—*Harmer*, vol. i. p. 277.—Ed.

^e Some of the Hebrew doctors, and herein they are followed by some Christians, are of opinion, that this widow's son was the prophet Jonas; that after his restoration, his mother gave him to Elijah; that ever after he attended on the prophet as long as he lived; and on a certain occasion was despatched by him to Nineveh, as every one knows. But besides that these traditions are destitute of any real proof, Jonah was an Hebrew, as he himself declares, (i. 9.) and a native of Gath-hepher, as we read (2 Kings xiv. 25.) whereas the widow's son was a native of Zarephtha, a town belonging to the kingdom of Sidon, and by birth a stranger to the race of Israel.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^f The woman had sufficient reason to believe, that Elijah was a prophet, or person sent from God, when she saw the miraculous increase of the meal and oil; but upon his not curing her son when he lay sick, but rather suffering him to die, her faith began to droop; whereas, upon seeing him revive, her faith revived with him; and through the joy of having him restored to her again, she accounted this latter miracle much greater than the former.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^g There are some Jewish doctors who think that this Obadiah was the same with him whose writings we have among the twelve minor prophets. They pretend that he was married to that woman of Shunem, where Elisha used to lodge; that he was a disciple of the prophet Elijah, and the last of the three captains whom king Ahaziah sent to apprehend him; and that for this reason he had compassion on him, though he destroyed the others that came before him, with fire from heaven, (2 Kings i. 9, &c.) but all these things are pure apocrypha. Obadiah himself, in his discourse with Elijah, sufficiently tells us who he was, namely, a person truly religious, who worshipped God alone, had a singular affection for his servants; enough, one would think, to have made Ahab discard, if not persecute him, had he not found him so highly useful in the management of his domestic affairs, as to connive at his not worshipping Baal, or the calves; especially as we read nothing of his going up to Jerusalem, which was a defect that God perhaps might think proper to dispense with.—*Calmet and Patrick's Commentaries*.

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executed, himself went along with some of them.^a Obadiah, of all the king's domestics, was the most religious. He in the time of Jezebel's^b persecuting the prophets of the Lord, concealed an hundred of them, by fifty in a cave, and there sustained them with necessaries. When Elijah met him, Obadiah saluted him with great respect; but when the prophet required him to go and acquaint the king that he was there, and desired to speak with him, Obadiah at first excused himself, upon apprehension that Elijah might vanish, and leave him the object of the king's indignation, who had taken such vast pains to find him out; but when the other assured him that he would not stir, he went and brought the king to him. The king, at the first interview, began to upbraid him with being the cause of the calamity that the nation suffered; but Elijah boldly returned the charge, and having taxed him with the worship of false gods, which was the source of all their wo, he undertook to prove that they were no more than false gods, if so be the king would be pleased to summon all the people to meet upon mount Carmel, and to bring thither the 450 priests of Baal, together with the 400 priests of Astarte, who were supported at Jezebel's table.

Elijah had told Ahab, that 'there should be neither dew nor rain upon the earth, but according to his word;' and therefore the king being persuaded, perhaps, that the national remedy was in his hands, neglected not to issue out writs for the convention of the people, and

ordered the priests to attend. When they were all met together, Elijah, having first upbraided them with their vile prevarication, in mixing the worship of God and the worship of Baal together, made them a fair proposal, to this effect. "Since there can be no more than one infinite, supreme, almighty, and independent being, let us, at this time, make the experiment who this being is. You, who are the worshippers of Baal, have all the advantages on your side, the favour and protection of the court, 450 priests of one kind, and 400 priests of another; whereas I, who am the manager of God's cause, am but one poor banished man; and yet let two oxen be brought before us. Let the priests of Baal choose their ox, dress it, cut it in pieces, lay it on the altar; but let there be no fire thereon; and I, in like manner, will do so to my ox. Let them pray unto their gods, and I likewise will call on the name of Jehovah; and then let the God, who, by consuming the sacrifice^c with a sudden flash of fire, shall make it appear, that he hath heard the prayers, be owned by this whole assembly to be this one, this true, supreme, independent Being."

This was a proposal that none could gainsay; and therefore the priests of Baal prepared their altar, sacrificed their bullock, placed it on the altar, and began to call upon their god: but Baal continuing deaf to their invocations, they betook themselves to odd gesticulations: they sometimes jumped over the altar,^d some-

¹ 1 Kings xvii. 1.

^a Of the dreadful extremities to which the inhabitants were reduced, for want of provender for their beasts of burden, an idea may be formed by the extraordinary circumstance of the haughty Ahab proposing to his prime minister Obadiah, to go in person, and by different routes, in search of grass for the horses and mules, both of which were held in the highest estimation. The places where Obadiah was recommended by his royal master to look for provender was in the vicinity of springs and running waters—a recommendation founded on a correct knowledge of the state of the parched and barren regions of the east, where the few spots of verdure that occur are found so generally to afford water, that the presence of the one is almost always a sure indication of the nearness of the other; and the circumstance of two personages of such elevated rank setting out from the palace in search of such places, is one of the strongest proofs that could be given of the simplicity of ancient manners, when the greatest princes were in the habit of stooping to perform the meanest and commonest offices. Among the tribes of Asia and Africa, the same habits are to this day observed by the most powerful chiefs, who are so far from deeming it derogatory to their royal dignity to engage in an expedition to obtain either grass or water, that no employment could be considered more suitable to their character, or more likely to secure for them the good-will and esteem of their subjects.—*Jamieson's Eastern Manners*.—Ed.

^b Elijah, in his appeal to the people, tells them, 'I, even I, only remain a prophet of the Lord,' (1 Kings xvii. 22.) and therefore we can hardly imagine, that all these hundred, whom Obadiah preserved, were men actually inspired and invested with a prophetic character, but only such as were the disciples of the prophets, and candidates for that office. For it is not unlikely, that even to Jezebel's time, there were remaining in Israel schools of the prophets, which she endeavoured to destroy, as well as those that were bred up in them, that there might be none left to instruct the people in the true religion. These she certainly looked upon as enemies to her idolatry, and might possibly persuade her husband, that they were disaffected to his government and favourers of the kings of Judah, because they worshipped the same God, and thought that the proper place of his worship was Jerusalem: and therefore the greater was the piety and courage of Obadiah, in rescuing so many victims from the hands of this furious and enraged woman.—*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

^c This is not the first time, wherein God had declared his approbation of his worshippers, by sending down fire to consume the sacrifices, (Lev. ix. 24. and Judg. vi. 21.) and though perhaps it may be possible for evil spirits, who may have great knowledge how to manage meteors and exhalations to their purposes, to make fire descend from the clouds; yet, since they can do nothing without a divine permission, it is absurd to think, that, in a matter of competition between him and false gods, he should give evil spirits any license to rival him in his miracles.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^d 1 Kings xviii. 26. 'They leaped upon the altar which was made.' Baal, whose idolatrous worship is here referred to, was the same as Apollo, or the Sun. Callimachus has given us a remarkable instance of the universal veneration which was paid by the ancient pagans, at his altar in the temple of Delos. Amongst other ceremonies in the worship of this idol, it was customary to run round his altar, to strike it with a whip, and with their hands or arms bound behind them, to bite the olive. For of Delos, the poet says:—

Thou, ever-honour'd isle, what vessel dares
Sail by regardless? 'twere in vain to plead
Strong driving gales, or, stronger still than they,
Swift-wing'd necessity: their swelling sails
Here mariners must furl: nor hence depart.
Till round thy altar, struck with many a blow,
The maze they tread, and backward bent their arms,
The sacred olive bite.

Hymn to Delos, v. 433.

The former part of this ceremony plainly alludes to singing and dancing round the altar. The latter part seems to accord with what is said of Baal, (1 Kings xviii. 26—28.) where we read of the priests of Baal who leaped upon the altar they had made, which the Septuagint renders *ran round*; 'and they cried aloud, and cut themselves, after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.' Their running round the altar signified the annual rotation of the earth round the sun. Striking with a whip the altar, cutting themselves with knives and lancets, crying aloud to their deity, were symbolical actions, denoting their desire that he would show forth his power upon all nature in general, and that sacrifice in particular then before him. Having thus surrounded the altar of Apollo, and by these actions declared their belief in his universal power, they used to bend their own arms behind them, and so take the sacred olive into their mouths: thereby declaring, that not their own arm or power which was bowed, but from his whose altar they surround-

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times danced round it, and, according as their custom was, began ^a to cut themselves with knives and lancets, but all to no purpose: whereupon the true prophet ^b fell a bantering and ridiculing them, as justly he might; but their senseless idol knew nothing of the matter.^c

ed, and from him they expected to obtain that peace, whereof the olive was always a symbol. (Gen. viii. 11.) There are some evident allusions to these abominable idolatrous practices in the Old Testament; and for which the Jews are severely reprimanded by the prophets, for following such absurd and wicked ceremonies. 'Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace,' (Micah iii. 5.) and respecting Ashdod, the prophet says, 'I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth.' (Zech. ix. 7.) "Theseus, on his return from Crete, put in at Delos, and having sacrificed to Apollo, and dedicated a statue of Venus, which he received from Ariadne, joined with the young men in a dance, which the Delians are said to practise at this day. It consists in an imitation of the mazes and outlets of the labyrinth; and, with various involutions and evolutions, is performed in regular time. This kind of dance, as Dicaearchus informs us, is called by the Delians the Crane; he danced it round the altar Keraton, which was built entirely of the left side horns of beasts." (*Plutarch vita Theseus.*) This was a circular dance, and probably called the crane, because cranes commonly fly in the figure of a circle. This dance, after a lapse of 3000 years, still exists in Greece, under the name of the Candiote. See an account of it in M. Guy's Hist. Lit. de la Grece, Lett. 13, and a plate in Leroy Baines des plus beaux monumens de la Grece.—Ed.

^a A strange method, one would think, to obtain the favour of their gods! and yet, if we look into antiquity we shall find, that nothing was more common in the religious rites of several nations than this barbarous custom. To this purpose we may observe, that as Plutarch, on Superstition, tells us, the priests of Belona, when they sacrificed to that goddess, were wont to besmear the victim with their own blood; that the Persian Magi, according to Herodotus (b. 7. c. 191.), used to appease tempests, and allay the winds, by making incisions in their flesh; that they who carried about the Syrian goddess, as Apuleius (b. 8.), relates, among other mad pranks, were, every now and then, cutting and slashing themselves with knives, till the blood gushed out; and that even to this day, some modern travellers tell us, that in Turkey, Persia, and several parts of the Indies, there are a kind of fanatics, who think they do a very meritorious thing, and what is highly acceptable to the deity, in cutting and mangling their own flesh. "But the gods ought not to be worshipped at all," says Seneca, as he is quoted by St Austin de Civ. Dei (b. 6. c. 10.), "if they delight in such. The fury of a restless and excited mind to gain the favour of the gods is so great, that not even the most hideous tyrants can exercise their cruelty so savagely," &c. *Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

^b The words of the prophet are very cutting and sarcastical. "Cry aloud, for he is a god" no doubt, though he may be deaf, or a great way off, so that he cannot hear unless you cry aloud; or "either he is talking," about business, or "pursuing his pleasures;" or perhaps "he is in a journey, and not at home;" or "peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened." The two last notions of "being asleep, and not at home," how absurd soever they may be when applied to the deity, were certainly such as several idolaters conceived of their gods, as appears from these passages in Homer. In the former of these, Thetis, says he, cannot meet with Jupiter, because he was gone abroad, and would not return in less than twelve days. "For Jupiter yesterday went away to a feast among the Ethiopians, and all the other gods are along with him, but on the twelfth day he will return again to Olympus." And in the conclusion of that book, he shows in what manner the gods went to sleep:—"But Jupiter, the Olympian prince of lightning, went up to his couch, where it was his wont to repose when gentle sleep hung heavily on his eyelids," &c.

^c Elijah's taunts were not the groundless effusions of satire and ridicule, but were founded on the absurd and grovelling notions entertained of the objects of their worship by the heathen; who, both in ancient and modern times, ascribed to their gods all the attributes of humanity; and considered that their favour was to

This farce of devotion they continued till the day was above half spent; when Elijah, desiring the people to draw near, and take twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes, ^d repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been broken down, and then laying his bullock on the wood, ^e poured a great quantity of water three times on the sacrifice, on the wood, and on the altar; so that the water filled the trench, which was dug round the altar to receive it. It was now much about the time of

be procured, and their presence and attention obtained, by means similar to those practised in securing the ear and the good-will of men. The heathen deities had all of them certain employments assigned them,—one had the management of the winds, another of the water, the cares of which were supposed necessarily to occupy and distract their minds at particular periods; and some were also engaged in long and distant expeditions, from which they had to return before they could answer the supplications of their votaries.—Even in the present day, the same notions prevail among the heathen, of the limited powers of the deities. Thus Siva, the principal god of the Hindoos, once fell into a profound reverie, which was supposed to be the cause of great public calamities and portentous occurrences that befell the land. On a particular season of the year, he is constantly occupied with the pleasures of the chase, to gratify him with which, his statue, together with that of his favourite wife, is taken from his temple, placed on a car, and carried out to the open fields. Sometimes he suddenly departs on long journeys, and sometimes he falls asleep, which he did on one occasion particularly, when he had assumed the form of a porter, and, wearied with his task, resigned himself under a tree to the influence

"Of nature's soft restorer, balmy sleep."

—From these circumstances, it appears that the sarcastic observations of the prophet were thrown out in ridicule of the prevailing ideas of the priests and devotees of Baal; and they were rendered the more cutting, by his recommending them 'to cry aloud;' the very last attempt to gain the ear of their deity they would have dreamt of making, as it is considered the greatest impropriety to disturb any one in a temple or sacred place, when he is meditating, or to trouble him when engaged in the pleasures of the chase—in prosecuting a journey, or the enjoyment of repose. The proposal was made by Elijah, as if, in the extremity of their distress, they should break through the ordinary rules of respect for their God, more particularly as the occasion so greatly concerned his honour; and, as if he wished to afford the spectators the strongest proofs, according to the popular notions, of the impotence and insignificance of the idol, to whom they had been taught to prostrate themselves with blind homage.—*Jamieson's Eastern Manners.*—Ed.

^d The altar, which the sacred author here calls 'the altar of the Lord,' was certainly one of those which were built in the time of the judges, and first kings of Israel; when, for want of a fixed place of worship, such structures were permitted. Both Tacitus (b. 2. c. 74,) and Suetonius, speak of the God of Carmel, whom Vespasian went to consult when he was at Judea. His priest Basilides promised him all manner of prosperity and success in his undertakings; but, as the two historians tell us, there was neither temple nor statue upon the mountain, but one altar only, plain but very venerable for its antiquity. Some are of opinion, that this Basilides was a Jew, and priest of the Most High God; but it seems more reasonable that he was a pagan priest, and probably the same who met Vespasian in the temple of Serapis in Egypt. However this be, the altar of Carmel seems to have had its origin from this altar of the true God, which the ancient Hebrews first erected, and Elijah afterwards repaired; which even the heathens held in such veneration, that when they came to be masters of the country, they would not place so much as an image by it.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^e This the prophet did to make the miracle more conspicuous and convincing, to show, that there was no fallacy in it, no fire concealed in or about the altar, but that the lightning, which was to consume the sacrifice, came from heaven, and came at his invocation; for so Josephus tells us, that Elijah invited the people to draw near, even that they might search, and spy everywhere if they could find any fire that was conveyed under the altar.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 8. c. 7; *Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

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offering the evening sacrifice, when, having prepared all things, he approached the altar, and prayed in this manner: 'Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show this day, that thou art the God of Israel, that I am thy servant, and that it is by thy commandment that I have done this thing.' ^a Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that these people may understand, that thou art the Lord God, and that their hearts may be converted from their idol unto thee.' And no sooner had he ended this short prayer, but a fire fell from heaven, ^b and consumed not only the burnt-offering, but the wood and stones, nay, the very dust of the place, and the water that was in the trench; insomuch, that, when the people saw the miracle, they fell on their faces, and in admiration and acknowledgment of it, owned that the God of Elijah was the true God: ^c whereupon he ordered them to seize on the priests of Baal as a pack of cheats and impostors, to carry them down from the mountain, and to slay them all at the brook Kishon.

After this just execution was finished, the prophet returned to the top of the mountain, from whence he might view the Mediterranean sea; where, having prayed for rain, ^d

^a He was the more earnest and fervent in his prayer, as Abarinel thinks, because he had undertaken to make the experiment of God's power on his own accord, and without any particular command from him, nothing doubting, but that he would appear to vindicate his own honour, even though he offered sacrifice on a high place, which was not agreeable to the law.—*Patrick's Commentary*. There is no ground whatever, for supposing that Elijah in this affair acted on his own responsibility; on the contrary, he expressly declares in his prayer, that he had acted according to the commandment of God.—*Ed.*

^b 1 Kings xviii. 38. Bishop Patrick apprehends that God testified his approbation of Abel's sacrifice by a stream of light, or a flame from the shekinah, which burned it up. In this opinion many ancient writers concur; remarking that footsteps of it may be met with in many other cases. (See Gen. xv. 17. Lev. ix. 24. Judg. vi. 21. 1 Chron. xxi. 26. 2 Chron. vii. 13. Ps. xx. 3, marginal reading.) Some relics of it are to be found among the heathen: for when the Greeks went on shipboard to the Trojan war, Homer represents Jupiter promising them good success in this manner. (*Iliad*, ii. 354.) And thunder sometimes accompanying lightning, Virgil makes him establish covenants in that manner. After Æneas had called the sun to witness, Latinus lifts up his eyes and right hand to heaven, saying, "Let the (heavenly) father hear what I say, who established covenants with thunder." (*Æneid*, xii. 200.) From some early instances of this kind the heathen seem to have derived their notions, that when a sacrifice took fire spontaneously, it was a happy omen. Pausanias says, that when Seleucus, who accompanied Alexander in his expedition from Macedonia, was sacrificing at Pella to Jupiter, the wood advanced of its own accord towards the image, and was kindled without fire. See also Lev. ix. 24. 1 Chron. xxi. 26. 2 Chron. vii. 1.—*Ed.*

^c The process of this consumption is very remarkable, and all calculated to remove the possibility of a suspicion that there was any concealed fire. 1. The fire came down from heaven. 2. The pieces of the sacrifices were first consumed. 3. The wood next, to show that it was not even by means of the wood that the flesh was burned. 4. The twelve stones were also consumed, to show that it was no common fire, but one whose agency nothing could resist. 5. The dust, the earth of which the altar was constructed, was burned up. 6. The water that was in the trench, was by the action of this fire entirely evaporated. 7. The action of this fire was in every case downward, contrary to the nature of all earthly and material fire. Nothing can be more simple and artless than this description, yet how amazingly full and satisfactory is the whole account.—*Dr A. Clarke*.—*Ed.*

^d 1 Kings xviii. 42. 'And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.' The devout posture of some people of the Levant greatly resembles that of Elijah. Just before the descent of the rain, he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face

between his knees. Chardin relates that the dervises, especially those of the Indies, put themselves into this posture, in order to meditate, and also to repose themselves. They tie their knees against their belly with their girdles, and lay their heads on the top of them, and this, according to them, is the best posture for recollection.—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 506.—*Ed.*

^e When Elijah's servant reported to his master, that he saw a little cloud arising out of the sea like a man's hand, he commanded him to go up and say to Ahab, 'Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.' This circumstance was justly considered as the sure indication of an approaching shower, 'for it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.' Mr Bruce (*Travels*, vol. iii. p. 669) has an observation which greatly corroborates this relation. He says, "there are three remarkable appearances attending the inundation of the Nile: every morning in Abyssinia is clear, and the sun shines; about nine, a small cloud not above four feet broad, appears in the east, whirling violently round, as if upon an axis; but arrived near the zenith, it first abates its motion, then loses its form, and extends itself greatly, and seems to call up vapours from all opposite quarters. These clouds having attained nearly the same height, rush against each other with great violence, and put me always in mind of Elijah's foretelling rain on Mount Carmel. The air, impelled before the heaviest mass, or swiftest mover, makes an impression of its own form, in the collection of clouds opposite, and the moment it has taken possession of the space made to receive it, the most violent thunder possible to be conceived instantly follows, with rain; and after some hours the sky again clears."—*Ed.*

^f In this country, loose and long garments were in use; and therefore, when the people were minded to run, or make any great expedition, their custom was to gird them round their waist; but why the prophet condescended to become, as it were, the king's running footman upon this occasion, was to show the world, that his extraordinary power, in working miracles, and the conquest he had thereby gained over his enemies, had not made him proud, and to satisfy the king of his readiness to do him all the honour imaginable; that he was far from being his enemy, and only desired he would become the true worshipper of God, who was, as he could not but see, the Lord God of Israel.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^g This certainly was the effect of her blind rage, and not of any prudence in her: for prudence would have advised her to conceal her resentment until she had been ready to put her designs in execution; whereas this sending him word, was giving him notice of his danger, and admonishing him to avoid it. But, since he had the confidence to come where she was, she might think perhaps, that he was as courageous as she was furious; that upon this notice he would scorn to fly; and she too, in her pride, might scorn to kill him secretly or surreptitiously, resolving to make him a public sacrifice.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

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who had brought him meat and drink, awoke him, and bade him eat heartily, because he had a long journey to take. The prophet did as he was ordered, and in the strength of that repast, walked ^a 40 days and 40 nights, until he came to Mount Horeb, the place where God at first delivered the law to Moses. Here he betook himself to a cave, intending very probably to spend the remainder of his days in retirement; but he had not been long in the place, before he had a vision, wherein God having first, by several ^b emblems, made him sensible of his almighty power and presence, ^c gave him to

understand, that the number of his true worshippers was greater than he imagined, ^d and that he would not fail to take vengeance on the house of Ahab for their abominable idolatry. To this purpose he ordered him to return into his own country by the way of Damascus, where he was to anoint Hazael king of Syria, Jehu king of Israel, and to appoint Elisha his successor in the prophetic office; intimating hereby, that these men ^e would be proper instruments, in his almighty hand, whereby to punish the idolatry of Israel, and to assert the righteousness of his own cause.

This was a matter of some comfortable expectation to Elijah: and therefore leaving Horeb, in his return by the way of Damascus, ^f he found Elisha at plough, and as he passed by, ^g cast his mantle upon him; which the

The Greeks, on the contrary, performed their sacred rites bareheaded. St Paul, therefore, writing to the Corinthians, who were Greeks, says, 'every man praying or prophesying with his head covered dishonoureth his head.' (1 Cor. xi. 4.)—Ed.

^d 'Yet I have felt me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.' (1 Kings xix. 18.) Bowing the knee was an act of worship, and so was kissing the idol. This was done two ways, either by applying their mouth immediately to the image, or kissing the hand before the image, and then stretching it out, and, as it were, throwing the kiss to it.—Ed.

^e The words in the text are, 'And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael, shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay' (1 Kings xix. 17.) Where it is easy to observe, that these things are not mentioned according to the order of time wherein they fell out, for Elisha was a prophet before Hazael was king, and Hazael was king before Jehu, but they are spoken of according to the decree of God, who, as Abarinel observes, appointed every one to execute that which was proper for him to do: "Thus he intended," continues that learned commentator, "that Hazael should destroy the idolaters of Israel in battle, and therefore he mentions that first, because it is a general calamity; but as Jezebel, the children of Ahab, and the priests of Baal, went not to fight, and consequently could not fall in battle, he ordained Jehu to cut off them, and all the worshippers of Baal, in the manner that we find he did: but as he did not know the disposition of little children, he left them to be punished by Elisha, who by the spirit of prophecy, foresaw that they would become idolaters." But in this there seems to be more subtilty than needs, since the plain sense of the words is no more than this:—"That God, in his providence, had appointed three persons to punish the Israelites according to their deserts; and that one or other of these should infallibly execute his judgments upon them." The only difficulty is, how the prophet Elisha can be said to slay, when, by profession, he was a pacific man, and never engaged in war? But when we consider the two and forty children which he destroyed, besides others, whom, upon the like occasion, he might destroy; the sore famine, which, by God's appointment, he sent upon the Israelites, (2 Kings vi. 25.) and the many cutting prophecies and comminations called in Scripture 'the sword of the mouth,' (Is. xlix. 2. and Rev. i. 16.) which he denounced against them, and which were fulfilled, we shall find reason enough to justify the expression.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^f So far was this from being any argument of his poverty, that it was in reality a token of his wealth and great riches: for he who could keep twelve yoke of oxen at plough, was in this respect no inconsiderable man, and yet according to the manner of these early times, he looked after his own business himself; for nothing was of greater esteem, not only among the Hebrews, but among the ancient Greeks and Romans likewise, than agriculture, and such persons as were of the best quality were called *ἀρουραγοί*, men who did their work themselves, and left not the care of it to others. Elisha therefore was taken from the plough to be a prophet, in like manner as among the Romans afterwards, some were taken from thence to be consuls and dictators.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^g The mantle was the proper habit of prophets (2 Kings i. 8.), and therefore Elijah's casting it upon him was the ceremony

^a From Beersheba to Mount Horeb is, at the most, not above 150 miles, and the prophet, it seems, had advanced one day's journey into the wilderness; so that he had not now more to finish than any active man might have done in four or five days at most: how came the prophet then to make forty of it? To this some reply, that he, as the Israelites of old, was kept wandering up and down this pathless wilderness forty days, as they were forty years, till, at length, he hit upon this sacred mountain. Others suppose that he went about by private ways, and perhaps sometimes rested, and lay hid, in order to prevent discovery. But, when he was got into the wilderness, one would think he might have been safe, and proceeded straightway, if he knew the straight way to the place intended. I was thinking, therefore, that there would be no solecism, if we should say, that the time of going to, staying at, and coming from, the mount of Horeb, is to be included in these forty days, though, in a short narration, words may be so expressed, as if the journey only had taken up all that time.—*Patrick's, Calmet's, and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

^b Elijah being now come to the same place, where God had delivered the law to his servant Moses, God was minded to communicate the like favour to his servant the prophet, namely, to unveil his majesty to him, and give him some signal of his immediate presence: but there is something very remarkable in the words of the text. 'And behold the Lord passed by, and a strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind, an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake, a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire, a still small voice,' (1 Kings xix. 11, &c.) And various are the speculations which this appearance of the divine majesty hath suggested to interpreters. The generality of them have looked upon this as a figure of the gospel dispensation, which came, not in such a terrible manner as the law did, with storms, thunders, lightnings, and earthquakes (Exod. xix. 16.), but with great lenity and sweetness, wherein God speaks to us by his Son, who makes use of no other but gentle arguments and soft persuasions. But, if we take this to be a symbolical admonition to Elijah, according to the circumstances he was then in, we may reasonably suppose, that herein God intended to show him, that, though he had all the elements ready armed at his command to destroy idolaters, if he pleased to make use of them, yet he had rather attain his end by patience, and tenderness, and long-suffering, signified by that small still voice, wherein the Deity exhibited himself, and consequently, that the prophet should hereby be incited to imitate him, bridling that passionate zeal to which his natural complexion did but too much incline him.—*Le Clerc's, Calmet's, and Patrick's Commentaries.*

^c 'And Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle and went out,' (1 Kings xix. 13.) The Jews accounted it a token of reverence to have their feet bare in public worship, and to have their heads covered. This was accordingly the practice, not of the priests only, but of the people also; and the latter practice remains so to this day. 'Thus, on the divine appearance to Moses in the bush, it is said, 'he hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God' (Exod. iii. 6.); and on the extraordinary manifestation of the divine presence to Elijah, 'he wrapped his face in his mantle.' On the same account perhaps the angels were represented in vision to Isaiah as covering their faces with their wings in the presence of Jehovah (Is. vi. 2.). The ancient Romans performed their sacred rites with a covering on their heads. Thus Virgil:

Our way we bend

To Pallas, and the sacred hill ascend:

There prostrate to the fierce virago pray,

Whose temple was the landmark of our way,—

Each with a Phrygian mantle veild his head.

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other understanding to be a call to the prophetic ministry, ^a as soon as he had settled his private concerns,

here used for his inauguration: though, as it was customary for servants to carry their masters' garments after them, others understand it only as a token that Elisha was to be his servant, to attend upon him, and succeed in his office. However this be, it is probable, that when he cast his mantle upon him, he said something to Elisha, whereby he acquainted him with his design, though the particular words, in so short an history, are not expressed.—*Poole's Annotations, and Le Clerc's Commentary.*

^a 1 Kings xix. 21. Elijah is commanded (ver. 16.) to anoint Elisha prophet in his room. 1. Though it is generally believed that kings, priests, and prophets, were inaugurated into their respective offices by the rite of unction, and this I have elsewhere supported; yet this is the only instance on record where a prophet is commanded to be anointed; and even this case is problematical, for it does not appear that Elijah did anoint Elisha. Nothing is mentioned in his call to the prophetic office, but the casting the mantle of Elijah upon him; wherefore it is probable that the word anoint, here signifies no more than the call to the office, accompanied by the simple rite of having the prophet's mantle thrown over his shoulders. 2. A call to the ministerial office, though it completely sever from all secular occupations, yet never supersedes the duties of filial affection. Though Elisha must leave his oxen, and become a prophet to Israel; yet he may first go home, eat and drink with his parents and relatives, and bid them an affectionate farewell. 3. We do not find any attempt on the part of his parents to hinder him from obeying the divine call: they had too much respect for the authority of God, and they left their son to the dictates of his own conscience. Woe to those parents who strive, for filthy lucre's sake, to prevent their son from embracing a call to preach Jesus to their perishing countrymen, or to the heathen, because they see that the life of a true evangelist is a life of comparative poverty, and they had rather he should gain money than save souls. 4. The cloak, we have already observed, was the prophet's peculiar habit; it was probably in imitation of this that the Greek philosophers wore a sort of mantle, that distinguished them from the common people; and by which they were at once as easily known as certain academical characters are by their gowns and square caps. The pallium was as common among the Greeks as the toga was among the Romans. Each of these was so peculiar to those nations, that Palliatus is used to signify a Greek, as Togatus is to signify a Roman. 5. Was it from this act of Elijah, conveying the prophetic office and its authority to Elisha by throwing his mantle upon him, that the popes of Rome borrowed the ceremony of collating an archbishop to the spiritualities and temporalities of his see, and investing him with plenary sacerdotal authority, by sending him what is well known in ecclesiastical history by the name of pallium, pall, or cloak? I think this is likely, for as we learn from Zech. xiii. 4, and 2 Kings i. 8, that this mantle was a rough or hairy garment, so we learn from Durandus that the pallium or pall was made of white wool, after the following manner:—The nuns of St Agnes, annually on the festival of their patroness, offer two white lambs on the altar of their church, during the time they sing *Agnus Dei*, in a solemn mass; which lambs are afterwards taken by two of the canons of the Lateran church, and by them given to the pope's subdeacons, who send them to pasture till shearing time; and then they are shorn, and the pall is made of their wool, mixed with other white wool. The pall is then carried to the Lateran church, and there placed on the high altar by the deacons, on the bodies of St Peter and St Paul; and, after an usual watching or vigil, it is carried away in the night, and delivered to the subdeacons, who lay it up safely. Now, because it was taken from the body of St Peter, it signifies the plenitude of ecclesiastical power; and, therefore, the popes assume it as their prerogative, being the professed successors of this apostle, to invest other prelates with it. It was at first confined to Rome, but afterwards it was sent to popish prelates in different parts of the world. 6. It seems, from the place in Zechariah quoted above, that this rough cloak or garment became the covering of hypocrites and deceivers; and that persons assumed the prophetic call; and God threatens to unmask them. We know that this became general in the popish church in the beginning of the 16th century; and God stripped those false prophets of their false and wicked pretensions, and exposed them to the people.—*See Dr Clark's Commentary.*—Ed.

went with Elijah, and was his servant as long as he lived; so that Elijah did not think it necessary to go to Damascus, upon the account of Hazael, nor to speak with Jehu in Israel; but left these affairs to be transacted by Elisha, whenever a fit opportunity should offer.

Not long after this, but upon what provocation it is not said, Benhadad raised a vast army against Ahab king of Israel, and marched directly into his country, with a design to invest Samaria, his capital city. But before he did that, he sent him an haughty message, demanding all that belonged to him, in satisfaction for some presumed affront. Ahab was in no condition to oppose him, and therefore he tamely submitted himself to his mercy: but this tameness only inflamed Benhadad's insolence, so that, in his next message, he demanded all things to be immediately put into his hand; which, when the king of Israel understood, he called a general council of the kingdom to advise what to do. They unanimously agreed to stand by their king to the last extremity; which, when Benhadad's ambassadors told him, he fell into a great rage, and immediately ordered his army to invest Samaria; but while he lay before the town, ^b God, who was justly provoked at this proud Syrian, sent ^c a prophet to Ahab, not only to assure him of victory, but to instruct him likewise ^d in what method he was to attain it; which succeeded so well that Benhadad himself had much to do to escape with his life.

The same prophet, however, gave the king of Israel great caution to recruit his army, and be upon his guard, against the beginning of the next year, because then the

^b 1 Kings xx. 12. 'And it came to pass, when Benhadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings, in the pavilions.' &c. The pavilions here spoken of were nothing more than mere booths or common tents, notwithstanding Benhadad and the kings were drinking in them. That great and even royal persons occasionally refreshed or indulged themselves in this manner, is clear from the following paragraph in Dr Chandler's Travels in the Lesser Asia, (p. 149.) "While we were employed on the theatre of Miletus, the aga of Suki, son-in-law by marriage to Elez Oglu, crossed the plain towards us, attended by a considerable train of domestics and officers, their vests and turbans of various and lively colours, mounted on long tailed horses, with showy trappings, and glittering furniture. He returned, after hawking, to Miletus, and we went to visit him, with a present of coffee and sugar; but were told that two favourite birds had flown away, and that he was vexed and tired. A couch was prepared for him beneath a shed made against a cottage, and covered with green boughs to keep off the sun. He entered as we were standing by, and fell down on it to sleep, without taking any notice of us."—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 50.—Ed.

^c Who the prophet was, who upon this, and another message afterwards, was sent to Ahab, the Scripture nowhere informs us. It is somewhat odd, that during this whole war with Benhadad, neither Elijah nor Elisha, the two principal prophets of Israel should appear, though other prophets, whereof there seems to be a considerable number, make no scruple of executing their office; whether it was, that this war commenced before Jezebel's persecution of the prophets, or that this impious queen abated her persecution, and let them have some respite, when she had exterminated Elijah as she thought.—*Cabnet's Commentary.*

^d The instruments in attaining this victory were to be 'the young men of the princes of the provinces,' with Ahab at the head of them, (1 Kings xx. 14.) The Hebrew word has some ambiguity in it, and may signify, either the 'sons,' or the 'servants' of the 'princes of the provinces,' either young noblemen themselves, or their father's pages, who were equally brought up delicately, and quite unaccustomed to war. It was by these young men, and not by old experienced officers that this battle was to be won: that thereby it might appear, that the victory was wholly owing to God's gracious and powerful providence, and not to the valour, or fitness of the instruments.—*Poole's Annot.*

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Syrians designed him another visit; which accordingly came to pass. For some of his generals having persuaded the king of Syria, that the gods of the Israelites "were gods of the hills," and, therefore, to fight them with advantage, was to fight them in a champaign country, he raised another army of equal force with that he had lost the year before, and came and sat down before Apheck, a city in the tribe of Asher. Ahab, however, was prepared to receive him, and though with a force far inferior to the Syrians, marched out to meet them, gave them battle, put them to the rout, and slew upon the spot 100,000 of them.

The vanquished ^b betook themselves to Apheck, but were far from finding any security there; for the providence of God pursued them, and by the fall of the walls of that city, destroyed 27,000 more of them: so that, terrified in this judgment, Benhadad went to hide himself in some place where he thought he could not be easily found; but was, at length, prevailed on by his chief officers to send ambassadors to Ahab, in the humblest manner, clothed ^c in sackcloth, and with ropes

^a That there were many gods, who had each their particular charge and jurisdiction; that some presided over whole countries, whilst others had but particular places under their tuition and government; and were some of them gods of the woods, others of the rivers, and others of the mountains, was plainly the doctrine of all heathen nations. Pan was reckoned the god of the mountains, for which reason he was styled, *ὄρεϊβάτης, mountain roamer*; and in like manner the Syrians might have a conceit that the God of Israel was a God of the mountains, because Canaan, they saw, was a mountainous land; the Israelites, they perceived, delighted to sacrifice on high places; their law, they might have heard, was given on the top of a mountain; their temple stood upon a famous eminence, as did Samaria, where they had so lately received a signal defeat. For their farther notion was, that the gods of the mountains had a power to inject a panic fear into an army, whenever they pleased. Nay, that they did not only assist with their influence, but actually engage themselves in battle, in behalf of their favourites, is a sentiment as old as Homer, and what Virgil has not forgot to imitate. "Monsters of all sorts of gods, along with the dog-headed Anubis, hurl hostile weapons against Neptune, Venus, and Minerva: in the midst of the contest rages the god of war, clothed in steel: around them flutter in the air, the black fates of death: Discord herself is seen in a rent garment, leaping in joy amid the carnage: and Bellona is following her, armed with a bloody whip." (*Æneid*. 8.) It was a prevalent notion among the heathens, not only that all deities were local, but that they had no power, anywhere but in that country, or place, over which they presided. It is very likely that the small Israelitish army availed themselves of the heights and uneven ground to fight with greater advantage against the Syrian cavalry.—*Horne's Introduction*, and *Dr Clarke*.—Ed.

^b Apheck, or Aphaca, as it is called by profane authors, was situated in Libanus, upon the river Adonis, between Heliopolis and Biblos: and in all probability is the same that Paul Lucas, in his *Voyage du Levant*, (vol. i. c. 20,) speaks of, as swallowed up in a lake of Mount Libanus, about nine miles in circumference, wherein there are several houses all entire, to be seen under water. The soil about this place, as the ancients tell us, was very bituminous, which seems to confirm their opinion, who think that subterraneous fires consumed the solid substance of the earth, whereon the city stood, so that it subsided and sunk at once, and a lake was soon formed in its place.—*Calmel's Commentary and Dictionary* under the word *Apheck*.

^c This was the posture in those times, wherein supplicants presented themselves when they petitioned for mercy. The sackcloth upon their loins was a token of their sorrow for what they had done; and the halters about their necks, a token of their subjection to whatever punishment Ahab should think fit to inflict upon them: for which reason Bessus, according to Curtius, (b. 7.) was brought to Alexander with a chain about his neck.—*Patrick's and Calmel's Commentaries*.

about their necks, to make their submission upon what conditions he pleased. ^d The conditions that Ahab insisted on, were only, that the Syrians should restore all the country which they had taken from Baasha, king of Israel, and grant ^e him some privileges in Damascus their capital, as a token of their homage and subjection; which the other very readily consented to, and so a league was concluded between them: but a league so offensive to God, that he sent a prophet immediately to reprove Ahab for it; and to let him know, "That had he destroyed Benhadad, as God had put it in his power, his dominions should have been annexed to the kingdom of Israel; but that since ^f he had acted otherwise, his life should pay for the life of Benhadad: for he should be slain in battle with the Syrians, who instead of being held in subjection to the Israelites, should, in a few years, as they were in the reign of Hazael, become their masters, take their towns from them, and make ravages in their country." But instead of humbling himself at the denunciation of this heavy sentence, or expressing any sorrow for his fault, Ahab became but more sullen and obstinate, and in a short time, ^g added this farther offence to his other great crimes.

Not far from the royal palace of Jezreel, in a place convenient for a kitchen-garden, there was one Naboth,

^d 1 Kings xx. 32. Approaching persons with a sword hanging to the neck, is, in the east, a very humble and submissive act. Thevenot has mentioned this circumstance (part i. p. 289,) in the account he has given of the taking of Bagdad, by the Turks, in 1638. When the besieged entreated quarter, the principal officer went to the grand vizier, with a scarf about his neck, and his sword wreathed in it, and begged mercy. The ropes mentioned in this passage were probably what they suspended their swords with.—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 258.—Ed.

^e The privilege which Benhadad gave to Ahab is thus expressed: 'Thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria;' but then the learned are not agreed what we are to understand by 'streets.' Some suppose, that they were courts of judicature where Ahab was to maintain a jurisdiction over Benhadad's subjects. Others think that they were public market places, where commodities were sold, and the toll of them paid to Ahab; but the most general opinion is, that they were citadels or fortifications, to be a bridle of restraint upon this chief city of the Syrians, that they might make no new eruptions into the land of Israel. A great privilege this! But what Benhadad, when he found himself set at liberty, refused to comply with.—*Patrick's and Calmel's Commentaries*.

^f If it should be asked, wherein lay Ahab's great offence, for which God threatens to punish him so severely? The answer is,—that it consisted in suffering so horrid a blasphemer as Benhadad was, to go unpunished, which was contrary to an express law, (Lev. xxiv. 16.) If it should be urged, that this was no thing to Benhadad, since the law concerned the Israelites only, the reply is, that this law extended not to those only that were born in the land, but as it is there expressed to strangers likewise that were among them, and in their power, as Benhadad certainly was. God had delivered him into Ahab's hands for his blasphemy, as he had promised, (1 Kings xx. 28.) and therefore this act of provocation, compared with the law, did plainly intimate, that he was appointed by God for destruction: but so far was Ahab from punishing him as he deserved, that he treats him like a friend and a brother, dismisses him upon easy terms, and takes his bare word for the performance, without the least care for the reparation of God's honour.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^g The account of Ahab's coveting Naboth's vineyard, as Ababiel observes, is immediately set after his treatment of Benhadad, to show his extreme great wickedness in sparing him, as Saul did Agag king of the Amalekites, and killing Naboth, that he might get possession of his vineyard. For this was an high aggravation of his crime, that he basely murdered a just Israelite, and let an impious enemy escape.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

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a citizen thereof, who had a vineyard, which Ahab was very desirous of obtaining ^a and therefore ^b offered the owner of it an equivalent, either in land or money; but the owner, upon the account of its being his paternal inheritance, refusing to part with it, gave Ahab such uneasiness, that he took his bed for mere discontent, and was so sullen and uneasy, that he would not eat his meat. But when his wife Jezebel came to understand the cause, she first upbraided him with his pusillanimity, or not knowing how to exert the authority of a king, and then to cheer him up, bid him drive away all melancholy, for that she had found out an expedient how to put him in the possession of Naboth's vineyard. To this purpose she wrote letters from Samaria in Ahab's name, and sealed with his signet, ^c to the principal men of

Jezebel, ordering them ^d to proclaim a fast, to bring ^e Naboth before the judges, and to suborn two false witnesses, who should depose against him, that he had ^f blasphemed God and the king, that so he might be carried out of the city, and stoned. ^g All this was done according to this wicked woman's desire; and, as soon as Ahab understood that Naboth was dead, he went to Jezebel, and took possession of his vineyard: but upon his return to Samaria, the prophet Elijah, by God's direction, met him, and having upbraided him with this his last flagitiousness, in slaying the innocent, and seizing on his inheritance, he denounced this heavy sentence against him, 'That in the same manner that dogs had licked Naboth's blood, they should lick his;' that all his posterity should die by the sword, and be exposed without the honour of a decent funeral; and that, as to his wife Jezebel, she should be devoured by 'dogs ^h near the

a 1 Kings xxi. 2. 'Give me thy vineyard.' The request of Ahab seems at first view fair and honourable. Naboth's vineyard was nigh to the palace of Ahab, and he wished to add it to his own for a kitchen garden, or perhaps a grass plot, gan yarak; and he offers to give him either a better vineyard for it, or to give him its worth in money. Naboth rejects the proposal with horror: 'The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to thee.' No man could finally alienate any part of the parental inheritance; it might be sold or mortgaged till the jubilee, but at that time it must revert to its original owner, if not redeemed before; for this God had particularly enjoined, (Lev. xxv. 14—17, 25—28.) therefore Naboth properly said, ver. 3, 'The Lord forbid it me, to give the inheritance of my fathers.' Ahab most evidently wished him to alienate it finally, and this is what God's law had expressly forbidden; therefore he could not, consistently with his duty to God, indulge Ahab; and it was high iniquity in Ahab to tempt him to do it; and to covet it showed the depravity of Ahab's soul.—Ed.

b By this it appears, that though the kings of Israel did rule their subjects in a very arbitrary and despotic manner, yet they did not as yet take the liberty to seize on their lands and hereditaments; and therefore what Samuel prophesies of the kings of Israel, that 'they would take their fields, their vineyards, and their olive-yards,' (1 Sam. viii. 14,) does not extend to any true and lawful, but a presumed and usurped right only in their kings.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

c 1 Kings xxi. 8. 'Seal.' Seals are of very ancient invention. Thus Judah left his seal with Tamar as a pledge. The ancient Hebrews wore their seals or signets in rings on their fingers, or in bracelets on their arms. Sealing rings, called annuli, signatorii, sigillares, and chiographi, are said by profane authors to have been invented by the Lacedaemonians, who, not content to shut their chests, armouries, &c., with keys, added a seal also. Letters and contracts were sealed thus: first they were tied up with thread or a string, then the wax was applied to the knot, and the seal impressed upon it. Rings seem to have been used as seals in almost every country. Pliny, however, observes that seals were scarcely used at the time of the Trojan war; the method of shutting up letters was by curious knots, which invention was particularly honoured, as in the instance of the Gordian knot. We are also informed by Pliny, that in his time no seals were used but in the Roman empire: but at Rome testaments were null without the testator's seal and the seals of seven witnesses.—(*Digest*, b. xxxvii. tit. de Bonorum Possessione, *Wilson's Archæol. Dict. art. Seal*.) The very ancient custom of sealing dispatches with a seal or signet, set in a ring, is still retained in the east. Pococke says, (*Travels*, vol. i. p. 186, note,) "in Egypt they make the impression of their name with their seal, generally of cornelian, which they wear on their finger, and which is blacked when they have occasion to seal with it." Hanway remarks (*Travels*, i. 317,) that "the Persian ink serves not only for writing, but for subscribing with their seal; indeed many of the Persians in high office could not write. In their rings they wear agates, which serve for a seal, on which is frequently engraved their name, and some verse from the Koran." Shaw (*Travels*, p. 247.) says, "as few or none either of the Arab shekhs, or of Turkish and eastern kings, princes, or bashaws know to write their own names, all their letters and decrees are stamped with their proper rings, seals, or signets, (1 Kings xxi.

8. Esth. iii. 12. Dan. vi. 17 or 18, &c.) which are usually of silver or cornelian, with their respective names engraved upon them on one side, and the name of their kingdom or principality, or else some sentence of the Koran, on the other." Eastern signets have cypress and letters on them.—*Clarke's Travels*, vol. i. p. 320.—Ed.

d It was always a customary thing, upon the approach of any great calamity, or the apprehension of any national judgment, to proclaim a fast; and Jezebel ordered such a fast to be observed in Jezebel, the better to conceal her design against Naboth. For, by this means, she intimated to the Jezebelites, that they had some accursed thing among them, which was ready to draw down the vengeance of God upon their city; and that therefore it was their business to inquire into all those sins which provoked God to anger against them, and to purge them out effectually. As therefore these days of fasting were employed in punishing offenders, doing justice, and imploring God's pardon, they gave the elders of the city an occasion to convene an assembly, and the false witnesses a fair opportunity to accuse Naboth before them.—*Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

e Josephus is of opinion, that, as Naboth was of an illustrious house, he was ordered to be set in an honourable place among the elders and chief rulers of the city; that so it might be thought, that they did not condemn him out of hatred or ill will, but merely as they were constrained to it by the evidence that was given against him. But others will have it, that the reason why he was set in an eminent place was only, because persons accused and arraigned were wont to stand conspicuous before their judges, that all the people might see them, and hear both the accusations against them, and their defence.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

f By the law of Moses it was death to blaspheme God, (Lev. xxiv. 16.) and by custom it was death to revile the king, (Ex. xxii. 28.) Now, in order to make safe work, the evidences as they were instructed accused Naboth of both these crimes, that the people might be the better satisfied to see him stoned. There is this difference, however, to be observed between these two crimes, that if a man had only blasphemed God, he was to be tried by the great court at Jerusalem, as the Hebrew doctors tell us, and his goods came to his heirs; whereas, when a man was executed for treason against the king, his estate went to the exchequer, and was forfeited to him against whom the offence was committed; and for this reason it was, that they accused Naboth of this crime likewise, that his estate might be confiscated, and Ahab, by that means, get possession of his vineyard.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

g Princes never wait instruments to execute their pleasure; and yet it is strange that among all these judges and great men, there should be none that abhorred such a villany. It must be considered, however, that for a long while they had cast off all fear and sense of God, and prostituted their consciences to please their king: nor durst they disobey Jezebel's commands, who had the full power and government of the king, as they well knew, and could easily have taken away their lives, had they refused to condemn Naboth.—*Poole's Annotations.*

h 1 Kings xxi. 23. Mr Bruce, when at Gondar, was witness to a scene in a great measure similar to the devouring of Jezebel by dogs. He says, "the bodies of those killed by the sword,

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wall of Jezreel,' that is, ^a where Naboth was judged, and unjustly condemned.

Uneasy at the sight of the prophet, and much more terrified at his denunciations, Ahab rent his clothes, put on sackcloth, and gave other indications of his sorrow and humiliation; ^b but as his repentance was neither sincere nor persevering, ^c God, who might otherwise have revoked the whole sentence, inflicted part of it upon his person; but the utter extirpation of his family did not happen, till the reign of his son Jehoram, as we shall see in its proper place.

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, as we said before, had imprudently married his son and heir to this wicked Ahab's daughter; and as this alliance occasioned an interview between the two kings, Jehoshaphat went one day to Samaria, to visit Ahab, who entertained him and his attendants very splendidly; but taking the advantage of this opportunity, invited him to go along with him to the siege of Ramoth Gilead, a town in the tribe of Gad, which the king of Syria unjustly detained from him. Jehoshaphat agreed to attend him; but being loth to do any thing of this kind without a divine approbation, he desired of Ahab to inquire of the prophets concerning the event of this expedition. To this purpose Ahab summoned together 400 priests of the goddess

Astarte, ^d who unanimously agreed, that the expedition would prove successful; but as Jehoshaphat's purpose was, not to inquire of these, but of some true prophet of the Lord, with much difficulty he obtained of Ahab to have Micaiah produced, who, charging ^e Ahab's prophets with falsehood, foretold, that the enterprise would prove fatal to all Israel, and to Ahab in particular; and therefore he advised both kings to desist.

Ahab, however, instead of listening to Micaiah, ordered him into custody, until he should return in peace; and taking Jehoshaphat with him, marched with all his forces to the siege: but, when he came within sight of the enemy's army, his courage began to cool, and thinking to evade the force of Micaiah's prophecy by a stratagem of his own, he put himself in the garb of a common officer, and advised Jehoshaphat to fight in his royal robes. The king of Syria had given particular command to his generals ^f to single out Ahab, and, if possible to kill him, as the chief author of the war. At first they mistook Jehoshaphat for the king of Israel, and therefore fell upon him with great impetuosity; but perceiving at length, that he was not the person they wanted, they desisted from the pursuit of him, and, in quest of Ahab, bended their course another way.

Ahab, however, did not gain much by his politic pro-

were hewn to pieces and scattered about the streets, being denied burial. I was miserable, and almost driven to despair, at seeing my hunting dogs twice let loose by the carelessness of my servants, bringing into the court-yard the heads and arms of slaughtered men, and which I could no way prevent, but by the destruction of the dogs themselves." He also adds, that upon being asked by the king the reason of his dejected and sickly appearance, among other reasons he informed him, "it was occasioned by the execution of three men, which he had lately seen; because the hyænas, allured into the streets by the quantity of carrion, would not let him pass by night in safety from the palace, and because the dogs fled into his house, to eat pieces of human carcases at their leisure." (*Travels*, vol. iv. p. 81.) This account illustrates also the readiness of the dogs to lick the blood of Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 38.), in perfect conformity to which is the expression of the prophet Jeremiah, (xv. 3.) 'I will appoint over them the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear.'—En.

^a There is a great dispute among the learned, as to the accomplishment of this prophecy. At first it was no doubt intended to be literally fulfilled; but upon Ahab's repentance, as we find below, the punishment was transferred from him to his son Jehoram, in whom it was actually accomplished; for his 'dead body was cast into the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite, for the dogs to devour,' (2 Kings ix. 25.) Since Ahab's blood therefore was licked by dogs, not at Jezreel, but at Samaria, it seems necessary, that we should understand the Hebrew word which our translation renders 'in the place where,' not as denoting the place, but the manner in which the thing was done; and so the sense of the passage will be,—That as dogs licked, or in like manner as dogs licked Naboth's blood; even so shall they lick thine; observe what I say, even thine.—*Poole's Annot.*

^b 1 Kings xxi. 27. Going softly seems to have been one of the many expressions of mourning commonly used among the eastern nations. That it was in use among the Jews appears from the case of Ahab; and by mistake it has been confounded with walking barefoot. It seems to have been a very slow, solemn manner of walking, well adapted to the state of mourners labouring under great sorrow and dejection of mind.—En.

^c The scope of the passage, (1 Kings xxi. 27—29.) leads us to believe, that Ahab's repentance was sincere, though it produced no lasting improvement in his character; besides, if his repentance had been merely a false pretence, it cannot be supposed that God would have signified his approbation of it by a remission of the threatened punishment. The circumstance deserves our particular notice, and furnishes a signal instance of God's readiness to meet the returning penitent, even while he is yet a great way off.—En.

^d In the text, they are simply called prophets; but it is not impossible that they were priests of the goddess Astarte, maintained by the wicked Jezebel.—En.

^e Micaiah's answer to Ahab, inquiring of him the success of his intended exhibition, is, 'Go, and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver the city into the hands of the king,' (1 Kings xxii. 15.) which does not at all contradict the other prophets, had it been spoken in earnest; but we have good reason to believe, that the words were spoken ironically, and in mockery to the promises which the other prophets made Ahab. Accordingly, we may observe by Ahab's reply, that he suspected Micaiah's sincerity, and, either by his gesture or manner of speaking, gathered, that his meaning was to traduce these false prophets for their answers. So that Micaiah's answer is in effect, as if he had said,—'Since thou dost not seek to know the truth, but only to please thyself, go to the battle, as all thy prophets advise thee; expect the success which they promise thee, and try the truth of their predictions, by thy dear bought experience.—*Poole's Annotations.* [The words of Micaiah evidently contain a strong irony; as if he had said, "All your prophets have predicted success; you wish me to speak as they speak: 'Go and prosper; for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king.'" These were the precise words of the false prophets, (v. 6 and 12,) and were spoken by Micaiah in such a tone and manner as at once showed to Ahab that he did not believe them; hence the king adjures him (v. 16.) that he would speak to him nothing but truth; and on this the prophet immediately relates to him the prophetic vision which pointed out the disasters which ensued. It is worthy of remark, that this prophecy of the king's prophets is couched in the same ambiguous terms by which the false prophets in the heathen world endeavoured to maintain their credit, while they deluded their votaries. The reader will observe that the word *it* is not in the original. 'The Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king;' and the words are so artfully constructed, that they may be interpreted for or against; so that, be the event whatever it might, the juggling prophet could save his credit, by saying he meant what had happened. Thus then the prophecy might have been understood: 'The Lord will deliver (Ramoth Gilead) into the king's (Ahab's) hand;' or 'The Lord will deliver (Israel) into the king's hand;' that is, into the hand of the king of Syria. And Micaiah repeats these words of uncertainty, in order to ridicule them and expose their fallacy.—En.]

^f This Benhadad might order, either in policy, as supposing this to be the best and readiest way to put an end to this war; or with a design to take him prisoner, that thereby he might wipe out the stain of his own captivity, and recover the honour and advantages which he then lost.—*Poole's Annotations.*

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ject, as he thought it; for he was mortally wounded by a random arrow: and though he was held up in his chariot for some time, with his face towards the enemy, to encourage his soldiers, yet about sunset he died, and a retreat was sounded. His dead body was carried to Samaria, and there buried, and his son Ahaziah succeeded him in the kingdom. But as the chariot wherein he was carried, was all stained with the flux of blood from his wound, while it was washed in a pool near the city, the dogs came and licked it, that the prophecy of Elijah might not go altogether unfulfilled.

As for Jehoshaphat, though he escaped from the battle, and returned in peace to Jerusalem, yet God sent the prophet Jehu to reprove him for his having assisted Ahab, who was ^a God's avowed enemy: but this fault he endeavoured to repair by the good order which he established in his dominions, both as to civil and religious affairs; by appointing honest and able judges, ^b and giving them proper charges; by regulating the discipline and order of the priests and Levites, and by enjoining them to perform punctually their respective duties in the service of God. Nor was it long before he experimentally found the favour of God extended to him in a most miraculous manner, for this his reformation. For when the Moabites and Ammonites, with their auxiliaries, made a formidable invasion upon his kingdom, and he thereupon had appointed a public fast, and applied himself to God for help ^c by humiliation and prayer, he had

^a Even common reason taught the heathens not to make any friendship with such as were enemies to the gods; and therefore Callimachus, in his hymn to Ceres, tells her, "O mother Ceres, may that man never be in friendship with me, who is in enmity with thee; nor let him dwell under the same roof: for those who are thy foes, assuredly are no friends of mine." Whereupon the illustrious Spanheim has observed many similar sayings among the heathens, and how the ancient Greeks abhorred to lodge in the same house, or to eat at the same table, with a murderer, or any grievous criminal, for the same reason, perhaps, that Horace has thus expressed upon the like occasion:—"The man who hath revealed the secret mysteries of Ceres, must ever be debarred from sitting under the same roof, or sailing in the same boat with me; for frequently the incensed deity of Olympus, in inflicting due punishment, hath joined the innocent with the guilty.—Justice, though she may follow with a limping foot, hath rarely failed to grasp the evading criminal."

^b The charge or solemn admonition which Jehoshaphat gave the judges, whom he appointed in each city, runs in these words:—"Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment; wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you: take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, no respect of persons, no taking of gifts." (2 Chron. xix. 6, 7.) It is a remarkable saying of Cicero, that judges, being sworn to do justice, should remember, when they come to pass sentence, "that they have God as a witness, that is, as I suppose, that they have their own mind, than which God hath given to man nothing more divine." (*De Offic.* b. iii. c. 13.) Where he has left us this excellent instruction likewise, that "a man must lay aside the person of a friend when he puts on the person of a judge." In like manner, there are several passages in Hesiod, admonishing those who have the administration of justice, to retain in their minds the consideration of their gods' inspection: but one of these will answer to our purpose.—"Ye kings, and ye that on earth administer justice to man, be faithful! for, amidst the countless mortal tribes, immortal beings dwell, and watch those who, wreckless of the wrath of heaven, grind the poor, inflicting undue punishment; yea, to the all-rearing earth, Jove has commissioned three myriads of undying ones as guardians of the death-doomed, by night and by day hovering on the air, and crowding the earthward tracts of heaven, they chain the arms and curb the fiery wills of tyrants.—*Works and Days*, l. 246.

^c This prayer of Jehoshaphat's is deservedly accounted one of

a most gracious answer vouchsafed him, namely, that, on the next day, he should obtain a complete victory, without once striking a stroke; which accordingly came to pass. For when Jehoshaphat drew up his army, near the place where the enemy lay, he found nothing there but dead bodies; God having been pleased, before his approach, so to confound their understanding, that being a mixed multitude of divers nations, they, ^d some way or

the most excellent that we meet with in sacred history. He begins it with an acknowledgment of God's supreme and irresistible power, which extends itself everywhere, over all creatures in heaven and earth, which are every one subject to his authority:—"O Lord God of our fathers, art thou not God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?" Then he remembers the peculiar relation which the people of Israel have to him; the promise he made to Abraham, as a reward of his fidelity; and the deed of gift which he conveyed to him and his posterity, of this country for ever: "Art thou not our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of the land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, thy friend for ever?" Then he reminds him of the long possession they had had of the country, and of the temple which Solomon had built for his worship, to whom, at the consecration, (and therefore he refers to Solomon's words at the consecration, 1 Kings viii.) he promised a gracious reward to all the prayers that should be offered there: "and they dwell therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, if when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before thee in this house, and in thy presence, for thy name is in this house, and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help." In the next place, he represents the foul ingratitude of their enemies, in invading a country to which they had no manner of title, even though the Israelites did them not the least harm when they came to take possession of it, but took the pains to march a long way about to get to it, rather than give any molestation; and in aggravation of their wickedness in this respect, he suggests, that by this invasion they made an attempt, not only upon the rights of the Israelites, but of God himself, who was the great Lord and proprietor from whom they held the land: "And now behold the children of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldst not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of the possession which thou gavest us to inherit." Then he appeals to the justice of God, the righteous judge, who helps those that suffer wrong, especially when they have no other helper: for this is the last argument he makes use of to conciliate the divine assistance, even the weak condition wherein he and his people were, which made them the objects of the divine pity, especially since they placed their hope and confidence in him alone: "O Lord, our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company, that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." (2 Chron. xx. 12.) &c. with *Patrick's Commentary* on the words.

^d The words in the text are, "the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten." (2 Chron. xx. 22.) And there are two ways wherein this slaughter may be supposed to have happened: either, 1st, by the ministry of God's angels, who might appear in the shape of men, and, putting on the appearance of Moabites or Ammonites, might smite some part of the army privately, and they supposing this to be done by their neighbours, might turn about and fall upon them like enemies, and so break forth into mutual slaughters: or, 2nd, by some jealousies and animosities among themselves, which by degrees break forth, first into secret ambushments, which one party laid for another, and then into open hostilities and outrages to their total destruction. So easy a thing it is for God to defeat his enemies, who can, when he pleases, infatuate their designs, or arm their own passions and mistakes against them.—*Poole's Annotations* on 2 Chron. xx. 22.—Boothroyd renders the passage thus: "And when they began to sing and praise, Jehovah turned the ambush-men of Mount Seir, who should have come against Judah, against the Ammonites and Moabites, and they

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other, by mistake, fell a slaying and destroying one another; so that Jehoshaphat and his people had nothing else to do but to carry off the arms and spoils of the dead, wherein they employed themselves for three whole days, and, on the fourth, meeting in a valley, which from this event, was called afterwards 'the valley of blessing,' they gave solemn thanks to God for this deliverance; and, not long after, Jehoshaphat, with his victorious troops, entering Jerusalem in triumph, was received with the joyful acclamations of his people, and struck such terror into all the neighbouring nations, that, for the remainder of his reign, he met with no molestation.

One loss however he had towards the conclusion of his reign, ^a in joining with Ahaziah king of Israel, to

were smitten. Then the Ammonites and Moabites attacked the inhabitants of Mount Seir, so as utterly to slay and destroy them; and when they had destroyed the inhabitants of Mount Seir, they rushed on to destroy one another:" he adds in a note, I conceive that the Edomites, who had been placed as an ambush against the Judahites, either by mistake or designedly, attacked the Ammonites and Moabites, and that these uniting, repelled the attack, and in a great measure destroyed the Edomites; then quarrelling among themselves, mutually destroyed one another. —Ed.

^a This certainly was a great weakness in him, to make friendship with the son, when he had been so sharply reprov'd for joining with his father Ahab, especially since the son was as great an idolater as the father, but unto this he was betrayed by the affinity that was between them; and though he did not join with him in war, but only in trade, yet God was nevertheless displeased with him; which shows how dangerous a thing it is to have too near a familiarity or commerce with idolaters, or any other very wicked men.—*Patrick's Commentary*.—[It appears from 2 Chron. xx. 36, that Jehoshaphat joined in making and sending ships to Tarshish, and it is possible that what is stated in 1 Kings xxii. 49, is spoken of a second expedition, in which Jehoshaphat would not join Ahaziah. But instead of *לֹא אָבָה*, *velo abah*, 'he would not,' perhaps we should read *לֹא אָבָה* *velo abah*, 'he consented to him;' two words pronounced exactly in the same way, and differing but in one letter, namely, an *s aleph*, for a *vau*. This reading, however, is not supported by any MS. or version; but the emendation seems just; for there are several places in these historical books in which there are mistakes of transcribers, which nothing but violent criticism can restore, and to this it is dangerous to resort, but in cases of the last necessity. Critics have recommended the 48th and 49th verses to be read thus: 'Jehoshaphat had built ships of burden at Ezion-Geber, to go to Ophir for gold,' 49. 'And Ahaziah the son of Ahab, had said to Jehoshaphat, Let my servants, I pray thee, go with thy servants in the ships; to which Jehoshaphat consented. But the ships went not thither; for the ships were broken at Ezion-Geber.' This is Houbigant's translation, who contends that "the words of the 48th verse, 'but they went not,' should be placed at the end of the 49th verse, for who can believe that the sacred writer should first relate that 'the ships were broken,' and then that Ahaziah requested of Jehoshaphat that his servants might embark with the servants of Jehoshaphat." This bold critic, who understood the Hebrew language better than any man in Europe, has, by happy conjectures, since verified by the testimony of MSS., removed the blots of many careless transcribers from the sacred volume.—*Dr A. Clarke*.]—Ed. [Boothroyd also follows Houbigant in his translation, and, with Geddes, arranges 1 Kings xxii. 43—50, as follows: 43. 'And he walked in all the ways of Asa, his father; he turned not aside from it, doing what was right in the eyes of Jehovah.' 46. 'For the remnant of the Sodomites, who were left in the days of his father Asa, he removed from the land; only the high places were not entirely removed; still the people sacrificed, and burned incense on the high places.' 44. 'And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.' 47. 'And as there was then no king in Edom, but a deputy for the king of Judah.' 48. 'Jehoshaphat built ships of Tarshish at Ezion-Geber, to go to Ophir, for gold,' 49. 'Then said Ahaziah the son of Abah, to Jehoshaphat, let my servants go with thy servants in the ships: to which

equip out a fleet in the port of Ezion-Geber, in order to go to Tarshish; for the whole fleet was dashed in pieces upon a ridge of rocks that lay in the mouth of the harbour, before they ever got to sea. But, as Jehoshaphat was afterwards convinced, that this was a judgment of God upon him for entering into partnership with an impious prince, as Ahaziah certainly was, the next fleet he set out was from his other port of Elah, wherein he suffered Ahaziah to have no concern; and therefore came off with better success. The truth is, Jehoshaphat was a religious and good prince, a zealous and great reformer, and yet the people still retained a kindness to the high places.^b He lived sixty, and reigned twenty-five years; was buried in the city of David, and succeeded by his son Jehoram.

His father Jehoshaphat had six other sons; but to give no umbrage for suspicion, he had in his life time removed them from all public business, made them governors of fenced cities, and give them separate fortunes of their own. But notwithstanding all this precaution when ^c Jehoram was settled on the throne, he murdered all his brothers, and several chief men in Israel, who, as he suspected, either adhered to their party, or were likely to revenge their deaths.

During these cruel proceedings in the very beginning of his reign, he had ^c a letter sent him from Elijah,

Jehoshaphat consented. But they went not; for the ships were wrecked at Ezion-Geber.' 45. 'Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and the might which he exercised, and how he warred, are written in the Chronicles of the kings of Judah.' 50. 'And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers; and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.']—Ed.

^b 1 Kings xxii. 43. Many of old worshipped upon hills, and on the tops of high mountains; imagining that they thereby obtained a nearer communication with heaven. Strabo says, that the Persians always performed their worship upon hills. Some nations, instead of an image, worshipped the hill as the deity. In Japan, most of their temples are at this day upon eminences, and often upon the ascent of high mountains, commanding fine views, with groves and rivulets of clear water; for they say, that the gods are extremely delighted with such high and pleasant spots, (*Kämpfer's Japan*, vol. ii. b. 5.) This practice, in early times, was almost universal; and every mountain was esteemed holy. The people who prosecuted this method of worship, enjoyed a soothing infatuation, which flattered the gloom of superstition. The eminences to which they retired were lonely and silent; and seemed to be happily circumstanced for contemplation and prayer. They who frequented them were raised above the lower world, and fancied that they were brought into the vicinity of the powers of the air, and of the deity who resided in the higher regions. But the chief excellence for which they were frequented was, that they were looked upon as the peculiar places where God delivered his oracles.—*Howell's Mythological Dict.* p. 225.—Ed.

^c Now since it is plain, from 2 Kings ii. 11, &c., that Elijah was taken up into heaven, in the time of Jehoshaphat, the question is, how could Elijah send his son a letter? For resolution to this, Josephus and others imagine, that this writing was indited in heaven where Elijah now is, and sent to Jehoram by the ministry of angels. But there is no reason to suppose that so singular a miracle was wrought in favour of an idolatrous prince, 'who had Moses and the prophets;' which, in our Saviour's opinion, were sufficient to instruct him in all points necessary to salvation, and needed not any additional writing to be sent him from the other world. Others therefore are of opinion, that this letter was written before Elijah's ascension into heaven; that, foreseeing, by the spirit of prophecy, the great wickedness Jehoram would fall into, he dictated the contents hereof to one of the prophets, charging them to put them down in writing, to send them in a letter to Jehoram, when he grew as impious as he is here related, and to let him know withal, that Elijah commanded

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wherein he upbraided him with the murder of his brothers, and his departure from the religion of his ancestors; and wherein ^a he threatened him with a sore disease in his bowels, and his wives, his children, and his people, with judgments of several kinds, which God would send upon them. Nor was it long before these threats began to operate. The Edomites, who had all along been subject to the house of David, rebelled; and having expelled his deputy, made themselves a king of their own, and were never again subject to the Jewish yoke. Libnah, a city in his own dominions, shook off its allegiance, and refused to acknowledge him any longer for its sovereign. The Philistines and Arabians made inroads upon his territories, ravaged the country, plundered his palaces, and carried away his very wives and children; so that they left none except Jehoahaz the youngest; and, to complete his misery, after God had afflicted him with a cruel dysentery, which for two years grievously tormented him, and brought him at last to his grave, he died, without being so much as lamented by his subjects; and after a life of forty, and a reign of eight years, being buried indeed in the city of David, but not in any of the royal sepulchres, was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz. But to return to the history of king Ahaziah.

Ahaziah, as we said, succeeded his father Ahab in the kingdom of Israel, in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat's reign, and was not a whit behind him in all manner of wickedness. But as his reign was but short, in the whole not above the space of two years, so was it inglorious and full of trouble. For in the first year of his reign, the Moabites, who had always been obedient to the kings of Israel from the first separation of the two kingdoms, took now an opportunity to revolt; nor had he power to reduce them to their subjection; for in the second year of his reign, he received such a hurt by a fall from ^b the terrace of his house, as reduced him to a

very bad state of health. In this condition, he sent to ^a Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to know if he should

surrounded with a battlement, to prevent falling from them, because it was a customary thing for people to walk upon them in order to take the air. Now, in this battlement, we may suppose that there were some wooden lattices for people to look through, of equal height with the parapet wall, and that Ahaziah negligently leaning on it, as it was rotten and infirm, it broke down, and let him fall into the court or garden belonging to his house. Or there is another way whereby he might fall. In these flat roofs, there was generally an opening which served instead of a skylight to the house below; and this opening might be done over with lattice-work, which the king, as he was carelessly walking, might chance to step upon, and slip through. Nor is there any absurdity in supposing such lattice-work in a king's palace, when the world was not arrived to that height of art and curiosity which we find it in now.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Dissertation on the Buildings of the Ancient Hebrews*.

^c The word signifies, *the god of flies*; but how this idol came to obtain that name, it is not so easy a matter to discover. Several are of opinion, that this god was called Baal-semin, the lord of heaven, but that the Jews, by way of contempt, gave it the name of Baal-zebub, or the lord of a fly, a god that was nothing worth, or, as others say, whose temple was filled with flies; whereas the temple of Jerusalem, notwithstanding all the sacrifices that were daily offered, never once had a fly in it, as their doctors relate. The sacred writings, indeed, when they speak of the gods of the heathens, very frequently call them, in general, idols, vanity, abominations, &c., but they never change their proper names into such as are of an opprobrious import: neither can we think it likely, that the king of Israel would have called the god of Ekron, for whom he had so high a veneration as to consult him in his sickness, by any appellation of contempt. Whoever considers what troublesome and destructive creatures, especially in some hot countries, flies are known to be; in what vast swarms they sometimes settle, and not only devour all the fruits of the earth, but in many places occasion a noisome pestilence; may reasonably suppose, that the heathens had a proper deity to whom they paid their addresses, either for the prevention or removal of this sore plague. [In particular, the fly, called *Zebub*, and in modern Arabic, *Zimb*, is an insect so very destructive as to render it far from surprising that the ancient polytheists, who had gods presiding over every department of nature, should worship, as a very powerful deity, *Baalzebub*, or the *lord of flies*. The *Zebub*, or *Zimb* is never seen, says Mr Bruce, but where the earth is fat and loamy; and though very little larger than a bee, "whenever it makes its appearance in swarms, as it always does, and even as soon as its buzzing is heard, all the cattle forsake their food, and run wildly about, till they die, worn out with fatigue, fright, and hunger." Even the elephant flies before it, or rolls himself in the mire to protect his skin from its attack. "The very sound of the *Zimb*, before it is seen, occasions," says the same author, "more trepidation both in the human and brute creation, than would whole herds of these monstrous animals collected together, though their number was in a tenfold proportion greater than it really is;" and the only remedy that remains for the shepherd on the appearance of this destructive insect, is to hasten with his cattle as quickly as he can, to the nearest sandy desert, whither the *Zimb* never pursues them. If we may believe Sandys, these flies abound in the country that was anciently called Ekron.]—*Bp. Gleig*. And accordingly we are told by Pliny (b. 29. c. 6.), that when there was a plague in Africa, occasioned by vast quantities of flies, after that the people had sacrificed to the god Achore, (he should have said the god of Ekron, for there is a plain affinity between their names,) the flies all died, and the distemper was extinguished. Now, it was a known maxim of the heathen theology, that as all plagues were inflicted by some evil demon or other, so all evil demons were under the restraint of some superior one, who is their prince and ruler. As therefore Pluto was known to be the god of hell, and to have all the mischievous band of spirits under his control, to him the heathens used to pray, and offer sacrifices, that he might not suffer any of his inferior agents to inflict this heavy judgment upon them. They worshipped him, I say, not to engage him to do them any good, but to prevail with him to do them no harm; and accordingly we may observe that every thing in their service was dark and gloomy. Their offerings were in the night: "then to the Stygian king he performs nocturnal sacrifices." (*Virg. Æn.*

this writing to be delivered to him, upon presumption that it would affect him the more, as it came from a person that was translated into heaven. But this notion has no better foundation than the other, for the prophets were sent to those who lived in their own age, to declare unto them the will of God, not to write letters, fit to be delivered only when they had departed out of this life. God never left himself without a witness; and at this time more especially, there were prophets in abundance; and therefore others have supposed, that there has been a mistake in the transcriber; and the name of Elijah put for that Elisha; or that Elijah, by whom this letter was sent, was not the prophet who was taken up to heaven, but another of that name, who lived in the subsequent age, and was contemporary with Jehoram. Which of these conjectures, for conjectures they are all, seems most feasible, we are at liberty to choose, since any of them is sufficient to solve the above-mentioned difficulty.—*Le Clerc and Patrick's Commentary*. [Boothroyd, in his translation, (2 Chron. xxi. 12.) instead of Elijah reads Elisha; and adds, this correction seems absolutely necessary, though not confirmed, perhaps, by any one MS. or ancient version. From comparing parallel passages, it is clear that errors in names are most frequent.]—*Ed.*

^a There was no calamity that could be thought of, as several have observed, which did not befall this wicked prince. His kingdom was destroyed and depopulated by the fiercest nations; his treasures ransacked: his wives carried into captivity; his children slain; himself afflicted with a sore disease for two years; and, when he was dead, denied the honour of a royal sepulchre, such as his father had. All which calamities were threatened in this writing sent him in the name of Elijah, that he might not think that they came by chance, but by the special direction of Almighty God, as a punishment for his impiety.—*Patrick's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xxi. 14.

^b In the eastern countries the roofs of the houses were flat, and

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recover; but, by God's appointment, the prophet Elijah was sent to meet his messengers, and to turn them back with this answer, 'that the king should certainly die.'^a The messengers coming back much sooner than was expected,^b acquainted the king with the reason of it; and he,^c by their description, understanding that it was Elijah who sent him the message, immediately despatched a captain with fifty soldiers to apprehend him; but upon their approach, the prophet commanded fire to come down from heaven and destroy them. The like he did to another captain and his company; but when the third came, in a more submissive manner, and begged his life, and the lives of his soldiers,^d Elijah went with him to the king, and told him from his own mouth what he had before told the messengers; which accordingly came to pass, for he died a short time after, and having no son of his own, was,^e in the second year of Jehoram, son

of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, succeeded by his brother Jehoram.

About the beginning of the *f* reign of Jehoram, king of Judah, Elijah the prophet was translated into heaven. God, very likely, had given him some intimation of the time when this miraculous event should happen; and therefore, before his departure, he visited the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel and Jericho, and took his leave of them with such solemnity, that they began to suspect that this was the last visit he intended to make them; and accordingly *g* apprised Elisha of it, who thereupon determined not to leave his master, as long as he continued upon earth.

With this resolution, he set forward with Elijah, who was now shaping his course towards his native country of Gilead, from whence he was to be translated; and as they were to pass over the Jordan, Elijah *h* with his mantle struck the waters, which instantly divided into two parts, so that they went over on dry ground.

When they had passed the river in the sight of fifty of the *i* sons of the prophets, and as they drew near to the

6.) Their victims were black: "The chaste Sybil shall invoke thee with the blood of many a swart victim." (*Virg. Æn.* 6.) And the blood let out into a deep ditch: "he sinks the knife in the throat of the black victim, and sprinkles the wide ditches with blood." (*Œcil. Met.* b. 7.) Such good reason have we to think, that the Baal-zebub, in Scripture, called the 'prince of the devils,' was the very same with the Pluto whom the heathens made the god of hell, and worshipped in this manner.—*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries; Jurieu's History of Doctrines and Worship*, part 4. c. 3, &c.; *Bruce's Travels*, and *Harmer's Observations*.

a Ekron was a city and government of the Philistines, which fell by lot to the tribe of Judah, in the first division made by Joshua, (*Josh.* xv. 45.) but was afterwards given up to the tribe of Dan, (*Josh.* xix. 43.) though it does not appear from history that the Jews ever had a peaceable possession of it. It was situated near the Mediterranean sea, between Ashdod and Jamnia, in a moist and hot soil, and was therefore very much infested with flies.—*Calmet's Dictionary and Patrick's Commentary*.

b It may seem somewhat strange, that Ahaziah's messengers should stop their journey to Ekron, at Elijah's command; but he was a man of such a venerable presence, and spake to them with such authority in the name of the Lord, that they were overawed thereby to obey him rather than the king.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

c The description which the messengers give of Elijah, is, 'that he was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins,' (2 Kings i. 8.) where his being an hairy man, may either denote his wearing long hair on his head, and his beard, as the ancient Greek philosophers were wont to do, and as Lucan describes Cato, "over his stern front, he allowed his hoary hair to hang, and on his chin, a gloomy beard to grow." Or it may denote his habit, which was made of skins, rough, and with their hair on; as the ancient heroes were clothed in the skins of lions, tigers, and bears; as the Evangelist represents the Baptist in 'a raiment of camel's hair,' (*Mat.* iii. 4.) as the apostle describes the prophets, 'wandering about in sheep skins and goat skins,' (*Heb.* xi. 37.) and as Statius dresses up old Tiresias, "he assumes the heavy looks and voice and well-known skins of that aged seer Tiresias."—*Theb.* b. 2.

d This is a great instance of the prophet's faith and obedience to God in whom he trusted, that he would deliver him from the wrath of the king, and the malice of Jezebel. He had ordered, not long before, all the prophets of Baal to be slain; had sent a very unwelcome message to the king; and now made a very terrible execution upon two of his captains and their companies; so that he had all the reason in the world to apprehend the utmost expressions of the king's displeasure: and yet, when God commands him, he makes no manner of hesitation, but goes boldly to him, and confirms, with his own mouth, the ungrateful truth which he had declared to his messengers.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

e How could Jehoram, the brother of Ahaziah, begin his reign in Israel in the second year of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, when we read soon after, that he began to reign over Israel in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, (2 Kings iii. 1.) and in another place, that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat,

began to reign over Judah, in the fifth year of Jehoram king of Israel? (2 Kings viii. 16.) Now, it is but supposing that Jehoshaphat declared his son Jehoram king, while himself was alive, and reigned in conjunction with him for the space of seven years, and all the difficulty is removed: for then Jehoram, the son of Ahab, might begin his reign in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, namely, in the second year that he reigned with his father who was then alive; and Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, may be said to have begun his reign in the fifth of Jehoram the son of Ahab, meaning the time when, after his father's death, he began to reign alone. That the kings of Judah and Israel, as well as other oriental princes, were accustomed to appoint their successors, and even during their lifetime, to give them some share in the administration, is plain from several instances: and that Jehoshaphat found it expedient to settle his son in the kingdom with himself, seems to be intimated in 2 Chron. xxi. 3, where it is said, that 'he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was his first-born, and gave gifts to the rest of his sons, who, being many, might perhaps be forming parties, and be entering into cabals about the succession to the kingdom; and therefore to put an end to all such contests, Jehoshaphat declared Jehoram king, while himself was on the throne, because he was his first-born.'—*Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

f To prevent confusion, the reader is desired to take notice, that in the course of this history there is mention made of two Jehorams, who reigned much about the same time; one, the second son of Ahab, who succeeded his brother Ahaziah, and was king of Israel; and the other, who was son and heir to Jehoshaphat, and reigned in Judah; both very wicked princes; and therefore the greater care should be taken, that their actions be not blended together.

g The expression in the text is, 'Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?' (2 Kings ii. 3.) where the sons of the prophets allude to their manner of sitting in their schools. For the scholars used to sit below their master's feet, and the masters above over their heads, when they taught them; and therefore the sense of the words is, that 'God would deprive Elisha of his master Elijah's instructions,' namely, by a sudden death. For it does not appear that they had any notion of his translation; so far from this, that they desired leave to send out some to seek for him, 'if peradventure the Spirit of the Lord had taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley,' (2 Kings ii. 16.)—*Patrick's Commentary*.

h In these two books of Kings, there is mention made five times of this mantle; and in every place it is called Adareth, which denotes 'a royal as well as a prophetic robe.' The Septuagint always translates it by the word *μαλῶν*, which properly signifies the prophetic mantle, made of lamb-skins, being a kind of upper garment thrown over the shoulders, and, as some think, reaching down to the heels; though others take it for no more than a leather jacket to keep out rain. "Let the leathern mantle never be wanting, in case of sudden rains," (*Mart.* b. 14.)

i By 'the sons of the prophets,' we are to understand 'the

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place of Elijah's ascension, Elisha requested of him that the same gift of prophecy which God had been pleased to bestow on him, might be ^a communicated to him, in a larger measure than to the other prophets; which the other did not positively promise, but told him, however, that if he happened to see him when he came to be translated, this would be a good sign, that God would not refuse him his request: and while they were thus going on, and talking, there appeared, as it were, a bright chariot, and horses, running towards them on the ground, and, coming between them, parted them. ^b For Elijah mounted the chariot, and in a great gust of wind, directed by angels, was transported into heaven; while Elisha, who was left behind, ^c cried to him as he saw

scholars of the prophets, such as they educated and trained up in religion and virtue, upon whom God by degrees bestowed the spirit of prophecy, and whom the superior prophets employed in the same capacity, as the apostles did the evangelists, namely, to publish their prophecies and instructions to the people, in the places where they themselves could not go. Nor is it any small testimony of Gods' love to an apostate people, that in these corrupt times, and in that very place where the golden calves were worshipped, he still continued the schools of the prophets, in order to recover them from idolatry. Nay, what is very remarkable, there were prophets of greater excellency for their miracles, in Israel, than were in Judah, because they needed them more, both to turn their hard hearts from the worship of idols, and to preserve the pious persons that remained among them from deserting their religion.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^a The words in the text are, 'Let, I pray thee, a double portion of thy Spirit be upon me;' where some learned men are of opinion, that this request in Elisha would be arrogant, if the words were to be taken in their most obvious sense; and therefore they refer them to Elisha's school-fellows, whom he desires to surpass in all prophetic gifts, as much as the first-born did excel the other children in his portion of the inheritance. But seeing Elijah had no other successor upon whom he was to bestow any prophetic gifts, but Elisha, we cannot see why Elisha may not be said to have a double portion of the prophetic spirit, since it is evident he did many more miracles than Elijah did, and even after his death, exerted a divine power in raising the dead man, (2 Kings xiii. 21.) Had he desired this double portion indeed out of a principle of vainglory, there might then be something said against his request; but since he did it with a pure intent to become thereby more serviceable in his generation, we cannot perceive why he was to blame in requesting what our blessed Saviour granted to his apostles, namely, the power of working greater miracles than he himself did.—*Le Clerc's and Calmel's Commentaries.*

^b What this chariot was, and to what place it conveyed Elijah, we shall have occasion to observe in the following chapter; at present we shall only take notice of some things relating to this prophet's character. The author of Ecclesiasticus (xlviii. 1, &c.) has dedicated this encomium to his memory, "Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burnt like a lamp. He brought a sore famine among them, and by his zeal he diminished their number. By the word of the Lord he shut up the heaven, and also three times brought down fire. O Elias, how wast thou honoured by thy wondrous deeds? And who may glory like unto thee? Who didst raise a dead man from death, and his son from the place of the dead, by the word of the Most High; who broughtest kings to destruction, and honourable men to their bed:—Who wast taken up in a whirlwind of fire, and in a chariot of fiery horses; who was ordained for reproofs in their times, to pacify the wrath of the Lord's judgment before it brake forth into fury; to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob." In which last sentence our author alludes to that passage in Malachi, (iv. 5, 6.) 'Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.'

^c The words of Elisha upon this occasion are, 'My father, my father,' so they called their masters and instructors, 'the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.' The expression alludes to

him mount, and expressed his sorrow when he was gone: but taking up the mantle which had dropped from him in his ascent, with it he divided the waters, as Elijah had done, and repassed the Jordan.

Hereby the prophets of Jericho, and the places adjacent, were convinced that the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha. And accordingly, when they met him, they recognised him for his successor, and paid him the same respect. Believing, however, that the Spirit of God might possibly have ^d transported Elijah into some distant or desert place, they desired leave to send out fifty men in search of him. Elisha assured them that it would be needless: however, to give them all the conviction they desired, he suffered them to do what they pleased; so that the men went and returned again after three days' search to no purpose.

From this place Elisha proceeded to Jericho, where, at the request of the inhabitants, he cured the ^e barrenness of their water, and the barrenness of their

the form of the chariot and horses that he had just then beheld, and seems to imply, "that Elijah, by his example, and counsel, and prayers, and power with God, did more for the defence and preservation of Israel, than all their chariots and horses, and other warlike provisions;" unless we may suppose that this was an abrupt speech which Elisha, in the consternation he was in, left unfinished, and so the sacred history has recorded it.—*Poole's Annotations and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

^d 'The Spirit of the Lord,' whereby we may understand either the power of God, or some one of his angels, frequently used to carry the prophets through the air, and with vast celerity remove them to distant places; and therefore Obadiah speaks of it as a common thing: 'and it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord will carry thee where I know not, so that when the king cannot find thee he will slay me,' (1 Kings xviii. 12). And accordingly in the New Testament, we are told of Philip, that 'when they were come out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught him away, that the eunuch saw him no more, and Philip was found at Azotus,' (Acts viii. 39, 40).—*Le Clerc's Commentary.*

^e The manner in which the prophet Elisha sweetened the fountain, and made the soil fruitful, was by casting salt into the water, to make the miracle more conspicuous; for salt is a thing, that of all others, makes water less potable, and the ground more barren. Josephus, however, willing to improve upon this history, adds, as his usual manner is, several circumstances of his own. For he tells us, "That this fountain did not only corrupt the fruits of the earth, whether grain or plants, but likewise caused abortions in women, and tainted, with a blasted infection, whatever it touched, that was capable of such impression; that Elisha, having been treated with great hospitality and respect by the people of Jericho, bethought himself of such an acknowledgment, as they themselves, their country, and their posterity, to the end of the world, might be the better for; that hereupon he went out to the fountain, and causing a pitcher of salt to be let down to the bottom of it, he advanced his right hand towards heaven, and, presenting his oblations at the side of it, besought God, in his goodness, to correct the water, and to sweeten the veins through which it passed; to soften the air, and to make it more temperate and fructifying; to bestow children as well as fruits, upon the inhabitants in abundance; and never to withdraw these blessings, so long as they continued in their duty; and that upon offering up this prayer, with all due ceremony, and according to form, the ill quality of the fountain was changed, and, instead of sterility, became now an efficacious means of plenty and increase." The author, we may observe, to gratify the pagans, represents Elisha in the form of a magician, who, by invocations, oblations, and other mysterious operations, changed the bad quality of the waters, and thereby made the valley of Jericho fruitful; whereas this was done in a manner altogether supernatural and miraculous. Nay, to this very day, there is a fountain on the west of Jericho, which rises about three quarters of a league above the town, in the way to Jerusalem, which, yielding a great deal of water, and that very good in its kind, runs along and fructifies the plain.—*The Wars of the Jews*, b. 5. c. 4.

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soil.^a Thence he continued his course to Bethel, where, upon the children's mocking and ridiculing him, ^b two she-bears rushing out of the neighbouring forest, fell upon them, and devoured two and forty of them. From Bethel he went to Mount Carmel, where probably there was another school of the prophets; and from thence he proceeded to Samaria, where he had soon opportunities enough of exerting his prophetic office.

It was in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, that this Jehoram king of Israel, ^c began to

^a 2 Kings ii. 19. 'And the ground barren;' marg. 'causing to miscarry.' If the latter reading is allowed to be more just than the former, we must entertain a different idea of the situation of Jericho than the textual translation suggests. There are actually at this time cities where animal life of certain kinds pines, and decays, and dies; and where that posterity which should replace such loss, is either not conceived; or, if conceived, is not brought to the birth; or, if brought to the birth, is fatal in delivery to both mother and offspring. An instance of this kind occurs in Don Ulloa's *Voyage to South America*, vol. i. p. 93. He says of the climate of Porto Bello, that "it destroys the vigour of nature, and often untimely cuts the thread of life." And of Sennar, Mr Bruce (*Trav.* vol. iv. p. 469.) says, that "no horse, mule, ass, or any beast of burthen, will breed, or even live at Sennar, or many miles about it. Poultry does not live there; neither dog nor cat, sheep nor bullock, can be preserved a season there. They must go all, every year, to the sands. Though every possible care be taken of them, they die in every place where the fat earth is about the town, during the first season of the rains." He farther mentions, that the situation is equally unfavourable to most trees.—Ed.

^b They had probably been robbed of their whelps, which made them more fierce and outrageous.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^c 'Jehoram king of Israel began to reign.' There were two Jehorams who were contemporary: the first, the son of Ahab, brother to Ahaziah, and his successor in the kingdom of Israel; the second, the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, who succeeded his father in Judah. But there is a difficulty here: how is it that Jehoram, the brother of Ahaziah, began to reign in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, as it is stated, 2 Kings i. 17, seeing that, according to chap. iii. 1, he began his reign in the eighteenth year of the reign of Jehoshaphat; and according to chap. viii. 16, 'Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, began to reign in the fifth year of Jehoram king of Israel.' Calmet and others answer thus: "Jehoram king of Israel began to reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, which was the second year after this Jehoshaphat had given the vice-royalty to his son Jehoram; and afterwards Jehoshaphat communicated the royalty to Jehoram his successor, two years before his death, and the fifth year of Jehoram king of Israel." Dr Lightfoot takes another method:—"Observe," says he, "these texts, 1 Kings xxii. 51, 'Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria, the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years;' and 2 Kings i. 17: 'And Ahaziah died, according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken, and Jehoram reigned in his stead, in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah;' and 2 Kings iii. 1: 'Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah.' By these Scriptures it is most plain, that both Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, and Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, began to reign in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat: for who sees not in these texts that Jehoshaphat's eighteenth, when Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign, is called the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat? Now Jehoshaphat's reign was not yet expired by eight or nine years, for this was in his seventeenth year, and he reigned twenty-five years; (1 Kings xxii. 42.) nor was Ahab's reign yet expired by two or three years, for this was in his twentieth year, and he reigned twenty-two years, (1 Kings xvi. 29.) But the reason why both their sons came thus into their thrones in their lifetime, and both in the same year, was, because their fathers, Jehoshaphat and Ahab, were both engaged in the war against the Syrians, about Ramoth-Gilead; and while they were providing for it, and carrying it on, they made their sons vice-royals, and set them to reign in their stead, while they were absent, or employed upon that expedition." This is very pro-

reign; and though he did not make any great reformation in his kingdom, yet he was not altogether so wicked as his father and brother: for he ^d removed the idols of Baal, very likely to procure Jehoshaphat's friendship, though the golden calves which were the state-engine to keep up the division between Israel and Judah, he could not prevail with himself to depose. In this state, however, he ^e had Jehoshaphat for an ally, when he engaged in a war, which was in the beginning of his reign, with Mesha king of Moab, for refusing to pay the tribute ^f of an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams with the wool, which, until the reign of his brother Ahaziah, had been all along from the time of David paid to the crown of Israel; and as the king of Israel was then no more than deputy to Jehoshaphat, he engaged him likewise in the quarrel. These three kings, in order to surprise the enemy, and invade him on the weakest side, took a compass of seven days' march in the wilderness of Edom, and had like to have been all lost for want of water, had not the prophet Elisha, who was then in the camp, ¹ put them in a method how to procure some; ^g and not only so, but at the same time promised

¹ 2 Kings iii. 16.

bable, and seems well supported by the above texts, and would solve all the difficulties with which many have been puzzled, and not a few stumbled. Here we have sufficient evidence for the vice-royalty here mentioned.—*Dr A. Clarke.*—Ed.

^d It is a little strange, that his mother Jezebel, who brought this worship with her from the Sidonians, should suffer him to remove the images of her favourite god; but she perhaps might be a little daunted with the many disasters that had befallen her family, and was content with the privilege of having her idolatrous worship in private; nor is it unlikely, that Jehoshaphat might refuse to assist him in his wars against the king of Moab, unless he would consent to renounce his idolatry.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^e The answer which he gives Jehoram is the very same that he returned to his father Ahab, in his war against the Syrians: 'I am as thou art; my people, as thy people; and my horses, as thy horses,' (1 Kings xxii. 4. and 2 Kings iii. 7.) And considering the ill success he had, one would wonder why he should be so forward to join with his son; but, as Jehoram had reformed some things, he might have a better opinion of him, and, by showing him kindness, hope perhaps to prevail with him to proceed farther: and, as the Moabites had of late invaded his country, (2 Chron. xx. 1.) he might embrace this opportunity to chastise them for it. But, without these considerations, the war was right and justifiable; and fit it was that rebels and revolvers should be chastised, lest the example should pass into his own dominions, and encourage the Edomites to revolt from him, as we find they afterwards did from his son.—*Patrick's Commentary* and *Poole's Annotations.*

^f This was a prodigious number indeed; but then we are to consider, that these countries abounded with sheep, insomuch that Solomon offered 120,000 at the dedication of the temple, (2 Chron. vii. 5.) and the Reubenites drove from the Hagarites 250,000, (1 Chron. v. 21.) For, as Bochart observes, their sheep frequently brought forth two at a time, and sometimes twice a year. The same learned man remarks, that in ancient times, when people's riches consisted in cattle, this was the only way of paying tribute; for, as he quotes the passage out of Pliny, "money, (*pecunia*), was even named so from the word *pecus*, or cattle: and still yet in the Censor's tables all things are called *pascua*, (pastures,) from which the people received revenue, because this had long been their only income." (*Nat. Hist.* b. 18. c. 3) It is observed by others likewise, that this great number of cattle was not a tribute which the Moabites were obliged to pay to the Israelites every year, but on some special occasion only; upon the accession of every new king, for instance, when they were obliged to express their homage in this manner, or to make satisfaction for some damages, that the Israelites should at all time suffer from their invasions or revolts.—*Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

^g The prophet did not instruct the kings how to procure a sup-

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them a complete victory over the Moabites. The next morning, the confederate army had water enough; ^a and the Moabites, who were now marching to oppose them, perceiving water where they knew there used to be none, and, by the reflection of the sun, that it looked like blood, supposed that the three kings had quarrelled, and their armies engaged, and slain one another; so that they concluded they had nothing to do but to fall upon the spoil. But when they came to the camp, the Israelites gave them a reception that they little expected; for they not only killed great numbers of them upon the spot, but pursued them into their country, destroyed their fortified places, choked up their springs, cut down their timber, ^b and made ravage and devastation wherever they came; inasmuch that the king was forced to betake himself to his capital city, Kirhareth, where the confederate army besieged him, and soon reduced him to such extremity, that after he had made a successful sally with 700 men, in hopes of forcing the king of Edom's quarters, and found himself repulsed, he took his eldest

son, ^c and in mere desperation, sacrificed him upon the wall of the city, in the sight of the Israelitish army, who being struck with horror at so barbarous an action, raised the siege, and retired to their own country. ^d

Upon raising this siege, the prophet Elisha left the three kings, and returned to Samaria; whereupon the sacred historian gives a long detail of the several miracles which he wrought, namely, ¹ that he increased a poor widow's oil, to such a quantity, as enabled her to pay her husband's debts, and preserve her two sons from bondage. ² That, to reward the wealthy Shunamite for his kindness and hospitality to him, ^e he prevailed in his prayers with God, that his wife might have a child, and afterwards, when the child died, ³ restored him to life again. That while he was at Gilgal, he cured the noxious quality of the prophets' ^f colloquintida pottage, by

¹ 2 Kings iv. 1, &c.

² 2 Kings iv. 8, &c.

³ 2 Kings iv. 34.

^c Not only the Holy Scriptures, but several heathen writers likewise do assure us of this, that in cases of great extremity, it was customary among people to sacrifice to their gods whatever was most dear to them. Caesar, in his war with the Gauls, tells us, that when they were afflicted with grievous diseases, or in time of war, or great danger, they either offered men for sacrifices, or vowed that they would offer them; because they imagined, that their gods could never be appeased, unless one man's life was given for another's. No less a man than Grotius is of opinion, that this Moabitish king, in imitation of Abraham, sacrificed his son to the God of Israel, hoping thereby to appease his wrath, and to move the compassion of the kings that were besieging him: but the most general opinion is, that he offered this costly sacrifice to some false deity, and very likely to Chemosh, which was his national god, and generally thought to be the sun.—*Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

^d Instead of the words, 'there was great indignation against Israel,' as in our version, 2 Kings iii. 27, Boothroyd has, 'there was great indignation amongst the Israelites,' which seems to be the true reading.—*Ed.*

^e This kindness consisted in entertaining him; to the better accomplishment of which, they built for him a little chamber on the wall, that he might turn in thither, as related, 2 Kings viii. 10. The following may illustrate the nature of this chamber: "To most of these houses there is a smaller one annexed, which sometimes rises one story higher than the house; at other times it consists of one or two rooms only, and a terrace, whilst others that are built, as they frequently are, over the porch or gateway, have, if we except the ground floor, which they have not, all the conveniences that belong to the house, properly so called. There is a door of communication from them into the gallery of the house, kept open or shut at the discretion of the master of the family, besides another door, which opens immediately from a private staircase, down into the porch or street, without giving the least disturbance to the house. These back houses are known by the name of *olee* or *oleah*, for the house properly so called, is *dar* or *beet*, and in them strangers are usually lodged and entertained. The *oleah* of holy Scripture, being literally the same appellation, is accordingly so rendered in the Arabic version. We may suppose it then to have been a structure of the like contrivance. The little chamber, consequently, that was built by the Shunamite for Elisha, whither, the text instructs us, he retired at his pleasure, without breaking in upon the private affairs of the family, or being in his turn interrupted by them in his devotions; the summer chamber of Eglon, which, in the same manner with these, seems to have had privy stairs belonging to it, through which Ehud escaped, after he had revenged Israel upon the king of Moab; the chamber over the gate, whither, for the greater privacy, king David withdrew himself to weep for Absalom; and that upon whose terrace, Ahaz, for the same reason, erected his altars; seem to have been structures of the like nature and contrivance with these *oleahs*."—*Shaw's Travels*, p. 280.—*Ed.*

^f It is a plant so very bitter, that some have called it the gall of the whole earth. It purges excessively, and is a sort of poison, if not qualified, and taken in a moderate quantity.—*Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*. It is customary to use herbs gathered

ply of water by any knowledge of his own, as our author's words would seem to imply, he merely announced to them what God had revealed to him, namely, that they should dig a number of ditches, and that these should be miraculously filled with water. "The mind of the holy man being discomposed, as it seems, by the presence of the idolatrous Edomite, he called for music, in order, probably, that its soothing influence might prepare him to give a response with calmness and self-possession, and then he predicted the manner and issue of the battle in terms as plain as if it had been a description after the event. The manner in which the enemy were delivered into the hands of the confederate kings, was altogether miraculous, for, though it was through the intervention of water, there was not the whirlwind, which in the east is the usual prognostic of rain; and it was to that usual atmospheric appearance, previous to a shower, that the prophet alluded, when he said, 'Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet the valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both you and your cattle.' The event fell out precisely as the prophet had foretold; the whole country was filled with water, and what proved a most seasonable relief to the confederate armies, was the cause of the enemy's destruction, for in consequence of the reflection of the sun's rays on the water, which, at its rising and falling, often gives water a red appearance, they were deceived into the belief that it was blood; and that such a profusion of it could have been occasioned only by some sudden and deadly strife between the allies. Under this delusion, they ran carelessly to the camp of the opposite party, by whom they were surprised, put to flight, and killed in great numbers, their country invaded and laid waste.—*Jamieson's Eastern Manners*, pp. 316, 317.—*Ed.*

^a 2 Kings iii. 17, 'Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet the valley shall be filled with water.' Rain is often in the east preceded by a squall of wind. The editor of the *Ruins of Palmyra* tells us, that they seldom have rain except at the equinoxes, and that nothing could be more serene than the sky all the time he was there, except one afternoon, when there was a small shower, preceded by a whirlwind, which took up such quantities of sand from the desert, as quite darkened the sky (p. 37). Thus Elisha told the king of Israel, 'ye shall not see wind nor rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water.' The circumstance of the wind taking up such a quantity of sand as to darken the sky, may serve to explain 1 Kings xviii. 45: 'The heaven was black with clouds and wind.' The wind prognosticating rain is also referred to Prov. xxv. 14: 'Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift,' pretending to give something valuable and disappointing the expectation, 'is like clouds and wind without rain.'—*Harmer*, vol. 1. p. 54.—*Ed.*

^b 2 Kings iii. 25. 'Felled all the good trees.' In times of war it was formerly very common for one party to injure the other, by destroying their valuable trees. Thus the Moabites were punished, and thus the Arabs of the holy land still make war upon each other, burning the corn, cutting down the olive trees, &c.—*Hasselquist's Travels*, p. 143.—*Ed.*

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the injection of a little meal. ¹ That there he multiplied twenty barley loaves, and satisfied above 100 persons with them; and ² that there he made an axe, which was fallen into the river, merely by throwing in a stick, rise up, and swim upon the surface of it; but the miracle which the sacred history more particularly insists on, is the cure of Naaman's leprosy.

Naaman was general of the king of Syria's troops, a man famous for exploits in war, and in great esteem with his master; but he was a leper. At this time there seems to have been no good understanding between the two crowns; and yet the king of Syria, to recover so valuable a servant from his illness, wrote to the king of Israel, but in such terms as gave him some uneasy apprehensions. ^a When Elisha understood this, he ordered that Naaman might be sent to him; and when he came with all his attendants and stately equipage, instead of receiving in form, ^b he sent his servant out to him, and bade him go ^c dip himself seven times in the river Jordan, and he would be cured. The proud Syrian, not understanding this treatment, and expecting very likely that the prophet, by some personal act, would have performed the cure, thought himself slighted, and was for returning home: but being advised by those that were about him, that since the prescription was so easy, to make the experiment at least would not be much, he went to the river, and after having bathed seven times therein, found himself perfectly cured.

Rejoiced at his unexpected recovery, Naaman returned to Elisha, acknowledging, that there was no other God, but the God of Israel; protesting, that from thence forward he would sacrifice to none but him; desiring, for that purpose, two mules' loads ^d of the earth of the coun-

try, wherewith to build him an altar; deprecating any offence that might arise from his waiting on the king, ^e his master, when he went to worship in the temple of ^f Rimmon; and, in the conclusion, importuning the prophet to accept of a present, for the great cure that he had wrought upon him, which the other most ^g positively refused.

But there was not the like disinterestedness in his servant Gehazi. He, thinking it unreasonable, that so potent and wealthy a person should go off without paying for so signal a benefit, resolved to get something for himself; and therefore, unknown to any body, as he thought, he followed after Naaman, and having soon overtaken him, forged a lie, that his master desired of the general to send him a talent of silver, and two changes of garments, for two sons of the prophets, who, since his departure, were come to visit him. The general was glad of this opportunity to oblige his master; and therefore pressed him to take two talents of silver with the garments, and sent two of his servants to carry them for him; from whom he received them before he came to his master's house, and deposited them, as he thought, in a safe place: but no sooner did he return into his master's presence, than he began to tax him with what he had been doing, which when Gehazi denied, he ^h denounced his sentence, namely, that the leprosy

holy and acceptable to God, and proper for his service; or because he would, by this token, declare his conjunction with the people of Israel in the true worship, and constantly put himself in mind of his great obligation to that God, from whose land this earth was taken. He might have had indeed enough of this earth without asking any one for it; but he desired the prophet to give it him, as believing, perhaps, that he who put such virtue into the waters of Israel, could put as much in the earth thereof, and make it as useful and beneficial to him in another way. These thoughts indeed were groundless and extravagant, but yet were excusable in an heathen and novice, that was not as yet sufficiently instructed in the true religion.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^e 2 Kings v. 18. 'And he leameth upon my hand.' This might be done out of state, or on account of weakness. In the additions to the book of Esther, (xv. 4.) mention is made of two young women that waited on that queen, upon one of whom she leaned, and the other held up her train. It was not only the custom amongst the Persians and Syrians, but the Israelites also. (2 Kings vii. 2, 17).—*Patrick in locum.*—Ed.

^f It is thought by the generality of interpreters, that as the Syrians were great worshippers of the sun, this god is the same; and that the name *Rimmon*, or *high*, is given him by reason of his elevation. Grotius takes it for Saturn, because that planet is the highest of all; and Selden will have it to be the same with Elion, or the most high god of the Phœnicians. It is certain that the word *Rimmon* is the name that the Syrians gave pomegranates; and therefore, as their country was full of pomegranate trees; whose fruit is not only of a delicious taste, but of great use likewise on account of the excellent liquor which it produces, they gave perhaps the name of *pomegranate* to their god, in the same manner that the Greeks and Latins gave that of Ceres to the goddess of corn.—*Lamy's Introduction*, b. 3. c. 1.; and *Jurieu's History of Doctrines and Worship*, part 4. c. 10.

^g Elisha did not think it a thing simply unlawful to receive gifts or presents: for we find him receiving them upon another occasion; (2 Kings iv. 41.) but he did not hold it expedient, in his present circumstances, to do it, because he thought it would make for the honour of the true God and religion, to let the Syrians see the generous piety, charity, and kindness of his ministers and servants, and how much they despised all that worldly wealth and glory, which the priests or prophets of the Gentiles so greedily sought after; that thereby Naaman might be confirmed in the religion he had embraced, and others, in like manner, incited to a love and liking of it.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^h And justly did he deserve it, since his crime had in it all these aggravations; a greedy covetousness which is idolatry; a

¹ 2 Kings iv. 41.

² 2 Kings vi. 5, 6.

from the fields, as well as those produced in the garden. Russell states, that at Aleppo, besides the herbs and vegetables produced by regularly cultivated gardens, the fields afford bugloss, mallow, and asparagus, which they use as pot herbs, with some others, which are used in salads.—*Itarmer*, vol. i. p. 332.—Ed.

^a 2 Kings v. 6. 'I have sent Naaman my servant unto thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.' Schultens, in his *MS. Orig. Heb.*, observes, that "the right understanding of this passage depends on the custom of expelling lepers, and other infectious persons, from camps or cities, and reproachfully driving them into solitary places; and that when these persons were cleansed and re-admitted into cities or camps, they were said to be 'recollecti,' gathered again from their leprosy, and again received into that society from which they had been cut off.—Ed.

^b Elisha's not appearing to receive the Syrian general is ascribed by some to the retired course of life which the prophets led; but then why did he see him, and enter into conversation with him, when he returned from his cure? I should rather think, that it was not misbecoming the prophet, upon this occasion, to take some state upon him, and to support the character and dignity of a prophet of the Most High God; especially since this might be a means to raise the honour of his religion and ministry, and to give Naaman a righter idea of his miraculous cure, when he found that it was neither by the prayer nor presence of the prophet, but by the divine power and goodness that it was effected.—*Poole's Annotations and Calmet's Commentary.*

^c In conformity to the law, which requires that lepers, in order to their cleansing, should be sprinkled seven times, (Lev. xiv. 7, &c.) the prophet ordered Naaman to dip himself as often; but Jordan, as the Syrian argued, had no more virtue in it than other rivers; nor could cold water, of any kind, be a proper means for curing this distemper, whose root is a white waterish humour, that would increase rather than be diminished by any such application.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^d He desired the earth of the land, because he thought it more

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whereof he had cured Naaman should adhere to him and his family for ever; which accordingly, that very moment, came to pass.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.*

THE most material part of the discourse which passed between Naaman and Elisha, is delivered in these words:

¹ ‘Thy servant,’ says Naaman, ‘will henceforth offer neither burnt-offerings nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord: in this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that, when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing: and Elisha said unto him, go in peace.’ ‘Go in peace,’ was a common form of valediction among the Jews, wherewith Elisha might dismiss Naaman without any further answer to his request, or resolution to his doubt. For the prophet, we must suppose, in this whole transaction, was under the immediate influence and direction of the Spirit of God; and therefore, if the Spirit of God thought proper to withhold any farther instruction from the Syrian general, it was not in the prophet’s power though he had ‘given him his house full of silver and gold,’² as Baalam put the case, ‘to go beyond the word of the Lord to do more or less.’ Considering then, ³ that Naaman was now in the infancy of his conversion, and as yet not able to receive the higher precepts of perfection; that himself was conscious of his own offence, and wanted not therefore so much to be instructed, as encouraged and strengthened in the Lord: and that the matters wherein he seemed to doubt were not of such mighty importance as to concern the essence and foundation of religion; considering these things, I say, we may soon perceive the reason why Elisha accepted of his renunciation of a false and profession of a true religion, his declared aversion to the worship of idols, and fixed resolution to serve the Lord only, as a sufficient advance in his present circumstances.

Israelites, indeed, and such as were descended from the stock of Jacob, were obliged to the observation of the whole Mosaic law; but strangers and aliens, when they came to be admitted proselytes of the gate, were confined only to the worship of the true God, and the practice of such duties as were moral and social: and therefore, when Naaman professed himself a worshipper of the most high God only, and declared withal, that his attending his master into the temple of Rimmon was not with any religious purpose, but purely in performance of the duty of his office, the prophet had good reason to bid him go in peace, or, as the words may import, to give himself no uneasiness about the matter.

For, though we pretend not to say with some rab-

binical doctors, that, as Naaman was no Jew, but a foreigner and a proselyte only,⁴ he was not obliged to abstain from all external worship of idols, as the Jews confessedly were, so long as he continued in another country; yet it is generally agreed, that we are bound to show the same respect to our superiors, and those that are set in authority over us, so long as we do not injure our consciences thereby, in one place as in another; and⁵ that therefore Naaman might very innocently retain his dignity, and high office at court, even as Joseph did in Egypt, and Daniel in Babylon; might accompany his master into Rimmon’s temple, nay, and bow together with him, in compliance to his infirmity or convenience, who could not so well bow, if the other stood upright, so long as this was a service done to the man, as Tertullian⁶ reasons upon the like occasion, and not to the idol; so long as this was an act purely external, without any of those inward sentiments of respect which constitute the essence of adoration.

“This, I own, is the common solution; but it does not entirely please me. It justifies an action which Naaman himself was not well satisfied in. It leaves upon the prophet an imputation of too much lenity and indulgence, and, upon the general, that of too much hypocrisy and dissimulation. Had Naaman’s example, in this sense, been made a precedent, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and old Eleazar, amidst Antiochus’s officers, might have escaped persecution. ⁷ They, at the sound of the instruments, might have fallen down before the image, not out of any principle of adoration, but in pure obedience to the king’s orders; and ⁸ Eleazar might have evaded the eating of swine’s flesh, if he would have but let it been reported that he did eat it; but we find no such prevarication in either of these, and therefore we can hardly think, that this is the right solution.”

⁹ Now since repentance has regard to what is past, and to ask pardon for an offence already committed is much more natural than to ask pardon for what we purpose for the future to commit, which, in matters of morality, is a kind of contradiction, it seems not improbable, that the words should be rendered, as the original will fairly bear it, in the preter tense: ‘Lord, pardon thy servant, that when my master went into the house of Rimmon, to worship, and he leaned on my hand, and I bowed myself there, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.’ For, how great would the incongruity be, if Naaman, who had just before declared his renunciation of idolatry, should now confess his readiness to relapse into the same crime, and desire God’s pardon for it beforehand? Whereas, to ask pardon for what he had done amiss, and to desire the prophet’s intercession with God in that behalf, argued a mind truly sensible of his former transgression, and very much resolved to avoid it for the future: and accordingly,¹⁰ it is supposed, that, upon his return home, he refused to worship Rimmon any more, and was thereupon dismissed from being general of the king’s forces.^a

¹ 2 Kings v. 17, 18.

² Num. xxii. 18.

³ Poole’s Annotations on 2 Kings v. 19.

profanation of God’s name; a downright theft, in keeping that to himself which was given for others; deliberate and impudent lying; a desperate contempt of God’s omniscience, justice, and holiness; an horrible reproach cast upon the prophet and his religion; and a pernicious scandal given to Naaman, and every other Syrian that should chance to hear of it.—*Poole’s Annotations.*

⁴ Grotius, in locum; and Selden, de Jure Nat. et Gent. b. 2. c. 11.

⁵ Calmet’s Dissert. sur la Priere que Naaman, &c.

⁶ See De Idololat. b. 16, 17.

⁷ Dan. iii. 12.

⁸ 2 Maccab. vi. 21, &c.

⁹ Calmet’s Dissertations.

¹⁰ Bedford’s Scripture Chronology, b. 6. c. 2.

^a Dr Boothroyd adopts the received version of this passage, and gives the following reasons: Dr Lightfoot and others would

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Bethel, we all know, was one of the cities where Jeroboam had set up a golden calf, a place strangely addicted to idolatry, and whose inhabitants had no small aversion to Elisha, as being the servant and successor of one who had been a professed enemy to their wicked worship, and himself no less an opposer of it. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the children, if they were children, for the word *naarim* may signify *grown youths* as well, who mocked Elisha, were excited and encouraged thereunto by their parents; and, therefore, the judgment was just in God's punishing the wickedness of these parents by the death of their children, who, though they suffered in this life, had the happiness to be rescued from the dangers of an idolatrous education, which might have been of fatal tendency both to their present and future state.

In the mean time, it must be acknowledged, that the insolence of these mockers, whether we suppose them children or youths, was very provoking,² forasmuch as they ridiculed not only a man whose very age commanded reverence, but a prophet likewise, whose character, in all ages, was accounted sacred, nay, and even God himself, whose honour was struck at in the reproaches cast upon his servant; and that too in one of his most glorious and wonderful works, his assumption of Elijah into heaven. For, 'Go up thou bald-head, go up thou bald-head,'^a besides the bitterness of the contempt ex-

pressed in the repetition of the words, shows that they made a mere jest of any such translation; and therefore in mere banter, bid Elisha go up, whither, as he pretended, his friend and master was gone before.

These provocations, one would think, were enough to draw an imprecation from the prophet; but this imprecation did not proceed from any passion, or private resentment of his own, but merely from the command and commission of his God; who, for the terror and caution of other profane persons and idolaters, as well as for the maintenance of the honour and authority of his prophets, confirmed the word which had gone out of his servant's mouth.

The like is to be said of the destruction which Elijah called down from heaven, upon the two captains, and their companies, who came to apprehend him; that he did this, not out of any hasty passion or revenge, but purely in obedience to the Holy Spirit wherewith he was animated, and in zeal for the honour and glory of God, which, in the person of his prophet, were grossly abused.

The officers that were sent to him, call him indeed a man of God; but, by the answer which the prophet returned, we may learn, that they called him so only by way of contempt and derision.³ As they could not be ignorant, however, that Abaziah was highly offended at Elijah, and had sent them for no other purpose, but to bring him to punishment⁴ for having denounced his death; if they thought proper to obey the king in such unrighteous proceedings, rather than the laws of nature and religion, which forbid us to be instruments in cruelty and wrong, they deserved the fate they met with: and our blessed Saviour does not blame Elijah's conduct in this respect, but his disciples only, for their perverse imitation of it, from a spirit of resentment and revenge,

¹ Poole's Annot. in locum.² Poole's Annot. in locum.

render it in the past tense, and make this a confession of his idolatry, and a prayer that he might receive forgiveness. In answer, he it remarked, first, That all the ancient versions render as our common version. Secondly, This version is most agreeable to the text, the words naturally suggesting it; and, thirdly, Naaman proposes a case, which must happen in the discharge of his duty. It appears to have been his duty, as chief commander, to attend the king when he went to worship; and when he did this, he asks, 'Will Jehovah pardon him?' Is such an act to be regarded as sinful, and inconsistent with the worship which Jehovah requires? If the act be considered in a civil light, he might bend in respect to the king without regarding the idol. To which it may be added, that the valediction of the prophet, 'go in peace,' may imply, 'trouble not thyself with scruples of this kind;' and in this concession there is nothing unreasonable, when we consider that Naaman did not enjoy the light of revelation, and was not amenable to the Mosaic law; but it by no means follows that such compliances are justifiable in those who live in an age or country, blessed with the knowledge of the revealed will of God.—Holden's Christian Expositor.—Ed.

a Whether Elisha was bald or not, does not appear from the sacred story, nor does it affect the object of these young scoffers, in applying that epithet to the holy man; for in the east, to call a person bald-headed, is to treat him with the utmost degree of contempt. "I was not a little astonished," says Mr Roberts, "when I heard for the first time, a man called a bald-head, who had a large quantity of hair on his head; and I found upon inquiry, that it was a term of ignominy and reproach. A stupid fellow is called a bald-headed dunce, and of those who are weak, it is usual to say they are bald-heads. Call a man a bald-head, which is often done although his hair be most luxuriant, and immediately sticks or stones will be your portion." Hence it appears, that the expression, applied to Elisha, contained the grossest insult. Ascend, thou empty skull to heaven, as it is pretended thy master did! This was blasphemy against God; and their punishment, for they were Bethelite idolaters, was only proportioned to their guilt. Elisha cursed them, that is, pronounced a curse upon them, in the name of the Lord. The spirit of their offence lies in their ridiculing a miracle of the Lord: the offence was against him, and he punished it. It was no petulant humour of the prophet that caused him to pronounce this curse; it was God alone: had it proceeded from a wrong disposition of the prophet, no miracle would have been wrought in order to gratify

³ Le Clerc's Commentaries in locum.⁴ 2 Kings i. 4.

it. "But was it not a cruel thing to destroy forty-two little children, who in mere childishness, had simply called the prophet bare skull, or bald-head?" I answer, Elisha did not destroy them: he had no power by which he could bring two she-bears out of the wood to destroy them. It was evidently either accidental, or a divine judgment, and if a judgment, God must be the sole author of it. Elisha's curse must be only declaratory of what God was about to do. "But then, as they were little children, they could scarcely be accountable for their conduct; and consequently it was cruelty to destroy them." If it was a judgment of God, it could be neither cruel nor unjust; and I contend that the prophet had no power by which he could bring these she-bears to fall upon them. But were they little children? for here the strength of the objection lies. Now, I suppose the objection means children from four to seven or eight years old; for so we use the word: but the original קטנים *qatanim* *qatanim*, may mean *young men*, for קטן *katon* signifies to be *young*, in opposition to *old*, and is so translated in various places in our Bible; and נער *naar*, signifies not only a child, but a young man, or servant, or even a soldier, or one fit to go out to battle; and is so translated in a multitude of places in our common English version. I shall mention but a few, because they are sufficiently decisive. Isaac was called *naar* when twenty-eight years old, (Gen. xxi. 5, 12;) and Joseph was so called when he was thirty-nine, (Gen. xli. 13.) Add to these 1 Kings xx. 14, 'And Ahab said, By whom shall the Assyrians be delivered into my hand? And he said, Thus saith the Lord, By the young men (*bazaarey*) of the princes of the provinces.' That these were soldiers, probably militia, or a selection from the militia, which served as a body guard to Ahab, the event sufficiently declares; and the persons that mocked Elisha were perfectly accountable for their conduct.—Jamieson's Eastern Manners and Dr A. Clarke on 2 Kings ii. 23.—Ed.

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and under a trivial provocation, in comparison of what was offered to the prophet. The truth is, God, in this instance of severity, hath taught us, that he will have his prophets revered, ^a ¹ because they are allied to him, and every affront put upon them he resents as an indignity to himself; and therefore the sad end of the two captains, and their companies, who came to apprehend the prophet of the Lord, was designed monumentally to deter future ages from the like provocations; and to remind us of the precept which God himself hath given us, ² 'touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.'

³ 'O Elijah!' says the author of Ecclesiasticus, 'how wast thou honoured in thy wondrous deeds, and who may glory like unto thee? Like thee, ⁴ who wast vouchsafed the sight of God's glorious and majestic presence; ⁵ who hadst angels sent to comfort and refresh thee, when thou wast weary; ⁶ who hadst fire sent thee from heaven, to avenge thee of thine enemies, when they came to insult thee; ⁷ who hadst thy body in a bright chariot translated into heaven, without undergoing the fate of mortals; and, (what was not the least of thy prerogatives) who hadst, ⁸ whilst thou lived, the power of locking or unlocking the storehouses of heaven at thy pleasure, and by thy prayers.' It was doubtless to magnify his office, which now began to be depreciated not a little, that God hath authorized his prophet to accost Ahab with such marvellous assurance, as if the dispensation of the rain and dew of heaven, for such a determinate time, had been entirely at his disposal: but we mistake the matter widely, if we suppose, that the prophet had any part, farther than he was God's minister and messenger to declare the thing, in bringing this famine upon the land. All judgments of this kind are the immediate work of God: and, 'as ⁹ he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;' so, if we will but turn to ¹⁰ the preceding chapter, we shall find an account of such open and avowed idolatry, and such bold contempt of the divine authority, both in the prince and people, as will sufficiently justify the severity of God in bringing this national judgment upon them. For well may the people be supposed to be generally depraved, when we find it recorded of their prince, that ¹¹ 'he did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.'

We own indeed, that Elijah did not, in every thing,

act a consistent part; he, who but lately was so bold and intrepid, as to present himself before Ahab, who had been long in quest of him, in order to make him suffer ¹² as the disturber of the public peace, is now frightened at the menaces of a silly woman; and thereupon quits his country, and flies for his life, notwithstanding the late signal interposition of providence in his favour. But what shall we say to this? ¹³ 'Elias was a man subject to the like passions as we are;' ¹⁴ and it was probable, in respect to this his infirmity, that the apostle made this reflection upon him. ¹⁵ He knew Jezebel, and that she had all the faults incident to her sex in a superlative degree; that she was fierce, cruel, vindictive, and implacable; that, in slaying the priests of Baal, he had incurred her displeasure, and that to revenge herself, she had all the power of the kingdom under her command. These notions ran in his head, and made such an impression upon his spirits, as deprived him of that resolution and manly courage for which he was heretofore so remarkable; nor was there wanting a wise design of providence in suffering this timidity to fall upon his servant.

St Paul tells us of himself, that ¹⁶ 'lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given unto him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet him,' as he repeats it again, 'lest he should be exalted above measure.' And in like manner, we have reason to believe, that ¹⁷ God, upon this occasion, might withdraw that spirit of intrepidity, wherewith at other times, he fortified Elijah's mind, on purpose to show him his natural imbecility, and the necessity he had at all times of the divine assistance; and on purpose to suppress all the little sentiments of

¹² 1 Kings xviii. 17.

¹³ James v. 17.

¹⁴ Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings xix. 3. ¹⁵ 2 Cor. xii. 7.

¹⁶ Calmet's Commentary and Poole's Annotations.

¹⁷ 'Subject to the like passions as we are.' The passage here quoted from James v. 17. is altogether misapplied. The apostle's design in making an allusion to the prophet Elijah, evidently was to confirm the truth of the maxim which he had stated, (v. 16.) that 'the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,' and thereby to furnish encouragement to believers to continue instant and persevering in prayer in behalf of others as well as themselves. By saying that 'Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are,' the apostle intended no reflection upon the character of that prophet; for the original word rendered by the phrase 'subject to like passions,' signifies the being liable to all those accidents which attach to mortality, namely, to those feelings, wants, and weaknesses, to disease and death, to which flesh is heir. The same word occurs in Acts xiv. 15, where it is used in the same sense. Hence the apostle's argument is, that since Elias, who was only a mortal like themselves, furnished such a signal instance of success in prayer, they also by engaging in that exercise with like faith and fervour, might expect the divine interposition whenever that should be necessary. But why does the author represent Elijah as betraying a want of trust in God's protection, because he fled from Jezebel when she threatened his life? Did not the apostles act in a similar way, and did not our Lord himself frequently use precautions in order to escape the rage of his enemies? The truth is, we have no warrant in Scripture for expecting that degree of divine protection which shall supersede all prudence and exertion on our part, with a view to our safety and self-preservation, provided this does not interfere with known or commanded duty. Now we do not find that Elijah received any divine command to remain in Jezreel, or any assurance of divine protection from the threats of Jezebel, and he knew that he was unable to protect himself if he remained. He took the most prudent course, which was to give place to the present storm, and retire to a place of safety.—Ed.

¹ Scripture Vindicated, part 2, page 124.

² Eccles. xlviii. 4. ⁴ 1 Kings xix.

³ 2 Kings i. 10, &c. ⁷ Ibid. ii. 11.

⁵ Lament. iii. 33. ¹⁰ Ibid. ii.

⁶ 1 Chron. xvi. 22.

⁸ Ibid. xix. 5.

⁹ Ibid. xvii. 1.

¹¹ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

¹² 1 Kings xvi. 33.

¹³ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

¹⁴ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

¹⁵ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

¹⁶ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

¹⁷ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

¹⁸ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

¹⁹ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

²⁰ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

²¹ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

²² 1 Kings xvi. 33.

²³ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

²⁴ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

²⁵ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

²⁶ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

²⁷ 1 Kings xvi. 33.

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pride and arrogance that might possibly arise in his breast, upon the contemplation of the gifts and graces which he had bestowed on him, and the many great miracles that were wrought by his hands; and that, thereupon, if he did glory, he might glory in the Lord, and not dare to take any part of his honour to himself.

¹ The Jews have made a comparison between Elijah and Moses in several particulars, and given Moses the preference, especially in the matter of his 'forty days fast': for Elijah, they suppose, did every day eat and drink, when he happened to find any sustenance in the wilderness; whereas Moses had nothing to support him, but only the miraculous power of God. The text, however, is far from intimating that Elijah ate any thing, but what the angel at first brought him; for ² 'he went in the strength of that meat, forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the mount of God'; whereas had he taken any nourishment by the way, it had not been by the strength of that food that he performed his journey.

What that food was, the Scripture has taken care to inform us, namely, that it was 'simple bread and water,' to make the miracle more remarkable, but such as was of far greater and more durable virtue than ordinary; and such as gave a life and vigour far surpassing the effects of any other nourishment. Whether angels, in the celestial state, are purely spiritual, or clothed with some material form, but much more subtle and refined than any we know of here below, is a question much agitated among the schools: but if, for the present, we should allow the affirmative, 'the food of angels,' and what may be called the sustenance of their glorious but infinite beings, need not be accounted altogether an allegory. It is certain, that upon their appearance in human shape, they did frequently eat the common food of men; that our blessed Saviour, after the assumption of his glorious body, ⁴ 'ate part of a broiled fish and of an honey comb'; nor may we forget, upon this occasion, his words at the paschal supper, ⁵ 'I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine, until that day I drink it new with you, in my father's kingdom:' all which will be enough to countenance the opinion that the food which was brought to Elijah at this time, was of celestial growth and virtue, whereby creatures of a superior excellency may possibly, at certain periods, have their natures renewed, as the tree of life, in the state of paradise, is supposed to have been intended for that purpose, and to live on to eternal ages. No wonder, then, that food of such a rare quality, as to deserve the delegation of an angel from heaven to bring it, should have all the virtue and all the efficacy that we read of.

But, waving this speculation, we may suppose the request to have been nothing more than common bread and water; yet who can doubt, but that God, either by retarding the faculties of concoction and perspiration, or by preserving the spirit and juices from dissipation, might make its strength and nourishment subsist for the time specified? It is but God's speaking the word in this case, and the thing is done. The least beck of his will can make the same meal that usually serves us for four and twenty hours, support us for forty days, and

much longer if he pleases. That meat of any kind should sustain us for four and twenty hours, if rightly considered, is a miracle; and that the like proportion should do it for the space of forty days is still but a miracle, and with the same facility that God does the one, he can do the other: ^a so true is that observation which our blessed Saviour borrows from Moses, ⁶ 'Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'

And indeed no person ever had so large experience of the truth of this observation, as had the prophet now before us, who was so long sustained, not only by the wonderful increase of the widow's oil and meal, but by the daily ministry likewise, and attendance of ravens. For whatever some may dream of merchants or Arabians, who might take pity of Elijah in his retirement, and send him provisions every day; besides that the original word, as ⁷ Bochart has sufficiently evinced, never signifies merchants, and that there were no Arabians inhabiting the coasts where Elijah lay concealed, it can hardly be imagined, but that the place of his retreat would have soon been discovered to Ahab, had either merchants, or other inhabitant of the country, been at any time acquainted with it.

What industry that wicked king used to find out the prophet, wherever he absconded, we may learn from the information of good Obadiah, namely, that he had ransacked every nation where he could reasonably think that he was concealed, and when he found him not, he took an oath of the people, that he was not among them. For ⁸ though Ahab could not compel other nations to take an oath to that purpose, yet, considering the great interest he had among the neighbouring princes, he might easily prevail with the great men of each kingdom to give him that satisfaction. If we look into his alliances, we shall find, that the king of Tyre was his father-in-law, and the king of Moab tributary to him; that Jehoshaphat was his friend and relation, and that the king of Edom was dependant on Jehoshaphat; that, ⁹ as the kings of Arabia and Syria corresponded with Solomon, so, very likely, they were confederate with Ahab; that one of their articles might be to deliver up to each other all their fugitive or banished subjects upon demand; and that this was the foundation of his desire and expectance of this oath: and yet, notwithstanding all this strict and diligent inquiry, Elijah might live concealed in the widow of Zarephtha's house, because he had laid sufficient obligations upon her, both in preserving her from the danger of the famine, and in restoring her

⁶ Deut. viii. 3. and Mat. iv. 4. ⁷ Hiero. part 2. b. 2. c. 13.

⁸ Poole's Annotations on 1 Kings xviii. 10.

⁹ 1 Kings x. 15, 29.

^a The author's remarks on this subject are very little to the purpose, and show an endeavour to be wise above what is written. To all inquiries respecting the manner in which Elijah was supported without food, for forty days, the only legitimate answer that can be given is, that this was effected by miraculous agency; and that God can support without food, for any length of time, surely no one will deny. The author's assertion, that the manner in which food of any kind should sustain us for twenty-four hours, if rightly considered, is a miracle, is improper. It is indeed true, that God can as easily support without food for forty days, as for twenty-four hours; but to say that the one case, as well as the other, is miraculous, is to destroy the distinction between a miracle, and what takes place in accordance with the established laws of nature.—Ed.

¹ Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings xix. 8.

⁴ Ibid.

² Gen. xviii. 8.

⁵ Luke xxiv. 42.

³ Mat. xxvi. 29.

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dead son to life again, to use all possible care to conceal him. But to return to Elijah's ravens.

Though we should allow that they are creatures voracious, and unnatural to their young ones, yet the more unfit instruments they seemed to be, the more they magnified the almighty power of Him who controlled their natural appetites, while he employed them: ¹ and if there was a moral instruction in it, as St Chrysostom fancies, the more they might mollify the prophet's heart toward the deluded Israelites, by seeing those very creatures that were cruel to their young kind to him. Though we should allow, that they were creatures legally unclean, yet, as it was for the meat, and not for the touch, that they were accounted so, this we must grant was a case extraordinary, wherein the ceremonial law was overruled by necessity, and by the lawgiver's dispensation. There is this to be said, however, in defence of God's choice of ravens for this purpose, namely, that as they are solitary birds, and delight to live about brooks of water, so are they accustomed to seek out for provisions, and to carry them to the places of their abode; upon which account they were no improper creatures for God to employ upon this service; ^a especially, if what St Jerome tells us may be credited, namely, that one of these birds brought Paul, the first hermit, half a loaf every day, and, when St Anthony came to visit him, it brought him a whole one, to answer the wants of these two soldiers of Jesus Christ, as ^b he words it; but whence it had this, as well as whence Elijah's ravens had their supply, we pretend not to tell; and had rather acknowledge our ignorance in such like speculations, than take up with uncertain, and sometimes absurd conjectures. ^c

¹ Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings xvii. 6.

^a It has been attempted to get rid of this miracle, by asserting that the prophet was not fed by ravens, but by the Orbini, or inhabitants of Orbo, a small town in the vicinity of Bethshan. But the following arguments will show that the received interpretation is correct.—It is expressly said that Elisha 'drank of the brook' Cherith, (1 Kings xvii. 6.) Had strangers brought him food, they might as well have furnished him with water; and thus it would not have been necessary for him to have removed when the brook was dried up. Again, Ahab, who had sent messengers in pursuit of the prophet among the neighbouring kingdoms and nations, took an oath of them that they were ignorant of the place of his concealment, (1 Kings xviii. 10); and some one out of a tribe, we may suppose it probable, would have delivered him up, seeing they could gain nothing by his concealment, and had every thing to fear from detection. If we come to verbal criticism, we find that the word is precisely the same with that which is most properly rendered 'raven' in Gen. viii. 7, when Noah sends a bird out of the ark. The Almighty, doubtless, could have caused food to have been conveyed to Elijah in any other way, but he chose to send it by these rapacious birds, for the greater illustration of his absolute command over all creatures, and also to give us full evidence that he is able to succour and preserve, by the most improbable means, all those who put their trust in him. We need go no further to inquire whence the ravens had this food: it is enough if we believe they brought it to Elijah, for then we must allow that they acted by divine direction, and that the food was of God's providing.—*Horne's Introduction*, 7th edition.—Ed.

^b At thy arrival, Christ doubled the provisions of his soldiers.—*Jerome's Life of Paul the Hermit*.

^c It was very foolish, if it proceeded from no worse motive, to put the ridiculous legend of Anthony on the same footing with the history of Elijah. Anthony was the founder of monachism, which, far from being essential to the Christian religion, has been the source of some of its greatest corruptions; and the tales which are told of his miracles, and many conflicts with demons, are now abandoned as absurd fictions by every man of learning, as well in

There are two exceptions more, which are generally made to Elijah's conduct, namely, his omission in not anointing Hazael to be king of Syria, and Jehu, king of Israel; and his cruelty in destroying the priests of Baal without a proper authority. Now, in answer to the former of these, it should be observed, that the words, 'Go and anoint,' may not be a positive command, but only a discretionary permission so to do. The prophet had been sorely complaining to God of the wickedness and idolatry of the Israelites, and of the bloody persecutions of their rulers: ² 'I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts,' says he, 'for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, and thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away.' Whereupon God, after having shown him, ³ by some symbolical representation, how able he was to avenge him of his adversaries, bids him go and anoint such and such persons to be kings; as if he had said, ⁴ "Thou desiredst of me, that I should destroy the idolaters of Israel, and such as have a design upon thy life; but, in order to that, thou hast nothing to do but to go and appoint two other persons to be kings over Israel and Syria, and they will avenge both thy quarrel and mine."

⁵ But allowing the words to be a positive command, we may suppose that when Elijah, by his prophetic spirit,

² 1 Kings xix. 10.

³ 1 Kings xix. 11—13.

⁴ Le Clerc's Commentary on 1 Kings xix. 15.

⁵ Ibid.

the church of Rome as in the Protestant churches. The miracles of Elijah were intimately connected with the theocracy of Israel, which was instituted for preserving in the world the knowledge of the divine unity. That theocracy was then administered by the idolater Ahab, as it had been by a series of idolaters before him; and the purpose of its institution would have been completely defeated, had it not been maintained by a succession of prophets armed with power to thwart in some degree the measures of those idolatrous princes. As Ahab was the most hardened idolater that had ever swayed the sceptre of Israel, so was Elijah the greatest prophet that had ever been raised up to maintain the unity of God, and to restore the authority of the law of Moses. His life was therefore miraculously preserved as essential to the theocratic government of Israel, which was itself necessary to the preservation of true religion. In his case, if in any, there was surely a "plot worthy of being unraveled;" whilst the pretended miracles of Elijah were wrought in support of the first corruptions of Christianity! That ravens were animals fit to be employed for the preservation of the prophet is very obvious; for they are carnivorous birds, and in a country like Israel, where altars were hourly smoking, and oxen and sheep killed, under every green tree, they could be at no loss to find either the bread or the flesh which they were instinctively prompted to carry twice every day for his subsistence. "It is a fact," says Mr King, (*Morsels of Criticism*, vol. 1. p. 292, 8vo edition), "now well known, that eagles, and ravens, and all birds of prey, do, at the time they have young ones, and even sometimes on other occasions, plunder the country all around them, in order to carry flesh and food of various kinds to their nests, and to feed their offspring. And with this fact the inhabitants near the Cevennes are so well acquainted, that the shepherds there, in the neighbourhood of the nests of those wild birds, contrive to serve themselves with meat for their own tables, at this very day, by means of these birds; climbing up to their nests, when the old ones fly from them in quest of more prey, and taking away from the young what the old had left there." There is no reason to think that the old prophet had occasion to climb for his food, as his purveyors were under the immediate control of that Providence which miraculously watched over him; but as he was not interdicted the use of fire in his banishment, he might easily make a fire of dry sticks to roast the meat, if it was brought to him raw, which is surely the most probable supposition.—*Bishop Gleig*.—Ed.

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perceived what a grievous destruction the exaltation of these two persons to the thrones of Israel and Syria, would bring upon his native country, he petitioned God to delay the execution of this his order; ^a at least for some time, and obtained his request. This indeed is a circumstance that we do not meet with in Scripture; but in so short a history as this of the Hebrews is, we may well be allowed to supply some things that seem to be omitted, when this may be done without offering any violence to the words of the text, and especially when there is an analogy, in other parts of the history to bear us out.

Now, in relation to one of these, namely, Hazael, who was afterwards king of Syria, it is said that, when he came to inquire of Elisha concerning his mother Benhadad's sickness, the prophet ¹ 'settled his countenance upon him stedfastly, and wept; whereupon Hazael said, Why weepeth my Lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel. Their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and thy young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.' And from this passage, we have some grounds to think that Elijah, upon the like prospect of his nation's calamities, might desire of God, if not a revocation of his command, at least a delay in the execution of it; and that this was the reason why neither of these kings were anointed by him.

What notions the worshippers of Baal might have of the power of their god, we cannot tell; but as sending down fire from heaven ² was not above the reach of evil spirits, and some lying traditions might perhaps have descended to them concerning the exploits of their Baal in particular, ³ who, as he was thought to be the sun, and to exceed all heavenly bodies in heat, might, upon this grand occasion, as they thought, exert his power and burn up their sacrifice, they held it the wisest way to accept of the prophet's challenge. The prophet's challenge indeed was upon such fair terms, that, whatever notions they might have of their god, they must have forfeited all their credit with the people, had they pretended to decline it: and therefore, rather than do this, they chose to venture all upon the hazard of an after-game, hoping that either they might have an opportunity of conveying fire among the wood clandestinely, or that Elijah would fail in his attempt as well as they, and so both stand upon equal ground; or that, if he succeeded, the thing might not be done so cleverly, but that there

might be room for some cavils and exceptions to be raised against it.

Upon these presumptions they might enter the lists; and, when they were so shamefully defeated, the prophet, ⁴ as an extraordinary minister of God's vengeance upon sinners, especially when the magistrate so grossly neglected his duty, had sufficient authority to execute ⁵ the sentence of death passed upon them by the Lord of life and death, as perversers of the law, and teachers of idolatry; as authors of cruelty, and inciters of Jezebel ⁶ to murder the prophets of the Lord; and as cheats and impostors, to whose execution the people concurred, their princes gave their consent, and their king, as astonished at the late stupendous miracle, could make no opposition.

Whether Ahab's repentance, upon the commination of God's judgments, was sincere or superficial only, has been a matter of some debate among divines. It is certain that, in consideration of it, God revoked, at least in part, the sentence which he had denounced against him, and transferred it upon his posterity. And ⁷ yet we do not find him producing any 'fruits meet for repentance,' ⁸ either renouncing his superstitions, or destroying his idols, or restoring Naboth's vineyard, or re-establishing the true worship of God. Struck with the prophet's menaces, and dreading the effects of his predictions, he put on the garb of a penitent; he wept, he sighed, he fasted and bemoaned himself; but how came God, who inspects the hearts, and cannot be taken with external show, to have any respect to this? Such esteem has he, according to some, for true repentance and reformation, that he is willing to reward the very appearance of it. But this is an answer that comports not so well with the purity and holiness of God; and therefore we should rather choose to say, that Ahab's repentance at this time was true, though imperfect; and his sorrow sincere, though of no long continuance; and that, had he persisted in the good resolutions he had then taken up, God would have remitted him, not only the temporal, but the eternal punishment likewise, that was due to his sin. In the mean time, this instance of the divine lenity is left upon record to encourage the first essays of our repentance, and to give us assurance of this,—That our good and gracious God, ⁹ 'who keepeth mercy for thousands, and forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin,' ¹⁰ will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, but bring forth judgment unto truth.

But the same God who professes himself the forgiver of transgression and sin, declares, withal, that ¹¹ 'he will not clear the guilty, but visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.' In the case of Hiel, that impious rebuilder of Jericho, God was obliged, in order to fulfil the prophecy, to transfer the punishment due to the father upon his sons, because the form of Joshua's malediction is, ¹² 'Cursed be the man before the Lord, that raiseth up, and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it:' and as this malediction was kept upon record, and a thing well known, the people would have had but a slender conception of

¹ 2 Kings viii. 11, 12.² Job i. 16.³ Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings xviii. 26.

^a The Scriptures are silent as to the precise time and manner in which the divine commission given to Elijah was executed; but it does not therefore follow that this commission was not executed at the time appointed. As the prophet was ordered to go on the way to the wilderness of Damascus, it is not improbable that he went directly towards Syria, and meeting with Hazael, anointed him. The word *anoint*, however, may be understood in a figurative sense, denoting a particular appointment, designation, or call to an office. In this sense the word is used in other passages of Scripture, (Ps. cv. 15; Is. xlv. 1.) and of the three individuals, Elisha, Hazael, and Jehu, whom Elijah was commanded to anoint, we read that the latter only was actually anointed, and that by Elisha. The command, then, given to Elijah, in so far as it regarded Hazael and Jehu, might have been executed by a prophetic declaration on the part of the prophet, that God intended to raise them to the kingly office.—Ed.

⁴ Poole's Annotations on 1 Kings xviii. 40.⁵ Deut. xiii. 6, 9—xvii. 2, 7.⁶ 1 Kings xviii. 4.⁷ Calmet's Commentary.⁸ Exod. xxxiv. 7.⁹ Is. xlii. 3.¹⁰ Exod. xxxiv. 7.¹¹ Josh. vi. 26.

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God's justice, or rather the judgment would have passed without observation, had Hiel alone, whose death might have been imputed to his old age, been cut off in the course of his building this city. But now by taking his children, one after another, as the building advanced, the hand of God was visible, the denunciation of his servant verified, and a proper caution given to the whole nation, not to despise his patience and long-suffering, because they could not but see, that, upon their persisting impenitence, all his threats and comminations would, sooner or later, most certainly come to pass. ^a

Hiel himself, indeed, is not concerned in the prophecy; and therefore no mention is made in Scripture of what fate befell him. But, from the impartiality of God's justice, we have reason to suppose, ¹ 'that, after he had lived to be an eye-witness of his children's untimely death, himself was cut off by some sore judgment; or that if he escaped, his present impunity was his greatest misery, forasmuch as it continued his torment in the sad and lasting remembrance of his sons that were lost through his folly; or else was a means to harden his heart for the infliction of such greater punishments as God had reserved for him.

¹ Poole's Annotations.

^a This prediction was delivered upwards of 500 years before the event; and though it was most circumstantially fulfilled, yet we know not the precise meaning of some of the terms used in the original execration, and in this place where its fulfilment is mentioned. There are three opinions on the words, 'lay the foundation in his first born, and set up the gates in his youngest son.' 1. It is thought that when he laid the foundation of the city, his eldest son, the hope of his family, died by the hand and judgment of God, and that all his children died in succession; so that when the doors were ready to be hung, his youngest and last child died, and thus, instead of securing himself a name, his whole family became extinct. 2. These expressions signify only great delay in the building; that he who should undertake it, should spend nearly his whole life in it; all the time in which he was capable of procreating children; in a word, that if a man laid the foundation when his first-born came into the world, his youngest and last son should be born before the walls should be in readiness to admit the gates to be set up in them; and that the expression is of the proverbial kind, intimating greatly protracted labour, occasioned by multitudinous hindrances and delays. 3. That he who rebuilt this city, should, in laying the foundation slay or sacrifice his first-born, in order to consecrate it, and secure the assistance of the objects of his idolatrous worship; and should slay his youngest at the completion of the work, as a gratitude-offering for the assistance received. This latter opinion seems to be countenanced by the Chaldee, which represents Hiel as slaying his first-born Abiram, and his youngest son Segub. But who was Hiel the Bethelite? The Chaldee calls him Hiel of Bethmome, or the Bethmomite; the Vulgate Hiel of Bethel; the Septuagint, Hiel the Bethelite; the Syriac represents Ahab as the builder: 'Also in his days did Ahab build Jericho, the place of execration;' the Arabic, 'Also in his days did Hiel build the house of idols,' to wit, Jericho. The MSS. give us no help. None of these versions, the Chaldee excepted, intimates that the children were either slain or died; which circumstance seems to strengthen the opinion, that the passage is to be understood of delays and hindrances. Add to this, why should the innocent children of Hiel suffer for their father's presumption? And is it likely that if Hiel lost his first-born when he laid the foundation, he would have proceeded under this evidence of the divine displeasure, and at the risk of losing his whole family? Which of these opinions is the right one, or whether any of them be correct, is more than I can pretend to state. A curse seems to rest still upon Jericho: it is not yet blotted out of the map of Palestine, but it is reduced to a miserable village, consisting of about thirty wretched cottages, and the governor's dilapidated castle; nor is there any ruin there to indicate its former splendour.—*Dr. A. Clarke* on 1 Kings xvi. 34.—*Es.*

It is certainly an argument either of gross ignorance, or of a very corrupt and depraved mind, to make the condescensions of Scripture matter of exception against it, and to find fault with the sacred penman, because he endeavours, by apt allusions and representations, to bring down spiritual and divine things to the measure of our mean and shallow capacities.

² The Jews conceived of God in heaven as of a king seated on his throne; and that good and bad angels, the one standing on his right hand, and the other on his left, were the appointed executioners of his orders, either to reward or punish his subjects. And as princes upon earth do generally nothing of moment without advising with their council and chief officers, so the prophet represents Almighty God, as deliberating with his heavenly courtiers what course he had best to take, in order to bring Ahab to destruction. Amidst this consultation, some suggest one expedient, and some another; but none takes with God until a lying spirit steps out and offers his service, which God, after some examination into his abilities, accepts.

But now no man, I think, can have such a crude conception of the divine providence, as to think that this is the method of God's governing the world; that he, who is the fountain of all power and wisdom, needs to advise with any of his creatures, or can be at a loss for any expedient to accomplish his ends; or that he, who is both truth and holiness itself, should ever send a lying spirit among his prophets, which would be to confound all inspiration, and to make the imputation of error redound upon himself.

³ Upon the whole, then, we cannot but infer that the speech of Micaiah was no more than a parabolical representation of a certain event, which not long after came to pass; that several of the circumstances which are thrown into it are, in a great measure, ornamental, and designed only to illustrate the narration; and that therefore they are not to be taken in a literal sense, but in such a manner as other parables are, where the end and design of the speaker is chiefly to be considered; which in Micaiah's case, was to show the reason why so many of the prophets declared what was false upon this occasion; even because they were moved, not by the Spirit of truth, but that of adulation.

The prophets indeed, both in their parabolical speeches and symbolical actions, are to be considered as persons of a singular character. For as we find ⁴ one of them tearing his own garment to pieces, to signify to Jeroboam the alienation of the major part of the kingdom from the house of Solomon; so here we have another desiring his companion, for so what we render 'neighbour' signifies, to give him a wound, ⁵ that thereby he might have the better opportunity of reproving Ahab for his ill timed clemency to Benhadad.

The princes of the east were difficult of access; and in the court of Ahab, in particular, the character of a prophet was held in so great detestation, that some expedient was to be found out, to gain him admittance to the king's presence, and an opportunity to speak to him in the manner he designed. After so great a victory as Ahab had lately won by the valour of his men, it may be presumed, that the name of a soldier was become in

² Calmet's Commentary.

³ Le Clerc's Commentary.

⁴ 1 Kings xi. 30, 31.

⁵ Ibid. xx. 35.

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high esteem; and therefore to personate a soldier, and a wounded soldier likewise, who might more engage the king's pity and attention, the prophet entreats his fellow-collegiate, having first told him his intent to give him a slight cut with a sword, or some other instrument, that thereby he might be enabled to act his part better.

To desire to have his own flesh slashed and cut, was, in appearance, a request so frantic, that justly might his brother prophet have denied him that courtesy, had he not been satisfied that the request came from God: but herein lay the great fault of the recusant; though he knew the authority of God's commands, and that this was the very thing which he enjoined, yet, out of an indiscreet pity and compassion to his brother, he refused to comply. ¹ Had he been a stranger indeed to the several methods of divine prophecy, he might have excused himself with a better grace; but as he was equally a prophet bred up in the same school with the other, had been informed by the other of his whole design, and well understood the weight of these words, ² 'I command thee in the name of the Lord,' he was utterly inexcusable; because disobedience to a divine command, and especially when delivered by a prophet, was, ³ by the construction of the law, held capital.

Now there were two ways, according to the Jewish doctors, wherein the prophets of old were punished for their offences in their office. Those ⁴ who prophesied in the name of idols, or prophesied falsehoods in God's name, were put to death by the judges; but those who either concealed or rejected a true prophecy, were to die by the hand of God. And in the case now before us, the divine justice might be more disposed to mark what was done amiss, for this reason, among others to us unknown, that, by the severity of this punishment of a prophet's disobedience, proceeding from pity to his brother prophet, he might teach Ahab the greatness of his sin, in sparing him, through a foolish generosity or compassion, whom, by the laws of religion, and justice, and prudence, and self preservation, he should have cut off; and consequently what punishment he might reasonably expect for his disobedience.

In the account which the Scripture gives us of Jehoshaphat's reformation, it is said, that he not only ⁵ 'took away the high places and groves, but sent to his princes to teach the cities of Judah, and with them sent Levites, who had the book of the law with them, and went through all the cities of Judah teaching the people.' But what the proper business of these princes, in their circuit round the kingdom was, is a matter of some dispute among the learned. Grotius ⁶ is of opinion, that their commission extended to the instruction of the people, which, in cases extraordinary, is every one's business, and could never be done with more probability of success, than by persons who were of the king's council, and invested with his authority. There is reason to think, however, that they did not act in the very same capacity with the priests and Levites that attended them; but that, ⁷ as judges and justices of peace among us, teach and instruct the people in the laws of the land, when they deliver their charges from the bench; so these great men, in the king's name, did only admonish and

require the people to observe the laws of God, which were the municipal laws of the land, and left the particular explication and enforcement of them to those of the sacred order, who went along with them; supporting them, in the mean time, in the execution of their office, and obliging the people to receive them with respect, to hear them with attention, and to practise what they taught them.

However this be, it is obvious from the sense of the words, that, in those days there was a great ⁸ 'famine in the land,' as the prophet expresses it, 'not a famine of bread, or a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.' There were then no such public synagogues and public teachers as were afterwards instituted in the kingdom, for the instruction of the people in the sense of the law; for then there would have been no occasion for these commissioners and Levites to have gone about throughout all the cities of Judah; and into such a wretched state of ignorance was the generality of the people fallen, that there was scarce one copy of the law to be found in the hands of any private person in the whole country; for which reason it was thought advisable, and necessary indeed, to carry one with them.

The truth is, the synagogues, whereof we read so much in the Acts of our Saviour and his apostles, as places appointed for the public instruction of the people, were not of so early an institution, as the times we are now speaking of. ⁹ They did not obtain universally till after the time of the Maccabees; and it is to no later date than this that the words of St James allude, ¹⁰ 'Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.' Upon the whole, therefore, we may infer that if proper places for religious instruction were not as yet instituted; if the Levites and others, whose stated business it was to instruct the people, were become grossly negligent in their duty; and the people withal were grown so obstinate in their ignorance, as to want a proper authority to compel them to listen to their instructors; then was this commission which Jehoshaphat gave to persons duly qualified to execute it, far from being needless or supererogant, but such only as became a pious prince, whose chief ambition was, that ¹¹ 'the earth should be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.'

For this reason, no doubt it is, that the sacred historian has remarked, as a reward of this prince's piety, that ¹² 'he had not only riches and honours in abundance,' but a more numerous people, and a larger military force, in proportion to his territories, than any of his most powerful predecessors. The whole amount of the particulars indeed is so very great, ¹³ that some have suspected a mistake in the transcribers; but when it is considered that the dominions of the kingdom of Judah under Jehoshaphat were not confined to the narrow limits of Judah and Benjamin only, but ¹⁴ reached into the tribes of Dan, Ephraim, and Simeon; into Arabia, and the country of the Philistines; in a word, from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim one way, and from Jordan to the Mediterranean sea the other; when it is considered that this kingdom received a vast accession, when Jero-

¹ Poole's Annotations. ² 1 Kings xx. 35.³ Deut. xviii. 19. ⁴ Deut. xviii. 20. ⁵ 2 Chron. xvii. 6.⁶ In locum. ⁷ Poole's Annotations on ver. 7.⁸ Amos viii. 11. ⁹ Calmet's Dict. under the word Synagogue.¹⁰ Acts xv. 21. ¹¹ Is. xi. 9. ¹² 2 Chron. xviii. 1.¹³ Le Clerc's Commentary on ibid. xvii. 14. ¹⁴ Calmet's ibid.

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boam thrust out the priests and Levites from officiating in the service of the Lord, and multitudes of other piously disposed persons followed them from all parts of Israel, when they found that they might be encouraged in worshipping God at Jerusalem; when it is considered, that this country was exceedingly well cultivated, flourishing in commerce, abounding with foreigners, and what a vast increase of inhabitants in any nation may be produced in the space of an hundred years, which was the very period from David; and when it is considered farther, that soldiers in these days were not kept, like our standing armies, in constant pay and duty, but only had their names set down in the king's muster-rolls, in order to be summoned to arms whenever there was occasion, and so returned to their families, and followed their usual occupations: when all this is considered, and put together, I say, we shall not find the number of twelve hundred thousand fighting men, even though they may include six millions of persons of all ages and conditions, to be so very extravagant; especially, when it is remembered, that the city of Thebes alone, as it is reported by ¹ Tacitus, furnished no less than seven hundred thousand soldiers; that, in ancient Rome, there were once between three and four millions of souls; and that, in Grand Cairo, as some travellers report, there is now almost twice that number.^a

We have but one seeming paradox more to account for, and that is the fall ² of the walls of Aphek upon no less than seven and twenty thousand men. But, in answer to this, ³ we are not to suppose that this wall, or castle, or fort, as it may be rendered, fell upon every individual one, much less that it killed every man it fell on: it is sufficient to justify the expression, that it fell upon the main body of these seven and twenty thousand, and that it killed some, and maimed others, for the Scripture does not say that it killed all, as is usual in such cases. Let us suppose, then, that these Syrians, after their defeat on the plains of Aphek, betook themselves to this fenced city, and, despairing of any quarter, mounted the walls, or retired into some castle, with a resolution to defend themselves to the last; and that the Israelitish army coming upon them, plied the walls or the castle on every side so warily with their batteries, that down they came at once, and killing some, wounding others, and making the rest disperse for fear, did all the execution that the text intends.^b

¹ Annals, b. 2.

² 1 Kings xx. 30.

³ Poole's Annotations in locum.

^a Though many travellers have reported this city to be of an enormous magnitude, the real circumference of it, however, is not more than 8 miles, and the number of inhabitants not more than 300,000 or 400,000.—Ed.

^b Serious doubts are entertained concerning the legitimacy of our translation of the passage in question. If, instead of *חומה* *chomah*, a wall, we read *חמה* *confusion* or *disorder*, then the destruction of the 27,000 men may appear to have been occasioned by the disorganised state into which they fell; of which their enemies taking advantage, they might destroy the whole with ease. But *חמה* *chomah*, a wall, becomes, as Dr Kennicott has observed, a very different word when written without the *ו* *vau*, *חמ* which signifies *heat*; sometimes the *sun*, *vehement heat*, or the *heat of the noon-day sun*; and also the name of a *wind*, from its suffocating, parching quality. The same noun, from *חם* *yacham*, Dr Castet explains by *exandescencia*, *furer*, *venenum*; *burning*, *rage*, *poison*. These renderings, says Dr Kennicott, all concur to establish the sense of a *burning wind*, eminently blasting and destructive. I shall give a few instances

Thus we may account for this event in a natural way; but it is more reasonable to think, that God, upon this occasion, wrought a miracle; and, either by some sudden earthquake, or violent storm of wind, overturned these walls, or this fortress upon the Syrians. And, indeed, if any time was proper for his almighty arm to interpose, ⁴ it was at such a time as this, when these blasphemous people had denied his sovereign power and authority in the government of the world, and thereby in some measure obliged him, in vindication of his own honour, to give them a full demonstration of it, and to show that he was the ⁵ God of the plains, as well as of the mountains; that he could as effectually destroy them in strongholds, as in the open field, and make the very walls wherein they trusted for defence, the instruments of their ruin.

CHAP. III.—Of the translation of Enoch and Elijah.

OF all the events recorded in Scripture, we meet with none that requires our attention more than the translation of the patriarch Enoch, in the times before the flood, and the assumption of the prophet Elijah, under the dispensation of the law: for, whether Moses, the great minister of that dispensation, was in like manner exempted from the common fate of mortals, is a matter wherein commentators are not so well agreed. The account of Elijah's translation is so express and circum-

⁴ Poole's Annotations in locum.

⁵ 1 Kings xx. 23.

from the Scripture:—We read in Job xxvii. 21: 'The east wind carrieth him away;' where the word *קדים* *hadim* is *καυσων*, *burning*, in the Septuagint; and in the Vulgate, *ventus urens*, a *burning wind*. In Ezek. xix. 12, 'She was plucked up *בדבר*, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit; her strong rods were withered, and the fire consumed them.' Hosea (xiii. 15.) mentions the desolation brought by 'an east wind, the wind of the Lord.' What in Amos iv. 9. is, 'I have smitten you with blasting,' in the Vulgate is, *in vento vehemente*, 'with a vehement wind;' and in the Syriac, *with a hot wind*. Let us apply these to the history: when Benhadad, king of Syria, was besieging Samaria the second time, the Israelites slew of the Syrians 100,000 footmen in one day; and it follows, that when the rest of the army fled to Aphek, 27,000 of the men that were left were suddenly destroyed by *החמה* *hachomah*, or *החמה* *hachamah*, a *burning wind*. That such is the true interpretation, will appear more clearly if we compare the destruction of Benhadad's army with that of Sennacherib, whose sentence is that God would send upon him a *BLAST*, *רוח* *ruach*, a *wind*; doubtless such a wind as would be suddenly destructive. The event is said to be that in the night 185,000 Assyrians were smitten by the angel of the Lord, 2 Kings xix. 7, 35. The connexion of this sentence with the execution of it is given by the Psalmist, who says, (civ. 4.) 'God maketh his angels *רוחות* *ruchoth*, winds;' or, 'maketh the winds his angels,' i. e., messengers for the performance of his will. In a note on Ps. i. 6. Professor Michaelis has these words: *Ventus Zilgaphoth, pestilens curus est, orientalibus notissimus, qui obvia quævis necat*; 'The wind Zilgaphoth is a pestilent east wind, well known to the Asiatics, which suddenly kills those who are exposed to it.' Thevenot mentions such a wind in 1658, that in one night suffocated 20,000 men. And the Samiel he mentions as having, in 1665, suffocated 4,000 persons. 'Upon the whole, I conclude,' says the Doctor, 'that as Thevenot has mentioned two great multitudes destroyed by this *burning wind*, so has holy Scripture recorded the destruction of two much greater multitudes by a similar cause; and therefore we should translate the words thus: 'But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and the *burning wind* fell upon the 27,000 of the men that were left.'—Dr A. Clarke on 1 Kings xx. 30.

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stantiated, that no question can be made of its reality; but the ambiguity of the words wherein the sacred historian has related the assumption of Enoch, has induced several to think, that though this antediluvian patriarch was highly in favour with God, and for that reason removed from the contagious wickedness which was then overspreading the earth; yet that this removal was effected, not by any miraculous operation of God, but merely by his undergoing a natural death.

The words wherein Moses has recorded this transaction are very few, and these of uncertain signification: 'Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.' Now it is plain, from several passages in Scripture, not only that the word which we render 'God took him,' is set to signify our common death, as in the case of Elijah himself, when, under the juniper-tree, he prays that God would ² 'take away his life,' because he was not better than his fathers; and in that of holy Job, when he tells us, that he did not know how soon ³ his Maker might take him away; but that the other expression, 'he was not,' is frequently used in the same sense, as is evident from the lamentation which both Jacob and his son Reuben made for the supposed loss of Joseph: 'Joseph is not,' and Simeon is not, says the old man: and ⁴ 'the child is not; and I, whither shall I go?' says the son. So that no argument can be drawn from the terms in the text to countenance a miraculous assumption, more than a natural death, in the prophet Enoch. But this is not all.

The author of the book, entitled *The Wisdom of Solomon*, is supposed to carry the matter farther, and to declare positively for the death of this patriarch, when he tells us, ⁵ 'that he pleased God, and was beloved of him, so that, living among sinners, he was translated; yea, speedily was he taken away, lest wickedness should alter his understanding, and deceit beguile his soul. Being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled a long time; for his soul pleased the Lord, therefore hastened he to take him away, from among the wicked.' Where every line in the description, as some imagine, suits exactly with Enoch, and yet the author all along supposes, that the person he is here speaking of died in the same manner as other men do.

⁷ We acknowledge indeed, that the author of the book of Wisdom, speaking of the hasty and premature death of the righteous, might properly enough allude to what Moses relates concerning the translation of Enoch, who, in comparison of his contemporary patriarchs, lived but a short time; but we have no reason at all to suppose, that he is here directly treating of the death of Enoch; on the contrary, that he is here discoursing of the righteousness in general, and vindicating the wisdom and goodness of providence, in taking them sometimes sooner than ordinary out of this wicked world, is evident from the inference wherewith he concludes his discourse: ⁸ 'thus the righteous that is dead, shall condemn the ungodly that is living, and youth, that is soon perfected, the old age of the unrighteous: for they shall see the age of the wise, and shall not understand what God in his council had decreed of him, and to what end the Lord hath set him in safety.'

We acknowledge again, that, according to the light which the gospel has introduced, for a good man to die at any time ⁹ is gain, and to be removed from the miseries of this life is much better than the longest continuance in it. ¹⁰ But still it must be confessed, that, in the first ages of the world, and under a less perfect dispensation, length of days was generally accounted the recompense of virtue; and, therefore, if there were nothing extraordinary in the manner of Enoch's departure, the other patriarchs, who so far exceeded him in years, seem to have been more immediately under the divine favour than he, who, though more remarkable than any for his piety and goodness, fell under the lot and commendation of the wicked, as being not permitted ¹¹ to live out half his days.

We acknowledge, once more, that the words of Moses do not necessarily imply any miraculous assumption of a living man into heaven, or any other place unknown, and inaccessible to mortals; but still, if we will but compare what he says of Enoch with what he relates of the other patriarchs, we shall soon perceive, that his purpose was to distinguish between their manner of leaving the world and his. For whereas it is said of all the preceding patriarchs, that they lived to such and such a number of years, and ¹² 'begat sons and daughters, and so died;' of Enoch it is said, that ¹³ 'he lived sixty and five years,' and begat Methuselah; that after he begat Methuselah, 'he lived three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters;' but then, instead of 'he died,' the author's words are, 'he walked with God, and was not, for God took him:' where he first takes notice of his good and pious life, which made him so acceptable to God, and then of his translation, 'God took him:' but lest there should be any ambiguity in that expression, he adds, and 'he was not,' or appeared no more in the world; whereby he intimates that he still lives, and subsists in some other place.

The truth is, these expressions in the text, when rightly understood, do confirm, rather than invalidate, the doctrine of Enoch's translation: but, to put the matter beyond all dispute, we have the authority of an apostle, enumerating the actions of the worthies of old, and telling us of this patriarch in particular, that ¹⁴ 'by faith he was translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him: for, before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God:' where the author to the Hebrews takes care, by repeating the word three times, to prevent our mistaking his meaning; and by telling us, that the patriarch was not found, he plainly alludes to what the sons of the prophets did, when Elijah was taken away, that is, sent ¹⁵ fifty men in quest of him, but found him not; and consequently not obscurely intimates, that this transport of the patriarch was of the same nature with what happened to the prophet so many years after; that they were both the effect of the divine favour to them, both the reward of their services upon earth, and both a remove to some certain place that is beyond the reach of the knowledge of man.

In what part of the world this place is, we should not

¹ Gen. v. 24. ² 1 Kings xix. 4. ³ Job xxxii. 22.

Gen. xlii. 36. ⁴ Gen. xxxvii. 30. ⁵ Wisdom iv. 10, &c.

⁶ Calmet's Dissertation on the Patriarch Enoch.

⁷ Wisdom iv. 16, 17.

⁹ Phil. i. 21, 22. ¹⁰ Saurin's Diss. on the Translation of Enoch.

¹¹ Psalm lv. 23.

¹² Gen. v. 5, &c. ¹³ Gen. v. 21, &c.

¹⁴ Heb. xi. 5.

¹⁵ 2 Kings ii. 16.

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be too inquisitive, much less too positive, because we have no foundation but conjectures to go upon. ¹ St Austin, who seems to be more reserved in other abstruse questions, is very peremptory in this,—That Enoch and Elijah were translated into that ^a terrestrial paradise where Adam and Eve lived, in their state of innocence; that there they are nourished by the fruit of the tree of life, which gives them a power of subsisting for ever, without submitting to the necessity of death; that there they enjoy all the blessings and privileges that our first parents had before their transgression; and, among other things, an exemption from sinning, by the supernatural grace of God. But then the question is, where we are to place this terrestrial paradise, since there is scarce one region in the world that one author or other has not made choice of for its situation; and since, by the violent concussions which happened at Noah's flood, the face of nature had been so changed, that those very places, which, according to their description in Scripture, seem once to bid fairest for it, are now debased to such a degree, as little to deserve the appellation of the gardens of pleasure, much less the abodes of the blessed.

² The word *Schamajim*, which we render heaven, is supposed by several, both Jewish and Christian doctors, to be the upper part of the air, where the spirits of just men departed, together with these two translated persons, live in a state of sincere, but imperfect bliss, until the general resurrection. But this, in our opinion, is placing the seats of the blessed too near the confines ³ of 'the prince of the power of that element,' and in danger of being disturbed by some incursions from his quarters: and therefore, if we might be indulged a farther conjecture, ⁴ we should rather choose to place them beyond the circumference of the solar system, where there are immense spaces, neither obstructed by the motion of any planets, nor obnoxious to the changes of their atmospheres, because nothing is there but pure ether. But how our corporeal part shall be enabled to live there, and to live to all eternity, we shall then come to understand, when by experience we shall know what that change is, which the body undergoes, when it puts on immortality. In the mean time, as God is omnipotent, nothing can hinder him from making what changes he pleases in our bodies, and from preserving them eternally in that state.

This we may call the celestial paradise, ⁵ into which

¹ Contra Julian, b. 6. c. 30.

² Le Clerc's Commentary on 2 Kings ii. 11.

³ Ephes. ii. 2.

⁴ Le Clerc, *ibid*.

^a Whether the Mahometans embrace the same opinion, it is a little uncertain; but they have a tradition among them, of one Kheder or Khizin, who had the good fortune to find the fountain of life, whereof he drank plentifully, and so became immortal. This Kheder, whose name signifies *verdant* or *ever-flourishing*, according to them, is the same with Elijah, who lives in a place of retirement, in a delicious garden where the fountain of life runs, and the tree of life, which preserves his immortality, grows.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Elijah*.

⁶ This is incorrect. The paradise into which the soul of the penitent thief was promised admittance, was nothing else than *hades*, or the abode of the spirits of the just until the general resurrection, as Dr Campbell has most satisfactorily shown in his sixth Dissertation, prefixed to his translation of the Gospels. Although, therefore, we cannot determine the place of residence assigned to Enoch and Elijah, we can scarcely suppose that they, with their glorified bodies, inhabit the regions

our blessed Saviour promised the penitent thief upon the cross a joyful admittance; and having taken him with him, and reposed his soul in this mansion of rest and happiness, proceeded in his ascent beyond the orbits of the most distant stars, and made his entrance into the highest heavens, which are the residence of God himself; and into which, as others imagine, this patriarch and prophet were, upon their translation, carried.

⁵ 'I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago,' says St Paul, speaking of himself, though his modesty made him conceal it, ' (whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth) such an one caught up to the third heaven; and I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, God knoweth) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard things unspeakable, which it is not possible for man to utter: ' and if St Paul ' was caught up into the third heaven,' even while he continued in this mortal state, why may we not suppose that Enoch and Elijah were at once translated into the same place? The probable design of God's vouchsafing the apostle this vision

⁵ 2 Cor. xii. 2, &c.

of disembodied spirits. The passage which our author here quotes from 2 Cor. xii., seems indeed to favour the opinion, that what is called 'paradise' by our Lord, (Luke xxiii. 43.) is the same as heaven itself; but that this is not the case, the following remarks by Dr Campbell, will, we think, place beyond a doubt: 'The Jews make mention of three heavens. The first is properly the atmosphere where the birds fly, and the clouds are suspended. The second is above the first, and is what we call the visible firmament, wherein the sun, moon, and stars appear. The third, to us invisible, is conceived to be above the second, and therefore sometimes styled the heaven of heavens. This they considered as the place of the throne of God, and the habitation of the holy angels. Now it is evident that, if in the second and fourth verses he speak of one vision or revelation only, paradise and heaven are the same; not so, if in these he speak of two different revelations. My opinion is, that there are two, and I shall assign my reasons. First, he speaks of them as more than one, and that not only in introducing them, 'I will come to visions and revelations:' for sometimes it must be owned, the plural is used in expressing a subject indefinitely: but afterwards, in referring to what he had related, he says, (2 Cor. xii. 7.) 'lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations,' *των αποκαλύψεων*. Secondly, they are related precisely as two distinct events, and coupled together as the connexive particle. Thirdly, there is a repetition of his doubts, (2 Cor. xiii. 2, 3.) in regard to the reality of this translation, which, if the whole relate to a single event, was not only superfluous, but improper. This repetition, however, was necessary, if what is related in the third and fourth verses, be a different fact from what is told in the second, and if he was equally uncertain, whether it passed in vision or in reality. Fourthly, if all the three verses regard only one revelation, there is, in the manner of relating it, a tautology unexampled in the apostle's writings. I might urge, as a fifth reason, the opinion of all christian antiquity, Origen alone excepted. And this, in a question of philology, is not without its weight. I shall only add, that though in both verses, the words in the English Bible are 'caught up,' there is nothing in the original answering to the particle 'up.' The apostle has very properly employed here the word *ἁρπαζω*, expressive more of the suddenness of the event, and of his own passiveness, than of the direction of the motion. The only other place in which *παράδεισος* occurs is in the Apocalypse. (Rev. ii. 7.) 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst' *τῶν παραδεισῶν* 'of the paradise of God.' Here our Lord, no doubt, speaks of heaven, but, as he plainly alludes to the state of matters in the garden of Eden, where our first parents were placed, and where the tree of life grew, it can only be understood as a figurative expression of the promise of eternal life, forfeited by Adam, but recovered by our Lord Jesus Christ.—*Campbell on the Gospels*.—En.

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of heaven, was to show him what his final reward would be, and consequently, for the crown of joy that was set before him, to make him ¹ 'glory in the cross of Christ,' ² 'in tribulation, in distress, in persecution;' and how reasonable it is to believe, that these two worthies, who in their several generations had ³ 'fought the good fight, and finished their course, and kept the faith,' should, upon the peculiar favour of their assumption into heaven, be admitted to a nearer participation of the beatific vision, as an ample reward for the fatigues of their warfare?

At our Saviour's transfiguration upon the mount, we find one of these sent to him, as we may presume, upon some important message, appearing in a bright and glorious form, and, as if he were admitted to the counsels of heaven, ⁴ 'talking with him of his decease, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem;' and therefore we can hardly think that his abode could be at any wide distance from the throne of God's presence, who, in conjunction with his faithful servant and lawgiver, Moses, was deputed to go an embassy to his ⁵ 'beloved son.' But in this point, we ought to repress our curiosity, and in the sense of ⁶ Theodoret, content ourselves with what God has been pleased to reveal in Scripture, without inquiring too curiously into what he hath thought fit to conceal.

In what manner Enoch was translated into heaven we have not the least intimation, nor is the account of Elijah's ascension to be taken in a literal sense; since a fiery chariot and horses would not have been a vehicle so proper for a nature as yet not impregnated with immortality. The notion of those who, upon this occasion, make angels assume the form of the chariot and horses, is not so incongruous, because we need not doubt but that by the divine permission they can transform themselves into any shape. They are supposed to have frequently appeared in the figure of flying oxen, for which reason they have obtained the name of *cherub*, or *cherubim*; and with the same facility they might at this time have put on the appearance of horses: but in points not so clearly expressed, we are to resolve God's method of acting by those that are analogous, and yet more plain.

Now the only ascension that we read of besides these, is that of our blessed Saviour; and the manner in which he is said to have been carried up, was by the subvention of a cloud, which raised him from the ground, and, the mounting with him gradually, ⁷ carried him out of the apostles' sight; and in like manner, we may suppose, that the translation of these two was performed, namely, that a bright and radiant cloud, which, as it ascended, might appear like a chariot and horses, raised them from the earth, and leaving this little globe behind, wafted them into the seats of the blessed. Only we must observe, that Christ's body was at this time invested with the powers of spirituality, and therefore capable of ascending without any vehicle; whereas theirs was retarded with a load of matter.^a And therefore it is rea-

sonable to think, that by the ministry of angels, or rather by the power of God, the cloud which carried them up, was condensed to a more than common consistency, and that the whirlwind which might be raised for this purpose, helped to accelerate its motion, and expedite their ascent.

But since ⁸ 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption;' the question is, how these persons were all on a sudden, ⁹ 'made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?' 'Behold I show you a mystery,' says St Paul, speaking of those who shall be alive at our Saviour's second advent, 'we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;' and therefore the same almighty power, which, at the sounding of the last trump, will make our corruptible natures 'put on incorruption, and our mortal put on immortality,' did, no doubt, in their passage, change their terrestrial into celestial bodies, and thereby convey into them such faculties as were requisite for the enjoyment of the place whereunto it was conducting them.

What particular services Enoch had done God, for which he vouchsafed him this favour extraordinary, and an exemption from mortality, the Scripture has nowhere specified.^b It tells us only, that 'he walked with God;' but then, considering, that if not then, at least in a short time, ¹⁰ 'all flesh hath corrupted their ways, and that when God saw the wickedness of the earth, it repented him that he had made man;' we may suppose, that this good and pious patriarch took care not only of his conduct, but set himself in opposition likewise to the violence, and other kinds of iniquity, which began then to prevail in most places; and that, in short, he was, as the tradition goes, a preacher of righteousness, in which office Noah is said to have succeeded him. For that he was a preacher of righteousness is manifest from that commination of his, which St Jude, from some ancient record or other, brings him in making to the antediluvian world: ¹¹ 'Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed, and of all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.'

⁸ 1 Cor. xv. 50.

⁹ Col. i. 12.

¹⁰ Gen. vi. 11, 6

¹¹ Jud. 14, 15.

from an earthly to a heavenly state, could change their gross natural bodies into pure and spiritual bodies, like those which the apostle tells us the saints shall possess when they shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air? That Enoch and Elijah underwent such a change, the author himself, with a strange inconsistency, admits in the next paragraph.—Ed.

^b It is not to be supposed that either Enoch or Elijah received such a glorious distinction on account of any services which they had rendered in the cause of God and religion; for, strictly speaking, no mere man was capable of rendering such services to God as should entitle him to an exemption from the curse brought upon all mankind by the fall; and however eminent these prophets were for their piety and zeal in the cause of God, they were still obnoxious to the consequences of Adam's transgression, and if they were exempted from the common doom, and admitted into the heavenly state, it could only have been through the blood of the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. See remarks at the end of this chapter.—Ed.

¹ Gal. vi. 14.

² Rom. viii. 35.

³ 2 Tim. iv. 7.

⁴ Luke ix. 31.

⁵ Luke ix. 35.

⁶ Quest. 45. in Gen.

⁷ Acts i. 9.

^a Whence did the author learn this? Is it not reasonable to suppose that the same power that removed Enoch and Elijah

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And in like manner, it is very evident, that Elijah was a zealous advocate for God, and a strenuous opposer of idolatry, an implacable enemy to Baal's priests, an undaunted reprove of the wickedness of princes; and a severe inflicter of the divine vengeance upon all the children of disobedience: and therefore, we may presume, that God designed his exaltation, not only as a recompense for his past services, which were great, but as an encouragement, likewise, to other remaining prophets, to be strong in the Lord; to bear witness boldly against the corruption of the age wherein they lived; and in the execution of their office to fear the face of no man.

The corruption of the age indeed, both in the times of Enoch and Elijah, was become so great and general, that the belief of a future state, we may well suppose, was in a manner quite extinct among them; and therefore God might think it expedient, at these two periods of time, to give the world a sensible proof of it, if not to convince the unbelieving part, at least to excite in the hearts of the faithful, under all their afflictions and persecutions for righteousness' sake, refreshing hopes and expectations of a recompense to be made them in due time. Nor can we think, but that in these instances God might have a prospect to a greater event, and by the assumption of his two faithful servants, intend to typify the ascension of his Son, who was to destroy death, and open the kingdom of heaven to all believers; that thereby he might make the testimony of his apostles concerning this fact a thing more credible; and give all good Christians a more solid comfort and consolation in those words of St Paul, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.'

The testimony of the angels concerning our blessed Saviour is,—² 'This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven:' but, before this his second coming, it is an opinion that has prevailed much among the ancient fathers, ³ that God in his great mercy will send Enoch and Elijah to oppose the proceedings of Antichrist, to refute his doctrines, and to fortify the righteous against his threats and cruelties; but that, by the management of this their adversary, they shall be put to death, though in a short time raised again to everlasting life and glory. The whole of this notion is founded upon a very abstruse passage in St John's Revelation, concerning the two witnesses, which are variously interpreted. For, besides Enoch and Elijah, as we said before, some apply them to the law and the prophets, others to the Old and New Testament, and others again, especially those who favour the millenary scheme, to our Saviour Christ, and his forerunner John the Baptist. But as every one is left to his liberty to choose what part he pleases in such problems as these, we shall, without pretending to determine any thing ourselves, leave the passage, which, in a great measure we account inexplicable, to the examination of the more

learned and sagacious.—^a 'I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth; and if a man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies.—They have power to shut heaven, that it rain not, in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters, to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast, that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and overcome them, and kill them, and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.—Their bodies shall lie three days and an half without being buried, and the people shall rejoice and make merry, because of their death; but after three days and an half, the spirit of life from God shall enter into them, and they shall stand on their feet, and great fear shall fall upon them that see them.'^b

^a Rev. xi. 3, &c. The learned Calmet, from whom in a great measure I have extracted this dissertation, concludes his discourse in such words as these.—1. That though we cannot infer from the strict words of Moses, that Enoch was translated alive into another world, and is still living; yet nevertheless ought the authorities of St Paul, and the tradition of the church, to prevail, with us, to esteem, this opinion as a matter of faith.—2. Although the fathers and interpreters seem to differ about the place into which Enoch was translated, yet if we examine carefully their different opinions, the greatest part of them may be reduced to a declaration of his being in paradise, which some place on the earth, and others in heaven. And, 3. That whatever liberty the church may allow interpreters, of putting a sense on the passage quoted out of the Revelation, which speaks of the coming of two witnesses that are to appear in the latter ages, it must be agreed, that the opinion which explains it of the return of Enoch and Elijah upon the earth, is much preferable to any other, on account of its antiquity, its intrinsic justness, and the number of authors who maintain it.—[Calmet might, very consistently with his creed, pay great deference to tradition, and the authority of the Romish church; but Protestants renounce both the one and the other, and appeal to no human tribunal, in the interpretation of Scripture, but that of reason.]—Ed.

^b A considerable portion of what is advanced in the preceding section, might well have been spared. All inquiries as to the particular place or state assigned to Enoch and Elijah, or as to the exact nature and locality of the mansions prepared for the just, are to be regarded as vain and fruitless speculations, which may lead into error, but cannot tend to edification or instruction. These are amongst the secret things which belong to the Lord: and therefore it argues presumption on our part to search into them with prying and curious eyes. What it concerns us chiefly to know, is the design which the Almighty had in translating Enoch and Elijah into heaven, without tasting death, and if we carefully attend to the times in which each lived, the circumstances in which each was placed, and the method which God was pleased to adopt, in revealing his plans of mercy to our fallen race, we may warrantably draw the following conclusions. 1. That God intended to put a distinguishing mark of his honour upon Enoch and Elijah, in consideration of their faithful adherence to the truth, and their zeal in defending it in the midst of universal degeneracy and corruption. 2. That the high honour thus conferred upon these two faithful servants of God, was intended as a public attestation of a future state of retributions for the encouragement of God's people in times of trial and affliction. The account given of Enoch's translation is brief, and couched in obscure terms, while the history of the translation of Elijah is much more particular and minute; and this is perfectly consistent with the gradual development of the Almighty's designs, which we clearly recognise in the Old Testament, and particularly in the prophecies. 3. The assumption of Enoch and Elijah, was also designed as a prefiguration of the ascension of Christ. On

¹ Rom. viii. 33, 34.

² Acts i. 11.

³ Calmet's Dissertation on the Patriarch Enoch, &c.

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SECT. III.

CHAP. I.—*From the Siege of Samaria by Benhadad, to the Death of Uzziah King of Judah.*

THE HISTORY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great service which the prophet Elisha had done Benhadad king of Syria, in curing Naaman, the general of his forces, of a confirmed leprosy, he still continued his enmity against Israel. Having raised an army with a purpose to besiege Samaria, he opened the campaign with stratagems of war; and, in hopes of surprising Jehoram's troops, laid here and there some ambuscades, which Elisha, by his spirit of prophecy found out, and all along gave the king of Israel a timely intelligence of them. Benhadad at first suspected that his councils were betrayed; but when he was informed by ^a one of his officers that Elisha, who was then at Dothan, a small city in the half tribe of Manasseh, and not far from Samaria, must certainly have been at the bottom of all this, he sent a strong detachment to seize him, and invested the city that night.

On the morrow, when Elisha's servant saw the enemy surrounding the town, and knew of no forces to oppose them, ^b he expressed his fear and concern to his master;

this point we can hardly entertain a doubt, if we attend to the nature and design of the types and figures of the Old Testament. "It has been pertinently remarked, that in each of the three great periods of the church, it has pleased God, with a view to support the faith of his people, to give them a lively figure of the resurrection, as in the cases of Enoch before the flood, and under what is called the patriarchal dispensation, Elijah under the Mosaic dispensation, and the great Captain of salvation himself, under the gospel, for whom the everlasting doors were opened. And in conducting those events, the Most High has gradually disclosed life and immortality, from the dawn of morning light, to the full glory of meridian splendour. It must have been an encouraging sight to the antediluvian saints to see a guilty son of Adam withdrawn from among them, and lodged not in a tomb, but in the bosom of God. It was a still more striking illustration of immortality, to behold the heavens opened, and the divine messengers, in flaming fire, conducting a prophet into the mansions of glory. But the grandest display of this doctrine, is presented before our eyes, in the case of the Author and Finisher of our faith, who when he burst the bars of the grave, and ascended up on high, 'brought life and immortality to light,' opened the gates of righteousness, that the nations of those who are saved, may enter in. Enoch, Elijah, and Christ, in one view, may be compared with each other; but, in all things, to the latter belongs the pre-eminence. Enoch and Elijah ascended as solitary individuals, and their ascension, except as an example, benefited only themselves. Christ ascended as the first-fruits of them that sleep, and now that he is lifted up, he is drawing together his elect unto him, whom at least he will present before the presence of the Divine glory, with exceeding joy."—*Jones*.—ED.

^a It is not to be doubted, but that Naaman, upon his return from Samaria, spread the fame of Elisha so much in the court of Syria, that some of the great men there might have the curiosity to make a farther inquiry concerning him; and, being informed by several of his miraculous works, they might hence conclude, that he could tell the greatest secrets, as well as perform such wonders as were related of him; and that, therefore, in all probability, he was the person who gave the king of Israel intelligence of all the schemes that had been contrived to entrap him.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b This young man, it is supposable, had been but a little while with his master, no longer than since Gehazi's dismission, and therefore perhaps had not yet seen any great experiments of his power to work miracles; or, if he had, the great and eminent

but, upon his master's prayer, ^c his eyes were opened, and he beheld a multitude of horses and fiery chariots standing in array, and prepared to protect them; while, as his master continued his prayer, the men that beleagured the town were struck with blindness; so that by the prophet's persuading them that they were out of their way, and had mistaken the place they were bound to, they were led, in this bewildered condition, into the very midst of Samaria, where, at the prophet's request, God opened their eyes again to show them the danger they were in.

Jehoram, finding so great a number of the enemy lying at his mercy, would have gladly put them to the sword; but Elisha by all means dissuaded him from it; alleging, that as he would scarce be so cruel as to kill in cold blood, even prisoners that were taken in war, much less should he touch those who were brought into his hands by the providence of God; and therefore he rather advised him ^d to treat them, with all manner of civility, and let them go; which accordingly the king did.

But, ^e how signal soever this piece of service and

danger he thought his master in, (for, in all probability, he had learned from the people of the town, that this vast body of men were come to apprehend him only,) might well be allowed to raise his fear, and shake his faith.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^c It must be allowed that angels, whether they be purely spiritual, or, as others think, clothed with some material form, cannot be seen by mortal eyes; and therefore as Elisha himself, without a peculiar vouchsafement of God, could not discern the heavenly host, which, at this time, encamped about him; so he requests of God, that, for the removal of his fears, and the confirmation of his faith, his servant might be indulged the same privilege; nor does it seem improbable, that from such historical facts as these, which have descended by tradition, that notion among the Greeks, of a certain mist which intercepts the sight of their gods from the ken of human eyes, might at first borrow its original. To this purpose we may observe, that Homer makes Minerva bespeak Diomedes fighting against the Trojans, who were assisted by some other gods: "The vapour which heretofore lay over thine eyes, I of a truth abstracted, that you might certainly know the immortal from the mortal being." Which Virgil has imitated, in making Venus speak thus: "Look for I will take away all that cloud which, at present overspreading thy vision, weakens it powers, and renders indistinct the circumjacent objects." (*Eneid*. 2).—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^d Though, according to the rigour of the laws of arms, a conqueror is at liberty to put whatever enemies fall into his hands, if he pleases, to the sword; yet the laws of humanity and compassion, of honour and good nature, should always restrain us from treating with the utmost severity such as surrender themselves, and implore our mercy; for so says the tragedian, "What the law doth not forbid, modesty itself repudiates." (*Senec. Troad*.) So the philosopher, "The nature of honour and equity commands us to spare even captives." (*Senec. de Clement*. b. 1. c. 18.) And so the divine, "Necessity, not will, destroys the opposing enemy; as violence is due to him that fighteth and opposeth, so mercy must be rendered to the vanquished captive." (*Aug. ad Bonifac. epis*. 1.) But, besides the humanity and charity of the thing, there was this prudence and policy, in the kind treatment of the Syrians, that, by this means, their hearts might be mollified towards the Israelites, that, upon their return, they might become as it were, so many preachers of the power and greatness of the God of Israel, and not only be afraid themselves, but dissuade others likewise from opposing a people that had so invincible a protector.—*Calmét's Commentary* and *Poole's Annotations*.

^e Several heathens have observed, that "injuries are more gloriously overcome by benefits, than requited by pertinacious and mutual hatred;" but the sense of benefits in bad natures does not last long: for no sooner do we read of the kind treatment which the Syrians received, (2 Kings vi. 23.) but it immediately follows, that the king of Syria 'gathered all his host, and went up and besieged Samaria,' which does not so well agree with what is said in the preceding verse, namely, that 'the bands of the

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generosity to Benhadad was, it did not prevail with him to relinquish the old grudge and malice which he had conceived against Israel: for, not long after, he laid close siege to Samaria, and reduced the city to such distress, that an ass's head was sold ^a for fourscore pieces of silver, and ^b three quarters of a pint of pulse for five. Nay, to that extremity was the famine come, that even mothers were constrained to eat their own children;

Syrians came no more into the land of Israel.^c But now, as we can hardly think, that any author whatever would contradict himself in the same breath, so we must suppose, either that the Syrians quite retreated for this time, and laid aside all thoughts of war, though afterwards they altered their minds, and broke out again into hostilities; or, what seems more plain, that their bands made no more incursions and inroads, but that they were resolved to fall upon the Israelites at once, with a regular and formed army, and to besiege Samaria. For in this sense Josephus takes it, when he tells us, that, after this time, "Adad," for so he calls Benhadad, "never entered into any underhand practice against the king of Israel, but resolved to make open war upon him, in confidence of his greater strength and numbers.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 9. c. 2.

^a If we reckon these pieces of silver, or shekels, at fifteen-pence apiece, they come to five pound sterling; a vast price for that which had on it so little meat, and that unclean according to the law, (Liv. xi. 26.) In times of famine, however, and extreme necessity, the Jews themselves were absolved from the observation of the law; nor do there want instances in history where other people, upon the same occasion, have been reduced to the like distress, if what Plutarch, in the life of Artaxerxes, tells us, be true, namely, that in that prince's war with the Caducii, an ass's head could scarce have been purchased at the price of sixty drachms, that is, two pounds and five shillings of our money.—*Calmel's Commentary*, and *Prideaux's Connection*, in the preface.

^b What we in this place call *pulse*, our translation has rendered *dove's dung*; but interpreters have been at a great loss to devise, upon what account the inhabitants of Samaria should be obliged to buy so small a quantity of it (for a cab was the least measure the Jews had for dry things) at so dear a rate. For food, for salt, for firing, for dunging their lands within the walls, several interpreters have severally applied it; but, upon a small examination, it will appear, that none of these uses could suit with the circumstances of a city so closely besieged as Samaria was. The Talmudists suppose, that they have found out the true solution, by translating the term in the original by *crop of doves*; for they affirm, that several people in Samaria kept many doves to bring them provisions from the country, which were wont to disgorge what they picked up, so that their owners might sell it at a dear rate: but who can imagine that so great a number of doves, as were necessary for this purpose, should be suffered to live in a city so pinched with famine; that doves should be so docile, and well trained up, as to bring to their masters whatever they had ranged for; or, that in a country, in a manner covered with the enemy, who had altogether foraged and laid it waste, there should be found any nourishment at all? The learned Bochart, therefore, has not only solidly confuted these wild opinions, but has likewise farther observed that the Arabians gave the name of *dove's dung*, or *sparrow's dung*, to two several things; 1st, to a kind of moss that grows on trees, or stony ground; and, 2dly, to a sort of pease or pulse, which was very common in Judea, as may be seen in 2 Sam. xvii. 28, and therefore he concludes, that the word *Chersonim* may very well denote *vetches* or *pulse*; and, for the confirmation of this, some travellers have told us, that, at Grand Cairo and Damascus, there are magazines where they constantly fry this kind of grain, which those who go on pilgrimage buy and take with them as part of the provision for their journey; *Hieroz*, part 2. b. 1. c. 7. and an *Essay towards a New Translation*.—[Harmer, in his *Observations*, attempts to show that the dove's dung mentioned 2 Kings vi. 25, was employed during the siege, for the purpose of more speedily raising a supply of esculent vegetables, such as melons and cucumbers; and it is well known that dove's dung is reckoned of great value in the east on account of its great power in stimulating the rapid growth of such vegetables. Most modern critics, however, are of opinion, that by

which when the king understood, from the information of one who had been constrained to do it, he rent his clothes, and, in a fit of rage vowed to be revenged of Elisha, whom he took to be the cause of all this calamity; and to this purpose sent an officer to take off his head, whilst himself followed after to see the execution done.

Elisha, by the spirit of prophecy, had notice of this wicked design against his life; and having acquainted ^a the company with it, desired them to secure the doors, ^e

dove's dung, is meant a kind of *pease*, which agrees with the opinion expressed in the author's note. Dr Boothroyd translates *vetches*, and certainly this rendering marks more strongly the severity of the famine than the received one, for it cannot be supposed that dove's dung, in the literal acceptation, was used for food. Dr A. Clarke agrees in supposing that a sort of pease are meant, which to this day the Arabs call by this name. Dr Shaw says, "The *garvanços*, *cicer*, or chick pea, has been taken for the pigeon's dung, mentioned in the siege of Samaria; and as the *cicer* is pointed at one end, and acquires an ash colour" in parching, the first of which circumstances answers to the figure, the second to the usual colour of dove's dung, the supposition is by no means to be disregarded.]—Ed.

^c The story, as it is represented in Scripture, is very affecting. 'And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king! And he said, If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow; so we boiled my son, and did eat him; and I said unto her the next day, Give thy son that we may eat him, and she hath hid her son.' 2 Kings vi. 26, &c. A shocking story this! and a terrible effect of the divine vengeance, which Moses had long before told the Israelites would fall upon them, Deut. xxviii. 53, if they rebelled against God; which, at two other times besides this, namely, at the siege of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, Ezek. v. 10, and at that under Titus the Roman general, came likewise to pass; for therein Josephus gives us a very dolorous account of a lady of distinction, who, out of extremity of hunger, was forced to eat the very child that sucked at her breast.—*The Wars of the Jews*, b. 7. c. 8.

^d The words in the text are, 'And Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him,' 2 Kings vi. 32, where, by 'his house,' some interpreters understand the school where the sons of the prophets met to be instructed; and, by the elders, his chief scholars, who under his instruction applied themselves to the study of divine things. But as we frequently read in Ezekiel, of the elders of Israel, sitting before the prophet to hear him, chap. viii. 1, and xiv. 1, we cannot see why the elders, in this place likewise, may not denote some good and godly men, who bore office either in the court, camp, or city, as it seems probable by the prophet's desiring their help and protection. For, though Jehoram himself was a wicked man, and most of his officers might be forward enough to imitate him, yet we are not to doubt, but that there were some of them, whom Elisha's holy life and glorious miracles, together with the sundry benefits which the public reaped from his ministry, had won over to God, and to the true religion; and these were here sitting with him, either to receive comfort and counsel from him in this distressed time, or to solicit him to use his power with God for their relief; which accordingly he did, and in compliance to their request, not out of any fear of the king's threats, (from which he was well assured that God would not fail to deliver him,) he pronounced the joyful news, which follows in the beginning of the next chapter.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^e Executions in the east are often very prompt and arbitrary. In many cases the suspicion is no sooner entertained, or the cause of offence given, than the fatal order is issued; the messenger of death hurries to the unsuspecting victim, shows his warrant, and executes his orders that instant in silence and solitude. Instances of this kind are continually occurring in the Turkish and Persian histories. "When the enemies of a great man, among the Turks, have gained influence enough over the prince to procure a warrant for his death, a *capidgi* (the name of the officer who executes these orders), is sent to him, who shows him the

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that the officer might not be admitted until the king came. When the king was come, and the prophet was exhorting him to have a little patience, and God would remove this affliction in time, in a raving fit of despair, he replied, 'That he would wait God's leisure no longer, but go and worship his father's idols, if they, peradventure, could deliver him in this necessity.' Whereupon the prophet assured him, that, if he would stay but four and twenty hours more, he should see such an alteration in Samaria, that ^a a measure of flour should be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for the same price. This a certain lord, a great favourite of the king's, standing by and hearing, affirmed to be a thing impossible, unless God should rain corn from the clouds; to whom the prophet only made this short answer, that 'himself should see the plenty, but not be permitted to taste of it;' which accordingly came to pass.

The people of Samaria, though addicted to idolatry, did nevertheless observe the ceremonial part of the law, and, pursuant to this, had ^b shut four lepers out of the

city; who lay under the walls, until they were ready to starve. In this condition these poor creatures, consulting what measures they should best take, resolved at last to try the generosity of the enemy, because, at the worst, they could but die; and accordingly, before the break of day, went to the camp. When they came thither, to their great surprise, they found no living creature, but only horses and asses.^c The tents were standing and well provided with riches, and all manner of necessaries, but the men were gone: for having been affrighted with a noise in the air, as of an army in full march, and ready to fall upon them, they supposed that the king of Israel had called to his assistance some foreign powers, the ^d Hittites or Egyptians, and thereupon leaving the camp, without ever striking their tents, betook themselves to their heels as fast as they could.

The poor lepers having first satisfied their hunger, and secured some riches to themselves, began to reflect, that while they were thus regaling themselves, and plundering the camp, their countrymen were in danger of starving in the town; and therefore, with all possible haste, returning to the gate, they gave the porter notice of the enemy's flight, who went immediately and sent an account of it to the king. The king, imagining at first that this had been a stratagem ^e of the Syrians to

order he has received to carry back his head; the other takes the warrant of the grand seignior, kisses it, puts it on his head in token of respect, and then having performed his ablutions, and said his prayers, freely resigns his life. The capidgi having strangled him, cuts off his head, and brings it to Constantinople. The grand seignior's order is implicitly obeyed; the servants of the victim never attempt to hinder the executioner, although the capidgi came very often with few or no attendants.^f It appears in the writings of Chardin, that the nobility and grantees of Persia are put to death in a manner equally silent, hasty, and unobstructed. Such executions were not uncommon among the Jews under the government of their kings. Solomon sent Beniah as his capidgi, or executioner, to put Adonijah, a prince of his own family, to death; and Joab, the commander-in-chief of the forces in the reign of his father. A capidgi likewise beheaded John the Baptist in the prison, and carried his head to the court of Herod. To such silent and hasty executions, the royal preacher seems to refer in that proverb; 'the wrath of a king is as messengers of death; but a wise man will pacify it;' his displeasure exposes the unhappy offender to immediate death, and may fill the unsuspecting bosom with terror and dismay, like the appearance of a capidgi: but by wise and prudent conduct, a man may sometimes escape the danger. From the dreadful promptitude with which Beniah executed the commands of Solomon on Adonijah and Joab, it may be concluded that the executioner of the court was as little ceremonious, and the ancient Jews nearly as passive as the Turks or Persians. The prophet Elisha is the only person in the inspired record, who ventured to resist the bloody mandate of the sovereign; the incident is recorded in these terms: 'But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; he said to the elders, See how this son of a murderer has sent to take away mine head? Look when the messenger cometh; shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?' But if such mandates had not been too common among the Jews, and in general submitted to without resistance, Jehoram had scarcely ventured to dispatch a single messenger to take away the life of so eminent a person as Elisha.—*Paxton's Illustrations*.—Ed.

^a The word *Seah*, which we render *a measure*, was equal to six cabs, and contained, as some think, six quarts, as others a peck, and as others a peck and two quarts, of our measure. The shekel was much about our three shillings; and to have a peck of fine flour for three shillings at other times would not have been so cheap; but, considering the present situation of things, it was wonderfully so.—*Le Clerc's Commentary and Poole's Annotations*.—According to the best authorities, the *measure or seah* was equal to one peck one pint, and the value of the shekel, two shillings, 3d; sterling. —Ed.

^b The Jews are of opinion, that these four lepers were Gehazi and three of his sons. Persons that were leprous indeed, were not permitted to converse with other men, and, by the

law of Moses, while the Israelites lived in tents, they were to be turned out of the camp, (Num. v. 2, 3.) But, after that they came to inhabit cities, it may be questioned whether they treated them with that rigour; since, in 2 Kings viii. 4, we find Gehazi holding discourse with the king, (which makes against his being one of the four excluded lepers,) and giving him a detail of all Elisha's miracles; but this he might do by talking to him at a proper distance. Lepers indeed were carefully avoided, because their distemper, in these hot countries, was thought contagious; but, in the case before us, these four seem to be excluded, not so much upon the account of their distemper, as because they were useless hands. They could neither fight, nor work in communion with others: they were only persons born to consume the fruits of the earth, and were therefore no proper persons in a siege.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries*.

^c 2 Kings vii. 10. 'Horses tied and asses tied.' From the circumstances recorded concerning the flight of the Syrians, it appears to have been remarkably precipitate. That they were not altogether unprepared for a hasty departure, may be inferred from comparing this passage with the following extract from *Memoirs relative to Egypt*, p. 300. "As soon as the Arabs are apprehensive of an attack, they separate into several small camps, at a great distance from each other, and tie their camels to the tents, so as to be able to move off at a moment's notice." Such a precaution is not probably peculiar to the modern Arabs, but might be adopted by the Syrian army. If this was the case, it shows with what great fear God filled their minds, that though prepared as usual for a quick march, they were not able to avail themselves of the advantage, but were constrained to leave every thing behind them as a prey to their enemies.—Ed.

^d The Hittites in particular lived in Arabia Petræa, to the south of Palestine, and, in Solomon's time, who had some wives likewise out of their country, held a great commerce with him for horses, (1 Kings x. 29. and xi. 1.) But under the name of Hittites, as elsewhere under the name of Amorites, the sacred penman seems to comprehend all, or any of the people of Canaan. For though the greatest number of that people were destroyed, yet some of them were spared, and many of them, upon Joshua's coming, fled away, some to remote parts, as that famous and ancient pillar in the coasts of Afric testifies, and others to the countries bordering upon Canaan; where, by reason of the scarcity of inhabitants in those days, finding room enough, they seated themselves, and in process of time, growing numerous and powerful, appointed, according to their ancient manner of government, kings to rule over them.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^e 2 Kings vii. 12. In the History of the Revolt of Ali Bey,

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draw his people out of the town, and so fall upon them, sent out some parties to reconnoitre such places as might be most suspected for ambuscades; but when they returned, they informed him, that they could get no sight of the enemy, only they found the road strewed with arms, and garments, and several bundles of things, which they had dropped, as they supposed, to ease themselves in their flight. Upon hearing of this news, the people rushed out of the city in great numbers, and bring in provision in such quantities, that corn was sold at the price which Elisha mentioned, and at the time which he foretold: and as the incredulous nobleman, who had despised the prophet's prediction, was appointed by the king to guard the gate which led from the city to the camp, the better to prevent disorders, the crowd pressed so vehemently upon him, that they trampled him under foot, and killed him, before he had an opportunity to taste any part of that great store which he saw was brought to the market.

After this miraculous raising of the siege of Samaria, Benhadad was deterred from making any farther attempts upon Israel: nor do we hear any more of him in the sacred history, until Elisha went to Damascus, the capital of Syria, to execute the order of declaring Hazael king, which was originally given to Elijah his predecessor. The king hearing of his arrival, and being no stranger to his abilities, sent this same Hazael, who was then become one of his prime ministers, to wait upon him with a very noble present, and to inquire of him whether he should recover of the sickness which he then laboured under. The prophet told Hazael, that his master might recover, because his distemper was not of itself mortal, but that he was very well assured that he would not: and then,

(p. 99.) we have an account of a transaction very similar to the stratagem supposed to have been practised by the Syrians. The pasha of Sham (Damascus) having marched near to the sea of Tiberias, found sheik Daher encamped there; but the sheik deferring the engagement till the next morning, during the night divided his army into three parts, and left the camp, with great fires, all sorts of provisions, and a large quantity of spirituous liquors, giving strict orders not to hinder the enemy from taking possession of the camp, but to come down and attack them just before dawn of day. "In the middle of the night, the pasha of Sham thought to surprise sheik Daher, and marched in silence to the camp, which, to his great astonishment, he found entirely abandoned, and thought the sheik had fled with so much precipitation, that he could not carry off the baggage and stores. The pasha thought proper to stop in the camp to refresh his soldiers. They soon fell to plunder, and drank so freely of the liquors, that, overcome with the fatigue of the day's march, and the fumes of the spirits, they were not long ere they were in a sound sleep. At that time sheik Sleby and sheik Crime, who were watching the enemy, came silently to the camp; and sheik Daher, having repassed the sea of Tiberias, meeting them, they all rushed into the camp, and fell on the confused and sleeping enemy, eight thousand of whom they slew on the spot; and the pasha, with the remainder of his troops, fled with much difficulty to Sham, leaving all their baggage behind."—*Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 244.—Ed.

^a What Benhadad's distemper was, we are nowhere told in Scripture; but it is very evident, that it was not of so desperate a nature, but that he might have recovered of it, had he not had foul play for his life. According to the account of Josephus, it was no more than a fit of melancholy; for "when he came to understand," as he tells us, "that all these alarms of chariots and horsemen, that had given such an irreparable rout to him and his army, were, in truth, only judicial impressions of affright and terror, without any foundation, he looked upon it as a declaration from heaven against him; and this anxiety of thought made him as sick in the body too as he was in his mind."—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 5. c. 2.

looking steadfastly upon him, he broke out into tears, upon the prospect, as he told him, of the ^b many barbarous calamities which he would bring upon Israel, when once he was advanced to power, as that he would be, because he was assured by divine revelation that he was to be king of Syria. At these words, Hazael's ambition took wing; and therefore returning to his master, he concealed the prophet's answer, and gave him good hopes of his recovery, but the next day took care to prevent it, by ^c stifling his breath with a thick cloth dipped in water: and as Benhadad had no son of his own, and Hazael was a man of great esteem, especially among the soldiery, he was, without much difficulty, declared his successor.

The next thing which Elisha did was to have Jehu anointed king of Israel, pursuant to the order that was given to his master Elijah, and to the divine decree of punishing the house of Ahab for their manifold impieties. Ramoth-Gilead was a place of long dispute between the two crowns of Israel and Syria. Jehoram, king of Israel, had lately had an engagement with Hazael, king of Syria, not far from it, wherein he had received some very dangerous wounds, and was gone down to Jezreel, to be cured of them. His army, however, ^d continued

^b The particulars are thus enumerated:—"I know the evil that thou wilt do to the children of Israel; their strongholds wilt thou set on fire; their young men wilt thou slay with the sword; and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child," (2 Kings viii. 12.) That dashing young children against the stones was one piece of barbarous cruelty, which the people of the east were apt to run into, in the prosecution of their wars, is plainly intimated in that passage of the Psalmist's, alluding to the calamities which preceded the Babylonish captivity: 'O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery! Yea, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us. Blessed shall he be, that taketh thy children, and throweth them against the stones,' (Ps. cxxxvii. 8, 9.) Nor was this inhuman practice quite out of use among nations that pretended to more politeness: for, according to the remains of ancient fame, the Greeks, when they became masters of Troy, were so cruel as to throw Astyanax, Hector's son, a child in his mother's arms, as Homer represents him, headlong from one of the towers of the city. The ripping up women with child is the highest degree of brutal cruelty; and a cruelty for which there is no occasion, because, kill but the mother, and the child dies of course; and yet it has been often known, that in the heat of execution, this barbarity has been committed. Nay, there is reason to believe that Hazael, in his war with the Gileadites, (2 Kings x. 32, 33.) verified this part of the prophet's prediction concerning him; for what Amos, complaining of his cruelty to these people, calls threshing Gilead 'with threshing instruments of iron,' both the Septuagint and Arabic versions read, 'he sawed the big-bellied women of Gilead with iron saws.'—*Le Clerc's and Calmet's Commentaries*.

^c This he did, that no signs of violence might appear upon him; for had the people, in the least, suspected his being murdered, Hazael would not so easily have acceded to the throne; because, according to the account of Josephus, Benhadad was a man of such reputation among the people of Syria and Damascus, that as his memory was celebrated among them with divine honours, his death, no doubt, had it been known to have been violent, would have been fully revenged upon the murderer.—*Jewish Ant.* b. 9. c. 2. We may observe, however, that history makes mention of some other princes who have died in the same manner that Benhadad did; that the emperor Tiberius, according to Suetonius, was, in his last sickness, choked in his bed by a pillow crammed into his mouth, or, as Tacitus has it, was smothered to death under a vast load of bedclothes; and that king Demetrius, the son of Philip, as well as the emperor Frederick II., was hurried out of the world the same way.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d It is supposed by some interpreters, that the city of Ramoth-Gilead was taken by Jehoram, before he departed from it to be

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the siege under the command of Jehu, who in the king's absence, acted as captain-general. This, Elisha thought, was no improper opportunity to execute the orders which were left upon him to do; and therefore ^a calling one of his minor prophets, he bid him go to Ramoth-Gilead, and ^b there anoint ^c Jehu, the grandson of Nimshi, as king of Israel, with the utmost secrecy, and then to come away with the utmost expedition. When the prophet came thither, he found the officers in a council of war, and Jehu, at the head of them. Desiring therefore to speak with him in private, he did what his instructions were, and reminding the general of the prophecies of Elijah, concerning the utter extinction of the house of Ahab, he enjoined him, now that he was invested with power, to put them in execution.

The officers that were with Jehu, had but a contempti-

ured of his wounds. This they gather from the mention made of the 'inner chamber,' (2 Kings ix. 2.) 'the top of the stairs,' (ver. 13.) and from that caution which Jehu thinks advisable, 'Let none go forth, or escape out of the city,' (ver. 15.) But these arguments will not do. What we render 'out of the city,' does signify every whit as properly, 'from before the city,' that is, out of the camp or army that is besieging the city. But even, if this be not so, the Israelites might, at this time, have the suburbs, or out-buildings belonging to the city, in their possession, where the general might have his headquarters, and from whence he might give orders to the piquet-guard, as we call it, that none should be permitted to move. For had the town been already in their hands, we cannot see why Jehoram should have kept all Israel there, (ver. 14.) that is, all the military force of Israel, when a strong garrison would have been sufficient.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^a The Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the prophet whom Elisha sent upon this message, was Jonah; but, upon this supposition, he must at this time have been a very young man, because Jeroboam II., in whose reign Jonah prophesied, did not ascend the throne till about fifty years after this unction of Jehu king of Israel. However this be, it is reasonable to think that Elisha himself did not go to perform this office, either because he was now grown old, and unfit for such a journey, or because he was a person too well known, and not so proper to be employed in an affair that required secrecy.—*Patrick's and Calnet's Commentaries.*

^b The Jews are of opinion, that none of the kings of Israel were anointed but those that were of the house of David, and these only when there was a question about their succession; as Solomon, they say, needed not to have been anointed, had it not been for the faction of Adonijah. But in the case of Jehu, in whom the succession of the kingdom of Israel was to be translated out of the right line of the family of Ahab, into another family which had no right to the kingdom, but merely the appointment of God, there was a necessity for his unction, in order both to convey to him a title, and to invest him in the actual possession of the kingdom: for if that, which some imagine from 1 Kings xix. 16., be true, namely, that the prophet Elijah did, before this time, anoint Jehu, that unction did only confer on him a remote right to the kingdom, in the same manner as Samuel's unction did to David. (1 Sam. xvi. 13.)—*Patrick's Commentary and Poole's Annotations.*

^c For barbarity and hypocrisy Jehu has few parallels; and the cowardliness and baseness of the nobles of Samaria, have seldom been equalled. Ahab's bloody house must be cut off; but did God ever design that it should be done by these means? The men were, no doubt, profligate and wicked, and God permitted their iniquity to manifest itself in this way; and thus the purpose of God, that Ahab's house should no more reign, was completely accomplished: (see 1 Kings xxi. 19, 21, 29.) And by this conduct Jehu is said to have executed what was right in God's eyes. (ver. 30.) The cutting off of Ahab's family was decreed by the divine justice; the means by which it was done, or at least the manner of doing, were not entirely of his appointing: yet the commission given him by the young prophet, (c. ix. 7.) was very extensive. Yet still many things seem to be attributed to God, as the agent, which he does not execute, but only permits to be done.—Ed.

ble opinion of the prophet; for persons of this character they looked upon as a ^d kind of madmen; and yet when they understood that he had anointed Jehu to be king, they proclaimed him with a general consent, and, with a good body of forces, marched directly to Jezreel, where Jehoram was not yet recovered of his wounds, and whither Ahaziah, king of Judah, was at that time come to visit him. Jehu's intent, was to get to Jezreel, before the king could have any intelligence of what had passed at Ramoth-Gilead, and there to surprise and seize him; but a ^e centinel from the watch tower, perceiving a body of men coming, and, by their hasty march, concluding that it was Jehu who commanded them, apprised the two kings of it; whereupon they got ready their chariots in all haste, and, as the providence of God would have it, met him not far from the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, and perhaps ^f in the place where Naboth was stoned.

Upon their first meeting, a few words convinced Jehoram, that Jehu had conspired against him, and was come in an hostile manner, to avenge ^f the idolatry and wickedness of his mother Jezebel, whereupon he turned his chariot and fled; but Jehu soon overtook him with a swift arrow, which pierced his heart; and when he per-

¹ 1 Kings xxi. 19.

^d The officers who were in company with Jehu, might easily perceive by the habit, and air, and manner of speech of the person who accosted Jehu so boldly, and when he had done his business, vanished so suddenly, that he was a prophet; but then there might be several reasons which might induce men of their profession to have a contemptible opinion of men of that order. The rigid and obscure course of life which the prophets led, their neglect of themselves, and of the things of this world, might pass with them for a kind of infatuation; and the holy exercises to which they devoted themselves, for no more than a religious frenzy. Besides this, the false prophets, which they had seen in the court of Ahab, had given just offence; and by their affected gestures and studied contortions, whereby they thought to recommend their crude enthusiasms, made themselves justly ridiculous, and contemptible. And therefore it is no wonder that these officers, at first sight, should censure a true, as they thought they had reason to judge of the false prophets with whom they had been acquainted; especially when we find some leading men in the tribe of Judah treating the prophets of the Lord, as in the case of Ezekiel xxiii. 30, 31, and of Jeremiah xxix. 26, as fools and madmen; and some great names in the heathen world, looking upon all pretenders to inspiration in no better light; according to that noted passage in Cicero: "what authority does that 'furor' possess which ye call divine, so that a madman can discern what a wise man cannot; and he who has lost his human senses, is thought to possess superhuman."—*De Divinat.* b. 2.

^e In time of peace, as well as war, it was customary to have watchmen set on high and eminent places wherever the king was, to prevent his being surprised. Thus David, at Jerusalem, was informed by the watchman, that his sons were escaped from the slaughter of Absalom, when he thought them all lost, (2 Sam. xiii. 34.) and therefore Jehoram, who had an army lying before Ramoth-Gilead, had good reason to keep a watchful eye upon every motion that came, especially from that quarter.—*Patrick's and Calnet's Commentaries.*

^f The answer which Jehu returns to Jehoram is,—'What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?' (2 Kings ix. 22.) that is, whilst her idolatries wherewith she bewitches the people, are still continued and multiplied. And he upbraids Jehoram with his mother's sins, and not with his own, because hers were more notorious and infamous, and what by his contrivance, he had made his own; because they were the principal reasons why God did inflict, and he was come to execute these judgments; and because he could find no odious accusations against him, except about the golden calves, which he purposely declined mentioning, because he himself intended to keep them up.—*Poole's Annotations.*

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ceived him sinking in his chariot, he bid an officer that was by throw him into Naboth's field, which was near at hand, ^a that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled.

As for Abaziah, he attempted to make his escape, but was pursued by a party of Jehu's men, who came up with him at Gur, and, as he was sitting in his chariot, gave him a mortal wound; so that as soon as he reached Megiddo he died. He was thence removed to Jerusalem, where he was buried in the royal sepulchre of his ancestors, and, after a reign of less than two years, was succeeded by his mother Athaliah, who usurped the throne.

Jehu, in the mean time, made the best of his way to Jezreel, where Jezebel, resolving to keep up her grandeur to the last, ^b painted and dressed herself in her royal robes, and looking out of her window, upbraided him with his treachery as he passed by, and reminded him of the unhappy fate of Zimri, who slew his king and master Elan: but, without making her any answer, he called to somebody to throw her out of the window, which ^c her own eunuchs did; so that, by the fall,

^a The words which Jehu seems to quote are these,—‘Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord, and I will requite him in this place, (2 Kings ix. 26.)’ It is to be observed, however, that in all the history of Naboth, which is recorded in 1 Kings xxi., we find no mention made of the death of his sons; but it is no unusual thing for the Scripture to supply in one place, that which has been omitted in another. It is not improbable, therefore, that as Naboth was accused of high treason, all his family was involved in his ruin, and all his estate confiscated to the king's exchequer: and what seems to confirm this opinion, is,—That we find Elijah never once putting the king in mind to restore the vineyard to Naboth's children, nor the king, in the time of his repentance, ever once thinking to do it, because, in all human appearance, there were no heirs left. Notwithstanding this, Grotius, and other learned men, have observed, that these words may signify no more than the extreme poverty to which Naboth's family was reduced by the death of their father, and the confiscation of his goods: for, among the Hebrews, say they, all punishments and miseries are called ‘blood,’ (Lev. xvii. 4) and to take away their estate, upon which they would have lived, was, in effect, to take away their blood, in which is the life of every creature. But this is a little forced: and therefore, we should rather think, that Jehu is here aggravating Ahab's crime, and reckoning the sons as slain with the father, because by their being deprived of him, and of his estate, they were, in a manner, in as bad a condition as though they were dead.—*Le Clerc's, Patrick's, and Cabnet's Commentaries.* [This last opinion is not more satisfactory than the preceding. As the object both of Ahab and Jezebel was to obtain entire and perpetual possession of Naboth's vineyard, it is very probable that the whole of Naboth's family were cut off with himself, in order that none of his posterity might afterwards reclaim the property.]—Ed.

^b The words in the original import, ‘She put her eyes in paint,’ that is, she used stibium or antimony pulverized, to make her eyes and eyebrows look black and large, which, in several countries, was accounted a great beauty. The use of paint has been of ancient date, and the art of blacking the hair, and beautifying the face may be indulged to the vanity of the female sex; but it raises one's indignation to read of a Sardanapalus painting his eyes and eyebrows; of the ancient Greeks running into the same custom; and much more of the ancient Romans: but there were fops in all nations then as well as now. ‘He by using wet soot enlarged his eyebrow: pricking it with an obliquely pointed needle, and stains his trembling eyelids.’—*Juv. Sat. 2.*

^c According to the custom of the eastern nations, the business of this sort of people was to attend upon queens in their chambers, who by their great fidelity and obsequiousness, gained generally the esteem, and were admitted to the confidence of those they served, and from thence into places very often of great trust and profit. It is remarked, however, of Jezebel's eunuchs, that they were far from being faithful to her, to let us see how suddenly courtiers are wont to change with the fortune of their masters.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

her ^d blood stained the walls of the palace, and, when she was upon the pavement, the horses trampled her under foot, and the dogs devoured her body; ^e insomuch,

^d Some of the Jewish doctors look upon this as a punishment, according to the *lex talionis*; for as she had done, so she suffered. She had caused Naboth to be stoned, and now she is condemned to be stoned herself. For there were two ways of stoning, either by throwing stones at malefactors till they had knocked them down and killed them; or by throwing them down upon the stones from an high place, and so dashing them to pieces.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^e It is scarcely possible for an European to form an idea of the intolerable nuisance occasioned in the villages and cities of the east, by the multitude of dogs that infest the streets. The natives, accustomed from their earliest years to the annoyance, come to be regardless of it; but to a stranger these creatures are the greatest plague to which he is subjected; for, as they are never allowed to enter a house, and do not constitute the property of any particular owner, they display none of those habits of which the domesticated species among us, are found susceptible, and are destitute of all those social qualities which often render the dog the trusty and attached friend of man,—the lively companion,—the faithful guardian, and the favourite on every hearth. Instead of the gentle, attractive, and almost rational creature he appears to be among us, the race seems wholly to degenerate in the warm regions of the east, and to approximate to the character of beasts of prey, as in disposition they are ferocious, cunning, blood-thirsty, and possessed of the most insatiable voracity; and even in their very form, there is something repulsive; their sharp and savage features; their wolf-like eyes; their long hanging ears; their straight and pointed tails; their lank and emaciated forms, almost entirely without a belly, give them an appearance of wretchedness and degradation, that stands in sad contrast with the general condition and qualities of the breed in Europe. They are almost wholly outcasts from human habitations; and, consequently, in Asiatic countries, the beautiful traits of canine fidelity and attachment, are altogether unknown. There the hand of man is seldom extended to offer the stroke or the morsel of kindness; and the creature that receives or snatches it from the unwilling hand, would, in a few hours after, if an opportunity offered, mangle and devour the corpse of his benefactor without the smallest repugnance. These hideous creatures, dreaded by the people for their ferocity, or avoided by them as useless and unclean, are obliged to prowl about everywhere in search of a precarious subsistence; and, as they have never been subjected to any discipline, and run generally in bands, their natural ferocity, inflamed by hunger, and the consciousness of strength, makes them the most troublesome and dangerous visitors to the stranger who unexpectedly finds himself in their neighbourhood, as they will not scruple to seize whatever he may have about him, and even in the event of his falling, and being otherwise defenceless, to attack and devour him. It is chiefly, however, at night, that these prowlers are the most formidable; for even those which lie during the heat of the day, lazy, inactive, and scarcely raising their head to growl at the passenger who may have chanced to trample on them, run about, whenever the shades begin to fall, and the inhabitants to disappear from the streets, and are so intolerable by their perpetual din, and their sudden and furious attacks, that it is an attempt never made without the greatest risk, to walk abroad at night, and without sufficient protection. This circumstance, which is frequently noticed by travellers in the east, may be illustrated by an incident described in a very lively manner by the French traveller Denon. It occurred on the day of his entry into Alexandria, when that city was stormed by the French in the late war, and having omitted to take with him some necessary articles of clothing, he had gone for that purpose to his ships, and was returning considerably later than he had anticipated to the city, which he found totally deserted; the stillness of midnight prevailing, and not a glimmer of light, but what was afforded by the stars and clear atmosphere of the climate. He had not proceeded far, when he was met by a troop of furious dogs, who attacked him from the streets, the doors, and the low roofs of the houses, with so much ferocity, as almost to deprive him of the power of self-defence. No sooner had he passed the territory of these, than he was received by a fresh band of assailants, till at length, molested and wearied almost to death, he thought of taking a circuitous route along the suburbs of the city, by which, after climbing over the walls, and wading a considerable depth into the river, he came,

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that when Jehu, in consideration of her quality, ordered some of his servants to go and bury her, they found nothing of her remaining but her skull, feet, and palms of her

after the greatest fatigue, about midnight, to one of the French sentinels, convinced that dogs are one of the greatest pests of an oriental city. Chateaubriand, speaking of Galata, near Constantinople, says, that, "the almost total want of women, the want of wheel-carriages, and the multitude of dogs without masters, were the three distinguishing features of the city;" and Le Bruyn, describing another eastern city, says, "great numbers of dogs crowd the streets; they do not belong to any one, but either get their food as they can, or are supported by the charitable, who give money to bakers and butchers to feed them, and even leave legacies for that purpose." In ancient times, they seem to have been no less a nuisance than they are to the modern cities of the east: for we find the sacred writers making several allusions to the particulars now mentioned regarding the character and condition of dogs in terms so graphic, and so like what an observer of the present day might use, as to convey the impression that the ancient inhabitants of Palestine witnessed the same spectacles, and were subjected to the same molestations, as are found still to exist in all the towns and villages throughout the east. Thus, the Psalmist, (Ps. lix. 14, 15.) "At evening they return and make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city; they wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied." In the 22d psalm, in which he gives a prophetic description of the sufferings of Messiah, he uses these expressions: "Dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me;" aptly representing, under the image of a band of ferocious dogs attacking a defenceless passenger, the proceedings of the insolent and infuriated multitude, who insisted for the crucifixion of Jesus. To the same features in the character of eastern dogs, allusion is made in the following passage from Isaiah:—"The watchmen of Israel are blind; they are ignorant; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber: yea they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough." Under this figurative language the prophet described the indolence, unfitness, and rapacity of the prophets and teachers of his corrupt age; the application of his bold metaphors may easily be made by help of the statements already given, of the disposition and habits of the dog in eastern countries; but he has included one additional circumstance that remains to be noticed to complete the description of the oriental breed. He calls them "dumb dogs; they cannot bark;" and this too is in exact accordance with what is found to be the case still; for travellers who have attended to this point, inform us, that the canine species degenerate so much in hot countries, that in a short time they lose their voice and cannot bark, so that they either make a hideous melancholy howl, or, as in some places, become altogether dumb. These animals, driven by hunger, greedily devour every thing that comes in their way; they glut themselves with the most putrid and loathsome substances that are thrown about the cities, and of nothing are they so fond as of human flesh; a repast, with which the barbarity of the despotic countries of Asia too frequently supplies them, as the bodies of criminals slain there for murder, treason, and violence, are seldom buried, and lie exposed till the mangled fragments are carried off by the dogs. Many travellers in the east mention their having met with such disgusting spectacles, and Bruce, in particular, describes the streets of Gondar, the capital of Abyssinia, as strewn with pieces of carcases, and the very courts of the governors polluted by such remains: while Sir Thomas Roe presents scenes of a still more revolting nature in Constantinople. With these circumstances in our knowledge, we cannot be surprised at those parts of the sacred history which describe the readiness of the dogs to lick up the blood of the much injured Naboth; or at the wretched fate of the royal accomplices in this murder; with one of whom, the atrocious Jezebel, the dogs had been so busy, that when the messenger came to bury her corpse, "they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands." And we are enabled to judge also of the severity of the divine judgment upon the guilty and impenitent nations of old, when the Almighty threatened to visit them, among other terrible scourges, with multitudes of furious and ravenous dogs: "I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord; the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy." (Jer. xv. 3.) The unsocial

hands: "a" so punctually was the prophet's prediction fulfilled concerning this wicked and idolatrous woman!

Having thus settled himself in a quiet possession of Jezreel, Jehu sent a letter to the nobles, and other great men,^b who were at Samaria, and had the care of the princes of the blood, to choose out whom they thought the fittest to sit upon the throne of Israel: but they being well aware with what intent he did this, and not unacquainted with the fate of the two kings, he had already dispatched, returned him a very submissive answer, wherein they declared themselves entirely at his devotion. This declaration he took the advantage of; so that, in his next message, he commanded them^c

and disgusting propensities which the dog exhibits, together with the general state in which he lives as a wandering outcast, have made him be regarded, in all ages, by the people of the east, with the greatest aversion and contempt; and hence one of the strongest terms which they can ever employ towards one whom they hold in little or no estimation, is, to call him a dog. Various examples of this occur in the course of the sacred history. "Am I dog," said the Philistine champion to David, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" alluding to the defences with which people are obliged to furnish themselves against the attacks of these furious animals. "After whom," said David, wishing to express his own insignificance as an enemy of Saul, "after whom is the king of Israel come out? After whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog?" Mephibosheth, by way of expressing his own humility, and thereby magnifying the liberality of king David towards him, said "What is thy servant that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" Abner, when accused of an odious crime, by his master Ishbosheth, made this indignant reply: "Am I a dog's head, that thou chargest me to-day with a fault concerning this woman?" that is, am I the head, the foremost and most headstrong of a band of grovelling dogs, that thou treatest me so?" Hazael, too, when informed by the sorrowing prophet of the dreadful cruelties he would perpetrate on the land of Israel, when he ascended the throne of Syria, the haughty soldier indignantly repelled them as an imputation on his honour. "But, what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?"—*Jamieson's Eastern Manners*.—Ed.

^a Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre; the wife of Ahab, and mother of Jehoram, kings of Israel; the mother-in-law of Jehoram king of Judah; and the aunt of Ahaziah, who was likewise king of Judah.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b The words in the original, which our translation has followed, are, "Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's children, (2 Kings x. 1.) But then, the question is—How the rulers of Jezreel came to be at Samaria? Some have imagined indeed a mistake in the transcriber, and that, instead of Jezreel, the word should be Israel, which is no great variation: but why may we not suppose, that, upon hearing how Jehu had slain Jehoram, the great men of his court might take the children, and, for fear that they should fall into his hands, flee with them to Samaria, as the capital and strongest place in the kingdom, where they might think of defending themselves against his usurpation, and, as his letters seem to import, of filling, with one of Ahab's family, the vacant throne. It was customary for princes of the blood, in those days, to be brought up in the families of the prime nobility of the nation; and therefore, whatever persons of this quality had these princes under their care, and saw the revolution that was likely to happen, they might think it the most advisable way to hasten with them to Samaria, as a place of the most security: or, for this very reason, Jehoram, when he went against Ramoth Gilead, might have sent them thither, that they might be under cover from any ill accident that might possibly happen in his war with the king of Syria.—*Patrick's Commentary* and *Poole's Annotations*. [Instead of the words of the text (2 Kings x. i.), as given in this note, Boothroyd translates, "Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the elders of the city," which the whole context shows to be the true reading.]—Ed.

^c Besides the accomplishment of the divine decree, Jehu had this farther design in requesting this cruel service of the rulers and elders, and great men of the nation, namely, that thereby he might engage them in the same crime and conspiracy with

¹ See note pp. 568, 569.

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to send him the heads of all the princes, who ^a were no less than seventy; ^b and on this likewise being punctually obeyed, without any farther delay, he proceeded to extirpate every one that remained of Ahab's family, the great men of his court, and all his friends. For, in his way to Samaria, meeting with some nephews and other relations of Ahaziah, who, ^c knowing nothing of these transactions, were going to pay a visit to the court at

himself. For, by prevailing with them to murder Ahab's kinsmen in this manner, he tied them to his interest so closely, that if any of the inferior people had been minded to oppose his designs, they were, by this means, deprived of any man of figure and distinction to head them; and not only so, but, by this expedient, Jehu thought likewise that he might, in a great measure, justify, at least lessen the odium of his own cruel and perfidious conduct; for this is the sense of his appeal to the people, 'Ye be righteous; behold I have conspired against my master, and slew him; but who slew all these?' (2 Kings x. 9). As if he had said, 'I own, indeed, that I was a great instrument in taking off the late king; but am I more culpable than are the friends, the counsellors, the officers of Ahab? I pretend not to conceal my fault; but the approbation which the principal men of the nation have given it, in taking up arms against the house of Ahab, and the wonderful success that has attended this enterprise of mine, are not these a certain proof that God has raised me up to execute his decree in this respect? And ought you not to acknowledge, in this case, the interposition of his hand?'—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^a The sacred historian takes care to repeat the number of these princes of the blood in two separate places, (2 Kings x. 1. and 6.) on purpose to show the vile spirit of these great men, who could destroy so many royal persons, to whom they were governors, and to whom they owed a just protection and defence; and therefore it was no more than they deserved, if, when Jehu 'slew all that remained of the house of Ahab, and all his great men, till he left none,' he included in that number, as some imagine, these base perfidious time-servers.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b It appears from the text that Jehu caused the heads of the king's sons to be piled up in two heaps at the gates of the palace. "Such barbarities, shocking as they are, are far from being uncommon in the east, and so gratifying a spectacle does a number of enemies' heads seem to afford to the savage princes of that quarter of the world, that there is scarcely any one country there, even the most advanced in civilization, where instances may not be found, of sovereigns and chiefs adorning the walls and avenues of their palaces with those bloody trophies. On passing one of the gates of the seraglio in Constantinople, which stood open, Carne saw lying a number of heads of the wretched Greeks, which the boys were tumbling about like footballs. A traveller, who was invited to the court of the dey of Algiers, says the first object that struck his eyes, were six bleeding heads, ranged along the entrance to the palace; and Sir John Malcolm informs us, that at the storming of Ispahan, where the slaughter was beyond all description, Timour ordered 70,000 heads to be piled up as a monument of his conquest. So fond are eastern conquerors of these sanguinary trophies, that prisoners have been known to be put to death in cold blood, in order that a greater number of heads might be dispatched from the seat of war to the victorious monarch, and so callous are the persons charged with the arrangement of them, that they often selected a head of peculiar appearance and long beard, to grace the summit of the pyramid. Brutal and savage, then, as it was, the conduct of Jehu has its parallel in the habits of so many other eastern princes, that it must be imputed, less to the barbarous temper and ferocity of the man, than the delight in blood and cruelty common to all uncivilized people."—*Jamieson's Eastern Manners*.—Ed.

^c Jehu must certainly have made wonderful expedition and secrecy in what he did, to have prevented the report, which generally spreads very fast, of what had passed at Jezreel. Two kings and a queen killed, the whole family of Ahab extinct, and a general change and revolution in the state; and yet not a word of this known at Jerusalem, which was not quite fourscore miles distant from Jezreel, even though Ahaziah the king of Judah, was one of the princes that were slain.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

Samaria, he ordered these likewise, which in all amounted to the number of forty-two, to be slain; and so, to give a better face to what he did, taking ^d Jonadab the son of Rechab, a man of great strictness and sobriety of life, into the chariot with him, ^e he proceeded on his journey to Samaria.

^d Several learned men are of opinion, that this Jonadab was not the person who gave the precepts mentioned in Jeremiah, (ch. xxxv.) to his children, but another of that name, who lived in the days of Jeremiah; for it is not likely, they think, that a man addicted to such a quiet and retired life as he instituted, would have come to meet Jehu; and therefore they rather imagine, that it was some military person of great note and esteem among the populace, whose interest might do Jehu great service, and whose advice in many things he afterwards followed. But why might not Jonadab, how well soever he might love retirement, come, upon this occasion, to congratulate Jehu's zeal against idolatry, and to advise and encourage him to proceed in fulfilling the will of God revealed to him? And the reason is obvious why Jehu might be glad of the countenance and company of such a man, whose known piety would gain him more reverence and respect, than the attendance of any great captain could procure him. But, though Jonadab the son of Rechab is allowed to be a good man, yet it does not therefore follow, that he revived the ancient rules of the Rechabites, as some are apt to think, upon a religious account, but purely as a matter of policy. The story is this: the Rechabites were of the race of Hobab, or Jethro the Kenite, priest of Midian, and father-in-law to Moses, (1 Chron. ii. 55.) so that the Kenites were Midianites, and the Midianites were dwellers in tents from the beginning; for in this manner Abraham lived while he sojourned in the land of Canaan; and, in imitation of him, the Midianites, who were of his posterity, might do the same. Now, when the children of Hobab, who were all Kenites, were invited by Moses to go along with the people of God into Canaan, they might retain this pastoral manner of life, not only as a badge of the nation from whence they were descended, but as a means likewise to make their habitation more quiet and secure, in a land where they were strangers, both from the envy of the Jews at home, and the danger of enemies abroad. For, having neither houses nor lands, but tents and cattle only, which they could move upon occasion from place to place, they could not be so subject to hostile invasions. But as, in length of time, these Kenites were tempted, by the more pleasant living of the Israelites, to think of changing this custom of their ancestors, this Jonadab the son of Rechab, a famous Kenite, and of much esteem and authority among them, took occasion to renew it again, and to bind his posterity to observe it; for which end he forbade the drinking of wine, lest the desire of so delicious a liquor might tempt them to plant vineyards, and build houses, as the Jews did. What authority he had to enforce these arbitrary injunctions, we cannot learn. It is plain, that he laid his posterity under no curse in case of disobedience; on the contrary, we find, that the prophet Jeremiah, (ch. xxxv. 2, &c.) was directed by God to bring them to an apartment in the temple, to set wine before them, and invite them to drink; which would have been an unworthy action, if they had been under an indispensable obligation of abstaining from it; and, on the other hand, the Rechabites refused it, not because their father laid them under any curse if they disobeyed him, but because he promised, that 'they should live many days in the land wherein they were strangers,' if they obeyed his voice (Jer. xxxv. 7.); which promise, being also made to those who 'honoured their parents,' (Exod. xx. 12.) might the more incline them to that strict obedience, for which they are so highly commended by God in the place above cited. Upon the whole, therefore, it appears, that Jonadab only renewed what his ancestors had observed long before he was born; and that his authority prevailed among his brethren to continue this abstinence for two hundred years after he was dead, not as a matter of religion, but as a mere civil custom.—*Patrick's Commentary* and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 6. c. 2.

^e 2 Kings x. 15. 'And he gave him his hand.' In token of acknowledging a newly elected prince, it was not uncommon, or inconsistent with the reverence due to his character, to take him by the hand. D'Herbelot, (p. 204.) in explaining an eastern term, which he tells us signifies the election, or inauguration of a khalif, he informs us, that this ceremony consisted in stretch-

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As soon as he was come to Samaria, he first destroyed all that were left of the house of Ahab in that city, and then, pretending that he designed to offer an uncommon sacrifice unto Baal, he issued out a proclamation, commanding all his priests, prophets, and worshippers, upon pain of death, to be present at this great solemnity. They all came, and when they, and they only, for care was taken, that none of the servants of the Lord should be among them, were met together in Baal's temple, and the ^a priests in their proper vestments, he commanded his guards to go in, and fall upon them, and kill them all. After this, they ran to the temple of Baal, broke down his image, and the ^b other images of the like nature, and burned them publicly. They demolished the temple quite, laid it flat with the ground; and, that the place whereon it stood might in all future ages be looked upon as despicable, they made it a ^c common jakes.

Thus entirely did Jehu destroy the family of Ahab, and the worship of Baal in the kingdom of Israel; for which he was so far approved and rewarded by God, that he entailed the crown upon his family to the fourth generation: but policy prevailed against religion, and persuaded him to continue the old idolatry, even when he had destroyed the new. The calves which Jeroboam had set up, he would not part with: and therefore God, to make him sensible of his displeasure, stirred up Hazael king of Syria to invade his country; who, having taken several of his frontier towns, did thereby open a

way to make great ravages in several other places of his kingdom, especially in the country beyond Jordan, where the tribes of Manasseh, Gad, and Reuben suffered much. In a word, we may say of Jehu, that, as his conduct was of a mixed nature, God rewarded his obedience, but punished his idolatry; who, after he had reigned eight and twenty years, died, and was buried in Samaria, and, without any opposition, was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz.

Jehoahaz, to preserve the crown of Israel from uniting with that of Judah, pursued the same method that his predecessors had done, in relation to the political worship of the golden calves; so that, during his whole reign, God sorely afflicted both him and his people, by delivering him into the hands of Hazael, and his son Benhadad, the third Syrian king of that name, who reduced him to that low ebb, that he had no more than 50 horsemen, 10 chariots, and 10,000 foot soldiers left. At length, through the many defeats he had received, and the grievous oppression under which he laboured, grown weary of life as well as government, after a very troublesome reign of seventeen years, he died, and was succeeded by his son Joash, a prince more fortunate, and not altogether so irreligious as his father. But, to inquire a little now into the affairs of the kingdom of Judah.

When Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, and wife to Jehoram king of Judah, understood that Jehu had slain her son Ahaziah, being a very ambitious, bloody-minded woman, and resolving to take the government upon herself, ^d she destroyed all the children that Jehoram had by another wife, and all their offspring, that so she might ascend the throne without any opposition. Jehoshaba, the sister of Ahaziah by the father's side, but not by the mother's, was, at this time, married to Jehoiada, the high priest; and while Athaliah's executioners were murdering the rest, she stole away ^e Joash, the son of

ing forth a person's hand, and taking that of him that they acknowledged for khalif. This was a sort of performing homage, and swearing fealty to him.—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 330. This was also sometimes done as a token of friendship and fidelity. (Gal. ii. 9). With this view it was also practised by the Romans, as appears from Virgil: "My father Anchises frankly gives the youth his right hand, and fortifies his mind by that kindly pledge."—*En.*

^a It was the custom of almost all idolaters to be very curious about the external pomp of their ceremonies, wherein, indeed, the chief part of their worship does consist. All the priests of Baal were clothed in fine linen, and their chief priests, no doubt, had some particular ornaments to distinguish them. Baal and Astarte were Phœnician deities: and therefore, as Silius Italicus, in his description of the priests of Hercules, has given us an account in what manner the Phœnician priests, when in their office, were habited, we have reason from thence to suppose, that the dress of the priests of Baal was much of the same kind. "Nor while sacrificing it is their custom to wear variegated robes; their bodies are covered with white linen, and the head is ornamented with Pelusian cloth. It is the part of those wearing flowing garments to offer frankincense, and according to the usage of their forefathers, to assume the sacrificial robe of the high priests."²

^b These idolaters, besides the supreme God whom they took Baal to be, worshipped several other lesser gods, whom they call Baalim, and whose images were placed in this temple: for it was an ancient custom, as Servius notes, after the priest had invoked the particular god for whom the sacrifice was intended, to address himself to all the other gods, lest any of them should think themselves neglected.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c The histories of the east furnish us with several examples of princes inflicting this kind of punishment upon such as were found guilty of high treason, or of contravening the king's commands. To this the decree which Darius made in favour of the Jews plainly alludes: 'whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and, being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill' (Ezra vi. 11.) And, to the same purpose, is that threat of Nebuchadnezzar to the magicians, &c. 'If ye will not make known unto me the dreams, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.' Dan. ii. 5.

^d The consideration of the fate that attended these royal families, is enough to make any one bless providence for having been born of a meaner parentage. The whole offspring of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab, kings of Israel, was cut off for their idolatry, so that there was not one left; and the kings of Judah, having contracted an affinity with the house of Ahab, and being by them seduced into the same crime, were so destroyed by three successive massacres, that there was but one left. For, first, Jehoram slew all his brethren; then Jehu slew all his brother's children; and now Athaliah destroys all the rest that her executioners could meet with. Enraged she was to see Ahab's family cut off; and therefore she resolved to do as much by the house of David. As she was one of Ahab's family, she had reason to apprehend that Jehu, who had a commission to extirpate all, would not be long before he called upon her: her only way therefore, to secure herself against him, was to usurp the throne; but this, she knew, she could not do without destroying all the royal progeny, who were no well-wishers to the worship of Baal, which she had abetted, and was resolved to maintain.—*Poole's Annotations*, *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 6. c. 2.

^e Some interpreters are of opinion, that Joash was not the real son of Ahaziah, in whom the race of Solomon, in a direct line, was extinct, but properly the son of Nathan, and only called Ahaziah's, because he succeeded him in the throne: for had he been Ahaziah's true son, and Athaliah's grandson, why might not she have declared him king, and during his minority at least, taken the administration into her own hands? But therefore she exercised her cruelty, as they say, in destroying the princes related to Ahaziah, because she was unwilling to have the kingdom go into another branch of David's family. But notwithstanding these reasons, and the authority of those who produce

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Ahaziah, and kept him, and his nurse concealed ^a in an apartment ^b of the temple, ^c for the space of six years.

In the seventh year, his uncle Jehoiada, being determined to place him upon the throne of his ancestors, and to this purpose having engaged the priests and Levites, and the leading men in all the parts of the kingdom, in his interest, in a public assembly produced him, and made them take an oath of secrecy and fidelity to him. Then putting himself in a proper posture of defence, ^d he distributed the arms which David had reposed in the temple, among his people, whom he divided into three bodies, one to guard the person of the king, and the other two to secure the gates of the temple, that none might be permitted to enter, except the priests and Levites, who were to officiate, upon pain of death. After this he brought out the young prince, set the crown on his head, ^e put the book of the law into his

them, in the second books both of Kings and Chronicles, we find this Joash so frequently called the son of Ahaziah, the king's son, &c., without any manner of restriction, that we cannot be persuaded to look out for any other father for him.

^a Josephus relates this young king's escape and concealment thus:—"Jehoshabath, the sister of Ahaziah, and wife to Jehoiada the high priest, coming into the palace, found a male child, of about a year old, whose name was Joash, among the dead bodies of the sons of Ahaziah, whom the nurse, it seems, had there laid on purpose to save its life; she therefore conveyed it away to her own lodgings, and thence to the temple, where she took care of it, through the whole six years of Athaliah's reign, without making any one privy to the secret, except her own husband;" who, upon this extraordinary occasion, might dispense with the law, or rather custom, which allowed none but the priests who officiated, to lodge in the apartments of the temple.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 9, c. 7. and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^b In the text, 2 Kings xi. 2, it is called a 'bed-chamber.' A bed-chamber does not, according to the usage of the east, mean a lodging room, but a repository for beds. Chardin says, "In the east, beds are not raised from the ground with posts, a canopy, and curtains; people lie on the ground. In the evening they spread out a mattress or two of cotton, very light, of which they have several in great houses, against they should have occasion, and a room on purpose for them." From hence, it appears that it was in a chamber of beds that Joash was concealed.—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 489.—Ed.

^c It is very likely, that Athaliah might imagine that she had slain all, and so think herself secure; or if she suspected that this one was preserved, she might not think it advisable to make any strict search, lest thereby she should alarm the people with the notion, that there was still a son of David's family left, which might be a means to make them uneasy under her government, and desirous of a change; besides that she might have the vanity to think of being able, in a short time, to secure the crown to herself, in such a manner as that she should not need to fear such a weak competitor.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^d The captains and other officers, who were admitted to the knowledge of Jehoiada's design, came into the temple unarmed, for fear of giving suspicion; but as David had erected a kind of sacred armoury in one of the apartments of the temple, wherein the weapons, and other trophies which he, and several other generals, had gained from their enemies, and as monuments of their victories, had dedicated them to the Lord, were deposited, Jehoiada took care, upon this occasion, to have this magazine of military provisions opened, so that there was no want of any sort of arms.—*Joseph Antiq.* b. 9, c. 7.

^e Those who think that the word *Eduth*, which we translate *testimony*, comes from the Hebrew root *Adah*, which signifies *to clothe, put on, or adorn*, suppose that it was some royal ornament, which the high priest put upon the king, as a mark of regal dignity, at the same time that he placed the crown upon his head; and this ornament they conceive to have been a bracelet, because in the story of the Amalekite, we read, that he brought to David the bracelet that was upon Saul's arm, as well as the crown that was upon his head. But since, in the 17th chapter of Deuteronomy, which treats expressly of the election and duty

hand, and because his right had been interrupted, anointed him, and with the sound of the trumpet proclaimed him, which was seconded with the joyful shouts and acclamations of the people.

Athaliah, hearing the noise, made all the haste she could to the temple; but when, to her great surprise, she saw the young king on a throne, which was erected ^f in an eminent place, ^g and the people and great men about him rejoicing, she rent her clothes, and cried out, 'Treason!' But Jehoiada soon silenced her: for having commanded the guards to seize and carry her out of the temple, and to put all to the sword who should pretend to rescue or assist her, they immediately executed their orders; and taking her out of the sacred ground, brought her, without any opposition, to the stable-gate belonging to the palace, and there slew her.

Joash, being thus seated on the throne, by the high priest's directions, made a covenant with the people, that they should restore the true worship of God, continue in it, and root out all idolatry; and then he made another between himself and the people, viz., that he should govern according to law, and that they should be mindful to obey him. When this was done, the multitude rose, destroyed the temple, demolished the altar, broke down the images, and killed Matan, the priest of Baal, who was then in waiting. After this, Jehoiada abolished some corruptions, which former reigns had introduced, made some reforms in the service of the

of a king, there is this injunction given—"That he should write him a copy of the law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites," ver. 18—others, with more probability, have thought, that, at his coronation, a roll, containing a copy of the law, which is frequently called a testimony, as being a witness of God's will and men's duty, was put in his hands, which he held for that time, in the way of a sceptre or a truncheon; though others will have it, that when Jehoiada crowned Joash, he laid the book of the law upon his head, to which custom holy Job (ch. xxxi. 35, 36.) as they think, seems to allude, when he wishes, 'O that mine adversary had written a book! Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me?' For the manner among the orientals, when they had received a letter from any person they highly respected, was to hold it up to their heads, before they opened it.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^f The words in the text are, 'And when she looked, behold the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was.' (2 Kings xi. 14.) Now there were two famous pillars, which Solomon erected in the porch of the temple, whereof that on the right hand was called *Jachin*, and that on the left *Boaz*, and were each of them, according to the account we have, eighteen cubits high, (1 Kings vii. 15, 21.) Solomon's design in setting up these two pillars, is generally supposed to have been, in order to represent the pillar of the cloud, and the pillar of fire, which went before the Israelites, and conducted them in the wilderness. The pillar on the right hand represented the pillar of the cloud, and that on the left the pillar of fire; and near one of these pillars, in all probability, the royal throne was erected; unless we can suppose, that what is here called a pillar, was that brazen scaffold, five cubits long, five broad, and five high, which Solomon made at first, upon his dedicating the temple, but was afterwards continued for the king, upon any solemn occasion, to appear upon, and where doubtless there was a throne of state.—*Calmet's Commentary* and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 6. c. 2.

^g From various testimonies it appears, that a seat erected near a pillar or column, was particularly honourable and distinguishing. Homer furnishes an instance of this kind. Speaking of Ulysses, he says—

'The monarch by a column high enthron'd
His eye withdrew, and fixed on the ground.

Odys. xxiii. 93. *Pope*.

The same custom is also twice mentioned in *Odyssey*, b. viii. See also *Kings* xliii. 3.—Ed.

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temple, and then, with all the rulers, and officers, and people, conducted the king to the royal palace, and put him into a quiet possession of the kingdom of Judah.

Seven years old was Joash when he began to reign, which was in the seventh year of Jehu king of Israel; and, while he was under his uncle Jehoiada's guidance and direction, he governed the nation very well: but when once that good old counsellor died, (who in the ^a 130th year of his age paid the last debt to nature, and in consideration of his many great services done the public, had the honour to be buried in one of the royal sepulchres,) he fell into the hands of such persons as were idolaters in their hearts, and they, taking the advantage of his youth, ^b by their crafty management and insinuations, first obtained a license for themselves to worship such idols as they should think fit, and then proceeded to delude him into the like apostasy.

In the beginning of his reign, he was very solicitous about the house of God, wherein he had so long, and so happily been concealed; and, as it was greatly gone to decay, through the negligence of former princes, and the depredation of Athaliah's children, he took no small pains to settle revenues, and procure contributions for its reparation. ^c But now, by his connivance at least, if not

^a This the historian takes notice of, as a life remarkably long in those days; and yet our learned Usher has observed, that in an age not far remote from our time, several men outlived this period. The words of Joseph Scaliger, which he quotes, are to this effect,—“Several persons we could mention, that have lived 120, 125, and 130 years, whom we knew, have seen, and well remember: but, in the year 1584, there was at Paris a miracle of an old man, who bore arms under Louis XI. and at the age of 140 years and upwards, had the use of his limbs and faculties entire.” But not a greater miracle was he, than our Thomas Parr, the son of John Parr of Winnington, in the county of Salop, who abode with his father as long as he lived, but after his decease, married his first wife at the age of eighty. With her he lived for the space of two and thirty years, in which time, being convicted of adultery with another woman, he did public penance in the church of Alderbury, when he was 105. In his 122d year, he married his second wife, who abode with him as long as he lived: but at length he was brought up to London by the earl of Arundel and Surrey, in the year 1635, and shown to the king of Great Britain, when he was some months more than 152 years old. Two years after this he died in Arundel house, and might probably have lived some years longer had he continued in his native air.—*Chronologia Sacra*, c. 12.

^b The Jews have a fancy, that the courtiers, who after the death of Jehoiada got possession of Joash, flattered him with a conceit, that he himself was worthy of divine honours, who had been brought up in the house of God, a favour that was never granted to a mere man, and that the king's being pleased with this kind of flattery, provoked God to send upon him the calamities we afterwards read of; even as the angel of God smote Herod, for assuming the glory to himself, when the people, in commendation of his oration, said, ‘That it was the voice of a god, and not of a man.’ (Acts xii. 22.) But this is mere fancy. If the princes of Judah wanted to obtain a toleration from the king for their idol worship, it would have been highly absurd for them to go about to persuade him that himself was a god, since they that have the folly to establish their own adoration are always very jealous of the worship of any other. Their making obeisance therefore to the king, denotes the humble posture wherein they represented their petition, that they might not be confined to unnecessary and troublesome journeys, in coming to Jerusalem to worship, but be indulged the liberty, which their forefathers had, of worshipping God in high places; which, when they had once obtained, they knew they might then worship idols, without observation or disturbance.—*Patrick's and Calnet's Commentaries*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^c Jehoiada, the high priest, is supposed to die in or near the three and twentieth year of king Joash's reign, so that Joash might be about thirty years old when the princes of Judah seduc-

ed him to idolatry: and this makes it the more wonderful what possibly could give occasion to such a shameful change, in so advanced an age, unless we can suppose that the conduct of the priests in embezzling the money collected for the reparation of the temple, whereof he complains to Jehoiada, (2 Kings xii. 7.), might curdle his temper, and give him some disgust.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Howell's History* in the notes.

And it was not long before the great avenger of all violence and wrong effectually did it; for the very next year the Syrian army under Hazael passed the Jordan, and marching directly to Jerusalem, slew in their way all the princes and great men that had seduced their king to idolatry.

Joash was in no condition to make any resistance; and therefore, to redeem himself from the miseries of a siege, took all the rich vessels which his ancestors had devoted to the service of God, and all the gold that was laid up in the treasures of the temple, besides what was found in the royal treasury, and sent it as a present to Hazael to prevail with him to withdraw his troops. Hazael, for the present, might withdraw them: but, ^e the next year they marched again into the territories of Judah; and though Hazael was not there in person, defeated the forces which Joash sent against them, made great havock in the country, entered Jerusalem, put some of the princes and rulers to the sword, and treated Joash himself with no small indignity and contempt. But this

ed him to idolatry: and this makes it the more wonderful what possibly could give occasion to such a shameful change, in so advanced an age, unless we can suppose that the conduct of the priests in embezzling the money collected for the reparation of the temple, whereof he complains to Jehoiada, (2 Kings xii. 7.), might curdle his temper, and give him some disgust.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Howell's History* in the notes.

^d This sin, besides the contempt of God's prophet, and of the sacred place where he was murdered, had an horrid ingratitude in it, since Zechariah was the son of him to whom the king owed his life and kingdom, and who himself assisted his father in his unction, as some think; because it is said that ‘Jehoiada and his sons anointed him,’ (2 Chron. xxiii. 11.) But if Jehoiada was high priest, this son is not reckoned among the successors of Aaron, (1 Chron. vi.) and therefore it is likely that he was a younger son of Jehoiada; for, had he been the eldest, he would have had sufficient authority, without the spirit of prophecy, to have reproved Joash for his idolatry. Ludovicius Capellus therefore thinks it probable that his brother, the high priest, connived at the king's apostasy, and that this younger brother was inspired by God to reprove it; which boldness Joash and his courtiers thought they might punish with some other colour, by alleging that he was not moved to it by the Spirit of God, but by a rash and pragmatical temper of his own, which they incited the people to chastise.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^e It is highly probable that, besides the present of gold which Joash sent Hazael, in order to bribe him to withdraw his army, he had made him a promise of an annual tribute; and that upon his refusal to pay it, the Syrian army took the field the next year, and as the expression in the text is, ‘executed judgment upon Joash,’ (2 Chron. xxiv. 24.) For, according to the author of the Jewish traditions upon the second book of Chronicles, while they killed his children before his eyes, they upbraided him with the cruel and unjust death of Zechariah.—*Calnet's Comment*.

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was not all; for no sooner was the Syrian army departed, but the distemper, or rather that complication of distempers, wherewith, some time before, God had afflicted Joash, grew worse and worse; so that being confined to his bed, two of his own servants, Zabad and Jehozabad, conspired against him, and ^a slew him; who, after a reign of forty years, was succeeded by his son Amaziah, and buried in the city of David, but ^b not in the royal sepulchres.

Amaziah was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and for some time behaved tolerably well, though he followed the example of his ancestors in letting the high places stand, and in suffering the people to offer sacrifice and burn incense there. ^c As soon as he found himself settled in the throne, he very justly took revenge of the two traitors that had murdered his father: but ^d their children he did not touch, because it was contrary to the law that ¹ 'children should be put to death for their fathers.' About four and fifty years before his accession, the Edomites had revolted, in the reign of Jehoram, from the kingdom of Judah; and therefore, having a design to reduce them to their former subjection, he new-modelled and new-officered his army, and upon a general muster found them to be no less than ^e 300,000 fighting men: but, thinking these too few for his intended expedition, he hired of the king of Israel 100,000 more, for whom he ^f paid him 100

¹ Deut. xxiv. 16.

^a These two murderers, (mongrel fellows, whose fathers were Jews, but their mothers aliens,) perhaps were of his bedchamber; and, having constant access to the king, might more easily accomplish their design: however, he was so weak and feeble that he could make no resistance, and had fallen into that contempt and disesteem, that his guards minded not what became of him.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^b Though the people could not punish wicked kings for their impieties while they lived, yet they fixed an odium upon their memory when they were dead; whereby they both preserved the sacredness of their supreme power, (as Grotius, *On the Law of War and Peace*, b. i. c. 3. sect. 16. speaks,) and kept kings in some measure under awe for fear of what might befall them after their decease.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^c It seems that these two assassins continued to be men of weight and interest at court, even after they had murdered their king; for his son, we may observe from 2 Kings xiv. 8. retained them in his service for some time, nor durst he venture to execute justice upon them, until he was well settled in his authority, and had divested those of all power who were their friends and abettors.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^d In this he acted like a good man, and contrary to the wicked customs of many kingdoms, where, if any one be guilty of high treason, not only he, but his children likewise, who are neither conscious nor partakers of any of his traitorous practices, are equally devoted to destruction, lest they, forsooth, should form any faction against the prince, or seek revenge for their father's death.—*Le Clerc's Commentary.*

^e Hence some have made an observation, how much the iniquities of the people of Judah had diminished their numbers since the days of Jehoshaphat, which was a space of but eighty-two years: for this king could bring no more than 300,000 men into the field; whereas Jehoshaphat brought almost four times as many.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^f If these be reckoned for talents of silver, as they generally are, each talent, at 125 pounds weight, and each pound weight at £4 in value, the whole will amount to £50,000 sterling, which will be but ten shillings to each man, officers included. Very low pay! unless we suppose, that this whole sum was given to the king of Israel for the loan of so many men, and that the men were to have their pay besides; or rather, that they were to have no other pay but the booty which they took from the enemy; and that this was the true reason why they were so exasperated at their dismissal, as to 'fall upon

talents; but, ^g by the direction of a prophet whom God sent to him on purpose to dissuade him from employing these auxiliaries, they were, with much ado, discharged, and himself went in person against the Edomites with none but his own men, the people of Judah. However, being thus shamefully dismissed, as they thought, they were not a little exasperated against Amaziah; and therefore, in their return home, they plundered all the towns in their way, killed no less than 3000 men, and carried away a considerable booty, to make an amends for the plunder they had promised themselves in the Edomitish war.

Amaziah, as we said, with none but his own forces, marched against the Edomites. In the ^h valley of salt he gave them battle, slew 10,000 upon the spot, and took 10,000 prisoners. From thence he marched to Selah, ⁱ the metropolis of Arabia Petrea, of which he soon became master, and from the top of the rock whereon the town stood, ^j threw the ten thousand he had taken prisoners headlong, so that they were all dashed to pieces.^k

the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon,' (2 Chron. xxv. 13.) They went very probably first to Samaria, where they complained to their own king of the bad treatment they had received from Amaziah, and desired some reparation to be made them for the affront put upon them, and the loss of the profit which they might have made in the war; but, finding him not inclinable to make them satisfaction, they immediately fell foul upon the territories of Judah, and, from Samaria, for that is the place of their setting out, even to Beth-horon, a town not far distant from Jerusalem, ravaged the country, and did the mischief here mentioned; which they might more easily do, because the war with Edom had drained the country of all the forces that should have opposed them.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries* on 2 Chron. xxv. 6. 13.

^g The Jews will needs have it, that this prophet was Amos, the father of Isaiah; but their tradition is built upon a mistake, namely, that Amos the prophet was Isaiah's father.

^h This valley lay towards the land of Edom, and was so called, either from the salt springs which were therein, or from the salt that was dug up there.—*Patrick's Commentary* on 2 Sam. viii. 13.

ⁱ *Selah*, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies *a rock*, and so exactly answers to the Greek word *petra*, that most commentators, with very good reason, have agreed, that this *Selah* is the same with *Petra*, the metropolis of Arabia Petrea, and from whence, as some imagine, the whole country took its name; though others think, that, as this city had its situation on a rock, so the adjacent tract was called Arabia Petrea from its being overspread with such rocks, or rocky hills.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

^j That this was an ancient punishment among the Romans, we may learn from Livy, Plutarch, and several others; as Mr Selden (*de Synedriis*, b. 1.) observes, that it was in use among other nations; but we do not find it commonly practised among the Jews. It is not in the catalogue of the punishments which Moses enacts; neither was it ever inflicted by any regular judicature; and therefore one would think that the Edomites, either by some such like cruelty to the people of Judah, had provoked them to make a retaliation in this manner, or that they were, in their very disposition, so apt to revolt, that there could be no keeping them in subjection, without some such sad exemplary punishment as this.—*Calmet's Dissert. on Punishments*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xxv. 12.

^k 2 Chron. xxv. 12. This mode of punishment was practised by the Greeks and Romans, as well as the Jews. In Greece, according to the Delphian law, such as were guilty of sacrilege were led to a rock, and cast down headlong. (*Ælian, Var. Hist.* b. xi. c. 5.) The Romans also inflicted it on various malefactors, by casting them down from the Tarpeian rock. (*Livy Hist.* b. vi. c. 20.) Mr Pitts, in his account of the Mahometans, (p. 10.) informs us, that in Turkey, at a place called Constantine, a town situate at the top of a great rock, the usual way of executing great criminals is by pushing them off the cliff. This

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But his cruelty to the captives was not the worse thing he was guilty of in this expedition. In his return, he ^a brought with him the idols of Edom, to which he paid adoration, and offered incense; which thing provoked the Lord so, that he sent a prophet to reprove him for his apostasy, and to threaten him with the destruction which in a short time came to pass. For, being now elated with his success against the Moabites, and resenting the affront which the Israelitish army had lately put upon him, he ^b sent Joash king of Israel a challenge to meet and engage him in a pitched battle.

Joash, as it deserved, ^c received the message with contempt: but when he found that Amaziah was hereby but the more irritated, and persisted in his purpose of fighting, he met him, and gave him such a reception, that he routed his army, took him prisoner, and carried him ^d to his own city of Jerusalem; where he entered in

is also mentioned as a capital punishment by Tacitus, (*Annals*, b. ii. c. 39.)—ED.

^a Idolatry, at the best, can no ways be apologized for; but no reason can be invented, why any person should make the objects of his adoration such gods as could 'not deliver their own people out of their enemies' hands,' as the prophet very justly reproveth Amaziah, (2 Chron. xxv. 15.), unless we suppose that the images of these gods were so very beautiful, that he perfectly fell in love with them, or that he worshipped them for fear they should owe him a spite, and do him some mischief, in revenge for what he had done against the Edomites. How much more wise were the sentiments of Fabricius Maximus, upon the like occasion, who, having conquered Tarentum, and being asked, what should be done with their gods? bid them leave them with the Tarentines, "for what madness is it," as he adds, "to hope for any safety from those who cannot preserve themselves?"—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b Josephus, in his account of this transaction, tells us that Amaziah wrote an imperious letter to the king of Israel, "commanding him and his people to pay the same allegiance to him that they had formerly paid to his ancestors David and Solomon; or, in case of their refusal, to expect a decision of the matter by the sword." Others think that he intended no war by this message, but only a trial of military skill and prowess, or a civil kind of interview between his men and those of Israel; for had he purposed to act in a hostile manner, he would have assaulted them on a sudden, and not given them this warning to stand upon their defence. The words of the message are, 'Come let us look one another in the face,' (2 Kings xiv. 8.) Much of the same kind with what Abner said to Joab, 'Let the young men now arise, and play before us,' (2 Sam. ii. 14.) But how polite soever the expressions may be, in both cases, they had in them the formality of a challenge, as both the king and general, who were not unacquainted with military language, did certainly understand them. So that the truth of the matter seems to be this:—Amaziah being encouraged by his late victory, determined to be revenged for the slaughter of his ancestors, by Jehu, (2 Kings ix.) and for the late spoil which the Israelites had made in his country; and thereupon resolving to have satisfaction, but in a fair and honourable way, he sent them this open declaration of war, but conceived in as mild terms as any thing of that harsh nature could be.—*Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

^c It was a custom among the oriental people to deliver their sentiments in parables, in which they made a great part of their wisdom to consist: and considering the circumstances of the person he addressed to, who was a petty prince, flushed with a little good success, and thereupon impatient to enlarge his kingdom, no similitude could be better adapted than that of a thistle, a low contemptible shrub, but upon its having drawn blood of some traveller, growing proud, and affecting an equality with the cedar, a tall stately tree that is the pride and ornament of the wood, till in the midst of all its arrogance and presumption, it is unhappily trodden down by the beasts of the forests, (2 Kings xiv. 9.) which Joash intimates were Amaziah's fate, if he continued to provoke a prince of his superior power and strength.—*Le Clerc's*, *Calmet's*, and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

^d Josephus relates the defeat and captivity of Amaziah after

triumph, plundered the temple and palace of all that was valuable, laid a tax upon the land, carried off hostages ^e for the security of the payment; and that, in case of any failure in this respect, the city might lie open to his invasions, he broke down all the fortifications of the wall, from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, about 400 cubits in length, and so ^f returned to Samaria.

After this shameful defeat, Amaziah lived above fifteen years; but we read of nothing remarkable concerning him, save that, persisting still in his idolatry, he continued under God's displeasure, and at length fell under the contempt of his subjects; insomuch that some of ^g the inhabitants of Jerusalem formed a conspiracy against his life, which he, having some intelligence of, endeavoured to escape by flying to Lachish, a town on the frontiers of the Philistines; but all in vain: for the conspirators sent after him, and had him there privately murdered; which, when his friends understood, they brought his corpse, without any state or formality, to Jerusalem, where he was buried among his ancestors, and, after a reign of nine and twenty years, was succeeded by his son Azariah, who, in the book of Chronicles, is called Uzziah. But to turn our thoughts now to the kingdom of Israel.

In the beginning of the reign of Jehoash, king of Israel, which was in the ^h thirty-seventh year of Joash,

this manner:—"No sooner were his men advanced within sight of the enemy, but they were instantly struck with such a panic terror, and consternation, that they turned their backs, without striking a blow; and flying several ways, left Amaziah prisoner in the hands of his enemies, who refused to give him quarter upon any other terms than that the citizens of Jerusalem should set open their gates, and receive him and his victorious army into the town; which, between the pinch of necessity and the love of life, they were prevailed upon to do: so that Joash entered the town in his triumphal chariot, through a breach of 300 cubits of the wall, that he had caused to be made, with his prisoner Amaziah marching before him.—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. 9. c. 10.

^e These hostages were, in all probability, the great men's sons of the city, whom Joash took along with them, as a security that the kingdom of Judah should give him no farther molestation.

^f He never intended to make a thorough conquest of the kingdom of Judah, nor did he leave a garrison in Jerusalem; but contenting himself with what spoil he could get, he made all convenient haste home, because he had work enough at this time upon his hands, to defend his territories against the daily invasions of the Syrians.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^g What provoked the people of Jerusalem more than any other part of the nation, against their king, was, their seeing their city spoiled of its best ornaments, exposed to reproach, upon account of the great breach that was made in their wall, and several of their children carried away as hostages for their good behaviour; all which they imputed to their king's mal-administration. Whereupon they entered into a conspiracy against him, which makes some commentators say, that he lived in a state of exile at Lachish, the space of twelve years, not daring to continue long in Jerusalem after the defeat which Joash had given him. But our learned Usher has placed this conspiracy in the last year of Amaziah's reign, as Jacobus Capellus, in his *Sacred and Foreign History*, supposes that it was set on foot by the great men of Jerusalem, upon the specious pretence of being guardians to the young prince, and taking better care of him than his father was likely to do.—*Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

^h The synarchies, or joint reigns of father and son, in these times have rendered the chronology a little difficult, as it is in this case: for in 2 Kings xiii. 1. it is said, that Jehoahaz, king of Israel began to reign in the twenty-third year of Joash king of Judah, and reigned seventeen years; from whence it follows, that Jehoash began to reign, not in the thirty-seventh, but in the thirty-ninth or fortieth year of Joash king of Judah: but by this it only appears, that he reigned three of these years in conjunction with his father.—*Howell's History* in the notes and *Patrick's Commentary*.

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king of Judah, the prophet Elisha fell sick of a disease, whereof he died. The king of Israel, upon this occasion, came to visit him; and having much ^a lamented the loss which all Israel would have by his death, he received his blessing, and dying counsel to wage war against the Syrians with all courage and bravery; giving him assurance, and, ^b by the emblem of a bow and arrows, making him sensible of the several victories which God had decreed that he should obtain.

This was the last prediction of Elisha that we read of, for soon after this he died; but it was not the last miracle that we find he did: for, some time after his interment, a company of Israelites, as they were going to bury a dead person, perceiving a band of Moabites ^c making towards them, ^d put the corpse for haste into

^a His words are, 'My father! my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof,' (2 Kings xiii. 14.) which are the very same that Elisha used concerning his master Elijah, when he was taken up into heaven, (2 Kings ii. 12.) signifying the great authority he had maintained among them, included in the word 'father,' and the many glorious victories which he had obtained for them, by the efficacy of his counsels and prayers.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^b This was a symbolical action, whereby the prophet intended to represent the victories, which he had promised the king of Israel against the Syrians more fully and plainly to him. His shooting the first arrow eastward, or to that part of the country which the Syrians had taken from his ancestors, was a declaration of war against them for so doing; and his striking the other arrows against the ground, was an indication how many victories he was to obtain; but his stopping his hand too soon, denoted the imperfection of his conquests, which did not please the prophet so well, and for what reason we shall see in the course of the objections.—*Le Clerc's Commentaries.* ["It was an ancient custom to shoot an arrow or cast a spear into the country which an army intended to invade. Justin says that, as soon as Alexander the Great had arrived on the coasts of Ionia, he threw a dart into the country of the Persians. 'When they had reached the continent, Alexander first threw a javelin as if upon a hostile land,' (Just. b. ii.) The dart, spear, or arrow thrown, was an emblem of the commencement of hostilities. Virgil (*Æn.* ix. 51.) represents Turnus as giving the signal of attack by throwing a spear:—

'Who first,' he cried, "with me the foe will dare?"
Then hurled a dart, the signal of the war.

Pitt.

Servius, in his note upon this place, shows that it was a custom to proclaim war in this way: the *pater patratus*, or chief of the *facies*, a sort of heralds, went to the confines of the enemy's country, and, after some solemnities, said with a loud voice, 'I wage war with you, for such and such reasons:' and then threw in a spear. It was then the business of the parties thus defied or warned to take the subject into consideration; and if they did not, within thirty days, come to some accommodation, the war was begun.—*Dr A. Clarke's Commentary.*—Ed.

^c These Moabites were not such a gang of robbers as sometimes infest our roads, but a regular body of men, well appointed, and under proper officers, to the number of a small army, who made incursions into the territories of Judah and Israel, generally at the beginning of the year, which is the season proper for armies to take the field; and therefore some have observed that the month Nisan, which, with the Jews, is the first in their year, had its name from Nisim, which signifies the 'engines of war,' which were usually set up in that month; in like manner as the month, which we call March, and, in part, answers to the Jewish Nisan, had its name among the Romans from Mars, their god of war; because most nations, at that time, began their military expeditions.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

^d The common places of burying among the Hebrews, were in the fields, in caverns dug into a rock, with niches for the corpses to be placed in, and, at the entrance of the sepulchre, there was a hewn stone, which might be removed or replaced without any damage to the tomb. The Jews, as Josephus informs us, gave Elisha a pompous and honourable interment, answerable to the dignity and merit of so great a prophet; but he does not tell us

Elisha's tomb, which, as soon as it had touched his body, ^e immediately revived, so that the man stood upon his feet, and went home, no doubt, with the company. This miracle, which was a divine confirmation of the truth of all Elisha's prophecies, could not fail of being a powerful means to encourage Jehoash in his engaging in war with the Syrians. Nor was his success less than the prediction; for, ^f in three pitched battles he vanquished Benhadad, (his father Hazael being then dead,) recovered all the cities that had been taken from his father Jehoahaz, and reunited them to the kingdom of Israel. After this he lived quiet from all enemies, until Amaziah king of Judah gave him the small disturbance we have spoken of: but, after the victory which he gained over him, we hear no more of his appearing in the field, and may therefore conclude that, after a reign of sixteen years, he died in peace, and was succeeded in his throne by his son Jeroboam.

In the fifteenth year of Amaziah king of Judah, this Jeroboam, the second of that name, began to reign over Israel, and by ^g the encouragement which the prophet

where the place of his sepulture was. Hereon some have imagined, that he was carried to Abelmeholah, the place of his nativity, to be there interred among his ancestors: others think that he was at first buried on Mount Carmel, a favourite place of his, and afterwards removed to Samaria: others again say, that he was buried at Nineveh; and, to this very day, the inhabitants show his monument at Mosul, which was built, as they say, upon the very same spot where old Nineveh stood. But the most prevailing opinion, founded upon a constant tradition, is, that he was buried somewhere in the neighbourhood of Samaria, because there, in all appearance, he died. The tomb, however, that is usually shown for his in that city, can be nothing more than the repository of his remains, since his original burying-place was certainly at some distance from it.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. ix. c. 9.

^e Josephus, in his account of this transaction, varies a little from the sacred history: for "it happened, after Elisha's burial," says he, "that a traveller was killed upon the way by some thieves, and his body thrown into Elisha's monument, which, upon the bare touch of the prophet's corpse, instantly revived." The Jewish doctors, who love to improve upon every miracle, tell us that this person, whom they pretend to call Sellum, after he was revived, did presently die again, because he was a wicked man, and did not deserve to live long; never considering, that his hasty death afterwards was the ready way to impair the credit of the miracle, and make it indeed of no effect. However this may be, it is certain, that by this miracle, as we find it related in Scripture, God did the highest honour to his prophet, and confirmed the truth of what he had promised to the king of Israel, as well as the certainty of a future life; in which sense some part of the character, which the author of Ecclesiasticus, (chap. xlviii. 12.) gives him, may not improperly be understood: 'Elisha was filled with Elijah's spirit; whilst he was not moved with the presence of any prince, neither could any bring him into subjection: no word could overcome him; and after his death his body prophesied: he did wonders in his life, and at his death were his works marvellous.'—*Jewish Antiq.* b. ix. c. 9. and *Calmet's Commentary.*

^f We have no particulars of the war between Jehoash and the Syrians, nor can we tell where these three battles were fought; but the success of them was so great, that the king of Israel not only retook all the places that had been lost in his own dominions, but repulsed the enemy into their own country, and there obtained a signal victory over them.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^g The only mention we have of this prophet, whom the Jews will have to be the son of the widow of Zarephtha, whom Elijah raised from the dead, but without any foundation of reason, is in this passage, and the account of his famous mission to Nineveh. What the prophecies were, whereby he encouraged Jeroboam to proclaim war against the king of Syria, we have no where recorded; but as we have not every thing which the prophets did write, so several prophets, we must know, did not commit their predictions to writing. From this place, however, we may observe

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Jonah gave him, proved successful in many military achievements. He recovered a large territory, which several kings had taken from his predecessors, even all the country from Libanus on the north, to the Lake Asphaltites, on the south; but especially on the east of Jordan, whereby he enlarged those conquests which his father Joash had made: and whereas Hamath and Damascus had, in the days of David and Solomon, been tributaries to the kings of Judah, but had now revolted from Israel, he conquered them again, and ^a made them pay homage to him, as they had formerly done to his predecessors. So that, after a long reign of ^b one and forty years, wherein his arms were all along successful, he ^c died in much honour and renown, and was buried with his ancestors; but whether it was through wars abroad, or through discord and dissention at home, he left the government in such confusion, that after his decease, there was an interregnum for the space of two and twenty years.

During the time of this interregnum, Jonah, ^d the son of Amittai, who had prophesied before, in the time of Jeroboam, was now sent upon another errand. His commission was expressly to Nineveh, whither he was to go, and to exhort the inhabitants to repentance, be-

cause the 'cry of their sins had reached heaven.' But instead of obeying the divine command, the sacred history informs us that he bent his course another way, and intending to retire to Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, embarked at Joppa, ^e a seaport on the Mediterranean; that as soon as he had well got to sea, an unaccountable storm arose which gave the mariners a suspicion, that some great malefactor was got on board, upon whose account the heavens seemed so very angry; ^f that therefore calling all the people together, they made them cast lots, in order to know who this guilty person was; that when the lot fell upon Jonah, he freely owned, that he was a Jew, who worshipped the God of heaven, and not only a Jew, but a prophet likewise, who had been ordered to go to Nineveh, but was now endeavouring to flee from the divine presence; that since he found it was impossible to do that, and every one's life, upon his account, was in such imminent danger, he wished them to throw him overboard, as the only way to appease the storm; that with some reluctance, ^g the seamen did it, whereupon there immediately ensued a calm, which struck the

that God was very merciful to the Israelites, though they were certainly a very wicked people, in continuing a race of prophets among them, even after Elisha was dead.—*Patrick's Comment.*

^a Some are of opinion, that when Jeroboam reconquered these two chief cities of Syria, he restored them to the kingdom of Judah because they belonged to it of right, and reserved to himself only a small tribute to be paid him by the way of acknowledgment. This is what the original Hebrew, as well as the Chaldee and Septuagint versions seem to favour: but the Syriac and Arabic translators have omitted the word Judah, and may therefore be supposed to think, as several others do, that Jeroboam kept to himself all those places which he had recovered at his own hazard and expense.—*Calmét's Commentary.*

^b This was much longer than any of the kings of Israel had reigned: for even Jehu himself, though his reign was longer than that of any who went before him, reigned but twenty-eight years; God having on purpose prolonged this prince's reign, because he was not minded to 'blot out the name of Israel from under heaven,' but to save them by his hand.—2 Kings xiv. 27.

^c The prophet Amos, who lived in the reign of this prince, was accused by Amaziah the priest of Bethel, for prophesying 'that Jeroboam should die by the sword;' but Amos never made any such prediction. It was a false accusation which this idolatrous priest sent against him, because he was desirous, to have him removed out of the way.—Amos. vii. 10, &c.

^d It is a very common opinion among the Jews, as we said, that Jonah was the widow of Zarephtha's son; and this opinion they found upon the words of the mother, when she received her son alive from the prophet's hand: 'By this I know, that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth,' (1 Kings xvii. 24.) for therefore, say they, was the child called the son of Amittai; because Amittai signifies truth: a weak reason, God wot! and such as is plainly repugnant to the testimony of Scripture. For this we know for certain, that Jonah lived in the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam the Second, kings of Israel, and therefore could not be the widow of Zarephtha's son, since the former of these princes did not begin to reign till sixty years after the translation of Elisha. Others pretend that he was son to the Shunamite woman, whom the prophet Elisha raised from the dead; but Shunam and Gath-hepher, where we are certain Jonah was born, were two quite different places, the former in the tribe of Issachar, the other in that of Zebulun; and therefore, we may conclude, that Amittai was the proper name of Jonah's father, who lived in a little canton of the tribe of Zebulun, called Hopher or Hopher, wherein was the town of Gath, which is generally believed to be the same with Jotapata, so famous for the siege which Josephus the Jewish historian, then maintained against the Roman army, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem.—*Calmét's Preface on Jonah*, and his *Dictionary* under the word.

^e Joppa is a seaport town in Palestine, upon the Mediterranean, and was formerly the only port which the Jews had upon that coast, whither all the materials that were sent from Tyre, towards the building of Solomon's temple, were brought and landed. The town itself is very ancient; for profane authors reckon it was built before the flood, and derive the name of it from Joppa, the daughter of Elolas, and the wife of Cepheus, who was the founder of it. Others are rather inclined to believe, that it was built by Japhet, and from him had the name of Japho, which was afterwards moulded into Joppa, but is now generally called Jaffa, which comes nearer to the first appellation. The town is situated in a fine plain, between Jamnia to the south, Cæsarea of Palestine to the north, and Rama or Ramula, to the east; but at present is in a poor and mean condition; nor is its port by any means good, by reason of the rocks which project into the sea. The chief thing for which this place was famous, in ancient pagan history, is the exposition of Andromeda, the daughter of Cepheus king of Egypt, who, for her mother's pride, was bound to a rock, in order to be devoured by a sea monster, but was delivered by the valour and bravery of Perseus, who afterwards married her; for in the times of Mela and Pliny, there were some marks remaining, as they themselves testify, namely, *Mela*, b. i. c. 11; *Pliny*, b. v. c. 13; *Joseph. on the Jewish Wars*, b. iii. c. 15, of the chains wherewith this royal virgin was bound to the rock which projects into the sea. But all this is mere fiction, first founded upon the adventure of Jonah, who set sail from this port, and then improved with the accession of some particular circumstances.—*Calmét's Commentary on Jonah*, i. 3.

^f The Jewish doctors, who are great lovers of prodigies, are not even satisfied with what they meet with in this history of Jonah, but have over and above added, that as soon as the ship, wherein he was embarked, was under sail, it all on a sudden stood stock still, so that it could be made to move neither backward nor forward, notwithstanding all the pains that the mariners took in rowing: but others, with more probability say, that while all the rest of the ships were quiet and unmolested, the storm fell upon none but that wherein Jonah was, which made the seamen think that there was something miraculous in it; and thereupon called upon the company that sailed with them, to come and cast lots, as the superstitious custom among the heathens was, whenever they were in any great distress: that accordingly they cast lots three different times, which still fell upon Jonah; and that they let him down several times with a rope, without plunging him into the sea, and as often as they did it, found the storm abate, and whenever they pulled him up again, found it increase: so that at last they were forced to commit him to the mercy of the waves: all which are circumstances which the Scripture account neither favours nor contradicts.—*Calmét's Commentary.*

^g The people of the east have a tradition, that it was not above four leagues from Joppa, over against Antipatris, that the seamen threw Jonah overboard.

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people with such devotion, that they offered a sacrifice to the Lord, and made their vows; that in the mean while God had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, in whose belly he continued for three days and three nights, and then upon his supplications to heaven, was thrown out upon the shore; that being thus wonderfully delivered, he disputed the divine command no longer, but made the best of his way to Nineveh, which, at that time, was a very large city, and having got into the heart of it, delivered his message, namely, that within forty days that city should be destroyed, with great boldness and intrepidity; that the people of Nineveh, believing this message to be sent from God, proclaimed a ^a most solemn fast, and from the highest to the lowest, putting on sackcloth, ^b and addressing their prayers to God, showed such tokens of sorrow and repentance, that he reversed their doom, or at least deferred it for some years; that Jonah being sore displeased at this, as fearing that it might bring some disgrace upon his prophetic office, after some expostulations with God, retired out of the city, and having built him a booth, sat under the cover of it, to see what the end would be; that while he was here, God ^c caused a gourd to spring hastily up, which

by its spreading leaves so shaded his booth from the heat of the sun, that it pleased him much; but being next morning gnawed by a worm, it withered away, which so fretted the impatient man, that he even desired to die; and that hereupon God took occasion to expostulate with him, and show him the unreasonableness of his repining at the loss of a plant, which cost him nothing, which rises in one night, and dies in another, and yet having no concern or commiseration for the destruction of a populous city, wherein there were above 120,000 innocent babes, and consequently the number of all its inhabitants vastly large; and with this way of reasoning, ^d we may suppose, he reconciled his prophet's wayward thoughts to this his merciful method of proceeding. But to return to the affairs of Judah.

After the murder of Amaziah at Lachish, Uzziah, who is ^e likewise called Azariah, in the sixteenth year of his age, ^f which was in the seven and twentieth year of the

^a The history tells us, that 'by a decree from the king and his nobles, neither man nor beast, neither herd nor flock were allowed to taste any thing, but were kept up from feeding and drinking water,' (Jonah iii. 7.) This was carrying their abstinence to a greater severity than what we find practised among the Jews. For though in times of public calamity, and on the day of solemn expiation, we find that they made their children fast, as we may gather from Joel ii. 16, yet we nowhere read of their extending that rigour to their cattle. Virgil indeed, in one of his eclogues, brings in a shepherd, telling his companion, that for the death of Julius Cæsar, the mourning was so general, that even the sheep and other creatures were not driven to water. But then the question is, whether this may not be looked upon as a poetical exaggeration. From Homer, and some other ancient authors, we learn, that when any hero, or great warrior died, the custom was to make his horses fast for some time, and to cut off part of their hair; nor may we forget mentioning, what some historians tell us, of the people inhabiting the Canaries and Peru, namely, that in times of great drought, they shut up their sheep and goats, without giving them any thing to eat, upon presumption that their loud cries and bleating will reach heaven, and prevail with God to give them rain.—*Horn on the Origin of the American Nations*, b. 2, c. 13.

^b The text tells us of the king of Nineveh, that upon the preaching of Jonah, 'he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes,' (Jonah iii. 6,) and, what is pretty strange, some have thought, that the king thus penitent upon this occasion, was Sardanapalus, a man famous among heathen authors for his luxury and riches, and in whose reign the famous city of Nineveh was taken by Arbaces and Belesis. But others, with more probability, suppose, that it was Pul, the father of this Sardanapalus, whom some heathen authors call Anabaxarus, and others Anacyndaraxus. For, as he died, according to Usher, about the year of the world 3237, he might be upon the throne in the reign of Jeroboam II. king of Israel, which was the time when Jonah was sent to Nineveh.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Usher at A. M.* 3254.

^c The word *Kikajon*, by the Septuagint, Arabic, and Syriac versions, is called a *gourd*; but most of the ancient Greek translators, following St Jerome in this particular, choose rather to render it *ivy*. St Jerome, however, acknowledges, that the word *ivy* does not answer the signification of the Hebrew *Kikajon*, though he thinks it much better in this place than a *gourd*, which, growing close to the earth, could not have shaded Jonah from the heat of the sun; for the *Kikajon*, according to him, is a shrub which grows in the sandy places of Palestine, and increases so suddenly, that in a few days it comes to a considerable height. It is supported by its trunk, without being upheld by any thing else; and by the thickness of its leaves, which re-

semble those of a vine, affords, in hot weather, a very agreeable shade.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Kikajon*. ['The best judges say the *ricinus* or *palma Christi*, from which we get what is vulgarly called castor oil, is here meant. It is a tree as large as the olive, has leaves which are like those of the vine, and is also quick of growth. This in all probability was the plant in question, which had been already planted, though it had not attained its proper growth, and was not then in full leaf. Celsus, in his *Hierobot.*, says it grows to the height of an olive tree; the trunk and branches are hollow like a kex, and the leaves sometimes as broad as the rim of a hat. It must be of a soft or spongy substance, for it is said to grow surprisingly fast. See Taylor under the root *p.p.* 1670. But it is evident there was something supernatural in the growth of this plant, for it is stated to have 'come up in a night;' though the Chaldee understands the passage thus: "It was here last night and is withered this night." In one night it might have blown, and expanded its leaves considerably, though the plant had existed before, but not in full bloom till the time that Jonah required it for a shelter.]-*Dr A. Clarke's Commentary*.—ED.

^d The book of Jonah ends as abruptly as it begins: it begins with a conjunctive copulative, 'and the word of the Lord came upon Jonah,' so it should be read, which has made some commentators think, that it was but an appendix to some of his other writings; and it ends without giving us any manner of account, either what became of the Ninevites, or of Jonah himself, after this expedition. It is likely indeed, from the compassionate expressions which God makes use of towards the Ninevites, that for that time he reversed their doom: and it is not improbable that Jonah, when he had executed his commission, and been satisfied by God concerning his merciful procedure, returned into Judea; but the author of the lives and deaths of the prophets, who goes under the name of Epiphanius, tells us, that, returning from Nineveh, and being ashamed to see that his prediction was not fulfilled, he retired with his mother to the city of Tyre, where he lived in the plain of Sear, until he died, and was buried in the cave of Cenezeus, judge of Israel; but who the author means by Cenezeus, unless it be Caleb, who is frequently surnamed the Kenezite, though we do not read of his being ever a judge of Israel, or rather Othniel, who was the son of Kenaz, and one that judged Israel, we cannot tell.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Jonah*, and *Hovell's History*, in the notes.

^e The words are much of the same signification; for the former signifies the strength, and the other the help of God.

^f Commentators have been at a good deal of trouble to reconcile a seeming contradiction in this computation. For if Amaziah, the father of Azariah, lived but fifteen years, after the beginning of Jeroboam's reign, as appears from 2 Kings xiv. 17, then Azariah must begin his reign, not in the twenty-seventh, but, if he succeeded his father immediately, in the sixteenth, or fifteenth rather, of Jeroboam: but our learned Dr Lightfoot solves this at once, by supposing, that there was an interregnum, wherein the throne was vacant eleven, or rather twelve years, between the death of Amaziah and the inauguration of his son Azariah, who being left an infant of four years old when his father died, was committed to the guardianship of the grandees of the

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reign of Jeroboam king of Israel, succeeded his father, and, in the former part of his reign, behaved well; for which God prospered him in all his undertakings, and blessed his arms with great success: for he worsted the Philistines in many battles, dismantled several of their towns, and built cities in the country thereabout to keep them in subjection. His next expedition was against the Arabians that were upon the borders of Egypt, and against the Mehunims, who lived in their deserts, whom he utterly subdued; and not long after, so terrified the Ammonites, that they, as the others were, became tributaries to him. He then repaired the walls of Jerusalem, and, at proper distances, built towers, from whence, ^a with engines that threw darts and stones, he might be able to annoy an invader; and, as he was a great lover of husbandry, he employed several plowers and planters in the plains, vine-dressers on the mountains, and shepherds in the valleys, whereby he acquired considerable wealth. But the chief glory of his kingdom lay in his army, which consisted of above 370,000 select men under the command of 2,000 brave experienced officers, all armed with proper weapons both offensive and defensive, and trained up in the most perfect manner of martial discipline.

Thus prosperous was Uzziah in every circumstance of life, ^b while Zechariah lived and had him under his

nation, who, during his minority, took the administration of public affairs upon themselves, and when he was become sixteen, devolved it upon him; so that when he came into the full possession of the throne, it was in the seven and twentieth year of Jeroboam.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^a This is the first time that we read of any machine, either for besieging or defending towns; which is plainly the reason why sieges were of so long a continuance before the invention of these. Homer, who is the most ancient Greek writer we know of that treats of sieges, describes a kind of entrenchment, though a poor one, some lines of circumvallation, and a ditch with palisades; but we hear not one word of any machines, such as the ballistæ and the catapultæ, which were used for hurling stones and throwing darts; and therefore we need less wonder that the famous siege of Troy continued so long. Sardanapalus, king of Assyria, maintained himself in Nineveh for seven years, because the besiegers, as Diodorus observes, (b. 2.) wanted such engines as were fit for demolishing and taking of cities, they being not then invented. Salmanezar lay three years before Samaria, (2 Kings xvii. 5, 6.) and, as some say, Psammeticus (*vid. Aristæus de LXX. interp.*) twenty, before Azoth. Now of Uzziah it is said, 'That he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers, and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones' (2 Chron. xxvi. 15.); so that it must needs be a mistake, to attribute the invention of the ballistæ, the scorpæ, or the onager, whereof Ammianus Marcellinus (b. 23. c. 2.) has given us the descriptions, to the Greeks or Romans, because we find them made use of in the east, before ever the Greeks had brought the military art to any great perfection. Uzziah was certainly the first inventor of them; and therefore it is said that, for these and other warlike preparations, 'his name was spread abroad.' From this time they began to be employed, both in attacking and defending towns; and therefore we find the prophet Ezekiel describing the future sieges of Jerusalem and Tyre, where he makes mention of battering rams, and engines of war, or, as it should be rendered, 'machines of cords,' which in all probability were what later ages called their ballistæ and catapultæ.—*Calmet's Dissertation on the Military Services of the ancient Hebrews.*

^b Some are of opinion that the person here mentioned was a prophet, and the same with that Zechariah whose book of prophecies is extant in the bible; but, as he wrote in the reign of Darius, it is plain that he lived almost three hundred years after this. It is not unlikely, however, that he was the son of that Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, who, by the command of king Joash, was slain in the temple; that he was called after his

direction; but when once that faithful counsellor died, which was in the three and thirtieth year of his reign, he soon grew so ^c intoxicated with the thoughts of his power and greatness, that forgetting himself he would needs intrude into the priestly office. Accordingly, having taken it into his head one day to ^d offer incense, he went into the sanctuary, and when Ahaziah, and some other of the priests, endeavoured to dissuade him from it, he fell into a rage, and received their remonstrances with threats. God, however, took care to vindicate the sacredness of the sacerdotal office: for the moment that he took the censer in his hand, and was going to burn incense, he was ^e struck with a leprosy, which no art of man could ever after cure; so that, while his son Jotham, as his father's viceroy, took the public administration upon him, he was forced to live in a separate place by himself; and, after a reign of two and fifty years, died, and was buried, not in the royal sepulchres, but in the

father's name; was preceptor to Uzziah; and, though not a prophet, a man very skilful in expounding the ancient prophecies, and giving instructions out of them, as Grotius understands it.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

^c How hard a matter is it, says Bishop Patrick, hereupon to bear great prosperity with moderation, and humble thankfulness!

^d What it was that tempted the king to this extravagant folly, it is hard to imagine; but the most likely conjecture is, that he had a vain ambition to imitate heathen princes, who, in several countries, joined both the regal and sacerdotal offices together. But, however it may be in all other countries, the priesthood in Judea was confined to the house of Aaron only, and every one that pretended to usurp that office, was, by the law of the land, to be put to death; 'for thou, and thy sons with thee,' says God to Aaron, 'shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the veil, and ye shall serve. I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.' (Numbers xviii. 7.)

^e The punishment for such as would intrude into divine ministrations was capital, we see; and therefore God smote Uzziah with such a disease, as was a kind of death; because it separated the person that was afflicted with it from the commerce and society of men, even as if he were departed this world, and, as the Psalmist expresses it, become 'free among the dead,' (Ps. lxxxviii. 5.) But, besides the infliction of this disease, Josephus tells us, 'that, the very moment that Uzziah was going to burn incense, there happened a terrible earthquake, and, as the roof of the temple opened with the shock of it, there passed a beam of the sun through the cleft, which struck directly upon the face of this sacrilegious prince, whereupon he instantly became a leper; nay, that this earthquake was so very violent, that it tore asunder a great mountain, towards the west of Jerusalem, and rolled one half of it over and over a matter of four furlongs, till at length it was stopped by another mountain, which stood over against it, but choked up the highway, and covered the king's gardens all over with dust.' But all this may be justly suspected. That there was a great earthquake in the reign of Uzziah, is evident from the testimony of two prophets, (Amos i. 1. and Zechariah xiv. 8.) but that it happened exactly when Uzziah attempted this invasion of the priesthood, is far from being clear; on the contrary, if we will abide by Bishop Usher's computation, the Jewish historian must be sadly mistaken. For since the prophet Amos tells us, that he began to prophesy two years before this earthquake happened, in the reigns of Uzziah king of Judah, and Jeroboam the second king of Israel; and since we may gather from the sacred history, that Jeroboam died two years before the birth of Jotham the son of Uzziah; that Jeroboam died in the six and twentieth year of the said Uzziah, and Jotham his son was born in the three and twentieth year thereof, and yet was of age sufficient to be made regent of the kingdom, when his father was thus struck with a leprosy, which must have been several years after Jeroboam's death, it must needs follow that this earthquake could not happen at the time which Josephus assigns, but must have been much later.—*Josephus's Jewish Wars*, b. 9. c. 11. and *Calmet's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xv. 5.

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same field, ^a at some distance from them, because he was a leper, and was succeeded by his son Jotham.

During the reign of this Uzziah, there happened some events, mentioned in other parts of Scripture, which are not to be found in the books that are purely historical. Such are that terrible earthquake whereof Amos ¹ prophesied two years before it happened; that sore plague of the locusts, whereof Joel ² gives us so full and lively a description; and that extreme drought, mixed with fearful flashes of fire, which fell from heaven, and, as the prophet ³ expresses it, 'devoured all the pastures of the wilderness, and burned up all the trees of the field.'

But that which we are chiefly concerned to take notice of, is the succession of prophets in Israel and Judah, whom God raised up to give them instructions and exhortations, and to denounce his threatenings and judgments against them, upon their persisting in their impieties: and these he appointed, not only to warn them by word of mouth, as his former prophets had done, but to commit their admonitions to writing, that posterity might see the ingratitude of his people, and all other nations, from their backslidings and punishments, might learn not to do so wickedly.

The first of these prophets was Hosea, the son of Beeri, who, according to the introduction to his book, prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the second king of Israel; and consequently continued to be a prophet at least seventy years, unless we may suppose, as ⁴ some have done, that this is a spurious title of some ancient transcribers, and that the true beginning of his work is at the second verse, 'The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea.' However this be, we may observe, that he speaks positively of the captivity of the ten tribes, and inveighs strongly against their disorders; that he foretells, that the kingdom of Judah should for some time subsist after them, but that at length they too should be carried away captive beyond the Euphrates; and through the whole lays open the sins, and declares the judgments of God against a people hardened and irreclaimable.

The next prophet is Joel, the son of Pethuel. He mentions the same judgment that Amos does; and, under the idea of an enemy's army, represents those vast swarms of locusts, which, in his time, fell upon Judea, and occasioned great desolation. He calls and invites the people to repentance, and promises mercy and forgiveness to those that will listen to the call. He speaks of the teacher of righteousness, whom God was to send, and of the Holy Spirit which he was to pour out upon all flesh; and, in the conclusion, relates what glorious things God would do for his church in the times of the gospel.

The next prophet is Amos; for he lived in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and of Jeroboam the second king of Israel. He begins his prophecies with threaten-

ings against the neighbouring nations, that were enemies to Israel; then reproves the people of Israel and Judah for their idolatry, effeminacy, and other sins; exhorts them to repentance, without which their hypocritical services will do them no good; foretells their captivity, and heavy judgments of God; and, at last, speaks of the restoration of the church among the Jews, and the happy accession of the Gentiles.

The next prophet is Obadiah; for he was contemporary with Hosea, Joel, and Amos. He denounces God's judgments against the Edomites for the mischief they had done to Judah and Jerusalem, whom he promises that they should be victorious over these Edomites, and their other enemies; and, at last, foretells their reformation and restoration, and that the kingdom of the Messiah should be set up by the 'bringing in of a great salvation.'

The book of Jonah is a history rather than a prophecy; and, if it was written by himself, it is a frank acknowledgment of his own faults and failings, and a plain evidence, that, in this work, he designed God's glory, and not his own. For it contains remarkable instances of human frailties in the prophet, of God's compassion and condescension to him, and a noble type of our Saviour's burial and resurrection.

The other prophet that lived in these times was Isaiah, the son of Amos, whose prophecies may be divided into three parts. The first part includes six chapters relating to the reign of Jotham, the six following chapters relate to the reign of Ahaz, and all the rest to the reign of Hezekiah. The great design of what he does, is to foretell the captivity of Babylon, the return of the people from that captivity, and the flourishing kingdom of the Messiah: but ^b the whole book is highly serviceable to the church of God in all ages, for conviction of sin, direction in duty, and consolation in trouble; and its author may justly be accounted a great prophet, whether we consider the extent and variety of his predictions; the sublimity of the truths which he reveals; ^c the majesty and elegance of his style; the loftiness of his metaphors, or the liveliness of his descriptions.^d

^b St Jerome, in his introduction to Isaiah's prophecy, tells us, that his writings are, as it were, an abridgment of the holy Scriptures, and a collection of all the most uncommon knowledge that the mind of man is capable of. His words are, "What shall I say of physics, ethics, and theology? Whatever belongs to the holy Scriptures, whatever the tongue of man can utter, and the senses of mortals can perceive, is contained in that volume."—*Jerome's Preface to Isaiah*.

^c Grotius compares this prophet with the great Grecian orator, Demosthenes; for in him, says he, we meet with all the purity of the Hebrew tongue, as in the other, there is all the delicacy of the Attic taste. Both are sublime and magnificent in their style, vehement in their emotions, copious in their figures, and very impetuous, when they set off things of an enormous nature, or such as are grievous or odious. But there is one thing, wherein the prophet was superior to the orator, and that is in the honour of his illustrious birth, and relation to the royal family of Judah; and therefore what Quintilian says of Corvinus Messala, may be justly applied to him, namely, that he speaks in an easy flowing manner, and in a style which shows him to be a man of quality.—*Grotius on 2 Kings xix. 2. and Quintil. b. 10. c. 20.*

^d Who Isaiah was, is uncertain: the Jewish tradition is that he was of the seed-royal, and nearly allied to Amaziah; but there is no proof of this assertion. Certain it is, he was much at court, and his style and manner refined, and particularly elegant and lofty.—*Hawcis*.—Ed.

¹ Chap. i. 1.

² Chap. ii. 2, &c.

³ Joel i. 18.

⁴ Calmet's Dictionary, under the word *Hosea*.

^a Josephus will needs have it, that his body was buried in his garden, in a monument by itself, forgetting very probably, what he told us before, that these gardens, at this time, were covered all over with rubbish.—*Josephus's Jewish Wars*, b. 9, c. 11. and *Calmet's Commentary on 2 Chron. xv. 5.*

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CHAP. II.—*Difficulties Obviated and Objections Answered.*

ST PAUL, speaking of the propagation of the gospel, and the seeming insufficiency of the means which God had employed to effect it, has these remarkable words: ¹ 'Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, the base things of the world, and things that are despised, yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.' And then proceeding to speak of himself; ² 'And I, brethren,' says he, 'when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; but was with you in weakness, and fear, and in much trembling: and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.'

Now, if God in the conversion of the world to Christianity, made use of instruments in themselves so incompetent for the work, lest the work might be imputed to human powers; by parity of reason we may presume, that, in the conversion of the Ninevites, God might not employ a prophet of the best natural temper and qualifications, since Isaiah was then of age, and seems to have been better fitted for such a mission, that the glory of the event might not be ascribed to any innate abilities of the prophet, but to the sole power of God which accompanied him, and ³ 'made the foolishness of his preaching,' as the apostle expresses it, 'effectual to save them that believed.'

We must not imagine, however, that, in his address to the people of Nineveh, the prophet had nothing to say but this one sentence, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.' This indeed was the sum and substance of his preaching, but we may well presume that he took frequent occasions to expatiate upon it; by reminding them of the number and nature, and several aggravations of their offences; by acquainting them with the holiness, justice, and omnipotence of God; that holiness which could not behold iniquity without detestation; that justice which, sooner or later, would not suffer it to go unpunished; and that almighty power, which could, in a moment, lay the stateliest cities in ashes; by exhorting them to repentance from a dread of his impending judgments; and by instructing them in the method of pacifying his wrath, and affecting a reconciliation with him.

Some of the ancients are of opinion that Jonah received no orders from God to limit the destruction of Nineveh to forty days, because there is no such time fixed in his instructions; all that God appoints him to do is, ⁴ 'to go unto Nineveh, that great city,' as he calls it, 'and to preach unto it that preaching which he should bid him:' and therefore they suppose that the space of forty days was an addition of the prophet's own, and, for that reason, not exactly fulfilled; but there is no occa-

sion for charging him with any such falsification, since the comminations of God are always conditional, ^a and answer his gracious purposes much better when they are averted than when they are executed.

And indeed, though in this case they were averted for a while, yet, when the people relapsed into their former iniquities, the prophet's prediction did not fail of its accomplishment. For, if we take the forty days to denote forty years, a day for a year, and the overthrowing of Nineveh, not to signify its final destruction, but only the subversion ⁵ of that ancient empire of the Assyrians, which had governed Asia for above 1300 years, and was destroyed under the effeminate king Sardanapalus; then was the prophecy literally fulfilled, and from its fulfilling we may trace the time of Jonah's mission.

But though this prophecy of Jonah was not fulfilled at the end of forty days, as he expected, and at the end of forty years there was only a destruction of the monarchy, and not of the city; yet his miraculous preservation in the whale's belly gave him such credit, that it was always believed that the time of its accomplishment was uncertain. To this purpose we find Tobit ⁶ giving his son Tobias instructions to depart out of Nineveh, 'because those things which the prophet Jonah spake should certainly come to pass;' and accordingly, before Tobias died, he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, which was taken by Nebuchodonosor and Ahasuerus: ⁷ for these two princes being related by marriage, entered into a confederacy against the Assyrians, and, joining their forces together, besieged this city, and, after having taken it and slain Saracus, the king thereof, they utterly destroyed it, and from that time made Babylon the place of royal residence, and the sole metropolis of the Assyrian monarchy. Thus was the prediction of Jonah, concerning the destruction of Nineveh, though not in the time which he had prefixed, fulfilled; nor can the delay of it be looked upon as any breach of the divine veracity, whatever unguiness it gave the prophet. The truth of the matter is,—Jonah was a man of an unhappy temper, peevish and passionate, and, in this case, fearful of being accounted a false prophet, of having his ministry exposed to contempt, or his person perhaps to violence from the Ninevites, because the event did not answer the prediction. And the proper lesson we are to learn from his behaviour is,—That the gift of prophecy does not alter men's natural tempers, nor set them above the level of human frailty: for ⁸ 'we have this treasure,' as the apostle speaks, 'in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.'

That stratagems in war, and other artifices to delude and ensnare an enemy, are not prohibited by the law of God, the generality of casuists are agreed; and therefore, upon the supposition that Elisha's speech to Ben-hadad's men was framed on purpose to deceive, he did no more than make use of the common privilege which every nation, engaged in war one with another, is permitted to employ: but upon a nearer examination, we cannot charge his words with a direct falsehood,

⁵ Prideaux's Connection, at the beginning.⁶ Tobit xiv. 8, &c.⁷ Prideaux's Connection, anno 613.⁸ 2 Cor. iv. 7.^a This may be clearly inferred from numerous instances recorded in sacred history, and is expressly declared in Jer. xviii. 7—10.—Ed.¹ 1 Cor. i. 26, &c.² 1 Cor. ii. 1, &c.³ 1 Cor. i. 21.⁴ Jonah iii. 2.

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though we must allow that there is some ambiguity in them.

When the prophet perceived that the Syrian army had encompassed the place where he abode, he went out of the city, and told them, ¹ 'This is not the way, neither is this the city,' namely, where they would find the man for whom they were sent; because, at that time, he was come out of the city; and therefore, if they proceeded in their march, they would be sure to miss him. But 'follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek;' and so he did, but not in the manner, it must be owned, that they either expected or desired. The whole conduct of the prophet, therefore, in this respect, was no more than what the practice of war always allows, namely, a feint to cover his real designs, and, by counterfeit motions and false alarms, to draw the enemy into such intricacies, that he might come upon them, and surprise them when they least of all thought of it.

The formality of a lie, as some will have it, does not consist so much in saying what is untrue, as in making a false representation of things with a purpose to do hurt: but the prophet's generous treatment of the enemy, when he had them at his mercy, shows that he had no malignity in his intention, no design to make an advantage of their deception; but, on the contrary, took the most effectual means, both to cure their inveterate hatred against the Israelites, and to reconcile them to the worship and service of the true God, who had wrought such a miracle for their conviction, as well as the preservation of his prophet.

² 'He smote them with blindness, according to the word of Elisha:' but then we are not to imagine that this blindness was so total that they quite lost the use of their eyes, but only that it was such a dimness and confusion in their sight, as hindered them from distinguishing one object from another, the city of Dothan, for instance, from the city of Samaria; even, in like manner, as we read of the people of Sodom, that when the angels ³ 'smote them with blindness,' which they might easily do by some small alteration, either in their sight, or in the air, 'they wearied themselves to find out Lot's door.' They saw the house, it seems, but did not discern the door, because this sudden disorder in their imagination might either make the door appear to them like the solid wall, or the solid wall like so many doors.

This is no more than what happens to several men in their liquor; that, though their eyes be open, and can perceive the several objects that surround them, yet they cannot discern wherein they differ. And if we may suppose that the Syrian army was under the like *ἀνομία*, as the Greeks very happily term it, we need no longer wonder that they readily accepted of a guide, who offered his services, and bespoke them fair, whom they might indeed take for some deputy of the town, with authority to deliver up the prophet to them, than that a drunkard, who, after a long while having lost his way, and found himself bewildered, should be thankful to any hand that would promise to conduct him safe home.

⁴ That Hazael was never, in a strict sense, anointed by Elijah, to be Benhadad's successor, is evident from what appears of him in sacred history. For, when he

came to consult Elisha, concerning his master's illness, which was a considerable time after the prophet Elijah's translation, we find by the whole interview, that he was entirely ignorant of his own designation for the throne of Syria, which he could not have been, had he been anointed before this time. Either therefore we must take the word in a figurative sense, to denote no more than God's purpose or determination, that Hazael should succeed in the throne of Syria, to execute the designs of his providence upon the people of Israel, even as Cyrus, for the same reason, is called ⁵ 'the Lord's anointed,' though he was never properly anointed by God; or, if we take it in a literal sense, we must suppose some reason why Elijah waved the execution of that command, even because he foresaw the many sore calamities which Hazael, when advanced to the crown of Syria, would bring upon Israel, and thereupon prevailed with God, that he might be excused from that ungrateful office, and that, in his time at least, a succession which would be attended with such direful consequences might not commence.

It may possibly be thought, indeed, that Elisha's foretelling his advancement to the throne might be a spur and incitement to his ambition; but the means whereby he accomplished his design were entirely from his own wicked and corrupt mind, which would not stay for the ordinary methods of divine providence to bring it innocently about, but chose rather to carve for himself, and, by murdering his master, to cut him out a more compendious way of coming into immediate possession. And this solves the seeming difficulty of the prophet's sending one answer to Benhadad, and telling Hazael quite another story: for when Hazael understood that his master's disease was not mortal, but that, if no violence intervened, he might easily get over that indisposition, for that is the sense of ⁶ 'he may certainly recover;' and, at the same time, was told by the prophet, that he would not, however, recover, because he foresaw that violence would be used to take away his life, as this is the sense of 'he shall surely die,' Hazael went his way, and not willing to trust Providence with his master's recovery, took care the next morning to have him despatched.

There is, however, another, and, as some think, a much plainer interpretation of the prophet's words: for, since this is a passage which admits of a various lecture, the adverb *to*, as it is in the textual reading, signifies *not*, but in our translation, which in this place follows the marginal, it is rendered, *to him*: so that, if the Hebrew text be right, as some learned men, upon examination, have given it the preference, the plain reading of the words will be, 'Go, say, thou shalt surely not live; for the Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt surely die.' This was the sense of the prophet's answer to Benhadad; but Hazael, who was a wicked man, went and told him a quite contrary thing, on purpose to lull him into a state of security, that thereby he might have a fairer opportunity of accomplishing his design upon him.

Thus, whether the marginal or textual reading be right, and consequently, whether the prophet's message to Benhadad be taken in an affirmative or negative sense, he cannot justly be charged with baseness and ingratitude; since, whether he accepted of his present or no, it

¹ 2 Kings vi. 19.

² Ibid. ver. 18.

³ Gen. xix. 11.

⁴ Le Clerc's Commentary on 1 Kings xix. 15. and Scripture Vindicated, part 2.

⁵ Is. xlv. 1.

⁶ 2 Kings viii. 10.

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is manifest that he could not return him any false and delusive answer: and yet the more probable opinion is, that, in conformity to his practice, in the case of Naaman the leper, he did, upon this occasion, 'reject the good things of Damascus' which Benhadad sent, because the same reasons which induced him to refuse them from the hand of Naaman were still in force, and might equally prevail with him not to accept them from the hand of Hazael.

Thus, with regard to Benhadad king of Syria, the prophet stands clear of any imputation of falsehood or ingratitude; and, in like manner, if we consider the matter as it stood, between him and Joash king of Israel, we shall find no unbecoming passion or peevishness in his conduct, but a great deal of zeal and concern for the honour both of his king and country. For whether king Joash before this interview with Elisha, was acquainted or not with the nature of parabolical actions, whereby prophets more especially were accustomed to represent future events; by the comment which Elisha made upon the first arrow that he shot, which he calls ¹ 'the arrow of deliverance from Syria,' he could not but perceive that this was a symbolical action, and intended to prefigure his victories over that nation; and therefore, as the first action of shooting was a kind of prelude to the war, he could not but understand farther, even though the prophet had said nothing to him, that this second action of striking the ground with the arrow, was to portend the number of the victories he was to obtain. ² But then, if we may suppose with the generality of interpreters, that the prophet had apprised him beforehand, that such was the symbolical intent of what he now put upon him; that the oftener he smote upon the ground, the more would their victories be which his arms should obtain; that this was the decree of heaven; and that thus, in some measure, his success in war was put in his own power; the king's conduct was utterly inexcusable, if, diffident of the prophet's promise, and considering the vast strength of the kings of Syria more than the power of God that was engaged on his side, he stopped his hand after he had smitten thrice; supposing indeed, that the prediction would never have been fulfilled, had he gone on and smitten upon the earth oftener. Upon the whole, therefore, the prophet had just reason to be offended at the king for not believing God, who had done so many signal miracles in favour of the Israelites; for not believing him, who, according to his own acknowledgment, had been a constant defender of the state, ³ 'the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof,' and now, in his dying hours, was full of good wishes and intentions for his country; and, by this unbelief of his, for eclipsing the glory of his own arms, and curtailing the number of his victories: for ⁴ 'thou shouldest have smitten five or six times,' says the prophet to the king, 'then shouldest thou have smitten Syria, till thou hadst consumed it; whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.'

⁵ 'Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes,' says our blessed Saviour, upbraiding the Jews with their bloody persecutions of the righteous,

'and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar: ' and hereupon some names of great authority have inferred, that the Zechariah, son of the high priest, whom Joash, king of Judah, commanded to be slain, was the same with the person whom our Saviour here mentions; for though he calls his father by a different name, Barachiah, and not Jehoiada, yet this he might do, say they, to denote the divine graces, which were so conspicuous in him; for so the word Barachiah means.

It must be observed, however, that as there is a difference in these two persons, not only in regard to their father's names, but to the place likewise where they suffered, the one ⁶ 'between the temple and the altar,' that is, in the court of the priests, and the other ⁷ 'in the court of the house of the Lord,' that is, in the court of the Israelites, where he was mounted on high, and inveighing against their idolatry, there are some grounds to believe, that the Zechariah in the gospel is not the same with him whose death we find recorded in the Chronicles of the kings of Judah.

Our blessed Saviour, it must be owned, not only foretold the utter excision of the Jews, but described likewise several preceding calamities almost in the very manner wherein their own historian has related them. Now, in the times of the Jewish war, Josephus ⁸ makes mention of one Zacharias, and gives us these circumstances concerning his murder: That he was the son of one Baruch, a man of the first rank, and of great authority, virtue, and wealth, a friend to all good men, and a constant enemy to the wicked; that his son Zacharias was, by the zealots of that time, looked upon as a man so very popular, that they could not think themselves safe, without taking away his life; that to this purpose they brought him before a sham court of their own erecting, where they accused him of a conspiracy to betray Jerusalem to the Romans, and of holding a criminal correspondence with Vespasian; that upon his trial, his innocence appeared so clear, and the accusations against him so false and malicious, that their own court, contrary to their expectation, acquitted him; but that, after he was acquitted, two ruffians of their company fell upon him, and, having murdered him in the middle of the temple, threw his dead body down the precipice whereon it stood.

This is the person, as others imagine, that our Saviour intends; for as he begins with Abel, the first instance of a person suffering by violence, it is but reasonable, they think, that he should conclude with one of the latest among the Jews while their government subsisted; and therefore they look upon our Lord's words, not as a recital of what had been done, but a prediction of what would be done; and a glorious evidence it is of his divine omniscience, which could foretell the names both of father and son, above forty years before the event happened.

However this be, we must not accuse the father of

¹ 2 Kings xiii. 17.

² Le Clerc's Commentary on 2 Kings xiii. 19.

³ Ibid. ver. 14.

⁴ Ibid. ver. 19.

⁵ Mat. xxiii. 34, &c.

⁶ Mat. xxiii. 35.

⁷ 2 Chron. xxiv 21.

⁸ History of the Jewish Wars, b. 1. c. 5

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that Zacharias, who died a martyr in the reign of Joash king of Judah, of showing a busy and pragmatism spirit, in placing this Joash, when a child, upon the throne of his ancestors. Jehoiada, as he was high priest, had a large authority even in civil affairs; ¹ the dignity of his station set him at the head of a very powerful body of men, the priests and Levites; and his quality, as first judge and president of the great council of the nation, gave him a right to defend oppressed innocence, and made it his duty to oppose the unjust usurpation of Athaliah, who had no pretence of claim to the crown, and was descended likewise from a wicked family, which God had particularly devoted to destruction.

² The constitution of the nation moreover was such, that the crown, by divine appointment, was appropriated to the sons of David; and therefore the hereditary right was inherent in him whom he had set up, whose aunt he had married, whose kinsman he was by birth as well as marriage, and who upon these accounts, as well as all necessary qualifications for so high a trust, was the properest guardian of the succession. For he had a large share of wisdom and experience, an ardent love for the public good, courage and activity in his complexion, and a solid piety towards God ruling in his heart; and yet he did not act alone in this important affair, but had the consent and concurrence of the chief officers, both civil and ecclesiastic, the special motion and assistance of God's blessed Spirit, and, as we may suppose, the direction and encouragement of the principal prophets that were then alive.

His son indeed was but badly requited for all the care which his father had taken in setting the crown upon young Joash, when, in his reign, and by his orders, he was stoned to death, and as he was expiring, cried out, ³ 'Lord, look upon it, and requite it.' But we must not by these words imagine that he died with a spirit of revenge, for far be it from so good a man, but that, by the spirit of prophecy, he only foretold, that it would not be long before God would find out some means of punishing the king for his barbarous usage of him; which accordingly came to pass; for in the following verses we read, that ⁴ 'at the end of the year, the host of Syria came up against him,' and not long after that, ⁵ 'his own servants conspired against him, and slew him on his bed.'

The spirit of the gospel, it must he owned, is of a much more gentle and forgiving temper than that of the law, under which we meet with several such imprecations, especially in the Psalmist, as cannot, without violence, admit of any other construction. ^a Our blessed Saviour,

in his reasoning with the Jews, tells them, ⁶ that Moses did indulge them in some cases, 'because of the hardness of their hearts;' not that God ever did, or ever will humour any man, because he is obstinate and obdurate;

⁶ Mat. xix. 8.

kindness and good will, Exod. xxii. 21—24; Lev. xix. 17, 18, 34; xxv. 35; Deut. x. 19; Prov. xv. 17; xvii. 17; xviii. 24; xxvii. 10; David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, extols and recommends benevolence and mercy, forgiveness and kindness, to enemies, Ps. xv. 5; xxvii. 2, et seq.; xxxiv. 14; xxxvii. 1, 8, 21, 26; xxxviii. 12—14; xxxix. 1; xl. 1, 3; xciv. 1; ci. 5; cix. 4, 5; cxii. 5, 9; cxx. 6, 7; cxxiii. 1—3; and his own conduct afforded a noble exemplification of these virtues, as will be apparent by consulting the following passages: Ps. xxxv. 12—15; 1 Sam. xxiv. 1, et seq.; xxvi. 1, et seq. 2 Sam. i. 4, et seq.; iv. 8—12; xvi. 7—11; xix. 21—23. It cannot then be credited that one so distinguished for tenderness and benevolence of heart, as well as for pre-eminent piety, could utter any thing in direct opposition to those feelings of mercy and forgiveness which he both highly recommended, and exhibited in his own practice. Independently of this we may rest assured that no unmerciful and revengeful sentiment was ever suggested by the Holy Spirit, or ever found entrance into a work of inspiration. From these observations we may with certainty infer that the passages in question, however they may appear, were undoubtedly not intended to convey any bitter and unrelenting malediction. Nor will they be deemed to do so, provided due allowance be made for the bold phraseology of oriental poetry, which must generally be received with considerable abatement; and provided also, they be understood with the reservation which ought to accompany all our wishes and addresses to the Deity, namely, that he would grant them only so far as may be consistent with his will and providence. If the imprecative parts of the book of Psalms be taken with these limitations, as in reason they ought, they will be found in substance merely to express a wish that the wicked men spoken of might receive the just recompence of their deeds, and that the punishment they deserved might speedily overtake them, if such were the will of God. The impious and transgressors are those alone upon whom the Psalmist imprecates the Divine vengeance; and there is nothing of vindictive feeling in praying for that which he believed the Divine justice, as well as the Divine promise were engaged to inflict; while at the same time his entire confidence in the absolute perfections of the Supreme Being affords ample evidence that he calls for this vengeance only so far as might be accordant with the divine attributes of wisdom, goodness, and equity. A strong confirmation of this reasoning is supplied by Ps. xxviii. 4, 5, where he prays the Almighty to 'give them according to their deeds, according to the wickedness of their endeavours; to give them after the work of their hands; to render them their desert;' and he immediately subjoins as a reason for the petition, and a vindication of it, 'because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall (will) destroy them, and not build them up.' Such imprecative addresses are in reality the expression of an earnest desire that the will of God may be done in earth as it is in heaven, and that, if it seemed good unto him, he would assert his own honour as well by the punishment of the iniquitous as by the preservation of the righteous. The persons to whom the imprecations refer, were inveterate adversaries, plotting against the life of the Psalmist, and maliciously intent upon effecting his ruin. To pray to be rescued from their wicked devices, was clearly lawful; and, considering their numbers and persevering malignity, his escape might seem utterly impracticable without their entire overthrow or extirpation; a prayer for their destruction, therefore, was equivalent to a prayer for his own preservation and deliverance. Besides, they were for the most part not only personal enemies, but hostile to the people of Israel, rebels to their heavenly king, and violators of his commands. To desire the punishment of such characters arose, it may fairly be presumed, not from personal vindictive feelings, but from a regard to religion, and hatred of iniquity; and was in fact tantamount to desiring the Almighty to vindicate his glory by inflicting the chastisements, which they deserved, and which he has denounced against the proud contemners of his laws. By many writers the passages objected to are explained as predictions; and this is not at variance with the Hebrew idiom, which admits, under some circumstances, the use of the imperative for the future as Ps.

¹ Calmet's Commentary on 2 Kings xi. 4.

² Poole's Annotations.

³ 2 Chron. xxiv. 22.

⁴ Ibid. ver. 23.

⁵ Ibid. ver. 25.

^a It must be confessed that, at first sight, these imprecations appear cruel and vindictive, irreconcilable with the gentle spirit of piety and religion; and some unhesitatingly acknowledging them to be indefensible on Christian principles, rest the defence solely on their accordance with the character of the Jewish dispensation; which, say they, did not inculcate that cordial forgiveness of injuries, and even love of our enemies, which form an essential and peculiar doctrine of the gospel. In this representation the inquirer will not be disposed to acquiesce, when he reflects that the Hebrew Scriptures do forcibly enjoin the duties of forgiving injuries, Exod. xii. 49; xxiii. 4, 5; Lev. xix. 17, 18; Deut. xxxii. 35; Prov. xi. 17; xix. 11; xx. 22; xxiv. 29; Zech. vii. 10; of doing good to enemies, Exod. xxiii. 4, 5; Prov. xxv. 21; Jer. xxix. 7; and of cultivating mutual

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but the sense of the word is, 'that God therefore con-
 vined at some things, because the dispensation under
 which they lived wanted proper efficacy to work their
 hearts to a greater softness. We are not therefore to
 wonder that we find some disparity in the behaviour of a
 Christian and Jewish martyr; but that such prophetic
 declarations, concerning the future punishment of ene-
 mies and persecutors, were not thought wicked and
 uncharitable, even under a more perfect dispensation, we
 have the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles to
 evince; who, speaking of Alexander the coppersmith,
 who had greatly opposed him, ² 'the Lord reward him,'
 says he, 'according to his works;' where it is to be ob-
 served that the king's manuscript reads *ἀποδώσει*, and
 not *ἀποδώ*, that is, *shall or will reward*, and most of
 the ancient commentators have remarked, that this is not
 an imprecation, but a prediction only, not unbecoming
 an apostle.

What God says of the king of Assyria, whom he calls
 'the rod of his anger, and the staff of his indignation,' is
 not unapplicable to Jehu, after he was advanced to the
 throne of Israel: 'I sent him against the people of my
 wrath to tread them down, like mire of the streets, how-
 beit, he meant not so, neither did his heart think so,
 but it was in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations not a
 few.' Jehu indeed made great ostentation of 'his zeal for
 the Lord,' and declared that, during his administration,³

¹ Young's Sermons.

² 2 Tim. iv. 14

³ Whitby's Commentary on the New Testament.

xxxvii. 27; Gen. xx. 7; xlii. 18; xlv. 8; Prov. iii. 4; iv. 4;
 and the employment of the imperative mood, when declaring fu-
 ture events, is not unusual with the sacred writers, as in Is. vi.
 10; viii. 9, 10; ix. 3; xvii. 1; xxix. 9; Jer. i. 10; Ezek. xliii. 3.
 In some instances, a prayer or wish for the punishment of sinners
 may be nearly equivalent to a prediction, inasmuch as it is
 founded on the belief, and meant to imply, that, according to
 God's moral government of the world, punishment most certainly
 awaits them. Some of the imprecations in the Psalms may, then,
 be understood as declarative of the just judgments of God, which
 would inevitably fall upon the impious; but in others, and per-
 haps most of them, both the natural construction of the sentences,
 and the full force and propriety of the expressions, require them
 to be taken in an imprecative sense. To explain them in any
 other sense is doing violence to the laws of grammatical inter-
 pretation: yet even in this light, considered as imprecations, they
 amount to no more than a wish that the impious may be dealt
 with according to the eternal and unalterable laws of divine jus-
 tice, that they may openly and before the world receive the
 penalties of crime, provided it be the will of God; which surely
 is neither an unnatural nor unreasonable wish in those, who an-
 xiously seek the punishment of vice, and the maintenance of true
 religion and virtue. In the Psalmist, moreover, it is a wish not
 proceeding from a desire to gratify a personal and vindictive
 feeling, but partly from a desire of self-preservation, and partly
 from anxiety to see the worship and glory of God triumphant
 over all enemies. Imprecations, therefore, made with the limita-
 tions, and originating in the motives just mentioned, so far from
 being liable to the charge of maliciousness and revenge, are in
 accordance with the purest spirit of religion, and with the exer-
 cise of the most extensive charity. Of all those tremendous im-
 precations which appear in our common English version of Deut.
 xxvii. 15—26, there is not one authorized by the original. The
 Hebrew texts express no kind of wish, but are only so many de-
 nunciations of the displeasure of God against those who either
 were or should be guilty of the sins therein mentioned, and of the
 judgments which they must expect to be inflicted upon them,
 unless prevented by a timely and sincere repentance. And
 agreeably to this view, the sacred text should have been rendered
 'cursed they,' or 'cursed are they,' and not 'cursed be they,'
 in the sense of Let them be cursed; the word *be*, though inserted
 in our translation, having nothing answerable to it in the Hebrew.
 —Horne's Introduction.—Ed.

'there should fall to the earth nothing of what he had
 said concerning the house of Ahab;' and it must be ac-
 knowledged, that for his performance of the divine
 commands in this regard, ⁴ he received commendations
 from God, and a settlement of his family in the throne
 of Israel for four successions; and yet we may say of
 him, 'that he meant not so, neither did his heart think
 so:' he was still a bad man, though 'he did well in exe-
 cuting that which was right in God's eyes,' as to the
 abolishment of the worship of Baal; ⁵ but his obstinate
 persistence in the sin of Jeroboam may be justly all
 against him, as an argument of his false-heartedness in
 all his other actions.

Why he continued in this kind of idolatry, the reasons
 were much the same with him, that they were with the
 first institutor of it,—lest, by permitting his subjects to
 go to the place appointed for divine worship, he might
 open a door for their return to their obedience to the
 house of David; and not only so, but disoblige likewise
 a great part of the nobility of the nation, who, by this
 time, had been long accustomed, and were warmly
 affected to the worship of the golden calves: herein,
 however, he made a plain discovery of his sin and folly,
 in not daring to trust God with the keeping of his king-
 dom, though it was from his kindness and donation that
 he had it, and in apprehending any danger from the
 house of David, or the kingdom of Judah, which were
 both now in so weak and declining a condition, that they
 were much more likely to be swallowed up by him.

⁶ The truth is, Jehu was a wicked, bold, furious, and
 implacable man; but a man of this complexion, consi-
 dering the work he was to be set about, was a proper
 instrument to be employed; and so far is it from tending
 to the reproach, that it is infinitely to the glory of God,
 that he can make use of such boisterous and unruly pas-
 sions of mankind for the accomplishment of his just
 designs, according to the observation of the royal Psal-
 mist, ⁷ 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and
 the remainder of his wrath shalt thou restrain.' This
 he plainly did in the case of Jehu; for after he had set-
 tled him in the possession of a kingdom, and still found
 that he persisted in his political idolatry, he brought
 down the king of Syria upon him, ⁸ 'who smote the coasts
 of Israel,' and quite wasted all that part of his kingdom
 which lay beyond the river Jordan.

There is this to be said, however, concerning Jehu's
 cutting off Ahaziah, and ⁹ the other branches of his
 family, that though his primary intent in doing it was to
 secure himself in the possession of the kingdom, against
 all claims that might come from the house of Ahab; yet
 did he not act entirely contrary to his commission, be-
 cause ¹⁰ Ahaziah was the son of Athaliah, the daughter of
 Ahab, and the order of God was, ¹¹ 'that the whole house
 of Ahab should perish;' but then the question is, where it
 was that Ahaziah was slain? because in the two accounts
 that we have of his death, there seems to be some repug-
 nancy. The account which we have in the second book
 of Kings runs thus:—¹² 'When Ahaziah saw the death of
 Jehoram king of Israel, he fled by the way of the garden-

⁴ 2 Kings x. 10. ⁵ Ibid. ver. 29. ⁶ Poole's Annotations.

⁷ Ps. lxxvi. 10.

⁸ 2 Kings x. 32.

⁹ Poole's Annotations on 2 Kings x. 14. ¹⁰ 2 Kings viii. 18.

¹¹ 2 Kings ix. 8.

¹² Ibid. ver. 27.

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house, and Jehu followed after him, and said, smite him also in his chariot: and they did so, at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam, and he fled to Megiddo, and there died: but in the book of Chronicles it is said, that ¹ 'when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, even the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered unto Ahaziah, he slew them. And he sought Ahaziah, and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu, and when they had slain him, they buried him.'

Now, in order to reconcile the different accounts of the same event, we must observe, ² that as one great end of writing the book of Chronicles, was to supply such matters as had been omitted in the book of Kings; so this account of the death of Ahaziah, in the latter, is very short, and included in the story of Jehoram, that the reader, at one and the same view, as it were, might perceive in what manner it was that both these princes fell; but in the former it is told more at large; and therefore, to complete the history, we must take in both accounts, and from thence we may gather,—that upon seeing Jehoram mortally wounded, Ahaziah turned his chariot, and made the best of his way to Samaria, in order to escape into his own kingdom,—but finding the passes too narrowly guarded, he thought proper to conceal himself in the town, in hopes of a better opportunity; that Jehu, in the mean time, coming to Samaria and having intelligence that Ahaziah was lurking there, ordered that diligent search should be made for him, and when he was found, that he should be carried to Gur, the place, in all probability, where his father Joram had slain all his brethren, and there be killed in his chariot, that so his servants might immediately carry off his corpse, and bury it. But as Jehu's order to the officers that were intrusted with the execution, was only, that they should smite him, they thought it enough to give him a mortal wound, so that his servants carried him from thence to Megiddo, the next town in the tribe of Issachar, where he died.

This makes the circumstances consistent: and though we are no ways concerned, especially when the sacred history is silent, to assign any reasons for such furious passions as are frequently observed in great and wicked men; yet it may be no hard matter to imagine something more probable, than what ³ Josephus makes the cause of Jehoram's indignation against Elisha, and his vowing to take off his head; even because he refused to intercede with God for the removal of the famine, that had, at this time, so sorely wasted the city of Samaria. From the many miracles which Elisha did, the king very likely might be convinced, that the same spirit which once resided in Elijah was now descended upon him; and therefore, as Elijah had power, by his prayers, either to shut or open the windows of heaven, either to cause or remove a famine, as he pleased, ⁴ he might possibly imagine, that God had conferred the same privilege upon Elisha, and might therefore be highly incensed against him, because he would not make use of it in the preservation of a city reduced to the utmost distress. But we can hardly imagine, that a wicked and idolatrous prince, as Jehoram certainly was, would ever entertain so high a conception of any of the Lord's prophets: and there-

fore we must endeavour to find out some other reason for the violence of his rage and indignation against him.

When the prophet Elisha carried the detachment of the Syrian army, which was sent to apprehend him at Dothan, hoodwinked, as it were, into the city of Samaria, Jehoram, we find, would have gladly taken this advantage, and fallen upon them with the sword: ⁵ 'My father, shall I smite, shall I smite them?' So eager was he to have them destroyed, as we may learn from the repetition of his words! But by no means would the prophet permit him; on the contrary, he ordered them to be treated with much civility, and dismissed in peace. A usage this which deserved a better return than what they made the Israelites the year following, when they came and besieged Samaria, and sorely distressed it. The king of Israel, therefore, reflecting on the opportunity which, had he employed it as he desired, would have disabled the army from making any fresh invasions, but was unhappily lost, by listening to an old doated prophet, as he might call him, was grieved beyond measure, and hereupon vowed to make his life pay for the lives of those, who, by his counsel, had escaped, and were now returned to repeat their hostilities. It may be supposed likewise, that upon the return of the Syrian army, the king of Israel, knowing himself in no condition to oppose them, might possibly be for purchasing a peace at any rate; which Elisha might endeavour to dissuade him from, by giving him all along assurance, that the enemy should at length be defeated. Finding however no effect in the prophet's promises, and, on the contrary, seeing his capital closely besieged, and the people reduced to great extremity of want, he began to repent him of following his advice; and being shocked at hearing the horrid story, and that from the mother's own mouth, of her being forced to eat her own child for hunger, he fell into a rage, and vowed to be revenged of Elisha, as one who, by his bad counsel, had occasioned all that misery: ⁶ 'God do so to me, and more also, if the head of Elisha, the son of Shaphat, shall stand on him to-day;' never considering that his own manifold and crying sins, especially his obstinate adhering to the idolatry of the calves, ⁷ and the whoredoms and witchcrafts of his mother Jezebel, were the true and proper causes of all his calamities.

Jehu, as we said before, was a wicked and ambitious man, and it is much to be questioned whether he would have executed the divine will so punctually, had it not fallen in with his own interest and designs. He had now extirpated the house of Ahab, and, as Ahab had been the first introducer of the idolatry of Baal into the kingdom of Israel, he could not but think that the priests and prophets, and such as adhered to the worship of that false God, were of Jezebel's faction, and might, at one time or other, take occasion to revenge her death. Something or other was therefore necessary to be done, in order to get rid of this dangerous set of men, and, that the business might be done effectually, to get rid of them all at once. ⁸ He was a person of a known indifference in matters of religion, who in this regard always conformed to the humours of the court, and, in the reign of king Ahab, had been as strenuous a worshipper

¹ 2 Chron. xxii. 7, &c.

² Jewish Antiq. b. 9. c. 2.

³ Poole's Annotations.

⁴ Poole's Annotations.

⁵ 2 Kings vi. 21.

⁶ 2 Kings vi. 31.

⁷ Chap. ix. 22.

⁸ Poole's Annotations.

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of Baal as any; and therefore, how could the people tell, when they read his proclamation for a great feast, and a solemn sacrifice to be offered unto Baal, but that, in good earnest, he had returned to his former love to the religion which he once embraced, and only deserted for a while, in complacency to others? He had gone on a little oddly indeed at his entrance upon the government, had murdered their chief patroness, and made free with some of their priests likewise; but these priests perhaps were ¹ domestics to Jezebel, or too nearly related to Ahab's family, not to go off in the common slaughter. Some instances of this kind could hardly be helped in the heat of execution, when the man was resolved to secure himself, and remove all competitors: but now that he has nothing to fear, why should we think, but that a prince who has no sense of religion at all, should be a worshipper of our god Baal, (that glorious luminary which shines so bright in the firmament of heaven,) as he is of the golden calves?²

Thus, we may suppose, the Baalites reasoned, upon reading the king's proclamation so apparently in favour of their idolatry; and God, in his judgment, suffered their ³ 'foolish hearts to be thus darkened, and because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, for this cause he sent upon them a strong delusion, that they might believe a lie.' But whether they deluded themselves into this persuasion or not, this they knew by experience, that Jehu was a man of a fierce and bloody temper, who would not fail to put his threats in execution; and therefore reading in the same proclamation, that ⁴ 'whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live,' they found themselves reduced to this sad dilemma, either to go or die; and therefore they thought it the wisest way to run the hazard, and throw themselves upon his mercy, having this at least to plead for themselves, that they were not disobedient to his commands. The only remaining question is, if every one obeyed this summons, how could the temple of Baal be capable of receiving them all?

Now the words of Jehu's summons are these: ⁵ 'Call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests, let none be wanting; for I have a great sacrifice to offer unto Baal. And Jehu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal;' in which words we may observe, ⁶ that two particular orders of men are distinctly mentioned, the prophets and priests; and therefore we may presume, that the servants and worshippers who are joined with them, were some of an inferior kind, such as Levites in the Jewish, or deacons in the Christian church, who attended upon the other in their sacred ministrations; because in the twenty-second verse, we find Jehu 'ordering him, who was over the vestry, to bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal,' which cannot be meant of the people in general, because they wore no distinct garments in their worship either of God or Baal, but of priests and ministers only. These were the great support of the present idolatry; and therefore Jehu concluded very justly, that, if he did but once destroy them, all the common worshippers would fall away of course.

But, even if we take the words 'servants' and 'worshippers' in their utmost latitude, we need not doubt but that the temple of Baal, ⁶ which was built in the capital city, and near the royal palace, and, being the chief in its kind, was designed for the use of the king and queen, and, particularly perhaps for such great and high solemnities, was large and capacious enough to hold them all. For, besides this principal building, ⁷ there might be several outward courts, as there were in the temple at Jerusalem, where the people stood while they worshipped, as they did in the temple service, and these, together with the temple itself, would afford space sufficient for all the idolaters of that kind, both ministers and people, that were then in the whole kingdom. For, since the days of Ahab, by the ministry of Elijah, Elisha, and the rest of the prophets, as well as by the slaughter which Hazael, in his wars against Israel, had made among many of them, the number of Baal's worshippers had been greatly diminished. Jehoram himself, as we read, ⁸ 'put away the image of Baal that his father had made,' and when the king withdrew his presence and encouragement, his subjects, without doubt, for the generality, followed his example; for it cannot be supposed, that the worship of such senseless idols could ever be kept up, especially among a people that had the oracles of God in their custody, without the influence of some great authority, or the consideration of some wicked and worldly ends.

CHAP. III.—Of Jonah's Mission to Nineveh, and abode in the Whale's Belly.

In the whole compass of the Old Testament, I know of no passage that has been made so popular a topic of banter and ridicule, and which the lovers of infidelity, in all ages, have so much delighted to descant upon, as the story 'of Jonah's continuing three days and three nights in the whale's belly.' The story indeed, at first hearing, sounds surprisingly; and therefore we need not wonder that the wit and sagacity of a Porphyry or a Julian found some plausible exceptions against it, which our modern retailers and malicious improvers of their objections have endeavoured to decry as a wild romance, or at best but a parabolical representation of something else.

"That a man, thrown into the sea with all his clothes on, should, in the very nick of time, meet with a fish, and such a fish as was never heard of before, large enough to swallow him up quick, and, without hurting a hair of his head, to keep him in his stomach for so many days and nights alive; that in this narrow and gloomy prison he should be able to breathe, and live, and be nourished; thence send up his prayers to God, and thence promise himself a deliverance in due time; this is an account of things so very absurd, that there is no possibility of believing it. For admitting that Jonah got safe and sound down the whale's throat, yet how could he subsist there without air, or continue any time without being parboiled? The stomach, we know, would do its office; and, therefore, we cannot but think, that in a few hours, much more in three days, the man

² 2 Kings x. 11.³ 2 Thes. ii. 11.⁴ 2 Kings x. 19.⁵ Ibid.⁶ Poole's Annotations.⁷ a Baal and Astaroth are commonly joined together; and as it⁸ Poole's Annot. ⁷ Patrick's Commentary ⁶ 2 Kings iii. 2. is believed that Astaroth denotes the moon, we have good reason to say, that Baal is put for the sun.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

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must, of course, have been totally dissolved, and his body converted into the body of the fish; or if its digestion was not so quick, he must, at least, when cast upon the shore, have been sadly sodden, and unfit to be sent upon another expedition.

“What God can do we must not dispute; but then great care should be taken, not to magnify his power to the diminution of his wisdom, or to think, that he is so lavish of his miracles as to save a rebellious prophet, that was disobeying his orders, and fleeing, if possible, from his presence, that deserved indeed to be left to the mercy of the waves, and made food for the fishes of the sea, rather than vouchsafed so stupendous a preservation; and all this, for what? Even to compel him to go, against his will, to a wicked city, with an unwelcome message; as if there had been no prophet in Israel, but this sullen and refractory man, to be sent upon this errand.”

Nineveh, at the time when Jonah was sent thither, was the metropolis of the Assyrian empire, and one of the largest and most ancient cities in the world. According to the best chronologers, it was built not long after the flood, and very soon after the tower of Babel, by Nimrod; but being afterwards greatly enlarged by Ninus, from him it received its name. It was situated upon the banks of the Tigris, and, as Diodorus¹ has given us the description of it, was, in length, 150 stadia; in breadth, 90; and in circumference, 470; which, being reduced to our measure, make it about 21 miles long, 9 broad, and 54 round. How stately its walls, and how lofty its towers were, the same historian has taken care to inform us; and how great the number of its inhabitants was, we may learn from² ‘the 120,000 children, who could not discern between their right hands and their left:’ for, according to a proportionate computation, there must have been in the whole above 600,000 persons.^a

¹ B. 2. Bih.² Jonah iv. 11.

^a Although Nineveh formed the subject of some of the earliest of the prophecies, and was the very first which met its predicted fate, yet a heathen historian, in describing its capture and destruction, repeatedly refers to an ancient prediction respecting it. Diodorus Siculus relates, that the king of Assyria, after the complete discomfiture of his army, confided in an old prophecy, that Nineveh would not be taken unless the river should become the enemy of the city; that after an ineffectual siege of two years, the river, swollen with long-continued and tempestuous torrents, inundated part of the city and threw down the wall for the space of twenty furlongs; and that the king, deeming the prediction accomplished, despaired of his safety, and erected an immense funeral pile, on which he heaped his wealth, and with which himself, his household, and palace were consumed. The book of Nahum was avowedly prophetic of the destruction of Nineveh: and it is therefore told that ‘the gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved,’ ‘Nineveh, of old, like a pool of water—with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof.’ The historian describes the facts by which the other predictions of the prophet were as literally fulfilled. He relates that the king of Assyria, elated with his former victories, and ignorant of the revolt of the Bactrians, had abandoned himself to scandalous inaction; had appointed a time of festivity, and supplied his soldiers with abundance of wine; and that the general of the enemy, apprized, by deserters, of their negligence and drunkenness, attacked the Assyrian army while the whole of them were fearlessly giving way to indulgence, destroyed great part of them, and drove the rest into the city. The words of the prophet were hereby verified: ‘While they be folded together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully

Now, we have wrong conceptions of God, if we think that, because he made the children of Israel his peculiar people, he therefore neglected all the world besides. On the contrary, ‘³ Though he showed his word unto

³ Ps. cxlvii. 19.

dry.’ The prophet promised much spoil to the enemy: ‘Take the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is no end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture.’ And the historian affirms, that many talents of gold and silver, preserved from the fire, were carried to Ecbatana. According to Nahum, the city was not only to be destroyed by an overflowing flood, but the fire also was to devour it; and, as Diodorus relates, partly by water, partly by fire, it was destroyed. The utter and perpetual destruction and desolation of Nineveh were foretold: ‘The Lord will make an utter end of the place thereof. Affliction shall not rise up the second time. She is empty, and void, and waste. The Lord will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. How is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in!’ In the second century, Lucian, a native of a city on the banks of the Euphrates, testified that Nineveh was utterly perished,—that there was no vestige of it remaining,—and that none could tell where once it was situated. This testimony of Lucian, and the lapse of many ages during which the place was not known where it stood, render it at least somewhat doubtful whether the remains of an ancient city, opposite to Mosul, which have been described as such by travellers, be indeed those of ancient Nineveh. It is perhaps probable that they are the remains of the city which succeeded Nineveh, or of a Persian city of the same name, which was built on the banks of the Tigris by the Persians, subsequently to the year 230 of the Christian era, and demolished by the Saracens in 632. In contrasting the then existing great and increasing population, and the accumulating wealth of the proud inhabitants of the mighty Nineveh, with the utter ruin that awaited it,—the word of God, (before whom all the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers), by Nahum was—‘Make thyself many as the canker-worm, make thyself many as the locusts. Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the canker-worm spoileth and fleeth away. Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers which camp in the hedges in the cold day; but when the sun riseth they flee away; and their place is not known where they are,’ or were. Whether these words imply that even the site of Nineveh would in future ages be uncertain or unknown, or as they rather seem to intimate, that every vestige of the palaces of its monarchs, of the greatness of its nobles, and of the wealth of its numerous merchants, would wholly disappear; the truth of the prediction cannot be invalidated under either interpretation. The avowed ignorance respecting Nineveh, and the oblivion which passed over it, for many an age, conjoined with the meagreness of evidence to identify it still, prove that the place was long unknown where it stood, and that even now it can scarcely with certainty be determined. And, if the only spot that bears its name, or that can be said to be the place where it was, be indeed the site of one of the most extensive of cities on which the sun ever shone, and which continued for many centuries to be the capital of Assyria,—the ‘principal mounds,’ few in number, which show neither bricks, stones, nor other materials of building, but are in many places overgrown with grass, and resemble the mounds left by intrenchments and fortifications of ancient Roman camps, and the appearances of other mounds and ruins, less marked than even these, extending for ten miles, and widely spread, and seeming to be ‘the wreck of former buildings,’ show that Nineveh is left without one monument of royalty, without any token whatever of its splendour or wealth; that their place is not known where they were; and that it is indeed a desolation—‘empty, void, and waste,’ its very ruins perished, and less than the wreck of what it was. ‘Such an utter ruin,’ in every view, has been made of it; and such is the truth of the divine predictions.—*Keith’s Evidence of Prophecy.*—Several writers are of opinion that the ruins on the eastern bank of the Tigris, opposite to the town of Mosul, point out the site of the ancient Nineveh. Mr Rich, who was resident at Bagdad, describes on this spot an enclosure of a rectangular form, corresponding with the cardinal points of the compass, but the area of which is too small to have contained a larger town than Mosul. The boundary of this en-

A. M. 3001. A. C. 1003; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4651. A. C. 757. 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON.

Jacob, and his statutes and ordinances unto Israel,' in a particular manner, yet he did not leave himself without a witness in other nations; but whenever they were drawing destruction upon themselves, took care to acquaint them with their impending doom. To this purpose, we may observe, that not only Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, but almost all the other prophets, do foretell the destruction of Babylon, and publish the divine threats against Egypt, Edom, and the other kingdoms neighbouring upon Canaan; that ¹ Jeremiah, in particular, was ordered by God to make himself bonds and yokes, and send them to the kings of the Ammonites, of Tyre and Sidon, and other princes, by the hand of their ministers, who were then at the court of Zedekiah king of Judah, with his admonition to their masters, that unless they repented of their evil ways, he would deliver them into the power of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, whom he calls his servant, even as he does ² Cyrus, his anointed, for being appointed to execute his will, some hundred years before he was born; and, therefore, we need less wonder, that we find God interesting himself in the preservation of the large and populous city of Nineveh, upon which depended the whole fate of the Assyrian empire, since, in all ages, he has given proofs of his protection and absolute dominion over other nations, as well as the Israelites, either in threatening their disobedience, in order to procure their amendment, or if they despised his threatenings, in punishing their obstinacy, as they deserve.

³ 'Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,' says an apostle of great authority; and, therefore, we may presume, that as Jonah was the only prophet in the Old Testament that was sent expressly to preach to the Gentiles, God might design hereby to give to his people a premonition of his intention, 'in the fulness of time, 'to raise up a root of Jesse,' as the prophet expresses it, 'which would stand for an ensign of the people, and unto

which the Gentiles should seek: to ⁵ break down the middle wall of partition, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances; and to unite all nations in one communion, 'under ⁶ one great shepherd and bishop of their souls.'

But whether God might design this call to the Ninevites, as a pledge and assurance of his future admission of the people of all nations into the privileges of the Christian covenant, this certainly he might have under his immediate view, namely, to show the disparity between his people and aliens, and upon the comparison of their several behaviours, shame them for living unreclaimed, under the constant preaching of his prophets for so many years, when a people, whom they despised, as 'being strangers to the covenant of promise,' had, by the mighty power of his word, been converted in the space of three days.

Nothing is more common in Scripture, than to find God complaining of his people for not attending to the messages which he sent them; ⁷ 'since the day that their fathers came forth out of Egypt,' says God to one of his prophets, 'even unto this day, I have sent unto them all my servants, the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them; yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck, and did worse than their fathers: therefore shalt thou speak all these words unto them, but they will not hearken, and thou shalt call unto them, but they will not answer thee.' And therefore God, very well foreknowing the success that his prophets would meet with, might send him with commission to preach to the Ninevites, not only in pursuance of his kind purposes to them, but with an intent likewise to render his own people inexcusable, even as our Saviour represents the case of the Jews in his days, who refused to hear him: ⁸ 'The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold a greater than Jonah is here.'

And indeed some have imagined, that one great cause of Jonah's declining the order at first, and of his going at last with so much reluctance to Nineveh, might be some suspicion, that in case these Gentiles should listen to his preaching, it might be not only a lasting reproach, but a means of reprobation likewise to his countrymen, who, under the constant ministration of so many prophets, were only become more obdurate in sin; and therefore, jealous of the honour of his nation, and too solicitous for their preservation, he could not prevail with himself to accept of a commission that seemed to interfere with this, lest a ready compliance with the divine command at Nineveh should prove the disparagement at least, if not the utter rejection of ⁹ 'his brethren, his kinsmen after the flesh.'

The prophet himself, however, has suggested another reason for his unwillingness to go to Nineveh, and that is, the superabundant mercy of God, which, he foresaw, would be moved to pity at the prayers and tears of the people; and therefore he remonstrates thus: ¹⁰ 'I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before into Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful,

¹ Jer. xxvii. 2, &c. ² Is. xlv. 1. ³ Rom. iii. 19.⁴ Is. xi. 10.

closure, which he supposes to answer to the palace of Nineveh, may be perfectly traced all around, and looks like an embankment of earth or rubbish, of small elevation; and has attached to it, and in its line, at several places, mounds of greater size and solidity. The first of these forms the south-west angle; and on it is built the village of Nebbi Yunus, where they show the tomb of the prophet Jonas. The next, and largest of all, is the one which Mr Rich supposes to be the monument of Ninus, and is situated near the centre of the western face of the enclosure, being joined like the others by the boundary wall; the natives call it Koyunjuk Tepé. Its form is that of a truncated pyramid, with regular steep sides and a flat top; and is composed of stones and earth, the latter predominating sufficiently to admit of the summit being cultivated by the inhabitants of the village of Koyunjuk, which is built on it at the north-east extremity. The measurements of this mound were 178 feet for the greatest height, 1850 feet the length of the summit east and west, and 1147 for its breadth north and south. Out of a mound in the north face of the boundary was dug, some time since, an immense block of stone, on which were sculptured the figures of men and animals. So remarkable was this fragment of antiquity, that even Turkish apathy was roused, and the pacha and most of the principal people of Mosul came out to see it. One of the spectators particularly recollected among the sculptures of this stone, the figure of a man on horseback, with a long lance in his hand, followed by a great many others on foot. These ruins seem to attest the former existence of some extensive buildings on the spot, but whether belonging to the ancient Nineveh will admit of considerable doubt.—*Catmel's Dictionary*.—Ed.

⁵ Eph. ii. 44.⁶ 1 Pet. ii. 25.⁷ Jer. vii. 25, &c.⁸ Mat. xii. 41.⁹ Rom. ix. 3.¹⁰ Jon. iv. 2.

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slow to anger, of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.' But how plausible soever this excuse may be, yet upon the face of the whole affair, it appears that the prophet considered himself a little too much; and therefore we may conclude, that the true reason for his declining this errand, was the hazard and difficulty of the undertaking, and the great uncertainty of its success: the very same thought that deterred Moses from applying to Pharaoh to grant the Israelites their liberty, and Gideon from taking up arms to rescue his country from the slavery of the Midianites: for as each of these made their several excuses; 'I am of uncircumcised lips,' says one, 'and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?' and, 'I am the least in my father's house,' says the other, 'and how then shall I save Israel?' So might Jonah say within himself, 'I am less than the least of the prophets,' and how then can I expect that the people of so great and opulent a city will give any attention to my preaching; that they will not rather take the alarm, and fall upon me, and slay me, when I come to tell them that their ruin and destruction is so near approaching? I will get quit of this dangerous affair, therefore, as well as I can; and because I conceive that the spirit of prophecy, which upon this account makes me so uneasy, will not pursue me, after I am gone out of the holy land, I will make the best of my way into Cilicia; for when I have got at some distance from Judea, God perhaps may think no more of sending me, but may find him out some other prophet, that is better qualified for this purpose.' But 'whither shall I go from thy Spirit?' as one better instructed than Jonah seems to be in this article of his omnipresence, addresses himself to God, 'or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down into hell, thou art there also; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me;' which no man ever so experimentally found to be true as did this prophet, while he sojourned in the deep, and took up his habitation in the whale's belly.

² Some learned men indeed are of opinion, that the fish which swallowed up Jonah was not a whale, because the largest of these, as they tell us, have but in proportion very narrow gullets, such as are not capable of receiving a man entirely into their stomachs: and therefore they imagine that it was what they call the lamia, or seadog, which, though less in bulk than a whale, has a gullet so vastly large, that frequently in its stomach have been found men, all whole and entire, ³ and sometimes clad in armour.

It must be acknowledged, that the Hebrew *dag-gadol*, which the text in Jonah makes use of, signifies no more than any great fish; but then it makes something for the common opinion, that the whale is the largest species we know of that swims in the sea. The ancients indeed seem to have enlarged too much in their account of this animal. ⁴ Pliny talks of some that were 600 feet long, and

above half as much broad. Solinus ⁵ makes others no less than 800 feet; and Dionysius ⁶ seems to affirm of others, that they had a throat wide enough to swallow up a ship with all its rigging. But though these may pass for extravagant exaggerations, ⁷ an author who has written expressly upon this subject gives us this account:—"That in the northern seas, there are whales of such a prodigious bigness, that when their flesh is taken off, and nothing left but their skeletons, they look like large vessels, or rather like spacious houses, with several chambers and windows in them, wherein a whole family might find room to live." Their mouth, every one allows, is capable of containing several men at once. We are told ⁸ of one cast on the coast of Tuscany, in the year 1624, whose jaws were so wide, that a man on horseback might have ridden into them with ease: and we have not much reason to doubt, but that their throat and belly are answerable ⁹ to so spacious an opening.

It cannot be thought, indeed, but the œsophagus in creatures that are dead, must be contracted to a great degree, in comparison to what it is when they are alive, and especially when they are eating; in which case it is capable of so great dilatation, as is evident from a pike's sometimes swallowing another fish almost of his own magnitude, that we need not much fear, but that the fish, which God had provided for that purpose, was able to gulp Jonah down at once, without ever hurting him. For the whale, as we are told has neither teeth nor tusks, whereas the seadog has four or five rows of teeth in each jaw, and is therefore the much properer of the two to receive into its stomach any thing alive without the danger of contusion.

Thus we have conveyed Jonah safe and sound into the whale's belly; let us, in the next place, see how he is to live there for the space of three days. The Scripture indeed speaks precisely of ¹⁰ 'three days and three nights;' but as Jonah was a type of our Saviour, and his abode in the belly of the whale, a prefiguration of our Lord's continuance ¹¹ 'in the heart of the earth,' there is some reason to think, that the type and the antitype, in this respect, were both alike; and that as our Lord was but one whole day, and part of two more, in the grave, so Jonah might continue no longer in the deep, and yet according to the Hebrew way of computation, both might be truly said to have been 'three days and three nights,' in their respective confinements. But not to insist on this abbreviation of time, what some naturalists tell us of the food of the whale, namely, that it does not live on flesh, but on weeds, on the froth of the sea, on insects, and such small fish as are easy of digestion; and that, consequently, as having a colder stomach, it was a fitter receptacle for the prophet, than any other fish that was carnivorous; this might be of some consideration perhaps, were we not disposed to call in the miraculous power of God, which alone could preserve him in these circumstances. But then, we cannot but allow, that as he suspended the violence of the fire from

¹ Ps. cxxxix. 7.² Bochart's Sacred Zoology, part 2. b. 5. c. 12; Bartholin. cu Diseases in Old Testament, art. 14.³ This a French author, named Rondelet, reports of one of these seadogs, which was taken near Nice, or Marseilles. — *Calmet's Dissertation* on the fish which swallowed Jonah.⁴ B. 38. c. 1.⁵ C. 52.⁶ Periegetes, ver. 603.⁷ Olaus Magnus on Wonderful Fishes, b. 21. c. 15, 16.⁸ John Cabri of the academy of Florence, makes mention of this whale.⁹ Its mouth was so large in extent, that it resembled the opening of a cave.¹⁰ Jon. i. 17.¹¹ Mat. xii. 40.

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hurting the three young men that were cast into the furnace: that as he made St Peter's body either so light as to walk upon the waters, or the waters so solid as to support it; so with the same facility, he might control the acid humours in any creature's stomach, and make it, for such a determinate time, lose its faculty of digestion: for in all this there is nothing that surpasses the power of the great Author of nature, who gives or suspends the activity of all bodies, who stops or controls, who changes or modifies, as he thinks fit, all the motions which he communicates to matter, of what kind soever it be. And, in like manner, though it be impossible, according to the ordinary laws of nature, for a man to breathe in the stomach of a fish, or at least to draw in such a quantity of air as is requisite to give a due circulation to his blood; yet since it is neither contrary to the nature nor superior to the power of God, by one means or other to effect the thing, if it be but agreeable to his will, we cannot see any reason why it may not be done.

Bats and swallows, and other birds, which in the cold season of the year, creep into cliffs of rocks, and hollow trees,¹ creatures that live under ground, and several others that abide at the bottom of deep water, subsist in a manner without breathing. They live, as it were in a *deliquium* of life, and the blood in their veins seems to move very slowly, if at all; and yet we find them revive again, upon the approach of the genial heat of the sun, to give their blood and juices a brisker fermentation; and why might not God then, during these three days and nights, put Jonah into the very same state of repose and tranquillity, that either the element they live in, or the colder season of the year, do naturally bring upon these animals, by correcting the fluidity, and retarding the circulation of his blood, so as to make frequent respiration not so necessary?

The ancient physicians were of opinion, that while the child continued in its mother's womb, it lived without breathing, so that there was no employment for the lungs, until it came into the open air; but later anatomists will persuade us, that, without some circulation of blood in the body, no animal can live; and therefore they pretend to have found out in the fœtus a considerable artery, which conveys the blood from the *vena cava*, without its passing into the right ventricle of the heart, into the lungs; from whence by another smaller artery, which they call the *total*, it is carried into the *aorta*, and so continues in a perpetual circulation, without entering the lobes of the lungs, which are not replete with blood, nor begin to move, until the child is born and sucks in the fresh air. For then, say they, the blood being forced by the motion of the heart into the artery, whose orifice lies in its right ventricle, goes directly into the lungs, and is thence brought back by the pulmonary vein, so that the other vessels which help the circulation of blood in the fœtus, being now become useless, do by degrees stop and are dried up. But it may not always happen so: in some particular persons nature sometimes preserves them open: and this is the reason which some give us why the divers, as they are called, who accustom themselves to go under deep water to discover and bring up the riches of the deep, can abide so long in that element without breathing.²

We pretend not however to advance, that Jonah was one of this sort of men; but still we may affirm, that it was in God's power, during his continuance in the fish's belly, to put him in such a state of acquiescence, and his blood into such a form of circulation, as would require no more respiration than the fœtus has in the womb. In this there is nothing impossible, nothing incompatible with the laws of nature; though it must be acknowledged that strictly speaking the thing is above the ordinary and known laws of nature, and therefore miraculous: but then if we believe not this miracle, why should we believe any other, or why should it be thought a more incredible thing, that Jonah should live three days in the belly of a large fish, than that Lazarus³ should be recalled to life again, after he had been four days buried in the grave; that the prophet should return from this sea-monster's stomach, safe and sound, than that the⁴ three Jews in Babylon should escape from the flaming furnace, without having so much "as the smell of the fire pass upon them?"

"But other miracles, it may be said, were done for some wise ends of providence, and when there appeared an urgent occasion for God's exerting his almighty power; whereas, in the case before us, there seems to be none at all."

That prophets, however, invested with great power, and sometimes intrusted with high commissions from God, were⁵ 'men subject to like passions' and infirmities as we are, is evident, not only from the testimony of the apostle, but from the accounts of their own behaviour likewise. The prophet that was sent to Bethel, to denounce God's judgment against the idolatrous altar, was a sad example of human frailty, in giving credit to the persuasions of another, even when they contradicted a divine command. Jonah, when he was directed to go to Nineveh, discovered the like if not greater tokens of human infirmity, when, instead of pursuing that journey, he bent his course another way, not without some vain hopes of evading, by that means, the divine presence: and therefore as God sent a lion to slay the prophet of Judah, for his too much credulity; so some have imagined, that he not only pursued this prophet of Israel with a dreadful storm, but even had him thrown overboard, and swallowed up by this sea-monster, in punishment for his perverseness and prevarication. God indeed, by his 'varruling power, made the belly of this monster a place of security to him; but what notions the prophet himself had of this strange habitation,⁶ 'where the floods compassed him about, and the billows and waves passed over him,' we may learn from his meditations in the deep,⁷ 'when he cried, by reason of his affliction, to the Lord, and he heard him;' so that, upon the presumption that God intended not to destroy him, the primary reason, we may imagine, for his appointing this fish to swallow him up, was to stop this fugitive prophet, as he was endeavouring to make his escape: but then, 'in the midst of judgment, thinking upon mercy,' after a confinement of three nights and three days in the deep, whereby he both taught him better obedience for the future, and rectified his notions concerning the divine omnipresence, he ordered his jailor, if we may so speak, to give him his liberty, and deliver him safe on shore.

¹ Calmet's Dissertation on the Fish, &c.² On this subject see the following supplement by the Editor.³ John xi. 17, 39, 44.⁴ Dan. iii. 27.⁵ Ja. v. 17.⁶ Jon. ii. 3.⁷ Ibid. ver. 2.

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The oriental traditions do vastly differ as to the place where Jonah was cast upon the land. ¹ Josephus must needs be under a gross mistake, when, to throw him upon some coast of the Euxine sea, he makes the whale, which could hardly be any quick mover, run 800 leagues, at least, in three days and nights; neither are others, who from the upper part of the Mediterranean, carry him into the ocean, and thence into the Red Sea, or the Persian Gulf, in the like space of time, any happier in their conjectures. The ship, we know, was bound for Tarsus ² a great trading town in Cilicia, a province in Asia Minor, at the east end of the Mediterranean Sea; and therefore the most probable opinion is, that somewhere on this coast, the fish disembogued itself of Jonah; and if so, the mariners, who by the time that he was set on shore, had arrived at their port, when they heard the strange account of his deliverance, must have become converts to the worship of that God only, who, in this instance, had shown himself able, ³ 'to do whatever he pleased in heaven, and in the earth, in the sea, and in all the deep places.'

In the storm which St Paul, in his voyage from Crete to Rome, underwent, an angel stood by him one night, and said unto him, ⁴ 'Lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee:' and if, by the expression, we may understand the salvation of their souls, as well as their bodies, a sufficient reason it was, for God's permitting this distress to fall upon them, since eventually it proved the occasion of their conversion. And, in like manner, if the sudden ceasing of the storm upon 'Jonah's being cast forth into the sea,' ⁵ made so strong an impression upon the mariners that sailed with him, how can we think, but that his miraculous escape out of that merciless element, especially when he came to recount the particulars of it, would make them all proselytes to his religion? And if we may suppose further, that some of the ship's crew accompanied him to Nineveh, as knowing the purpose of his errand thither, to testify to the people that he was the same man who was in this manner delivered from the jaws of the deep, or that the Ninevites came by their intelligence of this miracle by some other means, we have here a good reason why they attended to his message, and repented at his preaching; and consequently why God wrought this wonderful work upon him, in order to give his predictions more weight and authority.

Nay, farther, we may suppose, that when the people of Nineveh heard Jonah preaching about their streets, and threatening their city with so sudden a destruction, their curiosity would naturally lead them to inquire who that person was, and by whose authority it was that he took so much upon him? and being informed that he was of a nation, ⁶ 'which had God more nigh unto them in all

things that they called upon him for, and had statutes and judgments more righteous' than any other people upon earth: a nation ⁷ 'to whom,' as the apostle expresses it, 'appertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises:' a nation ⁸ 'which the Lord had taken from the midst of another nation,' had brought out of Egypt, and settled in Canaan, 'by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors;' and that he, in particular, was a prophet of this great God, who 'had made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is,' and who, for his disobedience in refusing to come upon this errand, had confined him in the deep for three days and nights, but now, upon his humiliation, had set him free from his ghastly prison, and given him courage to speak with so much boldness; the people, I say, who were informed of all this, could not well fail of giving God the glory due unto his name, for sending a prophet of his favourite nation, and one of so distinguished a character, to give them notice of their impending doom.

⁹ 'I wrought for my name's sake,' says God, remembering the wondrous things which he had done for the children of Israel, 'I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted among the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them out of the land of Egypt:' and therefore we may well admit, as another motive to his working this miracle, the desire he had to raise the fame of a nation he had taken so immediately under his care, as well as to have the glory of his own name magnified among the Gentiles. To which we may add that most weighty reason of all, which our blessed Saviour suggests: ¹⁰ 'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.' So that the great design of God's exhibiting, at this time, this miracle in the person of Jonah, was to confirm, in future ages, the great and fundamental article of our faith, upon which the whole superstructure of the Christian religion depends, 'the resurrection of our Saviour Christ;' and that whenever the reality of that fact, as it is related in the New Testament, came to be called in question, we might be furnished with a parallel instance of the mighty power of God recorded in the Old.

Nor is it only in the sacred records that we meet with this history of Jonah, but in the fables, related by several heathen authors, both in verse and prose, we find evident footsteps and memorials of it. Hercules was the great champion of the Grecians, and his fame they were wont to adorn with all the remarkable exploits that they could in any nation hear of. It is not improbable therefore, ¹¹ that the adventure of his jumping down the throat of the seadog, which Neptune had sent to devour him, and there concealing himself for three days, without any manner of hurt, save the loss of a few hairs, which came off by the heat of the creature's stomach, was founded upon some blind tradition which these people

¹ Jewish Antiq. b. ix. c. 11.

² Wells' Geography of the New Testament, part 2.

³ Ps. cxxxv. 6.

⁴ Acts xxvii. 24.

⁵ Jonah i. 16.

⁶ Deut. iv. 7, 8.

^a Commentators are not agreed as to whether this was the same with Tartessus in Spain, the most celebrated emporium in the west to which the Hebrews traded, or Tarsus, the metropolis of Cilicia, celebrated as the birth-place of St Paul: a considerable number of eminent names might be adduced in support of both opinions. That it was the one or other of these places seems almost certain; but it is not of great importance that we should be assured which it was.—ED

⁷ Rom. ix. 4.

⁸ Deut. iv. 34.

⁹ Ezek. xx. 9, 14.

¹⁰ Mat. xii. 39, 40.

¹¹ Lycophron, see Grotius and Bochart

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might have of what happened to Jonah. Nor can the known story of Arion, thrown overboard by the seamen, but taken up by a dolphin, and carried safe to Corinth, be justly referred to any other original; since, ¹ besides some resemblance in their names, and no great disparity in the times wherein they lived, which are both circumstances that make for this hypothesis, the supposed difference in their respective callings can be no manner of objection to it, ² because the same word in the Hebrew tongue signifies both a prophet and a musician. And therefore it is remarkable, that as Arion played the tune wherewith he charmed and allured the fish to save him, before he jumped overboard; so Jonah, when he found himself safely landed, uttered, what is called ³ a prayer indeed, but is, in reality, a lofty hymn in commemoration of his great deliverance, as appears by this specimen: ⁴ "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me round about, and weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth, with her bars, was about me for ever; yet hast thou brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God."

CHAP. IV.—*On Jonah's Mission to Nineveh, and abode in the Whale's belly.*

SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.

THE author of the Fragments appended to Calmet's Dictionary, explains this, not of a living animal, but of a floating preserver, by which Jonah was saved from drowning. He remarks that the word which is used in the original, 'Dag,' signifies primarily a fish; yet, that it also signifies a fish boat, and figuratively a preserver, so that the passage will admit of being rendered thus: 'the Lord prepared a large preserver to receive Jonah, and Jonah was in the inner part,' the belly or hold, 'three days and nights, and then was cast up on the shore.'

But this fanciful interpretation cannot be adopted, because it contradicts the express declaration of our Lord.⁵ There are four objections urged to the account which is given us of this miracle: first, that the gullet of a whale is too small to admit the body of a man. Secondly, that though admitted entire into the stomach of this fish, he could not live there. Thirdly, that there are no whales in the Mediterranean sea. And fourthly, that the whole story is rendered improbable by the representation given of the character and religious principles of Jonah.

The first objection is refuted by observations which have been made on the natural history of the whale. Captain Scoresby states, that when the mouth of the great common whale is open, it presents a cavity as large as a room, and capable of containing a merchant ship's jolly boat full of men, being six or eight feet wide, ten or twelve feet high, and fifteen or sixteen feet long.⁶ The objection of infidel writers, therefore, in regard to this point, is vain and unfounded.

But it is further alleged, that though the body of a

man might be admitted entire into the stomach of this fish, he could not live there. But Dr Mosely has ascertained by the most decisive experiments, that digestion in fishes is not produced either by trituration or by the heat of the stomach. "I generally found," says he, "after cutting up the stomachs of many cod-fish just as they came alive out of the water,—small oysters, muscles, cockles, and crabs, as well as small fishes of their own and other species. The coldness of the stomach of these fishes, is far greater than the temperature of the water out of which they are taken, or of any other part of the fish, or of any other substance of animated nature I ever felt. On wrapping one of them round my hand, immediately on being taken out of the fish, it caused so much aching and numbness that I could not endure it long." "Animals or parts of animals, possessed of the living principle, when taken into the stomach, are not," says Mr John Hunter,⁷ "in the least affected by the powers of that *viscus*, so long as the animal principle remains. Thence it is that we find animals of various kinds living in the stomach, or even hatched and bred there; but the moment that any of these lose the living principle, they become subject to the digestive power of the stomach. If it were possible for a man's hand, for example, to be introduced into the stomach of a living animal, and kept there for some considerable time, it would be found that the dissolvent powers of the stomach could have no effect upon it; but if the same hand were separated from the body, and introduced into the same stomach, we should then find, that the stomach would immediately act upon it. Indeed, if this were not the case, we should find that the stomach itself ought to have been made of indigestible materials; for, if the living principle were not capable of preserving animal substances from undergoing that process, the stomach itself would be digested. But we find, on the contrary, that the stomach, which at one instant, that is, while possessed of the living principle, was capable of resisting the digestive power which it contained, the next moment, namely, when deprived of the living principle, is itself capable of being digested, either by the digestive powers of other stomachs, or by the remains of that power which it had of digesting other things."

Still, however, it is stated, by way of objection, that there are no whales in the Mediterranean sea. With the view of obviating this objection, some writers have supposed that the shark may have been the fish which is here intended. But in truth, the objection which this hypothesis is designed to meet, is frivolous: for on any supposition the preservation of Jonah was owing to a miraculous interposition of providence. It is expressly asserted, "that God had prepared a great fish:" and who will say, that God could not by an impulse communicated bring the whale to the side of the ship, and prepare it for the purpose which it was intended to answer?

But the fourth objection to the whole of this narration is, that the story is rendered improbable by the representation given of the character and religious principles of Jonah. Can we imagine that a man would have been selected, to deliver a message from God to the great city of Nineveh, who was himself so ignorant as to suppose that he could flee from the presence of the Creator

¹ Huet. *Demonst. Evang. Propos. 4. de Prophetia Jonah.*

² Huetius, *ibid.*

³ Jon. ii. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.* ver. 5, 6.

⁵ Mat. xii. 40.

⁶ Vol. i. p. 455.

⁷ Phil. Trans. vol. lxii. p. 449.

⁸ Jon. i. 17.

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and Governor of the universe, and whose dispositions were so perverse as to make him unwilling to execute a commission the most honourable that could be intrusted to man?

A candid consideration of the circumstances of the case will show that there is no force whatever even in this objection.—Of Jonah little more is known than that he was of Gath-hepher, a town in the tribe of Zebulon, and connected with the kingdom of Israel. He was not ignorant, as has been imagined, that Jehovah is the God of the whole earth, whose dominion is universal, and from whose presence no swiftness can flee. But by fleeing unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, he meant a withdrawal from that prophetic ministry in the immediate and more special presence of God, as it were, which he had been called to discharge. Some think, that he declined going to Nineveh to denounce the judgments of God against it, because he was jealous for the honour of Israel, and was not willing that the Gentiles should partake of the benefits of prophecy; and he afterwards intimates¹ that he apprehended that God would mercifully spare Nineveh, and that he should be despised and punished as a false prophet. But when we consider the perils and hardships to which this journey and message were likely to expose him; when we imagine to ourselves the probable reception of a despised prophet of Israel in this proud idolatrous city, come avowedly to predict its speedy destruction; and that this might draw on him the resentment both of the rulers and the multitude, we shall not wonder that he was extremely reluctant to undertake the service. How often does it happen, that the servant of the Lord wishes for a removal from his post merely to escape the opposition with which he may be assailed,—not remembering that, however painful may be his circumstances, he is safe while in the path of duty, and that in fleeing from that path still greater trials await him!

Strong faith and a habit of unreserved obedience were necessary to overcome the reluctance that Jonah must have felt. He seems to have supposed that the spirit of prophecy would not rest on him, if he left the land of Israel to go some other way than to Nineveh: he desired to be freed from those impulses with which he had not courage and faith to comply, and he therefore proposed 'to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.' Accordingly, he went to Joppa, a seaport town, about forty miles from Gath-hepher, where he is supposed to have dwelt. There he met with a vessel about to sail to Tarshish, and, paying the fare, went aboard, not expecting to be pursued by more imminent danger, than any of those from which he fled. A tempest was commissioned to arrest the ship. The affrighted mariners having some sense of a superior power, but no right knowledge of the true God; and being of different countries, cried, every one to the idol that he had been used to worship, for deliverance from death. The extraordinary nature of this tempest, and the general notions of a superior power, and of right and wrong, which these men entertained, induced them to conclude, that some atrocious criminal sailed with them, for whose cause this evil had befallen them. They agreed to decide, by casting lots, who was the criminal. This was

an appeal to the heart-searching God, and to his providence; and he was pleased to determine the matter for them, by causing the lot to fall upon Jonah. When he was thus singled out as the culprit, whom divine vengeance pursued, the mariners calmly entreated him to inform them, whether he was not conscious of some great crime, for which this calamity was come upon them.

Without reserve Jonah told them of his people and religion, as a worshipper of Jehovah the God of heaven, the Creator both of the sea and the dry land; and at the same time ingenuously confessed his sin. This exceedingly alarmed them; and perceiving that the tempest continued to increase, and not knowing how to act, inquired of Jonah himself as the prophet of Jehovah, what they ought to do in this emergency. He, convinced of his sin and folly, and perhaps receiving some intimation of the divine will, counselled them to cast him into the sea, and then the tempest would cease, for he knew that it was raised on his account. When they found that their endeavours to preserve his life and their own were in vain; and after they had prayed to Jehovah not to impute to them the guilt of murder when in self-preservation they sacrificed his servant, they cast him overboard. The storm having ceased immediately, they were so impressed with what they had seen and heard, that they feared the mighty power of God, and worshipped his name. "Disclaiming all their idol gods," says Bishop Hall, "they offered a sacrifice to the only true God, and made vows to him, to worship him at Jerusalem."

SECT. IV

CHAP. I.—*From the Death of Uzziah, to the Death of Josiah king of Judah.*

THE HISTORY.

THE interregnum,^a or vacancy in the throne of Israel, which lasted for two and twenty years and upwards, occasioned so general a confusion, that the people at length came to a resolution to place Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam, and the fourth^b and last of Jehu's line,

^a This interregnum some chronologers make longer, and some shorter, according as they suppose that Zechariah reigned more or less in conjunction with his father: but that there was manifestly a vacancy in the throne of Israel for the time assigned, is evident from hence: that Jeroboam II., who began to reign in the fifteenth year of Amaziah king of Judah, died in the fifteenth year of Uzziah; and that his son Zechariah began not to reign till the eight and thirtieth year of the said Uzziah: so that there was plainly all this interregnum; but whence it was occasioned, whether by foreign wars, or rather by domestic confusions, as appears by the unfortunate end of the successors, we are nowhere told.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^b God had promised Jehu, that, for executing his will upon the house of Ahab, he would continue the crown of Israel in his family for four generations; and accordingly Jehoahaz, Joash, Jehoram, and Zechariah succeeded him: but because he did it not so much in obedience to the divine command, as to satisfy his private and ambitious views, and in a method of cruelty quite abhorrent to the divine nature, God cut his family short, as soon as he had fulfilled his promise to him, and thereby accomplished the prophecy of Hosea; 'I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the

¹ Chap. iv. 1, 2.

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upon the throne. This happened in the eight and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; but as he proved a wicked prince, and followed the steps of his ancestors, he did not live long to enjoy the government; for at the end of six months he was murdered by Shallum, who usurped the throne, but enjoyed it no longer than one month. For Menahem, general of the king's forces, which were then besieging Tirzah, hearing of what Shallum had done, immediately raised the siege, and marching directly to Samaria, defeated and slew Shallum; and by the power and authority of the army, placed himself upon the throne. Not long after this, he returned with his army to Tirzah; ^a but the inhabitants refusing to open the gates, he took the place by storm, and so having spoiled it, and laid all the country waste as far as Tiphzah, he came and sat down before it: but when the people of Tiphzah, in like manner, refused to open their gates, and submit to him, without distinction of age or sex, he put them all to the sword, and, in short, was so barbarously cruel, as to ^b rip up the very women that were with child.

Pul, ^c king of Assyria, taking the advantage of these

kingdom of the house of Israel (chap. i. 4.), and perhaps it was in remembrance of this prophecy, as well as of the promise which confined the kingdom in Jehu's family to four generations only (2 Kings xv. 10.), that Shallum was encouraged to attempt the life of Zechariah.—*Patrick's Commentary* and *Poole's Annotations*.

^a This is a place we find frequent mention of in the sacred records, because it was a long time the regal city of the kingdom of Israel, after that the ten tribes had revolted from the house of David. Jeroboam, who was the first king of Israel, though he dwelt for some time in Shechem, in his latter days at least, resided here, as did all the other kings of Israel, until Omri, having reigned six years in Tirzah, built Samaria, and removed the royal seat thither, where it continued until a final period was put to that kingdom. Now the reason which induced the first kings of Israel to make Tirzah the place of residence, may be gathered from that expression in Canticles, 'Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,' (vi. 4.) which certainly implies that Tirzah was a beautiful and pleasant city to dwell in. But how famous and beautiful a place soever this city was, we have no certain account of its situation: only it is supposed by most, that as Jeroboam was of the tribe of Ephraim, he would naturally be inclined to make choice of a place within the compass of his tribe for his royal city: and this opinion is thought to receive confirmation from the word Ephraim's being frequently used to denote the whole kingdom of Israel, even because its capital city was situated in that tribe. However this be, it is pretty plain, from the circumstances of the story, that the Tiphzah where Menahem exercised so much cruelty, was not the town of that name which lay upon the Euphrates, mentioned in 1 Kings iv. 21, as one of the boundaries of Solomon's dominion, but some place not far from Tirzah, and consequently, very probably in the tribe of Ephraim.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

^b Josephus does not indeed make mention of this particular instance of his unrelenting cruelty; but this he tells us, that, "when he had taken the town, he put all to the sword, without sparing a man, woman, or child; and that he exercised such merciless rigour and inhumanity towards his own countrymen, as would have been unpardonable even to the worst of barbarians;" but by these methods he thought, no doubt, to terrify the whole kingdom, so that none might dare to withstand him.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 9. c. 11. and *Patrick's Commentary*.

^c This is the first time that we find any mention made of the kingdom of Assyria, since the days of Nimrod, who erected a small principality there (Gen. x. 11.), and Pul, or Phul, is the first monarch of that nation who invaded Israel, and began their transportations out of their country. Some are of opinion that he was the same with Belesis, the governor of Babylon, who, together with Arbaces the Mede, slew Sardanapalus, the last of the Assyrian monarchs, and translated the empire to the Chaldeans. Our excellent Patrick seems to be confident in this. But accord-

ing to our learned Prideaux, Belesis was one generation later: and therefore it is supposed that this Pul was the father of Sardanapalus, who was called Sardon with the annexation of his father's name Pul, in the same manner as Merodach king of Babylon was called Merodach-baladan, because he was the son of Baladan. This Pul, therefore, was the same king of Assyria who, when Jonah preached against Nineveh, gave great tokens of his humiliation and repentance. [Dr Hales thinks he was son of that king.]—Ed. The only difficulty is, that he seems to have marched his army from Babylon, and not from Nineveh, and yet his son and successor, we find, lived at Nineveh; but then it is suggested that, as the kings of Assyria resided sometimes at Babylon, and sometimes at Nineveh, it is not improbable Pul, to avoid the judgments which Jonah threatened against the latter, might remove to Babylon, where he resided the remaining part of his reign; and this made it so convenient for him to attack the Israelites on the other side of Jordan.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 747, and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 6.

^d This shows that Menahem was a man of great weight and consideration; since, notwithstanding all his violence and cruelty, he left the kingdom in his own family, which his two predecessors could not do. It is manifest, however, that there was a small interregnum of about a year's continuance, between his death and his son's accession: for his son did not begin to reign till the fiftieth year of Uzziah, and yet he must have been dead the year before, because it is said of him, (2 Kings xv.) that he began to reign in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah, and reigned but ten years. There was therefore apparently an interregnum; but what the occasion of it was, it is not so well known; though there is room to suppose, that it proceeded from the interest of his successor, who might raise a party to keep him out of the throne, as he did afterwards to deprive him both of that and life. For, according to Josephus, "he was cut to pieces, with several of his friends about him, at a public feast, by the treasonable practices of Pekah, one of his principal officers, who, seizing upon the government, reigned about twenty years, and left it at last a difficult question to determine, 'Whether he was more remarkable for his impiety towards God, or for his injustice towards men?'"—*Josephus's Antiquities*, b. 9. c. 11., and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. 6.

^e He is supposed by some to have been the son and successor of Sardanapalus, who restored the kingdom of Assyria, and possessed it, after it had been dismembered by Belesis and Arbaces; but our learned Prideaux (who begins his excellent *Connection of the History of the Old and New Testament at this period*) makes him to be the same with Arbaces, by Elion called Thilgamus, and by Castor, Ninus Junior; who, together with Belesis, headed the conspiracy against Sardanapalus, and fixed his royal seat at Nineveh, the ancient residence of the Assyrian kings, as Belesis, who in Scripture is likewise called Baladan, (Is. xxxix. 1.) did his at Babylon, and there governed his new erected empire for nineteen years.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 747.

^f After he had murdered his predecessor Pekah, the elders of

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done his predecessor, and after an interregnum of nine years, ^a thrust himself into the throne; but it was not long before he found that his usurpation was attended with many incumbrances.

Salmaneser, who, in the fourteenth year of Ahaz, king of Judah, succeeded his father Tiglath-Pileser, in the kingdom of Assyria, invaded his country, and having subdued Samaria, made him promise to become his vassal, and to pay him an annual tribute. For some time Hoshea sent his presents, and his tribute money, very punctually; but having entered into a confederacy with So ^b king of Egypt, by his assistance he hoped to be able to shake off the Assyrian yoke; and therefore withdrew his subjection, and would pay no more tribute; whereupon Salmaneser ^c marched with an army against him, and having subdued all the country round, and amassed a ^d great quantity of rich prey, he came, and sat down before Samaria. The town held out for three years; but being at length compelled to surrender, Salmaneser quite demolished it. He took Hoshea, and put him in chains, and shut him up in prison all his days; and having ^e carried the people into captivity, and placed them in the north parts of Assyria, and in the cities of the Medes, he sent several colonies of his own subjects from Babylon, and other provinces, to replenish the land: but being too few for this purpose, and withal a very wicked and idolatrous people, the divine providence

the land seem to have taken the government into their own hands; for he had not the possession of the kingdom till the latter end of the twelfth year of Ahaz, that is, about nine years after he had committed the fact. He came to the crown, it must be owned, in a very wicked manner, and yet his character in Scripture is not so vile as many of his predecessors, (2 Kings xvii. 2.) For whereas the kings of Israel had hitherto maintained guards upon the frontiers, to hinder their subjects from going to Jerusalem to worship, Hoshea took away these guards, and gave free liberty to all to go and pay their adorations where the law had directed. And therefore, when Hezekiah invited all Israel to come to his passover, this prince permitted all that would to go: and when, upon their return from that festival, they destroyed all the monuments of idolatry that were found in the kingdom of Samaria, instead of forbidding them, in all probability he gave his consent to it; because without some tacit encouragement at least, they durst not have ventured to do it.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 729.

^a Ten years, according to Hales.—Ed.

^b This So, with whom Hoshea entered into confederacy, is, in profane authors, called Sabacon, that famous Ethiopian, mentioned by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, who, in the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, invaded Egypt, and having taken Boccharis, the king thereof, prisoner, had him, in great cruelty, burnt alive, and then seized on his kingdom.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 726.

^c Salmaneser, who in Tobit i. 2, is called Enemessar, and in Hosea x. 14, Shalman, was the son and successor of Arbaces, or Tiglath-Pileser, and according to Josephus, who has quoted a passage from Menander, there is mention made of him, and of his conquest of the land of Israel, in the history of the Tyrians.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 9. c. 14.

^d In this expedition, among other rich things which he took and carried away, was the golden calf which Jeroboam had set up at Bethel, which, ever since his time, had been worshipped by the ten tribes that had revolted with him from the house of David, as the other golden calf, which he, at the same time set up at Dan, had been taken thence, about ten years before, by his father Tiglath-Pileser, when he invaded Galilee, the province wherein that city stood.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 729.

^e The policy of any prince, in transplanting a conquered people into another country, is to prevent their combining together, which they cannot so well do in a strange land, and among a mixed multitude of different languages, in order to shake off their uneasy yoke, and recover their liberty.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

permitted lions, ^f and other wild beasts, to multiply upon them to such a degree, that they were forced to make a representation thereof at the Assyrian court, namely, "that being ignorant of the manner wherein they were to worship the god of the country, they supposed that this affliction was sent upon them; and therefore they humbly prayed, that some priest of the Jewish nation might be sent to instruct them in that particular."^g This accordingly was done: but as these colonies consisted of a mixture of different nations and provinces, they joined the worship of the true God with that of the several idols of the countries from whence they came; so that one might have seen the people who came from Babylon worshipping Succoth-Benoth; ^h the inhabitants of Cuthath, ⁱ praying to Nergal; ^k those of

^f Josephus, in this part of the history, takes the liberty to alter the sense of the sacred text: for instead of the increase of lions, which destroyed the people, he tells us, "that they were visited with a dreadful plague, so that the place was in a manner quite depopulated by it." But allowing it to be lions, why should these new inhabitants be afflicted with these creatures 'for not fearing the Lord,' (2 Kings xvii. 25.) when the Israelites, who feared the Lord as little as they, were never infested with any such thing? The Israelites were addicted to idolatry; but then they did not deny the divine power and providence, only they imagined, that their idols were the intermediate causes whereby the blessedness of the supreme God might be conveyed to them; whereas these new comers believed the idols that they worshipped to be true gods, and had no conceptions higher. They had no notion of one eternal, almighty, and independent being. The God of Israel they took to be such an one as their own, a topical god, whose power and care extended no farther than to one particular nation or people; and therefore, to rectify their sentiments in this particular, he took this method to let them know, that 'all the beasts of the forest were his,' and that whenever he is incensed with a people, he wants not instruments to execute his wrath; the air, the earth, the elements, and creatures of any kind, can avenge him, and punish them.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 9. c. 14. and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^g Imperfect as this teaching was, it in the end overthrew the idolatry of these people, so that soon after the Babylonish captivity they were found to be as free from idolatry as the Jews themselves, and continue so to the present day. But they are now nearly annihilated: the small remains of them is found at Naples and Jaffa; they are about thirty families; and men, women, and children, amount to about two hundred persons; they have a synagogue, which they regularly attend every sabbath; and they go thither clothed in white robes.—*Dr A. Clarke*.—Ed.

^h Among the great variety of conjectures, it is difficult to tell what we are properly to understand by these abstruse words. The Jewish doctors will have them to signify 'an hen and chickens;' but for what reason it is hardly conceivable. Others rather think them that celestial constellation called pleiades, which the Babylonians, who were greatly addicted to astronomy, might possibly worship. Some think them the name of a city which the Babylonians built in Samaria; and others a particular deity whom they adored; but since the words plainly import the 'tabernacle of daughters,' or 'young maidens,' they may be most properly referred to those infamous places where all the young women were obliged, once in their lives, to prostitute themselves to any that asked the favour, in honour of the goddess Mylitta, who, in other nations, is called Venus. Herodotus, in Clio b. 1, gives us an account of this abominable custom at large, and it is not improbable, that these Babylonians might bring it along with them into the country of Samaria.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word; *Selden on the Syrian gods*, Essay 2. c. 7. *Fossius on Idolatry*, b. 2. c. 2. and *Jurieu's History of Doctrines*, &c. part 4. c. 8.

ⁱ A province of Assyria, which, as some say, lies upon the Araxes; but others rather think it to be the same with Cush, which is said by Moses to be encompassed by the river Gihon, and must therefore be the same with the country which the Greeks call Susiana, and which, to this very day, is called by the inhabitants Chusestan.—*Wells's Geog. of the Old Test.* vol. 3.

^k The Rabbins, who are followed therein by some other inter-

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Hamath, ^a setting up Ashimah; ^b the Avites, ^c adoring Nibhaz ^d and Tartak; and those of Sepharvaim, ^e prostrate before Adramalech ^f and Ananalech; and all this,

preters, think that this deity is worshipped under the shape of a woodcock; but, as the word *ner* signifies a lamp, others, with better reason, have imagined that the Cuthites, who were afterwards called Persians, adored fire, and, in honour of the sun, in the same manner as the Persians did, kept a perpetual fire burning upon their altars.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

^a There are several cities and countries which go under this name; but what we take here to be meant, is that province of Syria that lies upon the Orontes, wherein there was a city of the same name, which when Salmaneser had taken he removed the inhabitants from thence into Samaria, at distance enough, as he thought, to prevent their raising any fresh commotion.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b Some of the Jewish doctors say, that this Syrian god was worshipped under the shape of an ape; others of a lamb; others of a goat; others of a satyr; and others in the figure wherein the poets represent the god Pan. They who made an ape of this idol god, seem to have some regard to the sound of the word Sima, which has an analogy to the Greek word *simia*; but the Hebrews, it is very well known, have another word to denote an ape, which together with the goat, was properly an Egyptian deity. The Syrians, however, adored the sun, under the appellation of Elah-Gabalah, from whence the emperor Heliogabalus, who instituted that worship with so much magnificence in Rome, took his name; and therefore, as Asuman or Suman, in the Persian language, signifies heaven, the Syrians might from thence derive the name of their god, who was represented by a large stone pillar, terminating in a conic or pyramidal figure, whereby they denoted fire.—*Patrick's Commentary* and *Dictionary* under the word, and *Tennison of Idolatry*.

^c In Deut. ii. 23, we read of the Avims; but then, in the same text we are told, that the Caphtorim, which is generally understood of the Philistines, 'destroyed them, and lived in their stead, long before these times;' nor does it appear, that the king of Assyria ever had under his subjection the places where these people are said to have lived. The most probable opinion seems, therefore, to be that which the learned Grotius has suggested, by observing that there are a people in Bactriana, mentioned by Ptolemy under the name of Avadia, who might possibly be those whom Salmaneser at this time transported into Palestine.—*Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

^d What these idols were, it is almost impossible to tell. Our learned Selden, though he thinks they were the same idol under different appellations, acknowledges himself unable to give any account of them; for he quite overlooks the fancy of the Rabbinical writers, who dress up the former in the shape of a dog, and the latter in that of an ass.—*Patrick's Commentary*. Jurieu, in his history of Doctrines, &c. part 4. c. 10, has observed, that as the word *Nibhas* or *Nibchas*, both in the Hebrew and Chaldee, with a small variation, denotes *quick, swift, rapid, &c.* and *Tartak* in the same language signifies a *chariot*, these two idols may both together denominate the sun mounted on his car, as the fictions of the poets, and the notions of the heathen theologians were wont to represent that bright luminary.

^e Ptolemy makes mention of a city called Ziphara, on the banks of the river Euphrates, which the generality of interpreters take to be this; but as the sacred history tells us that the Israelites were translated into the cities of the Medes, and these Medes, in all likelihood, were brought to supply their places; when Colchis and Media there are a people, whom Herodotus calls the Sapires, which may be the same with these that the text calls the 'Sepharvaites.'—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^f The former of these, according to the Jewish doctors, was represented in the form of a mule, some say a peacock; and the latter in the form of a horse, some say a pheasant: but the definition of the words, as well as the sacrifices that were made to them, quite destroys these idle fancies. Moloch, Milcom, and Meloch, in the languages of different nations, do all signify a *king*, and are put for the sun, which is called the king, as the moon is the queen of heaven: and therefore the addition of Addir to the one, which denotes *powerful*; and of Anna to the other, which signifies to *answer*, means no more than the mighty, or the oracular Moloch; as the children which were offered to him in sacrifice show, that he was the same with the Moloch of the

going on with the service of the God of Israel, made a strange and unaccountable medley of religion.

This was the end of the Israelitish kingdom, ^g after it had subsisted above two hundred and fifty-six years, and the beginning of that mongrel people which went afterwards under the name of Samaritan. Among the captive Israelites that were carried away by Salmaneser, ^h we have an account of Tobit, of the tribe of Naphtali,

Ammonites, or the Saturn of the Phœnicians.—*Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

^g In the kingdom of Israel there was from the first the greatest disregard of the divine laws; it was consequently destroyed one hundred and thirty-four years earlier than that of Judah. Jeroboam trusted little to the divine promise made him by the prophet; but fearing that if the people went to Jerusalem to attend the feasts, they would return to their alliance to the house of David, he set up two golden or gilded calves, as images of Jehovah: an imitation of the Apis and Mnevis of the Egyptians, among whom he had long dwelt in exile. One of these was placed at Bethel, not far from Shechem, for the southern tribes, and the other at Dan, for the tribes of the north. Temples were built, and altars erected, for these images; priests were appointed from all the tribes without distinction, and the priestly functions performed even by the monarch himself. He appointed the festivals a month later than they had hitherto been, and commanded that they should be celebrated before these images of Mnevis and Apis, which the people took for gods, and worshipped as such; although this kind of idolatry had already been very severely punished at mount Horeb. (1 Kings xii. 25—33. Exod. xxxii.) These arbitrary changes became after this so interwoven with the constitution, that even the more pious successors of Jeroboam did not venture to abolish them, and re-establish the authority of the fundamental law. These rebellious backslidings from God, though so impressively inculcated on the whole people at the first introduction of monarchy, and afterwards on Jeroboam himself, (1 Sam. xi. 14. xii. 1 Kings xi. 38.) did not prevent Jehovah from governing the kingdom of Israel according to his law. We see how he exterminated, one after another, those royal families, who not only retained the arbitrary institutions of Jeroboam, tolerated and patronized idolatry with its concomitant vices, but even introduced and protected it by their royal authority. The extermination of the reigning family he announced beforehand by a prophet, and appointed his successor. We see that the higher their corruptions rose, so much the more decisive and striking were the declarations and signs made to show the Israelites, that the Lord of the universe was their Lord and King, and that all idols were as nothing when opposed to him. Even Naaman the Syrian acknowledged, and the Syrians generally found, to their sorrow, that the God of the Hebrews was not a mere national god, but that his power extended over all nations. History represents a contest, as Hess expresses it, between Jehovah, who ought to be acknowledged as God, and the idolatrous Israelites; and everything is ordered to preserve the authority of Jehovah in their minds. At last, after all milder punishments had proved fruitless, these rebellions were followed by the destruction of the kingdom, and the captivity of the people, which had been predicted by Moses, and afterwards by Ahijah, Hosea, Amos, and other prophets. (Deut. xxviii. 36. 1 Kings xiv. 15. Hosea ix. Amos v.) We also find that divine providence was favourable or adverse to the kingdom of Judah, according as the people obeyed or transgressed the law; only here the royal family remained unchanged, in accordance with the promise given to David. We here meet indeed with many idolatrous and rebellious kings, but they are always succeeded by those of purer mind, who put a stop to idolatry, re-established theocracy in the hearts of their subjects, and by the aid of prophets, priests, and Levites, and the services of the temple, restored the knowledge and worship of God. Judah, therefore, though much smaller than Israel, continued her national existence one hundred and thirty-four years longer; but at last, as no durable reformation was produced, she experienced the same fate as her sister kingdom, in fulfilment of the predictions of Moses, and several other prophets. (Deut. xxviii. 36.)—*Jahn's Hebrew Commonwealth*.—Ed.

^h This account we have here inserted in the sacred history, not that we look upon the book of Tobit as canonical, for that the Jews and ancient Christians never held it to be, though the

A. M. 3301. A. C. 1003; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4654. A. C. 757. 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON.

who married one Anna, a woman of the same tribe,¹ and by her had but one son, whose name was Tobias: that, during his captivity, he was advanced to be purveyor to king Salmaneser; and, in that capacity, had liberty to go where he pleased; which gave him an opportunity of visiting his brethren, and doing them all good offices, of supplying their wants, and lending them money upon any occasion, as he did to one Gabriel, a kinsman of his, who lived at Rages in Media, to the sum of ten talents, for which he took his note: that, by a revolution

¹ Tobit i.

church of Rome, by a decree of the council of Trent, thought fit to receive it as such, but purely because it has been allowed by the generality of the christian fathers, to be a true history of this particular family, a good exemplar of charity and beneficence, and an excellent pattern of paternal care and filial obedience. The book itself is supposed to have been wrote, the former part of it by Tobit, and the latter by his son; at least it is thought that they left behind them memoirs of their family, and such materials as a later author, who lived, very likely, in or after the captivity, because the words Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael are allowed to be Babylonish, might compile and digest into proper order. It is not doubted but that the original of this book was either in Hebrew or Chaldee. St Jerome having met with a Chaldee copy of it, did not question but that he had got the original, and accordingly employed a man that was perfectly well skilled in that language to render it into Hebrew, whilst himself translated it into Latin; and this is the version that the church of Rome chiefly esteems. Before this version there was another, which is reckoned the most ancient, done into Greek; but who the author of it was, or from what language he translated it, we have but small foundation for conjecture; though some have been apt to think that it came from the same fountain from whence St Jerome had his, but that the translator had taken such freedoms with the text, as obliged him to retranslate it. The Latin translation, which was in use before St Jerome's appeared, seems to have been taken from the Greek, though in many places it varies from it, by abridging sometimes, and sometimes amplifying the narration. The Hebrew copies, published by Fagius and Munster, are nothing but translations (and those very modern ones, from the Greek or Latin versions, though, in many places of the book, they take the freedom to vary from them. That of Munster is supposed to have been done by himself, and that of Fagius by the Jews of Constantinople in the year 1517, and has so near a conformity to the Greek, that no manner of doubt is to be made of its being descended from thence. These are the several versions that we have of this book of Tobit, which, as it was not received into the canon of the Jews, was not therefore admitted into that of the ancient Christian authors, who confined themselves to those books which the Jews acknowledged to be canonical. It is certain that neither Josephus nor Philo, nor any of the ancient Jewish writers, make any mention of that copy which St Jerome took so much pains about, nor do they register it among their sacred books. Fagius pretends that this book of Tobit does not contain a true history, but a pious fiction only, wherein, under borrowed names, the characters of a father and a son truly pious are set forth; and our learned Prideaux seems to go farther when he tells us, "That there are some matters in it, which are not so reconcilable to a rational credibility, which look indeed more like the fictions of Homer than the writings of a sacred historian, and gives such an objection against the book as does not lie against any other." But, notwithstanding these allegations, we may be assured that the Jews had all along a great regard for this book. Origen, in his epistle to Africanus, tells us that the ancient Christians read it, though they placed it among their apocryphal writings. St Jerome acknowledges that, though they did not receive it into their canon, yet they admitted it among their hagiographa. Grotius owns that they read this book, and looked upon it as a true history; and our own Prideaux confesses that "it is of great use to represent to us the duties of charity and patience, in the example of Tobit's ready helping his brethren in their distress, to the utmost of his power; and his bearing with a pious submission, the calamities of his captivity, poverty and blindness, as long as they were inflicted on him."—*Calmet's Preface on the Life of Tobit, and Prideaux's Connect.*, anno 612.

of fortune, himself being reduced to a low condition, deprived of his eyesight, and now advanced in years, he ordered his son to go to Rages, to fetch the money he had left in his kinsman's hand; and because it was proper to have a companion in so long a journey, he hired a young man, as he thought, to be his guide, but who afterwards proved to be the angel Raphael: that coming to their inn one night upon the banks of the Tigris, Tobias went into the river to wash his feet, when a large fish made at him, as though it would devour him; but the angel encouraged him to lay hold on it, and draw it to the shore, and then bade him open it, and take out the heart, the gall, and the liver; for that the heart and liver when burned, would drive away evil spirits, and the gall was an excellent remedy for all impediments in the sight; that when they came to Ecbatana, they went to one Raguel, a near relation of Tobit's, who had an only daughter, named Sara, but her misfortune was to be haunted by a demon, who had slain her seven husbands successively, the very first night they went to bed to her: that notwithstanding this, by the persuasion of the angel, Tobias was induced to marry her, and by following his advice how he and his wife were to conduct themselves after marriage, and in what manner they were to fumigate the room by burning the liver of the fish, come off safe, to the great joy of the whole family: that having received the money at Rages, he returned with his wife to his parents at Nineveh; and upon his return cured his father of his blindness, by rubbing his eyes with the fish's gall, which brought away a kind of white film that obstructed his sight: that after this recovery of his sight, Tobit lived about forty years; but having all along charged his son, as soon as he and his wife were dead, to leave Nineveh, because the wickedness of the people, he was sure, would bring upon it the judgment which Jonah had denounced, Tobias, as soon as he had done his last duty to his parents, left the place, and with his wife and family, returned to Ecbatana, where he found his father and mother-in-law healthy, though now grown old. Upon their death he succeeded to their estate; and after he had lived to the age of fourscore and nineteen, died in peace, and was buried by his children. But it is time now to look back upon the affairs of the kingdom of Judah.

Jotham, the son of Uzziah king of Judah, was five and twenty years old when he began to reign; ^a though, as

^a Jotham is said (2 Kings xv. 33.) to have reigned sixteen years, yet in the preceding verse (30.) mention is made of his twentieth year. This repugnance is reconcilable in the following manner: Jotham reigned alone sixteen years only, but with his father Uzziah, who, being a leper, was therefore unfit for the whole government four years before, which makes twenty in whole. In like manner we read (2 Kings xiii. 1.) that 'in the three and twentieth year of Joash, the son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu, began to reign over Israel in Samaria,' and reigned seventeen years: but in verse 10. of the same chapter, it is related that 'in the thirty-seventh year of the same Joash, began Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, to reign over Israel in Samaria.' Now, if to the three and twenty years of Joash, mentioned in the first passage, we add the seventeen years of Jehoahaz, we come down to the thirty-ninth or fortieth year of Joash; when on the death of Jehoahaz, the reign of Jehoash may be supposed to have begun. Yet it is easy to assign the reason why the commencement of this reign is fixed two or three years earlier, in the thirty-seventh year of Joash, when his father must have been alive, by supposing that his father had admitted him, as an associate in the government, two or three years before his

A. M. 3001. A. C. 1003; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4654. A. C. 757. 1 KINGS xiii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON.

viceroy to his father, he had the whole administration in his hands for some years before. He ¹ was a prince ^a famous for all excellent qualities and virtues; a man exemplary for his reverence to God, his justice to men, and his care for the commonwealth. He made it his business to set and keep things in order; to rectify whatever he found amiss; and in matters of religion would have made a thorough reformation, but that his people were extremely wicked, and obstructed his designs. He took care, notwithstanding, to repair the temple; to rebuild the high gate which led from his palace; and, to secure himself against hostile invasions, raised several structures, both in the mountains and forests, for the service and strength of the kingdom.

The Moabites, however, though they had been formerly conquered by David, and made tributary to the crown of Judah, were now become so powerful, that they invaded Jotham; but he, with a good body of men, soon drove them out of his country, and imposed on them a tribute of 100 talents of silver, 10,000 measures of wheat, and as many of barley, to be paid him yearly. For three years they continued to pay it; but when Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, entered into a confederacy against Judah, they took this opportunity of revolting; and Jotham indeed had his hands too full ever to attempt to reduce them. He, however, died in peace, before the preparations for war that were making against him took effect: and being buried in the royal sepulchre of his ancestors, left his son Ahaz, who was then about twenty years of age, but much degenerated from his father's piety, under a fearful apprehension of the approaching war.

The design of the two confederate kings, upon the taking of Jerusalem, was to have extirpated the whole house of David, and set up a new king over Judah, the son of Tabeal; ^b but as God's design was only to punish Ahaz, and not to cut off the whole family of David his servant,

¹ Josephus's Jewish Antiquities, b. ix. c. 11.

death. This solution is the more probable, as we find from the case of Jeheshaphat and his son (2 Kings viii. 16.), that in those days such a practice was not uncommon.—*Dick on the Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 299. The application of the rule above stated will also remove the apparent contradiction between 2 Kings xxiv. 8, and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, Jehoachim being eight years old when he was associated with his father, and eighteen years old when he began to reign alone. The application of this rule will reconcile many other seeming contradictions in the books of Kings and Chronicles.—*Horne's Introduction*.—Ed.

^a Solomon Jarchi here observes, that all the kings of Judah had some crime or other laid to their charge, except this Jotham: that David himself sinned grievously in the matter of Uriah; that Solomon by his wives was drawn into idolatry; that Rehoboam forsook the law of the Lord, and Abijah walked in his steps: that Asa sent the treasures of the temple to the king of Syria, and put the prophet in the stocks: that Jehoshaphat entered into society with the idolatrous; and so he goes on with all the rest: but in Jotham, says he, there is no fault found, which, in an age of general corruption, is pretty wonderful, unless we may suppose, 'that the people's sacrificing and burning incense still on high places, (2 Kings xv. 35.) which he by his authority might have removed, be imputable to him as a fault.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b Who this person was, it is nowhere said in Scripture; but he seems to have been some potent and factious Jew, who having revolted from his master the king of Judah, excited and stirred up this war against him, out of an ambitious aim of plucking him down from his throne, and reigning in his stead.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 747.

he sent the prophet Isaiah to encourage him in the defence of the city, and, to assure him that they should not succeed in their attempt, he gave him two signs, the one to be accomplished speedily, and the other at some distance of time. The former was, ² that the son which the prophet then had by his wife, should not be of age to discern between good and evil, before both these kings should be cut off from the land. The other was, that a virgin ³ should conceive and bear a son, ^c who should be called Emanuel, so that he might rest himself satisfied because the destruction of the house of David could in no case happen until the Messiah should be born, in this miraculous manner, of a virgin descended from that family: and accordingly the two kings, finding themselves not able to carry the town so soon as they expected, raised the siege and returned home.

This deliverance, however, made no other impression upon Ahaz, than that, instead of being reformed, he grew more wicked and obdurate in his sins. For he not only set up the worship of the golden calves, for which he had not the same politic reason that the kings of Israel had, but made molten images likewise for all the inferior gods of the heathens. To these he sacrificed ^d and burned incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree. Nay, and to add to all his other impieties, made his sons 'pass through the fire to Moloch,' ^e in the valley of the sons of Hinnom; ^f for which provo-

² Is. viii. 4.

³ Ibid. vii. 14.

^c In the primary but lower sense of this prophecy, the sign was given to assure Ahaz that the land of Judea would be speedily delivered from the kings of Samaria and Damascus, by whom it was invaded. But the introduction of the prophecy the singular stress laid upon it, and the exact sense of the terms in which it is expressed, made it in a high degree probable that it had another and more important purpose; and the event has clearly proved that the sign given, had secondarily and mystically a respect to the miraculous birth of Christ, and to a deliverance much more momentous than that of Ahaz from his then present distressful situation.—*Horne's Introduction*.—Ed.

^d 2 Chron. xxviii. 23. 'For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him.' However stupid it was to imagine that they had any power over him, who could not defend themselves from Tiglath-Pileser, yet, being of opinion that they were gods, he endeavoured by sacrifices to appease them, that they might do him no farther hurt. Thus the ancient Romans, by sacrifices, intreated the gods of their enemies to come over to them, and to be their friends.—See *Jackson's Original of Unbelief*, c. 17.—Ed.

^e Interpreters are agreed that 'this passing through the fire' was performed either by causing the child to pass between two fires made near one another, by way of its consecration to the service of Moloch, or by putting it in the body of the idol made of brass, and heated extremely hot, so that it was immediately burned to death. But then, to abate the horror of the crime, some are of opinion that Ahaz made his sons pass through the fire in the former sense only, and that because we find Hezekiah survive and succeed him in the throne, and another of his sons, namely, Maaseiah, slain by Zichri, at his taking of Jerusalem; but this does not hinder Ahaz from having other sons, not mentioned in the history, whom he might make sacrifices to Moloch. The Scripture says expressly, that 'he made his sons to pass through the fire according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel,' (2 Kings xvi. 3.) Now it is incontestably true that the ancient inhabitants of the land of Israel did frequently imitate the heathens in these barbarities: 'They offered their sons and their daughters unto devils, and defiled the land with innocent blood, which they offered unto the idols of Canaan,' (Ps. cvi. 36. See Ezek. xvi. 20, 21, and xxiii. 37—39.) And therefore it is reasonable to think that he did the same, and that this is recorded against him as an aggravation of his other crimes.—*Patrick's and Calnel's Commentaries*, f Hinnom, in all probability, was some eminent person in

A. M. 3501. A. C. 1003; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4770. A. C. 741. 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON.

cations the Lord brought upon him the same confederate army the year following. This, dividing itself into three bodies, the first under Rezin king of Syria, the second under Pekah king of Israel, and the third under Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, invaded his kingdom in three different parts at the same time.

Rezin took Elah, ^a out of which he drove the Jews, and settled the Edomites in it; and having loaded his army with spoils, and taken a vast number of captives, returned to Damascus. Pekah, with his army, marched directly against Ahaz, and gave him a terrible overthrow, wherein he destroyed no less than 120,000 of his men: and Zichri, taking advantage of this victory, marched to Jerusalem; and having taken the royal city, slew Maa-seiah the king's son, and all the great men of the kingdom whom he found there. After this, both these armies of Israel, in their return, carried with them vast spoils, and above 200,000 captives, whom they intended to have sold for slaves: but as they approached Samaria, the prophet Oded, with the principal inhabitants of the city, came out to meet them, and, after proper remonstrances of their cruelty to their brethren, prevailed with them not only to release the prisoners, but to let them likewise be clothed and relieved out of the spoils they had taken, and so sent back to their own houses.

The kingdom of Judah was no sooner delivered from these enemies, but it was invaded by others, who treated it with the same cruelty; for the Edomites to the south, and the Philistines to the west, seized on those parts which lay contiguous to them, and, by ravages and inroads, did all the mischief they could to the rest.

Being reduced to this low condition, and seeing no other remedy left to his affairs, Ahaz sent an embassy to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, with a large present of all the gold and silver that he could find in the trea-

sury of the temple, and as large promises to become his vassal and tributary for ever, if he would but send forces to his assistance against his enemies.

The king of Assyria readily laid hold on this invitation; and, marching with a great army against Rezin king of Syria, he slew him in battle, besieged and took his capital of Damascus; and, having reduced the whole country under his dominion, transplanted the people to Kir, a place in the Upper Media, and so put an end to the kingdom of Syria in Damascus, ^b after it had continued for nine or ten generations.

After this he marched against Pekah, seized all that belonged to Israel beyond Jordan; and, having plundered the land of Galilee, proceeded towards Jerusalem with an intent to squeeze more money out of Ahaz, which when he had done, by making him cut the vessels of the temple to pieces, and melt them down to satisfy his avarice, he marched back to Damascus, and there wintered, ^c without doing him any further service. These indignities, which another man might have resented,

^b In the time of Abraham, Damascus was in being; and some of the ancients inform us that this patriarch reigned there immediately after Damascus, its founder. This much is certain, that one whom he had made free, and appointed steward in his house, was of Damascus, (Gen. xv. 2.) at the time that he pursued Chedorlaomer, and the five confederated kings, as far as Hobah, which lies northward of Damascus, (Gen. xiv. 15.) The Scripture says nothing more of this city until the time of David, when Hadad, who, according to Josephus, (*Jewish Antiq.* b. vii. c. 6.) was the first who took upon him the title of king of Damascus, sending troops to the assistance of Hadadezer king of Zabab, was himself defeated by David, and his country subdued. Towards the end of Solomon's reign, Rezin recovered the kingdom of Damascus, and shook off the Jewish yoke, (1 Kings xi. 23, &c.) Some time after this, Asa king of Judah, implored the help of Benhadad king of Damascus, against Baasha king of Israel, (1 Kings xv. 18.) And from his time the kings of Damascus were generally called Benhadad, till, in this last controversy with them, Ahaz called in the assistance of the king of Assyria, who killed their king, and carried his subjects into captivity, according to the predictions of Isaiah vii. 9, and Amos vii.—*Calmet's Dict.* under the word. [The present city of Damascus is of a long straight figure, extending about two miles, and lying nearly in the direction of north-east and south-west. It is surrounded with gardens, stretching no less, according to common estimation, than thirty miles around; which gives it the appearance of a city in the midst of a vast wood. The gardens are thickly planted with fruit trees of all kinds, that are kept fresh and verdant by the waters of the Banady. Numerous turrets and gilded steeples, glittering in the blazing sunbeam among the green boughs, diversify and heighten the beauty of the prospect. On the north side of this vast wood, is a place called Solkas, crowded with beautiful summer-houses and gardens. This delightful scene, and even the city itself, may be considered as the creation of the Banady, which supplies both the gardens and the city, diffusing beauty and fertility wherever it flows.]—*Paxton's Illustrations.*—ED.

^c In 2 Chron. xxviii. 20 we read, 'that Tiglath-Pileser came unto Ahaz, and distressed, but strengthened him not.' And yet, in 2 Kings xvi. 9, it is said, that 'he did help him;' and how then can he be said to have distressed him? Very well; for as he came to his assistance against the king of Syria, so he took Damascus, carried the people captive, and delivered Ahaz from the power of the Syrians; but this did Ahaz little good, for he helped him not to recover the cities which the Philistines had taken from him. He lent him no forces, nor enabled him to recruit his own; on the contrary, he rather weakened him by exhausting his treasures, and destroying Samaria, which opened a way for the invasion of his country with more facility, as it happened in the next reign. For it is no uncommon thing, even in later ages, to hear of kingdoms that have called in the help of some foreign prince against their enemies, overrun and conquered by those who came to their assistance.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

ancient times, to whom this valley belonged, and to whose posterity it descended, and is therefore sometimes called the 'valley of the children of Hinnom.' It was a famous plot of ground on the east side of Jerusalem, and so delightfully shaded, that it invited the people to make it a place of idolatrous worship, whereby it became infamous, and was at last turned into a public dunghill, or receptacle, where all the filth and excrements of the city were brought and burned; for which purpose there was a perpetual fire kept, which made it a kind of image or representation of hell.—*Patrick's Commentary* on Josh. xv. 8. The place now shown as the valley of Hinnom is a deep ravine, closed on the right by the steep declivity of mount Zion, and on the left by a line of cliffs, more or less elevated. From some points in these cliffs tradition relates that the apostate betrayer of our Lord sought his desperate end: and the position of the trees, which in various parts overhang the brow of the cliff, accord with the manner of his death.—*Jonett's Christian Researches.*—ED.

^a Elah, or Elam, as we took notice before, was a famous port on the Red Sea, which David in his conquest of the kingdom of Edom took, and there established a great trade to divers parts of the world. In the reign of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, the Edomites recovered their liberty, and became sole masters of this city, until the time that Uzziah recovered it to the dominion of Judah, (2 Kings xiv. 22.) but, in the reign of Ahaz, the Syrians retook it, and restored it to the Edomites: and why they chose to do this, rather than keep so advantageous a place in their own possession, we may learn from what we read of the Edomites, (2 Chron. xxviii. 17.) namely, that they invaded Judah, as auxiliaries to the king of Syria, much about the time that he was engaged in war with that kingdom; and therefore it is no wonder that he should give up a place which lay at too great a distance for him to keep, to the Edomites, whose originally it was, and who made perhaps the restitution of it one article of their confederacy with him.—*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

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Ahaz, in his circumstances, thought proper to overlook; and not only so, but when he heard that Tiglath-Pileser was returned to Damascus, he went thither to pay him homage and obeisance, as his vassal and tributary. While he continued at Damascus, he happened to see an idolatrous altar, of so curious a make and figure in his opinion, that he ordered a model of it to be taken, and sent to Urijah, the high priest at Jerusalem, ^a with injunctions to have another made as like it as possible; and when he returned, he removed the altar of the Lord out of its place in the temple, and ordered this new one to be set up in its stead, and that sacrifices for the future should be offered on it alone.

The truth is, the more his misfortunes came upon him, the greater his contempt of Almighty God grew: inasmuch that, having defaced ^b several of the most stately vessels of the temple, he caused it at last to be wholly shut up; and, suppressing all divine worship throughout the kingdom, in the room thereof he set up the worship of the gods of the Syrians, ^c and of other nations, alleg-

^a It must not be denied, indeed, but that the high priest carried his complaisance much too far, in obeying the king's injunction, which he ought, with all his power and interest, to have opposed. God prescribed to Moses in what form, and with what materials, he was to make the altar, (Exod. xxvii. 1, &c.) The altar which Solomon made, was indeed four times as large, (2 Chron. iv. 1.) but then God had given such solemn testimony of his approbation of it, that there was no touching it without impiety; for the high priest could not but know that this innovation of the king's did not proceed from any principle of religion, but from a design to degrade the altar of the Lord, as well as the other sacred vessels of the temple. But what shall we say for this? There will, in all ages, be some men found, who will be ready to execute the most impious commands that can possibly come from the throne.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

^b The words in the text, according to our translation, are, 'Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them, and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones, and the covert for the sabbath, that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the Lord, for the king of Assyria.' (2 Kings xvi. 17, 18.) His removing the bases, the laver, and the brazen sea, was palpably with a design to deface the service of God in the temple, and thence to bring it to public contempt; but then commentators are much at a loss to know what we are to understand by 'the covert for the sabbath within, and the king's entry without the temple.' Now the prophet Ezekiel tells us expressly, 'that the gate of the inner court which looked towards the east, was opened only on the sabbath, and on the day of the new moon;' and that in these days the king was to enter into the temple at this gate, and continue at the entrance of the priests' court, where was the brazen scaffold which Solomon erected, (2 Chron. vi. 13.) a place for the king to pay his devotions on, until his sacrifices were offered; and if so, the *misack*, which we translate *covert*, might be a kind of canopy, or other covered place, under which the king sat when he came to the service of the temple on the sabbath, or other great solemnities, which was therefore called the covert of the sabbath; and the reason why the king ordered this to be taken away was because he intended to trouble himself no more with coming to the temple, and by this action to express his hatred likewise, and contempt of the sabbath.—*Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries, and Spencer on the Laws of the Hebrews*, b. i. c. 1.

^c This was a monstrous stupidity, to think that these gods had any power over him, who could not defend themselves from the arms of Tiglath-Pileser! Thinking, however, that they had distressed him, he sacrificed to them, in order to appease their wrath, that they might do him no farther hurt; in the same manner as the ancient Romans were wont to bribe the gods of their enemies with larger sacrifices than ordinary, in hopes of bringing them over to their party, and making them their friends.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

ing that they had helped their respective people; whereas his God, forsooth, had forsaken him, and therefore deserved no farther homage. But in the height of all his impiety and profaneness, he was cut off by a sudden stroke, in the very prime of his age, after he had lived six and thirty, and reigned sixteen years; and, being buried in the city of David, though not in the royal sepulchres, ^d for that honour he was denied because of his iniquities, he was succeeded by his son Hezekiah, who was a worthy and religious prince.

^e In the five and twentieth year of his age Hezekiah

^d 2 Chron. xxviii. 27. The Israelites were accustomed to honour in a peculiar manner the memory of those kings who had reigned over them uprightly. On the contrary, some marks of posthumous disgrace followed those monarchs who left the world under the disapprobation of their people. The proper place of interment was in Jerusalem. There, in some appointed receptacle, the remains of their princes were deposited: and, from the circumstance of this being the cemetery for successive rulers, it was said, when one died and was so buried, that he was gathered to his fathers. Several instances occur in the history of the kings of Israel, wherein, on certain accounts, they were not thus interred by their predecessors, but in some other place in Jerusalem. So it was with Ahaz, who, though brought into the city, was not buried in the sepulchres of the kings of Israel. In some other cases, perhaps to mark out a greater degree of censure, they were taken to a small distance from Jerusalem. It is said that 'Uzziah was buried with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, he is a leper.' (2 Chron. xxvi. 23.) It was doubtless with a design to make a suitable impression on the minds of their kings while living, that such distinctions were made after their decease. They might thus restrain them from evil or excite them to good, according as they were fearful of being execrated, or desirous of being honoured, when they were dead. The Egyptians had a custom in some measure similar to this: it was, however, general as to all persons, though it received very particular attention, as far as it concerned their kings. It is thus described in Franklin's History of Ancient and Modern Egypt, (vol. i. p. 374.) "As soon as a man was dead, he was brought to his trial. The public accuser was heard. If he proved the deceased had led a bad life, his memory was condemned, and he was deprived of the honours of sepulture. Thus, that sage people were affected with laws which extended even beyond the grave, and every one, struck with the disgrace inflicted on the dead person, was afraid to reflect dishonour on his own memory, and that of his family. But what was singular, the sovereign himself was not exempt from this public inquest upon his death. The public peace was interested in the lives of their sovereigns in their administration, and as death terminated all their actions, it was then deemed for the public welfare that they should suffer an impartial scrutiny by a public trial, as well as the most common subject. Even some of them were not ranked among the honoured dead; and consequently were deprived of public burial. The Israelites would not suffer the bodies of some of their flagitious princes to be carried into the sepulchres appropriated to their virtuous sovereigns. The custom was singular: the effect must have been powerful and influential. The most haughty despot saw, by the solemn investigation of human conduct, that at death he also would be doomed to infamy and execution.' What degree of conformity there was between the practice of the Israelites and the Egyptians, and with whom the custom first originated, may be difficult to ascertain and decide, but the conduct of the latter appears to be founded on the same principle as that of the former, and as it is more circumstantially detailed, affords us an agreeable explanation of a rite but slightly mentioned in the Scriptures.—Ed.

^e Of Ahaz it is recorded that he was but 'twenty years old when he began to reign,' and that he reigned sixteen before he died; so that in the whole he lived six and thirty years, (2 Kings xvi. 2.) Now his son Hezekiah is said to have been 'five and twenty years old when he began to reign,' (2 Kings xviii. 2.) and consequently his father must have begot him when he was eleven years old, which seems a little incredible: and, to solve this difficulty, commentators have taken several ways. Some have imagined that Hezekiah was not the real, but adopted son only

A. M. 3246. A. C. 758; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4670. A. C. 741. 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON.

began to reign; and, after he had got the full possession of the kingdom, (for, during his father's illness, he acted only as viceroy under him,) he began in good earnest to ^a set about a thorough reformation of religion. To this purpose he caused the doors of the temple, which his father had ordered to be shut up, to be opened; his father's new altar to be removed; the altar of the Lord to

be restored to its place again; and whatever other pollutions it had contracted during his father's administration, he ordered them all to be purged and done away. Then calling the priests and Levites together, he required them to sanctify themselves according to the directions of the law; and, after that, the former he appointed to offer sacrifices, ^b in order to atone for the king's, their own, and the people's sins; and the latter, ^c with

of Ahaz, and might therefore succeed his foster-father at this or any other age; but this hypothesis, as Bochart observes, spoils the descent of our Saviour from David. Others suppose that there was an interregnum for some years, occasioned by a sedition that happened in Jerusalem: but there is no foundation for this hypothesis in history; on the contrary it is much more likely that, as Hezekiah was a man grown, and greatly beloved by the people, he should immediately succeed upon his father's demise. Others imagine that, in detestation of Ahaz's wickedness, his reign is omitted in this account, and that therefore the passage should be thus rendered: 'Ahaz was twenty years old when his father began to reign.' But this is reversing the order of words in the text, and turning them into a sense that is far from being natural. Others, not satisfied with any of these solutions, will needs have it that there is an error crept into the text itself by the negligence of some transcriber, who, instead of twenty, made Hezekiah five and twenty years old when his reign commenced, merely by mistaking the numerical letters; but it is not so well, even in numerical matters, which are most liable to variation, to find any fault with the text except where there is no other tolerable solution, which is not the case here. In these days, and long before, it was no unusual thing, upon several considerations, for kings to take the son who was to succeed them into partnership with them before they died. Now Ahaz, by his mismanagement, had brought himself into so many intanglements (2 Chron. xxviii. 16, &c. and xxix. 7, &c.) as to want an assistant in the government, and accordingly, it appears that he admitted his son in that capacity. For, whereas it is said of Hezekiah that he began to reign in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, (2 Kings xviii. 1.) and of Hoshea that he began to reign in the fourteenth year of Ahaz, (2 Kings xvii. 1.) it is evident that Hezekiah began to reign in the fourteenth year of Ahaz his father, and so reigned two or three years before his father's death. So that at the first date of his reign, which was in conjunction with his father, he might be but two or three and twenty, and his father, consequently, when he begot him, two or three years older than the common computation. But there is another way of solving this difficulty. It is a common thing, both in sacred and profane authors, in the computation of time, to take no notice whether the year they mention be perfect or imperfect, whether finished or but newly begun. Upon this account Ahaz might be near one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and near seventeen years older when he died; and, on the other hand, Hezekiah when he began to reign, might be but just entering into his five and twentieth year, and by this means Ahaz might be near fourteen years old when he begat Hezekiah, which is no extraordinary thing at all. Nay, even upon the lowest supposition, that he was but eleven or twelve years old, yet instances are innumerable, such as Bochart and others have given, of persons that have procreated children at that age: for it is not so much the number of years, as the nature of the climate, the constitution of the body, the stature of the person, the quality of the diet, &c., that ought to be considered in this affair.—Bochart's *Phaleg*, p. 920; Millar's *History of the Church*, p. 201; Bedford's *Scripture Chronology*, Patrick's and Calmet's *Commentaries*. [According to Dr Boothroyd, Ahaz was twenty-five years of age when he began to reign, and if this emendation be correct, the difficulty in question vanishes; for Ahaz would then have been only sixteen years of age when he begat Hezekiah.—See Boothroyd on 2 Kings xvi. 2.—Ed.]

^a A great demonstration this of his sincere piety and zeal towards God, that he began so soon to reform the corruption of religion, and did not stay till he had established himself in his throne! He might think, however, that the surest way to establish himself in the throne, was to establish the true worship of God; though he could not but foresee that he ran a great hazard in attempting the abolition of idolatry, which had been confirmed by some years' prescription.—Patrick's *Commentary*.

^b The words in the text are,—'For a sin-offering for the kingdom,' that is, for the king's sins and those of his predecessors; 'for the sanctuary,' for the priests' sins, and the profanations of the temple; 'and for Judah,' that is, for all the people who had followed the bad examples of their impious kings. Now, the offering which the law prescribed for the transgression of the people, was a young bullock; and for the offences of the prince, was a goat, (Lev. iv. 23, &c.) but good Hezekiah, we find, was willing to do more than the law commanded. He was sensible that both prince and people had been guilty, not only of sins of ignorance, for which these sacrifices were instituted, but of wilful and presumptuous crimes of gross idolatry, a profanation of the temple, and an utter extinction of the worship of God; and therefore he appointed seven bullocks for a burnt-offering, and as many goats for a sin-offering, upon presumption that these numerous sacrifices were, if not necessary, at least highly fit and becoming, upon the account of the great and long neglect of divine service, and the multitude and long continuance of their other offences against God, for which they were now to beg forgiveness.—Calmet's and Patrick's *Commentaries*.

^c Moses, in the service of the tabernacle, did not appoint the use of many musical instruments; only he caused some trumpets to be made, which, upon solemn occasions, were to be sounded at the time when the burnt-offering and peace-offering were upon the altar, (Num. x. 10.) But David, by the advice of the prophets Gad and Nathan, introduced several kinds of music into the service of the temple, as a thing highly conducive to inspire people with respect, with joy, and with affection for the solemnities and assemblies of religion, (1 Chron. xxiii. 5, and xxv. 1.) and it is farther observable, that the institution of music, in religious assemblies, is not a matter of human invention, but what was ordained by God, and has the sanction and authority of his prophets to confirm it; for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets, (2 Chron. xxix. 25.) [The musical instruments of the Hebrews are, perhaps, what has been hitherto least understood of anything in Scripture. Calmet considers them under three classes; 1st, stringed instruments; 2nd, hand instruments, or divers kinds of flutes; 3d, different kinds of drums. (1) Of stringed instruments, are the *nabel*, and the *psaltery*, or *psanneterin*. (Dan. iii. 5.) These three names apparently signify nearly, or altogether, the same thing. They considerably resembled the harp; the ancient *cythara* or the *ashur*, or the ten-stringed instrument; both were nearly of the figure Δ : but the *nablum* or *psaltery*, was hollow toward the top, and played on toward the bottom, whereas the *cythara* or ten-stringed instrument was played on the upper part, and was hollow below; both were touched by a small bow or fret, or by the fingers. The *kinnor*, or ancient lyre, had sometimes six, sometimes nine strings, strung from top to bottom, and sounded by means of a hollow belly, over which they passed; they were touched by a small bow, or fret, or by the finger. The ancient *symphony* was nearly the same as our viol. The *sambuc* was a stringed instrument, which was nearly the same, it is thought, as the modern psaltery. (2.) We discover in Scripture various sorts of trumpets and flutes, of which it is difficult to ascertain the forms. The most remarkable of this kind is the ancient organ, in Hebrew *huggab*, the ancient pipe of Pan, now common among us. (3.) Drums were of many kinds; the Hebrew *tup*, whence comes *tympanum*, is taken for all kinds of drums or timbrels. The *zabzelim* is commonly translated by the LXX and the Vulgate, *cymbala*; instruments of brass of a very clattering sound, made in the form of a cap or hat, and struck one against the other, while held one in each hand. Later interpreters by *zabzelim*, understand the *striscum*; an instrument anciently very common in Egypt. It was nearly of an oval figure, and crossed by brass wires, which jingled upon being shaken, while their ends were secured from falling out of the frame, by their heads being larger than the orifice which contained the wire. The Hebrews mention an instrument called *sha-*

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musical instruments, to sing praises to God in the words of David, ^a and of Asaph the seer.

Having thus restored the service of the temple, he proposed with himself to revive the passover, which, by reason of the division of the kingdom, and the frequent commotions that had happened thereupon, had not been regularly observed for a long while. To this purpose, he advised with the princes, and chief men of the kingdom; and because it was thought, that neither the temple, the priests, nor the people, could be sufficiently sanctified, against the usual time of observing it, which was in the first month of the year, it was resolved, that ^b it should be celebrated in the second: and accordingly a proclamation was issued out, requiring not only the people of Judah, ^c but all other Israelites of whatever tribe they were, to come to this solemnity.

It could hardly be expected but that, after so long a disuse of this holy festival, an attempt to revive it should meet with some scorn and opposition; and therefore we need not wonder that many of the tribes of Ephraim,

teshim, which the LXX translate *cymbala*; but Jerome *sistra*. It is found only in 1 Sam. xviii. 6. The term *sheshim* suggests that it was of three sides, (triangular) and it might be that ancient triangular instrument, which carried on each side several rings, that were jingled by a stick, and gave a sharp rattling sound. The original also mentions *mezzilothaim*, which were of brass, and of a sharp sound. This word is usually translated *cymbala*; some however render it *tintinnabula*, little bells, which is countenanced by Zechariah xiv. 20, which says, the time shall come when on the bracelets of the horses shall be written 'Holiness to the Lord!' We know that bells were anciently worn by horses trained for war to accustom them to noise.—*Calmet* abridged.—Ep.

^a David was both a great poet and master of music, and might therefore modulate and compose his own hymns; but whether the music of them might not be altered and improved in after ages, because the words only are here taken notice of, is a matter of some uncertainty. The Asaph here mentioned was the person who lived in David's days, so famous for his skill in music, and the several devout pieces, which he composed, are those which we meet with in the collection of the Psalms; but others will needs have it, but for what reason I cannot tell, that the author of the Psalms ascribed to Asaph, was another person who lived in after times, though perhaps of the same family, as well as name, with this famous Asaph who lived in David's.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b The direction which the law gives, is,—That the passover should be 'celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month, which the Jews call Nisan; but because it was found impossible to get all things in readiness against that time, it was judged more advisable to adjourn it to the fourteenth of the next month, which the Jews call *Jair*, rather than stay to the next year; and for this they had some encouragement; because the law allows, that, 'in case any man shall be unclean, by reason of a dead body, or be on a journey afar off, he may eat the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month,' (Num. ix. 10, 11.) and what was an indulgence to particular persons, they thought might well be allowed to the whole congregation of Israel.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c Hezekiah, it is certain, had no right to invite Hoshea's subjects to repair to Jerusalem to the celebration of his passover; yet for the doing of this, we may well presume, that he had encouragement from Hoshea himself, who, as to the matter of religion, as we said before, has a better character in Scripture than any of his predecessors from the division of the two kingdoms. But the truth of the matter was, that both the golden calves, which had made this political separation, were now taken away, that of Dan by Tiglath-Pileser, and the other of Bethel, by his son Salmaneser; and therefore the apostate Jews, being thus deprived of their idols, began to return to the Lord, and to go up to Jerusalem to worship, for some time before Hezekiah made them this invitation to his passover.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 729.

Manasseh, and Zebulun, should laugh at Hezekiah's messengers, when they invited them to this feast. Great multitudes, however, even from those parts, came to Jerusalem upon this occasion; and the concourse indeed was so numerous, that this might be justly reckoned one of the greatest passovers that had been solemnized from the days of king Solomon. The time which the law directs for the continuance of this feast, is seven days; but forasmuch as it had been long neglected, they now doubled the time, and kept it for fourteen, with great joy and gladness of heart: and as soon as the solemnity was ended, those that belonged to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, ^d went and brake the images in pieces, cut down the groves, threw down the high places, and altars belonging to strange gods, and absolutely destroyed all the monuments of idolatry which were any where to be found, either in Jerusalem, Judea, or any of the coasts belonging to them; as those of the other tribes, in their return home, did the same in all the rest of Israel; so that idolatry was quite abolished, and the true worship of God again universally restored.

Nay there was one thing, namely, the brazen serpent, ^e which might have been of innocent use, and served in

^d This, as the text tells us, was done not only in the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, but in those of Ephraim also and Manasseh, (2 Chron. xxxi. 1.) which though they were part of Hoshea's dominion, yet Hezekiah might direct this abolition of idolatry in them, in virtue of a law which bound Israel, as well as Judah, and required the extirpation of these things in the whole land of Canaan; by the special impulse and direction of God's Spirit, which puts men upon heroic actions, though not to be drawn into imitation; or out of a firm persuasion that his neighbour Hoshea, who had permitted his subjects to repair to the passover, would approve and consent to what he did in this respect.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^e The reason which the Scripture assigns for Hezekiah's destroying this brazen serpent is,—'because unto this day the children of Israel had burnt incense to it,' (2 Kings xvii. 4.) We are not however to suppose, that, all along from the days of Moses, this brazen serpent was made an object of religious worship: this is what neither David nor Solomon, in the beginning of his reign, would have allowed of; nor can we think, but that either Asa or Jehoshaphat, when they rooted out idolatry, would have made an end of this, had they perceived that the people, at that time, either paid worship or burnt incense to it. The commencement of this superstition therefore must be of a later date, and since the time that Ahab's family, by being allied to the crown of Judah by marriage, introduced all kinds of idolatry. Now, one false inducement to the worship of this image might be a mistake of the words of Moses. For whereas it is said, 'that whosoever looketh upon it shall live,' (Num. xxi. 1.) some might thence fancy, that, by its mediation, they might obtain a blessing, and so make it the object of their superstition at first. However, we may imagine that their burning incense, or any other perfumes before it, was designed only in honour to the true God, by whose direction Moses made it; but then, in process of their superstition, they either worshipped the God of Israel under that image, or what is worse, substituted a heathen God in his room, and worshipped the brazen serpent as his image; which they might more easily be induced to do, because the practice of some neighbouring nations was to worship their gods under the form of a serpent. Upon this account Hezekiah wisely chose rather to lose this memorial of God's wonderful mercy to his people in the wilderness, than to suffer it any longer to be abused to idolatry, and therefore 'he brake it in pieces,' that is, as the Talmudists explain it, he ground it to powder, and then scattered it in the air, that there might not be the least remains of it. And yet, notwithstanding all the care which he took to destroy it, Sigonius in his history of Italy, tells us, that in the church of St Ambrose, in Milan, they show a brazen serpent entire, which they pretend to be the very same which Moses erected in the wilderness; though it must be owned, that among their learned men, there

A. M. 3216. A. C. 758; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4086. A. C. 725. 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON

the same manner as did the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod, for a monument of God's miraculous mercy to the Israelites in their passage through the wilderness; but, because the preceding times of iniquity had made it an object of idolatrous worship, Hezekiah thought proper to destroy it, in order to take away all occasion of the like abuse for the future. Having thus removed all the objects of idolatry, he took care in the next place to restore the temple worship to its ancient splendour and purity. To this purpose he put the priests and Levites in their courses, and appointed every one his proper ministration. The tithes and first fruits, which idolatrous princes had detained, on purpose to bring the priesthood into poverty, and thence into contempt, he returned to the church; and ^a out of his own privy purse, as we say, ordered the expenses of the daily oblations, as well as of the larger offerings on the great festivals of the year to be defrayed.

Upon these, and several other accounts, Hezekiah deserved the title of one of the best of kings ^b that ever reigned in Judah; nor was God in the least wanting to reward his piety in a most signal manner. For, while Salmaneser was engaged in the siege of Samaria, he warred against the Philistines, and not only regained all the cities of Judah, which they had seized during the time that Pekah and Rezin jointly distressed the land, but also dispossessed them of almost all their own territories, except Gaza and Gath.

As soon as the siege of Samaria was over, Salmaneser sent to Hezekiah to demand the tribute which his father Ahaz had agreed to pay to the kings of Assyria; but Hezekiah refused to pay it; which would doubtless have brought the Assyrian upon him, with all his power, had he not been diverted by the war ^c he entered into against Tyre, and died before he had put an end to it.

are some who acknowledge the cheat, and disclaim it.—*Le Clerc's Commentary and Prideaux's Connection*, anno 726.

^a After that David had brought the ark of the Lord into the tent which he had pitched for it, near his own palace, the Scripture seems to intimate, (1 Chron. xvi. 1.) that he divided the priests and Levites into two bodies; one of which he left at Gibeath, to attend in the tabernacle which Moses made; and the other he took with him to Jerusalem. And from this time, it is highly probable, that out of his own estate he supplied whatever was necessary for the sacred ministry of this his domestic tabernacle on Mount Zion. When Solomon had built the temple, he obliged himself to defray all the expenses, both ordinary and extraordinary, of the altar, (2 Chron. viii. 13.) And, in like manner, upon the rebuilding of the temple, at the return from the captivity, Ezekiel assigns a proper revenue to the king, to answer the expense of all sacrifices, both stated and occasional, (chap. xlv.) so that Hezekiah in this did properly no more than what was incumbent on him; though several of his idolatrous predecessors had doubtless withdrawn the fund appropriated to that purpose, which made it so commendable in him to restore it to its proper channel.—*Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

^b The words in the text are,—‘So that, after him, was none like him amongst all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him, (2 Kings xviii. 5.) Now it is plain that the same commendation is given of Josiah, namely, that ‘like unto him was there no king before him, which turned to the Lord, with all his heart, &c., neither after him arose there any like him,’ (2 Kings xxiii. 25.) So that this character of Hezekiah must relate to some particular virtue wherein he stood distinguished from the rest of the kings of Judah, and that was, ‘his trusting in the Lord God of Israel,’ as it is in the beginning of the verse, and not in the help of any foreign forces, as all the other kings, even the most renowned for their piety, in some measure, are known to have done.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^c The king of Tyre finding the Philistines brought low by the

He was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, who, as soon as he was settled on the throne, renewed the demand for the tribute, and upon Hezekiah's refusing to comply, marched a great army into Judea, in order to fall upon him.

^d Not long before this, Hezekiah was taken with a sore illness, and had a message from God, by the prophet Isaiah, to settle his affairs and prepare for death; but, upon his great concern, and hearty prayer to God, he obtained another message from him by the same prophet, promising him a reprieve for fifteen years longer, and a deliverance from the Assyrians, who were then coming against him. Both these were events beyond his expectation; and therefore, to give him a full assurance of faith, God, at his request, made the sun go backward ten degrees upon the sun-dial that Ahaz had erected; and when, by the prophet's directions, a plaster of figs was applied to his ulcer, he recovered in the space of three days, and went up to the temple to return God thanks for so wonderful a deliverance.

Upon Hezekiah's recovery, Merodach-Baladan king of Babylon sent ambassadors ^e to congratulate him, and at the same time to enter into an alliance with him against Sennacherib, whose growing power the Babylonians, as well as the Jews, had reason to fear: and Hezekiah was so taken with the honour done him upon this occasion, that, out of the vanity and pride of his heart, he showed the ambassadors all the wealth ^f and strength

war which Hezekiah had lately made upon them, laid hold on the opportunity to reduce Gath, which had some time before revolted from under his obedience. Hereupon the people of Gath, applying themselves to Salmaneser, engaged him in their cause against the Tyrians. He soon took several of their cities, and at length closely besieged their capital: but before he could carry the place, which held out for five years, he died, and by that means gave some respite to Hezekiah.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 720.

^d In the course of the sacred history, this sickness of Hezekiah is placed immediately after the defeat and death of Sennacherib; whereas it plainly happened before that time, because in the message which God sent him upon his bed of sickness by the prophet Isaiah, he promises to ‘deliver Jerusalem out of the hands of the king of Assyria,’ (2 Kings xx. 6.) The truth of the matter is—Hezekiah reigned in all nine and twenty years, (2 Kings xviii. 2.) He had already reigned fourteen years, when Sennacherib invaded him (2 Kings xvii. 13.), and after his sickness he continued to reign fifteen years (2 Kings xx. 6.), so that his sickness must have happened in the very same year that the king of Assyria invaded his kingdom; but the sacred penman deferred the account he was to give of that, until he had finished the history of Sennacherib, which he was willing to give the reader at one view; and this is the true reason of the mislocation.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^e The conquests which the Assyrians were everywhere making could not fail of giving umbrage to the neighbouring powers to confederate against them; and therefore we may well suppose that, besides the business of congratulating Hezekiah's recovery, the purpose of this embassy was to enter into an alliance with him against Sennacherib, whose growing power the Babylonians had reason to fear, as well as the Jews; and, as the author of the Chronicles expresses it, ‘to inquire into the wonder that was done in the land,’ (2 Chron. xxxii. 31.) that is, to inquire about the miracle of the sun's retrogradation, which could not fail of being a matter of great curiosity to the Chaldeans, who, above all other nations, were at that time given to the study of astronomy. *Calmet's Commentary and Prideaux's Connection*, anno 713.

^f The things which Hezekiah showed to the Babylonian ambassadors, were the riches of his house, his treasures, his armoury, and all his stores and strength for war; and the reason for his doing this, was doubtless, to make the Babylonians put the greater value upon his friendship; but herein he offended God, that he not only laid a bait before these foreigners, to encourage them

A. M. 3246. A. C. 758; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4086. A. C. 725, 1 KINGS viii. TO THE END OF 2 CHRON.

of his kingdom, for which the prophet Isaiah was sent to reprove him, and to let him know that a day would come when all the stores he made such ostentation of should be carried into Babylon; which adoration ^a he received in a very decent and humble manner.

Sennacherib, in the mean time, advanced with a mighty army against the fenced cities of Judah; and, having taken several of them, he came at length and sat down before Lachish, and threatened, after he had taken that, to besiege even Jerusalem itself. Hereupon Hezekiah, taking advice of his princes and chief counsellors, made all manner of preparations for a vigorous defence. He repaired the walls, and fortified them with towers. He provided darts and shields in great abundance, and all other arms and artillery that might be useful, either to defend the place or annoy the enemy. He had the people inrolled that were fit for war, and placed over them good officers, both to instruct them in all military exercise, and to head and conduct them when they were to make their sallies. He stopped up the fountains ^b for a good

compass round, and the brook ^c that passed by the wall of the city, in order to distress the enemy for want of water: and, to strengthen himself the more against them, he entered into an alliance offensive and defensive with the king of Egypt. But this alliance the prophet Isaiah highly blamed, as it implied a diffidence of the Almighty's power to help him, and would redound to his own shame, and reproach, and confusion at last; which accordingly came to pass. For, while Sennacherib was besieging Lachish, Hezekiah, observing that this new ally of his made no haste to come to his assistance, and being sadly sensible that of himself he was not sufficient to resist so powerful an adversary as the king of Assyria, sent ambassadors to him, desiring him to retire out of his dominions, and promising to submit to such conditions as he should be pleased to impose upon him.

The demand which Sennacherib made, was the payment of three hundred talents ^d of silver, and thirty talents of gold; which Hezekiah was not able to raise, without exhausting all his treasures, and stripping the very doors of the temple of the gold plates wherewith they were overlaid. This diverted the king of Assyria for some time; so that, leaving Judea, he turned his arms against Egypt; ^e but after a series of different suc-

to invade his country, but seemed to place more confidence in this new alliance with them, than in the power of the Almighty, whose favour and protection he had so long experienced. The author of the Chronicles tells us, that, 'in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart,' (2 Chron. xxxii. 31.) And, from hence some have inferred, that Hezekiah's great offence lay, not so much in the ostentation of his military stores and treasures, as in his not giving sufficient glory to God for so signal a miracle, and his recovery ensuing thereupon, and in his not representing this matter to these idolatrous ambassadors, in such powerful and convincing terms as might have drawn them over to the knowledge of the true God, which was the proper improvement he should have made of this divine vouchsafement to him.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*. [However we may endeavour to excuse Hezekiah, it is certain that he made an exhibition of his riches and power in a spirit of great vanity; and that this did displease the Lord. It was also ruinous to Judea; when those foreigners had seen such a profusion of wealth, such princely establishments, and such a fruitful land, it was natural for them to conceive the wish that they had such treasures, and from that to covet the very treasures they saw. They made their report to their king and countrymen, and the desire to possess the Jewish wealth became general; and in consequence of this there is little doubt that the conquest of Jerusalem was projected.]—*Dr A. Clarke*.—Ed.

^a The words in the text are: 'Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken. And he said, is it not good if peace and truth be in my days?' (2 Kings xx. 19.) The prophet hath told him, that the very people whom he had been so highly complimenting would carry his posterity into captivity; and to return him such an answer as this, shows not all the concern which a good prince ought to have for his people and posterity. It shows, indeed, as if he cared not what became of them, so long as he was permitted to live easy and happy. The words in the original are to this effect, 'that which thou hast told me from God, is good.' I willingly submit to it: 'but shall peace and truth,' that is, solid and lasting peace, 'continue for my time?' 'May I flatter myself with so much happiness? And will God be so gracious as not to revoke the grant which he hath made me of a longer continuance here? He is just, no doubt, in every thing he sends upon us; but do these threats relate to me or my posterity only? Well were it for me, if he would suspend the execution of his wrath for the little time that I have to live.' This is the natural sense of Hezekiah's answer; and accordingly Josephus makes him say, 'That though I am much afflicted at the thoughts of the misery that will befall my family, yet, since it is God's pleasure that it should be so, I have no more to beg of Heaven, than that I may enjoy the small remainder of my miserable life in peace.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. x. c. 3. and *Cabnet's Commentary*.

^b It is an old stratagem in war, to distress an enemy by the

want of water; but this is what the besiegers do generally practise against the besieged. In this manner it was Holofernes intended to distress Bethulia, (Judith vii.); and of Semiramis, Cyrus, and Alexander, it is reported, that they all took Babylon by diverting the current of the Euphrates. But Hezekiah here takes another method; he is for preventing the Assyrians from carrying on the siege of Jerusalem by intercepting the water, that is, by filling up the fountain-heads with earth, that the enemy might not perceive where any water was; and so carrying their streams through pipes and subterraneous channels into the city, there to be received in basins and large pools for the benefit of the besieged: and this he might do with more facility to himself, and prejudice to the enemy, because (except the springs and brooks that were just contiguous to the city) the whole country, (according to Strabo, b. xvi.) for the space of sixty furlongs round about, was all barren and waterless.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^c This must be the brook Kidron, which ran in a valley of that name, between the city and the mount of Olives, when it had any water in it; for, except in the case of great rains, or the snow's dissolving from the mountains, it was generally dry. However, if it had any fountain-head, by stopping up that, and diverting its current by conveyances under ground, Hezekiah might, in like manner, make it of no use to the besiegers.—*Patrick's and Cabnet's Commentaries*.

^d The Hebrew talent, according to Scripture, (Exod. xxv. 39.) contains three hundred shekels, and every shekel answering to the value of three shillings, these three hundred talents of silver must contain, of our money, thirteen thousand five hundred pounds; and the thirty talents of gold, one hundred and sixty-four thousand two hundred and fifty; so that the whole sum here paid by Hezekiah amounted to one hundred and seventy-seven thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds of our money.—*Prudeau's Connection*, anno 713.

^e What might possibly be the occasion of a war between two kingdoms so widely distant as Assyria and Egypt were, it is difficult to know. We have nowhere any information from history, and are left therefore to conjecture—that, after Salmeser had taken away the ten tribes, and sent colonies in their room, the tribe of Simeon, which lay nearest to Egypt, becoming part of his dominions, as well as the rest, the Egyptians might take the advantage of the Assyrians' great distance, and make some encroachments upon it. That Sennacherib, when he was come as far as Judea, might take that opportunity to proceed with his arms into Egypt, in order to be revenged on Sevechus, the son of Sabacon or So, whom Herodotus calls Sethon, who was at this time king of Egypt, and the chief pontiff likewise of the god Vulcan. And as he was a weak prince, the king of Assyria gained many advantages over him; but, sitting down at length

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cesses, he returned again, and invested Lachish, and thence, contrary to all faith, and the agreement subsisting between him and the kings of Judah, sent three of his principal officers, with a good detachment of forces to demand the surrender of Jerusalem.

^a Rabshakeh, for that was the name of the person who

before Pelusium, when he had brought his platforms, as Josephus tells us, within a little of the top of the walls, and was upon the very point of giving the assault, news was brought him, that Tirhakah king of Ethiopia was upon his march, with a great reinforcement to assist the Egyptians; whereupon he immediately raised the siege, and drew off his army, which gave occasion to the fabulous account in Herodotus, namely, 'That upon the king's prayer to his god Vulcan, there came in one night such troops of rats, into the camp of the Assyrians, that they gnawed all their bowstrings to pieces, and so, in effect, disarmed the whole camp of the besiegers, and made them draw off from the town with so much precipitation.'—*Le Clerc's Commentary* on 2 Kings xxiii. 29, and *Jewish Antiquities*, b. x. c. 1. The overthrow of Sennacherib, whose expedition was designed particularly against Egypt, is described by Herodotus, (ii. 141,) but evidently corrupted by the Egyptian priests from whom Herodotus received the narration. His words are: "After this a priest of Vulcan, by name Setho, ascended the throne. He very imprudently treated the soldiers with great severity, as though he should never stand in need of their services. He insulted them in many ways, and took from them the lands which had been granted to them by former kings, at the rate of twelve arure (*ἀγούρας*) to a man. (Compare Is. xix. 1—4.) But afterwards when Sennacherib king of the Arabs and Assyrians was advancing against Egypt with a great army, the Egyptian soldiers refused to lend their aid against him. The priest was now in great perplexity; and, going into the temple, complained to his idol, with tears, of the peril he was in. In the midst of his complaints he was overtaken by sleep, and there appeared to him in a vision, the god standing by him, and bidding him to be of good courage, for no misfortune should befall him in encountering the Arabian army; for he himself would send him helpers. Confiding in this dream, he took such Egyptians as were willing to follow him, and encamped at Pelusium; for through this place the invaders must necessarily make their attack. None of the soldiers followed him, but only the merchants, artificers, and populace. When they had arrived there, field mice in great numbers spread themselves about among their enemies, and gnawed in pieces the quivers and bows, and thongs of the shields, so that on the following morning they were obliged to flee, destitute of arms, and many fell. Even to this day there stands in the temple of Vulcan a stone statue of this king, having a mouse in his hand, and speaking by an inscription to the following effect, 'Let him who looks on me reverence the gods.'" From this narrative, though considerably distorted, it is plain that the Egyptians attributed their deliverance from Sennacherib to a deity, and to that deity whom the Greeks call *Ἡρακλῆς*, Vulcan. Among the Egyptians he is named Phtha or Kneph; and because he is said to have made the world, he is also called *Δημιουργός*, the artificer. Now, as the God of the Hebrews was the Creator of the world, the Egyptians might easily confound him with their Phtha, and attribute this deliverance to the latter. The circumstance of Setho's going into the temple and complaining of his danger to Phtha, is manifestly borrowed from what is related of Hezekiah, (Is. xxxvii. 14, 15.) Eusebius makes Setho the first king of the nineteenth Diospolitic dynasty, and assigns to his reign fifty-five years. But if Tirhakah, whom Manetho places as the third of the twenty-fifth Ethiopian dynasty, with a reign of twenty years, was master of Egypt, then Setho could be only a tributary king and a vassal of this universal conqueror, or, at most could only reign over the Delta and Upper Egypt.—*John's Hebrew Commonwealth*.—*Er.*

^a Tartan, Rabсарis, and Rabshakeh, are not the proper names of these men, but rather denote their employments and offices. *Tartan* signifies the president of the customs, *Rabсарis*, the chief eunuch, and *Rabshakeh*, the principal cup-bearer; and because he spake Hebrew with some fluency, the rabbins are generally of opinion, that he was either an apostate Jew, or one of the captivity of Israel. It is certain that he was a very eloquent man, and his speech very well calculated to raise sedition, or defection among the besieged; but that a person of his edu-

delivered the demand from the king of Assyria, spake in the Hebrew tongue, and in a very insolent and impetuous manner, to the three ministers of state whom Hezekiah sent to parley with him, telling them, "That it was in vain for them to trust in their God for help, because his master's arms had been all along so victorious, that the gods of other nations could not resist their course, and much more vain would it be, to depend on the king of Egypt for assistance, who was hardly able to support his own dominions, and would certainly fail them when they looked for his aid. Their wisest way, therefore, would be to surrender the town to his master, the great king of Assyria, at discretion; for if they pretended to stand a siege, (and this he spake with a louder voice than ordinary, in the audience of the people that were upon the wall, and in hopes of creating a revolt among them,) his master would distress them to such a degree, that they should be compelled to eat their own excrements, and drink their own piss."

When Hezekiah heard the blasphemous message, which Rabshakeh had delivered to his ministers, he rent his clothes, put on sackcloth, went to the temple to address himself to God, and sent an account thereof to his prophet Isaiah. But Isaiah's answer was, not to fear the menaces of the proud Assyrian; for that God would soon find out a method to make him depart his country; ^c which accordingly came to pass. For news

cation should be versed in the Phœnician, which is in a manner the same with the Hebrew language, is no wonder at all. Moreover, had he been a Jew, though an apostate, he should have known better, one would think, than to have upbraided Hezekiah, with acting according to the law under which he lived, in destroying the groves and altars of idols, and in requiring his subjects to worship God in Jerusalem only, (2 Kings xviii. 22.)—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^b The words in the text are, 'Now behold thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, (2 Kings xviii. 21.)' The comparison is excellent, to denote an ally that is not only weak and unable to help, but dangerous likewise to those that rely upon him for succour; and his representing the power of Egypt to be as brittle as the canes or reeds that grow on the banks of the Nile, for it is to this, no doubt, that the Assyrian orator alludes, is a great beauty in the similitude. This, however, must be allowed, that what he here speaks in contempt of the Egyptian strength, has more of ostentation in it than truth; because the Assyrian army, having lately made an attempt to subdue that kingdom, was now returned into Judea with disgrace. *Patrick's, Le Clerc's, and Calmet's Commentaries*.

^c 2 Kings xix. 7. 'Behold I will send a blast upon him.' The destruction of Sennacherib and his army appears to have been effected by that pestilential wind called the simoom. Mr Bruce thus speaks of it:—"We had no sooner got into the plains than we felt great symptoms of the simoom; and about a quarter before twelve, our prisoner first, and then Idris called out, 'The simoom! the simoom!' My curiosity would not suffer me to fall down without looking behind me: about due south, a little to the east, I saw the coloured haze as before. It seemed now to be rather less compressed, and to have with it a shade of blue: the edges of it were not defined as those of the former, but like a very thin smoke, with about a yard in the middle tinged with those colours. We all fell upon our faces, and the simoom passed with a gentle shuffling wind. It continued to blow in this manner till near three o'clock, so that we were all taken ill that night, and scarcely strength was left us to load the camels, and arrange the baggage." (*Travels*, vol. iv. p. 581.) in another place Mr Bruce describes it as producing a desperate kind of indifference about life; that it brought upon him a degree of cowardice and languor, which he struggled with in vain; and that it completely exhausted his strength. From the accounts of various travellers, it appears to have been almost instantaneously fatal and petrifying. It was consequently a fit agent to be employed in desolat-

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being brought him that Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, or of the Cuthites rather in Arabia, had invaded some part of his dominions, he immediately raised the siege of Libnah, ^a where he then was, and marched against the enemy: however, before he raised the siege, he sent a second summons to Hezekiah, as insolent and blasphemous as the former. This was delivered in a letter; and Hezekiah had no sooner read it, but he went into the temple, spread it before the Lord, and implored of him a deliverance from this outrageous enemy; which Isaiah assured him he should have, because that the Lord had taken the city of Jerusalem under his protection, and would not therefore suffer the king of Assyria, ^b notwithstanding all his vain boastings, to come near it.

In the mean time, the king of Assyria having engaged the Ethiopian army, and given them a great overthrow, was in full march to Jerusalem, flushed with this fresh victory, and resolved to destroy the place, and every soul in it; when the very night after that the prophet had given the king of Judah this assurance, an angel ^c

ing the army of Sennacherib. It sometimes happens, that during an excessive heat, there comes a breath of air still more burning, and that both men and beasts being already overpowered and faint, this small increase of heat entirely deprives them of respiration.—*Niebuhr's Description of Arabia*, p. 81.—Ed.

^a Libnah was not far from Lachish, both situated on the mountains of Judea; and it is probable that Sennacherib, not finding himself able to carry the latter, had removed the siege to Libnah, which was a place not so well fortified in his opinion, and yet so situated, that by keeping a good guard in the chops of the mountains, he might carry on the siege, without any fear of Tirhakah's coming upon him.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^b The prophet, in his answer to Hezekiah, has given us an admirable description of the ridiculous vanity and ostentation of a king puffed up with great success: 'By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, and the sides of Lebanon; and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and enter into the forest of his Carmel. I have digged, and drunk strange waters, and with the soles of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places,' (2 Kings xix. 23, &c.) as if he had said, "What can resist the force of my victorious arms? Or where is the place that is inaccessible to the strength and activity of these troops? I have scaled the top of the highest mountains, with my heavy chariots of war. I have ascended even Lebanon itself, and through the most difficult passages have opened and plained myself a way. Who then shall hinder me from taking up my quarters in what part of Judea I please, from either climbing up to the top of Carmel, or from coming down into the fruitful vales, by making an entire conquest of the country? At my call fountains, even in the driest places, arise; at my beck the hills subside, the rocks divide, and make me a way; and at my approach, the deepest rivers and ditches run dry; so that resistance is unavailable, and victory must attend my standard wherever I go, or whatever enterprise I take in hand."

^c The ancient Jews, as well as the Persians and Arabians, were of opinion, that there is an angel of death, or an exterminating angel, to whom God has given the commission to take away the lives, either of single persons, or of multitudes of people at once, wherein the Almighty gives the order, but leaves the method of doing it to the discretion of the angel; so that in which way soever the infliction is made, it is always said to be done by the angel of God. The modern Jews are much of the same opinion: for they maintain that this angel of death stands at every dying man's bed's head, with a naked sword in his hand, at the extremity of which there hang three drops of gall, and that the sick person, seeing this angel, in a great fright opens his mouth, whereupon he immediately drops into it these three fatal drops; the first of which occasions his death; the second makes him pale and livid; and the third reduces him to the dust in the grave, with some other notions of the like nature. Now since the Scripture has nowhere said expressly, in what manner this Assyrian army was destroyed, some have thought that it was by a plague; others by thunder and

of the Lord came down into the camp of the Assyrians, and smote no less than a hundred fourscore and five thousand men: ^d so that, terrified with this slaughter, Sennacherib made haste into his own country, and took up his residence at Nineveh; where he had not been long, before ^e his two eldest sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer conspired against him, and, as he was worship-

lightning; others by fire from heaven; others by a scorching wind; and others by their falling foul of one another in the obscurity of the night; but which way soever it was effected, according to the Hebrew idiom, there is no impropriety in saying, that it was done by a destroying angel, which is a comprehensive phrase, that reconciles all the Scripture passages wherein this terrible defeat is mentioned, and all the sentiments of commentators concerning it.—*Calmel's Dissert. on the Defeat of the Army of Sennacherib*.

^d The reign of the good king Hezekiah was signalized by the extraordinary and memorable deliverance, which the Lord granted to him and his people out of the hands of the Assyrians under Sennacherib. The destruction of the vast multitude whom that invader commanded, and who became all dead corpses in a single night, is in one passage attributed to an angel of the Lord; but, in another part of the same history, and also by Isaiah, it is said to have been occasioned by a blast, which is generally, and on good grounds, supposed to mean the simoom, or hot pestilential wind which is so prevalent in the sultry regions of the east. It is a south wind, which, blowing over an immense tract of heated ground or sand, becomes itself so hot and stifling, as to occasion the greatest danger, and even immediate death to the traveller. Its approach is indicated by a haze in the atmosphere, in colours like the purple part of the rainbow, and passes along with silent and incredible velocity. The moment it is perceived by the natives and the camels, who are well acquainted with its fatal power, they instantly fall to the ground, and bury their mouth and nostrils in the sand. Della Valle mentions the melancholy fate of two gentlemen, who were travelling with him, and who having gone, during the middle of the day, into a khan to rest, fell asleep at the open window, and were found dead, and their bodies very black and disfigured, in consequence of a blast of the simoom having passed over them while they lay, unconscious of their danger, in that exposed situation. Another traveller mentions, that the water in their skins was dried up in a moment, and that his companion, who had been bathing in the Tigris, having on a pair of Turkish drawers, showed them, on his return, perfectly dried in an instant by this hot wind having come across the river. The most circumstantial, however, as well as the most recent account of a dreadful destruction, occasioned by this hot wind in the year 1813, is given in the newspapers of that day. The caravan from Mecca to Aleppo consisted of 2000 souls, merchants and travellers, pilgrims returning from performing their devotions at Mecca, and a numerous train of attendants, the whole escorted by 400 military. The march was in three columns. On the 15th of August, they entered the great Arabian desert, in which they travelled seven days, and were nearly approaching its boundary. A few hours more would have placed them beyond the reach of danger, when, on the morning of the 23d, just as they had struck their tents, and begun their march, a wind rose and blew with tremendous rapidity. They pushed on as fast as their beasts of burden could carry them, to escape the threatened danger, when the fatal simoom set in suddenly, the sky was overcast, dense clouds appeared, whose extremity darkened the horizon, and shot with the rapidity of lightning across the desert. They approached the columns of the caravan. Both men and beasts, overcome by a sense of common danger, uttered piercing cries, and the next moment fell beneath its pestilential influence. Of 2000 souls composing the caravan, not more than twenty escaped the calamity, and these owed their preservation to the swiftness of their dromedaries. Such, in all probability, was the terrible agent which heaven employed for the destruction of the prodigious army led on by the king of Assyria.—*Jamieson's Eastern Manners*.—Ed.

^e When Sennacherib was got home, after the loss of so great an army, he demanded of some about him, what the reason might be, that the irresistible God of heaven so favoured the Jewish nation? To which he was answered, that Abraham, from whom they were descended, by sacrificing his only son to him, had

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ping at the temple of Nisroch, ^a his god, fell upon him, and slew him; and afterwards making their escape into Armenia, gave room for Esarhaddon, their younger brother, to succeed in the throne.

After this signal defeat of the Assyrian army, Hezekiah lived the remainder of his days in peace and tranquillity, being both honoured and revered by all neighbouring nations, who by this, and several more instances, perceived that he was under the immediate protection of God, and were therefore afraid to give him any molestation. So that, being at rest from wars, he applied his thoughts to the good government of his people, and the improvement of the city of Jerusalem, by erecting magazines, and filling them with arms, and by making a new aqueduct, which was of great convenience to the inhabitants for the supplying them with water. At length, after a course of great and worthy actions, he died in the twenty-ninth year of his reign, and was buried, with great solemnity, ^b in the most honourable place of the sepulchres of the sons of David. Happy in every thing else, except in being succeeded by a son, whose name was Manasseh, and who, in the beginning of his reign more especially, proved the very worst of all his race.

Manasseh was but a minor of twelve years old when he succeeded to the crown; and as he had the misfortune to fall into the hands of such guardians and chief ministers, as were ill affected to his father's reformation, they took all the care imaginable to breed him up in the strongest aversion to it, and to corrupt his mind with the worst of principles, both as to religion and government. For he not only worshipped idols, restored high places, and erected altars unto Baal, but in the room of the ark of the covenant set up an idol, even in the sanctuary itself, made his children pass through the fire to Moloch, practised witchcrafts and enchantments, and consulted soothsayers, and such persons as dealt with familiar spirits.

Nor was he content to practise these abominations himself, but being naturally of a cruel temper, he raised bitter persecutions against those who would not conform.

purchased his protection to his progeny; whereupon the king replied, 'If that will win him, I will spare him two of mine to gain him to my side.' which when his two sons, Sharezer and Adrammelech heard, they resolved to prevent their own death by sacrificing him. But for all this fiction, there is no other foundation but that scarce any thing else can be thought of, that can afford any excuse for so wicked a parricide.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 709.

^a Some take this god to be the figure of Noah's ark; others of a dove, which was worshipped among the Assyrians; and others of an eagle. The Hebrew of Tobit, published by Munster, calls it Dagon; but Selden acknowledges, that in all his reading he never met with any thing that could help him to explain it. Jurieu, however, seems to be more lucky in his inquiries; for, by several arguments, he has made it appear, that this idol was Jupiter Belus, the founder of the Babylonish empire, who was worshipped under the form of an eagle; and therefore, he observes farther, that as this Belus in profane history was the same with the Nimrod of Moses, between Nimrod and Nisroch the dissimilitude is not great, nor is it improbable that to perpetuate his honour, his votaries might change the name of Nimrod, which signifies a rebel, into that of Nisroch, which denotes a young eagle.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Jurieu's History of Doctrines*, &c. part 4. c. 11.

^b In the innermost and chiefest of the rooms of the royal sepulchres of the house of David, was the body of Hezekiah placed in a niche, which in the upper end of the room was very likely at that time cut out purpose for it, to do him the greater honour.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 699.

The prophets ^c who were sent to reprove him, he treated with the utmost contempt and outrage, and filled, in short, all the land with innocent blood, which he shed in carrying on his detestable purposes: but it was not long before the divine vengeance overtook him.

Esarhaddon being settled in the kingdom of Babylon, began to set his thoughts on the recovery of what his father Sennacherib had lost in Syria and Palestine; and having raised a great army, marched into the territories of the ten tribes, from whence he carried away a great multitude of Israelites, who were remains of the former captivity, and so sending some of his generals with a part of his army to Judea to reduce that country likewise, they vanquished Manasseh in battle, and having taken him hid in a thicket of briers and brambles, brought him prisoner to Esarhaddon, ^d who put him in irons, and carried him prisoner to Babylon.

^e His prison and chains brought him to himself, and made him so sensible of his heinous provocations against God, that with deep sorrow and humiliation, ^f he implored the divine pity and forgiveness, and thereupon prevailed with God, to mollify the king of Babylon's heart, who restored him to his liberty, and reinstated him in his kingdom.

Upon his return to Jerusalem, he redressed, as much as he could, the mischiefs which his former impiety had

^c The prophets who were supposed to have been living in this king's reign, were Hoshea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, some say Obadiah; and who was the greatest prophet of them all, Isaiah. In the late reign he was in great esteem at court, and being himself of the blood royal, and as some say, the king's father-in-law, he thought it more incumbent upon him to endeavour to reclaim him from his degenerate wicked courses. But this so exasperated him against Isaiah, that, instead of hearkening to his remonstrances, he caused him to be apprehended, and to make his torture both more lingering, and more exquisite, had him sawn asunder with a wooden saw, to which the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, c. xi. 37.; may be thought to allude.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Howell's History*, in the notes.

^d From Isaiah xx. 1, we may learn, that Esarhaddon, whom the sacred writer in that place calls Sargon, king of Assyria, sent Tartan, his general into Palestine; and it was he, very probably, who took Manasseh and carried him prisoner to Babylon. Esarhaddon was some time before, no more than king of Assyria, but upon his accession to the throne, he made himself master of Babylon and Chaldea, and so united the two empires together.—*Calmet's Commentary* and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 677.

^e The Jewish doctors have a tradition, that while Manasseh was at Babylon, by the direction of his conqueror, he was put in a large brazen vessel full of holes, and set near to a great fire; that in this extremity, he had recourse to all his false deities, to whom he had offered so many sacrifices, but received no relief from them; that remembering what he had heard his good father Hezekiah say, namely, when thou art in tribulation, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, (Deut. iv. 30, 31.) he was thereupon immediately delivered, and in a moment translated to his kingdom; but this is no less a fiction, than that miraculous flame which the author of the imperfect comment upon St. Matthew speaks of, that encompassed him on a sudden, as he was praying to God, and having melted his chains asunder, set him at liberty. See *Tradit. Hebr. in Paralip. et Targum*, in 2 Chron. xxiii. 11. In all probability it was Saos Duchin, the successor of Esarhaddon, who, some years after his captivity, released Manasseh out of prison.

^f We have a prayer, which it is pretended he made in prison. The church does not receive it as canonical, but it has a place among the apocryphal pieces, and in our collections, stands before the books of the Maccabees. The Greek church, however, has received it into their Euchologium, or book of prayers, and they use it sometimes as a kind of devout form, and what contains nothing in it deserving censure.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Manasseh*.

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done. He abolished the idolatrous profanations of the temple; restored, in all things, the reformation which his father had made, and obliged all his subjects to worship and serve the Lord only; so that, after this, God blessed him with a long and prosperous reign, longer indeed than any of the kings of Judah, either before or after him, had reigned. He possessed the throne full five and fifty years: and yet, notwithstanding his signal repentance, because his former wickedness was so great, he was not allowed the honour of being buried in any of the royal sepulchres, but was laid in a grave made in the garden belonging to his own house, called the garden of Uzzah, ^a and was succeeded by his son Amon.

This prince, imitating the first part of his father's reign, and not the repentance of his latter, gave himself up to all manner of wickedness and impiety; so that God shortened his government, by permitting some of his own domestics, ^b after a reign of two years, to conspire against him, and slay him: but as wicked as he was, the people of the land took care to revenge his murder, by putting all to death who had any hand in it, though they would not, at his burial, honour him, any more than his father, with a place among the sepulchres of the sons of David.

His son Josiah, who was then a child no more than eight years old, succeeded in the throne; but, having the happiness to fall under the conduct of better guardians in his minority, than did Manasseh his grandfather, he proved, when grown up, a prince of very extraordinary worth, equal, if not superior, in piety, virtue, and goodness, to the best of his predecessors. In the sixteenth year of his age, he took upon him the administration of the kingdom; and beginning with the reformation of religion, endeavoured to purge it from all those corruptions, which had been introduced in the preceding reigns. To this purpose, he took a progress through the whole kingdom, and wherever he came, brake down the altars, cut down the groves, ^c and brake in pieces all the

carved and molten images that were dedicated to idolatry. The graves of idolatrous priests he dug up, and burned their bones upon some of these altars, thereby to defile and pollute them for ever; and ^d whatever priests of the Levitical order had at any time sacrificed on the high places, though it were to the true God, these he took care to depose from their sacerdotal office. ^e The houses of the Sodomites he broke down: Tophet, ^f which was in the valley of Hinnom, he defiled. The horses ^g dedicated to the sun he re-

derivatives are used. Here follow proofs. In chap. xxiii. 6, it is said, that 'Josiah brought out the groves from the house of the Lord.' This translation seems very absurd; for what grove could there be in the temple? there was none planted there, nor was there room for any. The plain meaning of *vaigotse eth haasherah nibbeyth Yehovah* is, 'And he brought out the (goddess) *Asherah* from the house of the Lord, and burnt it.' That this is the true meaning of the place appears further from verse 7, where it is said, 'he broke down the houses of the Sodomites,' (*hakkedeshim*, of the whoremongers,) 'where the women wove hangings for the grove,' (*bottim laasherah*, houses or shrines for *Asherah*.) Similar perhaps to those which the silversmiths made for Diana, (Acts xix. 24.) It is rather absurd to suppose that the women were employed in making curtains to encompass a grove. The Syriac and Arabic versions countenance the interpretation I have given above. In verse 6, the former says, 'he cast out the idol, *dechlotho*, from the house of the Lord,' and in verse 7, 'he threw down the houses, *dazione*, of the prostitutes; and the women who wove garments, *ledechlotho*, for the idols which were there. The Arabic is exactly the same. From the whole it is evident that *Asherah* was no other than *Venus*; the nature of whose worship is plain enough from the mention of whoremongers and prostitutes. I deny not that there were groves consecrated to idolatrous worship among the Gentiles, but I am sure that such are not intended in the above cited passages, and the text in most places reads better when understood in this way.—*Dr A. Clarke*, 2 Kings xxi. end of chap.—*Ed.*

^d Several of these priests, seeing the worship of the temple abandoned, and, after that the tenths, and offerings, and sacrifices were taken away, having nothing to subsist themselves, had the weakness to repair to the high places, and there offer unto God such oblations and sacrifices as the people brought them; for it does not appear that any of them entered into the service of false gods; but because this was giving countenance by their presence and ministry to a worship that was forbidden, (Deut. xii. 11.) he would not receive them any more into the service of the temple, though he suffered them to be maintained by it. He puts them, in short, into the conditions of those priests that had any blemish, who might 'not offer the bread of their God,' and yet might 'eat the bread of their God, both of the holy and most holy,' Lev. xxi. 21, 22.—*Calmét's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

^e This was the name which is sometimes given to the most infamous of all prostitutes, who expose their bodies to be abused contrary to nature, in honour of those filthy deities whom they worshipped. Their houses were near the temple, and therefore these were persons consecrated to impurity; and that they might commit their abominations with a greater licentiousness, they had women appointed to make them tents, wherein they were wont to retire upon these detestable occasions.—*Calmét's Commentary.*

^f It is the general opinion of the Jews, that the word *tophet* comes from *toph*, which, in their language, signifies a drum; because drums, in this place, were used to be beat, in order to deaden the cries of those children which were burned alive to the idol Moloch; but there is one objection to this etymology, namely, that it does not appear that the larger kind of drums, such as are in use now, were at all known to the ancients. There was a lesser sort, indeed, or what we call a tabor, wherewith they made music in their dancing; but these were not loud enough for the present purpose, and the larger kind we owe to the Arabians, who first brought them into Spain, from whence they were dispersed all Europe over.—*Le Clerc's Commentary.*

^g It is certain that all the people of the east worshipped the sun, and consecrated horses to it, because they were nimble and swift in their course, even as they supposed it to be: "The Persian appeases the ray-encircled Apollo with a horse, lest a slow-footed victim should be given to the fleet God." (*Ovid. Fast. b.*

^a This garden, as some think, was made in that very spot of ground where Uzzah was struck dead, for 'touching the ark of the Lord,' (2 Sam. vi. 7.) but others imagine, that this was the place where Uzziah, who died a leper, was buried, (2 Chron. xxvi. 23.) and that Manasseh chose to be buried here, as unworthy, because of his manifold sins, whereof he nevertheless repented, to be laid in any of the royal sepulchres of the kings of Judah.—*Patrick's and Calmét's Commentaries.*

^b This, as some Jewish authors observe, is the usual number of years to which the sons of those kings did arrive, who, by their abominations, provoked God to anger; as they instance in the son of Jeroboam, (1 Kings xv. 25.) the son of Baasha, (chap. xvi. 8.) the son of Ahab, (chap. xxii. 51).—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^c In 2 Kings xxi. 3 and 7, it is said, that 'Manasseh made a grove, and he set a graven image of the grove,' &c., *vaigaseth pesel haasherah, asher asah*: 'And he put the graven image of *Asherah*, which he had made,' into the house. *Asherah*, which we translate grove, is undoubtedly the name of an idol; and probably of one which was carved out of wood. R. S. Jarchi, on Gen. xii. 3, says, 'that *Asherah* means a tree, which was worshipped by the Gentiles;' like as the oak was worshipped by the ancient Druids in Britain. Castet in Lex. Hept. sub voce *אשרה*, defines *Asherah* thus: 'a wooden image dedicated to Astarte or Venus. The LXX. render the words by *αλσος*; and Flamininus Nobilis, on 2 Kings xxiii. 4, says, "Again Theoderet observes, *αλσος* is Astarte and Venus; and by other interpreters called *Ashtaroth*." The Targum of Ben Uzziel, on Deut. vii. 5, 'Their groves shall ye cut down,' translates the place thus:—*neilaney sigedeghon tehatsetsim*, 'and the oaks of their adoration shall ye cut down.' From the above it is pretty evident that idols, not groves, are generally intended where *asherah* and its

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moved; burned its chariots with fire; and being not satisfied with destroying all the monuments of idolatry in his own dominions, he visited in person the cities of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the rest of the land which had formerly been possessed by the ten tribes, and there did the same. But while he was at Bethel, ^a discovering by the inscription the monument of the prophet who was sent from Judah to declare against the altar which Jeroboam had there set up, and (above three hundred years before) to name the very name of Josiah who was to destroy it; he would not suffer it to be touched, nor his bones to be molested.

Having thus carried on the work of reformation in the distant parts of his kingdom, he took care in the next place, to have the temple repaired. To this purpose, he ordered Hilkiah the high priest to take a general view of it, and see what was necessary to be done; who, while he was surveying and examining every place, chanced to find 'a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses.' The book was carried to the king, who, having ^b heard some part of it read, rent his robes in dread of the curses denounced against a wicked people, and immediately sent the high priest, and some other of his chief officers, to Huldah ^c the prophetess to inquire

of the Lord; who returned them in answer, 'that the judgments threatened in the book of the law would not be long before they fell upon the kingdom of Judah; but that, because the king had expressed so deep a concern upon hearing the denunciation of them, their execution should be delayed till after his death.'

The good king, however, in order to appease the wrath of God, called together a solemn assembly of all the elders and people of Judah and Jerusalem; and going with them to the temple, he caused the law of God there to be distinctly read; and when that was done, both he and all the people entered into a covenant to observe all that was contained in it. After this he made another progress round the kingdom of Judah and Samaria, to destroy every the least remainder of idolatry that he could meet with; and when the season of the next passover was come, had it ^d kept with such exactness and solemnity, as had never been observed from the days of Samuel the prophet to that time.

In a word, this excellent prince did all that in him lay to atone for the sins of the people, and appease the wrath of God; but his decree, ^e for the removal of Judah into a

i.) But then the question is, whether the people of Judah sacrificed these horses to the sun, as it is certain that the Armenians, Persians, and other nations did, or only led them out in state every morning, to meet and salute the sun at its rising. The ancients had a notion likewise, that the sun itself was carried about in a chariot; and therefore chariots, as well as horses, were dedicated to it. Since then we find these horses and chariots standing so near together, the horses, we may suppose, were designed to draw the chariots, and the chariots to carry the king and his other great officers, who were idolaters of this kind, out at the east gate of the city every morning, to salute and adore the sun at its coming above the horizon.—*Bochart's Hieroz.* part. 1. b. xi. c. 10.

^a The Jews will tell us, that, on one side of the grave, where the prophet of Judah and the prophet of Bethel lay together, there grew nettles and thistles, on the other, myrtles, and other odoriferous plants, signifying that a true and false prophet lay there; and that this raised the king's curiosity to inquire whose that sepulchre was; but there is no ground for this fabulous fancy. The king, we may suppose, espied a stone or a pillar more eminent than the rest, with the names of the persons that were buried under it, and this made him ask the question of the men of the city, that is, some of the old inhabitants that had escaped the captivity, and not any of those new-comers whom the king of Assyria had sent thither; for these could give no account of the ancient histories of the Israelites; neither can we suppose that the sepulchre itself, after so many years' standing, could have been distinguishable, had not some pious person or other, with an intent to perpetuate the memory of the thing, in each successive age, taken care to preserve and repair it (Mat. xxiii. 29).—*Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

^b Whether it was the whole Pentateuch, or the book of Deuteronomy only, which the high priest found in the temple, it is generally agreed, that the part which Shaphan read to the king was taken out of Deuteronomy, and not without some probability, that the xxviii., xxix., and xxxth chapters were that portion of Scripture which the secretary, who, as we are told 2 Kings xxii. 8, had read the book before he brought it to the king, thought proper upon this occasion to turn to; for therein is contained a renewal of the covenant, which Moses, as mediator, had made between God and the people of Israel at mount Horeb; and therein are those threats and terrible comminations to the transgressors of the law, whether prince or people, which affected Josiah so much; and 'which Moses had given the Levites to put on the side of the covenant, that it might be there for a witness' against the transgressors of it, (Deut. xxxi. 25, 26).—*Calmét's Commentary*.

^c This is the only mention we have of this prophetess, and

certainly it makes much to her renown, that she was consulted upon this weighty occasion, when both Jeremiah and Zephaniah were at that time prophets in Judah. But Zephaniah, perhaps, at that time, might not have commenced a prophet; because, though we are told that he 'prophesied in the days of Josiah,' (Zeph. i. 1.) yet we are nowhere informed in what part of his reign he entered upon the prophetic office. Jeremiah, too, might at that time be absent from Jerusalem, at his house at Anathoth, or some more remote part of the kingdom; so that, considering Josiah's haste and impatience, there might be no other remedy at hand to apply to but this woman: 'great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us,' says the king to his ministers, (2 Kings xxii. 13.) and therefore his intent, in sending them, might be to inquire whether there were any hopes of appeasing his wrath, and in what manner it was to be done. Being therefore well assured of this woman's fidelity in delivering the mind and counsel of God, the ministers who went to inquire, concluded rightly, that it was much more considerable what message God sent, than by whose hand it was that he conveyed it.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^d The words of the text are, 'Surely there was not held such a passover, from the days of the judges, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, and of the kings of Judah,' (2 Kings xxiii. 22.) which, taken in a literal sense, must denote, that this passover, which was celebrated by two tribes only, was more numerous, and more magnificent, than all those that were observed in the days of David and Solomon, in the most happy and flourishing state of the Jewish monarchy, and when the whole twelve tribes were met together, to solemnize that feast. It may not be amiss therefore to allow, that, in these expressions, there is a kind of auxesis or exaggeration, not unusual in sacred, as well as in profane authors. For nothing is more common than to say, "never was so much splendour and magnificence seen," when we mean no more, than that the thing we speak of was very splendid and magnificent; unless we suppose with some, that a preference is given to this passover above all the rest, in respect of the exact observation of the rites and ceremonies belonging to it, which, at other times, were performed according to custom, and several things either altered or omitted; whereas at this, every thing was performed according to the prescribed form of the law, from which, since the finding of this authentic copy of it, Josiah enjoined them not to vary one tittle.—*Calmét's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*. [What distinguished this passover from all others before it, was doubtless the regularity with which it was observed, together with the zeal and devotion of those who were engaged in it. The words of the text do not therefore apply to the number present, but to the manner in which the solemnity was kept, and the spirit which animated the worshippers.]—*Ed.*

^e Though Josiah was doubtless sincere in what he did, and omitted nothing to restore the purity of God's worship, wherever his power extended; yet the people had still a hankering after

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land of their captivity, was passed, irrevocably passed; and therefore when Pharaoh Necho^a king of Egypt desired to pass through Judea, in order to go and attack Charchemish,^b a city belonging to the king of Babylon, and situate upon the Euphrates, Josiah would by no means consent to it; but getting together his forces, posted himself in the valley of Megiddo,^c on purpose

the corruption of the former part of Manasseh's reign. They complied, indeed, with the present reformation; but this was only out of fear of incurring the king's displeasure, or of feeling the severity of his justice. Their hearts were not right towards God, as appears from the writings of the prophets that lived in those times; and therefore, seeing no sign of their repentance, God had no reason to reverse his decree.—*Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

a Pharaoh signifies no more, in the Egyptian language, than king; and was therefore given to any one that sat upon that throne: but Necho, according to Herodotus, was his proper name, though some will have it to be an appellative, which signifies lame, because this Pharaoh, as they suppose, had a lameness which proceeded from some wound he had received in the wars. The same historian tells us, that he was the son and successor of Psammetichus king of Egypt, and a man of a bold enterprising spirit; that he made an attempt to join the Nile and the Red Sea, by drawing a canal from one to the other: that though he failed in this design, yet, by sending a fleet from the Red Sea through the straits of Babel-Mandeb, he discovered the coasts of Africa, and, in this his expedition to the Euphrates, resolved to bid fair, by destroying the united force of the Babylonians and Medes, for the whole monarchy of Asia.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 610, and *Marsham's Canon. æg. sæcul.* 18. [This Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, whom Herodotus calls the son of Psammetichus, and represents as an enterprising hero, with which representation the Bible perfectly accords, is enumerated by Manetho as the sixth (Nechas II.) of the twenty-sixth Saitic dynasty. (*Jahn's Heb. Commonwealth.*) The account of the war carried on by Pharaoh Necho against the Jews and Babylonians, is confirmed by the recent discoveries of the late enterprising traveller Belzoni among the tombs of the Egyptian sovereigns. In one of the numerous apartments of the tomb of Psammetichus or Psammis, the son of Pharaoh Necho, he found a sculptured group describing the march of a military and triumphal procession, with three different sets of prisoners, who are evidently Jews, Ethiopians, and Persians. The procession begins with four red men with white kirtles, followed by a hawk-headed divinity; these are Egyptians apparently released from captivity, and returning home under the protection of the national deity. Then follow four white men in striped and fringed kirtles, with black beards, and with a simple white fillet round their black hair; these are obviously Jews, and might be taken for the portraits of those who, at this day, walk the streets of London. After them come three white men with smaller beards and curled whiskers, with double-spreading plumes on their heads, tattooed, and wearing robes or mantles spotted like the skins of wild beasts; these are Persians, or Chaldeans. Lastly, come four negroes with large circular ear-rings and white petticoats, supported by a bell over the shoulders; these are Ethiopians.]—*Belzoni's Narrative*, *Atto*, and *Atlas of Plates*, Nos. 4, 5, and 6.—Ed.

b Geographers make no mention of this city under this name; but it is very probably the same with what the Greeks and Latins call Cercusium or Ceresium, which was situated on the angle formed by the conjunction of the Chaboras or Chebar, and the Euphrates. Isaiah x. 9, speaks of this place as if Tiglath-Pileser had made a conquest of it, and Necho, perhaps, now was going to retake it, as we find he did; but Jeremiah informs us, (ch. xli. 1, 2,) that in the fourth year of Jehoiachin king of Judah, it was taken and quite destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.—*Calmet's Comment.*, and *Wells's Geog. of the Old Test.* vol. iii.

c Megiddo was a city in the half tribe of Manasseh, not far from the Mediterranean Sea, which way Necho was to pass with his army, in order to go into Syria, and thence to the Euphrates. In the valley adjoining to this place Josiah was slain, 'while he was at the head of his army,' as Josephus tells us, 'and riding up and down to give orders from one wing to the other.' This action Herodotus makes mention of when he tells us, 'that Nechos king of Egypt having fallen upon the Syrians, near the

to obstruct his passage. The Egyptian king hearing of this, sent ambassadors desiring him to desist, declaring that he came not to invade his territories, but purely to do himself justice on the king of Babylon; and assuring him withal, that what he did in this case was by the order and appointment of God. Josiah, however, thought himself no way concerned to believe him; and therefore on Necho's marching up to the place where he was posted to receive him, a battle immediately ensued, wherein the Egyptian archers, discovering Josiah, though he had disguised himself before the action began, plied that quarter of the army where he fought so very warmly with their arrows, that at last receiving a mortal wound from one of them, he was carried in another chariot^d out of the battle to Jerusalem, where after a reign of one and thirty years, he died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

e The death of so excellent a prince was deservedly lamented by all his people; but by none more sincerely than by Jeremiah the prophet; who having a thorough sense of the greatness of the loss, as well as full foresight of the sore calamities which were afterwards to follow upon the whole kingdom of Judah, while his heart was full with a view of both these, wrote a song of lamentation^f upon this mournful occasion; but that is

city Magdol, obtained a great victory, and made himself master of Cadytis,^g where the author plainly mistakes the Syrians for the Jews; Magdolum, a city in the Lower Egypt, for Megiddo; and Cadytis, for Kadesh, (in the Upper Galilee, by which he was to pass in his way to Charchemish;) or rather for the city of Jerusalem, which, in Herodotus's time might be called by the neighbouring nations *Cadyta* or *Cadyscha*, that is, *the holy city*; since, even to this day, it is called by the eastern people *Al-huds*, which is plainly both of the same signification and original.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Kadesh*, and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 610.

d It was the custom of war in former times for great officers to have their led horses, that if one failed they might mount another. The kings of Persia, as Quintus Curtius informs us, had horses attending their chariots, which, in case of any accident, they might make to; and, in like manner, we may presume, that when it became a mighty fashion to fight in chariots, all great captains had an empty one following them, into which they might betake themselves if any mischance befell the other.—*Bochart's Hieroz.* part 1. c. 2 and 9.

e The author of the book of Ecclesiasticus has given us his encomium in these words:—"All, except David, and Hezekias, and Josias, were defective. They forsook the law of the Most High; even the kings of Judah failed. But the remembrance of Josias, is like the composition of the perfume, that is made by the art of the apothecary: it is as sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine. He behaved himself uprightly in the conversion of the people, and took away the abomination of iniquity. He directed his heart unto the Lord, and in the time of the ungodly, he established the worship of God."—*Eccles.* xlix. 1, &c.

f The Jews were wont to make lamentations, or mournful songs, upon the death of great men, princes, and heroes, who had distinguished themselves in arms, or by any civil arts had merited well of their country. By an expression in 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, 'behold they are written in the Lamentations,' one may infer, that they had certain collections of this kind of composition. The author of the book of Samuel has preserved those which David made upon the death of Saul and Jonathan, of Abner and Absalom: but this mournful poem, which the disconsolate prophet made upon the immature death of good Josiah, we nowhere have; which is a loss the more to be deplored because, in all probability, it was a master-piece in its kind: since never was there an author more deeply affected with his subject, or more capable of carrying it through all the tender sentiments of sorrow and compassion.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Preface on the Lamentations of Jeremiah.*

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lost; and the other, which goes under his name, and is still remaining, was composed upon the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties Obviated, and Objections Answered.*

THAT the dung of swallows is of a very hot and caustic quality, and when dropt into the eye, must needs be injurious to the sight, as being apt to cause an inflammation, and thereby a concretion of humours, which in process of time may produce a white film that will obstruct the light from the optic nerves; and that the gall of a fish, especially of the fish called Callionymus, is of excellent use to remove all such specks and obstructions to the sight, we have the testimony of some of the greatest men,¹ physicians and naturalists, to produce in confirmation of this part of Tobit's history. That good angels are appointed by God to be the guardians of particular men, and in execution of this their office, do frequently assume human shapes, to guide them in their journeys, and to deliver them from all dangers, is a doctrine² as ancient as the patriarch Jacob's time, embraced by Christians, and believed by the wisest heathens; and that every man, in like manner, has an evil angel, or genius, whereof some preside over one vice, and some over another; inasmuch that there are demons of avarice, demons of pride, and demons of impurity, &c., each endeavouring to ensnare the person he attends with a complexional temptation, is another position that has been almost generally received,³ not only in the Jewish and Christian, but in the Pagan theology likewise; and therefore thus far the history of Tobit can be no novel or romance.

That good angels have a superior power and control over the bad, and by the divine authority can curb and restrain their malice, which is all that we need understand by 'their binding them up,' is evident from a passage in the Revelations very similar to what we read here concerning Raphael and Asmodeus: 'I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more:' and that this good angel, personating an Israelite, and 'calling himself Azarias, the son of Ananias,' was not guilty of any lie or prevarication, is plain from cases of the like nature. For as the picture is usually called by the person it represents, and he who in tragedy acts the part of Cato, does, for that time, go

under his name; so Raphael, being sent by God in the form and appearance of a young man, was in that capacity to act and speak as if he had been such. Nor was there any fallacy in his assuming the name of Azarias, which signifies God's help or assistance, since he was manifestly sent for this very purpose, that he might be a guide and assistance to Tobias in his journey; and therefore very prudently concealed his quality of an angel, that he might more conveniently execute his commission. So that hitherto there is no incongruity in the whole narration, if we can but have a farther account, why⁴ the smoke of the fish's liver and heart should be of an efficacy to put the evil spirit to flight.

Those who are of opinion,⁵ that demons, or evil angels, were invested with certain material forms, wherein they snuffed up the perfumes, and feasted themselves upon the odours of the incense and sacrifices that were offered to them, have an easy way of solving this difficulty, by supposing that the smell of the burned heart and liver of the fish was offensive to Asmodeus, even as they pretend,⁶ that in some herbs, plants, stones, and other natural things, there is a certain virtue to drive away demons, and to hinder them from coming into such a determinate place. The Chaldeans, among whom the book of Tobit was wrote, and the Israelites, for whose use and instruction it was wrote, might both be of this opinion:—That demons, as not absolutely divested of all matter, were capable of the same sensations and impressions that belonged to corporeal substances; and therefore in accommodation to the vulgar idea and prejudice of the people, the author of this history might express himself, as though the expulsion of this evil spirit was effected by a natural cause, the smoke of the fish, even though, at the same time, he sufficiently intimates, that it was by a divine power that it came to pass, because we find the angel thus enjoining Tobias,⁷ 'when thou shalt come to thy wife Sara, rise up both of you, and pray to God, who is merciful, who will pity you, and save you.'

Upon the contrary supposition, namely, that this demon was a being incorporeal, and this is the supposition concerning the angelical nature which generally prevails, we may safely conclude, that the smoke of the fish's entrails could have no direct and physical effect upon him; that his fleeing away therefore was occasioned by a supernatural power, in the exercise of which, the angel appointed to attend Tobias, was the principal instrument;⁸ that he ordered the burning of the fish's entrails as a sign when the evil spirit, by his superior power, should be chased away; or in the same sense that our blessed Saviour spread clay upon the eyes of the man that was born blind, and ordered him to wash in the pool of Siloah, namely, not as the cause, but the proof of his cure; and that he sent him away⁹ 'into the uttermost parts of Egypt,' that is, into the deserts of the Upper Egypt, because our Saviour intimates that such is the usual habitation of evil spirits, when he represents them,¹⁰ 'as walking through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none.'

¹ Galen. de Simplic. Medicament. Facult. b. x. c. 12. Ælian. b. xiii. c. 4. Rhasis. b. ix. c. 27. Pliny, b. xxvii. c. 11. Gesner. Hist. Animal. b. iii. Aldrovand. Ornitholog. b. xvii. Vales. de Sacra Philosoph. c. 42.

² Gen. xlviii. 16. Ps. xxxiv. 7. Mat. xviii. 10. Acts xii. 15. Hesiod. Oper. et Dies. b. i. Plato. de Legibus. b. x. and Apuleius. de Deo Socratis.

³ See Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. c. 10. Basnag. Hist. des Juifs. b. vi. c. 19. Orphei Hymn. ad. Musas. Plutarch in Bruto. 1 Pat. v. 8. Mat. vii. 32, 33. Luke xiii. 11, 16.

⁴ Rev. xx. 1. &c.

⁵ Tobit v. 12.

⁶ Tobit viii. 2.

⁷ Origen. cont. Cels. b. viii.

⁸ Porphy. de Abstin. b. ii.

⁹ Tobit vi. 17.

¹⁰ Saurin's Dissert. sur le Demon Asmodée.

¹¹ Tobit viii. 3.

¹² Mat. xii. 43.

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However this be, we cannot hold ourselves concerned for the vindication of every expression in a book, which our church has not thought fit to receive into her canon of Scripture. It is sufficient for our present purpose, that the historical ground-plot of it be true, whatever may be said as to some particular passage in it; and though its figurative and poetical style, as well as near conformity to the theology then in vogue, may give some umbrage to a reader, that will not be so candid as to think with St Jerome, ¹ 'Many things are spoken in the sacred writings according to the opinion of that time, and not according to what was the real truth of the matter.'^a

¹ Jerome on Jeremiah xxviii. 28.

^a By much the greater part of this disquisition on the book of Tobit might have been well omitted. That book was never admitted into the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures by the Jews; nor is it to be found in the earliest and most authentic canons of the Christian church. That there was such a man as Tobit, carried captive with the rest of the tribe of Naphtali by Salmaneser; that he was eminent for his piety and charity; that his wife, though a good woman, was not always obedient to her husband; that he became blind in the manner which is recorded, and had his sight restored by the means which are said to have been used for that purpose; and that his son married the daughter of Raguel of Ecbatana, after she had been betrothed to seven husbands, there is no reason to doubt; for not one of these events is contrary to the common course of nature. It is indeed very singular that seven young men should have successively perished on their attempting each to consummate his marriage; but such events were not, in themselves, impossible, and perhaps we may even conceive the cause by which they were effected. The whole story of Asmodeus and Raphael is certainly a piece of poetical machinery, invented for a similar purpose with that for which Homer introduces his gods and goddesses as taking opposite sides in the Trojan war, or for which the Persian poets introduce the agency of good and evil genii, in their beautiful moral allegories. It was to adapt the story to the taste of those for whose amusement and instruction it was written, who delighted in the marvellous, and on whose memory and imagination a philosophical account of a singular event would have made no deep or lasting impression. To understand the story of Raphael and Asmodeus literally, as Calmet seems to have done, would be to prefer the authority of this beautiful oriental tale to that of the whole Hebrew Scriptures, in which I heartily agree with Bishop Horsley, that no countenance whatever is given to the popular doctrine of guardian angels. "This interpretation" says the bishop, "introduces a system, which is in truth nothing better than" the pagan polytheism, somewhat disguised and qualified; for in the pagan system every nation had its tutelary deity, all subordinate to Jupiter, the sire of gods and men. Some of those prodigies of ignorance and folly, the rabbins of the Jews, who lived since the dispersion of the nation, thought all would be well if for tutelary deities, they substituted tutelary angels. From this substitution, the system of guardian angels, which I have described, arose; and from the Jews the Christians adopted it with other fooleries." But though the story of Raphael and Asmodeus must be considered as mere machinery, it does not by any means follow that the history itself—the detail of facts, is not entitled to great credit. No man of real learning, Mr Bryant alone excepted, has ever called in question, I believe, the great outlines of the Trojan war as drawn by Homer: though surely no man in this age hath believed that the pestilence was sent among the Grecian troops by Apollo, for Agamemnon's cruelty to his injured priest, or that Diomedes literally wounded the god of war, and sent him bellowing with pain to heaven! That there were such men, however, as Agamemnon and Diomedes; that the former was the commander of the confederate Greeks, and the latter one of their most accomplished heroes; and that, in the tenth year of the war, great numbers of the army were cut off by some pestilential disease, which the medical knowledge of Machaon did not enable him to cure, it would be unreasonable to doubt. And would it not be equally unreasonable to doubt the historical facts related in the book of Tobit, though we do not interpret literally his oriental machinery? or on account of that machinery, to neglect the

Whether the book of the law, which Hilkiah the high priest found in the house of the Lord, in the time of Josiah king of Judah, consisted of the whole Pentateuch, or only of that part of it which is called Deuteronomy; and whether it was the authentic copy which Moses committed to the priest's custody, or only some ancient manuscript kept in the temple for the public use, namely, for the king to read to the people once every seven years, or for the priests to consult upon any emergent difficulty, is a matter of some debate among the learned. The testimony of the author of the book of Chronicles seems however to determine the matter, when he assures us, that the book of the law which Hilkiah found, was that ² 'which was given by the hand of Moses,' and consequently the whole Pentateuch, which, by his command, was reposit³ 'in the side of the ark of the covenant.'

It is presumed, indeed, that Josiah's three predecessors, Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon, as not content to be impious themselves, and to instigate their subjects to idolatry, had made it their business to burn and destroy all the copies of the law that they could anywhere meet with, ^b so that there was not so much as one left for the king's use; and that this was the reason of his discovering so great a surprise at his hearing the condemnations read, because he had never perhaps seen any such volume before. It must be acknowledged, indeed, that disuse often cancels the most excellent laws; and from Josiah's surprise, we have room to suspect, that he had not as yet transcribed a copy of the law with his own hand, and had probably for some time neglected the

² 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.

³ Deut. xxxi. 26.

moral lessons with which it abounds, and affect to despise the beautiful simplicity of the tale? As a moral tale founded in fact, it ought undoubtedly to be received; as such, it appears to have been alluded to by Polycarp early in the second century; and there is not the smallest reason to believe that its author ever expected it to be received as a work of a higher order.—*Bishop Gleig*.—Ed.

^b The rabbins say that Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon endeavoured to destroy all the copies of the law, and this only was sacred by having been buried under a paving-stone. It is scarcely reasonable to suppose that this was the only copy of the law that was found in Judea; for even if we grant that Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon had endeavoured to destroy all the books of the law, yet they could not have succeeded so as to destroy the whole. Besides, Manasseh endeavoured, after his conversion, to restore every part of the divine worship, and in this he could have done nothing without the Pentateuch; and the succeeding reign of Amon was too short to give him opportunity to undo every thing that his penitent father had reformed. Add to all the considerations, that in the time of Jehoshaphat, teaching from the law was universal in the land, for he set on foot an itinerant ministry, in order to instruct the people fully: for he sent his princes to teach in the cities of Judah; and with them he sent Levites and priests; and they went about through all the cities of Judah, and taught the people, having the book of the Lord with them.' (2 Chron. xvii. 7—9.) And if there be any thing wanting to show the improbability of the thing, it must be this, that the transactions mentioned here took place in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah, who had, from the time he came to the throne, employed himself in the restoration of the pure worship of God; and it is not likely that, during these eighteen years, he was without a copy of the Pentateuch. The simple fact seems to be this, that this was the original covenant renewed by Moses with the people in the plains of Moab, and which he ordered to be laid up beside the ark; (Deut. xxxi. 26.) and being now unexpectedly found, its antiquity, the occasion of its being made, the present circumstances of the people, the imperfect state in which the reformation was as yet, after all that had been done, would all concur to produce the effect here mentioned on the mind of the pious Josiah.—*Dr A. Clarke*.—Ed.

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reading it publicly, ¹ 'every seventh year,' according to the command. But that he had never seen such a transcript of it before this time, we can hardly believe, because it is not conceivable how he could so early apply himself to the service of God, even in opposition to the corruptions of the times; how he could begin the reformation of religion, the abolishment of idolatry and superstition, and the establishment of so many wholesome ordinances for the divine worship, without the assistance and direction of this book.

In this very year, we are told, that such a passover was solemnized ² 'as had not been kept from the days of Samuel the prophet, nor among all the kings of Israel;' but how the priests could have observed all the rites and ceremonies belonging to it, (which are not a few) if every prescribed form of it had been lost, we cannot conceive; since copies of the book, which was now found in the temple, could not be made and transcribed time enough for their instruction in these particulars.

In the reigns of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah, copies of the law ³ were common enough, and in the reigns of their wicked successors, the sacred history makes no mention of their being burned or destroyed. The Jewish doctors indeed tell us, that Manasseh blotted the sacred name of Jehovah out of all the books that he could find; but they nowhere report, that he utterly abolished them: and therefore we may conclude, that the people, at this time, had several copies of the law among them, though some of them perhaps were imperfect and corrupt; and the high priest might rejoice, when he had found the original, because by it all the other copies might be corrected; and rejoice the more, that he had found it at a time when the king was going to make a reformation in religion, which he could not but look upon as a very remarkable providence.

The four Evangelists, who have recorded the substance of the christian religion, we have by us, and may read therein every day; and yet who can say, but that some remarkable passage may perchance escape his observation? ⁴ But now, if, by some lucky accident, we should happen to find the original of St Matthew or St John, who can doubt, but that we should both read and listen to it with more seriousness and attention than we now do to the same books that are every day in our hands? And in like manner we may say, that it was the great reverence which Josiah bore to the original book of Moses, as well as the seasonable and remarkable finding it at this time, that awakened and quickened him to a more attentive consideration of all the passages contained in it, than ever he had known before, either in his reading, or hearing the ordinary copies of the law.

Manasseh was certainly, in the former part of his reign, a very impious prince. The Scripture seems to imply, that, till his miseries had rectified his notions, ⁵ he did not believe at all in the God of Israel, nor in the history of his forefathers; but he is not the only son that has degenerated from the good example of a pious father; neither were his subjects the only people that, even in the grossest irreligion and profaneness, have

imitated the example of their prince. The wonder is, how both prince and people became, upon every occasion, so prone to fall from the religion of their ancestors into idolatry, notwithstanding the frequent remonstrances on God's part to the contrary? Now, to this purpose it may be observed, ⁶ that in the whole compass of the law, there is no express revelation made of a future life; that the hints which are given of it, are too obscure for every common reader rightly to interpret; and that this obscurity might be a means of throwing the ancient Israelites into idolatrous practices. For as they had no certain hopes of another life to rely on, they could not see neighbouring nations in a more flourishing condition, without some uneasiness and perturbation of mind; and from hence, by degrees, they might fall into this opinion, —That the gods of these nations must needs be more mighty and powerful than the God of Israel, since their worshippers were manifestly more prosperous; and from hence they were induced to forsake the God of their ancestors, and to worship the gods of the heathen.

It may be observed farther, that the difficulty of keeping the Mosaic law, especially in what related to its rites and ceremonies, was very great, and the profit which resulted from thence no ways comparable to the trouble which it occasioned; and from thence they might be tempted to shake off ⁷ 'a yoke which neither they nor their forefathers were able to bear,' and betake themselves to the observance of other laws, more easy and commodious in themselves, and such as were productive of much more benefit and prosperity to the observers of them. Nor should it be forgotten, that as a great part of the revenues of Palestine, according to the custom of the Mosaic law, fell to the lot of the priests and Levites, the laity, upon every occasion, might grow weary of paying so much; and thereupon be inclined to any innovation in religion that should offer itself, if it could but be supported at an easier expence. And accordingly we may observe, that in the wicked reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh, when the temple was either quite shut up, or converted to idolatrous purposes, the payment of tithes and oblations was suspended, which might be a great gratification to the people, until, in the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah, they were again restored to the ministers of God. These, and such reasons as these, might make the ancient Hebrews so unsettled in their obedience to the law of Moses, ⁸ until the time that a clearer and

⁶ Le Clerc's Commentary on 2 Kings xxi. 11.

⁷ Acts xv. 10.

⁸ The manner in which the author here endeavours to account for the proneness of the Israelites to fall into idolatry, and to apostatize from the worship and service of Jehovah, is very unsatisfactory. He even seems to frame excuses for their conduct in this respect, or at least to diminish the magnitude of the guilt with which Scripture itself plainly charges them for their idolatrous practices. If, as the apostle Paul represents, the Gentiles were without excuse because they did not worship the true God in accordance with the natural dictates of their own consciences, and the knowledge of his character and attributes, manifested to them in the works of creation and providence; how much more guilty must the Israelites have been, in worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator; when to them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises? In vain shall we endeavour to account for the idolatrous propensities of the chosen people of God, if we leave out of view the natural depravity and corruption of the human heart. This principle, as the word of God declares in language too plain to be misunderstood, is the

¹ Deut. xxxi. 10, 11.

² 2 Chron. xxxv. 18.

³ Chap. xvii. 9.

⁴ Calmet's Comment. on 2 Kings xxii. 8.

⁵ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13.

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more perfect revelation of a future life extended their views and hopes above the things of this world, and made them more constant and immovable, as the author to the Hebrews¹ bears them testimony, in the worship of the true God.

Josiah may be thought by some to have followed the dictates of his zeal a little too far, in destroying the images, and altars, and other monuments of idolatry,

¹ Chap. xi. 35, &c.

main source and spring of idolatry and apostasy from the worship and service of God; and it has, in all ages, tended powerfully to cause men to forsake the Fountain of living waters, and to hew out to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water. We do not deny that, in the case of the Jews, there were other subordinate causes which operated in drawing them away from their allegiance to their God and King; but we maintain that the primary cause was an evil and bitter heart, and that this is the plain and often repeated declaration of Scripture. The author seems to take for granted, that the Israelites had no certain hope of a future life, and assigns this as one cause why they were so ready to fall into idolatrous practices; but if we examine carefully the Old Testament Scriptures, along with several passages in the New, we shall find, that, even on the subject of a future state, the Israelites had communicated to them a degree of knowledge sufficient to render unavailing the plea which the author urges in their behalf. The patriarchs cherished a hope of the pardoning mercy of God towards penitent sinners, (Gen. iv. 7.) and confided in him, as the judge of all the earth, (xviii. 25.) and the great rewarder of them that diligently seek him; which reward they expected, not merely in the present evil world, but in a future state: for we are told that 'they sought a better country, that is, an heavenly.' (Gen. v. 22, 24, compared with Heb. xi. 5, Gen. xxviii. 13; compared with Mat. xxii. 31, 32, and Gen. xxv. 8; compared with Heb. xi. 10, 14—16.) To this we may add, that a hope was cherished from the beginning, originally founded on a divine promise of a great Saviour, who was to deliver mankind from the miseries and ruin to which they were exposed, and through whom God was to make the fullest discoveries of his grace and mercy towards the human race, and to raise them to a high degree of glory and felicity. (Gen. iii. 15. xii. 3; xvii. 19; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xlix. 10.) These were the chief principles of the religion of the patriarchs who were animated by a strong sense of their obligation to the practice of piety, virtue, and universal righteousness. The belief of a future state, which we thus see was held by the patriarchs, (though not expressly taught by Moses, whose writings presuppose it as a generally adopted article of religion,) was transmitted from them to the Israelites, and appears in various parts of the Old Testament. From the circumstance of the promise of temporal blessings being principally, if not entirely, annexed to the laws of Moses, Bishop Warburton attempted to deduce an argument in support of his divine mission. It is impossible here to enter into an examination of this argument: but we may observe, in the first place, "that the omission of a future state as a sanction to the laws of Moses, can be satisfactorily accounted for; and, secondly, that the Old Testament shows that he himself believed a future state, and contains a gradual development of it. These two propositions, the former of which is in unison with the opinion of Warburton, the latter at variance with him, appear to be very satisfactorily established by the luminous reasoning of Dr Graves. Instead of employing the omission of the doctrine as a medium, by which to prove that a divine interposition was necessary for the erection and maintenance of Judaism, he first shows the reality of a divine interposition, and then that the omission in question, so far from being inconsistent with the divine origin of the system, does, in fact, necessarily result from the peculiar nature of the dispensation, and from the character of the people to whom it was given.—The polytheistic principle of tutelary deities maintained that their worship was attended with a national prosperity. The futility of this it was the intention of God to display by open and unequivocal demonstrations of his own omnipotence. The moral government of Jehovah was to be exhibited on the earth by the theocracy which he established. Its very nature required temporal sanctions, and their immediate enforcement; its object could not be attained by waiting till the invisible realities of a future state should be

in the kingdom of Israel, where he had neither any regal or judicial authority: but it should be remembered, that his authority in this regard was founded upon an ancient prediction,² where he is particularly named, and appointed to this work of reformation by God himself, and that consequently, he could not be guilty of an infringement upon another's right, even though he had

² 1 Kings xiii. 2.

unveiled. The previous exhibition of such a moral government was the best preparation for the full revelation of man's future destiny, and of the means provided for his welfare in it, by a merciful and redeeming God. 'Life and immortality were thus to be fully brought to light by the gospel.' As yet the bulk of mankind were unprepared for it, and were better fitted to comprehend, and be influenced by sensible manifestations of the divine judgments, than by the remoter doctrine of a future state of retribution. The Old Testament, however, and even the writings of Moses, contained intelligible intimations of immortality. The four last books of the Pentateuch, indeed, were principally occupied in the detail of the legal regulations, and the sanctions necessary to enforce them: yet even from them Jesus Christ deduced an argument to the confusion of the Sadducees. And in the book of Genesis are several occurrences, which must have led the pious Jews to the doctrine of a future existence, even had they possessed no remains of patriarchal tradition. The account of the state of man before the fall, of the penalty first annexed to his transgression, and of the sentence pronounced upon our first parents, considered in connexion with the promise of a deliverance, would necessarily suggest such a doctrine. Could the believing Jews conclude that death would have followed the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, unless he was translated to some better state of existence and felicity? How also did God show his approbation of Enoch's piety, unless he took him to himself, and to immortality and bliss? Doubtless the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was not the first who discovered that 'the fathers did not look for transitory promises; that 'they sought a better country, even a heavenly; and that 'God hath prepared for them a city; and that Moses himself rejected the 'enjoyment of the pleasures of sin for a season,' because 'he had respect to the recompence of the reward.' This important and consolatory truth of a future state of being, was, in process of time, displayed to the Jews more and more clearly. The book of Job is very explicit upon the subject. The royal psalmist has spoken of it with great confidence: and Solomon, besides several passages in his proverbs, which seem to allude to it, is supposed to have written the book of Ecclesiastes, which concludes with a clear declaration of it, for the express purpose of proving and enforcing it. The translation of Elijah, and the restoration to life of three several persons by him and his successors, must have given demonstration of the probability of the same doctrine: which also Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, and especially Daniel, very frequently inculcate, and even presuppose as a matter of notoriety and popular belief." To these considerations we may add the fact, that in the books of Leviticus (xix. 26, 31; xx. 27.) and Deuteronomy (xviii. 10, 11.) there are various enactments against diviners, enchanters, and those who profess to know the future, by consulting either familiar spirits, or the spirits of the departed. All these superstitions suppose the belief of spirits, and the doctrine of the existence of souls after death: and Moses would not have prohibited the consulting of them by express laws, if he had not been apprehensive that the Hebrews, after the example of the neighbouring heathen nations, would have abused the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which was universally received among them. Severe, however, as these laws were, they did not entirely repress this abuse: for the Psalmist (cvi. 28.) reproaches the Israelites with having eaten 'the sacrifices of the dead,' that is, sacrifices offered to the manes of the dead. We have also, in Saul, a signal instance of this superstition. After he had 'cut off those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land,' (1 Sam. xxviii. 3, 9.) having in vain consulted the Lord respecting the issue of his approaching conflict with the Philistines, he went in quest of a woman that had a familiar spirit, and commanded her to evoke the soul of the prophet Samuel. (ver. 7—12.) This circumstance evidently proves that Saul and the Israelites believed in the immortality of the soul.—*Horne's Introduction.*—Ez.

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no farther commission. But the ten tribes, we are to consider, being now gone into captivity, the ancient right which David and his posterity had to the whole kingdom of Israel, before it was dismembered by Jeroboam and his successors, devolved upon Josiah. The people who escaped the captivity were united with his subjects, and put themselves under his protection. They came to the worship of God at Jerusalem, and did doubtless gladly comply with his extirpation of idolatry; at which the Cuthites, the new inhabitants of the country, who worshipped their gods in another manner, were not at all offended.

The kings of Assyria, it is true, were the lords and conquerors of the country; but from the time of Manasseh's restoration, they seem to have conferred upon the kings of Judah, who might thereupon become their homagers, a sovereignty in all the land of Canaan, to the same extent, wherein it was held by David and Solomon, before it was divided into two kingdoms. So that Josiah, upon sundry pretensions, had sufficient power and authority to visit the kingdom of Israel, and to purge it from idolatry, as well as his own.

And this, by the bye, suggests the reason why that good king was so very strenuous in opposing the king of Egypt, when he demanded a passage through his country. ¹ He was now, as we said, an homager, and ally to the king of Babylon, and under a strict oath to adhere to him against all his enemies, especially against the Egyptians, and to defend the land of Canaan, which was one barrier of the empire, against their invasions; and, being under such an obligation to his sovereign paramount, he could not permit his enemy to pass through his country, in order to make war upon him, and not oppose him, without incurring a breach of his oath, and a violation of that fidelity, which, in the name of his God, he had sworn to the king of Babylon; and this was a thing which so good and just a man as Josiah was, could not but detest.

It was the sense of his duty, therefore, and not any rashness of temper, or opposition to the divine will, that engaged Josiah in this war with the king of Egypt. The king of Egypt indeed sent to him to acquaint him, that ² God was with him, and that therefore opposing him, would be fighting against God: but Josiah knew very well that he was an heathen prince, who had no knowledge of the Lord Jehovah, nor had ever consulted his oracles or prophets, and had therefore sufficient reason to believe, that by the god who, as he pretended, had sent him upon this expedition, he intended no other than the false Egyptian god, whom he served, but whom the king of Judah had no reason to regard.

The truth is, whenever the word *God* occurs in this message from Necho to Josiah, it is not expressed in the Hebrew original by the word *Jehovah*, which is the proper name of the true God, but by the word *Elohim*, which, being the plural number, is equally applicable to the false gods of the heathens, (and is the word that is used to denote them, whenever they are spoken of,) as well as the true God. But even suppose that Necho, in his embassy to Josiah, had made use of the proper name of the true God; yet was not Josiah therefore bound to believe him, because we find Sennacherib, when he

came up against Judah, sending Hezekiah word, ³ that the Lord (Jehovah in the Hebrew) had ordered him to go up against the land, and destroy it; and yet it is certain that Sennacherib, in so pretending, lied to Hezekiah; and why then might not Josiah have as good reason to conclude, that Necho, in the same pretence, might have lied likewise? Necho, however, in his message, by using the word *Elohim*, gave Josiah to understand that, by the false gods of Egypt, he was sent upon that expedition, and therefore Josiah could not be liable to any blame for not hearkening to the words which came from them.

His death, indeed, was sudden and immature; he fell in battle against the Egyptians; and yet he may be said to have 'gone to his grave in peace,' because he was recalled from life, whilst his kingdom was in a prosperous condition, before the calamities wherewith it was threatened were come upon it, and whilst himself was in peace and reconciliation with God. Thus, when ⁴ 'the righteous are taken away from the evil to come,' though, ⁵ 'in the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery;' yet, in what manner soever their exit be, they may well be said 'to die in peace,' who, after their dissolution here, ⁶ 'are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints.'

⁷ 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun,' says the wise preacher. The love of life is natural to us, and in our very frame and constitution is implanted the fear of death; so that it requires no small compass of thought and serious consideration, to receive the sentence of our dissolution with a proper composure of mind. The common excuse of human infirmity might therefore apologize for Hezekiah's conduct, had we nothing more to say in his behalf; but this is far from being all.

The message which God sent him by the prophet Isaiah was, that 'he should die,' that is, that his distemper, according to the natural course of things, was mortal, and above the power of human art to cure. But this denunciation was not absolute and irreversible. It implied a tacit condition, even as did Jonah's prediction of the destruction of Nineveh, which the repentance of its inhabitants prevented, as Hezekiah's humiliation retarded the time of his death. At this time, however, he was no more than nine and thirty years old, nor had he as yet any son; for Manasseh was not born till three years after his illness. The Assyrians too were now making great preparations to invade his kingdom; for his sickness was prior to their invasion, though, in the course of the history, it is placed immediately after it. Putting all these considerations together, then, the king had sundry reasons, besides the natural aversion which all men have to death, to be concerned at its approach, and to desire a prolongation of his life.

Length of days, and a peaceful enjoyment of old age, was a promise which God had made to his faithful servants, and the reward that he usually paid them in hand; ⁸ and therefore Hezekiah was apt to look upon himself as under the displeasure of God, for his being so hastily

² 2 Kings xviii. 25.

⁴ Is. lvii. 1.

⁵ Wisd. iii. 2.

⁶ Wisd. v. 5.

⁷ Eccl. ix. 7.

⁸ Le Clerc's Commentary on 2 Kings xx. 3.

¹ Prideaux's Connection, anno CIO.

² 2 Chron. xxxv. 21.

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summoned away, and this premature death of his, as a kind of token of his final retribution. In himself he saw the royal family of David extinct, and all the hopes of having the Messiah born of his race become abortive. He saw the storm that was gathering, and threatening his country with desolation, while there was none of his family to succeed in his throne, and all things were in danger of running into anarchy and confusion; and therefore, having this prospect before his eyes, he might well melt into tears at the apprehensions of his approaching death, which would extinguish all his hopes, and consummate all his fears, in making him go down childless to the grave.^a

What his distemper was, the Scripture has nowhere expressly told us: the original word denotes an *inflammation*; but what kind of inflammation it was, or what part of the body it affected, we have no intimation given us: and therefore, being thus left to conjecture, some have thought it an imposthume; others, a plague-sore; and others, a quinsy; being all led in their opinions by what ¹ naturalists have told us of the virtue of the medicine that was here applied for the cure, namely, that figs, in a decoction, are good to disperse any inflammation about the glands, by gargling the throat; and that, in a cataplasm, they wonderfully soften and ripen any hard tumour. But, whatever the quality of the medicine might be, that there was a divine interposition in the whole affair, is evident, both from the speediness of the cure, and the nature of the sign which God gave Hezekiah, in order to convince him of it.

Some very considerable writers would endeavour to persuade us that, before the Babylonish captivity, the Jews had no instruments whereby to measure time, nor any terms in their language whereby to denote the distinct gradation of it; which, were it true, would effectually destroy all that the Scripture relates, both concerning this sun-dial which Ahaz set up, and the famous miracle which was wrought upon it: but who the first inventors of such horological instruments were, it is not so easy a matter to determine.

² The Egyptians, who always loved to magnify the

glory of their nation, and to lay claim to the invention of every learned science or curious art, pretend that machines of this kind were in use among them many years before they appeared in other nations. To this purpose ³ their historians have observed that in Acantha, a town situate on the Nile, there was every day a large vessel filled with water, which, as it sunk gradually by running out at a small passage, distinguished the several hours of the day; and that all 'the *clepsydræ*, or *water hour glasses*' among the Greeks and Romans, were afterwards formed upon this model.

The Babylonians were a people well versed in all parts of astronomy, and it was from them, as Herodotus ⁴ observes, that the Greeks had the pole and the gnomon, and the twelve parts of the day. For Anaximander, whom Pliny, by mistake, calls Anaximenes, who first taught them to distinguish time, travelled into Chaldea for the improvement of knowledge, and from thence brought away this useful invention. Anaximander, indeed, is said to have flourished about two hundred years after this; but as the Scripture informs us, that there was a good deal of intimacy between Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and Ahaz king of Judah, it is not improbable, that as he was taken with the figure of a strange altar, when he went to visit that prince at Damascus, he might then likewise see some of the sun-dials, (for sun-dials might be common in Chaldea, though not in other countries,) which Tiglath-Pileser was accustomed to carry along with him, for the mensuration of time, wherever he went; and, being highly delighted with so curious and useful an invention, might either have one made on the spot, or take the model of one to be made at Jerusalem, and set up in his royal palace.

It is no easy matter to determine of what form the sun-dial was, but, ⁵ if we may be allowed to gather any thing from the signification of the word *mahal*, which is always used in this narration, we may, with the learned Grotius, suppose that it was not horizontal, as sun-dials are commonly made, but of a concave hemispherical figure, ⁶ much like what the Greeks call *σάφην*, and that therein was a gnomon of some kind or other, which cast its shadow upon the lines engraven in its concavity.

But of what make soever this dial was, we have reason to believe, that the recess of its shadow was a real miracle, and not the effect of any natural cause, namely, the interposition of a cloud, or any other meteor, which might diverge the rays of the sun to another part of the dial, for some small space of time.

The account which we have of this event, in the second

¹ Dioscor. b. i. c. 183; Pliny, b. xxiii. c. 7.

² See Usher ad A. M. 3291, and Jaquelot. Dissert. i. on the Existence of God, c. 16.

^a As the nation was at this time threatened with an assault by the whole force of the king of Assyria; they therefore needed a commander, who united wisdom, courage, and faith, to head them in such an emergency: and if he were removed, and they were left to a disputed succession, and the weakness of an usurped or opposed government, there could be little prospect, but that Jerusalem would share the fate of Samaria. With great earnestness and perseverance, Hezekiah had brought his reformation to a hopeful establishment; but he might fear lest the instability of the people, and the dissensions of the nobles, would subvert all, if he were taken away at this crisis. He therefore desired to live, not for his own sake so much as for that of his family and people, especially for the interests of true religion; and he prayed to that effect, with many tears as well as with great fervency. The Lord knew, and Hezekiah could appeal to him, that he had walked before him in sincerity and uprightness of heart; having used all his authority and influence, with zeal and earnestness, to suppress idolatry and wickedness, and by every scriptural means to promote the worship and service of God; and that he had done what was good in his sight, being an example to his people. The consciousness of his integrity gave him confidence; and he begged the Lord to remember the fruits of grace which had been produced, and to spare him, that he might be yet more fruitful and useful.—*Scott's Comment*.—Ed.

³ Herod. b. i., and Strabo b. ii. c. 109.

⁴ B. ii. p. 76.

⁵ Calmet's Dissert. on the Retrogradation, &c.

⁶ Other authors are of an opinion quite contrary to this. They suppose that, as there is no mention made of any sun-dials in all the works of Homer, and the Jews very probably knew nothing of the division of the day into so many hours till after the time of the captivity, the invention of such machines was subsequent to Hezekiah's days: and therefore, from the word *ῥαβδόμους* in the Septuagint, which may properly enough be rendered *steps* or *stairs*, they infer, that this famous chronometer of king Ahaz, was nothing but a flight of stairs leading up to the gate of the palace, and according to the projection of the sun, marked at proper distances with figures, denoting the division of the day, and not any regular piece of dial work.—*Universal Hist.* b. i. c. 7. But this is too poor a thing to be recorded in history, as the invention or erection of a king, which every person might have done as well as he.

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book of Kings, makes no mention indeed of the sun's going back, but only of the shadow upon the dial; but, in the book of Isaiah's prophecy, wherein we have this miracle more minutely related, we are told expressly that 'the sun returned ten degrees,' and from hence the opinion of the ancients, both Jews and Christians, has been, that the miracle was wrought, not upon the shadow,^a but upon the body of the sun; or "that the sun," as our excellent archbishop Usher² expresses it, "and all the heavenly bodies went back, and as much was detracted from the next night as was added to this day."

Those who embrace the new philosophy, which places the sun in the centre, and supposes the earth to move round it; have, from their hypothesis, no difficulty in admitting of this miracle, whether it be said to consist in the different determination of the rays, or in the retrogradation of the body of the sun; because it is the same thing as to all outward effects, whether the earth turn round the sun, or the sun round the earth: but, in both cases, there is this difficulty: ³ that the sudden and violent motion either of the sun or earth, to make that day and night of no greater length than the rest, would be in danger of shocking or unhinging the whole frame of nature, as it certainly would have done, had it not been guided and directed by the steady and unerring hand of the great Creator of the universe, whose motion he can either retard or accelerate as he pleases, without occasioning any confusion in the order of things, and with

much greater facility to himself, than any human artificer can cause a machine of his own making to go swifter or slower, by the sole suspension of an heavier or lighter weight.

Since the Scripture, therefore, in this case, tells us as plainly, that the sun did recede, as, in the case of Joshua, that it did stand still in the firmament of heaven, we have no other warrant but to take words in their literal sense, even though it be attended with some difficulties. These difficulties arise chiefly from the opposition of some modern systems of philosophy; but whether it be just and reasonable that revelation should conform to philosophy, or philosophy to revelation, especially when the expressions of Scripture are clear, and sentiments of philosophers but mere conjectures, is a question that need require no long deliberation; especially since heavenly bodies, by reason of their vast distance, are inaccessible to our utmost sagacity, and the greater part of the secrets of nature are not discoverable by our most indefatigable search after truth.

⁴ Though at first view we may be apt to think that a sign, which precedes the event, is more significant, because better adapted to our manner of conceiving it, than one which follows after it; yet, upon a nearer examination, we shall find that a sign which is posterior to the event, is not a less, but in some respects, a more convincing proof than the other; especially when the person to whom it is given lives to see both the sign and the event accomplished. The sign which goes before the event proves but one thing, namely, that the event was from God, or that the person who foretold it was divinely inspired; but the sign which is future to the event, manifests these three things: 1st, that the person who foretold it was possessed with the spirit of prophecy: 2dly, that God was the author of the miraculous event which he foretold: and 3dly, that he was the author likewise of the sign which followed the miracle; especially if the sign be miraculous, as it generally is.

To apply this now to the case before us. To convince Hezekiah of his approaching deliverance, God gave him such things for a sign as would not come to pass until his deliverance was accomplished; but then it should be remembered, that as the people were to be convinced that what happened to Sennacherib was not the work of chance, or the effect of natural causes, but immediately inflicted by the hand of God, his prophet was to foretell not only the particulars of what befell him, but such consequences, likewise, as would appear not only to be supernatural, but demonstrations likewise of the divine power and goodness. To this purpose Isaiah is sent, not only to foretell Hezekiah's deliverance, the destruction of the Assyrian army, and the death of Sennacherib; but, to fortify the people against the apprehensions of another enemy, namely, a grievous famine, after that Sennacherib was gone, he is ordered to add, that God would find one means or other to preserve his people. Though the enemy will destroy all the corn in the country, 'yet ye shall eat this year,' says the prophet, 'such things as ye can meet with;' though the next year be the year of Jubilee, or Sabbatical year, in which ye are to let the land rest, 'yet ye shall eat such things as grow of themselves;' ⁵ God shall take care,

¹ Is. xxxviii. 8.

² Annal. A. 3291.

³ Calmet's Dissertation on the Retrogradation, &c.

^a Those who maintain the contrary opinion, namely, that the whole miracle was wrought upon the dial, and occasioned only by the reversion of the sun's beams, while the sun proceeded in its ordinary course, urge in its defence,—That in 2 Kings xx. 9, where this miracle is recorded, mention is only made of the 'shadow's going back;' and though, in Isaiah xxxviii. 8, the sun is said to 'return ten degrees;' yet, to put the sun for its beams is a common mode of speech in all languages. That the division of the day into hours, upon which the invention of all horoscopic instruments must depend, was of a later date than this: that Daniel is the first writer in the Old Testament who makes any mention of it: and that there is no Hebrew word, in the compass of the whole language, to denote it. As, therefore, the intent of this miracle was, not to lengthen the day, as that of Joshua's, but purely to put back the shadow upon the sun-dial, this might have well enough been done, say they, by the sole refraction of the sun's rays, and without giving any interruption to the course of nature. This interruption, if the recess and return of the sun, or the earth, if we please, was gradual, must have occasioned great inconveniences to mankind upon earth; since, if the degrees were horary, or lines of an hour's distance upon the dial-plate, as we now speak, to make the sun recede ten hours, and after that re-advance ten more, this would have been to prolong that day for twenty hours, which in hot regions, would be enough to scorch the people of the hemisphere that the sun was over, and in colder climates, when it happened to be absent so long, to freeze the inhabitants to death. On the other hand, this interruption, if the sun or earth went back in an instant, and returned as hastily again, must have been seen and felt all the world over, been observed by the astronomers then living, and recorded in the writings of subsequent historians, as well as the sun's standing still in Joshua's time; but, since we find no footsteps of this, on the contrary, by Merodach Baladan's sending to Hezekiah to inform himself about this phenomenon, it is rather evident that the thing had not been observed as far as Babylon, they thence infer that there was no reason for God's putting himself to the expence of so prodigious a miracle, as to make an alteration in the whole fabric of the universe, when a bare refraction of the sun's rays upon the dial-plate would have answered the end as well.—*Le Clerc's Commentary; Lowth's Commentary on Isa. xxxviii., and Universal History, b. i. c. 7.*

⁴ Calmet's Commentary on 2 Kings xix. 29.

⁵ Lowth's Commentary on Isaiah xxxviii. 33.

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one way or other, that ye shall want no provisions these two years; and in the third year there shall be no enemy to molest you, and therefore 'sow and reap the fruit of your labours;' for though ye have been brought low with losses innumerable and persecutions, yet, in a short time ye shall be re-established; for 'the remnant that is escaped of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.'

The like may be said of the sign concerning the virgin that was to 'bear a son, and call his name Immanuel;' though it was some hundred years subsequent to the deliverance which God promised Judah, yet was it of great service to confirm the people in their expectations of it. To this purpose we may observe, that it is not to Ahaz that the prophet addresses himself, (for he, out of a specious pretence of not being willing to tempt God, rejected all signs,) but to the princes of the blood royal; and therefore he says, 'hear ye now, ye house of David, the Lord himself will give you a sign, a virgin shall conceive.' The original word *alma* (as several learned men have observed) signifies almost always a *virgin untainted by a man*,—is so rendered by the Septuagint in this place, and cannot, with any propriety, denote any indifferent young woman, who should afterwards be married, and have a son. For how can we imagine that, after so pompous an introduction, the prophet should mean no more at last by 'a virgin's conceiving,' than that a young woman should be with child? What! does Isaiah offer Ahaz a miracle, 'either in the depth, or in the height above?' and, when he seems to tell the house of David that God, of his own accord, would perform a greater work than they could ask, does he sink to a sign that nature produces every day? Is that to be called a wonder, (which implies an uncommon, surprising, and supernatural event,) which happens constantly by the ordinary laws of generation? How little does such a birth answer the solemn apparatus which the prophet uses to raise their expectation of some great matter? 'Hear ye, O house of Judah,—behold, the Lord will give you a sign worthy of himself; and what is that? Why, a young married woman shall be with child. How ridiculous must such a declaration make the prophet! And how highly must it enrage the audience, to hear a man, at such a juncture as this, begin an idle and impertinent tale, which seems to banter and insult their misery, rather than administer any consolation under it!

It is to be observed farther, that, in the beginning of this passage, when God commanded Isaiah to go and meet Ahaz, he ordered him to take with him his son Shear-jashub, who was then but a child. Why the child was to accompany his father, we can hardly suppose any other reason, but that he was to be of use, some way or other, to enforce the prophecy. It is but supposing then that the prophet, in uttering the words, 'before this child shall be able to distinguish between good and evil,'⁴ pointed at his own son, for there is no necessity to refer them to Immanuel, who might then either stand by him, or be held in his arms, and all the difficulty is solved; but then the comfort which accrued to the house of David from this seasonable prophecy, was very con-

sideable.⁵ For it assured them of the truth and veracity of God's promise, and that he would not suffer them to be destroyed, nor the 'sceptre to depart from Judah,' until the Messiah came. It assured them of his almighty power, in that he could create a new thing in the earth, by making a virgin to conceive, and thereby show himself able to deliver them out of the hands of their most potent enemies; and it assured them likewise of his peculiar favour, in that he had decreed the Messiah should descend from their family, so that the people whom he had vouchsafed so high a dignity, might depend on his promise, and 'under the shadow of his wings,' think themselves secure.

CHAP. III.—On the Dial of Ahaz.

SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.

AT the beginning of the world it is certain there was no distinction of time, but by the light and darkness; and the whole day was included in the general terms of the evening and morning. The Chaldeans, many ages after the flood, were the first who divided the day into hours; they being the first who applied themselves with any success to astrology. Sun-dials are of ancient use: but as they were of no service in cloudy weather and in the night, there was another invention of measuring the parts of time by water; but that not proving sufficiently exact, they laid it aside for another by sand. The use of dials was earlier among the Greeks than the Romans. It was above three hundred years after the building of Rome before they knew any thing of them: but yet they had divided the day and night into four and twenty hours; though they did not count the hours numerically, but from midnight to midnight, distinguishing them by particular names, as by the cock-crowing, the dawn, the mid-day, &c.

With respect to the dial of Ahaz, it is said, that the shadow was brought ten degrees backward. Was this miracle occasioned by the sun's going ten degrees back in the heavens, or by the earth's turning upon its axis from east to west, in a contrary direction to its natural course. To me it appears that the miracle was effected by means of refraction. For a ray of light, we know, can be raised or refracted from a right line by passing through a dense medium; and we know also, by means of the refracting power of the atmosphere, the sun, when near rising and setting, seems to be higher above the horizon than he really is; and by horizontal refraction, we find that the sun appears above the horizon when he is actually below it, and literally out of sight: therefore, by using dense clouds or vapours, the rays of light might be refracted from their direct course, ten, or any other number of degrees; so that the miracle might have been wrought by occasioning this extraordinary refraction, rather than by disturbing the course of the earth.

It is owing to refraction that we have any morning or evening twilight: without this power in the atmosphere, the heavens would be as black as ebony in the absence of the sun; and at his rising we should pass in a mo-

¹ Is. vii. 13, 14.

² See Kidder's Demonstration, part 2.

³ See Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion.

⁴ Usher's Annal. A. M. 3263.

⁵ See Kidder's Demonstration, part 2.

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ment from the deepest darkness into the brightest light; and at his setting, from the most intense light to the most profound darkness, which in a few days would be sufficient to destroy the visual organs of all animals.

That the rays of light can be supernaturally refracted, and the sun appear to be where he actually is not, we have a most remarkable instance in Kepler. Some Hollanders who wintered in Nova Zembla in the year 1596, were surprised to find that, after a continual night of three months, the sun began to rise seventeen days sooner than (according to computation deduced from the altitude of the pole, observed to be seventy-six degrees) he should have done; which can only be accounted for by an extraordinary refraction of the sun's rays passing through the cold dense air in the climate. At that time, the sun, as Kepler computes, was almost five degrees below the horizon when he appeared, and consequently the refraction of his rays was about nine times stronger than it is with us.

Now, this might be all purely natural though it was extraordinary, and it proves the possibility of what I have conjectured, even on natural principles; but the foretelling of this, and leaving the going back or forward to the choice of the king, and the thing occurring in the place and time when and where it was predicted, shows that it was supernatural and miraculous. But why maintain, it may be asked, that the event alluded to was effected by refraction? Could not God as easily have caused the sun, or rather the earth, to turn back, as to have produced this extraordinary and miraculous refraction? This is most certain: but, according to our limited apprehensions, it seems more consistent with the wisdom of God to attain an end by simple means than by those that are complex: and had it been done in the other way, it would have required a miracle to invert and a miracle to restore; and a strong convulsion on the earth's surface to bring it ten degrees suddenly back, and to take it the same suddenly forward. The miracle, according to my supposition, was accomplished on the atmosphere, and without in the least disturbing even that; whereas, on the other supposition, it could not have been done without suspending or interrupting the laws of the solar system. The point to be gained was the bringing back the shadow on the dial ten degrees: this might have been accomplished by the means which I have described, as well as by the other; and these means being much more simple, were more worthy the divine choice than those which are more complex, and could not have been used without producing the necessity of working at least double or treble miracles.

It is objected, however, to this view, that Isaiah expressly asserts that 'the sun returned,' and not merely that 'the shadow went backward.' It becomes not erring man even to seem to contradict this assertion. I would only venture to say, with all humility, that as the very same end might have been attained by means of refraction as would have been accomplished by the retrograde motion of the sun; and as the event was unquestionably miraculous on either supposition, I do not see that the adoption of the view of this subject which I have suggested is in any way derogatory to the authority of divine revelation.²

CHAP. IV.—Of the Transportation of the Ten Tribes, and their Return.

NOTHING³ in history is more common, than to see whole nations so changed in their manners, their religion, their language, and the very places of their abode, as that it becomes a matter of some difficulty to find out their first original. Large empires swallow up lesser states; and, in the course of their conquests, sweeping every thing before them like a torrent, they compel the vanquished to follow the fate of their conquerors, and to inhabit such countries as were unknown to them before.

Never was there a people that had a more ample experience of these unhappy revolutions than the kingdom of Israel, which, upon the revolt of Rehoboam, came to be called 'the kingdom of the ten tribes.' God, by the mouth of his servant Moses, had denounced this judgment upon them, in case of their obstinate disobedience to his law: 'the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth to the other; and among all these nations, thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest.' And accordingly, when by their idolatry, and other grievous impieties, they had 'provoked God to wrath, and filled up the measure of their iniquity;' in the reign of Pekah king of Israel,⁵ he sent Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, who invaded his country, and having overrun great part of it, carried away captive the tribes of Naphtali, Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, from the east side of the river Jordan; and about twenty years after this, in the reign of Hoshea, sent his son Salmaneser against Samaria, who, after a siege of three years, took it, and carried away all the remainder of that miserable people according to what the prophet Hosea had foretold: 'Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit. My God shall cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him, and they shall be wanderers among the nations.'

Such, with very small exception, has been the case of this unhappy people, ever since the time of the Assyrian captivity; and yet, such is their pride and arrogance, that instead of owning the truth, they have devised fables of their living all along in great prosperity and grandeur in some unknown land, as a national and united body, in an independent state, and under monarchies or republics of their own. So, that before we begin to inquire into the real places of their transportation, and some other circumstances thereunto belonging, it may not be amiss to examine a little the merit of these pretensions, and what foundation they have for such mighty boasts.

The author of the second book of Esdras informs us, 'that the ten tribes, being taken prisoners by Salmaneser, and carried beyond the Euphrates, entered into a resolution of quitting the Gentiles, and retiring into a country never inhabited before, that they might there religiously observe the law, which they had too much neglected in their own land; that to this purpose they crossed the Euphrates, where God wrought a miracle for their sakes, by stopping the sources of that great river,

³ Calmet's Dissert. on the Ten Tribes, &c.

⁴ Deut. xxviii. 64, 65.

⁵ 2 Kings xv. 29.

⁶ Hosea ix. 16, 17.

⁷ 2 Esdras xiii. 40, &c.

¹ Chap. xxxviii. 8.

² See Dr Clarke's Commentary on the place.

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and drying up its channel for them to pass over; that having thus wonderfully passed this river, they proceeded in their journey for a year and a half, till they arrived at last at a country called Arsareth, where they settled themselves, and were to continue until the latter days, when God would appoint their return, and work the same miracle in passing the Euphrates that he had done for them before.¹

This is the substance of our author's account: but now, who can believe, that a people so fond of idolatry in their own country, should, in their state of captivity, be so zealous for the observation of the law? Arsareth, we are told, is a city in Media, situate beyond the river Araxes; but if this was the place they betook themselves to for the freer exercise of their religion, what need was there for so very long a peregrination? Or who can suppose that their imperious masters would suffer captives, upon any pretence whatever, to retreat in a body, out of their country, and set up a distinct kingdom in another place? ¹ In short, this counterfeit Esdras, who seems to have been a Christian, and to have lived about the end of the first, or the beginning of the second century, is not only so inconsistent in his account of this, and several other transactions, but so fond of uncertain traditions, and so romantic and fabulous about the divine inspiration which he boasts of, that there is no credit to be given to what he says,^a concerning the retreat of the ten tribes into an unknown land.

A famous Jewish traveller ² of the twelfth century, and who seems to have undertaken his travels solely to discover the state of his dispersed brethren, assigns them a large and spacious country, wherein reigned two brothers, descendants of the house of David. The elder

¹ Basnag. Hist. of the Jews, b. 6. c. 2.

² Benjamin de Tudela's Itiner. page 89.

^a There is an unfounded opinion, though very ancient, that the majority of the ten tribes emigrated to an unknown country. The spurious Ezra asserts, "that Salmaneser carried them beyond the river, and they resolved to separate from the heathen and to seek a spot where they might religiously observe the law, for the violation of which they had been so severely punished." Ezra characterizes the country whither they retired as follows: 1. It was uninhabited. (Then they must have sought an unexplored country.) 2. Its distance was such, that their journey lasted a year and a half. 3. To reach it they crossed the Euphrates, which God miraculously divided for the passage of the Jews; and Ezra adds, that on their return to Judea God will again perform the same miracle. 4. This country is called Arsareth. But we ask, how could a people completely subdued, rise in a body and march unresisted through the territory of their proud masters, to establish a kingdom elsewhere? This event happened, if ever, in the thirty-first year of the captivity; but Ezra informs us that they were then in the countries whither Salmaneser had carried them captive. Their desire to keep the law strictly is said to have been their motive; but the Jews in their dispersions revered the law so little, that they adopted the pagan customs and worship. There is a city called Arsareth beyond the river Araxes, and the Jews are supposed to have given it this name. But the country whither the ten tribes retired, being at a great distance from Media, this cannot be the Arsareth of Ezra. The route they took is as little known as the country to which they emigrated; and hence it is that so many authors severally mention China, Tartary, India, and a second river Sabbatius, as the retreat of the ten tribes; while they all appeal to Ezra as their authority. But the account of Ezra is suspicious; for it does not appear from the book of Tobit, that the journey of the tribes was long, or that there was any separation from the heathen, for the more strict observance of the law. On the contrary, Jews were to be found in Susa, Echatan, Rages, and in the other cities of Media and Assyria, and also on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates.

of these, as he tell us, was Annas, who, besides his capital Thema, had many other cities, castles, and fortresses, and an extent of ground which could not be travelled over under sixteen days. The other, whose name was Salman, had in his dominions forty cities, two hundred boroughs, and an hundred castles. His subjects, who were all Jews, were three hundred thousand; Tanai, which was his capital, containing an hundred thousand; and Tilimosa, a strong city situate between two mountains, where he usually resided, as many inhabitants.

Here we have a spacious country of nothing but Jews: but the author, who pretends to have been there, has so mistaken the situation of several places that he mentions, and gives us such fabulous accounts of the manner of the Persians fishing for pearls; of the virtue of the prophet Daniel's tomb; and of some Turks, who had two holes in the midst of their face, instead of a nose; that a man must be very fond of romances, who can give credit to what seems to be calculated on purpose to flatter the pride of a people, who are still foolishly vain, though under the rejection of Almighty God.

Another Jewish author ³, in his description of the world, has found out very commodious habitations for the ten tribes, and in many places has given them a glorious establishment. In a country which he calls Perricha, inclosed by unknown mountains, and bounded by Assyria, he has settled some, and made them a flourishing and populous kingdom. Others he places in the desert of Chabor, which, according to him, lies upon the Indian sea, where they live, in the manner of the ancient Rechabites, without houses, sowing, or the use of wine. Nay, he enters the Indies likewise, and peoples the banks of the Ganges, the isles of Bengala, the Philippines, and several other places, with the Jews, to whom he assigns a powerful king, called Daniel, who had three other kings tributary, and dependent on him. But this is all of the same piece, a forged account to aggrandize their nation, and to make it be believed, that ⁴ "the sceptre is not departed from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet," and that Shiloh consequently is not yet come.

Manasseh, one of the most famous Rabbins of the last age, has asserted the transmigration of the ten tribes into Tartary, where he assigns them a great province, called *Thabor*, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies a *navel*, because this Thabor, as he says, is one of the middle provinces of Tartary. Ortelius, in his Geography, is not only of the same opinion, but in confirmation of it adds that the ten tribes succeeded the Scythians, its ancient inhabitants, and took upon them the name of *Gauthei*, because they were 'zealous for the glory of God; that *Totaces*, the true name of the Tartars, is Hebrew, and signifies *remains*, as the tribes dispersed in the north were the remains of ancient Israel; that among these people there are several plain footsteps of the Jewish religion, besides circumcision; and from them, in all probability, have descended the Jews, that in Poland and Muscovy are found so numerous.

⁵ It cannot be denied, indeed, but that several of the Israelites might pass into Tartary, because Armenia is the only country that parts it from Assyria, whereunto they were primarily carried: but there is no reason for

³ R. Abi Ben Merodoche Peritsful, of Ferrara.

⁴ Gen. xlix. 10. ⁵ Basnag. History of the Jews, b. 6. c. 3.

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their penetrating Scythia, and thence dispersing themselves in the kingdoms of Poland and Muscovy; because the tranquillity and privileges which the princes of these countries have granted the Jews, are the true cause and motive of their resorting thither in such numbers. In confutation therefore of what has been said above,¹ the Jewish historian has well observed, that the ancient Scythians were a people too fierce by nature, and too expert in war, for a handful of fugitives, such as the Israelites were, ever to conquer or expel; that the people of this country were all along idolaters, until they were converted to the religion of Mahomet, from whence they received the rite of circumcision, and some other ceremonies conformable to the law of Moses; that the etymology of names is, of all others, the weakest and most precarious argument; and that it is ridiculous to seek for the glory of God among the Tartars before the introduction of Mahometanism, since, according to the account of their² historian, "some of them lived like beasts, without any sense of God; others worshipped the sun, moon, and stars; and others again made gods of the oxen that ploughed their land, or prostrated themselves before every great tree."

Manasseh, the famous Rabbin we lately mentioned, published a book,³ entitled, 'The Hopes of Israel,' founded upon the number and power of the Jews in America; but in this he was imposed upon by the fabulous relation of Montesini, who reported, "that he found a great number of Jews concealed behind the mountains of Cordilleras, which run along Chili in America; that continuing his journey in that country, he came at length to the banks of a river, where, upon his giving a signal, there appeared a people, who pronounced in Hebrew these words out of Deuteronomy, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,' that they looked upon Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as their great progenitors, and had been conducted into that country by incredible miracles; that the Indians had treated them with great cruelty, and thrice declared war against them; but that, by God's protecting his people against idolaters, they had been as often defeated, and were now totally destroyed; and that some of their Magi, who made use of enchantments, had openly declared that the God of Israel was the only true God, and that, at the consummation of ages, their nation should become the mistress of the whole universe."

Deluded with this account, Manasseh endeavoured to find out the road which might possibly lead the Israelites into the West Indies; and, to this purpose, supposing that Asia and America were formerly one continent before they were divided by the straits of Anian, he asserted that the Israelites might travel to America, by land, before the separation happened.

Sir William Penn, in his 'Present State of the Lands of the English in America,' tells us, "that the faces of the inhabitants, especially of their children, are so very like the Jews, that when you look upon them, you would think yourself in the Jews' quarter in London; that their eyes are little and black, like the Jews, that they reckon by moons; offer their first fruits; have a kind of feast of tabernacles; and that their language is masculine, short,

concise, and full of energy, in which it much resembles the Hebrew."

Other historians⁴ have observed that some of the Americans have a notion of the deluge, though they relate it in a different manner; that they celebrate a jubilee every fifth year, and a sabbath every seventh day; that others observe circumcision, abstain from swine's flesh, and purify themselves by bathing, whenever they have touched a dead carcase; that marriages, among others, are performed⁵ in a manner not unlike what Moses prescribes; and that they generally believe a resurrection;⁶ for which reason they cause their wives and slaves to be buried with them, that, when they arise from their graves, they may appear with an attendance suitable to their quality.

⁷ This conformity of customs, and looks, and sentiments, have induced several to think, that the captive Israelites we are here in quest of, went into America, either by way of China or Tartary, and there settled themselves. But, how specious soever these arguments may appear, there is no manner of solidity in them. To prove a point of this kind, we should produce a whole nation or province in America, distinct from all others in their ceremonies and way of worshipping God, in a manner exactly agreeing with the Hebrews: but to say, that because in one place the people abstain from swine's flesh, and in another they observe the seventh day; in one, they offer sacrifices, and in another use baths, when they think themselves polluted, the Americans were originally Israelites, is carrying the consequence a great deal too far, and what indeed we may prove in any other nation under heaven, if we may be allowed to argue in this manner from particulars to generals.

The truth is, the devil, in all his idolatrous countries, has made it his business to mimic God in the rites of his religious worship; or, if this were not, there is naturally so great a conformity in men's sentiments concerning these matters, that the Americans might agree with the Jews in the oblation of their first-fruits, their computations by moons, &c., without having any commerce or affinity with them; and though there be something more characteristic in circumcision, yet as several other nations used it, the Americans, upon this account, cannot be Jews,^a because, if we may believe Acosta, who had

⁴ See Acostan, and other Writers on American Affairs.

⁵ Deut. xxv. 9.

⁶ Zaaert's History of the Discovery of Peru, b. 1. c. 12.

⁷ Saurin's Dissertation on the Country, &c.

^a We are not to believe that these savages are Jews, merely because their religious rites resemble in some respects those of Judaism. The religious worship of other idolaters has much in common with Judaism; and can we infer that they too are the posterity of Jews? There are those who attribute this similarity in forms of worship to the machinations of the devil, who seeks to rival the glory of God by receiving the same kind of adoration. But without allowing to the arch fiend more power than he really possesses, this resemblance may be explained from the similar dispositions of men. Idolatry does not necessarily derive its ceremonies from the true church. Nations which have never had any intercourse with each other, have the same ideas of a God, and frequently worship him in the same manner. The aborigines of America have been taught neither by the Manicheans nor Egyptians, the belief in two first principles. Yet the inhabitants of Peru relate that man was created by a powerful being named Con; but the sun and moon begat an evil being called Pachachauna, who was more powerful than Con. He transformed men into apes, parrots, and bears, and was the

¹ Basnage's History of the Jews, b. vi. c. 3.

² Haitho Armenius, b. on the Tartars, c. 1.

³ Amsterdam, 1650.

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made their customs a good part of his study, they never did circumcise their children, and therefore are thus far excluded from being descendants of that race.

Thus we have endeavoured to find out the situation of the ten tribes of Israel, and yet can meet with nothing, but either the fabulous accounts of the Talmudists, or the uncertain conjectures of modern critics ; let us now have recourse to the Scriptures, and know what the information is that they can supply us with, in this our inquiry.

The sacred history thus expresses it—¹ ‘ the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor, by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes ;’ only we must note, that there is some ambiguity in the translation : for, whereas it looks as if Gozan were the river and not Habor, there is plainly no river to be found of the name of Gozan, and therefore the emendation should be—‘ he placed them in Halah, and by the river Habor in Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.’

The holy penman, we may observe, distinguishes two places into which the Israelites were carried, as indeed they were numerous enough to make two different colonies, Assyria and Media. In Assyria we see the river Habor, or Chaboras, ^a which rises from mount Masius, and, running through Mesopotamia, falls into the Euphrates. Halah, which in Ptolemy is called Chalcitis, is a city and province situate on one side of its banks, and Gozan, which is likewise a city and province, is found on the other ; so that the ten tribes were seated in two provinces, which stretched along both sides of this river. A happy situation for them, since they were only separated by a river which watered all the cities that were assigned for their habitation !

² As to the cities of the Medes we are more in the dark, because the Scripture does not specify any ; but we may presume that this colony was placed in the mountainous part of Media, because it was less peopled than the lower country. It wanted indeed inhabitants, and if we

will believe ³ Strabo, was supplied by strangers and colonies from abroad.

The truth is, the ancients have extolled Media as a very happy country. Ecbatana, where the king kept his residence in summer, was one of the finest and largest cities in the world. Susa, where he spent the winter, was a very considerable place likewise : but, on the north side, there were high mountains, where nevertheless there was good pasturage, so that what the country wanted was good husbandmen, and such as were used to tillage ; for which purpose the Israelites, who had made that their principal business in the Holy Land, were, of all other people, the fittest inhabitants.

In these two provinces were the ten tribes seated at first ; and it is not improbable that, in a short time, those of Assyria might extend themselves into several other parts of the empire ; for, in Alexander’s time, we meet with ^b a great body of them in Babylon ; and that those of Media might stretch upon the right, into the provinces bordering upon the Caspian sea, or, as ^c some imagine, even beyond that sea, as far as the river Araxes ; but that they ever became so powerful as ^c to change the ancient names of places into those of their own language, we can hardly believe ; because they fell under so many bitter persecutions, were subject to so many revolutions of the kingdoms where they lived, and, from different princes, underwent such a variety of transmigrations, that, before they could gain any such weight and authority in the world, we find them here and there scattered, in lesser bodies, as it were, over the whole face of it.

Not only some of the Greek fathers, but some of our modern critics likewise, have maintained, that the ten tribes were restored, with those of Judah and Benjamin, under the conduct of Zerobabel and Nehemiah, when Cyrus and his successors were so kind as to give the Jews in general a full permission to return into their native land.⁵ To this purpose they have observed, that several of the prophets who foretold their captivity, with the same breath, as it were, have predicted their return ; that, in token of such their return, ⁶ ‘ twelve goats,’ for every tribe one, ‘ were offered at the dedication of the new temple,’ which would scarce have been done, had

³ Basnage’s History of the Jews, b. vi. c. 4.

⁴ Fuller’s Miscell. Sacr. b. ii. c. 5.

⁵ Calmet’s Dissert. on the Ten Tribes, &c. ⁶ 1 Esdras vii. 8.

^b Besides those that were carried thither at the captivity, Artaxerxes sent a new colony of that nation thither, who, when Alexander the Great was for rebuilding the temple of Belus, had the courage to resist him. For, whereas other people were eager to furnish materials for the building, they refused to do it, as thinking it had some stain of idolatry.—*Basnage’s Hist. of the Jews.*

^c We read of the Cadusians, the Geles, and of Arsareth beyond the Caspian sea ; for which reason the learned Fuller supposes, that the Jews spread themselves thus : “ For the name of *Geles*,” says he, “ is Chaldaic, and signifies *strangers* or *fugitives*, which title suited with the Jews, whom God had expelled from their country for their sins. The Cadusians have a little altered the word *Chadoschim*, which signifies *saints*, which was a title the Jews, who called themselves a holy nation, much affected ; and, lastly, Arsareth, the most famous of all the cities built upon the Araxes, had a Hebrew name, signifying the *city of relics*, or the *remains of Israel*.” But the author of the History of the Jews, so often cited upon this subject, has confuted the argument drawn from the etymology of the words ; and, in particular, shown that the Cadusians were a people much antienter in the country than the Israelites, since Ninus reckoned them among his subjects.—B. vi. c. 4.

¹ 2 Kings xvii. 6. ² Basnage’s History of the Jews, b. iv. c. 4. creator of the Indians. They worship both these beings but especially the evil being, because they fear that he may again change men into brutes. They may, in the same manner, have instituted rites resembling those of Judaism, without borrowing them from the Jews. They form their altars of twelve stones, they offer to God the first-fruits, and divide the year by moons ; but these are customs which might have arisen from peculiar circumstances in any country. It is by no means certain that the Indians practised circumcision. Peter Martyr asserts that they “ sacrificed their infants to idols, and circumcised themselves ;” but Gomara says that the rite was not universal among them. Acosta, who was well acquainted with the customs of the Americans, observes, “ that they never circumcised their children, and therefore could not be the posterity of the ten tribes.” If they were uniformly circumcised, it would not prove their descent from the Jews, because there are other nations besides the Jews who practise this rite. We cannot then infer the origin of the Indians from an apparent resemblance in their forms of worship to those of Judaism.—*Jahn’s Heb. Com.* pp. 316, 317.

^a Ezekiel addresses his prophecies from the river Chebar, or Habor. Our translation takes Habor for a city situated ‘ by the river of Gozan,’ and major Rennell says there is found in the country antiently named Media, in the remote northern quarter towards the Caspian sea, and Ghilan, a considerable river named Ozan, or Hozal-Ozan. There is also found a city named Abhar or Habor, situated on a branch of the Ozan ; and it has the reputation of being exceedingly antient. Here Mr Morner found ruins composed of large mud bricks, made with straw, and baked in the sun, like some of those found at Babylon. This is probably the place mentioned in Scripture.—Ed.

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ten of these tribes been left behind beyond the Euphrates; that under Nehemiah the Levites confessed the sins of the ten tribes; that in the time of the Maccabees ¹ all Palestine was full of Israelites as well as Jews; that ² St Matthew makes mention of the land of Naphtali; and that St Paul, in his defence before Agrippa, declares, ³ 'that for the promise, to which the twelve tribes hope to come, he was called in question.'

It cannot be thought, indeed, but that the love which the Jews, above all other nations, bore to their native country, and the great encouragement which the princes of the east were pleased to grant to forward the re-establishment, might tempt some of each tribe to take this opportunity of returning with the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; nor can we doubt, but that, upon their return, they would be apt to assume their former names, and, as far as in them lay, to settle themselves in their ancient possessions. So that, what with those that escaped their conqueror's fury, and remained untransported; those who returned with Ezra, pursuant to the commission which Artaxerxes gave him; and those who took the advantage of the revolutions of the empire, and of the frequent journeys they made to Jerusalem,—great numbers of the ancient inhabitants might be found in the days of the Maccabees, and some of every tribe in our Saviour's time: but that all these returns did never amount to a full restoration of the people, we have abundant testimony to convince us.

Josephus ⁴ indeed tells us, that Ezra, upon the receipt of his commission from Artaxerxes, communicated the contents of it to all the Israelites that were in exile, some of whom resorted to Babylon in order to return with him; "but there were then another sort of Israelites," as his words are, "who being wonted to the place, and settled in their habitations, chose rather to continue where they were." Upon the whole, he computes, that few or none, but those of the tribe of Benjamin and Judah, came along with Ezra; and "this is the reason," as he tells us, "that in his time there were only two tribes to be found in Asia and Europe under the Roman empire; for, as for the ten tribes, they are all planted beyond the Euphrates," says he, "and so prodigiously increased in number, that they are hardly to be computed." Nay, even those that followed Ezra, according ⁵ to the sentiment of some of the Talmudists, were but the dregs of the people, because the nobility and principal men of the house of David still continued in Chaldaea.

However this be, it is certain that Philo, ⁶ in his representation to Caligula, tells him, that Jerusalem ought to be looked upon, not only as the metropolis of Judea, but as the centre of a nation dispersed in infinite places; among which he reckons the isles of Cyprus and Candia, Egypt, Macedonia, and Bithynia; the empire of the Persians, and all the cities of the east, except Babylon, from whence they were then expelled. Nay, prior to this we read, ⁷ that a great number of these orientals appeared at Jerusalem, at the feast of Pentecost, when, after our Saviour's ascension, his apostles began to preach the gospel during that festival. It cannot be thought that they were only proselytes, whom

the Jews of the dispersion had converted; they must have been Jews who came to sacrifice at Jerusalem, according to the law; for by St Luke's enumeration of them, it appears that they were the descendants of the tribes that had been long before settled among the ⁸ Medes, among the Parthians, in Mesopotamia, in Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia Minor, &c., and therefore we find St Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, directing his epistle ⁹ 'to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.'

Upon the strength of these authorities we may then conclude that, though Artaxerxes, in his commission to Ezra, ¹⁰ gave free liberty to all Jews whatever that were under his dominions to return to Jerusalem, if they were so minded, which some, without doubt, most gladly embraced; yet the main bulk of the ten tribes, being loth to remove, continued in the land of their captivity, where they are still to be found in great numbers: and therefore all those glorious prophecies, which some by mistake have applied to their thin returns under the Jewish governors sent from Babylon, do certainly relate to a much greater event, even their conversion and final restoration under the kingdom of the Messias.

The prophet Hosea, speaking of the present state of the Jews, gives us this character whereby to distinguish them: ¹¹ 'They shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.' In vain do they boast of that power and authority which they never had, but in their own country. The kings and the princes that they talk so much of, are all fictitious and imaginary. From the first time of their transmigration to this very day, they have been a people without any governor, or form of government; and if, in the midst of so many different nations, and under so severe persecutions, they nevertheless have hitherto been preserved, it must be imputed to the secret and wonderful providence of God, who hath still designs of pity and gracious loving-kindness towards them. To this purpose the same prophet assures us, that ¹² 'the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God: for he shall recover the remnant of his people,' says another prophet, ¹³ 'that shall be left:—He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth;' for ¹⁴ 'behold the days come, saith the Lord,' by another of his prophets, 'that it shall no more be said, the Lord liveth that brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands, whither he hath driven them. And I will bring them again into the land that I gave unto their fathers;' and, when this is done, ¹⁵ 'I will no more hide my face from them,' but ¹⁶ 'will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people.' ¹⁷ 'They shall be no more a prey to the heathen:' ¹⁸ 'violence shall be no more heard in their

¹ 1 Mac. v. 9, 15, &c.

² Mat. iv. 15.

³ Acts xxvi. 7.

⁴ Jewish Antiq. b. xi. c. 5.

⁵ Basnage's Hist. of the Jews, b. vi. c. 2.

⁶ Philo ad Calum.

⁷ Basnage's Hist. of the Jews, b. vi. c. 2.

⁸ Acts ii. 9.

⁹ 1 Pet. i. 1.

¹⁰ 1 Esdras viii. 10, 11.

¹¹ Hos. iii. 4.

¹² Ibid. i. 10.

¹³ Is. xi. 11, 12.

¹⁴ Jer. xvi. 14, 15.

¹⁵ Ezek. xxxix. 29.

¹⁶ Is. lxx. 19.

¹⁷ Ezek. xxxix. 28.

¹⁸ Is. lx. 18.

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land, wasting, nor destruction within their borders; but they shall call their walls salvation, and their gates praise.' 'Their land shall no more be termed desolate,' 'but they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob my servant, even they and their children's children for ever; and my servant David,' (not the son of Jesse, who was dead long before Ezekiel prophesied, but the Messiah, who was to be of the lineage of David, as Kimchi explains it,) 'shall be their prince for ever.' 'Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace, which shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will set my sanctuary among them for evermore. My tabernacle shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.'

³ Now, though it cannot be denied that these, and several other prophecies to the like purpose, do denote a great and glorious restoration to God's people; yet it seems very evident that scarce any of them can be applied to the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon. Long since that time, and almost seventeen hundred years ago, his covenant of peace has been departed from them; 'violence has been in their land,' which has been laid desolate; their tabernacle and sanctuary have been consumed; they have been a prey to the heathen; and have long ceased to be God's people, and he to be their God: and therefore these prophecies must be understood of some other event, which can only be the general conversion of the Jews to Christianity, and their re-establishment in the Holy Land. For this mystery the apostle has revealed, ⁴ 'that blindness in part hath happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written,' ⁵ there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. ⁶ Then shall the Lord set his hand again, a second time, to recover the remnant of his people, and to assemble the outcasts of Israel, from every kindred, and tongue, and nation, and people, that, at ⁷ the blowing of the great trumpet, they may come from the land of Assyria and Egypt, and may worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.' When this great event shall happen, it is impossible for us to determine; but our business, in the mean time, is to pray, that ⁸ 'the salvation of Israel may come out of Zion, that Jacob may rejoice, and Israel may be glad.'^a

¹ Is. lxii. 4.² Ezek. xxxvii. 25, &c.³ Whitby's Treatise of the true Millennium.⁴ Rom. xi. 25, 26.⁵ Is. lix. 20.⁶ Ibid. xi. 11, &c.⁷ Ibid. xxvii. 13.⁸ Ps. xiv. 7.

^a Numerous prophecies in the Old Testament declare, as clearly as language can, that the Jews shall return to Judea, and be at last permanently re-established in the land of their fathers. The uniform experience of the literal truth of every prediction respecting their past history may suffice to give assurance of the certainty of their predicted restoration. And amidst many signs that 'the times of the Gentiles' are drawing towards their fulfilment, many concurring circumstances seem also to be preparing the way of the children of Israel. Scattered as they have been for so many ages through the world, and maintaining still their distinctive character, their whole history forbids the thought that they will ever mingle among the nations, or cease to be, what they have ever been, a peculiar people. But while their history, as a nation, gave, for the space of many generations, unequivocal attestations of an overruling providence, sustaining the theocracy of the commonwealth of Israel; and while during a period of still greater duration, they have been 'a people scattered and peeled;' yet after the lapse of so many ages, they are still reserved for illustrating the truth, the mercy,

SECT. V.

CHAP. I.—From the Death of Josiah, to the Babylonish Captivity.

THE HISTORY.

AFTER the unhappy death of good Josiah, his son Jehoahaz, ^b who was also called Shallum, was anointed king; but as he was far from following his father's ex-

and the glory of the God of Israel; 'at eventide it shall be light.' They now begin, centuries of persecution and spoliation having passed away, to participate, in cases too numerous to be specified, of benefits arising from the altered spirit of the times. And possessed, as in an unexampled degree they are, of silver and gold, and of large portions of the public funds of various kingdoms, they may be said, even now in some manner, to 'inherit the riches of the Gentiles.' And commanding, as in a great measure they do, the rate of exchange throughout Europe, they are entitled from the present influence of money on the security of governments, and on the art and results of war, to high political consideration; and the time may not thus be remote, when they shall be 'raised up as an ensign among the nations.' Not naturalized to the isles of the Gentiles, either by law or affection, or bound to any soil by the possession of fixed property, which would be of no easy transference, but ever looking with undiminished love to the land of their fathers, even after an expatriation uninterrupted for nearly eighteen centuries, they are ready, whenever the time shall be fulfilled, to fly thither 'like a cloud, and like doves to their windows.' But to what degree, and in what manner, the present convulsions of the Turkish empire, combined with the peculiar, and in many instances, novel condition of the Jews, throughout Europe and America, shall be the means of facilitating their eventual restoration to their own land, (which is ravaged by Arabs, and yields but a scanty revenue to the Turks) no mortal can determine. It is enough for Christians to know, that two thousand of years, through nearly which period it has been dormant, can neither render extinct the title, nor prescribe the heaven-chartered right of the seed of Abraham to the final and everlasting possession of the land of Canaan: that God 'will remember the land, and gather together' unto it his ancient people, and that his word concerning Zion, which he hath neither forgotten nor forsaken, is, 'I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers, and they that made thee waste, shall go forth of thee, &c.' (Is. xlix. 16, 17, &c.) And that through all the changes which have happened in the kingdoms of the earth from the days of Moses to the present time, which is more than three thousand two hundred years, nothing should have happened to prevent the possibility of the accomplishment of these prophecies, but, on the contrary, that the state of the Jewish and Christian nations at this day should be such as renders them easily capable, not only of a figurative, but even of a literal completion in every particular, if the will of God be so, this is a miracle which hath nothing parallel to it in the phenomena of nature.—*Keith's Evidence of Prophecies*.—Ed.

^b Jehoahaz was not the eldest son of Josiah, as appears from this,—That he was but three and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned but three months; after which his brother Jehoikim, when he was made king, was five and twenty years old, (2 Kings xxiii. 31, 32.) For this reason, it is said, that the people anointed him, because, as he did not come to the crown by right of succession, his title might have otherwise been disputed; for in all disputed cases, and where the kingdom came to be contested, anointing was ever thought to give a preference. At this time, however, the Jews might have some reason to prefer the younger brother, because very probably he was of a more martial spirit, and better qualified to defend their liberties against the king of Egypt. His proper name, it is thought, was Shallum; but our learned Usher supposes, that the people looking upon this as ominous, because Shallum, king of Israel, reigned but one month, changed it to Jehoahaz, which proved not much more fortunate to him, for he reigned but three.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries*.

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ample, he was soon ^a tumbled down from his throne into a prison, where he ended his days, with misery and disgrace, in a strange land. For Pharaoh-Necho, upon his return from the expedition against the Babylonians, wherein he had great success, hearing that Jehoahaz had taken upon him the kingdom of Judah without his consent, sent for him to Riblah in Syria, and on his arrival, caused him to be put in chains, and sent prisoner to Egypt, ^b where he died. He had an elder brother, whose name was Eliakim; but Necho, when he came to Jerusalem, changed it into Jehoiakim; ^c and having constituted him king, and put the land to an annual tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold, he returned with great triumph into his own kingdom.

Jehoiakim ^d being thus placed on the throne, went on in his brother's steps to relax all the good order and

^a The Scripture nowhere tells us, upon what occasion it was that Jehoahaz fell into the king of Egypt's hands, or for what reason it was that he used him so severely; but it is presumable, that to revenge his father's death, he might raise an army, and engage him in a pitched battle, though he failed in the attempt. For why should he put him in bands, if he voluntarily went, and surrendered himself at Riblah? or why be so highly offended at him for accepting of a crown which the people conferred on him? The general opinion therefore is, that he was a man of a bold and daring spirit, and therefore those words in the prophet Ezekiel are applied to him: 'thy mother is a lioness; she brought up one of her whelps; it became a young lion; but he was taken in the pit, and he was brought with chains unto the land of Egypt;' for which reason Pharaoh-Necho treated him in this manner, that he might put it out of his power to give him any farther disturbance.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

^b This the prophet Jeremiah foretold, where he bids the king, and the people of Judah, 'not to weep for the dead,' meaning Josiah, 'but for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.' Because, 'thus saith the Lord concerning Shallum,' which was the original and right name of Jehoahaz, 'the son of Josiah king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah, his father, and who went forth out of this place, he shall not return hither any more.' (Jer. xxii. 11.)

^c It was a usual thing for conquerors to change the names of the persons they vanquished in war, in testimony of their absolute power over them. Thus we find the king of Babylon changing the name of Mattaniah into Zedekiah, when he constituted him king of Judah, (2 Kings xxiv. 17.) But our learned Usher has farther remarked, that the king of Egypt gave Eliakim the name of Jehoiakim, thereby to testify that he ascribed his victory over the Babylonians to Jehovah, the God of Israel, by whose excitation, as he pretended, (2 Chron. xxxv. 21, 22), he undertook the expedition.—*Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

^d As to the time when Jehoiakim came to the throne, the difference is very remarkable: for in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, it is said, that he was but 'eight years old,' but in 2 Kings xxiv. 8, that he was 'eighteen when he began to reign,' and yet, considering how common a thing it was for kings to make their sons their associates in the kingdom, thereby to secure the possession of it in their family, and prevent all contention among the other brothers, the difference is easily reconciled, by supposing, that when his father had reigned one year, he took him to reign in conjunction with him, when he was no more than eight years old. With his father he reigned ten years; so that, when his father died, he was eighteen years old, and then he began to reign alone, which was no more than three months. The author of the book of Kings makes mention therefore only of the years when he began to reign alone; but the author of the Chronicles speaks of all the time that he reigned, both with his father, and alone. This is a fair solution; though I cannot see what injury it can do to the authority of the sacred text, if we should acknowledge, that there is an error in the transcriber of the book of Chronicles; because two of the most ancient and venerable versions, the Syriac and Arabic, have rendered it in that place, not eight but eighteen, which they were doubtless induced to do by those ancient Hebrew copies from whence they formed their translation.—*Patrick's Commentary, and Poole's Annotations.*

discipline which his father had instituted, and the people, who never heartily came into that good king's reformation, took this opportunity to follow the bent of their depraved inclinations; whereupon the prophet Jeremiah went first to the king's palace, where he denounced God's judgments against him and his family, and afterwards into the temple, and there spoke to all the people after the same manner. The priests, offended at this freedom, caused him to be seized, and brought before the king's council, in hopes of having him put to death; but Ahikam, ^e who was one of the chief lords thereof, so befriended him, that he got him discharged by the general suffrage, not only of the princes, but also of all the elders of the people that were then present.

But ^f Urijah, another prophet of the Lord, who, in like manner, had declared against the iniquity of the prince and people, did not so easily escape: for though he fled into Egypt, when he understood that Jehoiakim had a design against his life; yet this did not hinder the tyrant from pursuing him thither, where having procured him to be seized, he brought him prisoner to Jerusalem, and there had him executed, and his dead body contemptuously used; which was no small aggravation to all his other crimes.

He had not been above three years upon the throne, before Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, being now become old and infirm, and perceiving that, upon the late advantage which the king of Egypt had gained against his arms, all Syria and Palestine had revolted from him, took his son Nebuchadnezzar into partnership with him in the empire, and sent him with a strong army into those parts, in order to recover what had been lost.

It was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Nebuchadnezzar, having defeated Necho's army on the banks

¹ Jer. xxvi. 20, &c.

^e This Ahikam was the father of Gedaliah, (2 Kings xxv. 22.) who was afterwards made governor of the land, under the Chaldeans, and the son of Shaphan the scribe, (who was chief minister of state under king Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 12.) and brother to Gemariah, (Jer. xxxvi. 10, Elash, xxix. 3, and Jaazaniah, Ezek. viii. 11,) who were great men in those days, and members likewise of the council with him; where, in conjunction with them, he could not fail of having a powerful interest, which he made use of on this occasion, to deliver the prophet from that mischief which was intended against him.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 609.

^f About this time also were living the prophets Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Nahum, who being called to the prophetic office in the reign of Josiah, continued, very likely, to this time, because we find them prophesying the same things that Jeremiah did, namely, the destruction and desolation of Judah and Jerusalem, for the many heinous sins that they were guilty of. As to Habakkuk, neither the time in which he lived, nor the parents from whom he was descended, are any where named in Scripture; but his prophesying the coming of the Chaldeans, in the same manner that Jeremiah did, gives us reason to believe that he lived in the same time. Of Zephaniah, it is directly said, (chap. i.) that he prophesied in the time of Josiah, and in his pedigree, which is also given us, his father's grandfather is called Hezekiah, whom some take for the king of Judah, and consequently reckon this prophet to have been of royal descent. As to Nahum, lastly, it is certain, that he prophesied after the captivity of the ten tribes, and before that of the other two, which he foretold, (chap. i.) Though therefore the Jews do generally place him in Manasseh's reign, yet others choose to refer him to the latter part of Josiah's, as being nearer to the destruction of Nineveh and of the Assyrian monarchy, to which several prophecies of his do principally relate.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 609; and *Howell's History*, in the notes.

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of the Euphrates, marched into Syria and Palestine, in order to recover these provinces, which he soon did; and having besieged Jerusalem, took it, and carried away the king, and part of the vessels of the temple along with him, to Babylon. In a short time, however, he released him and restored him to his crown, on condition that he should become tributary to him, which he continued to be for three years; but in the fourth, he retracted from that subjection, whereupon Nebuchadnezzar came upon him with a fresh invasion.

Upon the first invasion, the Rechabites, who, according to the institution of Jonadab the son of Rechab, their founder, had always abstained from wine, and hitherto only lived in tents, apprehending themselves in more danger in the open country, came to Jerusalem for safety. By these people God intended to convince the Jews of their disobedience to him; and therefore he ordered his prophet Jeremiah, to bring them to an apartment of the temple, and there offer them wine to drink, which when they refused upon account of its being contrary to their institution, which they never yet had violated, the prophet (after due commendation ^a of their obedience) turned it upon the Jews, and reproached them, who were God's peculiar people, for being less observant of his laws than the poor Rechabites, who were not of the stock of Israel, had been of the injunctions of their ancestor.

Before the next invasion Jeremiah prophesied that Nebuchadnezzar would again come against Judah and Jerusalem; that he would waste the country, and carry the people captive to Babylon, where they should continue in that condition for the space of seventy years; with many more calamities, and woful desolations, that were ready to fall upon them, if they did not repent. But this was so far from making any saving impression upon them, that it only enraged and exasperated them the more against him, insomuch, that, for fear of their malice and wrathful indignation, he was ^b forced to keep himself concealed.

^a The prophet's words, upon this occasion, are these:—'Because ye have obeyed the commandments of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you; thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.' (Jer. xxxv. 18, 19.) To stand before a prince, or to see his face, in Scripture phrase, denotes the honour which accrues from being in his service, but the Rechabites were neither priests nor Levites. Hitherto they had lived in the fields, separate from towns and villages, and were averse indeed to any employment either in church or state; but from the time of their captivity, (for they were carried along with the two tribes,) we find them employed as singers and porters in the service of the temple. To serve in this capacity, there was no necessity for their being of the tribe of Levi; the declaration of the divine will, by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, was in this case a sufficient vocation.—*Calmet's Commentary* on Jer. xxv. 19.

^b Jeremiah's words, upon this occasion, are,—'I am shut up, I cannot go into the house of the Lord,' chap. xxxvi. 5. But then the question is, what we are to understand by his being shut up? For, that he was not at that time shut up in prison, is plain from the prince's advising him and Baruch to hide themselves, ver. 19. Junius and Tremellius do therefore suppose three ways of his being shut up, and leave it to our choice which to take. The first is, that the king had forbidden him to go any more into the temple to prophesy such terrible things to the people; but the prophets of God did not use to observe such prohibitions of their prophetic ministry. The second is, that the chief priests had excommunicated him, and therefore he might not go; but this, in all likelihood, he would have less regarded, for the same reason. The third is, that God, to provide for the

During his concealment, God commanded him to collect together, and digest into one volume, all the prophecies which he had given him against Israel, against Judah, and against other nations, from the time that he first began to prophesy, (which was in the thirteenth year of Josiah,) if haply, by hearing all his judgments summed up together against them, they might be brought to a better sense of their transgressions. To this purpose the prophet employed Baruch, ^c his disciple and amanuensis, to take a copy ^d of them from his mouth,

safety of his prophet, and to punish the obstinacy of the people, would not permit him to go any more among them. This, of the three, seems the most probable; though the phrase may very properly denote no more than the prophet's concealing himself, and keeping at home, for fear of some mischief from the people.—*Howell's History*, in the notes.

^c Baruch, the son of Neriah, and grandson of Maaseiah, was of an illustrious birth, and of the tribe of Judah. Seraiah, his brother, had a considerable employment in the court of king Zedekiah, but himself kept close to the person of Jeremiah, and was his most faithful disciple, though his adherence to his master drew upon him several persecutions, and a great deal of bad treatment. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, Baruch and his master were permitted to stay in the land of Judea; but when the remains of the people which were left behind, after having slain their governor Gedaliah, were for retiring into Egypt, they compelled Jeremiah and his disciple to go along with them, where the prophet died, and Baruch soon after made his escape to his brethren in Babylon, where, according to the tradition of the Rabbins, he likewise died in the twelfth year of the captivity. But of what authority the book, which goes under his name, is, or by whom it was written, and whether any thing related therein be historically true, or the whole of it a fiction, is altogether uncertain. Grotius, in his Commentary upon it, thinks it an entire fiction of some Hellenistical Jew, under the name of Baruch; and St Jerome, long before him, (in the preface to his Exposition of Jeremiah,) tells us, that the reason why he did not make a comment on this book, (though, in the edition of the Septuagint, it be joined with Jeremiah,) was, because it was not deemed canonical among the Hebrews, and contains an epistle which falsely bears the name of Jeremiah. This epistle is annexed to the book, and, in the common division of it, makes the last chapter; but the main subject of the book itself is likewise an epistle, either sent, or feigned to be sent, by king Jehoiakim, and the Jews who were in captivity with him in Babylon, to their brethren the Jews who were still left in Judah and Jerusalem; wherein they recommend to their prayers the emperor Nebuchadnezzar and his children, that, under his dominion, they may lead quiet and peaceable lives; wherein they confess their sins, and ask pardon for what is past, take notice of the threats of the prophets, which they had so long despised, and acknowledge the righteousness of God in what he had brought upon them; wherein they remind them of the advantages which the Jews had in their knowledge of the law of God, and of true wisdom, above all other nations, and thereupon exhort them to reform their manners, and forsake their evil customs, which would be the only means to bring about their deliverance from the captivity under which they groaned. The whole is introduced with an historical preface, wherein it is related that Baruch, being then at Babylon, did, in the name of the captive king, and his people, draw up the same epistle, and afterwards read it to them for their approbation; and that, together with it, they sent a collection of money to the high priest at Jerusalem, for the maintenance of the daily sacrifices. This is the substance of the book itself; and, in the letter annexed to it, which goes under Jeremiah's name, the vanity of the Babylonish idols and idolatry is set forth at large, and with liveliness enough. Of the whole there are but three copies; one in Greek, and the other two in Syriac, whereof one agreeth with the Greek, though the other very much differs from it; but in what language it was originally written, or whether one of these be not the original, or which of them may be so, it is next to impossible to tell.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 595, and *Calmet's Preface on Baruch*.

^d How Jeremiah could remember all the prophecies that he uttered for the space of two and twenty years together, we can

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and, when he had so done, ordered him to go up into the temple, on the day of expiation, ^a and there read it in the hearing of all the people.

Pursuant to his instructions Baruch went, and, in Gemariah's ^b apartment, read the book, first to the people, who stood below in the courts, and afterwards to the princes who were met together in the secretary's chamber; and who thereupon advised him and his master Jeremiah, both to ^c keep out of the way, until they had known the king's pleasure concerning it. As soon as the king was informed of the book, he sent one of his attendants for it, and commanded him to read it: but he had not gone far, before the king, impatient to hear the judgments denounced against him, snatched it out of his hand, and, notwithstanding the importunity of his nobles to dissuade him, cut it to pieces, and threw it into the fire, ^d which was upon the hearth, (for it was then the

hardly conceive, unless we allow that he had the particular inspiration of God to bring all things to his remembrance, that he might neither forget nor misrepresent them in his recital to Baruch: for, without such a supernatural assistance, what security have we that this part of the Scriptures is the work of the Holy Ghost?—*Calmet's Commentary* on Jer. xxxvi. 4.

^a Some are of opinion that this was done on the great day of fasting, or solemn expiation, which was observed at the beginning of the civil year, on the tenth day of the month *Tisri*, which answers to the latter end of our September, and the beginning of October; but the context seems to denote, that it was on the fast day mentioned in the ninth verse to have been proclaimed in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, which must have been a fast extraordinary, and appointed upon some particular occasion of the state, because the law had ordained no such observation on the ninth month: but what that particular occasion was, it is not so well known; though some have imagined that it was in commemoration of the calamity which had befallen Jerusalem in the year before, when Nebuchadnezzar had sent to Babylon part of the vessels of the house of the Lord, and was upon the point of sending away captive the king and all his princes.—*Calmet's Commentary* on Jer. xxvi. 4. 9.

^b This Gemariah was one of the captains of the temple, whose apartment was near the New Gate, whereof he kept guard, and had a certain number of Levites under him, who constantly stood sentinel. For the temple, we must know, was guarded like a king's palace; and as the upper court, which is mentioned in the text, was, in all probability, the priest's court; so the gate, whereof Gemariah had charge, must have been the east gate of that court, which, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 5. is called the New Court.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^c The advice which the princes of Judah gave upon this occasion is very remarkable, because it reconciles their duty to God, to justice, and to charity, with what they were obliged to from their prince. Their prince, they knew, was of an hasty and violent temper; and yet the contents of the book were such, that it would not be safe for him to be ignorant of it; and therefore, being in duty bound to acquaint him with it, they advised Baruch and his master to provide for their own security, until they should see what effect it would have upon the king, whereof they promised, no doubt, to give them intelligence.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d The text tells us, that it was in the ninth month, (which answers in part to our month of November,) when the king burned the book. After that the rain began to fall in the month of September, the weather generally grew raw and cold, so that a fire at this time was not unseasonable: the custom, however, in this country was not to have chimneys, as it is among us. The fire was made in the middle of the room, upon an hearth, or in a stove, and the smoke went out either at the door or window, or some opening made on purpose in the roof of the house, as we see in some of our college halls, and some kitchens in ancient monasteries, where the chimney is in the midst of the roof, in the form of a cupola, with several openings for the smoke to fly out at. For, that there were formerly no chimneys in the manner we make them now, is plain from the observation which his annotator makes upon Vitruvius, namely, that, in all his book of

winter season,) where it was consumed; and then immediately sent out his officers to apprehend the prophet and his amanuensis; but they had both withdrawn to a place of security, and could not be found.

Upon burning the book, Jeremiah was commanded to make another in the same manner; to have the same prophecies inserted in it, with some ¹ farther denunciations against Jehoiakim and his house, which, in a short time, began to take effect. For Nebuchadnezzar, as we said, having invaded Judea, and laid siege to Jerusalem, soon took it, and put Jehoiakim in chains to carry him to Babylon; but, upon his humiliation, and swearing fealty to him, he again restored him to his kingdom, and left Jerusalem, in order to pursue his victories against the Egyptians: but before he did that, he ^e caused great numbers of the people to be sent captives to Babylon, and gave particular orders to Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that, out of the children of the royal family, and that of the nobility of the land, he should make choice of such as surpassed others in beauty and wit, that, when they came to Babylon, they might be made eunuchs too, and attend in his palace. This Ashpenaz accordingly did; and, among the children that were carried away captive ^f for this purpose were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah. Daniel, upon his ar-

¹ Jer. xxxvi. 30, 31.

architecture, he makes no mention of chimneys, which he questionless would have done, had they been of use in his time.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *M. Perault* on Vitruv. b. vi. c. 8.—[In Palestine, and the surrounding regions, the coldness of the night in all the seasons of the year, is often very inconvenient. The king of Judah is described by the prophet, as sitting in his winter-house in the ninth month, corresponding to the latter end of November and part of December, with a fire burning on the hearth before him. This answers to the state of the weather at Aleppo, where, as Dr Russel informs us, the most delicate people make no fires till the end of November. The Europeans resident at Syria, he observes in a note, continue them till March; the people of the country seldom longer than February; but fires are occasionally made in wet seasons, not only in March, but in April also, and would be acceptable at the gardens sometimes even in May. Dr Pococke, in his journey to Jerusalem, being conducted by an Arab to his tent, found his wife and family warming themselves by the fire on the seventeenth of March; and on the eighth of May he was treated with a fire to warm him, by the governor of Galilee. The nights at that season are often very cold, and of this the inhabitants are rendered more sensible by the heats of the day. In May and June, and even in July, travellers very often put on fires in the evening. This statement clearly discovers the reason, why the people, who went to Gethsemane to apprehend our Lord, kindled a fire of coals to warm themselves at the time of the passover, which happened in the spring.—*Paston's Illustrations*, vol. i.—Ed.]

^e Since the people were thus carried into captivity, the sons of the royal family, and of the nobility of the land, made eunuchs and slaves in the palace of the king of Babylon; the vessels of the temple carried thither, the king made a tributary, and the whole land now brought into vassalage under the Babylonians; from hence we must reckon the beginning of the seventy years' captivity foretold by the prophet Jeremiah, ch. xxv. 11. and xxix. 10, and in the fourth year of Jehoiakim must be the first year in that computation.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 606.

^f Some indeed do place their captivity several years later, but it is absolutely inconsistent with what is elsewhere said in Scripture: for these children, after their carrying away to Babylon, were to be three years under the tuition of the master of the eunuchs, (Dan. i. 5.) to be instructed by him in the language and learning of the Chaldeans, before they could be admitted into the presence of the king, to stand and serve before him. But in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, after his father's death, which was but the fourth year after his first taking of Jerusalem, Daniel had not only admission and freedom of access

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rival in Babylon, was called Belteshazzar, and the other three were named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, of whom we have several things to say in another place.

Jehoiakim, after he had lived in subjection to the king of Babylon for three years, rebelled against him; and refusing to pay him any more tribute, renewed his confederacy with Necho king of Egypt. Hereupon Nebuchadnezzar, ^a not being at leisure to come himself to chastise him, sent orders to all his lieutenants and governors of provinces in those parts, to make war against him, which brought upon him inroads and depredations from every quarter; till, in the eleventh year of his reign, all parties joined together against him, and, having shut him up in Jerusalem, they took him prisoner in a sally which he made upon them, slew him with the sword, and, in the completion of the ¹ prophet's prediction concerning him, ^b cast his dead body in the highway, without allowing it the decency of a funeral.

After the death of his father, Jehoiachin, ^c who is likewise called Coniah and Jeconiah, ascended the throne; but for the little time that he continued thereon, persisting in his father's impieties, he drew upon himself ² a

¹ Jer. xxii. 18, 19.² Jer. xxii. 24—30.

to the king, but we find him there interpreting his dream, (Dan. ii.) and immediately thereupon advanced to be the chief of the governors of the wise men, and ruler over all the provinces of Babylon; and, less than four years' instruction in the language, laws, usages, and learning of the country, can scarce be thought sufficient to qualify him for such a trust; nor could he any sooner be old enough for it, because we may observe, that when he was first carried away from Jerusalem, he was but a youth.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 606.

^a What detained him from going in person against Jerusalem we are not told: only it appears, that, in the tenth year of Jehoiakim, he was engaged in an arbitration between the Medes and Lydians, the occasion of which was this:—After the Medes had recovered all the Upper Asia out of the hands of the Scythians, and again extended their borders to the river Halys, which was the common boundary between them and the Lydians, it was not long before there happened a war between these two nations, which was managed for five years together with various success. In the sixth year, intending to make one battle decisive, they engaged each other with their utmost strength; but in the midst of the action, and while the fortune of the day seemed to hang in an equal balance between them, there happened an eclipse, which overspread both the armies with darkness: whereupon they desisted from fighting, and agreed to refer the controversy to the arbitration of two neighbouring princes. The Lydians chose Siennesis king of Cilicia; and the Medes Nebuchadnezzar (who, by Herodotus, b. 1. is called *Labyntus*.) king of Babylon, who concluded a peace between them, on the terms that Astyages, son of Cyaxares king of Media, should take to wife Ariana, the daughter of Halyattis, king of the Lydians; of which marriage, within a year after, was born Cyaxares, who is called *Darius the Mede*, in the book of Daniel.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 528.

^b In 2 Kings xxiv. 6, we are told expressly, that Jehoiakim 'slept with his fathers,' and yet it is very certain that he was neither buried with them, nor died in his bed, but lay above ground unburied, according to the prediction of the prophet, (Jer. xxxvi. 30.) 'exposed in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost;' from whence it appears, 'that to sleep' with one's fathers,' signifies no more than to die as they did.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c His succeeding his father in the throne of Judah may seem to disagree with the threat which the prophet denounces against his father, (Jer. xxxvi. 30.) 'He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David.' But as Jehoiachin's reign lasted little more than three months, during which time he was absolutely subject to the Chaldeans, a reign of so short a continuance, and so small authority, may very justly be looked upon as nothing.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

bitter declaration of God's wrath, which was speedily executed. For, in three months after his father's death, Nebuchadnezzar, ^d coming in person with his royal army to Jerusalem, which was then blocked up by his lieutenants, caused the place to be begirt with a close siege on every side. This so terrified Jehoiachin, that ^e taking his mother, his princes, and his chief ministers with him, he went out to Nebuchadnezzar, and delivered himself into his hand; who, though he spared his life, put him in chains, and sent him to Babylon, where he continued in prison until the death of his conqueror. But when Evilmerodach ^f succeeded to his father's throne, he not only released him from his imprisonment, which had continued for seven and thirty years, but treated him with great humanity and respect, allowing him an honourable maintenance, and giving him the precedence of all other princes in Babylon.

At this time Nebuchadnezzar carried away with him, besides the king and his family, a vast number of other captives, among whom was Ezekiel the prophet, all the mighty men of valour, and all the useful artificers, out of Jerusalem, ^g to the number of ten thousand men, together with all the treasures, and ^h rich furniture of the

^d It is very probable that Nebuchadnezzar heard that he had entered into a confederacy with the king of Egypt, as his successor did; and therefore sent an army against him, in the very beginning of his reign, to lay siege to Jerusalem, against which he intended to come himself. But the Jews have a conceit that Nebuchadnezzar's counsellors represented to him, how unadvisedly he had acted in making him king whose father had been in rebellion against him, and that upon their representation, he resolved to depose him. 'From an ill dog there never comes a good whelp,' was the proverb, they say, which the counsellors made use of on this occasion; and to make this more feasible to the father and son, they generally apply that passage in Ezekiel, 'She took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion, and he went up and down among the lions. He became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devour men. Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces: they spread their net over him, and he was taken in their pit,' chap. xix. 6, &c.—*Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

^e It is very probable that he made this surrender, at the advice of the prophet Jeremiah, who gave the same counsel more than once to his successor Zedekiah, (Jer. xxi. 9; xxvii. 17; xxxviii. 2.)

^f During his father's indisposition, who fancied himself metamorphosed into an ox, he took upon him the administration of the government; but after seven years, when his father recovered his understanding, so as once more to ascend the throne, Evilmerodach, as some believe, was imprisoned by his father, and in his confinement, contracted an acquaintance and intimacy with Jehoiachin; so that after his father's death, and his full accession to the throne, he released him out of prison, and heaped many favours upon him: and it was by his advice, as the Jews tell us, that Evilmerodach took his father out of the ground, after he was dead and buried, cut his body in pieces, and gave them to three hundred ravens, lest he should return from his grave, as he had before recovered from his metamorphosis into an ox.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Evilmerodach*.

^g This must be understood of the whole number of the people that were at this time carried captive, which, according to Abernethy was thus made up:—Jehoiachin and all his court, and great men, were seven thousand; the craftsmen a thousand; and other considerable men in the country two thousand, which completed the number. Jeremiah indeed computes them to be little above three thousand that were now carried away; but he reckons only those that were carried from Jerusalem; whereas in 2 Kings xxxiv. 16, there is an account of those who were carried from other cities, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, which were seven thousand; and this reconciles the difference.—*Patrick's Comment.*

^h Nebuchadnezzar carried away the vessels, and rich furniture of the temple, at three different times. 1st. In the third year of

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temple, and of the royal palace. What he left in the land were only the poorer sort of people, over whom he made Mattaniah, the third son of Josiah, king. Of him he took a solemn oath to be faithful and true in his obedience to the crown of Babylon; and, to engage him the more to be so, he changed his name to *Zedekiah*, which signifies the *justice of the Lord*, intending thereby to put him in mind of the vengeance he was to expect from the justice of the Lord his God, if he violated that fidelity which he had in his name sworn unto him.

Zedekiah was but just settled in the throne, and Nebuchadnezzar departed out of Judea, and Syria, when¹ several kings of the neighbouring nations, namely, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Zidonians, the Tyrians, &c., sent their ambassadors to Jerusalem, to congratulate him upon his accession to the throne, and to propose a league against the king of Babylon, in order to shake off his yoke, and prevent his return into those parts any more. Upon this occasion, Jeremiah, by God's command, made him bonds and yokes, which he sent by the said ambassadors to their respective masters, with this message from God, namely, "That he had given all their countries to the king of Babylon, and therefore their wisest course would be to submit to his yoke, which if they refused to do, both they and their countries should most certainly be destroyed:" but to Zedekiah he went in person, and having persuaded him to submit to the king of Babylon, and not to give credit to false prophets, who might flatter him with a deliverance from his power, he prevailed with him for that time not to enter into the league that was proposed.

He had before this,² under the emblem of two baskets of figs, foretold Zedekiah the restoration which God intended for those that were gone into captivity, and the misery and desolation which should befall them who were still in the land; and now in pursuance of his prophetic office, he^a took the opportunity of the king's

sending an embassy to Babylon to direct a letter to the Jews of the captivity, advising them not to be deceived with such prophets,^b as made them entertain false hopes of a speedy restoration; that by the ordination of God their captivity was to last seventy years; and that the people left at Jerusalem would be of little use to assist them in their deliverance, because God, in a short time, would afflict them with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, so as to consume the greatest part of them, and scatter the rest over the face of the earth; and therefore he exhorts them to live quietly and peaceably in the country, whither they were carried, without expecting any return, until the time which God had appointed.

Upon the receipt of this letter, one Shemaiah, a popular man among the captive Jews at Babylon, took upon him to write to Zephaniah, the second priest, and to all the priests and people of Jerusalem, representing Jeremiah as a madman, and a false pretender to prophecy, and advising them to confine him: which Jeremiah hearing, was commanded by God to send again to the captives of Babylon, to let them know, that he would punish Shemaiah and his posterity very severely, for having deluded them with false prophecies; and at the same time, to convince those that were left in Jerusalem, he showed them,³ by the emblem of a potter's vessel, that it was in the Almighty's power to destroy what nation or people he pleased. But all this availed nothing. They still resolved to go on in their wicked ways: and, to avenge themselves of the prophet, who gave them some disturbance therein, they abused him with words and blows, and, at length, put him in the stocks.

It was no small comfort to him, however, under all his afflictions, to find that Ezekiel, who, much about this time, was called to the prophetic office, prophesied the same things at Babylon that he did at Jerusalem. At Jerusalem, Jeremiah⁴ foretold the divine judgments which were to be executed upon Chaldaea and Babylon, by the Medes and Persians, which he wrote in a book, and⁵ delivered it to Seraiah, who was then going to

¹ Jer. xxxvii.² Jer. xxiv.

the reign of Jehoiakim, when he first took Jerusalem, he carried part of the vessels of the house of God away into the land of Shinar, and put them into the house of his god,' (Dan. i. 2.) These were the vessels which his son Belshazzar profaned, (Dan. v. 2.) and which Cyrus restored to the Jews, (Ezra i. 7.) to be set up again in the temple when rebuilt. 2dly, In the reign of Jehoiachin, he took the city again, and cut in pieces a great part of the vessels of gold which Solomon had made, (2 Kings xxiv. 13.) and by some chance or other had escaped his former plunder. 3dly, In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, he pillaged the temple once more, when he brake in pieces the pillars of brass, and the bases, and the brazen sea, and took along with them all the vessels of silver and gold that he could find, and carried them to Babylon, (2 Kings xxv. 13.) &c. It is somewhat strange, that amongst all this inventory we hear no mention made of the ark of the covenant, which of all other things was held most sacred; but it is very probable that it was burned together with the temple, in this last desolation. For what some say of its being hidden by the prophet Jeremiah, in a certain cave in Mount Nebo, is a mere fable. — *Patrik's and Calnet's Commentaries, and Dissertation on the ark of the Covenant.*

a At what time, and upon what occasion Zedekiah sent this embassy to the king of Babylon, the sacred history is silent; but it is very presumable that it was at the beginning of his reign, and that as Judea was then tributary to the Chaldeans, the king's policy was to keep up a good understanding with them. Ezekiel however was not as yet possessed of the spirit of prophecy; and for this reason Jeremiah was obliged to take care of the Jews who were gone captives into the land of Babylon, and to send them instructions in what manner they were to behave, namely,

³ Jer. xviii.⁴ Jer. i. and li.⁵ Jer. li. 59, 64.

to seek the peace of the city, whither they were carried away,' (Jer. xxix. 7.) pursuant to which instruction, we find those in Babylon requiring their brethren at Jerusalem 'to pray for the life of Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon, and for the life of Belthasar his son, that their days may be upon earth as the days of heaven:—That they might live under the shadow of Nabuchodonosor, and under the shadow of his son, and find favour in their sight.' (Baruch i. 11, 12.)

b The two persons mentioned in Scripture, who took upon them to be prophets sent from God, were Ahaz the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, two of the captivity among the Jews at Babylon; who feeding the people with false promises of a speedy restoration, hindered them from making any settlements in the places assigned for their habitation: but, as the prophet Jeremiah denounced their sudden and fearful destruction, Nebuchadnezzar, understanding that they disturbed the people by their vain prophecies, caused them both to be seized, and roasted to death in the fire. The later Jews say, that these two men were the two elders who would have corrupted Susanna, and that Nebuchadnezzar commanded them to be burned for this reason: but the whole foundation of this conceit is, that Jeremiah (chap. xxix. 23, where he speaks of these men) says, 'that they committed villany in Israel, and adultery with their neighbours' wives;' from whence they conjecture all the rest.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 597.

c The words in the text according to our translation are, 'the word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah, the son of Neriah, &c., when he went with Zedekiah, the king of Judah, into Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign, and this

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Babylon upon an embassy, with instructions to read the contents of it to his captive brethren upon the banks of the river Euphrates; and when he had made an end of reading, to tie a stone to it, and ^a throw it into the river, thereby to denote, that as it would naturally sink, so should the Babylonish empire be totally destroyed, and never rise any more.

At Babylon, Ezekiel, by several types and prophetic revelations, foretold the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; Zedekiah's flight from the city by night; the putting out of his eyes; his imprisonment and death at Babylon; the carrying away the remainder of the Jews into captivity; the desolation of their country, and the many and great calamities which should befall them for their iniquities. But to those of the captivity, who, avoiding these iniquities, did endeavour to keep themselves steady and faithful in God's service, God, by the mouth of his prophet, promised to become a sanctuary in a strange country, and to bring them back again unto the land of Israel, where they should flourish in peace and righteousness, and once more ¹ become his people, and he their God.

Thus did these two great prophets visit the people which were still remaining in Jerusalem with several warnings; endeavouring, both by significant emblems, and direct predictions, to reclaim them. But, when they still persisted in their obstinacy and disobedience, God at length brought upon them the calamities which he had so often foretold, and so severely threatened.

Before we come to the destruction of Jerusalem, how-

¹ Ezek. xi. 20.

Seraiah was a quiet prince,' (Jer. li. 59,) and from hence some Hebrew interpreters infer, that Zedekiah went to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign to make his court, and cultivate the good graces of his patron and paramount Nebuchadnezzar. But this opinion, though followed by several, has no foundation in any other part of Scripture; and the passage now before us, may, according to the original, be very properly rendered in this wise. 'The word which Jeremiah commanded Seraiah, when he went to Babylon upon an embassy from Zedekiah.' The chief business of this embassy was to request of Nebuchadnezzar, a restitution of the sacred vessels of the temple which he had taken away, when he carried Jehoiakim captive into Babylon. Our translation, however, is not at all significant in this place, when it styles this Seraiah, a quiet prince. The Septuagint have very properly rendered the words *ἀρχὸν δαίαν* the prince of the presents, which some apply to the presents which king Zedekiah made to the temple, and others to the things he daily supplied for sacrifices; but the most natural sense in this place is, that he was charged with the presents and tribute which Zedekiah was obliged to send to Nebuchadnezzar; that his business was, to present them to the emperor, and, upon that occasion, to solicit the restoration of the sacred vessels; upon which account, the Vulgate has rendered the words 'princes prophetic,' the chief person in the embassy, who at the time of audience, was to make a speech to the emperor, in his prince's name.—*Cabnet's Commentary*.—[Dr Boothroyd renders the passage in question thus,—'The word which Jeremiah, the prophet, commanded Seraiah, the son of Meriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went on behalf of Zedekiah, king of Judah, to Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign; for Seraiah carried a present.]—*Boothroyd's New Version*.—Ed.

^a We have an emblematical action of the like kind described in the book of the Revelation of St John: 'and a mighty angel took up a stone, like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus, with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all,' chap. xviii. 21, where the word *Babylon* is taken in an analogical sense, because the destruction of that great city and empire, as we shall see hereafter, was so remarkable, as to afford a com-

parison for any other great and opulent state brought to ruin and desolation.

^b It is a great dispute among the learned, whether this history of Judith was transacted before or after the Babylonish captivity. Those who maintain the latter opinion, found a great deal upon the words of the history itself, wherein the author, according to the Greek version, (chap. iv. 3,) expressly tells us, that 'the Israelites were newly returned from captivity, and all the people of Judah were lately gathered together, and the vessels, and the altar, and the house, were sanctified after their profanation;' and wherein it is farther affirmed, that they 'were led captives into a land that was not theirs,' that the temple of their God was 'cast to the ground, and their cities taken by the enemies;' but now they are come up from the places where they were scattered, and have possessed Jerusalem,' (ch. v. 18, 19.) It is in vain, say they, to endeavour to correct the sense of these passages; the bare reading of them, and the first impression they make upon the mind, naturally leads one to say, that this history was not transacted till after the return from the captivity, which, in a great measure, is confirmed by the opinion of almost all the ancients, and a great many of the moderns; but then they widely disagree in their computations of the period of time when this remarkable event happened. For some place it under Cambyzes, the son of Cyrus, others under Xerxes, others under Darius; and others again, under Antiochus Epiphanes, in the time of the Maccabees; which last opinion is the most tenable, if we will but allow, that a feast was instituted in commemoration of it, as we read in the Vulgate, but in none of the other translations. Those who maintain that this transaction happened before the captivity, are in like manner divided; for some place it under Manasseh, and others under Zedekiah.

Those who contend for Zedekiah's reign, make the Nabuchodonosor in the book of Judith, and the Nebuchadnezzar in the 2d of Kings, the same person; and as it is positively said in the 2d chapter of Judith, that he put his general Holofernes on this expedition, in the first month of the eighteenth year of his reign, which was the ninth of Zedekiah king of Judah, Holofernes's death, and the siege of Jerusalem happened, they say, in the same year; only it must be supposed, that the attempt against Bethulia was in the beginning of the year, and the siege of Jerusalem at the end of it. The captivity, therefore, from which the Jews are said to have newly returned, must be that in Jehoiakim's time, for that in Zedekiah's continued seventy years, before which Nebuchadnezzar had quite subdued Arphaxad, king of the Medes, and demolished Ecbatan. And as for the Bethulians enjoying peace during the life of Judith, it may be supposed that Nebuchadnezzar, being employed two years in the siege of Jerusalem, might spend some years in reducing other parts of the country; and seeing Bethulia was a place naturally strong, and situated among the mountains, he might be unwilling to foil his army before it, and, especially considering the ill success of his general, to make any fresh attempt upon it, until he had subdued all the rest. Those, again, who contend for Manasseh's reign, make the Nabuchodonosor in Judith to be the same with Saosduchius in Ptolemy, and Arphaxad the same with Phraortes, mentioned by Herodotus; and that, as these two princes made war with one another, wherein Phraortes was vanquished, and perished with his army, all the other things recorded of Saosduchius and his general might happen without inconsistency. For the captivity there mentioned, might be that from whence Manasseh, with some of his subjects, had lately returned, when the temple, which had been profaned, was purified again, and the service of the sanctuary restored to its ancient dignity, (2 Chron. xxxiii. 1, &c.) This is a short state of the several opinions concerning the date of this transaction, and the last of these, in our judgment, seems to be best founded.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 665; *Cabnet's Preface on the Book of Judith*.

^c For though the Jews and ancient Christians did not receive this book of Judith into their canon of Scripture, yet they always looked upon it as a true history; and accordingly Clement, in his epistle to the Corinthians, has cited it as well as the author of the apostolic constitutions, which go under his name; and as St Athanasius, or the writer of the Synopsis, that is ascribed to

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The author of the book of Judith ^a relates, that Nebuchodonosor, ^b king of Assyria, in the twelfth year of his reign, fought a great battle in the plains of Ragau, ^c with Arphaxad ^d king of Media, wherein he not only utterly

him, gives a summary account of it, even as he does of other sacred books, from his example we may be permitted to justify the short abridgment which we have made of it in our 'History of the Holy Bible.'—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Judith*.

^a Who this author was, it nowhere appears. St Jerome seems to think that Judith wrote it herself, but produces no good authority for his opinion. Others will have it, that the high priest Joakim, mentioned in this book, was the author of it; but this is equally a bare conjecture; nor is there much more certainty in those, who, supposing the history to have happened in the time of Cambyses, ascribe it to Joshua, the son of Josedek, who was high priest at that time. But whoever the author was, he seems to be posterior to the facts which he relates, because he speaks of the festival instituted in memory of Judith's victory, as still continued in his time, (Judith xvi. 20.) The book was originally written in the Chaldee language, which is not now extant; but from thence, at the desire of Paula and Eustochium, St Jerome formed the translation, which we now have in the vulgar Latin edition of the Bible, not rendering it word for word, as himself tells us in his preface to the history, but repairing the corruptions of the various readings, and giving us, according to the best of his judgment, the true and entire sense of the original. Besides this translation of St Jerome's, there are two others, one in Greek, and the other in Syriac. That which is in Greek is attributed to Theodotion, who lived in the time of Commodus, who was made emperor of Rome in the year of Christ 180. But the version was much ancienter; for Clemens Romanus, as we said, in his epistle to the Corinthians, which was wrote near 126 years before, has a quotation from it. The Syriac translation was made from the Greek, and so was also the English, which we, at present, have among the apocryphal writings in our Bible. And of all these three versions, it may be observed, that there are several particulars in them which are not in Jerome's, and which seem to be those various readings which he professes to have cut off, as vicious corruptions of the text; so that, in this respect, St Jerome's translation ought to have the preference, whenever there is any remarkable difference between them.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 655, and *Calmet's Dissertation on the Book of Judith*.

^b This Nabuchodonosor is the same prince whom Herodotus calls Saosduchinus, who, after the death of Esarhaddon, (the same who took the advantage of Massesimordacus's dying without issue, and united the kingdom of Babylon to that of Assyria,) succeeded to his acquisitions; and the reason why the author of this book of Judith, who apparently wrote either in Babylon, or some other part of Chaldaea, calls him Nabuchodonosor, is, because this was the common name, as Pharaoh was in Egypt, of the kings of that country.—*Calmet's Commentary on Judith*, and *Prideaux's Connection*.

^c The plains of Ragau are very probably those which lie about Rages, a town of Media, standing upon the mountains of Ecbatan, and distant about a small day's-journey from that city.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

^d Both our learned Prideaux and primate Usher are of opinion, that this Arphaxad was the person whom profane historians call Dejoces, the first king of the Medes, and founder of Ecbatan; but the account which the book of Judith gives of Arphaxad, and of the circumstances of his death, seems to be more applicable to what Herodotus relates of Phraortes, his son and successor. For, as Arphaxad had many nations under his dominion, and fell in battle against the king of Assyria, (Judith i. 6, 15.) so Herodotus (b. i.) tells us of Phraortes, "That, having subdued the Persians, and made them part of his empire, he soon overcame the rest of the people of the Upper Asia, that is, all that lay north of Mount Taurus, to the river Halys, passing from nation to nation, and always attended with victory; until coming with an army against the Assyrians, with an intent to besiege Nineveh their capital, he was vanquished and slain in the two and twentieth year of his reign. Dejoces, indeed, is said by Herodotus to have been the first founder of Ecbatan; but as the undertaking was very great, it is not improbable, that he left enough to his successor Phraortes to complete; so that all the works which the author of Judith ascribes to Arphaxad (chap. i.)

defeated, and slew him, but made himself master of several of his cities, and among others, of Ecbatan, ^e the royal seat of the Median empire, which he miserably defaced: and afterwards returned in great triumph to Nineveh: that, some time after inquiring of his officers, nobles, and counsellors, what tributary countries had not gone with them to the war, for he had summoned them all to attend him, and finding that none of the western provinces had paid that regard to his commands, he made a decree that Holofernes, ^f the chief captain of his army, should not fail the next year to chastise their disobedience: that, pursuant to this decree, this general took the field with a vast army; ^g and having wasted and destroyed several other nations, at length came unto Judea, where he laid siege to Bethuliah, ^h a strong town in the

might be his."—*Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary; and Prideaux's Connection*, anno 635.

^e This city, Herodotus says expressly, was built by Dejoces, the first king of the Medes; but that author is wrong in ascribing the honour of the whole work to him, which his son Phraortes, at least finished and beautified to such a degree, that, though the Scripture is silent, profane authors have given us a very advantageous account of it. The city, according to them, was situate on a spacious eminence, and into it Dejoces had brought together the whole nations of the Medes, who never before had lived in any thing but caves and huts, dispersed up and down in the country, which great concourse of people made it very large and populous. It was encompassed with seven walls, at equal distances from each other. The first was the lowest and equal in circumference with those of Athens, that is, according to Thucydides, (b. ii.) 178 furlongs. The rest rose gradually, and overlooked each other, about the eighth of a battlement. The battlements were of different colours. The first was white, the second black, the third red, the fourth blue, the fifth of a deep red, the sixth of a silver, and the seventh of a gold colour; and for this reason, as Bochart has observed, this city was usually called by the ancients *Agbata*, which, in the Arabic language, signifies, *a thing of different and distinct colours*. The royal palace and treasury stood within the seventh wall; and the palace alone, according to Polybius, (b. x.) was seven furlongs round, and built with all the cost and skill that a stately edifice did require; for some of its beams are said to have been of silver, and the rest of cedar, which were strengthened with plates of gold.—*Calmet's Comment. and Dictionary* under the word; and *Wells' Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3. [This city still exists under the name of Hamadan, and is situated in lat. 34° 53' N., long. 40° E. The tombs of Esther and Mordecai are said to be still preserved in it, and are protected by a colony of Jews, who have been resident there from time immemorial, and at present amount to about 600 families. The whole population of Hamadan is estimated at 40,000.]—Ed.

^f Some annotators are of opinion, that the word Holofernes is of Persian extract, in the same manner as Tisaphernes, Intaphernes, &c. But others imagine that this general was a native either of Pontus or Cappadocia. Polybius makes mention of one of that name, who, having conquered Cappadocia, soon lost it again, because he was for changing the ancient customs of the country, and introducing drunkenness, together with feasts and songs to Bacchus; whereupon Casaubon conjectures, that this was the same Holofernes that commanded Nabuchodonosor's forces, as it must be owned, that his riot and debauchery, as well as the rapidity of his conquests, makes him not unlike him.—See *Polyph. apud Athen.* b. x. c. 11.; and *Casaub. in Athen.*

^g The author of Judith's history has thus described it:—"Holofernes mustered the chosen men for the battle, as his lord commanded him, unto an hundred and twenty thousand, and twelve thousand archers on horseback. A great multitude of sundry countries went with them like locusts, and like the sand of the earth: for the multitude was without number" (Judith ii. 15, 20).

^h Our modern travellers to the Holy Land do almost unanimously agree, that Bethulia is situate in the tribe of Zebulon, about a league from Tiberias towards the west, where they pretend that some marks of Holofernes's camp are still to be seen; but some great men are apt to suspect the report of these travel-

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tribe of Simeon, and by cutting off its waters, reduced it to such extremity, that, through the people's impotency, Ozias the governor had promised to surrender the place unless it was relieved in five days: that Judith, a widow lady of an ample fortune, but ^a of great virtue and piety withal, sent for the governor and principal men of the city, to let them know that God, by her hand, would find out an expedient to deliver them; but in what manner this was to be effected, she desired them not to inquire: that, having addressed herself to God by prayer for success, and being not insensible of her own beauty, for she was extremely handsome as well as virtuous, she adorned herself in all her rich attire, and attended only with one maid, ^b left Bethulia, and went directly to the Assyrian camp: that, being stopped by the outguard, and carried before the general, he received her with all the civility and respect that her appearance seemed to demand; and, having understood that the design of her leaving her countrymen was, both to escape the destruction which she foresaw was coming upon them, and to inform him in what situation their affairs were, and how he might become master of the place without the loss of one man, he not only promised her his protection, but appointed her and her maid an apartment proper for them; for he was already enamoured with her wit and beauty: that, having thus far succeeded very prosperously, she requested of him, that, as she was a strict observer of the religion of her country, she might be permitted to eat separately ^c such provisions

hers, who are too much accustomed to take up with the traditions of the country, though there is not always the greatest certainty in them. This, however, is incontestible, that both Judith and her husband were of the tribe of Simeon, (Judith viii. 1, and ix. 2,) and for what purpose they should remove to so great a distance from their own inheritance, and settle in a different tribe, we cannot see. Since, therefore, the Scripture takes notice of a place in the tribes of Simeon named Bethuel, (Joshua xix. 4,) a place dependant on Gaza of the Philistines, and famous for its temples, which were very remarkable, both for their antiquity and fine structure, from whence not unlikely it had its name of *Bethel*, or *the house of the Lord*, there is much more reason to conclude, that this was the place; since the other, which travellers talk of in the tribe of Zebulun, must be of too modern a date to be the city intended here, because we find neither Joshua, nor Josephus, nor Eusebius, nor St Jerome making any mention of it.—*Calmet's Dissertation and Commentary on the Book of Judith.*

^a The character which the historian gives her with respect to this is,—"That there was none who gave her an ill word, for she feared the Lord greatly," (Judith viii. 8,) which is certainly an high commendation, considering how tender and delicate a thing the reputation of a young and beautiful widow is.

^b The word, in ancient translations, is *Abra*, which signifies a *companion*, or *maid of honour*, such as ladies of the first condition had, rather than a servant; for the same word in the Septuagint is applied to the women that attended both Pharaoh's daughter, (Exod. xi. 5,) and Queen Esther, (chap. iv. 4.)

^c There was no law of God that prohibited the Jews from eating several things that the Gentiles made use of. Bread, wine, and fruits were allowed them with other people; but, either some tradition then prevailing among the Jews, or some religious vow that Judith might have bound herself under, the fear of giving scandal to her countrymen when she returned, or the prayers and pagan invocations which were made over the meat that was served up to Holofernes; some of these reasons, I say, very likely hindered her from accepting the offer which the general made, of provisions from his table, and inclined her to desire to eat alone; a restraint which we find Daniel putting himself under in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, (chap. i. 8,) and Tobit, in that of Salmaneser, (chap. i. 10, &c.) where he says of himself, that "when all my brethren, and those that were of my kindred did eat of

as she had brought with her; and, without any molestation, to have leave to go out of the camp at night, or before it was day, in order ^d to perform her devotions; which accordingly was readily granted her: that having lived in this manner for three days, on the fourth, Holofernes invited her to a splendid entertainment, where she appeared in her choicest ornaments of dress; and the general, in hopes of enjoying the beautiful stranger that night, gave a loose to mirth, and drank more plentifully than ever he was known to do: that, in the evening, all the company being dismissed, except Judith, who was left alone with the general intoxicated with liquor, and now fallen fast asleep upon the bed, she thought this a proper opportunity to put her design in execution; and therefore, approaching the place where he lay, and taking down his scimitar, which hung by him, she first prayed to God to strengthen her in the enterprise, and then, at two strokes, severed his head from his body, which she gave to her maid, who, by her order was waiting ^e at her tent door, to put it in the bag wherein her provisions were brought: that, having thus accomplished their design, they passed through the camp unobserved, and made the best of their way to Bethulia, where Judith, acquainting the governor and elders of the city with what she had done, and in testimony thereof, producing the head of Holofernes, advised them to hang it out upon the walls as soon as the morning appeared, and then every one to arm, and sally out of the gates as if they meant to attack the enemy, but, in reality, only to give them an alarm, that thereupon they might have recourse to their general, as she supposed they would, and so come to know what fate had befallen him: that, upon the Bethulians appearing in arms, the outguards gave notice to their officers, and the officers sent to their general; but when they understood that their general was dead, his head gone, and nothing left behind but a senseless trunk wallowing in blood, such a general consternation overspread the camp, that, instead of preparing themselves to fight, the Assyrians threw away their arms, and fled; while the Bethulians, and other neighbouring people, to whom Ozias had sent intelligence of this their disaster, attacked them in small parties, from several quarters; and having slain a considerable number of them, greatly enriched ^f themselves with their spoils:

the bread of the Gentiles, I kept myself from eating, because I remembered God with all my heart."—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^d As prayer, no doubt, is best performed in places of retirement, and the hurry of a camp must needs be inconvenient for religious offices, Judith, who professed herself a woman of strict piety, had a good pretence to request of the general a liberty to retire out of the camp, when she thought proper, and without any questions asked her, to perform her devotions, which she foresaw would be a means to favour her escape, after she had executed the design she came about. For it was on this precaution, rather than any obligation, either from the law or from custom, that this devotion of her praying without the camp was founded.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^e Namely, to go along with her out of the camp to prayers, as she had done the nights before; for it does not appear, from the whole history, that Judith had communicated her design to her woman, but rather that she took upon herself the risk of the whole affair, which could not be conducted with too much secrecy and prudence.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^f So great was the number of these, that the text tells us, the Bethulians were thirty days in gathering them, (ch. xv. 11.) For considering the largeness of the camp of the Assyrians, and the several detachments they might have, some on the moun-

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that a deputation of the elders from Jerusalem with their chief priests accompanying them, came to Bethulia to compliment Judith upon this her great achievement, with whom she repaired to the temple at Jerusalem; where public thanks were given, and burnt sacrifices offered to God, for this signal victory, and Judith's oblation,^a upon this occasion was the plunder of Holofernes's tent, with all his rich equipage, which the soldiers had presented her with; and, lastly, that after these public rejoicings,^b she went back to Bethulia again, where she lived in great splendour and renown, and, after a good old age, died, and was buried with her husband Manasseh, much beloved, and much lamented by the people. But to look back to the affairs of Judea.

In the seventh year of his reign, Zedekiah, being grown impatient of the Babylonish yoke, had sent his ambassadors, and made a confederacy with Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt; which when Nebuchadnezzar understood, he drew together a great army out of all the nations that were under his dominion, and, in a short time, marched towards Judea, to punish him for his perfidy and rebellion. His victorious army soon overran the country, and having taken most of the cities, in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, the tenth month of the year, and the tenth day of the month, it came before Jerusalem, and blocked it close up on every side; so that, in a short time, the famine began to prevail: and in memory of this, the Jews have ever since observed the tenth day of Tebeth, (the month when this happened,) as a day of solemn fasting and humiliation even to this time.

On that very day of the month when the siege of Jerusalem began, Ezekiel, then a captive in Chaldea, had it revealed to him by the type of a boiling pot, what a dismal destruction should be brought upon that city; and, in the beginning of the next year, Jeremiah was ordered to declare to the king, that the Babylonians who were then besieging the town, would certainly take it, and burn it with fire, make him prisoner, and carry him to Babylon, where he should die: which provoked Zedekiah to such a degree that he ordered him to be clapped up close in prison.

As Nebuchadnezzar's army was approaching Jerusalem, Zedekiah, and his people, in dread of what might

follow, made a show of returning unto the Lord their God. They entered into a solemn covenant thenceforward to serve him only, and to obey his laws; and in pursuance of that, agreed to proclaim a manumission, or liberty to all Hebrew servants of either sex, according to what the law^c enjoined; but upon the coming of Hophra king of Egypt, to the relief of Jerusalem, and Nebuchadnezzar's raising the siege to meet him, and give him battle, the Jews were generally of opinion, that the Chaldeans were gone for good and all, and thereupon repented of their covenant of reformation, and caused every man his servant, and every man his hand-maid, to return to their servitude. Which base and impious prevarication so provoked God, that he ordered his prophet to proclaim liberty to the sword, and to the famine, and to the pestilence, to execute his wrath upon them, and their king, and their princes, and all Judah and Jerusalem, to their utter destruction.

Jeremiah, indeed, in all the answers which he returned the king, (who, upon the departure of the Chaldeans, sent frequently to consult him,) was always positive, that the Egyptians, whom he depended upon, would certainly deceive him; that their army would return without giving him any assistance; and that the Chaldeans would thereupon renew the siege, take the city, and burn it with fire. During their absence, however, he thought it no improper time to endeavour to avoid the approaching siege, by retiring to Anathoth, his native place; but as he was passing the gate of the city which led that way, the captain of the guard seized him as a deserter, and brought

^c The words of the law are these:—"If thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then, in the seventh year, thou shalt let him go free from thee; and when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty; thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: of that wherewith the Lord hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him: and thou shalt remember, that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee.—It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years, and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest." (Deut. xv. 12, &c.) Now, for the better understanding of this, we must observe that there were two periods of time, wherein this release of Jewish bond-slaves was enjoined, the year of jubilee, which was every fiftieth year, and the sabbatical year, which was every seventh year. The sabbatical year is what is here intended: it now happened in the eighth year of Zedekiah's reign; but, as Prideaux in his preface remarks, had not been observed for above 360 years before; for which reason the Jews, being now in a state of compunction, were for restoring it to its primitive institution; but upon the removal of their fears, by the withdrawing of Nebuchadnezzar's forces, they repented of their good intentions, and recalled their servants to their slavery again. Why the observation of such a year in seven was enjoined, the reasons are pretty obvious: for besides the commemoration of the Israelites' release from the Egyptian bondage, which the text specifies the general release of servants, and the restoration of lands and tenements to their first owners, which were then to be transacted, were to hinder the rich from oppressing the needy, and reducing them to perpetual slavery; that debts should not be too much multiplied, nor the poor, consequently, entirely ruined; but that a liberty of people's persons, an equality of their fortunes, and the order and distinction of their tribes and families (as far as it was possible) might be preserved: and as it was something like this that Lycurgus established among the Lacedaemonians, in his instituting an equality among persons, banishing slavery, and preventing, as far as he could, any one's becoming too powerful, or too rich.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. iv. c. 4. and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Sabbath*.

tain, and others on the plains; the many valuable things which might be hid, or thrown aside in their flight: and the much time it would cost the Bethulians to search diligently, and to collect them all, and to provide carriages to bring them home to the city, there to be distributed equally among the people, and, according to the prescription of the law, (Num. xxxi. 27.) considering all this, I say, thirty days may not be thought an unreasonable space: though it must be owned, that the Syriac version reads it only three.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^a Nothing is more common, both in sacred and profane history, than to meet with several kinds of spoils taken in war, dedicated to God, in acknowledgment of his goodness, and in memory of the victory, which, by his blessing and assistance, was then obtained.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b The joy which the people of Jerusalem expressed upon Judith's entry, is thus related: "Then all the women of Israel ran together to see her, and blessed her, and made a dance among them for her; and she took branches in her hand, and gave also to the women that were with her, and put a garland of olive upon her, and on her maid that was with her, and she went before all the people in the dance leading the women, and all the men of Israel followed with garlands, and with songs in their mouths.—Judith xv. 12, 13.

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him before the princes, who, in much rage, fell upon him, and beat him, and then committed him to the common jail, where he continued for many days.

In the mean time, the Egyptians not daring to engage the Chaldean army, retired before them into their own country, leaving Zedekiah and his people, with their unequal strength, to contend with Nebuchadnezzar, who now returned more exasperated than ever, to re-invest the city of Jerusalem. Nor had he been long before it, ere the king sent messengers to Jeremiah to inquire of him, then in prison, concerning the fate of the present war: but his constant answer was, "That God being highly provoked against him and his people, for their manifold iniquities, would fight against the city, and smite it; that both king and people should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon; that those who continued in the city during the siege, should perish by the pestilence, by the famine, and by the sword; but that those who endeavoured to escape, though they fell into the hands of the Chaldeans, would have their lives preserved:" at which several of the princes, and chief commanders, being very much offended, pressed the king against him, as one who, by his speeches, discouraged the soldiers and people, and was enough indeed to occasion a defection.

In this conjuncture of affairs, the king was obliged to deliver him into their hands; and they, with unrelenting cruelty, cast him into a nasty dungeon, ^a where inevitably he must have perished, had not Ebed-Melech, ^b one of the king's eunuchs, interceded with his master to have him released from thence, and sent him back to his former prison; for which favour the prophet assured him from God that he should not perish at the sacking of the city.

As the city began to be pressed more by the siege, the king desired a private conference with Jeremiah, who accordingly was sent for to an apartment of the temple; but the prophet could give no other answer to his questions, than what he had done before; only he advised him to surrender to the enemy, as the best expedient to save both himself and the city. The king, though urged by the prophet, could by no means bring himself to think of that. At his breaking off the discourse, however, he obliged him to secrecy, though he did not forget to remand him to prison: and this is the last interview that the prophet had with the king.

In the mean time, the siege began to draw toward a conclusion. The people within the walls, through the scarcity of provisions, were reduced to the last necessity, even ¹ to feed on one another; and those without had

now finished their works, and provided all things for a general assault; when in the eleventh year of king Zedekiah, and on the ninth day of the fourth month of that year, the city was taken by storm, about midnight, and every place filled with blood and slaughter. Through the favour of the night, Zedekiah and his friends ^c endeavoured to make their escape towards the wilderness; but he had not gone far, before he was taken, and carried to Nebuchadnezzar, who was then at Riblah, ^d where, after some severe reproaches, ^e he first caused his sons and the princes of Judah taken with him, to be slain before his face, and then commanded his eyes ^f to be put out

^c It is a hard matter to conceive how the besieged could make their escape, seeing that the Chaldeans had begirt the city round about. Josephus indeed gives us this account:—"That as the city was taken about midnight, the captains with the rest of the soldiers, went directly into the temple; which king Zedekiah perceiving, he took his wives, children, commanders, and friends, and they slipt all away together, by a narrow passage towards the wilderness. But then what this narrow passage was is still the question. The Jews indeed think that there was a subterraneous passage from the palace to the plains of Jericho, and that the king, and his courtiers might endeavour to make their escape that way. Dion, it is true, tells us (b. lxi.) that in the last siege of Jerusalem, the Jews had covert ways, which went under the walls of the city, to a considerable distance into the country, out of which they were wont to sally, and fall upon the Romans that were straggling from their camp: but since neither Josephus, nor the sacred historian, takes notice of any such subterraneous conduit at this siege, we may suppose that the Chaldeans having made a breach in the wall, the besieged got away privately between the wall and the out-works, in a passage which the enemy did not suspect. The words in the second book of Kings are:—"They went by the way of the gate, between the two walls, which is by the king's garden," (chap. xxv. 4.) which in Jeremiah are thus expressed:—"They went by the way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls;" so that, as the king's garden faced the country, very likely there was some very private and imperceptible gate, through which they might attempt to escape, and the besiegers perhaps might not keep so strict a watch at that part of the town, especially in the hurry of storming it, because it led to the plain, and made their escape in a manner impracticable.—*Jewish History*, b. x. c. 11; *Patrick's, Le Clerc's, and Calmet's Commentaries*.

^d Riblah was a city of Syria, in the country of Hamath, which country is the nearest to Judea, and which city, according to St Jerome, was the same with that which was afterwards called Antioch; and as it was the most pleasant place in all Syria, here Nebuchadnezzar lay, to attend the success of the siege of Jerusalem, to send his army proper supplies, and to intercept any relief that might come to the besieged.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^e Nebuchadnezzar no sooner cast his eye upon him, says Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, b. x. c. 11.) than he called him all the faithless and perfidious names that he could think of. "Did you not promise to manage the power and authority that I put you in possession of for my advantage and behoof? And am not I well requited, do you think, for making you a king in your brother Jehoiakim's place, by your employing of the credit and interest that I gave you, to the ruin of your patron and benefactor? But that God is great and just, who for the punishment of your treachery and ingratitude, hath now made you my prisoner." But there is a mistake in this speech of Nebuchadnezzar's, namely his making Zedekiah succeed his brother Jehoiakim whereas he was put in the place of his nephew Jehoiachin; but his nephew's reign was so very short, little more than three months, that this imperious monarch might look upon it as nothing at all.

^f Josephus takes notice, that the seeming contradiction in the prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, concerning the fate of Zedekiah, made that prince give no heed to what was foretold. Ezekiel's prophecy is delivered in these words:—"I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans, yet he shall not see it, though he die there," (chap. xii. 13.) and Jeremiah's in these:—"He shall be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes," (chap. xxxii. 4.) both of which were literally

¹ Lam. iv. 4, 5, and Ezek. v. 10.

^a Some think, that when he was in this dismal place, he made those mournful meditations, which are set down in the third chapter of the Lamentations: "They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me.—I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon, and thou hast heard my voice," &c. ver. 53, 55, 56.—*Louth's Commentary* on Jer. xxxviii.

^b This charitable intercessor for the prophet in his distress, is, in the text, said to have been an Ethiopian; accordingly Huetius (in his *Treatise on the voyaging of Solomon*, c. 7.) observes from Josephus, that Solomon in his voyage to Tarshish, (1 Kings x. 22) amongst other merchandise, brought slaves from Ethiopia, which was likewise the practice of the Greeks and Romans in after ages, as he there proves by several testimonies: and such an one he supposes this Ebed-melech to have been originally, though afterwards he was promoted to be an eunuch, or chief officer of the king's house.—*Louth's Commentary* on Jer. xxxviii.

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and himself to be bound in fetters of brass, to be sent to Babylon, and put in prison for life, to the full accomplishment of ^a what the two prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, had foretold concerning him.

As soon as Nebuchadnezzar had advice of the taking of Jerusalem, he sent Nebuzaradan, the captain of his guards, with orders to raze the place, plunder the temple, and carry the people that were left captives to Babylon; which he failed not to execute with the utmost rigour and cruelty. For having taken all the vessels out of the house of the Lord, and gathered together all the riches that he could find, either in the king's palace, or in any great men's houses, he ^b set both the temple and city on fire, and overthrew all the walls, fortresses, and towers thereunto belonging, until he had brought the whole to a perfect desolation: and upon these two sad occasions, namely, the taking of the city, and the destruction of the temple, the prophet Jeremiah composed a mournful poem, which is called his Lamentations, ^c and the Jews

accomplished; for Zedekiah was carried to Riblah, where he saw the king of Babylon, and spake to him, and beheld his children executed; but had afterwards his eyes put out, and was then carried to Babylon, where he was incapable of seeing the city, because he had lost his eyesight.—*Jewish Antiquities* b. x. c. 11; *Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

^a The reflection which Josephus makes upon this occasion is very good and moral:—"This may serve to convince even the ignorant," says he, "of the power and wisdom of God, and of the constancy of his counsels, through all the various ways of his operations. It may likewise show us, that God's foreknowledge of things is certain, and his providence regular in ordering of events; besides that, it holds forth a most exemplary instance of the danger of our giving way to the motions of sin and infidelity, which deprive us of the means of discerning God's judgments, which are ready to fall upon us."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. x. c. 11.

^b The temple was burned, from the time that it was built, 400 years, says Sir John Marsham; 424 years 3 months and 8 days, says Primate Usher; 430 years, says Abarbinel, and other learned Jews; but Josephus computes the thing still higher; for he tells us, that the temple was burned 470 years 6 months and 10 days, from the building of it; 1060 years 6 months and 10 days from the Israelites' coming out of the land of Egypt; 1950 years 6 months and 10 days, from the deluge; and 3530 years 6 months and 10 days from the creation of the world. Josephus stands amazed, that the second temple should be burned by the Romans in the same month, and on the very same day of the month, that this was set on fire by the Chaldeans, and as some of the Jewish doctors say, when the Levites were singing the same psalm in both destructions, namely, xciv. 23, "He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and he shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off."—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Jewish Antiquities*, b. x. c. 11.

^c The Lamentations of Jeremiah, for the title is properly and significantly plural, consist of a number of plaintive effusions, composed upon the plan of the funeral dirges, all upon the same subject, and uttered without connexion as they rose in the mind, in a long course of separate stanzas. These have afterwards been put together, and formed into a collection or correspondent whole. If any reader, however, should expect to find in them an artificial and methodical arrangement of the general subject, a regular disposition of the parts, a perfect connexion and orderly succession in the matter, and, with all this, an uninterrupted series of elegance and correctness, he will really expect what was foreign to the prophet's design. In the character of a mourner, he celebrates in plaintive strains the obsequies of his ruined country: whatever presented itself to his mind in the midst of desolation and misery, whatever struck him as particularly wretched and calamitous, whatever the instant sentiment of sorrow dictated, he pours forth in a kind of spontaneous effusion. He frequently pauses, and as it were ruminates upon the same object; frequently varies and illustrates the same thought with different imagery, and a different choice of language: so that the whole bears rather the appearance of an accumulation of corresponding sentiments, than an accurate and connected series of different ideas arranged

observe two annual fasts, the one in the fourth month, which falls in with our June, and the other in the fifth month, which answers to part of our July, even to this day.

in the form of a regular treatise. I would not be understood to insinuate, that the author has paid no regard whatever to order or arrangement; or that transitions truly elegant from one subject, image, or character, to another, are not sometimes to be found; this only I wished to remark, that the nature and design of this poem (being in reality a collection of different sentiments or subjects, each of which assumes the form of a funeral dirge) neither require, nor even admit of a methodical arrangement. The whole poem, however, may be divided into five parts: in the first, second, and fourth, the prophet addresses the people in his own person, or else personifies Jerusalem, and introduces that city as a character: the third part is supposed to be uttered by the chorus of Jews, represented by their leader, after the manner of the Greek tragedies; and in the fifth, the whole nation of the Jews, on being led into captivity, pour forth their united complaints to Almighty God. This last, as well as the others, is divided into twenty-two periods, according to the number of the letters of the alphabet; with this difference, that in the four other parts the initial letters of each period, exactly correspond with the alphabetical order. And from this circumstance we have been enabled to form some little judgment concerning the Hebrew metres. The acrostic or alphabetical poetry of the Hebrews was certainly intended to assist the memory, and was confined altogether to those compositions which consisted of detached maxims or sentiments without any express order or connexion. The same custom is said to have been prevalent, indeed is said still to prevail in some degree among the Syrians, the Persians, and the Arabs. With how much propriety the prophet has employed this form of composition on the present occasion, is evident from what has been said concerning the nature of this poem. The manner and order of this kind of verse is as follows:—Each of the five parts, or grand divisions, is subdivided into twenty-two periods or stanzas; these periods in the three first parts are all of them triplets, in other words, consist each of three lines only; in each of the two former parts there is one period, consisting of four lines. In the four first parts, the initial letter of each period follows the order of the alphabet; but the third part is so very regular, that every line in the same period begins with the same letter, so as necessarily to ascertain the length of every verse or line in that poem; indeed, even in the others, though the lines are not distinctly marked in this manner, it is no difficult matter to ascertain their limits, by resolving the sentences into their constituent members. By this mode of computation it appears, that in the fourth part all the periods consist of distichs, as also in the fifth, which is not acrostic: but in this last part I must remark another peculiarity, namely, that the lines are extremely short, whereas in all the rest they are long. The length of these metres is worthy of notice: we find in this poem lines or verses, which are evidently longer, by almost one half, than those which occur usually and on other occasions. The length of them seems to be, on an average, about twelve syllables; there are a few which do not quite amount to that number, and there are a few which perhaps exceed it by two or three syllables: for, although nothing certain can be determined concerning the number of syllables, in truth I pay no attention to the fictions of the Mazorites, there is room, nevertheless, for very probable conjecture. We are not to suppose this peculiar form of versification utterly without design or importance; on the contrary, I am persuaded that the prophet adopted this kind of metre as being more diffuse, more copious, more tender, in all respects better adapted to melancholy subjects. I must add, that in all probability the funeral dirges, which were sung by the mourners, were commonly composed in this kind of verse; for whenever, in the prophets, any funeral lamentations occur, or any passages are formed upon that plan, the versification is, if I am not mistaken, of this protracted kind. If this then be the case, we have discovered a true legitimate form of elegy in the poetry of the Hebrews. It ought, however, to be remarked, that the same kind of metre is sometimes, though rarely, employed upon other occasions by the sacred poets, as it was indeed by the Greeks and Romans. There are, moreover, some poems manifestly of the elegiac kind, which are composed in the usual metre, and not in unconnected stanzas, according to the form of a funeral dirge. Thus far in general as to the nature and method of the poem,

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Having thus destroyed the city and temple, Nebuzaradan made all the people that he found in the place captives. Some of the chief of these, such as Seraiah the high priest, Zerbaniah ^a the second priest, and about seventy others, he carried to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar ^b caused them all to be put to death. The poorer and labouring part of the people, such as could till the ground, and dress the vineyards, he left behind him, and made Gedaliah ^c their governor; but as for all the rest, he carried them directly away to Babylon; only Jeremiah, of whom Nebuchadnezzar had given him charge to take particular care, he not only took out of prison when he first came to Jerusalem, but as the rest were upon their departure, gave him his option, whether he would go with him to Babylon, where he should be maintained very plentifully at the king's charge, or else remain in

the country; and when the prophet had chosen the latter, he dismissed him honourably, with a handsome present, and with letters of recommendation to the governor Gedaliah, wherein he gave him a strict charge to take particular care of him.

CHAP. II.—*Objections answered and Difficulties obviated.*

and the form of the versification;—it remains to offer few remarks concerning the subject and the style.

That the subject of the Lamentations is the destruction of the holy city and temple, the overthrow of the state, the extermination of the people—and that these events are described as actually accomplished, and not in the style of prediction merely—must be evident to every reader; though some authors of considerable reputation have imagined this poem to have been composed on the death of king Josiah. The prophet, indeed, has so copiously, so tenderly, and poetically, bewailed the misfortunes of his country, that he seems completely to have fulfilled the office and duty of a mourner. In my opinion there is not extant any poem which displays such a happy and splendid selection of imagery in so concentrated a state. What can be more elegant and poetical than the description of that once flourishing city, lately chief among the nations, sitting in the character of a female, solitary, afflicted, in a state of widowhood, deserted by her friends, betrayed by her dearest connexions, imploring relief, and seeking consolation in vain? What a beautiful personification is that of 'the Ways of Sion mourning, because none are come to her solemn feast!' How tender and pathetic are the following complaints!

"Is this nothing to all you who pass along the way? Behold and see, If there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is inflicted on me; Which Jehovah inflicted on me in the day of the violence of his wrath. For these things I weep, my eyes stream with water; Because the comforter is far away, that should tranquillize my soul; My children are desolate, because the enemy was strong."

But to detail its beauties would be to transcribe the entire poem. I shall make but one remark relative to certain passages, and to the former part of the second alphabet in particular. If, in this passage the prophet should be thought by some to affect a style too bold and energetic for the expression of sorrow, let them only advert to the greatness of the subject, its importance, sanctity, and solemnity; and let them consider, that the nature of the performance absolutely required these to be set forth in a style suitable, in some degree at least, to their inherent dignity:—let them attentively consider these things, and I have not a doubt but they will readily excuse the sublimity of the prophet.—*Louth on Hebrew Poetry*.—ED.

^a The Jews call their second priest their *Sagan*, whose business it was to supply the function of the high priest, in case he was sick, or any other incapacity attended him. We find no such particular institution under the law; but Eleazar, the son of Aaron, who is styled 'the chief over the chief of the Levites, and who had the oversight of them who kept the charge of the sanctuary,' (Num. iii. 32,) and whose authority was not much inferior to that of the high priest, may, not improperly, be deemed one of that order.—*Calmel's Commentary*.

^b Because, very probably, he looked upon them as the king's principal counsellors, who advised him to rebel against him.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^c Gedaliah, we understand, was the son of Ahikam, Jeremiah's great friend; and it is not unlikely, that, by the prophet's advice, who exhorted all, both king and people, to surrender themselves to the Assyrians, (Jer. xxxviii. 5, 17,) he made his escape from the city, and went over to the king of Babylon and for this reason was promoted to the government of Judea.—*Calmel's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

WE, who have not received the book of Judith in our canon of Scripture, are not under the like necessity of vindicating its divine inspiration and authority, as are they who, ¹ by a public act of council, have thought proper to admit it; but still we see no reason why we should recede from the opinion of the ancients, merely because some modern commentators, who, by the same freak of fancy, might have turned the plainest narrative in Scripture into an allegory, have adventured to call it a parable. Mysteries indeed may be made of any thing, and, in a pregnant brain, fit allusions will never be wanting, when once a full scope is given to the imagination, and a writer is permitted to invent what he pleases: but it would be madness to give up the truth of historical facts merely because the man has ingenuity enough to apply them to a feigned purpose, especially when upon examination we find that there are sufficient proofs and testimonies of their reality, and no insuperable objections to the contrary.

Let us suppose, then, that the events contained in this history happened before the Babylonish captivity, and in the reign of Manasseh king of Judah; that Nabuchodonosor in Judith was the same with Saosduchius in Ptolemy, who reigned over the Assyrians and Chaldeans, having subdued Esarhaddon king of Assyria; that Arphaxad is the same with Phraortes, mentioned in Herodotus, and that these two kings waged war with each other; that Saosduchius having overcome Arphaxad, resolved to reduce all the nations spoken of in Judith, under his dominion, and to that purpose, sent Holofernes at the head of his forces to subdue those countries that would not submit; that at this time Manasseh, who had been a little before delivered from the captivity in which he had been carried to Babylon, dwelt at Jerusalem, concerning himself but little with the government, and leaving the care of public affairs to Joakim the high priest; that the inhabitants of Bethulia resolved by God's assistance, to preserve their religion and liberties, and accordingly shut their gates against Holofernes; and that Judith, a woman of great courage and conduct, seeing the extremity to which the city was reduced, undertook to destroy Holofernes, and, in her attempt, succeeded. Supposing all this, I say, and this is the substance of the whole, where do we find any thing contrary to the rules either of history or chronology?

The war, we suppose, commenced between Nabuchodonosor and Arphaxad, in the year of the world 3347; the expedition and death of Holofernes were both in the next year, 3348, Manasseh was taken and carried to Babylon 3349, he returned some years after, and died 3361: so that here we find a proper space for the things related in this

¹ Concil. Trid. sess. 4.

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history to be transacted; and that they were really thus transacted we have the concurring testimony both of the Jewish and Christian church, who, though they deny the book a place in the number of their sacred and divine writings, yet did always esteem it one of their apocryphal pieces, and a true and uncontested history, well contrived for the edification of the vulgar, though not of authority enough to determine any controversy in matters of religion.

¹ Josephus indeed makes no mention either of the book of Judith, or of her famous exploit in killing Holofernes; but his silence is no argument against what we assert, because he nowhere professes to take notice of every thing that occurred in the Jewish republic; on the contrary, ² he openly declares that his purpose was to relate only such things as were recorded in the books which were originally written in Hebrew, and declared canonical, which that of Judith never was.

It is some confirmation of its genuineness, however, that, in writings which are of undoubted authority, we meet with some citations out of it; and therefore, when we find St Luke, in Elizabeth's salutation of the Virgin Mary, using these words, —³ 'Blessed art thou among women,' which are manifestly taken from the compliment which Ozias makes Judith, ⁴ 'Blessed art thou of the most high God, above all the women upon earth;' and St Paul in his exhortation to the Corinthians, using these, —⁵ 'Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer,' which he certainly borrows from the tenth chapter of Judith, according to the Greek interpretation; we cannot forbear concluding, that, in the apostolic age, this book was looked upon as a piece of true and uncontroverted history.

Difficulties, indeed, there will occur in relation to names, dates, and other particulars, almost in all histories, and especially in the Oriental, ⁶ when we shall find, not only in writers of different characters, the Greek and Hebrew, the sacred and profane, but even in writers of the same nation, the same person under different appellations. Though, therefore, in strictness of speech, it may be accounted an error in history, to call the king of Nineveh by the name of Nabuchodonosor; yet, as it was the style and manner of the Jews to denote any prince who lived beyond the Euphrates by that name, we need not wonder that we find an author, who lived in an age when the fame and reputation of Nabuchodonosor the Great had quite eclipsed the name of all his predecessors, calling another prince, who lived at a far distance, that is, Saosduchinus the king of Assyria, by the name of the king of Babylon, which perhaps at that time might be the standing name of every great and distant monarch.

Nor is there any great trespass against the truth of history ⁷ in this author's asserting that Arphaxad built the walls, the towers, and the gates of Ecbatan; since by Arphaxad he does not mean the Dejoces in Herodotus, but his son Phraortes, who succeeded him in the kingdom of Media: for that he must mean so, is plain, because he gives us to understand, that this Arphaxad was defeated, and ⁸ himself slain by the Assyrian

archers, which even Herodotus ⁹ himself makes to be the fate, not of Dejoces the father, but of his son Phraortes, who, having subdued the Persians, as he tells us, and made himself master of almost all Asia, was not content therewith, but coming at last to attack Nineveh and the Assyrian empire, was overcome, and killed in the bold attempt.

His father indeed might lay the foundation of Ecbatan, and during his lifetime, carry on the building; but a work of this kind is not so soon effected, but that he might leave the completion of it to his son, who being a prince of a warlike spirit, and having many forces under his command, is therefore, in the book of Judith, not improperly said to have made the gates of this royal city ¹⁰ 'in height seventy cubits, and in breadth forty cubits, for the going forth of his mighty armies, and for the setting in array of his footmen.'

Whoever looks into the order and succession of the Jewish high priests, as we have them delivered to us in the first book of Chronicles, ¹¹ in the books of Ezra, ¹² Nehemiah, ¹³ and in the history of Josephus, ¹⁴ will find them so intricate and perplexed, so many omissions and mislocations, such a diversity of names and numbers, and such seeming contrariety in the several accounts, as will cost him no small pains to reduce them to any tolerable regularity. The reason is, because the Scripture nowhere professes to give an exact catalogue of all such as had been admitted to that office and dignity until the captivity.

That in the book of Chronicles seems to bid fairest for it: but, upon examination, it will appear ¹⁵ to be only a direct lineal descent of the pontifical family, from Aaron to Josedech the son of Seraiah, who was high priest at the captivity; and not a succession of such as had borne the pontifical office, because several in that pedigree are inserted that were never high priests, ¹⁶ and several are omitted that were. The pedigrees of the high priests in Ezra and Nehemiah are but imperfect parts of that which we have in the book of Chronicles; and as for the catalogue of Josephus, it is so corrupted, that scarce five of the names in it do agree with any thing that we have in Scripture: so that, considering the defect of these accounts, we may be allowed to infer, that Joakim or Eliakim, (for they are names both of the same import,) might have been high priest in the time of Manasseh; even though we should suppose there was no mention made of him as such, either in the Holy Scriptures, or in the history of Josephus.

¹⁶ The Scripture, however, takes notice of one Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, whom, (according to the prophet ¹⁷ Isaiah) God promised 'to clothe with a robe, and to

⁹ B. i. c. 97.

¹⁰ Judith i. 4.

¹¹ Chap. vi. 3, &c.

¹² Chap. ii. 36, &c.

¹³ Chap. vii. 39.

¹⁴ B. viii. c. 15.

¹⁵ Prideaux's Connection, anno 655.

¹⁶ Calmet's Dissertation on the Order and Succession, &c.

¹⁷ Chap. xxii. 21.

^a The high priests of the family of Eli are instances of the latter; for they are left out of that pedigree, though they were high priests; and those of the true race who were excluded by them, are instances of the former; for they are in it, though they were never high priests; and it is very likely that, from the time of Solomon to the captivity, many more such instances might have happened, to hinder that pedigree from being an exact catalogue of the high priests.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 655.

¹ Innetius's Demonstrat. propos. 4. ² Jewish Antiq. b. x. c. 11. ³ a Luke i. 42. ⁴ Judith xiii. 18. ⁵ 1 Cor. x. 10.

⁶ Calmet's Preface on the book of Judith.

⁷ Judith i. 2, &c.

⁸ Ibid. ver. 16.

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strengthen with a girdle,' that is, to invest with the pontifical habit and office; and therefore, his 'being a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah, and his having the key of the house of David laid upon his shoulder; so, he should open, and none should shut, and he should shut and none should open,' does very well agree with the part which Joakim is said to have acted in the book of Judith. For though the supreme power was doubtless in Manasseh, yet, since his return from the captivity, having either sequestered himself from public business, or ¹ being engaged in the defence of his country in some other place, he might intrust the management of his affairs in Jerusalem to the high priest, who, having such an amplitude of power, and acting as chief minister in that place, might be well enough mentioned in this transaction of Judith, ² and in the deputation of the elders from Jerusalem to thank her for it, without naming his master at all.

What the manners and customs of the Persians were we may in some measure learn from the Greek historians, who, upon the dissolution of that monarchy by the conquest of Alexander, were obliged to say something of a people whom they succeeded in the dominion of the east; but, as these historians did not write till after the kingdom of Persia was destroyed, they have taken little or no notice of other Oriental nations; and therefore what affinity there might be in their manners and usages, we cannot tell; and ³ consequently must not blame the author of the book of Judith, for making Holofernes act out of character, as we think, unless we know how far the customs of the Assyrians and Persians did conform or disagreee.

Herein, however, we know, that all Oriental nations were unanimous, namely, in affecting pomp and grandeur; and therefore (whether it was a Persian custom or no) we need not wonder, that we find Holofernes, the captain-general of the Assyrian army, ⁴ 'resting upon his bed, under a canopy, which was woven with purple, and gold, and emeralds, and precious stones;' and when Judith was introduced, 'coming out before his tent, ^a with silver lamps going before him.' We need not wonder at the rapidity of his conquest, since, doubtless, he had several lieutenant-generals under him, who, with strong detachments from the grand army, might, in separate bodies, invade all the provinces which the historian mentions; and, since he nowhere met with any opposition until he came into Palestine, but expected a great deal in Egypt, he thought it advisable to halt, for some time, in the neighbourhood of Bethulia, and to put his men into quarters of refreshment, until the forces which he had detached upon sundry expeditions were come up, and had joined him. And for this reason he was not so eager to press the siege of Bethulia, that he might not

harass and fatigue his men in fighting against rocks and inaccessible mountains, but preserve them fresh and unfoiled, for their great and more important expedition against Egypt.

The truth is, the king of Nineveh was resolved not only to subdue the several nations from the Euphrates to Ethiopia, but intended likewise to oblige them all to ⁵ adore and acknowledge him only to be god; ⁶ and therefore the Bethulians, who could not, without impiety, and a renunciation of their religion, submit to the dominion of such a king, had reason to promise themselves the assistance of God, in the prosecution of this war; and Judith, who found herself under a divine and irresistible impulse to go upon so adventurous an exploit, had good reason to hope for success against a prince, who had declared himself an enemy to the God of heaven, and an usurper of that honour and adoration which belonged to him alone.

^b 'If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him:' and, in pursuance of this law, much more might Judith, or any other inhabitant of Bethulia, whom God had inspired with the like courage and magnanimity, endeavour to counterplot the designs of any person, who, in an hostile manner, should come, not only to invade their civil rights and liberties, but to extirpate their religion; and, instead of enticing, to compel them by force of arms, to receive a form of idolatry, which neither they nor their fathers knew.

Many things may be alleged against Judith's method of proceeding in this affair, but they are most of them reducible to the common stratagems of war, which not only the law of arms, but the commands of God in some cases, and the examples of several of the best men in sacred history, have declared to be allowable. What comes not under this denomination, we shall not pretend

⁵ Judith vi. 2.⁶ Deut. xiii. 6, &c.

^b How great soever the folly and impiety was, in desiring to pass for a god, yet the king of Nineveh was not the only prince that we find infected with it. The flatterers of Darius the Median proposed to him to make a decree that, under pain of being cast into the den of lions, no one should dare to ask a petition of any god or man, but of him only, for the space of thirty days, (Dan. vi. 7.) When Alexander the Great took it into his head, to exact the same divine honours of his people that they had formerly paid to the kings of Persia his predecessors, he found people about him base and prostitute enough to commend the design, and to maintain, that thus to advance kings above the rank of mortal man, was not only a pious, but a prudent and advantageous thing; for so the historian expresses it: "That the Persians, not only through motives of piety but of wisdom, worshipped their kings as gods, for they deemed majesty to be a bulwark to the welfare of the nation," (*Quint. Curt. b. viii.*) The Egyptians had their princes in the like veneration, and looked upon them as highly raised above the condition of other men; but the Greeks, it must be owned, held all this baseness and abject flattery in a just detestation, insomuch that the Athenians put Timagoras to death, for having prostrated himself before the king of the Persians; and Sperchius and Bulis, two Lacedemonians, though then in a state of captivity, could not be brought to pay that adoration to Artaxerxes, which he required of every one that approached him.—*Plut. in Artur.*

¹ Prideaux's Connection, anno 655.² Judith xv. 8.³ Calmet's Preface on the book of Judith.⁴ Judith x. 21, 22.

^a Holofernes may be thought, in this piece of state, to imitate the custom of the Persians, among whom it was usual to carry fire before their kings, as it was afterward done before the Roman emperors, and is at present before the emperor of the Turks; but the reason of this might be no more, than either that Judith and her maid were apprehended, and brought to Holofernes, before it was quite day, or that the inner apartment of his tent was so very dark, that he had lights continually burning in it.—*Calmet's Commentary on Judith x. 22.*

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to vindicate; ¹ for the notion of mental reservations and ironical speeches, which are not allowed in common conversation, are but the poor subterfuges which commentators have used to apologise for the conduct that they can by no means justify.

The history, indeed, represents this Judith as a woman of great courage; but it nowhere intimates that she was without faults. The manner of her preparation for the undertaking, and the success wherewith it was attended, may make us presume, that its design was originally from God; but then the continued train of falsehood and dissimulation wherewith it was carried on, must needs persuade us, that the means of conducting it was left to the woman, who, on this occasion, has given us a very remarkable specimen of the cunning and sagacity, the guile and artifice, of her sex.

One thing, however, may be said, and that without any forced explication, in favour of her conduct:—That her answer to the eunuch's suggestion she might design for no more than a common compliment, which the situation of her affairs, at that time, obliged her to make. ² She might perceive, very likely, the bad design which the Assyrian general had upon her; but she did not think herself concerned to discover that she perceived it. She pretended, in some measure, to be ignorant of it; and to pretend an ignorance of what is proposed, when the thing is naughty and will not bear examination, is a point of modesty as well as prudence: as, where it will admit of a double construction, there to take it in the better sense, is even reputed an act of candour and good breeding. 'Let not this fair damsel fear,' says the old pander, 'to come to my lord, and to be honoured in his presence, and drink wine, and be merry with us, and be made this day as one of the daughters of the Assyrians, who serve in the house of Nabuchodonosor.' How the daughters of Assyria, who served in this capacity, were used, Judith very probably had been informed: but, since the eunuch seemed to put it on the foot of a great favour and honour done her, she could not do less than return him a compliment; but then we all know, ³ that the offers of service, which, upon every occasion, we are so apt to make to one another, and those expressions of submission and respect, which so commonly pass among us, are not to be taken in a literal sense, because they always imply a tacit condition; and therefore the answer which the historian puts in Judith's mouth, 'surely, whatever pleaseth him, I will do speedily,' will fairly admit of this construction, 'whatever Holofernes shall desire of me, so far as it is consistent with my duty, my honour, and my religion, I will not fail to do.'

Thus we have endeavoured to satisfy most of the popular objections, and to reconcile most of the seeming inconsistencies, that occur in the history of Judith; and if there still remain any that cannot sufficiently be cleared up, they ought, in justice, to be imputed to our ignorance and want of better information. Had we the ancient books of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah, to which we are so often referred in Scripture, or had we the histories of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Medes, Persians, and Egyptians, (with whom the Jewish nation had so long an intercourse,) perfect and entire, it is not to be doubted,

but that many of the difficulties which at present seem insurmountable, would then easily subside and sink into nothing. The plain truth is, "there was scarce ever a history written" according to our learned Prideaux's ⁴ observation, "but what in the very next age will seem to have inconsistencies enough in it as to time, place, and other circumstances, when the memory of men concerning them begins to fail; and therefore we may be much more apt to blunder, when we take our view at the distance of above two thousand years, and have no other light to direct us to our object, but such glimmerings, from broken scraps of history, as are in effect next to nothing."

The like is to be said of the several seeming absurdities that may be observed in the writings and behaviour of the prophets:—That were we sufficiently acquainted with the style and manner of writing that was in use in those days, and especially in the eastern countries, we should think it no strange thing to find them expressing themselves by types and figures, parabolical representations, and emblematical actions. For, however it comes about, so it is, that mankind have all along been marvelously taken with story and picture. ⁵ These excite the curiosity of our nature; they tempt us to learn, help us to remember, and convey instruction to the mind, in a more pleasing and effectual manner than plain documents can; and hence it came to pass, that a great part of the learning of the wise men of the east consisted in ⁶ 'prophecies, in subtle and dark parables, and in the secrets of grave sentences,' as the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus has branched it out; for ⁷ 'to understand a proverb and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings,' was the very best description that Solomon himself could give of wisdom. ⁸ Among the ancients, indeed, mythology was in the highest esteem. The Egyptians, who were in great reputation for learning, delivered their notions in hieroglyphics; and from them the Greeks took the mode of couching their meaning in fable. Hesiod, ⁹ who contends with Homer for antiquity, is supposed by Quintilian to be the author of the fables which go under the name of Æsop; but, however this be, the very supposition of his being so, makes it probable that he did write fables, as, perhaps, most men of learning and note in those days accustomed themselves to this form of writing.

¹⁰ But, besides this parabolical way of writing which was in great vogue among the ancients, and to which the Jews, by a kind of natural genius, were wonderfully inclined, the people of the east had a way of expressing themselves by actions as well as words, and to enforce the matter they were upon, would frequently make use of outward and visible signs and representations. ¹¹ This, our learned Mr Mede shows, was the practice of the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians; and, even among the Romans, who were a people that used great modesty of style, and more gravity in their actions, than many other nations, it was a customary thing in their orations and pleadings, to use all arts to raise the passions, by actions and representations as well as words; insomuch, ¹² that

⁴ Connection, anno 655.

⁵ Reeve's Sermons. ⁶ Eccles. xxxix. 1, &c. ⁷ Prov. i. 6.

⁸ Jenkins' Reasonableness of Christianity, vol. ii. c. 3.

⁹ Quintil. Instit. b. v. c. 11.

¹⁰ Lightfoot's Heb. and Talmud. Exercit. in Mat. xiii. 3.

¹¹ Comment. in Apocal. part. 1. p. 470. ¹² Cic. pro P. Sextuo.

¹ Calmet's Commentary on Judith x. 13.

² Calmet's Preface on the book of Judith.

³ Ibid.

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they would frequently hang up the picture of the thing they were to speak to. Cicero tells us of himself, that he sometimes took up a child, and held it in his arms to move compassion; and to excite horror and indignation, nothing was more common, than for the accusers to produce, in open court, a bloody sword, or the garments of the wounded; to show the bones that had been taken out of the wound, or the scars that it had left behind it: "The power of these things is usually great," says Quintilian, "directing the attention of men to the subject in question;" for it can hardly otherwise happen, but that by this means they should fix the attention of their hearers, when, at one and the same time, they speak both to their eyes and ears.

From these few remarks, it appears in general, that the figurative expressions of the prophets, their actions, and types, and parables, were not incongruous to the customs of the times and places where they lived, and yet very proper means to give a lively and affecting representation of the message they had to deliver; and so proceed we to the passages which seem to give disgust.

To take several of these in their literal sense, would be an effectual way to disparage the divine precept, which, according to this acceptance, would put the prophet upon acting in a manner quite inconsistent with common prudence; and therefore interpreters are generally agreed, that the things of this kind, which will not come under a literal construction, were either transacted in vision, that is, the prophet in a dream, or some other deliquium, imagined that he did such and such things, and then related them to the people; or that they were parables, which God dictated to the prophet, and the prophet recited to the people; only it must be observed, ² that the literal interpretation of a text always claims the preference, if there be not some weighty reason against it, or some intimation in the text itself, that the words are figurative and enigmatical.

The prophet Jeremiah ³ is ordered by God, 'to take the wine-cup of his fury at his hand, and to carry it up and down, far and near Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings and princes thereof: to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, princes, and people; to all the Arabians, and kings of the land of Uz; to the kings of the land of the Philistines, Edom, Moab, and Ammon; to the kings of Tyre and Sidon, and of the isles beyond the sea, Dedan, Tema, and Buz; to the kings of Zimri, of the Medes, and Persians, and all the kings of the north.' Now, since it was morally impossible for the prophet to visit all these kings and nations in person, and the nature of the thing would not admit of any real performance, it could be no otherwise done than in vision. 'The cup of God's wrath,' is a common figure in Scripture, to denote the severity of his judgments; and therefore, when the prophet says, that 'he took the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations drink thereof,' he can mean no more, than that he prophesied against these several nations, and, by virtue of the spirit of foreknowledge which God had imparted to him, pronounced their doom.

⁴ In like manner, his sending yokes and bonds to several kings, whose ambassadors were then at Jeru-

salem, can hardly be understood in a sense altogether literal; because it is not probable, either, that the ambassadors would take the yokes at his hands, or carry them to their respective masters; but then, as yokes and bonds are common figures in Scripture, to denote captivity, and the miseries that attend it, his sending the yokes and bonds, may signify no more, ⁵ than his declaring, from God, the fate of these princes, when the king of Babylon was let loose upon them. Only it must be observed, that the prophet might really make some of these yokes and bonds, (as the Scripture says expressly, that he put one upon himself,) to enliven the idea, and make the impression of what he was to say more strong and emphatical. For these ornamental figures, and affecting images interspersed with it, added new force and dignity to the prophet's message, made it more awful and solemn to the delivery, and gave it the advantage of a deeper and more durable impression.

In like manner, again, the whole affair of this prophet's girdle, his carrying it to the Euphrates, hiding it in a rock, and, at such a determinate time, going for it again, and finding it quite rotten and spoiled, can hardly be taken in a literal sense; because the vast ^a distance of the place, and trivialness of the errand, as well as the impossibility of getting out of Jerusalem, if it was then invested by the Babylonians, make strongly against it; and therefore we may suppose, that all this was transacted in the prophet's imagination only; that, in the night-time, God sent upon him a vision, wherein all this series of things seemed to be performed by him, to imprint it the deeper upon his understanding, namely, that the kingdom of Judah, which was once as nearly united to God as the girdle is to a man's loins, should be utterly ruined and destroyed; and though the river Euphrates be at a wide distance from the prophet's place of abode, yet, in the vision, which is never confined to places, it might be more aptly made choice of than any other, thereby to denote to the Jews, that over that river they were to be carried captive to the city of Babylon.

The short of the matter is,—Several things which the prophets set down as matters of fact, might not be actually done, but only represented as done, to make the more lively impression upon their readers and hearers. Nay, there are several commands which God gives Ezekiel in particular, such as, his 'lying for 390 days on one side,' which was next to a thing impossible, 'his baking his bread with man's dung,' which was a thing unseemly, and his 'shaving his head and beard,' which, as he was a priest, ⁶ was a thing expressly forbidden him, that the prophet is never once said to have performed, nor were they indeed given him with an intent that he should perform them, but only relate them to the people, and so

⁵ Henric. Michael Bib. Heb. notes on the passage.

⁶ Lev. xxi. 5.

^a The learned Bochart has invented a new solution of this difficulty. He supposes, that as it was a common thing for the initial letter to be dropped, in the names of places and persons, the Hebrew word *Phrath* may be supposed to stand for *Ephrath* or *Ephratah*, which is *Bethlehem*, about five or six miles distant from Jerusalem; by which means the prophet's journey is greatly shortened, and the pains of going thither once again is not much. But whether this solution, as ingenious as it is, will bear the test, is left to the examination of the critics.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Scripture Vindicated*, in locum.

¹ Instit. b. v. c. 1.

² Scripture Vindicated, part 3. p. 72.

³ Chap. xxv. 15, &c.

⁴ Scripture Vindicated, part 3. p. 88.

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make them 'signs unto the house of Israel,' that is, either resemblances of things past, or prognostications of things to come.

St Peter, we may observe,¹ was commanded in his vision, to do what he never did; 'Rise, Peter, kill and eat;' nay, by his reply, it appears, that himself did not think that he was any ways bound to obey the command; 'Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.' And yet the use which he made of this vision was, to report it to the church as a sign or emblematical indication of God's having accepted the Gentiles into the gospel terms of salvation. And, in like manner, when Ezekiel, in his vision, received the command of 'shaving his head and his face,' his answer might have been in St Peter's strain, 'Not so, Lord;' for, by thy law, I am forbidden 'to make baldness upon my head, or to shave off the corner of my beard;' and yet he might relate this vision to the people, the better to enforce the threats which God had authorized him to denounce against Jerusalem: 'Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee, in the sight of the nations; and I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thy abominations.'

In a word, the prophets, in their visions, might receive several commands concerning things illegal or indecent; ² but then they considered these not as formal commands, but as types, emblems, and predictions, delivered to them in a perceptive form, in order to imprint the things intended the deeper upon their minds, and to make the representation thereof to the people with whom they had to do more lively and affecting; nor should it seem strange, that the divine wisdom, in this case, makes choice of things improper, and sometimes impracticable, since his purpose in so doing is to make the prophet perceive at once, that it was all symbolical, and not designed to direct him how and what to act, but how and what to apprehend, foresee, and foretell of things to come.

Whether the command given to Hosea to marry a woman that either had been or would prove a prostitute, is to have a literal or figurative construction, commentators and critics, both ancient and modern, are not a little divided; but since in the figurative there is no violence offered to Scripture, and in the literal there is nothing immoral or absurd, it matters not much in which sense we take it. In Scripture, it is a common thing to represent the defection of a people from the service of God, ⁴ by the metaphors of adultery and fornication; and, therefore, to introduce the prophet as marrying a woman that proved an adulteress, as having several children by that marriage, and as calling these children by such names as denoted the destruction of a rebellious nation, is no bad manner of expressing the near relation between God and his people; his constant care in preserving and multiplying them; their vile ingratitude in revolting from him; and the great severity wherewith he intended to punish their revolt. Or, take the words in a literal sense, and that the prophet was

really commanded to marry a woman of a bad reputation; yet might there not be many prudential considerations to make such a match eligible? The Scripture, we may observe, in the appellations which it gives persons and things, has less regard to what they actually are, than to what they once were; and hence it is, that Moses's rod, when turned into a serpent, ⁵ is still called his rod; and those whom our Saviour healed of their several infirmities, are still the deaf, ⁶ the lame, &c., even after they are cured. Now, if the woman whom Hosea was ordered to marry, though once she had lived an incontinent life, was now become chaste and virtuous, where was the great absurdity of his actually doing it, since, besides other motives to us unknown, he was, in this action, to be a sign to the Israelites, and to set an example to them, 'who had gone a whoring after other gods,' ⁷ that, if they would forsake their false deities, and return to their true God, the God of their fathers, he would still accept, and receive them, in the like manner as the prophet had taken an adulteress to his wife, upon assurance that ever, for the future, she would prove faithful to his bed?

The account of Ezekiel's packing up his household goods, removing them by night, and breaking through the walls of his house to carry them away more secretly, though some interpreters have looked upon it as the mere narration of a vision, or the recital of a parable, yet to me it seems more probable, that the whole was transacted just in the manner wherein it is described; especially considering the near resemblance between the prediction and the event. For, after that the prophet, by the symbolical action of removing his goods in a fright, had typified the taking of Jerusalem, he proceeds to apply what he had done in this prediction.—⁸ 'I am your sign; like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall remove, and go into captivity; they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby; and the prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth.—My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare; and I will scatter, toward every wind, all that are about him to help him, and all his bands.' And accordingly the event happened; for ⁹ 'when the city was broken up,' says the historian, 'all the men of war fled by night, by the way of the gate, between two walls, which is by the king's gardens, for the Chaldees were against the city round about, and the king went the way towards the plain. But the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army were scattered from him.'

The like is to be said of the same prophet's being ordered by God to delineate upon a slate the city of Jerusalem, and the Babylonish camp investing it, namely, that the portraiture of the fort, the mount, the camp, and battering rams, against it, ¹⁰ are so very like to what happened at the siege, that we can hardly forbear presuming, that the whole narration is literal, or that the prophet did really draw a sketch of the siege of the city, as God commanded him. For since, as we observed before, it was a practice sometimes among the best of ora-

¹ Acts x. 13, 14.

² Ezek. v. 8, 9.

³ Scripture Vindicated, part 3. p. 91.

⁴ Lev. xvii. 7. Jer. iii. 1. Ezek. xvi. 15. xxiii. 3, &c.

⁵ Exod. vii. 12.

⁶ Mat. xi. 5. and John ix. 17.

⁷ Jenkins's Reasonableness of Christianity, vol. ii. p. 53.

⁸ Ezek. xii. 11, &c.

⁹ 2 Kings xxv. 4, 5.

¹⁰ Josephus's Jewish Antiquities, b. x. c. 11

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tors to represent, in a picture, the particular thing they were to speak to, thereby to gain the readier attention of their hearers, why should it be thought inconsistent with the character of a prophet, or any diminution of his discretion, or gravity, to do the same thing, in order to gain the same end?^a

To walk naked indeed for three years together, as the prophet Isaiah¹ is said to have done, does not so well comport with the rules of decency, and seems to carry in it an appearance of frenzy or madness; but we are to remember, that, in Scripture phrase, those are said to go naked, who either go without² their upper garment, or without the³ habit that is proper to their station or quality; and that the Hebrew text does not say, that Isaiah walked in this manner for three years together, but that he thus walked as a type or sign of the three years' calamity which would come upon Egypt and Ethiopia. So that the sense of the passage is thus:—That Isaiah went about without his upper garment, in token that the Egyptians and Arabians should undergo a calamity of three years' continuance from the king of Assyria; but how long or how often he did this, the Scripture is silent; only it may be presumed, that he did it in such a manner, whether three days together, or thrice the same day, as might best prefigure the three years' calamity: and since the action was to be typical, the prophet, who, through the iniquity of the times, could scarce gain the audience of the people at any rate, was to appear in an uncommon garb, and with something particular in his manner, to strike the eyes and awaken the observation of all around him: for, had not there been some visible impropriety in the action, something seemingly inconsistent with the character of so grave a man, it would not have answered the purpose of exciting the curiosity and attention of the people for which it was intended.

Thus we have endeavoured to vindicate the actions of the prophets, or rather the wisdom of God which put them upon such actions, from all imputations of weakness and folly; and shall only observe farther, that our misconceptions of these things must, in a great measure, proceed from our ignorance of the prophetic style, as says a learned examiner of this style;⁴ “For all places of Scripture that are expressed in allegorical or proverbial forms of speech, or by types and resemblances of things, as all prophecies more or less are, must needs have been better understood in those times when they were written, than they can be now, because we have but an imperfect notion of many things to which the allusion is made, and from whence the similitude is taken.”

¹ Chap. xx. 3, 4.² John xxi. 7. Acts xix. 16. Mark xiv. 36. Mat. xxv. 26.³ 2 Sam. xix. 24. 2 Sam. vi. 20.⁴ Jenkins's Reasonableness, vol. ii. c. 7.

a Language, as appears from the nature of the thing, from the records of history, and from the remains of the most ancient languages yet remaining, was at first extremely rude, narrow, and equivocal: so that men would be perpetually at a loss, on any new conception, or uncommon accident, to explain themselves intelligibly to one another; the art of enlarging language by a scientific analogy being a late invention: this would necessarily set them upon supplying the deficiencies of speech by apt and significant signs. Accordingly, in the first ages of the world, mutual converse was upheld by a mixed discourse of words and actions; hence came the eastern phrase of “the voice of the sign;” and use and custom, as in most other affairs of life, improv-

CHAP. III.—Of the Sacred Chronology and Profane History during this period.

THE particular differences, and seeming incongruities, in point of chronology, that have occurred in this period of history, we have endeavoured to solve and reconcile in the notes that are annexed to it; but there is a passage

ing what had arisen out of necessity, into ornament, this practice subsisted long after the necessity was over; especially amongst the eastern people, whose natural temperament inclined them to a mode of conversation, which so well exercised their vivacity, by motion; and so much gratified it, by a perpetual representation of material images. Of this we have innumerable instances in holy Scripture: as where the false prophet pushed with horns of iron, to denote the entire overthrow of the Syrians: where Jeremiah, by God's direction, hides the linen girdle in a hole of the rock near Euphrates; where he breaks a potter's vessel in sight of the people; puts on bonds and yokes; and casts a book into Euphrates; where Ezekiel, by the same appointment, delineates the siege of Jerusalem on a tile; weighs the hair of his beard in balances; carries out his household stuff; and joins together the two sticks for Judah and Israel. By these actions the prophets instructed the people in the will of God, and conversed with them in signs; but where God teaches the prophet, and, in compliance to the custom of that time, condescends to the same mode of instruction, then the significative action is generally changed into a vision, either natural or extraordinary: as where the prophet Jeremiah is bid to regard the rod of the almond tree, and the seething pot; the work on the potter's wheel, and the baskets of good and bad figs; and the prophet Ezekiel, the ideal scene of the resurrection of dry bones. The significative action, I say, was, in this case, generally changed into a vision; but not always. For as sometimes, where the instruction was for the people, the significative action was perhaps in vision; so sometimes again though the information was only for the prophet, God would set him upon a real expressive action, whose obvious meaning conveyed the intelligence proposed or sought. Of this we shall give, at the expense of infidelity, a very illustrious instance. The excellent Maimonides, not attending to this primitive mode of information, is much scandalized at several of these actions, unbecoming, as he supposed, the dignity of the prophetic office; and is therefore for resolving them in general into supernatural visions impressed on the imagination of the prophet; and this, because some few of them may perhaps admit of such an interpretation. In this he is followed by Christian writers, much to the discredit, as I conceive, of revelation; and to the triumph of libertinism and infidelity; the actions of the prophets being delivered as realities; and these writers representing them as mean, absurd, and fanatical, and exposing the prophet to contempt. But what is it they gain by this expedient? The charge of absurdity and fanaticism will follow the prophet in his visions, when they have removed it from his waking actions: for if these actions were absurd and fanatical in the real representation, they must needs be so in the imaginary; the same turn of mind operating both asleep and awake. The judicious reader, therefore, cannot but observe, that the reasonable and true defence of the prophetic writings is what is here offered: where we show, that information by action was, at this time and place, a very familiar mode of conversation. This once seen, all charge of absurdity and suspicion of fanaticism, vanish of themselves: the absurdity of an action consists in its being extravagant and insignificant; but use and a fixed application made these in question both sober and pertinent: the fanaticism of an action consists in a fondness for unusual actions and foreign modes of speech; but those in question were idiomatic and familiar. To illustrate this last observation by a domestic example: when the sacred writers talk of being ‘born after the spirit,’ of being ‘fed with the sincere milk of the word,’ of ‘putting their tears into a bottle,’ of ‘bearing testimonies against lying vanities,’ of ‘taking the veil from men's hearts,’ and of ‘building up one another;’ they speak the common, yet proper and pertinent phraseology of their country; and not the least imputation of fanaticism can stick upon these original expressions. But when we see our own countrymen reprobate their native idiom, and affect to employ only scripture phrases in their whole conversation, as if some inherent sanctity

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in the prophet Ezekiel, generally supposed to relate to this time, wherein some learned chronologists do not so well agree.

The passage is this:—¹ 'I have laid upon thee the

¹ Ezek. iv. 5, 6.

resided in the eastern modes of expression, we cannot choose but suspect such men far gone in the delusions of a heated imagination. The same may be said of significative actions. But it is not only in sacred story that we meet with the mode of speaking by action. Profane antiquity is full of these examples; the early Oracles in particular frequently employed it, as we learn from an old saying of Heraclitus: "That the king whose oracle is at Delphi, neither speaks nor keeps silent, but reveals by signs." The influence language would have on the first kind of writing, which was hieroglyphical, is easy to conceive. Language, we have shown, was out of mere necessity, highly figurative, and full of material images; so that when men first thought of recording their conceptions, the writing would be, of course, that very picture which was before painted in the fancy, and from thence, delineated in words: even long after, when figurative speech was continued out of choice, and adorned with all the invention of wit, as amongst the Greeks and Romans, and that the genius of the simpler hieroglyphic writing was again revived for ornament, in emblems and devices, the poetic habit of personalizing every thing filled their coins, their arches, their altars, &c. with all kinds of imaginary beings. All the qualities of the mind, all the affections of the body, all the properties of countries, cities, rivers, mountains, became the seeds of living things: for,

— "as imagination bodied forth

The forms of things unknown, the artist's hand

Turn'd them to shape, and gave to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name."

Shakspeare.

The reciprocal influence hieroglyphic writing would have on language is as evident. The Chinese used this kind of writing, as well as the Egyptians; and the character given of their language is entirely correspondent: "The style of the Chinese, in their compositions," says Du Halde, "is mysterious, concise, allegoric, and sometimes obscure. They say much in few words. Their expressions are lively, animated, and thick sown with bold comparisons, and noble metaphors." Their style, we see, was concise and figurative; the very character, as we have seen, of all the barbarous nations upon earth, both ancient and modern; for nature is ever uniform. The cold phlegmatic temper of the Chinese made their style short and laconic; the use of hieroglyphics made it figurative; and from this mixture it became obscure; but had those remote inhabitants of the east and west possessed the warm imagination of the proper Asiatics, then had their language, like that of the people spoken of above, abounded with pleonasm instead of laconisms. The old Asiatic style, so highly figurative, seems likewise, by what we find of its remains, in the prophetic language of the sacred writers, to have been evidently fashioned to the mode of ancient hieroglyphics, both curiologic and tropical. Of the first kind are the figurative expressions of 'spotted garments,' to denote iniquity; an 'intoxicating draught,' to signify error and misery; the 'sword and bow,' a warrior; a 'gigantic stature,' a mighty leader; 'balance, weights, and measures,' a judge, or magistrate; 'arms,' a powerful nation, like the Roman. Of the second kind, which answers to the tropical hieroglyphic, is the calling empires, kings, and nobles, by the names of the 'heavenly luminaries, the sun, moon, and stars;' their temporary disasters or entire overthrow, denoted by 'eclipses and extinctions;' the destruction of the nobility, by 'stars falling from the firmament;' hostile invasions, by 'thunder and tempestuous winds;' and leaders of armies, conquerors, and founders of empire, by 'lions, bears, leopards, goats, or high trees.' In a word, the prophetic style seems to be a speaking hieroglyphic.

These observations will not only assist us in the intelligence of the Old and New Testament, but likewise vindicate their character from the illiterate cavils of modern libertines, who have foolishly mistaken that colouring for the peculiar workmanship of the speaker's heated imagination, which was the sober established language of their times; a language which God and his Son condescended to employ, as the properest vehicle of the high mysterious ways of Providence, in the revelation of themselves to mankind.—*Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses* vol. iv. pp. 133—136, and 173—175.—Ed.

years of their iniquity, according to the number of days, three hundred and ninety days; so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou shalt accomplish them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have appointed thee each day for a year.' The generality of commentators, who take God's laying upon the prophet the years of his people's iniquity, to denote his forbearing to punish them for their offences for such a determinate time, do agree, ² that there is an exact sum of 390 years mentioned in this place; that this sum is to begin from the time that Jeroboam first set up the golden calves; and that the 390 and 40 years are not distinct numbers, but that the less is to be included in the greater; but then the question is, where we are to end these 390 years? or to which of the captivities do they extend?

Several learned men of great authority make these years to end ³ at the last captivity by Nebuzaradan, captain of the guards under Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and four years after the last destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in the eleventh year of Zedekiah; for, from the time of the setting up the calves, ⁴ say they, to this last instance of God's severity, are just 390 years; from the eighteenth year of Josiah, when the kingdom of Judah entered into covenant with God, to this time, are just forty years; and, by this last captivity, all the predictions of the several prophets, relating thereunto, were perfectly fulfilled.

It is to be observed, however, that this last captivity was so small, so sudden, and attended with so little difficulty, as can by no means come up to the pomp and solemnity of the prophet's description, in that very chapter wherein this epocha is mentioned. The account which we have of the invasion is this:—⁵ "Whilst Nebuchadnezzar lay at the siege of Tyre, he sent Nebuzaradan with part of his army to invade the land of Israel, on purpose, as is supposed, to revenge the death of Gedaliah; because there was no other reason for his falling upon the poor remains of those miserable people, whom he himself had left and settled there. In this expedition Nebuzaradan seized upon all the Jews whom he found in the land, made them captives, and sent them to Babylon; but they all amounted to no more than seven hundred and forty-five persons." Here was no resistance made, no siege maintained, no famine incurred. The people fell a cheap and easy prey, because they were ruined, and destroyed before. But now, in the expedition to which the prophet ⁶ alludes, Jerusalem was besieged, and the defendants reduced to the necessity of ⁷ 'eating bread by weight, and with care, and of drinking water by measure, and with astonishment,' as he expresses it.

For this reason, we should rather incline to the hypothesis of those who end both the computations at the destruction of Jerusalem, in the eleventh of Zedekiah; who, according as they compute the time from Jeroboam's apostasy, make the period of God's forbearing

² Bedford's Scripture Chronology, b. vi. c. 1.

³ Jer. lii. 59.

⁴ Primate Usher, Dr Prideaux, and Marshall, in their Chronological Tables.

⁵ Prideaux's Connexion, anno 584.

⁶ Ezek. iv. 1—3.

⁷ Ezek. iv. 16.

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the house of Israel, from thence to the destruction of Jerusalem, to contain just three hundred and ninety years; and who begin the forty years of God's forbearance of the house of Judah, from the mission of the prophet Jeremiah to preach repentance to them, that is, ¹ from the thirteenth year of Josiah, when he was first called to this office; from which time, to the last year of Zedekiah, when Jerusalem was destroyed, were exactly forty years. For ² since the hundred and twenty years of God's forbearing the old world is reckoned from the mission of Noah to preach repentance, there seems to be some parity of reason, that his forty years' forbearance of the kingdom of Judah should be reckoned from the like mission of Jeremiah.

But there is another way of explaining this passage; for if by the word *iniquity*, which God imputes to the house of Israel and Judah, we are to understand the punishment of their iniquity, which is very common, and seems to be the most natural sense in this place, it is plain, that as the whole tenor of the prophet's discourse seems to denote an event future, and far distant, it may not improperly relate to the continuation of God's punishment upon the tribes of Israel and Judah, for their great and manifold provocations.

³ Now the punishment of Israel for their iniquities may be said to commence at the taking of Samaria, in the reign of Hoshea; as that of Judah did, at the taking of Jerusalem, in the reign of Zedekiah. If then we reckon from the destruction of Jerusalem to the time when Cyaxares II. (whom ⁴ the Scripture calls 'Darius the Median,') became king of Babylon, we shall find it about forty years; and as he was a known favourer of the Jews, and might therefore give them leave to return home, we may be allowed to infer, that here the term of their punishment did expire. And, in like manner, if we reckon from Salmaneser's taking Samaria to the last victory which Alexander the Great obtained over Darius Codomannus, whereby he became sole monarch of all Asia, we shall find it to be much about three hundred and ninety years: and as his kindness to the Jews was very remarkable, we may here date the restoration of their liberty, and consequently their release from the punishment which God inflicted on them for their sins.

Thus, accordingly as we take the sense of the words in the prophet, the history which is alluded to puts on a different aspect, and relates to a different period: but proceed we now to the profane history itself.

What dealings and intercourse, in the space of these last four hundred years, ^a namely, from the building of Solomon's temple to the captivity of Babylon, the Jewish people had with the Philistines, the Ammonites, Moabites, Phœnicians, Syrians, and other neighbouring nations; and what relation and dependence they had on the great and powerful kingdoms of Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt, has, in some measure, been observed in the course of this history. What we are farther concerned to do, is to take notice of some more remarkable events,

which, during this period of time, are supposed to have happened in the world.

⁵ In the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Uzziah king of Judah, and while there was an interregnum in the kingdom of Israel, the Olympic games were instituted in Greece. The use and design of them was to train up the youth in active and warlike exercises, that, if occasion required, they might be capable of doing their country service in the field; and it was not from the mountain Olympus, in Thessaly, but from the city Olympia, (since called Pisa, near Elis, a city in Peloponnesus, where they were celebrated in the adjacent plains, near the river Alpheus), that they took their names. Here was the splendid temple of Jupiter, which had vast treasures belonging to it, by reason of the oracles which were there given out, and these games which were there celebrated in honour of that deity; and here was likewise that famous statue of Jupiter, ⁶ made by Phidias, which was accounted one of the wonders of the world, and from which he obtained the name of Jupiter Olympius.

It was about four hundred and forty years before this time, that these games and exercises were at first instituted by one Hercules; not the son of Jupiter and Alcmena, so much celebrated by the Greek and Latin poets, but one of the priests of Cybele called by that name, who came into Greece from Ida, a mountain in Phrygia, (whence he and his companions were called Idæi, Dactyli, and Corybantes,) and brought in many superstitious rites with them. After the death of this

⁵ Bedford's Scripture Chronology, b. vi. c. 2.

⁶ This statue of Jupiter is described by Pausanias, in the following manner:—"He is made sitting on a throne of gold and ivory, with a crown on his head, which seems to be made of olive branches. In his right hand he holds an image of victory, made of ivory likewise, that has on its head-dress a crown of massy gold; and in his left a sceptre, made of all kinds of metals mixed together, with an eagle on the top of it. His shoes and stockings are all of gold, and the rest of the drapery is of the same metal, adorned with figures of various animals, and a great number of flower-de-luces. His throne is embellished with ivory, ebony, gold, precious stones, and a multitude of embossed figures. At the four feet, or pedestals of the throne, are four victories, and two others at the feet of the statue. At the two feet, on the fore-side of the throne, on one hand, are the figures of sphinxes, who are carrying off some Theban youths; and on the other side, are represented the figures of the children of Niobe, whom Apollo and Diana shot to death with their arrows. Between the feet of the throne is represented Theseus, and the rest of the heroes who accompanied Hercules to the war against the Amazons, together with several Athletes of diverse kinds; and the place is all around adorned with pictures, representing the labours of Hercules, together with several others of the most renowned historical subjects. On the upper part of the throne, on the one side, are engraven the Graces, and on the other the Hours, because, according to the poets, both these were the daughters of Jupiter. On the footstool of the statue are golden lions, and a representation of the combat of Theseus with the Amazons; and on a basis thereof are innumerable golden figures, such as that of the sun going into his chariot, of Jupiter and Juno, Mercury, Vesta, and Venus, who has Cupid standing by her; of Apollo, Diana, Minerva, Hercules, Amphitrite, Neptune, and the Moon, which is here represented sitting upon a horse." This is the substance of what Pausanias says of this famous statue; but notwithstanding that its workmanship was the wonder of all the ancients, and the curiosity of seeing it might increase the number of those who came to the Olympic games, yet Strabo finds great fault with it for want of a due proportion, because it was of such a prodigious bigness, that if it had stood upright, it must have made a hole in the roof of the temple.—Bedford's Scripture Chronology, b. vi. c. 2. in the notes.

¹ Jer. i. 1, 2.

² Gen. vi. 3.

³ Calmet's Dissert. or the Examination of the Ten Tribes, &c.

⁴ Dan. v. 31.

^a Dr Hales dates the finishing of the temple, B. C. 1020, and the destruction of Babylon B. C. 586; making this period 434 years.—Ed.

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Hercules, these games were discontinued for many years, till, by advice from the oracle of Apollo, Iphitus established them again; even in the lifetime of Lycurgus, who is nowhere said to have opposed them;^a and so they continued until the time of Constantine the Great, who, upon his profession of the Christian faith, first slighted the *ludi seculares*, and afterwards all other games, as monuments of pagan superstition; so that falling by degrees into disesteem, in the time of Theodosius the Great, if not before, they were utterly unfrequented, and dwindled into nothing.

These games were used to be performed at the end of every four years, and so every four years made an Olympiad, and lasted for five days; when the youth of Greece contended for mastery in five sorts of exercises, one for each day, namely, the castus, or whirlbat, the quoit, leaping, wrestling, and racing, either on foot or horseback, or in chariots; all which exercises were thought so honourable, that even kings themselves did not disdain to become competitors for the victory; and accordingly we find Pindar, the most celebrated poet in those days, addressing his first Olympic to Hiero king of Syracuse, for having won the prize in one of the horse-races.

The prize, however, was not great; it was no more than a garland of palm or olive: but the victor was treated with such tokens of respect and esteem, and was attended by the people with such loud acclamations, while he rode into the city in a coach through a breach in the wall, which, upon this occasion, was made for his more pompous entrance; and while he was sure to have the best of poets to celebrate his praise, and rank him even among the gods, that to come off conqueror, and be crowned in this place, was thought an honour not inferior to that of a triumph in Rome; and this the rather, because the inhabitants of Elis, who were the presidents of these games, were so remarkably impartial in giving sentence according to merit, that whoever was crowned by their order and determination was always thought justly to deserve it.

Thus,¹ it appears, that the original use of these Olympic games was to encourage activity of body; but in process of time, they came to be employed to a quite different purpose, even to fix the chronology of the history of the Greeks, among whom^b it grew a custom to reckon by Olympiads; for before that custom prevailed, their historians were vastly negligent in fixing the date

of such transactions as they related. Varro, the most learned person among the Romans, both for history and antiquity, reckon three sorts of times. The first from the beginning of mankind to the first flood, which he calls uncertain, because no account is given of it by any heathen writer. The second, from the flood to the first Olympiad, which he calls fabulous, because many strange stories are reported of the gods and demigods in those times, but without any method or order. The third, from the first Olympiad to his time, which he calls historical, because thenceforward all transactions were laid in their proper places; but before the institution of this method of computation, "every thing was confused in the Grecian history," as Eusebius² tells us, "and³ no one thing written with any tolerable exactness."

In the eleventh year of Jotham,^c king of Judah, which was the twelfth of Pekah king of Israel, another famous era commenced, and was in use throughout all the empire, upon the building of the city of Rome, the history of which is as follows.

After the destruction of Troy,⁴ Æneas landing in Italy, was at first opposed by Latinus, king of the Latins, or aborigines; but being overcome in battle by the Trojans, Latinus made peace with their leader, and permitted him and his men, to live independent in his kingdom. Enraged at this treatment, Turnus king of the Rutuli, fomented a fresh war against Æneas; but in the conclusion, he was slain in single combat by the Trojan chief, and his mistress Lavinia, who was the occasion of all this contention, was, by her father Latinus, given to the conqueror for a wife. Æneas, it must be observed, had another son by a former wife, named Creusa, who was lost in the siege of Troy; and after his death, his relict Lavinia, being great with child, and fearing the power of Ascanius, for that was his name, fled into the woods, and was there delivered of a son, who, for that reason, was called Sylvius, and because he was born after his father's funeral, was likewise called Posthumus. It was not long, however, before the people began to express their resentment of this hard usage of Lavinia, so that Ascanius was obliged to recall her; and to avoid all occasions of disagreement for the future, he left to her and her son Sylvius, the city of Lavinia, which Æneas had built, and called after her name, whilst himself removed to Alba Longa, a city of his own erecting and where he lived for the remainder of his days, highly delighted with the situation of the place.

After the death of Ascanius, there happened a contention between this Sylvius the son of Æneas, and Iulus

¹ Bedford's Scripture Chronology, b. vi. c. 2.

^a Dr Hales gives the following account of the Olympiads, which is probably correct, and is certainly more perspicuous than that in the text. These celebrated games were originally instituted in honour of Jupiter Olympius, by the Phrygian Pelops, who settled in the Grecian peninsula, called from him Peloponnesus about B. C. 1350. They were repeated by the Theban Hercules, about B. C. 1325, and, after a long interruption, restored in part by Iphitus king of Elis, and celebrated at Olympia, on the banks of the river Alpheus, B. C. 884, according to the most probable account. However, the vulgar era of the Olympiads did not commence till 108 years after, July 19. B. C. 776.—Hales' *Analysis*, vol. i. p. 135, second edition.—Ed.

^b It is to be observed, however, that it was not from the first Olympiad, that they began their computation, but from the 27th, when Choræbus, a native of Elis, was victor, because there was no register kept of the preceding Olympiads; and therefore the commencement of this era was an hundred and eight years after the establishment of the games which occasioned it.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Olympiad*.

² Africanus, and Euseb. Præp. Evan. b. x. c. 10.

³ Justin Martyr's Exhortation to the Greeks.

⁴ Sir Walter Raleigh's History, b. ii. c. 24. s. 4.

^c Of the time when this city was built, there are two accounts, the Varronian and the Capitoline. The Varronian places it in the year before, but the Capitoline in this year, and yet they may both be easily reconciled; for as it was customary in those times, when they began to build a city, to go round it with a plough, and make a furrow where the walls were to be built, but leave a void space for the gates; the year before they might thus mark out the city, dig the foundation of the walls, and provide stones, timber, and other materials, and this year lay the foundation; so that the computation might easily begin from either year, though the Capitoline is the general account.—Bedford's *Scripture Chronology*, b. vi. c. 2. [Dr Hales fixes the date of the building of Rome as B. C. 753; which makes the fourth year of Jotham. See table at the end of this section.]—Ed.

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the son of Ascanius, about the succession to the kingdom; but as the relations of Lavinia had the more prevalent interest in the country, the matter was so compromised that Iulus was made high priest, and Sylvius king, in whose family the kingdom continued for several generations, and every succeeding prince was named Sylvius.

Of this race was Latinus the Second, grandson to Sylvius, who built several towns on the borders of Latium; and their inhabitants, standing much upon the honour of their original, were afterwards called *Prisci Latini*. Of this race was Tiberinus, who, as some say, was drowned in the Tiber, and from that unhappy accident gave name to the river. Of this race was Aventinus, who, by being buried in the place, gave name to one of the mountains on which Rome was built; and of this race was Procas, who, after his death, left his two sons, Numitor and Amulius, to reign alternately every year; but Amulius the younger deposed Numitor, slew his son Ægisthus, and to cut off the whole race, compelled his daughter Ilia to enter into a vow of perpetual virginity, by becoming a priestess to the goddess Vesta. Her vow however did not last long; for a certain soldier found means to get her with child, but to cover the disgrace, a report was raised, that all this was done by Mars, the god of war. At length she was delivered of two sons, Romulus and Remus, whom their uncle Amulius commanded to be drowned, and their mother to be buried alive, as being the punishment which the law inflicted, when vestal virgins had violated their chastity.

Whether the mother underwent this punishment, or, as some will have it, upon the entreaty of Antho, the daughter of Amulius, obtained her pardon, it is certain that the two children were thrown into the Tiber, in order to be drowned; but as the stream was low, and much mud was in the place, a certain woman, named Lupa, found them before they were dead, and having suckled them for some time, from whence the story of their being nursed by a she-wolf took its rise, brought them at length to Faustulus, the king's shepherd, who recommended them to the care of his wife Laurentia, and so they were both preserved.

As soon as they came to a proper age, they lived at first in the capacity of shepherds; but being naturally of a brave and martial temper, they applied themselves, not only to the business of hunting wild beasts, but of clearing the country likewise of such gangs of robbers, as came to plunder and infest it; so that, in a short time, the fame of their adventures made multitudes of the neighbouring youth, who were of the like complexion, resort unto them. Enraged at their proceedings, a strong company of these robbers set upon them at a certain time, and though Romulus defended himself against their attack, took Remus prisoner, and pretending that he had plundered the estate of his grandfather Numitor, delivered him to king Amulius, who sent him to his brother Numitor, to be executed for the fact.

When Remus was brought before Numitor, he behaved with such courage and intrepidity, that he could not but suspect something uncommon in him; and thereupon hearing that he had another brother, and that they were twins, and comparing their age with the time when his daughter Ilia's two children were exposed, he began to think, that these, without doubt, must be the boys whom

some good providence had wonderfully preserved; and, being confirmed in his opinion by the information of Faustulus, who had brought them up, he entered into a conspiracy with them, against his brother Amulius, wherein it was agreed, that Romulus with his men should privately enter the city, and being joined with such forces as Remus could muster up in Numitor's family, should, all on a sudden, attack the palace, and seize the king.

The plot succeeded. Amulius was taken and killed; and after that Numitor had congratulated his grandsons upon their success, he ascended the rostrum, and in a full assembly of people, declared how wicked and inhuman his brother Amulius had been; that these were his two grandchildren; how they were born, and bred up, and came to be discovered; and that by their contrivance it was that the tyrant was taken off; whereupon the people immediately came to a resolution, that Numitor should be their king, and that, next under him, Romulus and Remus should be held in the greatest veneration.

As soon as these matters were settled and adjusted, the two young princes (to perpetuate the memory of their preservation) resolved to build a city upon the spot where they had been nourished and brought up; and several of the neighbouring people, as well as their own men, came in to their assistance. It was not much doubted, but that this new city would, in process of time, outvie all the other towns in Italy; but then, as the two brothers were twins, and it was not well known which was the elder, they agreed to determine, by the flight of birds who should give the name to the city, and upon the grandfather Numitor's decease, which of them should reign first.

To this purpose they went each of them to the top of an hill. Romulus ascended what was afterwards called Palatinus, and Remus Aventinus, from whence he discovered six vultures first; but his brother afterwards saw twelve, so that the dispute was never the nearer an end. Remus laid claim to the sovereignty, because he saw the first vultures, and Romulus because he saw the most; insomuch that from words proceeding to blows, Remus was unhappily slain by his brother, and, in his death,¹ put an end to the controversy.

When the city was built, Romulus called it *Roma*, which, in the Greek tongue, signified *strength*, and not by his own name *Romula*, because it was a diminutive. As the city, however, when finished, had not a sufficient stock of inhabitants, he found out an expedient to remedy this defect, by making a neighbouring grove an asylum or place of refuge, to all malefactors and discontented persons; so that, in a short time, vast numbers of all nations, that could not live in their own country with safety fled hither for protection, and peopled the city. These inhabitants however could last but for one age, because they were most of them men, and when they desired to marry with their neighbours, were rejected

¹ Florus makes the occasion of the death of Remus to be another matter: for having observed that Romulus, by the greater number of the vultures which he saw, had got the better, and built his city, with good hopes that it would be remarkable for warlike affairs, because those birds were accounted birds of prey; ere the walls were raised to any great height, his brother Remus made a jest of them; which exasperated the other to that degree, that he ordered him immediately to be slain,

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with scorn; so that they were under a necessity to get themselves wives by some stratagem or other. To this purpose Romulus proclaimed a feast, and public games, in the honour of Neptune, to be celebrated near his new city; and when the virgins from every quarter came thither to see and divert themselves, upon a signal given, they were all seized by force, carried into the city and compelled to become wives to those that wanted them. Exasperated with this base treatment, the neighbouring people immediately prepared for war, but are repulsed with loss by the Romans; till the Sabines, who were their most formidable enemy, and principally concerned in the late affront, marched against them, and, under the command of their king, Tatius, were just upon giving them a total defeat; when their daughters, who were now become wives to the Romans, ran between the two armies, and with their hair torn, and all other indications of sorrow, acquainted their parents that they had been used civilly, and that, if matters were carried to such extremities, nothing could be expected on their side but ruin and destruction. Hereupon their parents, being overcome by their prayers, and tears, and arguments, laid aside all angry resentment, and entered into a treaty with their sons-in-law, which succeeded so well, that several of them left their ancient habitations, and came with all their substance, and lived in Rome. From so small a beginning did this city gradually increase to be the seat of the western empire, and the mistress of the then known world!

One very remarkable event more, which happened the very next year after the building of Rome, namely, in the twelfth year of Jotham king of Judah, and the thirteenth of Pekah king of Israel, was the dissolution of the Assyrian monarchy upon the death of Sardanapalus, as several heathen authors have thus related it. This emperor exceeded all his predecessors, in sloth and voluptuousness. He clothed himself in women's attire; he painted his face, and decked his body more like a strumpet than a king; he affected an effeminate voice; spun fine wool and purple among his concubines, and proceeded to such a degree of luxury and shamelessness, that he wrote verses in commemoration of his dissolute manner of life, and commanded, after his death, to have them inscribed on his tomb.

The kings of the east seldom appeared in public: but Sardanapalus was never seen by any, but such only as were either assistants or associates in his lasciviousness; until Arbaces, the general of the Median forces, bribed one of his eunuchs, by giving him a golden cup, to be introduced into his presence; where, seeing his vile degenerate behaviour, he began to think it a disparagement, that so many brave and gallant men should be under the dominion of a worthless wretch, that affected to be a spinster rather than a king. This he communicated to his friends and acquaintances, to the governors of several provinces, but more especially to Belesis, the governor of Babylon, with whom he entered into a close confederacy to depose the present emperor, and to divide his dominions between them, whereof Belesis was to have Babylon, Chaldea, and Arabia, and himself all the rest.

¹ When matters were thus agreed on, Arbaces endeavoured, by all sorts of arts and insinuations, to make

himself acceptable to the Medes; to persuade them to invade the Assyrian empire, and, in hopes of regaining their liberty, to draw the Persians into the like confederacy. On the other hand, Belesis prevailed with the Babylonians to revolt, and gained the king of Arabia, with whom he had a very great intimacy, to his party; so that, when all their forces were joined together, the army is said to have consisted of 400,000 men.

Sardanapalus, seeing such a strong confederacy and combination of arms against him, thought it high time to shake off his sloth; and having drawn forth the forces of the rest of the provinces, he engaged the enemy thrice, and as many times defeated them. In the first action he pursued them to the mountains, seventy furlongs beyond Nineveh. In the second he so defeated them, that they were all upon the point of returning home, had not Belesis, who was a Babylonish priest, and pretended to great skill in astrology^a and divination, given them

^a Whatever skill he might pretend to in astrology, it is certain that he was an excellent astronomer, and when he came to Babylon, and was made emperor there, set himself to rectify the Chaldean year, which seems to have stood unaltered from the flood till that time. The ancient year of the Chaldeans consisted of 360 days, or of twelve months, with thirty days to each month; but as this was five days and a quarter less than the revolution of the sun to the same point of the equinox, the Egyptians, in the time of Thoth, their second king, and grandson of Ham, added five days to the year, so that every year consisted exactly of 365 days. But then, in four years there was one day less than in so many Julian years, which in a great length of time, namely, in 1460 years, made the beginning of the year run through all the seasons. To prevent this inconsistency, the Chaldeans, about every six years, added to their year of 360 days an intercalary month, which made their years unequal; and therefore Belesis, being well acquainted with the Egyptian astronomers, and finding that their year was equal, though not absolutely perfect, reduced the Babylonian year to the same standard, that is, he made it consist of 365 days, which were divided into twelve months, of thirty days each, and five days, which were added at the end of the year. But then, because, in each of these years there would be a redundant quarter of a day, and in four years, one whole day, instead of the bissextile day, as it is in the Julian computation, he began every fourth year a day sooner. This alteration he ordered to begin in the first year of his reign, and from thence it was called "the famous era of Nabonassar," for so Belesis was likewise named, which continued in Egypt to the death of Anthony and Cleopatra, and was afterwards in use among the mathematicians and astronomers to the time of Ptolemy, who made his canon by this account, which is justly esteemed the surest and most useful guide of ancient chronology, where the sacred historians are silent.—*Bedford's Scrip. Chron.* b. vi. c. 2. *Whiston's Theory*, b. ii.; and *Chron. of the Old Testament*, p. 12. [It is not probable that the Chaldean astronomers, in whose country must have been preserved much of the learning of the antediluvian world, were under the necessity of borrowing any part of their science from the Egyptians, whose ancestors, at their first emigration from Babylonia, must have carried with them from that country the rudiments at least of all their own science. Accordingly the account of the origin of the famous era of Nabonassar, which Syncellus has given us, from the earliest writers on Chaldean history and antiquities, differs considerably from this. "Nabonassar," says he, as quoted by Dr Hales, "having collected the acts of his predecessors, destroyed them, in order that the computation of the reigns of the Chaldean kings might be made from himself." Such was the origin of the era of Nabonassar, which that monarch made to begin, with his own reign, on the 26th day of February, B. C. 747, and the year employed in it, was the movable year of twelve equal months of thirty days each, to which were added five supernumerary days. This year, which had been in common use among the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Armenians, Persians, and other oriental nations, from time immemorial, ran through all the seasons in the course of 1461 years, which was therefore considered as the grand Nabonassarian period or *annus magnus* of the Chaldean astronomers, for

¹ Bedford's Scripture History, b. vi. c. 2.

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assurance, that God would at last reward their labours with success. In the third engagement Arbaces himself was wounded, and his army routed, and pursued as far as the mountains of Babylon; so that the chief officers were for dispersing and shifting for themselves, when Belesis gave them once more assurance, that if they would but continue together for five days longer, every thing in that time would have a different turn.

With much entreaty was the army prevailed on not to disperse, when suddenly news was brought, that a great enforcement was coming from Bactria to join the king, so that the only game which Arbaces had to play was, to march against them, and by all means imaginable, prevail with them to revolt; wherein he succeeded beyond all men's hopes and expectations, and so gave another turn to the face of affairs.

Sardanapalus, in the mean time, knowing nothing of this, and being elated with his repeated successes, was indulging his sloth and luxury, and preparing beasts for sacrifice, with plenty of wine, and other things necessary to feast and entertain his soldiers; when Arbaces, having intelligence by deserters in what condition his army lay, fearless of any foe, and overcome already with surfeiting and drunkenness, broke into their camp by night, and, having made a terrible slaughter of most of them, forced the rest into the city,

The king, after this defeat, took upon him the defence of the place, and committed the charge of the army to Salamenus, the queen's brother; but Salamenus was worsted in two pitched battles, one in the open field, and the other before the walls of Nineveh, where himself was slain, and most of his men cut to pieces; so that all the resource which Sardanapalus had, was to sustain the siege as long as he could, until the succours, which he had sent for out of all his provinces, should come to his assistance; and this he had some hopes of being able to do, because there was an ancient prophecy, "that Nineveh never could be taken by force, until the river became its enemy."

Arbaces, on the other hand, was much encouraged by his successes, and carried on the siege with the utmost vigour; but the prodigious strength of the walls, which were an hundred feet high, and so very broad, that three chariots might go abreast upon them, and the vast plenty of all manner of stores and provisions, necessary for a long defence, hindered him from making any considerable progress.

Thus two years were spent, without any prospect of relief on the one side, or of taking the town on the other. In the third year, a continued fall of rains made the Tygris overflow to such a degree, that coming into the

much the same reason that 4714 has been considered as the grand Julian period by the astronomers of modern Europe. Hence the astronomical era of Nabonassar, or *annus magnus* of the Chaldeans, commenced on the 28th day of March, B. C. 867, near 120 years before the Historic era; and the king and his counselors were induced to fix on that year and day for the commencement of their grand or astronomical period, because there was a synchronism of the new moon and vernal equinox on that day, which was likewise the beginning of the Chaldean year. It is, however, the historical era that was in common use among chronologers; and its freedom from intercalation rendering it peculiarly convenient for astronomical calculations, it was adopted by the early Greek astronomers Timachares and Hipparchus, and by Ptolemy and others of the Alexandrian school in Egypt. — *Hales's Analysis*, vol. i. p. 155, second edition. — Ed.

city, it tore along with it twenty fathoms of the wall which Sardanapalus concluding to be the accomplishment of the oracle, because by this means the river was apparently become an enemy to the city, he grew quite dispirited, and gave up all for lost. However, to prevent his falling into the hands of the enemy, he caused a large pile of wood ^a to be made in the court of his palace, and there heaping up together all his gold, silver, and royal apparel, and having enclosed his eunuchs and concubines in the midst of it, ordered it to be set on fire, and so burned himself and them together. The only action wherein ¹ those historians, who make no mention of his victories, represent him as a valiant man! Arbaces, being informed of this, marched his army through the breach of the wall, and took the city. After this he rewarded his followers according to their merit; made Belesis governor of Babylonia, Chaldea, and Arabia, according to their compact, and took the rest of the empire to himself; which put an end to the Assyrian monarchy, after it had governed all Asia ² above thirteen hundred years, and, according to the vision which Daniël ³ had of it, in its conquests had been as swift as an eagle, but now its wings were plucked. ^b

¹ Justin, b. i. and Athenæus, b. xii. c. 12.² Justin, b. i.³ Dan. vii. 4.

^a Concerning this pile, Athenæus informs us that it was four hundred feet high, upon which he placed one hundred and fifty golden beds, and as many golden tables; that he had thrown into it some millions of talents of gold and silver, besides the richest furniture of purple, and the finest garments; and that this pile was fifteen days in burning. To which Diodorus adds, that Belesis, by craft, obtained leave of Arbaces to carry off the ashes, under pretence of building an altar with them at Babylon, by which means he gained an immense treasure. But all this looks more like a romance than a true story. — *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, b. vi. c. 2. in the notes.

^b The following is Dr Hales's table of this period, confessedly the most difficult part of sacred chronology, and the account of the principles on which he has harmonized the different reigns, in his own words:—

From the revolt of the Ten Tribes, to the destruction of Jerusalem. 404 years.

KINGS OF JUDAH.		KINGS OF ISRAEL.	
	Y. B.C.		Y. B.C.
1. Rehoboam . . .	17 990	1. Jeroboam . . .	22 990
2. Abijah . . .	3 973	2. Nadab . . .	2 968
3. Asa . . .	41 970	3. Baasha . . . (24)	23 966
4. Jehosaphat . . .	25 929	4. Ela . . . (2)	1 943
5. Jehoram, or Joram . . .	8 904	5. Zimri & Omri (12)	11 942
6. Ahaziah . . .	1 896	6. Ahab . . .	22 931
7. Q. Athaliah . . .	6 895	7. Ahaziah . . .	2 909
8. Joash, or Jehoash . . .	40 889	8. Jehoram, or Joram . . .	12 907
9. Amaziah . . .	29 849	9. Jehu . . .	28 895
Interregnum . . .	11 820	10. Jehoahaz . . .	17 867
10. Uzziah, or Azariah . . .	52 809	11. Jehoash, or Joash . . .	16 850
11. Jotham . . .	16 757	12. Jeroboam II. . .	41 834
12. Ahaz . . .	16 741	13. Interregnum . . .	22 793
13. Hezekiah . . .	29 725	14. Zechariah & Shallum . . .	1 771
14. Manasseh . . .	55 696	15. Menahem . . .	10 770
15. Amon . . .	2 641	16. Pekahiah . . .	2 760
16. Josiah . . .	31 639	16. Pekah . . .	20 758
17. Jehoahaz, 3 m. . .		2d Interregnum . . .	10 738
18. Jehoiakim . . .	11 608	17. Hoshea . . .	9 728
19. Jehoiachin, 3 m. . .			
20. Zedekiah . . .	11 597	Samaria taken . . .	271 719
Jerusalem taken . . .	404 586		

This period has been hitherto considered as the Gordian knot of sacred chronology; the intricacy of which, all the chronologers have complained of, but none have been able to unravel. The difficulty of harmonizing the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel together, has principally arisen; 1. from the discordance

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of some of the correspondences in the years of their respective reigns, with the direct lengths of those reigns; and 2. from not critically determining the duration of the two interregnums or vacancies, in the succession of the latter kings, so as to make them correspond with the former throughout. The whole is here adjusted and harmonized, and it is hoped, satisfactorily, upon the following principles:—1. The standard of the reigns of the kings of Judah is considered as correct; for it is verified by the concurrence of the books of Kings and Chronicles, the latter relating especially to the kings of Judah, and of Josephus, Abulfaragi, and Eutychius. The incorrectness, therefore, complained of, must be confined to the latter series; and must be remedied, by reducing it to the former. 2. The two series of reigns agree in three points of time: 1. The reigns of Rehoboam and Jeroboam began together, or in the same year, (1 Kings xii. 1—20; 2 Chron. x. 1—19; as did also, 2. The reigns of queen Athaliah and of Jehu, who slew the two kings of Judah and Israel, Ahaziah and Jehoram, the same day, (2 Kings ix. 24—27;) and, 3. Samaria was taken by the Assyrians in the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, and in the sixth year of Hezekiah king of Judah, (2 Kings xviii. 10.) 3. Hence it necessarily follows, 1. That the first six reigns in Judah must be equal in length to the first eight in Israel; and also, 2. That the next seven in Judah, to the sixth of Hezekiah, including one interregnum, must be equal to the remainder in Israel, including two interregnums. 4. But upon comparing the former together, it appears that the first six of Judah amount to ninety-five years; whereas, the first eight of Israel amount to ninety-eight years, according to the table of reigns in Scripture. Consequently, three years must be retrenched from the latter, to reduce them to an equality with the former. Accordingly, one year is here subtracted from each of the reigns of Baasha, Ela, and Zimri, which are thereby reduced from current,* to complete years. And this reduction is warranted by the correspondences: for Baasha began to reign in the third year of Asa king of Judah, (1 Kings xv. 33;) and his son Ela, in the twenty-sixth of Asa, (1 Kings xvi. 8,) which gives the reign of Baasha, 26—3=23 years complete. Ela was slain in the twenty-seventh of Asa, (1 Kings xvi. 10;) he reigned, therefore, only 27—26=1 year complete. And Zimri and Omri reigned in succession, from the twenty-seventh to the thirty-eighth of Asa, (1 Kings xvi. 29;) or only 38—27=11 years complete. And as their reigns were all included in the one reign of Asa, and therefore more likely to be correctly referred thereto, this is a reason why these three reigns should be selected for reduction, rather than the succeeding or the preceding. 5. Upon comparing the latter together, it appears that there was one interregnum in the kingdom of Judah, of eleven years, and two in Israel of twenty-two years, and of ten years; which are requisite in both, to equalize the two periods together, of one hundred and seventy-six years each; counting them from the joint accession of queen Athaliah and Jehu, to the sixth of Hezekiah, and capture of Samaria, in the same year. That the lengths of these interregnums are rightly assigned, will appear from the correspondences of reigns. 1. Amaziah king of Judah, survived the death of Jehoash king of Israel, fifteen years; he died, therefore, about the sixteenth year of his son Jeroboam II. (2 Kings xiv. 17; 2 Chron. xxv. 25;) but Azariah, or Uziah, did not begin to reign

until the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam II. (2 Kings xv. 1; 2 Chron. xxvi. 1;) therefore, from the death of Amaziah to the succession of his son Uziah, there was an interregnum of 27—16=11 years. 2. Jeroboam II. began to reign in the fifteenth year of Amaziah, king of Judah, and reigned forty-one years, (2 Kings xiv. 23;) he died, therefore, in the sixteenth year of Uziah, king of Judah; but Zechariah, his son, did not succeed him till the thirty-eighth of Uziah, (2 Kings xv. 8;) consequently, the first interregnum in Israel lasted 38—16=22 years. 3. Pekah, king of Israel, began to reign in the fifty-second of Uziah, (2 Kings xv. 27; 2 Chron. xxvi. 3;) and in the twentieth year of his reign was slain by Hoshea, (2 Chron. xv. 30,) in the third year of the reign of Ahaz king of Judah, (2 Kings xvi. 1;) but Hoshea did not begin to reign till the twelfth year of Ahaz, (2 Kings xvii. 1;) or the thirteenth current, (2 Kings xviii. 10;) consequently, the second interregnum in Israel lasted 13—3=10 years. 6. A curious and satisfactory confirmation of this adjustment of the reigns of the kings of Israel, is furnished by Josephus, who reckons their amount, from the revolt of the ten tribes, to the extinction of that kingdom, 240 years, (*Ant. ix. 14, 1;*) and if, from the whole corrected amount, 271 years, we deduct the two interregnums, 32 years, the remainder, 239 years, complete, or 240 current, gives the lengths of the reigns alone. This furnishes a decisive proof of his great skill as a chronologer, in developing the length of this intricate and perplexed period. That he was no stranger to the chasm of thirty-two years in Israel, we may infer from his taking into account the eleven years of interregnum in Judah, necessary to complete his amount of the whole period, from the foundation to the destruction of the temple, 441 years. 7. We are now competent to detect some errors that have crept into the correspondences of reigns; and which have hitherto puzzled and perplexed chronologers, and prevented them from critically harmonizing the two series; not being able to distinguish the genuine from the spurious numbers.

1. ‘Jehoshaphat began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab,’ (1 Kings xxi. 41.) It should be the second.

2. ‘Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, began to reign over Israel in the seventeenth of Jehoshaphat,’ (1 Kings xxii. 51.) It should be the twentieth of Jehoshaphat.

3. ‘Jehoram, the son of Ahaziah, began to reign over Israel in the second year of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat,’ (2 Kings i. 17.) It should be in the twenty-second year of Jehoshaphat; as also, where it is again incorrectly stated, in the eighteenth, (2 Kings iii. 1.)

4. ‘Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, began to reign over Judah, in the fifth year of the reign of Joram, the [grand] son of Ahab,’ (2 Kings viii. 16.) It should be the fifth year from the death of Ahab; or the third year of Joram’s reign. ‘Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah,’ is an anachronism, and an interpolation in the Masoretic text.

5. ‘Jehoash began to reign over Israel in the thirty-seventh year of Joash, king of Judah,’ (2 Kings xiii. 10.) It should be the thirty-ninth year; as in the accurate Aldine edition of the Greek Septuagint..

6. The correspondences by which the interregnum in Judah was collected, are incorrect; they should be 25—14=11 years.

7. ‘Hoshea slew Pekah king of Israel, in the twentieth year of Jotham,’ (2 Kings xv. 30.) But Jotham reigned only sixteen years, (2 Kings xv. 33.) It should be in the third year of Ahaz, as collected from 2 Kings xvi. 1.—Ed.

* That the reigns in these lists are all computed, in current time, according to the popular mode of computation in the east, and every where, may further be collected from that of Zedekiah, eleven years; which actually was only ten years, four months, and eight days, supposing the first year to have been complete. Compare 2 Kings xxiv. 18, with xxx. 2—4.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK VII.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THINGS FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST,
IN ALL 588 YEARS,—ACCORDING TO DR HALES 586.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE two methods by which Scripture gives an account of the events by which the great plan of redeeming mercy has been carried on, are history and prophecy. Where Scripture history fails, prophecy takes place; so that the account is carried on, and the chain is not broken, till we come to the very last link of it in the consummation of all things.

The period, accordingly, on which we are now entering, though less the subject of Scripture history than most of the preceding, is more the subject of prophecy than the events of the former periods. It was the will of God that the spirit of prophecy should cease; but before that took place, an outline of the history of events till the coming of Christ was given in the prophecies which were recorded in Scripture. It is also deserving of notice, that, whereas the historical notices of the preceding periods in profane history are scanty and imperfect, they are, in regard to this period, authentic and full.

Nor can we fail to notice the number and magnitude of the revolutions which, from this era, took place among the nations of the earth, preparatory to the coming of Christ. The king of Babylon is represented in Scripture as overturning the world; but the Babylonish empire was overthrown by Cyrus, who founded the Persian empire in its room, and which greatly surpassed it in extent and glory. But this also was overthrown by Alexander, who established the Grecian empire on its ruins; and this in its turn was destined to be subverted by the Romans, whose empire surpassed all that had preceded it in extent and dominion. These mighty revolutions were designed by the sovereign Ruler of the universe, to prepare the world for the coming of Christ. ¹ 'I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.' ² 'For thus saith the Lord of hosts, I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall

come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.' These mighty empires were suffered thus to overthrow and destroy one another, to show the instability and vanity of all earthly power and greatness; which served as a foil to set forth the glory of Messiah's kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. This was the kingdom which the God of heaven was to set up;—a kingdom that shall not be left to other people, but which shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and shall stand for ever. ³

How remarkable was the preservation of the church amid those overturnings of the kingdoms of the world! It is indeed wonderful that the chosen people should have been preserved for five or six hundred years, while the earth was, as it were, rent in pieces; especially considering that the land of Judea, the chief place of the church's residence, lay in the midst of the contending nations, and was very much the object of the envy and hatred of all the heathen nations.

The first thing that offers itself to our observation in the history of this period, is the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. They were often, in the time of the judges, brought under the dominion of their enemies; but there had never been any such thing as destroying the sanctuary and city of Jerusalem, and all the towns and villages of the land, and carrying the whole body of the people into a distant country. Yet, the great plan of redeeming love and mercy was promoted by this dispensation; for it had the effect of curing the nation of their tendency to idolatry. This was a remarkable and wonderful change in that people, and what directly promoted the work of redemption. It also tended to prepare the way for the coming of the Redeemer, by diminishing the glory of the Jewish dispensation. In the language of prophecy ² it removed the crown and diadem, that it might be no more, till he should come, whose right it was. The Jews henceforward were always dependent on the governing power of other nations, that is, during the space of near six hundred years, with the exception of a short interval. They were, besides,

¹ Ezek. xxi. 27.

² Haggai ii. 6, 7.

³ Dan. ii. 44.

² Ezek. xxi. 26.

A. M. 3417. A. C. 537; OR. ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4825. A. C. 586. JER. xl. 7.—xliv.—DANIEL AND EZRA i.—v.

by the captivity into Babylon dispersed over the world before the coming of Messiah,—a circumstance which tended greatly to promote the kingdom of Christ. Though Cyrus gave them liberty to return to their own land, many of them never returned, but were scattered abroad, and continued to dwell among the nations. The effect of this dispersion was the raising of a general expectation of the Messiah—the birth of a glorious person in Judea, who should reign over the world in peace and righteousness. It is unnecessary to say, how much this general dispersion of the Jews contributed to the general and rapid promulgation of the gospel.

It was during the captivity that Ezekiel and Daniel greatly enlarged the canon of Scripture. To each of these prophets Christ appeared in the form of that nature which he was afterwards to assume. These two prophets, in many respects, were more particular concerning the coming of Christ, and his glorious kingdom, than any of the prophets had been before. Daniel mentions the time in which Messiah should come. Thus does gospel light increase the nearer we approach to the dawn of the Sun of righteousness.

But Babylon itself, into which the Jews had been carried captive, was overthrown by Cyrus. Its destruction was brought about in such a manner, as wonderfully to show the hand of God, and to fulfil his word by his prophets. That great city was destroyed after it had stood about seventeen hundred years. The Jews were in consequence permitted to return to their own land, and to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. This return of the Jews from Babylonish captivity is, next to the redemption out of Egypt, the most remarkable of all the Old Testament redemptions, and most insisted on in Scripture, as a type of the redemption of man from the dominion of sin and Satan. Their return was a remarkable dispensation of providence, inasmuch as Cyrus, the main instrument by whom it was effected, was a heathen prince, who gave them liberty not only to rebuild the city and the temple, but to receive the silver and gold which were requisite for their undertaking. Afterwards God inclined the heart of Darius to further the building of the temple with his own tribute money, and by commanding the Samaritans, who had been striving to hinder them, to help without fail, by furnishing them with all that they needed in order to it.¹ God inclined the heart of Artaxerxes, another king of Persia, to promote the work of preserving the state of the Jews, by his ample commission to Ezra; helping them abundantly with silver and gold of his own bounty, and offering more as should be needful, out of the king's treasure-house. In the prophecy of Daniel, this is called *the decree* for restoring and building Jerusalem; hence the seventy weeks are dated.

It was during this period that Ezra added to the canon of Scripture, and that the canon of the Old Testament was completed and sealed by Malachi. Soon after this, the spirit of prophecy ceased till the appearing of the great Prophet, who came a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel.

The events, characters, and dispensations, which the history of the patriarchal and Mosaic economies records, were made subservient to the Redeemer,—to the

representation of his offices, and to the arrival of the period suitable for the accomplishment of his work. The prophets who were successively raised up bore testimony concerning him; and their power of eloquent and of sublime description never rose so high, as when setting forth the dignity of his person, the efficacy of his work, and the glories of his kingdom. At length the Divine Redeemer, for whom this preparation had been made, appeared, and justified by the works which he performed, and the redemption which he wrought out, the light in which poetry, history, and prophecy, had held him forth. His glory was beheld as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

SECT. I.

CHAP. I.—*From the Captivity to the Death of Cyrus.*

THE HISTORY.

AFTER the return of Nebuchadnezzar and his victorious army to Babylon, all those Jews who, for fear of him, had taken refuge among neighbouring nations, or had hid themselves in the fields and deserts of their own country, hearing that Gedaliah was made governor of the land, resorted to him at Mizpah,^a where he set up his residence. Among these were Johanan and Jonathan, the sons of Kereah, and Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, with divers others: but Ishmael came to him out of a treacherous intent only; for being of the blood-royal, he reckoned to make himself king of Judea, now that the Chaldeans were gone, and to that purpose had formed a conspiracy to kill Gedaliah, and seize on the government, wherein Baalis,^b king of the Ammonites, was confederate with him.

^a In the history of Jacob we read, that after a stay of several years at Haran, making his escape from thence, he was overtaken by Laban, his father-in-law, in a mountainous tract, which was afterwards called Gilead, that is, an heap of stones, as also Mizpah, that is, a watch tower, because, at the covenant which was made between Laban and him, an heap of stones was gathered to remain a monument of it, and upon that occasion Laban's expressions are these:—'The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou wilt afflict my daughters, or if thou wilt take other wives besides my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness between me and thee.' (Gen. xxxi. 49, 50.) From that time, the place where this covenant was made, and where, probably in memory of it, a city in after-ages was built, was called Mizpah. It was situate on the east side of the river Jordan, and in the division of the land, fell to the tribe of Dan; and here it was that Gedaliah chose to fix his habitation, or perhaps was ordered to fix it here, because it lay nearest of any to Babylon, from whence he was to receive his instructions as to the administration of the government.—*Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. i.

^b That Ishmael, who was of the blood-royal of Judah, should attempt to take away the life of Gedaliah, is no wonder at all. His envy of the other's promotion, and his ambition to make himself a king, might be strong incitements to what he did: but why Baalis should have any hand in so black a design, we can hardly imagine any other reason than the ancient and inveterate hatred which the Ammonites always had against the Hebrews: and therefore this king of theirs, seeing that the Jewish nation was at this time, in a manner, brought to nothing, was minded to take revenge for all the injuries that his ancestors had received from them, and to give the finishing stroke to their ruin by cutting off their governor, and so dispersing all the remains of that unhappy people, which was now gathered together at Mizpah.

¹ Ezra vi.

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His design, however, was not carried on so secretly, but that Johanan, the son of Kereah, got notice of it, and acquainted the governor with it; but he being a man of a generous temper, and not apt to entertain jealousies of others, took no notice of Johanan's information, but continued the same friendly correspondence with Ishmael that he had ever done. This gave the traitor an advantage against him; for pretending to pay him a visit one day, he and his confederates, at a time when the people were gone out to harvest work, fell upon him, and slew him, even while he was entertaining them at his table. With him he murdered all the Jews and Chaldeans that were at Mizpah, except some few, whom he made captives; and having kept the matter private, the next day but one, he destroyed fourscore Israelites, who were coming in a mournful manner, ^a with their oblations, into the town, and there put them all to the sword, except ten, who, for the redemption of their lives, offered him all the ^b treasures they had in the field.

After this massacre, Ishmael not thinking himself safe in Mizpah, took the captives with him, among whom were king Zedekiah's daughters, and was making the best of his way to the king of the Ammonites, when Johanan and the rest of the captains of Judah, hearing of this detestable deed, made after him with what forces they could get together: but when he perceived them coming, he left all his train behind him, and with only eight men, made his escape into the land of Ammon.

Johanan, and the rest of the captains, being thus left with all the people, and now reflecting on what Ishmael had done to Gedaliah, began to be apprehensive, that the Chaldeans might possibly revenge his death upon them; and, therefore, for fear of the worst, they retired

to Chimham, ^c not far from Bethlehem, that in case they were called to an account, they might more readily make their escape into Egypt.

Jeremiah, from the time that he parted with Nebuzaradan, had taken up his abode with Gedaliah the governor; but after his death, among the rest of the captives, was carried from thence by Ishmael the conspirator, and now, upon his defeat, accompanied Johanan, and the rest of his countrymen, to their new habitation at Chimham. Here they had not been long before Johanan, and the other princes of the people came to request of him that he would consult the Lord concerning their intended journey into Egypt, with warm professions, however, of a ready compliance with whatever he should think fit to enjoin them. The prophet did so: and in ten days' time returned them this answer from God:—"That if they would tarry in Judea, and live peaceably under the king of Babylon, he would screen them from their present danger, and incline the heart of their conqueror to be favourable to them; but that if they persisted in their intention of going into Egypt, he would infallibly cause every thing they dreaded, the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, to pursue them." But notwithstanding both their own professions, and the prophet's declarations, wherein they ^d blamed Baruch, as being accessory, they were resolutely bent upon going into Egypt; and accordingly taking all the remnant of Judah, men, women, and children, the king's daughters, Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch his scribe, with them, they went and settled in the country, until the judgments wherewith God had threatened their disobedience came upon them.

The Jews ^e were no sooner settled in Egypt, than

But whatever their views might be, it is certain that they put their design in speedy execution; for the murder of Gedaliah happened but two months after the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, namely, in the seventh month (which is Tisri, and answers in part to our September and October), and on the thirtieth day of the month: for that day the Jews have kept as a fast, in commemoration of this calamity (which indeed was the completion of their ruin) ever since.—*Calmet's Commentary* on Jer. xl. 14; and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 588.

^a The Hebrews, at the death of their friends and relations, gave all possible demonstrations of grief and mourning. The duration of which was commonly seven days: but it was lengthened or shortened according to circumstances. That for Moses and Aaron was prolonged for thirty days, which, Josephus says, ought to be sufficient for any wise man, on the loss of his nearest relation, or his dearest friend. The mourning habit among the Hebrews was not fixed either by law or custom. We only find in Scripture, that they used to tear their garments. Though it was an express prohibition in the law, 'ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you,' (Lev. xix. 28.); yet this seems to relate only to such practices, when they became superstitious, and were done in honour to false gods; for in cases of ordinary mourning for the dead, or for any other grievous disaster, the words of the prophet seem to imply, as if they had been permitted in common use: 'both the great and the small shall die in the land; they shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them, neither shall men tear themselves in mourning to comfort them for the dead.' Jer. xvi. 6, 7.

^b Treasures, according to the common phrase of Scripture, signify any thing that is hid or kept in reserve, whether it be gold, silver, corn, wine, oil, apparel, or any other thing; and among the people of the east, it was a usual thing to bury their corn, and other provisions, in deep holes, and caverns, which they dug and filled up so very dexterously, that no one could perceive that the earth had been moved, nor could any find them out, but those who made them.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^c This place may be supposed, from 2 Sam. xix. 38, to have been anciently given by king David to Chimham, the son of old Barzilai the Gileadite, and which, at this time, bore his name, though near five hundred years after the first donation. It was in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, about two leagues from Jerusalem, and hither the poor people betook themselves; because it was at a much farther distance from Babylon than Mizpah, and in their straight way to Egypt, in case they should determine to go thither, as they seemed inclinable to do, because there they supposed they should 'have no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread.' Jer. xlii. 14.

^d The words in the text are,—'The Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, go not into Egypt to sojourn there; but Baruch, the son of Neriah, setteth thee on against us, to deliver us into the hands of the Chaldeans, that they may put us to death, and carry us away captive into Babylon,' Jer. xlii. 2, 3. But what foundation the people should have for this their accusation against Baruch, it is no easy matter to conceive; only we may suppose, that as Baruch was preserved, and taken care of by the Chaldeans, as well as his master, and was equally against maintaining the siege of Jerusalem, when Nebuchadnezzar came before it; and that as he had been some time at Babylon himself, (see Baruch i. 1, 3,) and was probably not so virulent in his speeches against the Chaldeans as the other Jews were; this, to a blind and malicious mob, was reason enough to suspect him of being engaged in the enemy's party.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^e The places in which the Jews are said to have settled themselves in Egypt, were Migdol, Tahpanhes, Noph, and the country of Pathros, (Jer. xlv. 1.) Migdol is the same place in Egypt, which Moses makes mention of, (Exod. xiv. 2,) over against Baal-zephon, not far from the Red Sea. Tahpanhes is Daphne, not far from Pelusium, the first city in Egypt, in the road from Judea, and, as it were, its key. Noph is Memphis, situate above the parting of the Nile, or where the Delta begins, and not a little famous for its pyramids; and the country of Pathros is the same with Thebais, or the Upper Egypt, so called from the city Thebes, which was the first capital of it.

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they gave themselves wholly up to idolatry, worshipping the queen ^a of heaven, and the other false deities of the land, whereupon Jeremiah made loud remonstrances; but all the effect which they had upon them, was only to make them more obstinate in their impiety: so that the prophet was obliged to denounce God's severest judgments against them in express terms, and at the same time to foretel, that the king of Egypt, under whose protection they lived secure, as they thought, should be delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, ^b God's agent for that purpose, in like manner as Zedekiah was; which, in the space of eighteen years afterwards, accordingly came to pass.

After this we have no more of the prophet Jeremiah, ^c and very little of his contemporary Ezekiel. ^d They both, no doubt, continued in their prophetic office until their death; but when or where that happened, or by whose means it was occasioned, the Scripture is silent, and tradition is uncertain. This however we may learn

^a By which is meant the moon at least, if not all the planets; for what we render *queen*, in the marginal note, is called *the frame of heaven*.

^b It is very observable, that in several places of Jeremiah's prophesy, namely, chap. xxv. 9, chap. xxvii. 6, and chap. xlii. 10, Nebuchadnezzar is called 'God's servant,' on purpose to show us, that as great a prince as he was, he was no more than the executioner of his commands: that he was the general of his troops, and that all the victories he gained, and the conquests he won, were by his direction and appointment: for no writers speak with so much deference of God, as do the prophets, because they only knew, by the inspiration of the divine Spirit, to express with a proper dignity what the greatest monarchs are in comparison with the divine majesty.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^c St Jerome, in the life of this prophet, and Dorotheus, in his Synopsis of the lives and deaths of the prophets and apostles, tell us, that he was stoned to death in Egypt by his own renegade countrymen the Jews, for preaching against their idolatry: and of this some interpret St Paul's *ἐλεῖσθαι*, they were stoned, Heb. xi. 37. It appears indeed by the account we have of their behaviour, Jer. xlv. 16, that they were bent both against him and his reprofs; and therefore it was more likely that they were the authors of his death, than, as some say, the Egyptians were, for his prophesying against them, and their king Pharaoh-hophra. For the Egyptians, according to the same tradition, having by the prophet's prayers, been freed from the crocodiles, which very much infested them, had him in such great honour and esteem, that, in testimony thereof, they buried him in one of their royal sepulchres. The truth is, Jeremiah was, all his lifetime, exposed to the ill treatment of the Jews, whose irregularities, and sad apostasy, he was always reproofing; and therefore the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus, in the encomium which he gives of this prophet, seems to draw his character from the persecutions he endured: 'they intreated him evil, who nevertheless was a prophet, sanctified in his mother's womb,' Eccles. xlix. 7.

^d St Jerome, in his life of this prophet, tells us, that he was put to death by a prince of the children of Israel, whom he reproofed for his idolatry: but who this prince of the Jewish nation should be, upon the river Chebar, where Ezekiel, in the time of his captivity, lived, it is difficult to tell. He was buried, as some say, in the same cave wherein Shem and Arphaxad were deposited, upon the banks of the Euphrates: but Benjamin of Tudela, in his travels, tells us, that at some leagues from Bagdat, he saw a magnificent mausoleum, which was said to be this prophet's tomb, upon the top of which there was a famous library, wherein, as they say, was the original of the prophet's predictions, written with his own hand: that in the prophet's tomb there is a lamp continually burning, maintained at the expense of the captivity of Bagdat: that every year this tomb is frequented by the several heads of the captivity, who resort thither with a numerous retinue; and that not only the Jews, but the Persians, Medes, and many of the Mussulmen, made this a place of devotion, and came thither to make their presents, and perform their most sacred vows.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Ezekiel*.

from their own writings, that after they had discharged their duty to their own people the Jews, they were directed by God to address the rest of their predictions chiefly to the Gentiles. Accordingly we find Jeremiah prophesying against Egypt in the 46th chapter; against all the Philistines in the 47th; against the Moabites in the 48th; against Ammon, Edom, and other people in the 49th; and against Babylon in the 50th and 51st; with some promises here and there interspersed concerning the redemption of Israel. In like manner we find Ezekiel prophesying against the Ammonites in the 25th chapter; against the Tyrians, and those that traded with them, in the 26th and 27th; against the prince of Tyre, in the 28th; against Egypt, in the 29th, 30th, 31st, and 32d; against the shepherds of Israel, in the 34th; against the Edomites in the 35th; and against the enemies of the church of God, under the name of Gog and Magog, in the 38th and 39th; with promises of a restoration (especially in the 36th and 37th,) to his captive countrymen, and a long description of the rebuilding of the temple and city, wherewith he concludes, as a sure confirmation of it.

Daniel, who was descended from the royal family of David, in the first captivity of Judah, which happened under king Jehoiakim, together with his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, was carried to Babylon, when he was as yet but a youth. The custom among conquerors then was to change the names of their captives, especially when they were to serve in any capacity about the court; and therefore, by the order of Aspenaz, ^e master of the eunuchs, Daniel ^f was called *Belteshazzar*; Hananiah *Shadrach*; Mishael, *Meshach*; and Azariah, *Abednego*.

For three years they were instructed in all the learning of the Chaldeans, and had a daily allowance of meat and wine from the king's table; but Daniel, who was a devout observer of the religion of his country, desired of the chief eunuch, that they might be excused from that, and have only a sufficient quantity of water and pulse allowed them, which accordingly was granted; and, by the time that they had finished their studies, they were found to excel in the several parts of learning there in

^e What we render 'master of the eunuchs,' may very likely signify the chief minister of Nebuchadnezzar's court. Such officers, in the palaces of eastern princes, were usually called eunuchs; because they who had the control of the king's household, as we say, were ordinarily such, though many times it might be otherwise. The Jews have a notion, that Daniel and his three companions were, by the order of Nebuchadnezzar, made eunuchs, that the prophesy of Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'Thy sons, that shall issue from thee, shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon,' (chap. xxxix. 7.) But that is no conclusive reason; because in that prophesy, as well as in the passage we are now upon, the name of eunuch might mean no more than any person who had an employment at court.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^f It is very remarkable, that, as all their former names related to the true God, so all the names which on this occasion were imposed upon these four Jewish youths, had some reference or other to Babylonish idols. Daniel, in Hebrew signifies, *God is my judge*; Belteshazzar, in Chaldee, is *the treasure of Babel*; Hananiah, in Hebrew, is *well pleasing to God*; Shadrach, in Chaldee, the *inspiration of the sun*; Mishael, in Hebrew, *proceeding from God*; Meshach, in Chaldee, *belonging to the goddess Sheshach*; Azariah, in Hebrew, *God is my help*; and Abednego, in Chaldee, *the servant of Nago*, that is, the sun, or the morning star, both deities among the Babylonians, and so called because of their brightness.—*Calmet's Commentary* on Dan. i. 7.

A. M. 3417. A. C. 587; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4825. A. C. 586. JER. xl. 7—xlv. DANIEL, AND EZRA i—v.

vogue, all the magicians in the country; ^a and especially Daniel was become very famous for his singular skill in the knowledge and interpretation of dreams.

It so happened one night, that king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which left strong impressions upon his spirits; but the thing which made him uneasy was, that he could not recollect the substance of it. To assist his memory in this respect, he summoned all his wise men together, those especially that pretended to divination, demanding of them what his dream was, but when they endeavoured to excuse themselves upon the presumed impossibility of the thing, he fell into such a passion, that he ordered all who professed magic ^b in his dominions to be instantly put to death.

Under this denomination and sentence were Daniel and his three friends included; and therefore, understanding the reason of this sudden decree, Daniel applied himself to Arioch, captain of the guard, desiring a short respite of its execution, in which time he did not in the least doubt but to give the king full satisfaction, both as to his dream, ^c and the interpretation of it: and so pro-

^a The prophet Daniel makes great mention of these sort of people, and ranks them under these four different kinds:—The Chartumim, the Asaphim, the Mecasphim, and the Chasdim, (chap. ii. 2.) Chartumim, according to the Septuagint, signifies *sophists*, but, according to St Jerome, *diviners, fortune-tellers, casters of nativity*, &c. Asaphim has no derivation from the Chaldee tongue, but no small resemblance to the Greek word *sophis*, (whether the Greeks took this word from the Babylonians, or the Babylonians from them) and therefore the Seventy have rendered it by *philosophers*. Mecasphim is thought by some to be *necromancers*, such as pretended to raise the dead, to gain intelligence of things future: but the Seventy have rendered it by a word that denotes such enchanterers as made use of noxious herbs and drugs, the blood of victims, and the bones of the dead for their superstitious operations. The other word Chasdim is the same with Chaldeans, and here signifies a sort of *philosophers* among the Babylonians, who dwelt in a separate part of the city, and were exempt from all public offices and employments. Their study was natural philosophy, astrology, divination, or the foretelling of future events by the observation of the stars, the interpretation of dreams, the science of auguries, the worship of their gods, &c., as Diodorus Siculus, (b. 1.) give us an account of them.—*Culmet's Dictionary* under the word *Magicians*.

^b Magic is properly of three kinds, natural, artificial, and diabolical. The first of these is no other than natural philosophy, but highly improved and advanced; whereby the person that is well skilled in the power and operation of natural bodies, is able to produce many wonderful effects, mistaken by the illiterate for diabolical performances, but such as lie perfectly within the verge of nature. Artificial magic is what we call legerdemain or sleight of hand, the merry tricks of jugglers, as we corrupt the *joculatores*, far from exceeding the power of art, though many times they pass with the vulgar for diabolical likewise. Diabolical magic is that which is done by the help of the devil, who, having great skill in natural causes, may assist those who are in league and covenant with him, to do many strange and astonishing things. It seems, however, by the discourse which passed between Nebuchadnezzar and his magicians, that they had no knowledge in the sciences they pretended to; that the king himself looked upon them as no better than a pack of impostors; and that they had no familiarity with any wicked demons who might have helped them out at this dead lift; otherwise they would not have told the king, 'it is a rare thing which the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods whose dwelling is not with flesh,' (Dan. ii. 11.)—See *Edwards's Body of Divinity*, vol. i.

^c Some are of opinion, that Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the interpretation thereof, were both revealed to Daniel while he was asleep; but others rather think that it was in a vision while he was awake, because the prayer and thanksgiving which he made to God seem to insinuate that he was awake; though we cannot see why he might not receive the revelation in his

ceeding to his three friends, he acquainted them with what he had undertaken, and desired their joint prayer to God, that he would be pleased to reveal this great and important secret to him; which accordingly was done that very night.

The next morning, after he had returned praise and thanksgiving to God for this singular vouchsafement, he repaired to the palace, and, being introduced by the captain of the guard, was asked by the king, if he had found out his dream? "You saw," ^d says he, "O king, an image of a vast dimension, ^e excellent in brightness, but terrible in aspect. The head of this image was of fine gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet partly iron and partly clay. You saw, likewise, O King, a stone cut out of the mountain, but from whence it came you knew not. This stone, falling upon the feet of the image, brake them into pieces, and then the rest of the image mouldered into dust, which the wind dispersed, so that it was no more to be seen; but the stone which, in this manner, destroyed the image, increased to a great mountain, and filled the earth. This, O king, was the dream: and the interpretation ^f of it is this:—You, who

sleep, and return God thanks for it as soon as he awoke.—*Culmet's Commentary*.

^d Josephus introduces Daniel as making this preamble to his discovery and explanation of the king's dream: "It is not any high conceit of my own wisdom, as if I understand more than the Chaldeans do, or any designed reproach upon them for not being able to resolve a question which I am able to unriddle, that I engage in this matter; for I am not a person that pretends to more skill and knowledge than my neighbours; but it is purely the work of God, in pity to the miserable, and in mercy to my prayers, for the life and safety of myself and friends, that has now laid open this dream to me, and explained the meaning of it. Nor have I been so solicitous for the safety of myself and my companions under your displeasure, as for your honour and glory, lest you should tarnish them, by putting to death (contrary to all right and justice) so many worthy men, merely because they were not able to do a thing that is impossible for flesh and blood to perform," (*Jewish Antiq.* b. x. c. 11.) This is to be observed, however, that though a great part of the book of Daniel be in Hebrew, yet this speech of his to the king, as well as the dialogue which passed between the king and the magicians; the king's decree, wherein he orders the golden statue to be worshipped; and that other, wherein he declares his dream of the vast large tree, which Daniel explained; the history of the feast which Belshazzar made; of his profanation of the sacred vessels, and the terrible vision of the handwriting which he saw upon the wall; the beginning of the reign of Darius; the honours conferred on Daniel, and the vision of the four beasts, denoting the four monarchies; that all these, I say, (namely, from the fourth verse of the second chapter, to the beginning of the eighth chapter,) are wrote in the Chaldee or Syriac language, which, at that time, were both the same, and both as familiar to the prophet as was his mother tongue.—*Culmet's Commentary* on Dan. ii. 4.

^e Grotius accurately observes, that the image appeared with a glorious lustre in the imagination of Nebuchadnezzar, whose mind was wholly taken up with admiration of worldly pomp and splendour; whereas the same monarchies were represented to Daniel under the shape of fierce and wild beasts, (ch. vii.) as being the great supporters of idolatry and tyranny in the world.—*Louth's Commentary* on Dan. ii.

^f By these different emblems of metals and stone, God intended to signify to Nebuchadnezzar the several empires that were to be in the world. The Assyrian or Chaldean is represented by gold, because it was the first and the most magnificent, if not the most extensive, and Nebuchadnezzar being then upon the throne, is said to be head of it. That of silver is the Persian, founded by Cyrus, upon the ruins of the Chaldee, but inferior to the Chaldean in its duration at least, if not in its extent. That of brass is the Grecian, founded by Alexander, upon the ruins of the Persian, and its character is, that it 'should bear rule over

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are supreme above all other kings, and to whom the God of heaven hath given power, and strength, and glory, are signified by this head of gold. After you another kingdom shall arise, but as inferior to yours as silver is to gold. After that there shall arise a third kingdom, emblemed by brass, which shall govern the earth; but the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, and vanquish all the rest. And whereas the feet were partly iron, and partly clay, this kingdom shall be divided; part of it shall be strong, and part of it weak, as clay and iron cannot be solidly mixed together; but in the times of these empires, the God of heaven shall set up another kingdom, signified by the stone, which shall prevail above all, and itself never be destroyed," &c.

Surprised at this wonderful discovery, the king fell prostrate before Daniel, ^a and was ready to pay him divine honours. He loaded him, however, with presents and rich gifts; set him at the head of his learned men; made him governor over the whole province of Babylon; and, at his request, put his three friends into places of the highest trust under him. But all this happened ^b before the siege of Jerusalem.

all the earth,' (Dan. ii. 39,) which was verified in its great founder; for, upon his return from India to Babylon, the ambassadors of almost all the known parts of the world resorted thither to pay their homage and acknowledgment of his dominion. That of iron is the Roman empire, which is distinguished by its 'breaking in pieces, and subduing all things,' (ver. 40.) For, whilst it was in its full strength and vigour, under its consuls and first emperors, it brought under its dominion all the kingdoms and states that were then subsisting in Europe, Africa, and a great part of Asia; but, from that time, it became a mixture of iron and clay. Its emperors proved most of them vicious and corrupt, either by their tyranny, making themselves hateful to their subjects, or by their follies and vices, contemptible. Lastly, that of the 'stone out of the mountain,' is the fifth monarchy, or the kingdom of the Messias; which, against all the power and policy of the Roman empire, prevailed, not by an external force, but by the powerful preaching of the gospel, to the suppression and defeat of wickedness and impiety, idolatry, and superstition, and 'it shall stand for ever, and never be destroyed,' (Dan. ii. 44,) which can be said of no other kingdom but that of Jesus Christ, which, for these eighteen hundred years and upwards, has withstood the violence of persecutions, and all other contrivances formed against it, and has the sure promises of its almighty Founder on its side, that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,' Mat. xvi. 18.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^a Nebuchadnezzar seems, in a sudden transport, to have looked upon Daniel as having something more than human in him, just as the barbarians thought of St Paul, (Acts xviii. 6;) and therefore it is said, that 'he fell on his face and worshipped him;' because the doing of reverence, by way of prostration, is not only an act of worship paid to God, but frequently given to kings and great men in the Old Testament, according to the custom of eastern countries, (2 Sam. ix. 6;) and sometimes even to prophets, on account of the sanctity of their office, (1 Kings xviii. 7;) nor was it usually refused by them, except such circumstances were added to it, as made it look like divine worship, and then it was always rejected, as in the case of St Peter, Acts x. 26.—*Louth's Commentary* on Dan. ii. 43.

^b Namely, in the seventh year of Jehoiakim, according to Prideaux. [This however seems to be a mistake. The most accurate chronologers suppose it to have happened not only after the destruction of Jerusalem, but even after Nebuchadnezzar's devastation of Egypt; and the arguments by which they support their opinion appear to be conclusive. 1. Daniel was old enough to be included, with his three friends, among the Magi condemned to death, for not telling to the king his dream, and not only so, but to be appointed Archimagus on his declaring and interpreting that dream. 2. He styles Nebuchadnezzar king of kings, invested with universal dominion over all the earth; but this could not be said even in the hyperbolical style of the east, till after the king's return from the conquest of Egypt. Jackson and

Nebuchadnezzar being now returned home, out of the spoils which he had brought from Syria and Palestine, ordered a golden statue ^c to be made, thirty yards in height, and of proportionable bigness; and having set it up in the plains of Dura, near Babylon, he summoned all his subjects, of whatever order and degree, to be present at the dedication of it, and the moment they heard the music strike up, which was to be the signal, to fall prostrate on their faces, and adore it, upon pain of being thrown into a burning ^d furnace.

Among the captive Jews, the three friends of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were accused to the king as having violated his command; and when they were brought before him, persisted in their refusal to pay adoration to the image, with so much constancy, that the king, being incensed thereat, ordered those about him to have the furnace made seven times hotter than it was before; to bind these bold contemners of his will, and cast them immediately into it.

The furnace indeed was so intensely hot, that the persons who were ordered to throw them in, were scorched to death; but they themselves came to no manner of harm; for an angel ^e from heaven came, and,

Hales therefore place the discovery and interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's first dream 569 years B. C., or seventeen years after the destruction of Jerusalem.—*Hales's Analysis*, vol. ii. pp. 455-6, second edition.]—Ed.

^c Grotius is of opinion that the image which Nebuchadnezzar set up was the figure of his father Nabopolassar, whom, by this means, he intended to deify; but others think that it was his own statue which he erected, to gain the adorations of his people in this form. We cannot, however, in what we find Nebuchadnezzar saying to Daniel's friends, perceive that he any where upbraids them with contempt offered either to his person, or his statue, but only that they 'would not serve his gods, nor worship the image which he had set up,' (Dan. iii. 14.) And therefore others have imagined, that this was neither his own nor his father's statue, but that of Jupiter, which was afterwards found in the temple of Belus, when Xerxes plundered it of its immense riches, among which were several images of massy gold, but one more especially forty feet high, which might be the same that Nebuchadnezzar consecrated in the plains of Dura. For though that is said to have been sixty cubits, that is, ninety feet high, yet we may suppose, that it stood upon a pedestal of fifty feet high, and so the image and the pedestal together, might make ninety, (see vol. i. p. 310. in the notes,) otherwise there would be no proportion between its height and its breadth, according to the description we have of it in Dan. iii. 1.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 573.—[That the image which Xerxes found in the temple of Belus was forty feet high, is indeed said by Diodorus Siculus (b. ii.); but according to Herodotus, (b. i. c. 183,) it was only twelve cubits or eighteen feet high, and this is surely the more probable account of the two. It may, however, have been the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar; for in the height of that image, as stated in the book of Daniel, the pedestal or pillar, on which it was placed in the plain of Dura, is probably included.]—*Bishop Gleig*.—Ed.

^d This kind of punishment was pretty common in these parts of the world, so that some will have it, that Abraham, before he departed from Chaldaea, was made to undergo it, but escaped by a miraculous preservation, founding their opinion on Gen. xi. 31. Of this furnace, in particular, it is related, that the king's servants having received the command to heat it seven times hotter, 'ceased not to make the oven hot with rosin, pitch, tow, and small wood; so that the flame streamed forth above the furnace forty and nine cubits, and passed through and burned the Chaldeans it found about the furnace. *The Song of the three holy Children*, ver. 23, &c.—For an inquiry into the construction of this furnace or place of fire, see *Taylor's Fragments to Calmet*, and *Calmet* abridged, p. 409.—Ed.

^e Nebuchadnezzar's expression upon this occasion is, 'Lo! I see four men walking loose in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God,' (Dan. iii. 25.) Where-

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suspending the agency of the fire, walked in the midst of the furnace with them, blessing ^a and praising God; so that when the king, who staid to see the execution, perceived it, he started up on a sudden, and, coming nearer to the mouth of the furnace, called upon them to come forth, which they instantly did, in the presence of him and all his attendants, without ^b so much as an hair of their heads being singed, or the least smell of fire about them. Convinced by the greatness of this miracle, the king himself glorified the God of Israel, published an edict in favour of the Jewish religion, and gave these three glorious confessors still higher promotion in the province of Babylon.

Not long after this, the judgments which the prophet Jeremiah ¹ had denounced against his countrymen the Jews, when they rejected the counsel of God, and fled into Egypt for protection, (as they vainly thought,) be-

¹ Jer. xlv. 27, 28.

upon some have thought that this prince, having little or no knowledge of the true religion, imagined that he saw some demigod, an Apollo, a Hercules, a Mercury for instance, the son of a superior god walking with the three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace. The notion, it must be owned, agrees very well with the ancient theology of the Greeks, to which that of the Chaldeans had no small resemblance; but as angels are sometimes in Scripture called the 'sons of God,' (Joh i. 6. and xxxviii. 7.) and most nations had not only a belief of their existence, but high conceptions likewise of their power, the king explains himself what he means by 'the son of God,' when, in joy for their deliverance, he cries out, 'blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him!' (Dan. iii. 28.) For, as it is in the song of the three holy children, "the angel of the Lord came down into the oven, together with Azariah and his fellows, and smote the flame of the oven, and made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist and whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither hurt nor troubled them." [Instead of 'the son of God,' as we have it in Dan. iii. 25, Dr Boothroyd translates 'a son of God,' and Dr A. Clarke has the following remarks on the passage:—"What notion could this idolatrous king have of the Lord Jesus Christ? for so the place is understood by thousands; *bar elohim* signifies a son of the gods, that is, a divine person or angel; and so the king calls him in ver. 28: 'God hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants.' And though even from this some still contend that it was the angel of the covenant, yet the Babylonish king knew just as much of the one as he did of the other. No other ministration was necessary; a single angel from heaven was quite sufficient to answer this purpose, as that which stopped the mouths of the lions when Daniel was cast into their den."—*Dr Clarke's Commentary* on Dan. iii. 25.—ED.]

^a According to the vulgar Latin edition, in the third chapter of Daniel, between the 23d and 24th verses, is added the 'Song of the three children;' but being nowhere extant, either in the Hebrew or Chaldean language, and never received in the canon of holy writ by the Jewish church, or by the ancient Christians, our church has thought proper to place it among the apocryphal writings, where it stands next to the book of Baruch, though the church of Rome, by a decree of the council of Trent, (sess. 4.), has not only given it, but the history of Susanna likewise, and of Bel and the Dragon (which most of the ancients looked upon as mere fables,) a place among the canonical Scriptures. The Song itself consists of two parts; a prayer, and a thanksgiving. The prayer is a devout confession of the sins of the people, and acknowledgment of God's righteousness, in bringing their captivity, and other calamities, upon them. And the thanksgiving is a solemn excitation of all creatures whatever, but more especially of the three Hebrew children, who were thus 'saved from the hands of death, to bless the Lord, praise him, and exalt him above all for ever.'

^b "As if the flame itself (according to the expression of Josephus) had been conscious of the injustice of their sentence, and suspended the very nature of its consuming quality in favour of the innocent."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. x. c. 11.

gan to operate; for, when Nebuchadnezzar understood, ^c that the subjects of Pharaoh Hophra had revolted from him, and declared Amasis, an officer of his court, their king, he took the advantage of the intestine troubles ensuant thereupon, and having in a short time overrun the country from Migdol to Syene, ^d that is, from one end of Egypt to the other, he plundered and laid it waste; and of the Jews, who, after the murder of Gedaliah, had fled thither, some he slew, and others he carried away captive to Babylon; so that scarce any escaped but such as fled out of Egypt, and afterwards settled themselves in their own land, at the end of the captivity. ^e

Having thus reduced the king of Egypt, and constituted Amasis his viceroy, he returned to Babylon, where he had another dream, which gave him fresh disquiet. This dream he very well remembered; and therefore he sent for his own magicians first, in hopes that they could have interpreted it; but when he met with no satisfaction from them, he was forced to have recourse to Daniel again; and thus, upon his entrance, he accosted him:

"I saw ^f a tree of a prodigious bigness, which seemed to reach from earth to heaven. It was fair and full of fruit; yielded shelter to the beasts and fowls, and sustenance to all flesh. I saw ^g likewise an angel

^c The occasion of this revolt is to this effect related by Herodotus.—That Pharaoh Hophra, whom he calls *Apries*, having lost a great army in Libya, and, as some imagined, on purpose, that, being rid of them, he might with more ease and security govern the rest, fell under the resentment of his subjects to such a degree, that several of them joined together in a body, and revolted from him; that, to appease and reduce them to their duty, he sent Amasis, one of the officers of his court, to them, but, instead of his persuading them, they prevailed with him to be their king; that hereupon Hophra sent *Palerbamis*, a person of the first rank, to arrest Amasis, and bring him with him; but, when he returned without being able to execute his commission, he commanded his ears and his nose to be immediately cut off, which indignity, to a man of his worth and character, so exasperated the rest of his subjects, that they almost all forsook him; so that he was forced to hire an army of foreigners, wherewith he attempted to give Amasis battle not far from Memphis; but had the misfortune to be vanquished, taken prisoner, and carried to the city Sais, where he was strangled in his own palace.—*Herod. b. i.*, and *Diod. Sic. b. i.* part 2.

^d This is a city in the southern frontiers of Egypt, between Thebes and the great cataracts of the Nile, of which the ancients speak frequently, as the farthest part in Egypt of any note towards Ethiopia.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

^e These transactions probably took place before the erection of the golden image, and the miraculous deliverance of the three children. See previous note by ED.

^f It is very observable, that in the writings of the prophets, princes are frequently compared to trees, (Ezek. xvii. 5, 6, and xxxi. 3. Jer. xxii. 15. Ps. xxxvii. 35.) and it is the notion of Grotius, that a tree seen in a dream, according to the principles of the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians, denotes some great and excellent personage; but nothing is more precarious than these principles, or more uncertain than these observations, because in the dreams which come from God, he may represent an eminent person under a thousand different types, as well as that of a state-tree.—*Calmet's Commentary* on Dan. iv. 7.

^g The words in our translation are, I saw 'a watcher,' which, as it came down from heaven, could be no other than an angel. The Chaldean word is *nir*, from whence St Jerome imagines, that the pagans derived their *Iris*, the messenger of the gods; and by some expressions in Dan. iv. 17, it looks as if the Chaldeans had a notion, for the king, we may suppose, speaks according to the common sentiments of the people, that these watchers, or holy ones in heaven, did constitute an assembly of judges, or were an order of blessed spirits, who took under their cognizance and decision the fate of men; for, by the decree of these watchers it was, that

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coming down from heaven, who cried with a loud voice, Hew down the tree, cut off the branches, shake off the leaves, scatter the fruit, and let all creatures depart from it; but let the stump remain in the earth, and bind it with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: let his heart be changed from that of a man, and a beast's heart be given him, ^a and let seven times pass over him."

As soon as Daniel heard the dream, he was so affected with the dreadful judgments which it portended to the king, that he stood silent for the space of an hour; but being encouraged by the king to expound the thing to him, be it what it would, he addressed himself to him in these words:—"The tree, O king, which thou sawest in thy dream, is thyself; for thy greatness reacheth unto the heavens, and thy dominions to the end of the earth: but the angel which came from heaven with orders to cut down the tree, denotes the decree of the Most High, which is determined against thee, namely, that thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; thou shalt eat grass with the oxen, and be wet with the dew of heaven; that seven years shall pass over thee, before thou comest to consider that God ruleth over the kingdoms of men; and that, after such a term, thou shalt be restored to thy kingdom again, which is the thing intimated by the stump of the tree that was ordered to be left. And now that thou hast heard the interpretation of this dream, permit me, O king, to advise thee to atone for thy sins by an holy life, and by acts of mercy to the poor, and to recommend thyself to the mercy of God, that he may prolong thy posterity." This was the advice of a faithful minister; but Nebuchadnezzar, it is to be feared, had ^b not the heart to pursue it.

the tree, in the vision, was ordered to be cut down.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^a The ambiguity of this expression, which the prophet, in his exposition of the dream, still adheres to, has occasioned a great variety of opinions concerning it. Some maintain, that, as the Persians distinguished their years into two seasons, winter and summer, the seven years of Nebuchadnezzar must be reckoned in this manner, which will therefore reduce them to the space of three years and a half. Dorotheus, in his Synopsis of the lives of the prophets and apostles, tells us, that God did indeed condemn Nebuchadnezzar to seven years' habitation with brutes, but that, at the prayers and intercessions of Daniel, the seven years were reduced to seven months. The word *time*, according to others, denotes no more than the space of a month; so that the king's disorder, of course, lasted no longer than seven months; whereof, according to their computation, for the first forty days he continued in his frenzy as a madman; in the forty days following he bewailed his offences, and in the last forty days he recovered by degrees from his infirmity: but all these are idle conjectures. A year was a common measure of time among the Chaldeans, especially in the chronicles of their kings; and, therefore, in this particular, we need no other interpreter for Daniel than Daniel himself, who, in sundry places of this prophecy, particularly in chap. xii. 7, has set a time and times, and the dividing, or half of a time, for the space of three years and a half.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Nebuchadnezzar*.

^b God delayed the execution of his threats against this prince, and gave him a whole year's reprieve, (chap. iv. 29,) to see if he would repent, and turn unto him; but perceiving that he still persisted in his crimes, as soon as the measure of his iniquity was full, he smote and reduced him to the condition of a beast. This is Theodoret's notion of the matter; but St Jerome rather thinks, that this king being terrified with the threats, and touch-

His cessation from war, in which he had been long engaged, had by this time given an opportunity of finishing his stately buildings at Babylon; and upon the survey of these, as well as other monuments of his greatness, he became so intoxicated with pride and arrogance, that God, in punishment of his haughty mind, deprived him of his senses, and for exalting himself above the state of men reduced him to the condition of a beast.

For seven years he lived abroad in the fields, eating grass like an ox, and taking up his lodging on the ground in the open air. But at the expiration of this time, when he became sensible of God's superior power and dominion, his senses returned to him again. His kingdom was restored, and he re-instated in his former majesty; whereupon he made this solemn and grateful acknowledgment; ¹ 'And now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that work in pride, he is able to abase, when he pleases.'

Upon the death of Nebuchadnezzar, ^c (for he lived not long after his restoration,) his son Evil-merodach succeeded to the throne of Babylon, and to make some amends for his father's hard usage of Jehoiachin, the captive king of Judah, he released him, as was said before, from an imprisonment that had lasted near thirty-seven years, and promoted him to great honour in his palace. His reign however was but short; for his lusts and wickednesses had, in the space of two years, made him so intolerable, that even his own relations conspired against him, and put him to death; whereupon Nerigissar, his sister's husband, who was at the head of the conspiracy, reigned in his stead; and as Jehoiachin ^d did not long survive him, Salathiel, his son, succeeded as nominal prince ^e of the Jews. Upon his accession to the

¹ Dan. iv. 37.

ed with the exhortations of the prophet, began to set about his reformation, and by acts of charity and mercy, to reconcile himself to God, for which he obtained a delay of his punishment for a year's space; but that, instead of persevering in these good purposes, he suffered himself to fall into pride, upon the contemplation of the mighty works he had done, and so, by his vanity, lost what he had gained by his charity.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^c This prince died in the year of the world 3442, and B. C. 562, according to Hales, A. M. 4850, and B. C. 561, after he had reigned from the death of his father, according to the Babylonish account, three and forty years. He was certainly one of the greatest princes that had appeared in the east for many years before him, and according to Megasthenes, (as he is cited by Josephus, *Antiq. b. x. c. 11.*) both for his enterprises and performances, far excelled even Hercules himself. The same historian (as he is quoted by Eusebius, *Præp. b. ix. c. 41.*) informs us, that, a little before his death, he foretold his subjects of the coming of the Persians, and their subduing the kingdom of Babylon; but this he might gather from the prophet Daniel, and especially from the interpretation of his dreams.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 562.

^d It is not unlikely that Jehoiachin, being a favourite, fell with him; for that best agrees with Jeremiah's prophecies concerning him, wherein it is denounced, (chap. xxii. 30,) that he 'should not prosper in his days;' which could not be so well verified of him, had he died in the full possession of all that prosperity to which Evil-merodach had advanced him.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 559.

^e Long after the loss of all authority, the Jews kept up the title of a king among them, and had a person descended of the house of David, who, by the name of 'the head of the captivity,' was acknowledged and honoured as a prince, and, as far as was consistent with the government they lived under, was invested with some sort of jurisdiction over them. Nay, to this very day,

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throne, Neriglissar made great preparations for war against the Medes, which obliged Cyaxares, their king, to call in the assistance of his nephew Cyrus ^a out of Persia, who, coming with a body of thirty thousand Persians, was by his uncle made general of the Medes likewise, and thereupon, with his joint forces, gave Neriglissar battle, slew him, and put his army to the rout.

The death of this prince proved a great loss to the Babylonians, especially considering that his son Laborosoarchod, who succeeded him, was in every thing the very reverse of his father, a man given to all manner of wickedness, ^b cruelty, and injustice, for which he became so odious to his own subjects, that they conspired against him, and slew him after he had reigned only nine months.

Belshazzar ^c (in all probability the grandson of the great Nebuchadnezzar) succeeded him; in the first year

of whose reign, ¹ Daniel had his dream of the four beasts, representing the four empires of the Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, and Romans; and in the third, the famous vision of the ² ram and the he-goat, by the latter of which was signified Alexander the Great, and by the former Darius Codomannus, the last of the Persian kings, who were the successors of Cyrus. Cyrus, indeed, who was to lay the foundation of the Persian monarchy, had several conflicts with Belshazzar's armies; but at length, having overthrown him in a pitched battle, he shut him up in the city of Babylon, and there besieged him.

During the siege, Belshazzar having made a great feast for all his courtiers, ordered that the vessels of gold and silver, which his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple of Jerusalem, should be brought into the banqueting house, that he and his princes, together with his wives and concubines, might drink out of them; which accordingly was done; and, to add to their profaneness, in the midst of their cups, they sang songs in the praise of their several idols. But it was not long before God ^d put

the same pageantry is said to be kept up among the Jews, and chiefly with this view, that they may be furnished from hence with an answer against the Christians, urging the prophecy of Jacob against them, namely, that 'the sceptre is departed from Judah'; for thereupon their usual reply is, that the sceptre is still preserved among them in the head of the captivity; though some of them have modesty enough to give up this.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 559.

^a It is on all hands agreed, that Astyages king of the Medes had a son, whom profane history calls Cyaxares; and a daughter whose name was Mandana, married to Cambyzes, a Persian, by whom she had Cyrus; but whether this Cambyzes was king of the country, or only a private person, it is not so well agreed. The two chief historians who write of this matter, are Herodotus and Xenophon; but their relations in this regard are different; forasmuch as the latter makes his father king of Persia, the former a meaner man. The account of Herodotus indeed contains narratives that are much more strange and surprising, and consequently more diverting and acceptable to the reader; and for this reason, more have chosen to follow him than Xenophon; but though Xenophon (as being a great commander, as well as a great politician) had certainly grafted many maxims of war and policy into his history, yet where nothing of this appears, he must be allowed to be an historian of much more credit in matters of fact than Herodotus. Herodotus having travelled through Egypt, Syria, and several other countries, in order to the writing of his history, did, as travellers used to do, put down all matters upon trust, and in many, no doubt, was imposed on; but Xenophon was a man of another character. He wrote all things with great judgment, and due consideration; and having lived in the court of Cyrus the younger, a descendant of the Cyrus whom we now speak of, had opportunities of being better informed of what he wrote concerning this great prince than Herodotus had; and confining himself to this argument only, no doubt he examined all matters relating to it more thoroughly, and gave a more accurate and just account of them, than could be expected from the other, who wrote of all things at large, as they came in his way.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 563.

^b Two acts of his tyrannical violence towards two of his principal nobility, Gobrius and Gadates, are particularly mentioned by Xenophon, namely, that the only son of the former he slew at a hunting, to which he had invited him, for no other reason but his throwing a dart with success at a wild beast, when he himself had missed it; and that the other he caused to be castrated, merely because one of his concubines had commended him for a handsome man.—*Cyropædia*, b. v.

^c Great is the difference among historians, and others, who this Belshazzar (who is generally believed to be the same with the Nebonnedus in Berosus, and the Labynetis in Herodotus) was. Some will have him to be of the royal blood of Nebuchadnezzar, and others no way related to him. Some maintain that he was a Babylonian, and others affirm that he was a Mede; and of those who allow him to be of the royal family of Nebuchadnezzar, some will have it that he was his son, and others that he was his grandson; and, therefore, to clear this matter, we must observe, 1st, That Belshazzar, be he who he will, was cer-

¹ Chap. vii.

² Chap. viii.

tainly of the seed of Nebuchadnezzar, because he is expressly called his *son* in several places of the 5th chapter of Daniel, and in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20, it is said, that Nebuchadnezzar and his children, or offspring, reigned in Babylon until the kingdom of Persia commenced. 2dly, That, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, (chap. xxvii. 7.) the nations of the east were to serve Nebuchadnezzar and his son, and his son's son; and therefore he must have had a son, and a son's son, successors to him in the throne of Babylon. 3dly, That as Evil-merodach was Nebuchadnezzar's son, of all the kings that reigned after him at Babylon, none but Belshazzar could be his son's son; for Neriglissar was only his daughter's husband, and Laborosoarchod was Neriglissar's son; so that neither of them was either son or grandson to Nebuchadnezzar. 4thly, That, according to Herodotus, (b. i.) the last king of Babylon, who, without doubt, was Belshazzar, because, immediately after his death, the kingdom was given to the Medes and Persians, (Dan. v. 28, 30, 31.) was son to the great queen Nitocris; but now Nitocris, to have a child that was grandson to Nebuchadnezzar, could be wife to no other than Evil-merodach; and therefore, putting all this together, it appears that Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, was the son of Evil-merodach by Nitocris his queen, and consequently son's son to Nebuchadnezzar; nor must it seem strange, that we find him, in Dan. v. called 'Nebuchadnezzar's son,' and 'Nebuchadnezzar his father,' because it is the usual style of Scripture to call any ancestor upward, father, and any descendant downward, son.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 555. [It is not often safe to differ on a point of ancient history with Dr Prideaux; but the series of Nebuchadnezzar's successors on the throne of Babylon, as given by Dr Hales, seems more consistent than this, both with itself and with sacred Scripture. That Evil-merodach—the Ilverodam in Ptolemy's canon—was the son and immediate successor of Nebuchadnezzar, seems to be universally admitted. According to Hales, however, he was not cut off in a conspiracy of his own subjects, but slain in battle by Cyrus when commanding the armies of his uncle and father-in-law Cyaxares, whose territories Evil-merodach had prepared wantonly to attack. He was succeeded by his son Neriglissar, the Belshazzar of Daniel, and grandson of Nebuchadnezzar the great; and it was Belshazzar or Neriglissar, who so cruelly oppressed his own subjects, and exercised such acts of tyrannic violence on Gobrius and Gadates, as provoked them to excite a conspiracy against him, in which he was slain, according to Ptolemy's canon, seventeen years before the final overthrow of the kingdom of Babylon. Laborosoarchod, who is, by our author, called the predecessor of Belshazzar, we learn from Berosus to have been his son, and, though a mere boy (*παις*), to have succeeded him in the kingdom; but he was slain, in a conspiracy, nine months afterwards, and is therefore omitted in Ptolemy's canon.]—*Hales's Analysis*, &c. vol. ii. p. 503, &c. and vol. iii. p. 81, &c.—Ed.

^d Next to murder, no sin is so remarkably punished in this world as that of sacrilege. This appears from innumerable instances taken from all histories, both sacred and profane. But

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a damp to the king's mirth, by causing a hand to appear upon the wall, which, in three words, wrote the sentence of his condemnation. The king saw the hand that wrote; and being exceedingly affrighted and troubled at it, he commanded all his wise men, magicians, and astrologers to be immediately called, that they might read the writing, and explain its meaning; but when none ^a of them could do either, notwithstanding the great honours ^b and presents which he offered them, at the instance of the ^c queen-mother, Daniel was sent for.

As soon as he came into the king's presence, he ^d received him very courteously, and made him the same

in the heathen story, remarkable examples of this kind are the miserable end of the Phocians, who robbed the temple of Delphos, and were the occasion of that war, which was called from thence 'the holy war;' the destruction of the Gauls in their attempt upon the same temple; and of Crassus, who plundered the temple of Jerusalem, and that of the Syrian goddess; as these two last stories are related by Prideaux, part 2.—*Louth's Commentary* on Dan. v. 5.

a The writing very probably might be in a character unknown to the Chaldeans, as the old Hebrew, Phœnician, and Samaritan were; or if they were acquainted with the character, yet such is the genius of most of the oriental languages, where so little use is made of vowels, and where the pronunciation and sequel of the discourse generally determine the signification of the letters, that a man may be a perfect master of a language, and yet not able to read and comprehend a word, when it stands alone, and without any context, as it is in the case of *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*. A man, for instance, that understands the Hebrew tongue never so well, were he to meet *dbr* standing alone, would have much ado to read them, because, according to the manner that we pronounce them, the letters will admit of many different significations; and it is much the same in the Chaldee language, wherein the words we are now speaking of were wrote.—*Calmet's Commentary* on Dan. v. 7.

b The king's words are these:—'Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom;' (Dan. v. 7.) From whence it appears, that the kings of Babylon were the same ornaments, and, in rewarding their favourites, gave the same marks of honours that the kings of Persia and their successors did. For purple, we find in several Greek authors, was the ordinary habit of the kings of Persia, and of the princes of their court that were in the highest posts of honour. The chain or collar of gold was one of the greatest marks of distinction that the Persian kings could bestow upon their subjects; and 'to be the third ruler of the kingdom,' was the same sublime office that Darius the Mede put Daniel in, (ch. vi. 1, 2,) when he constituted him one of the presidents over the hundred and twenty princes that he had made governors over provinces.—*Xenophon's Cyropædia*, b. 8; *Diodorus*, b. xviii; *Josephus's Antiquities*, b. xi. c. 6; *Brisson on the kingdom of the Persians*, b. i.

c In the 2d verse of the fifth chapter of Daniel, we read, 'that the king, his princes, his wives, and his concubines' were all at the feast, which he made for them; and yet in the 10th verse it follows, that the queen, upon hearing of the news of the handwriting, 'came into the banquet house;' but then it must be observed, that this queen was not one of his wives, but Nitocris, his mother, and she seems there to be called the queen by way of eminence, because she had the regency of the kingdom under her son, for which her great wisdom duly qualified her. For this reason Herodotus speaks of her, as if she had been sovereign of the kingdom, in the same manner as Semiramis is said to have been, and attributes to her all those works about Babylon which other authors ascribe to her son.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 547.

d And yet it is observable, that when he came into his presence, he asked him, 'art thou that Daniel?' which seems to imply, though he was one of the chief ministers of state, (Dan. v. 13,) the king did not know him; but this only shows, that Belshazzar was a man who minded nothing but his pleasures, and left all things else to the management of others; a conduct too often followed by such princes as think kingdoms made for nothing else but to serve their pleasures, and gratify their lusts!—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 547.

offer of honours and presents, that he had done to his own magicians, if he would but explain the writing. Daniel modestly refused the offers he made him; but having undertaken to perform what he required of him, he first reproved him, with some freedom, for his ingratitude to God, who had advanced him to the rank of a sovereign, and for the profanation of the vessels which were consecrated to his service; and then proceeded to the interpretation of the words, which were these, *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*. "*Mene*," says he "which signifies *number*, intimates, that the days, both of your life and of your reign, are numbered, or that you have but a short time to live. *Tekel*, which signifies *weight*, intimates, that you have been weighed in the balance of God's justice, and found too light; and *Upharsin*, ^e which signifies *fragment*, intimates, that your kingdom shall be divided, and given to the Medes and Persians;" which accordingly came to pass; for that very night, in the midst of their feasting and revelling, the city ^f was taken by sur-

^e Daniel, in repeating the words, instead of *Upharsin*, puts in *Peres*; but they both signify the same thing.

^f Cyrus had lain before the town to little or no purpose for the space of two years, when, understanding that a great annual feast was approaching, wherein the Babylonians, in honour of their idol Sheshach, were wont to spend the whole night in revelling and drunkenness, he thought this no improper time to attempt to surprise them. To this purpose, having posted one part of his men at the place where the river ran into the city, and another where it came out, with orders to enter by way of the channel, as soon as they found the river fordable: about the close of the evening he fell to work, broke down the dams, and turned aside the stream; so that, by the middle of the night, the river was so drained, that the parties according to their orders, entered the channel, and finding the gates leading down to the river open, by them they ascended into the city, and made directly to the palace, where they slew the king, and all those that were about him. By this stratagem Cyrus became master of Babylon, but he took no care to repair the breach in the banks of the river; so that all the country on that side was overflown, and the current which went to Babylon grew afterwards so shallow, as to become unfit for the smallest navigation. So fully verified were all these prophecies concerning Babylon: 'Behold I will stir up the Medes against her,' (Isa. xiii. 7.) 'I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry,' (Jer. li. 36.) 'Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be like Sodom and Gomorrah,' (Is. xiii. 19.) 'For I will make it a possession for the bitter, and pools of water,' (Is. xiv. 23.) 'saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts.'—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 547. [According to Dr Hales, the taking of Babylon by Cyrus was long after this, on the revolt of Nabonadius from the dominion of the Medes; and it is certainly not said in the book of Daniel, that on the night of Belshazzar's murder the city was 'taken by Cyrus,' or by 'any man.' "The great feast, on the night of which Belshazzar was slain, appears to have been at a season of profound peace and tranquillity, when 'a thousand of his lords' could freely come from all parts of his empire without molestation or interruption from a besieging enemy, and when the king would be most apt 'to forget God, after he had eaten and was full.'" In the book of Daniel it is not said how or by whom Belshazzar was slain; but it may be collected, says Dr Hales, from Xenophon, that he was slain by conspirators, at the head of whom were Gobrias and Gadates. This is certainly not said by Xenophon, who seems to have confounded the time at which Belshazzar was slain, when the gods punished the impious king, with the taking of Babylon when it had revolted from the Median yoke; for it is much more probable that Xenophon confounded dates and events, than that there should be any mistake in the canon of Ptolemy, or in the Chaldean records as quoted by Berosus. The family of Nebuchadnezzar being now extinct, our author thinks that Cyaxares or Darius the Mede, who was the brother of Nebuchadnezzar's queen, took possession of the throne by the voluntary offer of the Babylonians.]—*Bishop Gleig*.—Ed.

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prise, ^a Belshazzar slain, and the kingdom translated to Cyaxares, whom the Scripture calls 'Darius the Mede.'

Darius, from his very first accession to the throne, had a great esteem for Daniel, as knowing him to be a person of extraordinary parts and learning, and long versed in affairs of state; and therefore having divided the whole empire into an hundred and twenty provinces, over which he set governors, and over these three presidents, as the king's chief ministers, he made Daniel the first of these; ^b but it happened to him, as it usually does to all favourites, to be maligned, and envied by others.

His administration of public affairs, however, was so just, that in that capacity he gave them no room for any accusation against him, and therefore they laid their plot another way. He, they knew, was a strict observer of the religion of his country, and a constant resorter to God in prayer; and therefore they applied themselves to Darius, in the name of his whole council and officers of state, that he would be pleased so far to indulge his people, as to pass a decree, only for thirty-days, that whoever ^c should ask any petition either of God or man, except of the king only, for that space of time, should be thrown to the lions; which the king, taking it for a great testimony of their affection and loyalty to him, at his first accession to the throne, without any manner of

hesitation, passed into an act, and issued out his proclamation to that purpose.

Daniel was not ignorant that this wicked contrivance was designed to ensnare him; but nevertheless he continued his usual course of paying his adorations to God, three times every day, and that not in any clandestine manner, but with his chamber window open towards Jerusalem. ^d His enemies, who had laid this snare for him, were not forgetful to watch him diligently; and therefore having taken him in the act of prayer, they immediately went to the king, accused Daniel of a contempt of his decree, and desired that the sentence might instantly be executed upon him.

The king too late perceived, that his easy compliance with a fallacious offer had betrayed him into a mistake that was likely to prove fatal to his servant Daniel, and therefore he laboured what he could to reverse the decree; but the grandees, on the other hand, represented to him, that the royal decrees, according to the laws of the Medes and Persians ^e were unalterable, and consequently the penalty which Daniel had incurred, irreversible; so that what through the importunity of those wicked men, and a false notion of honour in adhering to his word, the king delivered up Daniel to their mercy, but not without some glimmering hopes, that the God whom he served continually would by some means or other preserve him.

No sooner was Daniel delivered into their hands, but they hurried him away to the lions' den; and having thrown him in, they not only rolled a large stone to the mouth of it, but had it sealed likewise ^f with their own, as well as the king's signet, that thereby they might prevent all possibility of his making an escape. The king, in the mean time, went pensive home; and having passed the night in much uneasiness and anxiety of mind, he rose early next morning, and repaired to the den, where, to his great and surprising joy, he found Daniel alive; and having caused him to be taken out, he ordered, that his accusers, ^g their wives and their children, should be all

^a Of the manner wherein this was done, we find Xenophon (*Cyropædia*, b. vii.) thus relating the story, namely, "That two deserters, Gadates and Gobryas, having assisted some of the Persian army to kill the guards and seize upon the palace, they entered into the room where the king was, whom they found standing up in a posture of defence, but that they soon dispatched him, and those that were with him, and thereby fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah; 'I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains and rulers, and her mighty men; and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts,'" (chap. li. 57.)—*Loveth's Commentary* on Dan. v. 30.

^b For though the whole power of the army, and the chief conduct of other affairs were in the hands of Cyrus (and therefore we find him, in Ptolemy's canon, set down as immediate successor to Belshazzar, who is there called Nabonadius,) yet as long as his uncle lived, Cyrus allowed him a joint title with him in the empire, and out of deference to him, yielded him the first place of honour in it; though, in reality, he had no more than the name and shadow of sovereignty, except in Media, which was his own proper dominion before any conquests were made.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 538. [This is certainly not correct. That Nabonadius was a very different man from Belshazzar has been already shown; and it seems evident from Ptolemy's canon, and from Berosus as quoted by Dr Hales, that Darius, whilst he lived, was the sole monarch of Babylon and Media, though, being of an indolent disposition, as has been already observed, he left the burden of military affairs and the care of the government to Cyrus, who was at once his nephew, his son-in-law, and his destined heir. This may have led Xenophon, and after him Prideaux, to suppose Cyrus joint sovereign with his uncle of the Babylonian empire, especially as Darius appears to have lived only two years after he succeeded to that throne.]—*Bishop Gleig*.—Ep.

^c It may seem a little strange, that Darius should so readily accept of an honour which was due to God alone. But we see what a pitch of vanity and arrogance these eastern princes were arrived at, when we find Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel, asking the three Hebrew youths, 'Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?' (Dan. iii. 15.) when we find it said of another of that name, in the book of Judith, 'Who is God but Nabuchodonosor? He will send his power, and destroy them from the face of the earth,' (chap. vi. 2, 3;) and more especially, when we find the Persians making it a matter of state policy to have the persons of their kings in the same veneration as they had their gods.—*Quint. Curt.* b. viii.

^d It was a constant custom among the Jews, for those that were in the country, or in any distant land, to turn themselves towards Jerusalem; and for those that were at Jerusalem, to turn towards the temple, when they prayed; and the probable reason of this might be, the words of Solomon, in his prayer to God, at the consecration of the temple: 'If thy people, when led away captive, pray unto thee toward their land which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city, which thou hast chosen, and the house, which I have built for thy name; then hear thou their prayers, and their supplication, in heaven, thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause,' (1 Kings viii. 48, 49.)

^e So Diodorus Siculus tells us (b. iv.) of Darius the last king of Persia, that he would have pardoned Charidemus after he was condemned to death, but could not reverse the law that had passed against him. What made these laws thus unalterable, we are at a loss to know, unless we suppose, that when they passed, either the king had confirmed them by an oath, and then they became immutable; or that they were sealed not only by the king, but by all the princes then in council, as one would be apt to guess from Dan. vi. 8, and xii. 9.—*Loveth's Commentary* on Dan. vi.; and *Patrik's Commentary* on Esther i.

^f By this it seems, as if the Persian government, at this time, was a kind of mixed monarchy, consisting of a king and nobles; forasmuch that we find the king could do nothing of importance without his counsellors, nor had he power to alter any thing that was determined in council.—*Cabnet's Commentary*.

^g The Lex Talionis condemned all calumniators to the same sort of punishment which they intended to have brought upon others; and in this case, among the Persians, it was a frequent

A. M. 3417. A. C. 587; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 1825. A. C. 586. JER. xl. 7—xlv. DANIEL, and EZRA i—v.

cast into it, where the lions fell upon them, and instantly destroyed them; while the king, in grateful acknowledgment of a wonderful providence in Daniel's preservation, made public proclamation, that in all the parts of his dominions, the God, whom Daniel worshipped, should be revered.

The term of seventy years, which the prophet Jeremiah^a had prefixed for the continuance of Judah's captivity, being now drawing toward a conclusion, Daniel¹ thought it his duty to humble himself before God, and to make his ardent supplications to him that he would remember his people, and grant a restoration to Jerusalem, and make his face again to shine upon his holy city, and his sanctuary, which was desolate; whereupon he had in a vision assurance given him by the angel Gabriel, not only of the deliverance of Judah from their temporal captivity under the Babylonians, but also of a much greater redemption which God would give his church, by delivering them from their spiritual captivity under sin and Satan, to be accomplished at the end of seventy weeks after the going forth of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, that is, at the expiration of 490 years, as we shall have occasion to explain that remarkable passage² hereafter.

Upon the reduction of Babylon,³ which put an end to the Chaldean empire, after it had continued from the reign of Nabonassar, who founded it, 209 years, Cyrus went into Persia to make a visit to his father and mother, who were yet living; and, on his return through Media, married the daughter and only child of his uncle Darius, and had, in dower with her, the reversion of the kingdom of Media, after her father's death; so that, in a short time, he succeeded, not only to the Babylonish empire, but to the two additional kingdoms of Persia and Media likewise, and from hence the whole extent of his dominions took the name of the Persian empire.^b

¹ Chap. ix.

² Dan. ix. 24, &c.

³ Prideaux's Connection, anno 540.

thing to include all the family in the penalty inflicted on the father; but "abominable laws," says Ammianus Marcellinus, "by which, on account of the guilt of one person, death was inflicted on the whole of the kindred."—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^a The particular prophecies to which Daniel alludes, might probably be these: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, because ye have not heard my words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land and the inhabitants thereof: and this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years; and it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity: but I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know my thought that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end," (Jer. xxv. 8, &c., and xxix. 10, 11.) But prophecies, he knew very well, were but conditional, and, for their accomplishment, depended, in a great measure, upon the behaviour of those to whom they were made. One part of this prediction he had seen executed, in the punishment of the king of Babylon, and the translation of his kingdom to the Medes and Persians; but good reason he had to fear, lest the sins of his countrymen the Jews should retard the completion of the other part, namely, their return from captivity, beyond the compass of seventy years: and this was both the cause of his grief and the motive of his prayer.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b There seems to be in this paragraph many mistakes. It cannot be true that Cyrus did not marry the daughter of Darius or Cyaxares till after the conquest of Babylon; for Xenophon, who relates this, says likewise that the princess and he were

^a As soon as Cyrus was come into the full possession of the empire, he published a decree, ^c wherein he gave free liberty to the Jews to return to their own country, and to rebuild the house of the Lord at Jerusalem. ^d Many of the sacred vessels, to the number of 5400,

⁴ Ezra i. 1, &c.

about the same age; and it seems indisputable that at the conquest of Babylon Cyrus was sixty-three years of age. But he had two children by the daughter of Darius, who were both grown to man's estate at his death, when he was seventy years of age; and therefore he must have married at a much earlier period than the conquest of Babylon. His father likewise, and probably his mother, must have been dead before that period, as will appear from the following account of the birth, successions to different kingdoms, and death of this illustrious prince, collected by Dr Hales with the utmost care and accuracy. "The reign of Cyrus over Persia began, according to Diodorus, Thallus, Castor, Polybius, and Phlegon cited by Eusebius, (*Præp. Evang.* b. 19.) in the first year of the fifty-fifth olympiad, corresponding to the Julian years, B. C. 560, and 559. He reigned, in all, thirty years, according to Ctesias, Justin, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Eusebius; twenty-nine according to Herodotus; and thirty-one years according to Sulpitius. The year of his death is ascertained to have been B. C. 529, by a lunar eclipse recorded by Ptolemy to have happened in the seventh year of his son and successor Cambyses, B. C. 523. This determines the birth of Cyrus to have been B. C. 599, two years after his grandfather, Astages, succeeded to the crown of Media, B. C. 601. Cyrus succeeded to the crown of Persia, on the demise of his father, B. C. 559, as hath been already observed, and is determined by the thirty years of his whole reign. This corrects an error of Xenophon, who represents Cambyses, (father of Cyrus) as still alive after the capture of Babylon, B. C. 536; an error into which he was led, perhaps, by confounding this capture with the death of Belshazzar, that 'impious king,' as he calls him, who was slain seventeen years before, B. C. 553, when Cyaxares, or Darius the Mede, took possession of the kingdom of Babylon. Cyrus peaceably succeeded his uncle two years after," as the author completely proves, in opposition to Herodotus, and the general current of ancient and modern historians, by the united testimony of Æschylus, Xenophon, Josephus, and the Persian historians, supported by the authority of Scripture, and common sense. "And when Nabonadius, who had been appointed viceroy of Babylon by Darius the Mede, at length rebelled and joined Cræsus the sovereign of Lydia, he was defeated, B. C. 538, and Babylon was taken by Cyrus, B. C. 536, which was, of course, the era of the actual commencement of his full sovereignty.—*Hales's Analysis*, &c., vol. ii. p. 465, and vol. iv. p. 88, second edition.—Ed.

^c It is a good deal more than probable, that this decree in favour of the Jews was, in a great measure, owing to Daniel's good offices. Cyrus, at his first coming to Babylon, after he had taken the city, found him there an old minister of state, famed for his great wisdom over all the east, and, in many things, for a knowledge superior to the rest of mankind; and accordingly we find, that he not only employed him as such, but, upon the settling of the government of the whole empire, made him first superintendent or prime minister of state over all the provinces of it. In this station of life, Daniel must have been a person of great authority at court, and highly in the esteem of his prince: and therefore, as we find him earnest in his prayer to God for the restoration of his people, (Dan. ix.) we cannot but think, that he would be equally warm in his intercessions for it with the king. To which purpose, it is not improbable, that he might show him those passages in Isaiah, which speak of him by name, 150 years before he was born, as a great prince and conqueror, the ruler of many nations, and the restorer of his people, by causing his temple to be built, and the city of Jerusalem re-inhabited. For, that Cyrus had seen those prophecies, the thing is plain, not only from the testimony of Josephus, (*Antiq.* b. xi. c. 1.) but from the recital that is made of them in the decree itself, (Ezra i. 2;) and if so, who should be so proper to show them to him, and to recommend the accomplishment of them to his princely care, as Daniel, who had so great credit with him, and so passionate a concern for the restoration of Zion.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 538.

^d Some are of opinion that among the sacred things which

A. M. 3417. A. C. 587; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4825. A. C. 586. JER. xl. 7.—xliv. DANIEL, AND EZRA i—v.

^a which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the former house, brought to Babylon, and placed in the temple of his god Bel, he ordered his treasurer to restore; and wrote letters ^b recommendatory to the governors of several provinces to assist the Jews in their undertaking.

The encouragement which was given them by virtue of this decree, made the Jews soon gather together out of the several parts of the kingdom of Babylon, to the number of 42,360, which, together with their servants, who were 7337 more, amounted in all to 49,697 persons. For, not only those of Judah and Benjamin, but several also of the other tribes that had been carried away by Tiglath-Pileser and Esarhaddon, yet still retained the true worship of God in a strange land, took the benefit of this decree, to return to their own country.

The chief leaders of these returning captives were Zerubbabel and Joshua. Zerubbabel, ^c whose Babylonish name was Sheshbazzar, was the son of Salathiel, the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, who was kept so long captive in Babylon; and Joshua was the son of Jozadach, the son of Seraiah, who was high priest when Jerusalem

was destroyed, and put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, in Syria; so that the former of them was descended from the regal, and the latter from the pontifical family in a direct line. Zerubbabel was made governor of the land by a commission from Cyrus; Joshua, of course, succeeded to the chief priesthood; and with them were joined several others, as assistants, for the settling all affairs both in church and state.

On the first month of the Jewish sacred year, which is called Nisan, and answers to part of March and part of April in our calendar, the people arrived in Judea; and, having dispersed themselves, according to their tribes and families, in their several cities, they set about the rebuilding of their houses, and the cultivation of their lands, after they had lain desolate, from the murder of Gedaliah, two and fifty years. On the seventh month, which is called Tisra, and answers in part to our September and October, all the people from their several cities, met together at Jerusalem, and on the first day of that month, there celebrated the ^d feast of the trumpets. On the tenth was the great day of expiation, ^e when the

Cyrus ordered to be restored, the ark of the covenant was one; but it nowhere appears that this ark was carried from Jerusalem to Babylon. They tell us, indeed, that in the second temple sacrifices were offered, as in the first, and all solemn days observed, especially the great day of expiation, when the law ordained, that the blood should be sprinkled before the mercy-seat; and the mercy-seat, say they, was part of the ark; but besides that, the ark, without the shechinah, or divine glory, (which was then withdrawn,) would have been of no great significance, the Jews universally acknowledged, that the ark was one of the five things that were wanting in the second temple.

^a The sum total of the vessels, as they are named in Ezra, i. 9, 10, do not amount to half this number; and therefore some have thought, that there must be a numerical error either in the one place or the other; whilst others suppose, that as in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 18, Nebuchadnezzar is said to have carried away all the vessels, both great and small, in this detail the larger vessels only, and such as were of great value, are mentioned, but that the gross sum comprehends all, and amounts to the number specified. — *Patrick's Commentary* on Ezra i. 11.

^b Josephus has recorded one, which is directed to the governors of Syria, in the following manner:—"Cyrus the king, to Sysina and Sarabasan sendeth greeting. Be it known unto you, that I have given leave to all the Jews that are in my dominions to return to their own country, and there to rebuild their capital city, with the holy temple at Jerusalem, in the same place where it stood before. I have likewise sent my treasurer, Mithridates, and Zerubbabel the governor of Judea, to superintend the building, and to see it raised sixty cubits upward from the ground, and as many over; the walls to be three rows of polished stone, and one of the wood of the country, together with an altar for sacrifices, and all this to be done at my charge.—It is my further pleasure, that they receive entire to themselves all the profits and revenues that were formerly enjoyed by their predecessors, and that they have an allowance paid them of 250,500 drachmas, in consideration of beasts for sacrifices, wine, and oil, and 2500 measures of wheat, in lieu of fine flour, and all this to be raised upon the tribute of Samaria; that the priests may offer up sacrifices, according to the laws and ceremonies of Moses, and pray daily for the king and royal family, and for the welfare and happiness of the Persian empire; and let no man presume to do anything contrary to the tenor of this my royal will and proclamation, upon pain of forfeiting life and estate."—*Jewish Antiq.* b. xi. c. 1.

^c In the time of the captivity, it was a common thing for the great men of Judah to have two names; one of their own country, which was domestic, and another of the Chaldeans, which was used at court. Zerubbabel was born in Babylon; and his name, which signifies an *exile*, or *stranger in Babylon*, imports the misery of the people of Israel at that time; but *Sheshbazzar*, which is a compound of two words, signifying, *fine linen and gold*, seems to be a name of a better omen, and to denote their future more flourishing condition. — *Patrick's Commentary*.

^d The first day of the month Tisri was the beginning of the Jewish civil year, and on it was the feast of trumpets, so called, because it was proclaimed by sound of trumpet; but, upon what occasion it was at first instituted, the Scripture is silent. Theodoret (*Quest.* xxxii. in *Lev.*) is of opinion, that it was in memory of the thunder and lightning upon Mount Sinai, when God gave his law from thence. The ancient rabbins will have it, that it was in remembrance of the deliverance of Isaac, in whose stead Abraham sacrificed a ram; but some modern Jews maintain that it was in memory of the world's creation, which they accordingly assert was in the beginning of autumn, and, as they hold it by tradition, that on this day God particularly judges all the actions of the foregoing year, and disposes all the events of the year following, for this reason they generally apply themselves, for the whole eight days preceding this feast, to the works of penance and mortification. On the feast itself, which lasts for two days, all labour and business are suspended, and, while sacrifices were in use, the Jews offered, in the name of the whole nation, a solemn holocaust of a calf, two rams, and seven lambs, all of the same year, together with the flour and wine, that usually went along with such sacrifices; but, instead of that, they now go to the synagogue, where they repeat several prayers and benedictions, and having taken the Pentateuch very solemnly out of the chest, and read to five persons the service that used to be performed on that day, they sound twenty times upon a horn, sometimes very low, sometimes very loud: and this, they say, makes them think of the judgments of God, to intimidate sinners, and put them upon repentance. — *Calmel's Dictionary* under the word *Trumpet*.

^e This was one of the principal solemnities of the Jews, and the ceremonies to be observed hereon were such as these.—The high priest, after he had washed not only his hands and feet, as usual in common sacrifices, but his body likewise, dressed himself in a plain linen garment like one of the priests, and had neither his purple robe, his ephod, nor his pectoral on, because he was going to expiate his own as well as the people's sins. He first of all offered a bullock and a ram for his own sins, and those of the other priests, putting his hand upon their heads, and confessing his own sins, and the sins of his house: then he received from the princes of the people two goats for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, to be offered in the name of all the people. By lots it was determined which of the two goats should be sacrificed, and which be set at liberty; and therefore, after that he had perfumed the sanctuary with some burning incense, he took of the blood of the bullock which he had sacrificed, and dipping his finger in it, sprinkled it seven times between the ark and the veil, which separated between the holy of holies, and the body of the tabernacle or temple. After this he came out again, and having sacrificed the goat upon which the lot was fallen, he returned with some of its blood into the sanctuary, and there sprinkled it as he had done before: then coming out again, he sprinkled both sides of the court with the blood of the goat, and so proceeding to the altar of the burnt-offerings, he wet the four

A. M. 3117. A. C. 587; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES. A. M. 4825. A. C. 586. JER. xl. 7—xlv. DANIEL, AND EZRA i—v.

high priest made atonement for all the people; and on the fifteenth began the feast of tabernacles, ^a which lasted till the twenty-third. During all which solemnities, the people staid at Jerusalem; and to promote the restoration of God's worship in that place, the free-will offerings, which they made upon that occasion, besides an hundred vestments for the priests, amounted to sixty-one thousand drachms of gold, and five thousand minæ of silver, which, in all, comes to about ^b seventy-five thou-

horns of it with the blood of the goat and the bullock, and sprinkled it seven times with the same. After all these ceremonies were finished, the goat that was to be set at liberty, which was commonly called the scape-goat, was brought to the high priest, who put both his hands upon its head, and having confessed all his own sins, and the sins of the people, delivered it to persons appointed to that office, who carried it into the wilderness, and left it upon the brink of a precipice, at twelve miles' distance from Jerusalem. After all which, the high priest washed himself all over again in the tabernacle or temple, and putting on his pontifical dress, sacrificed two rams for a burnt-offering, one for himself and the other for the people; and so concluded the day, with reading the law, and giving the blessing to the people, who all, upon this occasion, behaved with great devotion, fasted punctually, and returned home with a full persuasion and assurance that their sins were entirely done away, and expiated. The modern Jews, who have no sacrifices, content themselves with reading in Leviticus what relates to the solemn service of this day, and the ceremonies concerning the scape-goat. They, in like manner, fast very strictly, and pray very devoutly, until the conclusion of the day, when having received the Rabbin's blessing, they go home, fully satisfied that all their iniquities are pardoned; for their standing maxim is, that repentance, though accompanied with a resolution of living well, does but suspend sins; whereas the feast of expiation does absolutely abolish them. The reader that is desirous to know more of this, may consult *Basnage's History of the Jews*, and *Culmet's Dictionary* under the word *Expiation*.

^a This was one of the great solemnities of the Jews, wherein all the males were obliged to present themselves before the Lord. In Hebrew it is called *chag hassuchoth*, the *feast of tents*; because it was kept under green tents, and arbours, in memory of their dwelling in tents in their passage through the wilderness, and immediately after the harvest, in grateful acknowledgment to God for the fruits of the earth which they had lately gathered in. It was observed for seven days; and of the several sacrifices which were appointed for each day, we have a punctual account in the book of Numbers, (chap. xxix. 12, &c.) The modern Jews not having now an opportunity of going to the temple and performing all the ceremonies prescribed by Moses, make, each for himself, in some open place, a bower, or arbour of the branches of trees of such a determinate height, hung round about, and adorned, as much as they can, where they eat and drink, and pass at least as much time in their houses, for all the days of the festival; but such as are old, or sick, are excused, and when it rains very hard, they are permitted to retire to their houses. On the first day of the feast, they take one branch of palm, three of myrtle, and one of willow, bound together, which they carry in their right hand, and having a branch of citron, with its fruit, in their left, thus they make four turns about the reading desk, in their synagogues. On the seventh day, which is accounted more holy than the rest, they rise with the sun, and going to the synagogue, sing abundance of prayers, which they repeat all the feast, with prodigious rapidity, as supposing, that during their journey they were obliged to make haste even in the service of God. On the eighth, (for they have added two days to what Moses at first prescribed) they get their friends together, and give them an entertainment; and on the ninth, which they call 'the joy of the law,' they complete the reading of the Pentateuch, according to the order of its sections.—*Basnage's Hist. of the Jews*, and *Culmet's Dict.* under the word *Tabernacles*.

^b For every drachm of gold is worth ten shillings of our money, and every mina of silver nine pounds; for it contained sixty shekels, and every shekel of silver is worth three shillings of our money.—From whence it appears, that the Jews were not made such poor slaves in Babylon, as wrought for their lords and masters, but had some of them very considerable offices at court, and an liberty to trade, and get riches for themselves; and conse-

quently that there may not be all the truth imaginable in that common saying among them, namely, that they were the only bran, that is, the dregs of the people, who returned to Jerusalem, after the end of the captivity, and that all the fine flour staid behind at Babylon.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 536.

c For although, from the time that they had been infested with lions, in the days of Esarhaddon, they had worshipped the God of Israel, yet it was only in conjunction with their other gods whom they worshipped before; and therefore, notwithstanding their worship of the true God, since they worshipped false gods too at the same time, they were, in this respect, idolaters, which was reason enough for the true worshippers of God to have no communion with them.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 534.

d We do not find that Daniel took the advantage of the edict which Cyrus made in favour of the Jews; and therefore we may suppose, that, as he did not return with them to Jerusalem, the king might require his continuance with him, and Daniel might the rather consent to it, as having thereby a better opportunity to befriend his countrymen upon any exigence. To this purpose it is highly probable, that he attended the Persian court, which, after the taking and defacing of Babylon, resided in summer at Shushan or Susa, and in winter at Ecbatan. In the palace of Shushan, Daniel, as himself tells us, (chap. viii. 1, &c.) had several visions. In this city, as Josephus himself informs us, (*Antiq. b. x. c. 12.*) where, instead of Ecbatan, St Jerome reads Susa, he built a famous edifice, finished with such exquisite art, that it continued fresh and beautiful in his days; and in this city the common tradition is, that he died in the third or fourth year of Cyrus, and about the ninety-first year of his age; for even to this day, as we learn from Benjamin's *Itinerarium*, the inhabitants of the place, at present called Taster, show his monument. But the most valuable monument left behind him is in his writings, whereof the Jewish historian gives us this character:—

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A. M. 3417. A. C. 587; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4825. A. C. 586. JER. xl. 7—xiv. DANIEL, AND EZRA I—v.

"We had this peculiar blessing attending him, that he lived in great reputation both with prince and people, and when he died, left an immortal memory behind him. His writings, which are still extant, and in common use, we keep as a sure pledge that he had an intimacy and conversation with God: for, whereas other prophets were more employed in foreboding calamities and ill news, which drew upon them disgrace from princes, and hatred from the people, Daniel, on the contrary, foretold nothing but happy events, and what was agreeable; so that the nature of his predictions was such, as gained him the good will of all, and such the certainty of them, as gained him a ready credence with all; which, as the historian remarks, may serve not only to establish a veneration for the memory of a man whom God so signally honoured, but to confound likewise the impious doctrines of the Epicureans, which will not allow of any overruling providence interposing in the government and preservation of the universe, but will have the whole course of sublunary things to be nothing more than one grand huddle of contingencies. For when I consider the prophecies of Daniel, says he, I cannot but blame the ignorance or irreverence of those who make it their profession to decry providence, as if God took no care of us, since it is impossible to conceive how there should be such a correspondence between the things foretold at one time and fulfilled so many ages after, if, according to their opinion, every thing were left to run at random, and fall out at hap-hazard."—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. x. c. 12. [Mr Bell, in his edition of Rollin, has an able and elaborate inquiry into the situation of Shushan, which he identifies with the ruins called Sus or Shush, 100 miles distant from the banks of the Shat-ul-Arab, and 50 miles N.W. of Shuster; the Tuster mentioned above. From this article we extract the following interesting account of the tomb of Daniel:—Amongst the ruins of Sus, two mounds stand pre-eminent, and of enormous dimensions, the one being a mile in circumference, and the other two; their height measuring nearly 150 feet. They are composed of huge masses of sun-dried brick, and courses of burnt brick and mortar, and stand not very far from the banks of the Kerah or Karasu; from whose eastern shore the vestiges of this once famous capital are yet traceable nearly to the banks of the Ab-zal, approaching the town of Dezful. The people of the country distinguish these two great mounds by the name of the Castle and the Palace; and at the foot of the latter or largest appears a little dome-like building, under which travellers are shown the tomb of Daniel the prophet. A dervise resides there, impressed with a belief of its peculiar sanctity, and who points to the grave of the 'man greatly beloved,' the most inspired of Judah's prophetic sons, with as much homage as if it belonged to the pretended prophet of Mecca himself, or to the Imaum Hosein. Though covered by this modern structure, no doubt is held by Jew, Arab, or Mussulman, of the great antiquity of the tomb beneath—all bearing the same tradition, that it does in very deed contain the remains of the prophet. The exact era of his death is not known: but it is probable that he died in Susa, a few years after the taking of Babylon by Cyrus. Josephus mentions a famous edifice built by Daniel at Susa, in the form of a castle, which, he adds, was still standing; and had been finished with such wonderful art, that even then it appeared as fresh and beautiful as if only newly founded. "Within this edifice," Josephus says, "was the place where the Persian and Parthian kings were usually buried; and for the sake of the founder, the keeping of it was committed to one of the Jewish nation, even at that day." Some copies of Josephus, now extant, place this building at Ecbatan, or Hamadan, in Media; but St Jerome, who also gives an account of it, and professedly does so verbatim from Josephus, places it at Susa, which shows that it was so in his copy of that historian. We no where read in Scripture that Daniel was at Ecbatan. Susa was formerly a city of the Babylonian empire, and Daniel sometimes at least resided there before the taking of Babylon; and it has since then been the constant tradition, that there Daniel died, and there they still show his monument. It must also be remarked, that Josephus calls this edifice *Baris*, the same name by which Daniel himself distinguishes the castle or palace of Shushan. For what is translated at *Shushan* in the palace, (Dan. viii. 2,) is in the original *Bish Shushan Ha Bira*. Here, undoubtedly, the Bira of Daniel is the same with the Baris of Josephus, and both signify the palace or castle built at Shushan by Daniel while governor of that province. The site of this once famous metropolis of the east is now a mere wilderness, given up to beasts of prey, no human being disputing their reign save the poor dervise who keeps watch over the tomb of the prophet. The chambers of royalty where Ahasuerus showed

the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty, for 180 days, unto all his princes and servants, the power of Media and Persia, with the nobles and princes of the 127 provinces that stretched from India even to Ethiopia, are now the abodes of the lion, the wolf, and the hyæna; and the voice of festive song that once filled the joyous halls is now exchanged for the frightful howlings of these beasts of prey. The earliest notice of Daniel's tomb published in Europe, seems to have been given by Benjamin of Tudela, a Spanish Jew, who visited Asia, towards the latter part of the thirteenth century. The account of his travels was first printed in Hebrew, in 1543, and has gone through several editions and translations into different languages. The tomb of Daniel is also mentioned by another Jewish traveller, whose Hebrew work, with a Latin translation by the learned Hottenger, was published at Heidelberg, in 1659, under the title of 'Cippi Hebraici.' But in these notices the Tigris is confounded with the Euphrates, and Babylon with Susa. "The local tradition which fixes Daniel's tomb at Susa," says Sir William Ouseley, "seems worthy of investigation. Through the more modern authors of some oriental works, mostly geographical, I have pursued the tradition to Hamdalla, Cazvini, of the fourteenth century, and from him through Rabbi Benjamin above-mentioned, to Ebn Hawkel, who travelled in the tenth century."—*Oriental Geog.* p. 70, of *Ebn Hawkel*, translated by Sir William Ouseley. This is probably the oldest authority furnished by printed books on the subject; but a venerable historian, Aasim of Cufah, who preceded Ebn Hawkel by two centuries, (for he died in 735) mentions the discovery of Daniel's coffin at Sus, in a MS. chronicle, from which Sir William Ouseley promised an extract, which is given in Walpole's memoirs of Asiatic Turkey, p. 422. The passage in Ebn Hawkel respecting Daniel's tomb is as follows:—"In the city of Sus there is a river; and I have heard, that in the time of Abou Mousa al Ashari, a coffin was found there, and it is said the bones of Daniel the prophet, to whom he peace, were in that coffin, these the people held in great veneration, and, in time of distress or famine from drought, they brought them out and prayed for rain. Abou Mousa al Ashari ordered this coffin to be brought, and three coverings or lids to be made for it; the first or outside one of which was of boards, exceedingly strong, and caused it to be buried, so that it could not be viewed. A bay or gulf of the river comes over this grave, which may be seen by any one who dives to the bottom of the water." Now follows Sir William Ouseley's own relation, with the extract from Aasim of Cufah: "I was finally driven by the heat to the tomb of Daniel, or, as he is called in the east, Danyall, which is situated in a most beautiful spot, washed by a clear running stream, and shaded by planes, and other trees of ample foliage. The building is of Mahommedan date, and inhabited by a solitary dervise, who shows the spot where the prophet is buried, beneath a small and simple square brick mausoleum, said to be, without all probability, coeval with his death. It has, however, neither date nor inscription, to prove the truth or falsehood of the dervise's assertion. The small river running at the foot of this building, which is called the Belleran, flows, it has been said, immediately over the prophet's tomb, and, by the transparency of the water, his coffin was to be seen at the bottom. But the dervise and the natives whom I questioned, remembered no tradition corroborating such a fact. On the contrary, it has at all times been customary with the people of the country to resort hither on certain days of the month, when they offer up their prayers at the tomb I have mentioned, in supplication to the prophet's shade; and, by becoming his guests for the night, expect remission from all present grievances, and an insurance against those to come." The following is the tradition from the Persian MS. of Aasim of Cufah, communicated by our author:—In the 18th year of the Hegira, A. D. 640, whilst Omar was khalif, an Arabian army, under Abou Mousa al Ashari, invaded Susiana. In the ancient capital Susa (Sus) that general found, besides considerable treasures of various kinds, an extraordinary sepulchral monument, which, according to local tradition, contained the body of the prophet Daniel. Of this discovered monument, the most circumstantial account is given by Abou Mohammed Ahmed, whose father, Aasim of Cufah, flourished so shortly after the conquest of Susiana, that he might, when young, have conversed with several of the veteran warriors, whose valour had contributed to that event, for he died in A. D. 735, as we learn from Casiri, Ebn Aasim's Book of Victories, in the original Arabic, is a work very rare; but it was translated into Persian by Ahmed al Mas-touzi, about the year 1200, A. D. and copies in this language

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who was a powerful advocate for his countrymen at the Persian court, and the death of their great benefactor

are sufficiently numerous. I have extracted what relates to the tomb of Daniel. "Abou Mousa, having pillaged the territory of Ahwaz, proceeded to Susa, where he slew the governor, a Persian prince, named Shapoor, the son of Azurmahan. Then he entered the castle and palace of that prince, and seized all the treasure there, deposited in different places, until he came to a certain chamber, the door of which was strongly fastened, a leaden seal being affixed to the lock. Abou Mousa inquired of the people of Sus what precious article was guarded with such care in this chamber. They assured him, that he would not regard it as a desirable object of plunder; but his curiosity was roused, and he caused the lock to be broken, and the door to be opened. In the chamber he beheld a stone of considerable dimensions hollowed out into the form of a coffin, and in that the body of a dead man, wrapped in a shroud or winding-sheet of gold brocade. The head was uncovered. Abou Mousa and his attendants were astonished; for having measured the nose, they found that proportionally he must have exceeded the common size of men. The people now informed Abou Mousa, that this was the body of an ancient sage who formerly lived in Irak, (Chaldea or Babylonia,) and that whenever the want of rain occasioned a famine or scarcity, the inhabitants applied to this holy man, and through the efficacy of his prayers, obtained copious showers of rain from heaven. It happened afterwards that Sus also suffered from excessive drought; and the people in distress requested that their neighbours would allow this venerable personage to reside a few days among them, expecting to derive the blessing of rain from his intercession with the Almighty; but the Irakians would not grant this request. Fifty men then went, deputed by the people of Sus, who again petitioned the ruler of Irak, saying, 'Let the holy person visit our country, and detain the fifty men until his return.' These terms were accepted, and the holy person came to Sus, where, through the influence of his prayers, rain fell in great abundance, and saved the land from famine; but the people would not permit him to return, and the fifty men were detained as hostages in Irak. Such, said those who accompanied Abou Mousa, is the history of the dead man. The Arabian general then asked them, 'by what name this extraordinary personage had been known among them?' They replied, 'the people of Irak called him Daniel Hakim, or Daniel the Sage.' After this Abou Mousa remained some time in Sus, and despatched a messenger to Omar the Commander of the Faithful, with an account of all his conquests in Khuzistan, and of the various treasures that had fallen into his possession. He related also the discovery of Daniel's body. When Omar had received this account, he demanded from his chief officers some information concerning Daniel, but all were silent, except Ali, on whom he bestowed the blessing of God. He declared, that Daniel had been a prophet, though not of the highest order; that in ages long since he had dwelt with Bakht al Nassar, (Nebuchadnezzar), and the kings who had succeeded him; and Ali related the whole of Daniel's history from the beginning to the end. Omar then, by the advice of his counsellor Ali, caused letters to be directed to Abou Mousa to remove with due respect and veneration the body of Daniel to some place where the people of Sus could no longer enjoy the possession of it. Abou Mousa, immediately on the receipt of this order, obliged the people of Sus to turn the stream which supplied them with water from its natural course. Then he brought forth the body of Daniel, and having wrapped it in another shroud of gold brocade, he commanded a grave to be made in the dry channel of the river, and therein deposited the venerable remains of the prophet. The grave was then firmly secured and covered with stones of considerable size; the river was restored to its wonted channel, and the waters of Sus now flow over the body of Daniel. The venerable dervise who watches the tomb of Daniel, showed major Monteith several blocks of stone curiously sculptured, and of evident antiquity, two of which he sketched hastily. The first of these was a green granite, so dark as to be almost black, finely polished, and in height twenty-two inches, and twelve in width. One of its sides was completely covered with hieroglyphical figures, roughly carved in relief, and occupying five rows. The first row contains forms supposed to denote the sun, moon, and one of the stars; the second, animals resembling a hare, a dog, and a bird; the third, a figure with the head and lower extremities of a tiger, the arms of a man, and the tail of a goat. Three symbolical instruments divide this monster from a second, who is

Cyrus, ^a which happened not long after, it was quite intermitted, until the second year of the reign of Darius the son of Hystaspes, wherein it was re-assumed.

CHAP. II.—Difficulties Obviated and Objections Answered.

THAT there was such a person as Daniel, of the Jewish captivity in Babylon, famous for his discovery of future events, and for his great piety and devotion towards God, can hardly be denied; that the discourses and predictions of a person so highly in favour with God should be put in writing, either by himself or some other, and when committed to writing, should be carefully preserved, is reasonable to believe; and that the book which has descended to us contains the revelations, and other accounts of things, which God was pleased to communicate to him, will sufficiently appear by the sequel.

The character which the prophet Ezekiel gives his contemporary, Daniel, ¹ is, his singular prevalence with God in prayer; and whoever looks into the book that goes under his name, will find its author verifying ² this

¹ Ezek. xiv. 14.

² Dan. ii. 6, 9.

also half brute, half man, with a staff in its hand, and crowned with a flat cap; the fourth row contains an animal like an antelope, a serpent a scorpion, and something resembling the ornamented top of a staff or sceptre; the fifth exhibits a trident, two spears, a hawk, and another bird, finishing the group with a regularly formed Greek cross. Besides these hieroglyphics, two sides of the stone are occupied by inscriptions in the cuneiform character. At the head of one of them was a double row of natural objects resembling birds. The second relic of Susa, which drew the particular attention of major Monteith, was a white marble stone found, as the dervise told him, in the great mound of the palace, near to the tomb of the prophet. It does not exceed ten inches in width and depth, and measures twenty in length, and is hollow internally. Three of its sides are cut in bas relief, two of them with similar representations of a man apparently naked, excepting a sash round his waste, and a sort of cap on his head: his hands are bound behind him. The corner of the stone holds the neck of the figure, so that his head forms part of one of its ends. Two lions in sitting postures, appear on either side at the top, each having a paw on the head of the man. The execution resembles the style of the other on the dark stone; but there are no traces of letters on this. Both major Monteith and captain Lockett attempted to get the dark stone by means of negotiating with the people, but in vain—the inhabitants viewing it in the light of a sacred talisman.]—*Bell's Rollin*, vol. 1, pp. 195-6.—Ed.

^a It is generally agreed by historians, that Cyrus was much about seventy years old when he died; but then they widely differ among themselves as to the manner of his death. Some say that he was taken in an engagement, and hanged; others, that he died of a wound which he received in his thigh; and others that he was killed in a battle with the people of Samos. Herodotus, Justin, and Valerius Maximus relate, that, in his war against the Scythians, falling into an ambush which queen Tomyris had laid for him, he was taken prisoner, and, with insult enough, had his head cut off by her order: but Xenophon's account is,—that he died peaceably in his bed, amidst his friends, and in his own country; as, indeed there is little reason to think either that so wise a man as Cyrus should, in his advanced years, engage in so desperate an undertaking as this Scythian expedition is represented on all hands, or that had he died in Scythia, his mangled body could have ever been got out of the hands of these barbarians to be buried at Pasargada in Persia, as most authors agree it was, and where his monument was to be seen in the time of Alexander the Great.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Cyrus*; and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 530.

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character, and his success in this particular exemplified in several instances. ¹ His deliverance out of the den of lions, and that of his companions out of the fiery furnace, facts that are recorded in the present book, are expressly mentioned in the prayer of ² old Eleazar in Egypt, under the rage of Ptolemy Philopater against the Jews, and ³ of Mattathias, the father of the Maccabees, in Judea, under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, and their examples, among other Scripture instances, are proposed as motives to confidence in God, and constancy in their religion: ⁴ so that the Jews in those times, took this book to be written by Daniel himself, and accordingly made use of it. Nay, long before these times, ⁵ we find Nehemiah beginning his solemn prayer to God in Daniel's own words, almost with no variation. 'O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him and keep his commandments,' which is a plain proof, not only that he looked upon this book of Daniel as true and authentic, but that he esteemed his manner of praying likewise not unworthy his imitation.

Josephus, we know, was a priest well versed in the law, and in the sacred writings, whose authority he professes to follow through all his Antiquities; and yet he seems to prefer Daniel above other writers of that kind, and to give us a more particular account of his than of all the other prophecies of the Old Testament put together: for he informs us, ⁶ "That Daniel not only foretold future things (which was common to him with other prophets), but that he set the time likewise for their coming to pass; ⁷ that this book therefore was held among the sacred writings, and ⁸ read in public assemblies (which is the peculiar privilege of canonical books) in his days, because the completion of the events he foretold gained him belief with all mankind." Nay, if we will give credit to this same Josephus, this book of Daniel was looked upon as genuine, and of divine authority, even in the days of Alexander the Great; otherwise the high-priest had put a banter upon him, when, ⁹ at his coming to Jerusalem, and going into the temple, he showed him a passage in it, wherein it was foretold, under the emblem of a he-goat with one horn, overcoming a ram with two, that a certain king of Greece would conquer the Persians; which Alexander took to himself, and perhaps, upon that very account might treat the Jewish nation with more clemency than he did their neighbours.

But however this be, it is certain, that in and before the time of our blessed Saviour, the Jews received the book of Daniel as authentic Scripture, without any suspicion to the contrary. For, whereas the name of the *Messias*, and of 'the Son of man,' which they applied to the Deliverer whom they expected, the title of the 'kingdom of God,' and of 'heaven,' used for the state of things under that Deliverer, his coming in the 'clouds of heaven,' his taking 'all judgment upon himself, and the resurrection of the dead,' pursuant upon that his

coming, are expressions manifestly borrowed from Daniel: these expressions were, at that time, the current language of the Jews, inasmuch, that we find none of them surprised when they heard the Baptist telling them that 'the kingdom of heaven was at hand,' or our Saviour calling himself so frequently 'the Son of man,' and citing Daniel the prophet by name; which they certainly would have been, and thereupon raised no small clamour, had they perceived that he was obtruding a spurious book upon them for canonical.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that, since there confessedly was such a person as Daniel, whose character in the prophet Ezekiel agrees with what we find in our present Daniel; since this book of his has the testimony of Josephus (no incompetent judge in a matter of this nature), was commonly cited in the times of our Saviour, was referred to before the times of the Maccabees; nay, was thought genuine in the times of Alexander, and has received no small confirmation from the use and application which Nehemiah makes of it; either we may suppose, that all these persons, in their different generations, were mistaken, or else we must allow, that our present book of Daniel is no fictitious piece of later date, but the work of the prophet whose name it bears, and who lived in the age which the sacred records have assigned him.

It is no valid objection, either against his personal or prophetic character, that he was educated in the learning of the Chaldeans, and became a remarkable proficient therein. The learning of the Chaldeans consisted chiefly in what they call astrology, or the knowledge of the celestial motions, the art of building, and the art of war. Some curious and superstitious arts that were abhorrent to the law of Moses, they were famous for practising; but there is no necessity for us to infer from thence, that Daniel and his friends were ever initiated in these; on the contrary, we may be allowed to argue thus:—That, had there been anything criminal in the method of their education, they who refused to defile themselves with the king's meat, would never have complied with it. They refused the king's provisions, not only because he might probably have such things served up at his table as were prohibited by their law, but because it was customary likewise in most nations, before their meals, to make an oblation of some part of what they ate or drank, to their gods, as a thankful acknowledgment, that whatever they enjoyed proceeded from their bounty: so that every entertainment had in it the nature of a sacrifice; and therefore Daniel and his friends looked upon the provisions which came from the king's table as meats offered to idols, and upon that account esteemed them unclean. But the same principle that moved them to this, would have restrained them from the study of the Chaldean learning, had any of their impious or unwarrantable sciences been imposed upon them.

The king indeed is said ¹⁰ 'to have found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in his realm.' But these words, in ancient times, were not appropriated to the evil sense which they now bear, but signified, in the general, men of wisdom and

¹ Dan. iii. and vi. ² Joseph. Jewish Antiq.³ 1 Maccab. ii. 60.

Bishop Chandler's Vindication of his Defence of Christianity.

⁵ Compare Neh. i. 5, with Dan. ix. 4.⁶ Antiq. b. 12, c. 11.⁷ Ibid. b. 10, c. 11.⁸ Ibid. c. 12.⁹ Ibid. b. 9, c3.¹⁰ Dan. i. 20

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learning, skilled in the knowledge of things natural and divine. ¹ Those who in St Matthew are called *μαγγοι*, our translation has rendered 'wise men,' because the evangelist seems to have given them that name, not as a note of infamy, but as an honourable title. And in like manner, why may not the words be here understood of such persons as employed themselves in the lawful search of natural causes and effects, of the curious products of the earth, and the regular motions of heavenly bodies? For when Daniel made intercession to the captain of the guard, that ² the 'wise men of Babylon might not be slain,' we can hardly suppose that all of these were such as studied unlawful arts and sciences, since he himself was afterwards made master and president over them.

Nay, even supposing that these wise men of Babylon made profession of some sciences, whose only foundation were superstition and deceit, yet why must their Hebrew disciples be obliged to pursue the same? Might they not follow such studies as best suited their genius, and the principles of their religion? The same indulgence which they obtained from the master of the eunuchs with regard to their provisions, may well be supposed to have been granted them in relation to their studies, in case any difficulty of this kind had been imposed upon them. But there is no occasion for our imagining this. The masters of these occult sciences (as they call them) had many good reasons for not obtruding them upon their disciples; and Daniel and his companions, who were designed to attend in the king's presence, were more properly to be educated in another way, viz. in the knowledge and purity of the Chaldee tongue, of the arts of war and policy, of the state and revenues of the kingdom, and such other lighter and more polite accomplishments, as would make their persons and services more acceptable at court, than any proficiency in these abstruse matters could do. But put the case, that they were at any time called to lectures in any of the sciences that were not so strictly warrantable, we cannot see why they might not be permitted to attend to them with the same spirit that ³ 'Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,' namely, 'not with a purpose to follow them, or to square their lives or sentiments according to them, but purely to put themselves into a capacity, upon a proper occasion to confute them, and with more advantage to expose their falseness and absurdity.

It was not for any more excellent proficiency therefore in those black arts, which were prohibited by the law of God, that Daniel obtained an exemption from the punishment of the fiery furnace, but either because he was absent upon some pretence or other, as most of the Jews might choose to be absent upon this occasion, or because he was not accused to the king, at this time, for refusing to worship the idol which he had set up, though he might be present at the dedication.

Nebuchadnezzar, ⁴ we read, had summoned all his princes, counsellors, governors, captains, and all his other officers and ministers, to be present and assisting at the solemnity of this dedication; and therefore it is

not likely that Daniel, who was one of the chief of them, should be allowed to be absent; but his enemies thought it more advisable not to begin with him, because of the great authority he had with the king, but rather to fall first upon his three friends, whose promotion in the province of Babylon raised their envy, that thereby they might more successfully pave the way to his ruin: but the miraculous interposition of providence in behalf of his friends quashed all farther accusations against him; and for this reason it is, that no mention is made of him in this whole transaction.

It is said indeed of him, ⁵ 'that he had understanding in all visions and dreams,' and dreams, we know, among the eastern people, were held in great regard. They observed them much, and applied to such persons as pretended to explain them, for their interpretation: nor can it be denied, that in the earliest ages of the world, it was the received opinion, that such dreams as were attended with unusual circumstances, did portend and signify some future event; that they were frequently sent from God, ⁶ 'who in a dream, in a vision of the night, speaks once, yea twice, to men,' as Elihu affirms in Job. Now, if dreams be significative, and often sent from God, it can hardly be thought, that in all cases the interpretation of them should be unlawful; and therefore we may observe, that in that very place where Moses forbids the Hebrews to consult magicians and interpreters of dreams, he nevertheless tells them, ⁷ 'that the Lord their God would raise up to them, from among their brethren, a prophet like unto him, whom they should consult and hearken to.' So that, though the Israelites were forbidden to make use of soothsayers or diviners, as the custom of the nations was, to whose possessions they succeeded; yet they were permitted to address themselves to God and his prophets, in order to learn the explanations of their dreams, and the prediction of future events; consequently there could be no crime in Daniel's applying himself to this kind of knowledge, since whatever excellency he had in this way, the Scripture takes care to ascribe it to the peculiar gift of God ^a

¹ Dan. i. 17. ² Job xxxiii. 14, 15. ³ Deut. xviii. 15.

^a That he was taught—even by the astrologers, much useful knowledge, can hardly be doubted: for those men could not have pretended to foretell future events from the conjunctions and oppositions of the stars or planets, without acquiring great knowledge in the useful and sublime science of astronomy, which the agricultural life of the Jews, and the perfection of their law, deprived them of almost every inducement to study. No Chaldean astrologer can have employed himself in more frivolous pursuits than were those of the alchemists, in the dark ages of modern Europe, in quest of the Philosopher's stone; and yet to the alchemists we are in a great measure indebted for the origin of the science or chemistry, which has within these thirty years been carried to such perfection, and contributed so much to the comfort and elegance of civil society. Even in the interpretation of dreams something might be learned from the Chaldean wise men. Neither the gods of Babylon, indeed, nor the conjunctions of the stars, could reveal any thing to the astrologers or soothsayers. but no man who admits the Divine origin of any part of the Scriptures, can doubt, but that the true God occasionally revealed his will to the prophets in dreams and visions; and when he did so, he must have made use of such symbols or such language as was generally employed to denote the things intended. The narrowness of original languages, and the practice of hieroglyphical writing which seems to have prevailed in most nations—especially in the east—during some period of their existence, rendered it almost necessary to express occasionally one thing by another, to which it was supposed to have some resemblance or analogy.

¹ Whitby's Paraphrase on Mat. ii. 1.

² Dan. ii. 24.

³ Acts vii. 22.

⁴ Calmet's Commentary on Dan. i. 17.

⁵ Dan. iii. 2.

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Daniel, indeed, lived in great prosperity, and in the capacity of a prime minister, under some of the Babylonian and Persian monarchs; and therefore if, through ignorance, he has mistaken their name, or recorded any

In visions or dreams, whether sent by God or not, some symbols or language must have been employed; and the business of the Oneirocritic or interpreter was to ascertain the import of such symbols. The interpreter who practised by art could only guess at that import, and in nine instances out of ten was likely to guess erroneously; but he who interpreted by inspiration was in no danger of falling into error, though each symbol, or word, taken by itself, must have had some meaning generally understood by those among whom such symbols and words were in general use, as well as by the prophet. "The early interpreters of dreams," says Bishop Warburton, (Divine Legation of Moses, b. iv. s. 4.) "were not juggling impostors; but, like the early judicial astrologers, more superstitious than their neighbours, and so the first that fell into their own delusions. However, suppose them to have been as arrant cheats as any of their successors, yet, at their first setting up, they must have had materials proper for their trade; which could never be the wild workings of each man's private fancy. Their customers would look to find a known analogy, become venerable by long application to mysterious wisdom, for the groundwork of their deciphering; and the decipherers themselves would as naturally fly to some confessed authority to support their pretended science. But what ground or authority could this be, if not the mysterious learning of symbolical characters? The Egyptian priests, the first interpreters of dreams, took their rules for this species of divination, from their symbolical riddling, in which they were so deeply read;—a ground of interpretation which would give the strongest credit to the art, and equally satisfy the diviner and the consulter; for it being generally believed that their gods had given them hieroglyphic writing, nothing was more natural than to imagine, that those gods, who, in their opinion, gave dreams likewise, had employed the same mode of writing in both revelations." When the true God gave revelations by dreams, he, of course, made use of the symbols that were most likely to arrest the dreamer's attention, and at the same time were generally understood; and in different countries he would make use of different symbols according to the practice of the people, for whose information the dream was sent. Thus in Pharaoh's two dreams, the symbols made use of were, in one, 'seven kine,' and, in the other, 'seven ears of corn.' In the hieroglyphics of Egypt the ears of corn denoted its fertility, and the kine its great tutelary patroness Isis. Thus far Pharaoh seems to have understood the dream without an interpreter; and hence arose his anxiety to understand the rest, as a matter that concerned the public. "Accordingly, when Joseph comes to decipher the dream, he does not tell the king that the two sevens denoted seven years, in Egypt, but simply seven years;—the scene of the famine needing no deciphering." In Nebuchadnezzar's second dream, he saw 'a fair and high tree,' of which the height reached to heaven; and this being the symbol of majesty in general, very naturally made the proud monarch anxious to know what particular monarch it signified; and therefore the prophet Daniel begins his interpretation with saying—'The tree that thou sawest—is thou, O king! But if Daniel was intended by God, as he certainly was, to be an interpreter of the dreams sent by him to the king of Babylon—the scourge by whom he chastised sinful nations—it is obvious that a knowledge of the symbols by which events were supposed to be represented in Chaldaea, was a species of preparatory knowledge absolutely necessary to him. The symbols employed for this purpose by the Chaldean magi may have been different from those in use among the priests of Egypt; but whether they were or not, it seems evident that hieroglyphical writing, and all kinds of symbolical representations of God and his attributes, were absolutely prohibited by the Mosaic law. Daniel, therefore, must have been taught the import of the Chaldean symbols, to fit him for an important part of the office which he was destined to fill; and as God appears not on any occasion to work miracles for an object which can be attained by natural means, it is to be hoped that the deist will permit Christians to believe that Daniel might without sin be taught the meaning of the mysterious symbols of Chaldaea by those wise men of that empire, among whom they were best understood. The sciences of astronomy and chemistry furnish many illustrious proofs of the power, wisdom, and good-

thing of them that is not true, this we allow will have a suspicious aspect upon the authority of his writings: but when it is considered how common a thing it was for the princes of the east, upon one occasion or other, to multiply their names, and not only by foreigners, but even by their own people, to be called sometimes by one name, and sometimes by another; how usual it was for them to continue the titles of honour which were conferred in consideration of those great exploits, whereby the dignity of their family was originally raised, and to adopt them into the number of their own; how customary it was, upon their accession to the kingdom, for them to change their names, and yet the first and private name be still retained by most other people, while the imperial name appeared in public acts, and was used at home only: whoever considers this, I say, will cease his wonder, when, amidst such a variety of appellations for one and the same person, he finds this historian making use of one, and that of another, according as his fancy, his pronunciation, or the custom of the country where he lived, led him. Daniel, in all probability, calls the same person Darius Medus, whom the Greek historians call Cyaxares the Second: but when it is observed, that these historians agree with Daniel as to the main points of his narration, namely, ¹ that Babylon was taken by an army of Medes and Persians, whereof the Medes being the superior, were, at that time, named first; that Cyaxares, king of Media, assisted at the siege, and was treated by Cyrus as his chief; that after a day of riot and revelling the city was taken in the night time, by diverting the course of the river Euphrates, and the king of Babylon slain in his palace; that Cyaxares being old, and naturally inactive, chose rather to live at Ecbatan, the capital of Media, while Cyrus attended the affairs of the government of Babylon; and that Cyrus, upon his death, succeeded to the whole empire: if we observe, I say, the exact agreement between these historians, as to the chief matters of fact, we may easily dispense with some small difference in point of names; especially considering that the authors lived at no less a distance than Babylon is from Greece, and that the Greeks consequently might make use of the name which he went by in Media, as best known to them, which the Babylonians, after he had taken their city, changed into Darius Medus, or the victorious Mede, and which Daniel, being a captive in the place, might, in conformity, call him.

It ² may happen, indeed, that there is now and then a word or two, in the book of Daniel, which may seem to have some analogy to the Greek tongue, and with some little variation, may be derived from it; but then it is to be observed, that the words of this kind are, for the most part, technical terms, such as might slip into any language, without being perceived, and such a writer might properly enough use, without understanding any more of

¹ Xenophon, b. v. and viii. and Herodotus, b. i.

² Bishop Chandler's Vindication of the Defence of Christianity.

ness of the Creator and Governor of the world; these sciences have been successfully cultivated by philosophers in France, who seem not to acknowledge the moral attributes of the great first Cause—if indeed they allow any cause to be first; but surely an intelligent Christian clergyman, of a mind tolerably firm, might take lessons in astronomy and chemistry from such men, not only without incurring guilt or danger, but with great advantage to himself.—Bishop Gleig.—Ed.

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the tongue from whence they are borrowed. Architects and mechanics, we know, use to this day several Greek and Arabic terms of art in their respective professions, and yet they do not pretend to understand the language from whence they came: and why might not Daniel, speaking in terms of art, as he certainly does, when he ^a names the musical instruments, very probably of the Grecian make, which were used at the consecration of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image; why might not he, I say, make use of words of a foreign extract, and, at the same time, be supposed a stranger to the other parts of the language? This I think is the common privilege of most writers: nor is the mixture of some Greek terms in the Chaldee language so difficult a matter to account for, if we will but allow what Grotius, upon the place, observes, namely, "That before Daniel's age, many colonies both of the Ionians and Æolians, having settled themselves in Asia Minor, which lies contiguous to some provinces of the eastern kingdoms, might that way communicate the names of what they invented, or improved, even as far as Babylon itself."

The translation of the Septuagint has been held in such esteem, that to have any part of Scripture omitted in it would give a just suspicion, as if it had not been extant, or not known at the time when those learned men undertook the work: but this is so far from being true in the case of Daniel, that we find the Septuagint version of him read publicly in our Saviour's time; that we find Justin Martyr, ¹ and Clemens Romanus, ² who both wrote before Theodotion's version was made, both citing passages out of it; that we find St Jerome ³ giving us several various readings, different from those in Theodotion, and sometimes from those of Aquila and Symmachus, out of it; and, at the same time, telling us, why this translation of Daniel was repudiated, and that of Theodotion substituted in its room by the doctors of the church.

It was Origen indeed who first brought it into discredit, by comparing it with that of Theodotion from the original, in his Hexapla, which showed its imperfections a little too plainly; but then its degradation proves, that before this happened to it, it was all along used in the Christian church.

The omission of Daniel's name in the enumeration of the prophets which we meet with in Ecclesiasticus, ⁴ is of no great moment, because we find no mention made

of Job or Ezra, and yet they both had books that went under their names, as well as he. The truth is, the history of the book itself may give us some grounds to think, that Daniel's character might possibly have been in it at first, though upon some occasion or other, it afterwards came to be dropped. Jesus the grandfather, as we read in the prologue, wrote it in several volumes, and left it behind him unfinished: the original fell into such hands as carried it into Egypt, where Jesus the grandson met with it, and having compiled it all orderly into one volume, upon account of the pains which he had taken with it, he joined his own name with that of his grandfather in the titlepage: ⁵ but it fared with this as it does with other books, to lose in translation, and to suffer by copyists; insomuch, that whoever will be at the trouble to compare the Greek editions with one another, and with the various translations, will discover words, parts of sentences, and whole periods, to be so frequently omitted, altered, contracted, explained, or enlarged, as to abate his wonder, that the mention of any person, though never so considerable, should be omitted in a book that is delivered to us so variously and imperfectly. But there may be another reason assigned for this omission: most part of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, which was the common language of Judea, and in it did Jesus the son of Sirach write this book of Ecclesiasticus. Now, as a great part of the books of Ezra and Daniel was written in Chaldee, which was a tongue not so well known in Judea, it may reasonably be supposed, that the author's ignorance of that tongue might be the true reason why he omitted these two great men, and all account of their writings, in his catalogue of the prophets.

There are sundry reasons likewise to be given, why we have no Chaldee paraphrase upon Daniel, as well as the rest of the prophets: for, besides that a good part of Daniel is in the Chaldee tongue, and, upon that account, might less need one; it is a general complaint among the Jews themselves, that a great many of their ancient Targums have been lost, and an acknowledged case, that some of their sacred writers (such as Ezra and Nehemiah for instance, men famous in the Jewish story, and the latter of them highly celebrated by the son of Sirach) never had any. The truth is, the frequent calamities which befell the Jewish nation, and dispersed them into other countries, made them negligent of their books; left them no leisure to transcribe long paraphrases; and when, by mixing among other people, they had lost the knowledge of the language, left them no ability to do it; so that, amidst this ignorance and confusion, it is no wonder if many valuable copies were lost, some of which ⁶ have since come to light; but there is reason to apprehend, that the Targum upon Daniel never will. For so much does this prophet speak of the Messiah, describe the signs, and define the time of his coming so precisely, that the Jews, perceiving the advantage which their adversaries the Christians might make of it, were under strong temptations, either to omit or suppress the paraphrase of a prophet so diametrically opposite to them. And accordingly, we have a story from ⁶ one of

¹ Dial. cum. Tryph. p. 87.

² Ad Corinth. ep. 1.

³ In Dan. iv. 8.

⁴ Chap. xlix.

^a Our learned Bishop Chandler is fully of opinion that the names of the instruments mentioned in Dan. iii. 5, are not Greek, but eastern derivations, that from thence they did pass to the Greeks, who, with a little alteration, adapted them to their pronunciation, or termination of words. "For," as he argues, "that their names were at first given them in the country where the instruments themselves were invented, can hardly be doubted; if therefore such instruments as are here specified were used in the east; if their names be proved to be barbarous; and if an eastern root can be assigned for their derivation, which no Greek theme will suit so well," all which he endeavours to prove in several instances, then may we be well allowed to infer that the names of these instruments, whatever affinity they may seem to have to the Greek language, were originally oriental; which opinion is confirmed by the testimony of Strabo, (b. x.) who assures us, that the names of musical instruments, such as *nablia*, *sambuca*, and *barbitos*, were derived from barbarous languages, by which the Greeks denote the eastern tongues.—See *Vindication of the Defence of Christianity*; and *Louth's Commentary* on Dan. iii.

⁵ Bishop Chandler's *Vindication*, &c.

⁶ R. Aburahadam in Zaccath's *Juchaim*, p. 54.

^b It is but the other day that the Targums of the two books of Chronicles were discovered.—*Bp. Chandler's Vindication*, &c.

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their rabbins, that savours not a little of some such practice, namely, “that when Jonathan had finished his Targum on Job, Proverbs, and the Psalms, and was going on to Daniel, he was restrained by a voice, which bade him give over there, lest the sons of men should learn from Daniel the time of the Messias.”

However this be, ¹ since Daniel is so far from being passed by in any dishonourable manner, that even Jonathan himself, in his Targum on the other prophets, expresses a great regard to him, by applying predictions found only in his book, to texts in other prophets that he was then interpreting; since, in doing this, he follows Daniel in his ideas, phrases, and words, and explains passages in other prophets by such as were plainer and fuller, in his opinion, in him; it certainly follows, that (however his paraphrase be lost) Daniel was in his esteem a prophet of equal, if not superior, credit to the prophets he was then commenting upon.

Whether the Jews were more than other nations addicted to the publishing of spurious tracts, under the names of their great authors, and particularly under Daniel’s name, it concerns us not to inquire; since the very supposition implies thus much, that with the Jewish church, at that time, the writings of Daniel were held in high esteem, (for, in such a case, who would choose an inglorious father?) when these base pieces came out in his name. The having impostures fathered on him therefore is so far from being any prejudice to Daniel’s genuine writings, that it rather redounds to the confirmation of their authority; since what was spurious did no sooner appear in the light, but it was despised, rejected, and condemned. The prayer of the three children was not read in all the copies of the Septuagint; the story of Susanna, in some manuscripts, stood apart from the book of Daniel, in others after it; and as for the fable of Bel and the Dragon, it was not intended by its first inventor to pass under the name of Daniel, but of one Habakkuk, the son of Jesus, of the tribe of Levi, till Theodotion, in his Greek edition of the Bible, thought proper to change its title.

The truth is, the Jewish church always looked upon these pieces as spurious, and therefore allowed them much the same place in their Scriptures as the apocryphal books have in our English Bibles; but the genuine book of Daniel they held always in the greatest veneration, esteeming the author of it as one of the chief of their prophets, until Maimonides, a learned Jew of the twelfth century, in order to bar all proofs that might be drawn from him in favour of Christianity, thought fit to degrade him from his prophetic character, and place him in the number of ^a hagiographical writers only.

¹ Bishop Chandler’s Vindication, &c.

^a It is much to be questioned, whether such a distinction, as hagiographical books was known in our Saviour’s time. All the partition that we read of is, the law and the prophets, and the rest of the books (Proleg. to Eccles.) which in Luke xxiv. 44, are called ‘the Psalms;’ and according to Philo (de Vit. Const.) “are hymns and other books, conducing to the promotion of piety and knowledge.” This threefold distribution of the books of Scripture is taken from the nature and subjects of the books themselves, and not from any supposed degrees of sacredness between them; and, if the word *Cethubim*, or *Hagiographa*, was then, or rather in the next century, made use of, it was applied only as a general name for the poetical and moral books of Scripture, to which class neither Daniel nor any historical book was reducible.—*Bishop Chandler’s Vindication, &c.*

Hard is the fate of a prophet, when the very clearness as well as obscurity of his writings must be imputed as an objection against his authority; but certainly we must allow, that it is as easy for an all-knowing God to foretell all circumstances of an event, or to reveal the whole series of events, in their proper connexion and succession, as to declare one single occurrence. Such knowledge and such wisdom are essential attributes of God: nor can there be any absurdity in his imparting his knowledge of future events, with more or less reserve to one man rather than another; only one would think, that the freer such communications were, and the more conspicuous the revelation, the more excellent should the prophet whom God pleased to honour in this manner be accounted. So unreasonable are the prejudices of those who make the clearness of prophecies an argument against them, and endeavour to exclude Daniel from the number of prophets, for a reason that best entitled him to that character!

“But what shall we say ² to his dark and abstruse way of writing in other places, his figurative and parabolical, his enigmatical and emblematical style, his uncouth images and symbols, entirely unlike the writings of the other prophets, but vastly agreeable to that turn which the Jews took up, when they came to be formed in the schools of the Greeks?” All the Greek authors that we are acquainted with, are strangers to this manner of writing; they abound, indeed, in figures and allegories; but the symbolical and emblematical form was purely oriental, and what other prophets as well as Daniel, as occasion requires, pursue.

For, doth not Isaiah foretell the destruction of the Egyptians under the image of God’s ³ striking with a great and strong sword the leviathan (or crocodile), and slaying the great dragon that is in the sea? Does not Jeremiah ⁴ speak of the Assyrians under the name of a dove, because ⁵ Semiramis had made that bird the symbol of her nation? Does not Ezekiel prophecy of Pharaoh under the figure of ⁶ a great dragon that lives in the midst of the rivers; of the king of Babylon, under the emblem of a ⁷ large eagle with great wings; and of the Assyrian, under the similitude of ⁸ a tall cedar in Lebanon, exalted above all trees, and reaching the clouds with its top, &c., the very same figure ⁹ whereby the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar was represented? It is the genius of the eastern people to be delighted with fiction and imagery, and, as Sir John Chardin, in his description of Persepolis, tells us, nothing is more common among their authors, than to call countries by the names of their emblems, which are, as it were, the arms of that nation; and, in forming these emblems, to make use not only of natural animals, but of such as are chimerical and fabulous likewise, beasts with wings, and birds with four feet and long ears.

¹⁰ “Among the figures upon the walls and pillars of an ancient temple in this ^b once famous metropolis of

² See Collins’s Scheme of Literal Prophecy.

³ Is. xxvii. 1.

⁴ Jer. xlviii. 28.

⁵ Diodor. Sicul. b. 3.

⁶ Ezek. xxix. 3.

⁷ Ezek. xvii. 3, 12.

⁸ Ezek. xxxi. 3, &c.

⁹ Dan. iv. 10, &c.

¹⁰ Bishop Chandler’s Vindication, &c. p. 152.

^b While Alexander lay at this place, he gave himself much to feasting and drinking, for joy of his great successes. In one of these feasts, which he made for his chief commanders, he in-

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Persia," says he, "there are some very monstrous for figure and size. A winged lion with a crown on his head; a winged lion flying on the back of a bull; the body of a horse with wings on his back; and a man's head covered with a high bonnet crowned, &c. In images and hieroglyphics," continues he, "here one may see the wars of princes and countries, and their successes expressed. The beasts represent the people or land in war; their running at each other, their engagement; and the crown on the head of one of them, or his taking the other by the hair of the head, and stabbing him, points out his victory."

Now, since this method of describing things by images was so customary in the age and place where Daniel was captive, it is reasonable to suppose, that he conformed himself to it, and that the fictitious animals which he makes mention of, were no improper emblems of the several empires whereof he writes. The ram, for instance, was the royal ensign of the Persians,¹ as Ammianus Marcellinus observes; the goat, since their king Carinus, was the arms of Macedon; and therefore, how aptly does Daniel see a goat with a notable horn (for a horn² is always an emblem of power and dominion), to which he gives wings, because of the quickness of his success, to³ 'run against a ram with unequal horns, and cast him to the ground,' when he foretells what the Mede and Persian empire should do, and suffer from the Macedonian Greeks? Upon 'the breaking of the great horn,' on Alexander's dying in the height of his triumphs and prosperity, how properly do⁴ 'four others come up towards the four winds of heaven,' to denote the division^a of his empire among four kings, whereof Ptolemy had Egypt, and the adjoining countries to the south; Antigonus had Asia to the north; Seleucus had

Syria to the east; and Antipater Greece and Macedonia to the west.

⁵ A little horn coming out of one of these, and waxing exceeding great towards the south, and east, and pleasant land, nay, waxing so great as to cast down some of the host of heaven, and of the stars to the ground, and so trample upon them, may seem a wild extravagant rant: but when it is considered, that all this is meant of Antiochus, who was afterwards called by his flatterers Epiphanes, though himself a vile person, and usurper of the kingdom; that it is to represent him, as soon as he got possession of the Syrian kingdom, taking advantage of the youth of Ptolemy Philometer, and invading Egypt to the south, Armenia and Persia to the east; and Judea, which is here styled 'the pleasant land,' and frequently described as a land flowing with milk and honey, that it is to represent him persecuting the Jewish church and nation, here styled 'the host of heaven;' murdering the principal men of both, here called 'the stars;' deposing their high priest, whose title is 'the prince of the host;' profaning their temple, polluting their altar, abolishing their law, and establishing idolatry by a solemn edict,⁶ as whoever has read of the mad and impious actions of Antiochus^b must know: when this is considered, I say, a small allowance for the oriental manner of pompous writing will reduce these images to a tolerable size.

The plain truth is, princes and states were in old times painted by their symbols, which are therefore called their *συμβολατα*, and, in after ages, came to be distinguished by writers under the name of such symbols, as well as by their proper appellations; and therefore 'the lion with eagle's wings,' signifying the strength of the Assyrian empire, and the celerity of its conquests; 'the beast with three ribs in his mouth,' intimating the reduction which Cyrus made of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, to the Persian monarchy; the 'leopard with four wings and heads;' denoting Alexander and his four successors; and the 'other beast with iron feet and ten horns,' representing the Roman empire, and the ten

¹ B. 19. And rams' heads with horns, the one higher, and the other lower, are still to be seen among the ruins of Persepolis, as Sir John Chardin takes notice in his travels.

² Deut. xxxiii. 17; Psal. lxxxix. 17.

³ Dan. viii. 7.

⁴ Dan. viii. 8.

vited their mistresses likewise to accompany them; among whom was one Thais, a famous Athenian courtesan, who was then mistress to Ptolemy, afterwards king of Egypt. This woman, in the heat of her carousals, proposed to Alexander the burning down of the city and palace of Persepolis, in revenge to the Persians; especially for their burning of Athens under Xerxes; and, as the whole company was drunk, the proposal was received with a general applause, so that every man took a torch, and (with Alexander at the head of them) setting fire to the city and palace, in a short time, burnt them both to the ground. Thus, at the motion of a drunken strumpet, was destroyed, by this drunken king, one of the finest palaces in the world; for that this at Persepolis was such, the ruins of it sufficiently show, which are still remaining at a place near Shiras, named *Chebelminar*, which, in the Persian language, signifies *forty pillars*; and is so called, because such a number of pillars, as well as other stately ruins of this palace, are there still remaining even to this day.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 330.

^a Dr Prideaux is of opinion, that this partition of Alexander's empire, to which the prophecy has relation, did not happen till after the battle at Ipsus, where Antigonus was slain, and whereupon the four surviving princes divided the conqueror's dominions into four distinct kingdoms, whereof Ptolemy had Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, Cælo-Syria, and Palestine; Cassander, Macedonia and Greece; Lysimachus, Thrace, Bithynia, and some other provinces beyond the Hellespont and the Bosphorus; and Seleucus all the rest; *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 301. But others have made the division of his empire ensuant immediately upon his death.—*Calmet's Commentary* on Dan. vii.

⁵ Daniel viii. 9, &c.

⁶ 2 Maccab. v. 24, &c.

^b Many of the heathen writers give us this account of him, namely, that he would frequently get out of the palace, and ramble about the streets of Antioch with two or three persons only accompanying him; that, in his rambles, he would drink with strangers and foreigners, and even with the meanest and vilest of them; that, when he heard of any young company met together to make merry, he would intrude himself among them, and revel away the time with them in cups, and songs, and other frolics, without any regard to common decency, or his own royal character; that, in these frolics, he would often go out in the streets, and there scatter his money by handfuls, for the rabble to scramble for; that, at other times, he would go about with a crown of roses upon his head, and, in a Roman gown, would walk the streets alone, carrying a parcel of stones in his lap, to throw at those that should follow after; that he was much addicted to drunkenness and lasciviousness; was frequently found in the company of pathics, and common prostitutes, on whom he would gratify his lust publicly, and in the sight of the people; and that, having for his catamites two vile persons, called Timarchus and Heraclides, who were brothers, he made the former of them governor of Babylon, and the other his treasurer in that province. The short is, his freaks, follies, and vices were so many, that men were in a doubt whether he were a madman or a fool, though the former of these was generally thought his truest character; and, therefore, instead of Epiphanes the Illustrious, they commonly called him Epimanes, the Madman.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 175.

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kingdoms, ^a or principalities, into which it was divided, was a language as well known to skilful readers at that time, as are the arms, the colours, and the field of escutcheons, in these latter days, to heralds.

^b Porphyry, no doubt, was well acquainted with this hieroglyphic way of writing, because all the objection which he makes to these prophecies of Daniel, concerning the four empires, is, that they were too plain and perspicuous, and more like historical narratives of facts already done, than prophetic predictions of things to come. But however this enemy of Christianity might urge the plainness of the prophet's predictions, in order to invalidate the authority of his book, it must not be denied, but that God, in his great wisdom, has so ordered the matter, for the exercise of our faith and industry, and so framed the prophetic style, that there should be still some shade and remains of obscurity, abiding upon the face of almost every prophecy, even after the time of its completion; and, therefore, instead of being surprised at the great variety of computations, which chronologers, and other learned men have put upon the 'seventy weeks' mentioned in Daniel, we may much rather wonder, how, at this distance of time, they have been able to come to any tolerable exactness.

The words of the prophecy are these:—'seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy

¹ Dan. ix. 24.

^a Bishop Lloyd hath given us the following list of the ten kingdoms which arose out of the dissolution of the Roman empire, and the time of their rise. 1. Hunns erected their kingdom in that part of Pannonia and Dacia, which from them was called Hungary, about A. D. 336. 2. Ostrogoths settled themselves in the countries that reach from Rhetia to Masia, even as far as Thrace, about 377, and afterwards came into Italy under Alaricus in 410. 3. Wisigoths settled in the south parts of France, and in Catalonia, about 378. 4. Franks seized upon part of Germany and Gaul, A. D. 420. 5. Vandals settled in Spain, and afterwards set up their kingdom in Africa, A. D. 407. 6. Suevians and Alans seized the western parts of Spain, A. D. 407, and invaded Italy 457. 7. Burgundians came out of Germany into that part of Gaul, called from them Burgundy, 407. 8. Rugians, and Thuringians settled in Italy under Odoacer, about 476. 9. Saxons made themselves masters of Great Britain, about the same time, 476. And 10. Longobards settled first in Germany, A. D. 383, and afterwards succeeded the Heruli and Thuringi in Hungary.—*Louth's Commentary* on Dan. vii. 24.

^b This Porphyry was a learned heathen, born at Tyre, in the year of Christ about 230, and there called Malchus; but upon his going among the Greeks, he changed it to Porphyry, which is much of the same signification; for Malchus in the Phœnician language, which was then spoken at Tyre, signifies a king, as *μαλχός*, in the Greek denotes one that wore purple, which none but kings, and royal persons were then permitted to do. He was a bitter enemy to the Christian religion; and therefore wrote a large volume against it, containing fifteen books, whereof the twelfth was wholly levelled against the prophecies of Daniel; but because the predictions of this prophet, concerning the several empires, were acknowledged, on all hands, to have been fulfilled, he did not go about to disprove it; on the contrary, he endeavoured to maintain, by the testimony of the best Greek historians then extant, that they were fulfilled so exactly, and so minutely, that it was impossible for them to be the predictions of the Daniel who belonged to the Babylonish captivity, and must therefore be the spurious composition of some later author. But this argument St Jerome, in his comment upon Daniel, fully turns upon him. It is much to be lamented, however, that not only this whole work of Porphyry is lost, but that also the books of Eusebius Apollinarius, and Methodius, which were wrote in answer to this heathen adversary, (to the great damage both of divine and human knowledge,) have all undergone the same fate.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 164.

holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore, and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the prince ^c shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks, and the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times; and after threescore and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and at the end of the war, desolations are determined; and he shall confirm the covenant with many, for a week; and, in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.'

Now, to set these words in a right light, we must consider, 1st, That the main design and intendment of them is, to foretel the coming of the Messiah, his abolishing the Jewish, and setting up a new and more perfect religion; which is so manifest to every common reader, that later Jews (to avoid the force of this one prophecy) have even adventured to exclude the whole book of Daniel from the number of inspired writers, and to pronounce a curse upon any that shall pretend to compute the time of the Messiah's coming. 2dly. It is agreed by most interpreters, that the seventy weeks here spoken of (according to the prophetic style) are to be taken for weeks of years, every one of which contained seven years, and so the seventy weeks will amount to 490 years, at the expiration of which term, the matters contained in this prophecy were to have their accomplishment. But then the question is, at what point of time these seventy weeks, or what is all one, the 490 years, either began or expired? For if we can but find out one of these periods, there will be less difficulty in stating the other. Now, 3dly. It seems pretty plain, that the several events specified in the beginning of this prophecy, viz. 'to finish' or restrain transgressions; 2. To make an end of sin; 3. To make expiation, or reconciliation for iniquity; 4. 'To bring in everlasting righteousness;' 5. 'To seal up,' or complete, and 'fulfil vision and prophecy;' and 6. 'To anoint,' or consecrate 'the Most Holy,' were all accomplished in the great work of our salvation, by the death and passion, and by the doctrine and resurrection, of our Saviour Christ. For being born without original, and having lived without actual sin, he truly was the most holy of all that ever bore our nature, and being thereby fully fitted for this great work, 'he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power,' to be our priest, our prophet, and our king.

As our priest, he offered himself a sacrifice upon the cross, and thereby made atonement for our sins, which is 'making an end of them,' by taking away their guilt; and in so doing, working reconciliation for us with God.

^c The colon, which, in our English Bibles, is placed after 'seven weeks,' in the middle of this sentence, should be placed after 'two weeks,' at the end of it, which wrong punctuation may possibly lead some people into an error in their computation.

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As our prophet, he gave us his gospel, a law of 'everlasting righteousness,' and the only revelation we are to expect. And as our king, he sent his Holy Spirit into our hearts, to guide and influence us according to this law; whereby he has taken an effectual method to restrain, and extinguish in us, all manner of transgression; and in doing all this, he has sealed up, that is, fulfilled, and thoroughly finished all, that by visions and prophecies had been before revealed concerning him.

Since¹ therefore all these events were brought to pass, and accomplished at the time of Christ's death, this must determine us where to fix the end of the weeks wherein these events were to be accomplished. And if the end of these weeks is to be fixed at the death of Christ, then, 4thly, This will determine us where to place the beginning of them, namely, 490 years before,^a which is the very year and month,^b wherein Ezra had his commission from Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, for his returning to Jerusalem, and there to restore the church and state of the Jews.

The only objection against this computation is,—That the words of the prophecy seem to denote a real building of the city, since it makes mention of its streets and walls; whereas that work was executed upon the decree by Cyrus, several years before Ezra was in commission. But this objection will appear of little force, if once it be considered, that figurative expressions are, in a

¹ Prideaux's Connection, anno 409.

^a Most learned men agree, that the death of Christ happened in the year of the Julian period 4746, and in the Jewish month Nisan: and therefore, if we reckon 490 years backward, this will lead us to the month Nisan, and in the year of the Julian period 4256; which, according to Ptolemy's canon, was the seventh year of Artaxerxes' reign, in which the Scripture tells us (Ezra vii. 7), that this commission was granted.—Prideaux's Connection, anno 578.

^b Others are of opinion, that the commission here intended was not that which was given to Ezra, but that which Nehemiah had from Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of his reign, at which period they place the commencement of these seventy weeks; which, being reduced to 490 lunar years, bring us down to the time when our Saviour Christ was put to death. There are some variations, indeed, concerning the calculation of these years. Chronologers differ among themselves a little; but the greatest difference does not exceed nine or ten years; and yet even this, Petavius, who has treated of the subject, in his twelfth book of *Doctrina Temporum*, has endeavoured to accommodate, by showing that the words of the prophecy of Daniel, concerning the going forth of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, ought to be understood of the complete execution of that order, which was performed by Nehemiah only; and that the twentieth year of Artaxerxes mentioned in Nehemiah i. 1, ought to be explained, not of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes alone, but of the twentieth from the time that his father made him his associate in the throne, which was ten years before his death: which ten years being deducted from the number of years that elapsed from the decree of Artaxerxes in favour of Nehemiah, to the death of Jesus Christ, deliver the chronologers out of all their perplexities, and dispel all the difficulties that the few supernumerary years occasioned; *Calmet's Dissertation on the Seventy Weeks*, &c. What the learned Bishop Lydd's manner of computing these weeks is, the reader will find fully explained and illustrated by Mr Bedford, in his *Scripture Chronology*, (b. 7. c. 1); and if he would have still farther satisfaction herein, he may consult Pererius upon Daniel; M. Basnage's Dissert. upon the seventy weeks; F. Hardouin's Dissert. on the same subject; and that of F. Frischmuth, in his *Thesaurus Dissertationum*, at the end of the great critics.—[Dr Hales's Analysis of Ancient Chronology is also worthy of being consulted on the Prophecies of Daniel, though the worthy author is too eager to launch into futurity; see also Mr Bell's Dissertation on Dan. xi.; Rollin, vol. 2. p. 510.]—Ed.

manner, necessary in prophecies, and that nothing is more common in Scripture, than by Jerusalem, in particular, to mean the whole political and ecclesiastical state of the Jews.

There is another difficulty observable in this prophecy, which deserves our attention, and that is, the division of the seventy weeks into three distinct periods, that is, into seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week, to each of which a different event is assigned. In the seven weeks, or forty-nine years, from the going forth of the commandment, the streets and walls of Jerusalem, that is, the restoration and establishment of the church and state of the Jews, is to be accomplished. In the sixty-two weeks, or 434 years more, the Messiah is to come, and make his appearance in the world; and in one week, or seven years after this, he is to 'confirm a covenant with many, and cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease:' all which were literally fulfilled. For, in the space of forty-nine years, which answers to seven weeks, the reformation and establishment of the Jewish church and state was carried on, and completed, first by Ezra, in virtue of a decree granted in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, and afterwards by Nehemiah, in virtue of another granted him by the same prince, in the twentieth year of his reign. From that time, in the space of 434 years, which answers to sixty-two weeks, our blessed Saviour appeared in the world as the Messiah; and for seven years after that (which answers to the one week in the prophecy), first, by his forerunner John the Baptist, for the space of three years and a half more, he confirmed the covenant of the gospel with as many of the Jews as were converted, and embraced these laws of everlasting righteousness which he published; and at length by the sacrifice of his most precious blood, made all other victims and oblations (which were but types and emblems of his) for ever cease and be abolished. As to the other part of the prophecy, it relates so evidently to the destruction of Jerusalem, that it needs no explanation. Whoever has read Josephus cannot but observe, that, by the destruction of the city and sanctuary, by the people of the prince that was to come, who, with their armies and desolating abominations, should invade Judea as with a flood, and, by a terrible and consuming war, bring utter ruin and destruction upon it, and upon all the people of the Jews that should dwell therein, can be meant nothing but Titus at the head of the Roman army, executing the wrath of God for the murder of his Son, our Saviour, upon that devoted city and people, in such a terrible and tragical manner as their historian has related.

Ezekiel, indeed, according to the sentiment of some rabbins, was a prophet of more obscurity than Daniel, and, especially in the description of the chariot, as they call the first chapter, so very intricate and abstruse, that they would not permit it to be read by any until they were arrived at the age of thirty. The design of the prophet in that chapter is, to represent the great and glorious appearance of God coming to give him instructions in the management of his prophetic office; and, to this purpose, he makes use of images foreign indeed to our manner of writing, but which are all significant and full of majesty. He seats himself on a radiant throne, supported by cherubim moved by wheels of an uncommon make, covered with the canopy of heaven, and en-

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circled with the rainbow; and though, in the description of the cherubim and wheels, there may be something not so agreeable to our way of thinking, yet we are not to suppose, but that, in the whole, it was adapted to the age wherein the prophet wrote, and in each part perhaps did include an excellent moral. Angels, of what rank or denomination soever, are all ministering spirits, and the instruments of God's providence in the government of the world; and therefore are represented here as supporting his throne, and in allusion, ¹ very likely, to the triumphal chariots of eastern princes, which are drawn by several sorts of beasts, they are said ² every one to have four faces. Their wings denote their readiness and alacrity; their eyes, their sagacity and vigilance; their hands, their prudence and dexterity; their feet, their steadiness and resolution in performing the divine commands; and ³ the noise of their wings, when they went, expressed the terribleness of the judgments which they were to execute upon Jerusalem and all the Jewish nation.

And, in like manner, ⁴ the make and fashion of the wheels which these cherubim actuate, shows, that all the ways of providence are uniform, and subservient to each other; as ⁵ their going perpetually forward intimates, that providence does nothing in vain, but always accomplishes its designs. ⁶ The largeness of the rings or circumference of the wheels, denotes the vast compass of providence, ⁷ 'which reacheth from one end to another mightily.' ⁸ Their being full of eyes implies, that the motions of providence are directed by unerring wisdom; and ⁹ their moving, when the cherubs moved, seems to demonstrate, with what readiness and alacrity all the instruments of providence do concur in carrying on his great designs. ^a Thus, full of instruction is every

little symbol in this description! And therefore it is doing injustice to the character of the prophet, to find fault with his images, because they agree not with the present mode, or to censure his writings before we understand them.

His prophecy ¹⁰ concerning Gog and Magog is perhaps deservedly thought one of the most difficult passages that occur in the Old Testament; and accordingly, the conjectures about it have been various. It is generally agreed, however, that the words ^b Gog and Magog are not real but fictitious names; and therefore their wars with the people of God, some have applied to the cruelties of Antiochus Epiphanes against the Jews; others to the persecutions of the Gentiles against the Christians; some to the irruption of the Goths, and other barbarous nations, into the Roman empire; others to the ravages which the Turks made in Asia, and some parts of Europe; and others again, to those, as is prophesied elsewhere, oppressions which, in the latter days, Antichrist shall bring upon the true professors of our most holy religion.

¹¹ The main current of interpreters will have the Gog in Ezekiel to be Antiochus; but then there are some exceptions to this opinion, that may be gathered from Ezekiel himself. For whereas the Gog in Ezekiel ¹² 'was to fall upon the mountains of Israel,' ¹³ 'was to be buried in the east of the Mediterranean sea,' was to have an army destroyed, ¹⁴ 'by their turning their swords upon one another,' and ¹⁵ the Israelites were to gather the 'spoils, and burn their arms for several years:' whoever looks into the history of Antiochus, will see that he died at a little town called Taba, in the confines of Persia

¹⁰ Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.

¹ Lowth's Comment. on Ezek. i. ² Ezek. i. 6.

³ Ibid. ver. 24. ⁴ Ibid. ver. 16. ⁵ Ibid. ver. 17.

⁶ Ibid. ver. 18. ⁷ Wisd. viii. 1. ⁸ Ibid. ver. 18.

⁹ Ibid. ver. 19.

^a Each cherub had four faces: (1.) that of a man; (2.) that of a lion; (3.) that of an ox; (4.) that of an eagle. These four faces were probably attached to one head, and seen by the beholder in union, being joined, each by its back part, to the others. Their body, from the neck downwards, was human; 'the likeness of a man.' This human part first meeting the spectator's eye, had he seen nothing else, he might from thence have supposed the whole form to be human. Ezekiel describes the cherub as having four wings;—Isaiah describes the seraph as having six wings; say, two on his head, two on his shoulders, two on his flanks. Their arms, rendered in our translation hands, were four, one on each side of the creature. The remainder, or lower part of their figure, was, from the rim of the belly downwards, either (1.) human thighs, legs, and feet, to which were appended, at the posteriors, the body and hind legs of an ox; or rather, (2.) the body and the fore legs of an ox, out of which the human part seemed to rise, so that all below the rim of the belly was ox-like, and all above that division was human. From which formation a spectator paying most attention to their lower parts, might have been inclined to think them oxen; or at least bestial. With regard to their services, or what they appeared to do, Mr Taylor asks, was the vision seen by the prophet Ezekiel, as well as that by the prophet Isaiah, the resemblance of a movable throne or chariot, of prodigious dimensions, on which the sovereign was understood to sit; and to which the wheels were annexed in much the same manner as to the royal travelling, or military thrones of the Persian kings; while the four cherubim occupied the places of four horses to draw this magnificent machine? This he thinks probable, and illustrates the idea at some length. The wheels described in Ezek. i. 15—21, in connexion with the cherubim, Mr Taylor conceives to have been representative of the throne of the Deity: the construction—wheel within wheel—being for the purpose of their rolling every way with perfect readiness, and without any

¹¹ Calmet's Dissert. on Gog and Magog. ¹² Ezek. xxxix. 4. ¹³ Ibid. ver. 11. ¹⁴ Ibid. xxxviii. 21. ¹⁵ Ibid. xxxix. 9, 10.

occasion of turning the whole machine. The cherubim having the conducting of this throne, it is obvious to remark how well adapted their figure was to their service; their faces looking every way, so that there was no occasion for turning, as a horse must, in obedience to directions, to proceed to the right, or to the left, instead of going straight forward. As much misapprehension respecting these appearances, has arisen from the idea of the wheels and the cherubim being full of eyes, (Ezek. i.) Mr Taylor next endeavours to correct that mistake. It is surprising, he remarks, that when the same Hebrew word *ayin*, had been rendered colour, in verses 4, 7, 16, 22, 27, it should in verse 18 be rendered eyes. It means the glittering splendid hues—the fugitive reflected tints, those accidental conceptions of colours, such as we see vibrate in some precious stones, which, seen in some lights, show certain colours, but seen in other lights, show other colours. This sense of the word is confirmed by the use of it in Numb. xi. 7: 'the manna was like coriander seed, itself; but the eye of it—the reflected glistening tint which vibrated from it—was like to the eye—the glistening tint—of the bellium.' It would not be far from the truth, to say, that these eyes were of the nature of those we call eyes in a peacock's feather: that is, that they were spots peculiarly embellished with colours, or streaks like those of the golden pheasant of China.—*Calmet's Dict.*—Ed.

^b Magog was the son of Japhet, (Gen. x. 2.) from whom the Scythians were generally supposed to be derived; a people well known in the east for their frequent irruptions and devastations therein made, and who, for their rapine and violence, cruelties and barbarities of all kinds, for some time passed into a proverb; and therefore, whether we suppose Cambyzes or Antiochus, as we shall see hereafter, to be the Gog in Ezekiel, the prophet's calling him by the name of a 'wild Scythian' can be no objection, because scarce ever were any two men more cruel, more savage, and brutal in their passions, than they; inasmuch, that we may truly say, that, as the Scythians were the terror of all the east, so Cambyzes and Antiochus were the horror and abomination of mankind.—*Calmet's Commentary on Gog and Magog.*

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and Babylonia; that, upon his death, his army suffered no defeat, neither did the Jews reap any advantage by it, because his son Antiochus Eupater continued to oppress and harass them with wars as much as ever.

But if Antiochus was not the Gog in Ezekiel, the question is, Who was? And to resolve this question, we may observe, that (be the person who he will) the prophet speaks of him as a powerful prince, who should come from the north,¹ with a numerous army,² made up of different nations, exasperated against the Jews, and with full intent³ to plunder and ravage their country; but that he should be disappointed in his design, and⁴ his army miraculously destroyed.

We may observe farther, that this event was to happen after the return from the captivity; because the prophet mentions it as a thing future: ⁵ 'thou shalt come into a land (speaking of Gog) that is brought back from the sword, and against a people who have lately returned from amidst the nations where they had been dispersed; which can be meant of none but the Jews; but⁶ that it could not happen after the time of the Maccabees, because the Jewish history is, from thence, so very well known, that a transaction of this nature could not well escape us; and therefore we may conclude that it was between the return from the captivity, and the first appearing of the Maccabees, a very obscure interval as to the Jewish affairs, that what the prophet relates of Gog and his adventures, came to pass; and if so, we can see no prince or potentate to whom the characters which the inspired writers give of him, can so properly belong, as to Cambyses the son of Cyrus.

According to the accounts of all history, he was cruel and barbarous, excessively impious, and insatiably covetous. His indignation against the Jews he expressed⁷ by a revocation of a grant which his father gave for the rebuilding of their city and temple. He led a large army into Egypt, composed of all the different nations⁸ that Ezekiel mentions, who were overwhelmed (a great many of them at least) by the driven sands of the deserts. In his return from Egypt,⁹ he died at Ecbatan in Palestine, at the foot of Mount Carmel, which faces the Mediterranean sea, of a wound which he received by his sword's falling accidentally out of the scabbard; so that a great many lines of the picture which the prophet draws of Gog, meet in Cambyses, though it must be acknowledged that all do not.

¹⁰ What bids fair for this opinion, however, is the order and series of events which Ezekiel seems to have observed in his prophecies; for having first foretold the taking of Jerusalem, the captivity of Babylon, and the desolation of Tyre, Egypt, and some other countries neighbouring upon Judea, he proceeds, in the next place, to the dissolution of the Chaldean monarchy, and the return of the Jews from their captivity: but before they are well settled in their native country, Gog and his numerous army are introduced to trouble their repose, and threaten their ruin; but that God interposes to rid them of this fierce enemy, who is said to have fallen in the mountains of Israel, he, and all his army. It must

be owned, indeed, that the writers of the life of Cambyses make mention of no intention in this prince to fall foul upon the Jews, nor do they say any thing of the destruction of his army, ensuant upon his death; but upon the supposition, that the prophecy relates to him, God, who knew the evil disposition of that prince's heart towards the Jews, (which no profane author could penetrate,) has given us this part of his history: ¹¹ 'Thus saith the Lord, it shall also come to pass, that at the same time, thou shalt think an evil thought, and shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwall'd villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey, to turn my hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are now gathered out of the nations.' What became of his army, after he was dead, we cannot tell. Herodotus, who gives us the largest accounts of him, immediately after his decease, passes to the history of the Magian, who usurped his throne; and therefore we may suppose,¹² that as they consisted of so many different nations, and followed him only by compulsion, when once their head was gone, they crumbled into parties, quarrelled, and, as¹³ the prophet had foretold, turned their arms upon one another; which was no more than what¹⁴ the Philistines did in the time of Saul, and¹⁵ the Midianites, when Gideon judged Israel. ^a

¹¹ Ezek. xxxviii. 10, &c.

¹² Calmet's Dissert.

¹³ Ezek. xxxviii. 2.

¹⁴ 1 Sam. xiv. 20.

¹⁵ Judg. vii. 22.

^a The following is Rosenmüller's account of Gog and Magog. It seems to rest upon a much better foundation than that given above:—"The word Magog, which in the ethnographic table in Genesis, is the name of Japhet's second son, appears in Ezek. xxxviii. 2, as the name of a country, whose ruler was called Gog, and who, at the same time, was prince of Meshech and Tubal, that is of the Moschi and Tibareni. It is said, that after the people of God should be delivered from all their enemies and oppressors, and enjoy a long season of repose, this powerful monarch would collect a numerous and formidable host of the tribes of the distant north, and overrun the Holy Land, where, however, he would meet a signal overthrow, and be buried in a valley on the east side of the lake of Genesareth, (chap. xxxix. 11.) In the Revelation of St John, (chap. xx. 8,) Gog and Magog are not spoken of as lands or their rulers, but as two great nations, comprising the heathen at the four ends of the earth, who, after the millennial reign, shall be stirred up by Satan to encamp against the holy city, and shall be destroyed by fire from heaven. Among the Arabs and Persians the nations of Yajooj and Majooj correspond to the Gog and Magog of the Hebrews. They are supposed to have descended from Japhet, and to dwell in the distant north. Alexander the Great is said to have erected a wall, in order to prevent the inroads of these plundering tribes into the countries of the south. From the accounts found in Arabian and Persian geographers of Yajooj and Majooj, we conclude that they comprehend, under this designation, all the less known barbarous people of the north-east and north-west of Asia; the same who were described among the Greeks and Romans by the name of Scythians, and among the later Europeans by the name of Tatars, (corrupted into Tartars.) Yet though the Gog and Magog of the Hebrews may have had an equally vague acceptance, it nevertheless seems to have pointed more precisely to the northern tribes of Caucasus, between the Euxine and Caspian Seas. This idea is countenanced, not only by the fact of the names being connected in Ezekiel with Ararat (Armenia,) Meshech (the Moschi,) and Tubal (the Tibareni); but also by the circumstance that the famous Caucasian wall, anciently erected by a Persian monarch as a defence against the incursions of the northern barbarians, and which extended from Derbend, on the western shore of the Caspian to near the Black Sea, was called the wall (against) *Yajooj* and *Majooj*, that is, Gog and Magog, a name which the remains still bear. In the Apocalypse,

¹ Ezek. xxxviii. 15. ² Ibid. ver. 2. ³ Ibid. ver. 9, &c.

⁴ Ibid. ver. 22, &c.

⁵ Ibid. ver. 8.

⁶ Calmet's Dissert. on Gog and Magog.

⁷ Ezra iv. 19, &c. ⁸ Ezek. xxxviii. 2, &c. ⁹ Herod. b. iii.

¹⁰ Calmet's Dissert. on Gog and Magog.

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We have been so large in our answers to some of the last objections, that we have less room left for the reconciliation of some seeming inconsistencies that are alleged in this period of history; but a little will suffice for this.

For, 1. Whereas the number of the people, returning from the captivity, is much larger in the general sum than it is in the particulars, it is to be remembered, that not only those of Judah and Benjamin, but several also of the other tribes, took the benefit of the decree which Cyrus granted in favour of the Jews, to return again into their own land. That they did so, is plain from the tenor of the decree itself, which extends ¹ 'to all the people of the God of Israel,' whereof (as Josephus informs us) Zerubbabel sent a copy into Media, to the rest of the ten tribes, who, 'together with the rest of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin,' are supposed to be those, ² 'whose spirit God had raised up to go:' and therefore the difference between the gross and the particular sums arises from hence, ³ that in the latter, the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, only are reckoned by their families; whereas in the former, all those of the other tribes that accompanied them in their return to Jerusalem are added.

This accounts for the difference between the general and particular sums in Ezra; and then why the particulars in Ezra differ from the particulars in Nehemiah, the matter (according to a very competent ⁴ judge) is to be

¹ Ezra i. 3.² Ibid. ver. 5.³ Patrick's Commentary on Ezra ii. 6; and Prideaux's Connection.⁴ Lightfoot's Chronology, p. 146.

the terms Gog and Magog are evidently used allegorically, as names of the enemies of Christianity, who will endeavour to extirpate it from the earth, but shall thereby bring upon themselves signal destruction."—(*Bib. Cabinet*, No. xi. Rosenmuller, *Bib. Geog.* vol. i. pp. 121—123.) With regard to the wall of Gog and Magog mentioned by Rosenmuller, Ker Porter (*Travels*, vol. ii. p. 520.) thus writes,—“The name Daghistan implies a land of mountains, and it contains some of the most inaccessible of this branch of the Caucasian range, which runs directly through the heart of this country. The eastern side, towards the sea, commands the most level ground; and on that shore we find the district and city of Derbent. It possesses a picturesque citadel, though situated at rather an unserviceable distance from the town and harbour; but I am told that part of the ancient wall, named Gog and Magog, is very traceable near this old stronghold, and that its foundations may be tracked thence, running in a westerly direction over even the highest mountains. This place, and its adjacent district, a position deemed of the greatest importance by all conquerors, whether Persians, Greeks, Arabs, &c. who could acquire its possession, is now the property of Russia.” This wall was really built by the famous Noushirvan, king of Persia, as a barrier against the invasions of the Khazars. That Gog and Magog were to be sought for in the Caucasus, was the idea of Bochart. “He observes,” says Wells, (*Geog. of the Old Testament*, vol. i. p. 121.) that these words גִּיגִּי וּמָגִיגִּי, denote in the neighbouring oriental tongues as much as Gog's Fort, and from Gog-chasan the Greeks framed the name Καυκάσος, Caucasus.” And besides finding the word Gog preserved in Gogarene, a district of Iberia, he believes Prometheus, chained to the Caucasus by Jupiter, to have been none other than Gog.

The *Scherif-el-Edrisi*, in his geographical work called “The Diversion of the Curious,” gives a singular account of Yajooj and Majooj, taken from the travels of one Salam the interpreter. This person, says he, was sent about the beginning of the ninth century, by the Calif Mohammed Ameen Billah, to discover the mountain Kokaiya, with the bank or rampart of Yajooj and Majooj, who dwelt on the north of it, and who were confined within by a great gate of iron, fifty cubits high, supported by great buttresses, with an iron bulwark reaching to the summit of

conceived and apprehended thus,—“That Nehemiah found the list and catalogue of those that came up in the first of Cyrus, as it was then taken, and that he called over the names of the families, as they lay in order there; that he observed the order of the old list, in calling them over, and lifting them, but took the real number of them, as they were at the time, when he numbered them, that some families were now more in number than they were when the first list was made, and some fewer; and some that were in that list were not to be found now; for some more of the same stock had come up from Babylon, since the first numbering, and others, who had come up at first, and were then numbered, were now gone back again.”

2. Whereas it is said of the fourscore Israelites, that they were ⁵ ‘carrying their offerings to the house of the Lord,’ when the house of the Lord at Jerusalem had, for some time before, been destroyed by the Babylonians; ⁶ why may we not suppose, that the place where the temple stood, even after its destruction, was held in such veneration, that the people who were left in the country, after the general captivity, chose to offer their sacrifices and oblations there, as long as they remained in the land; and that having no priests at Jerusalem, they might go to Mizpeh (where these servants of the Lord had, very probably, put themselves under the governor's protection) to fetch one from thence, in order to assist them in their religious offices?

⁷ Samaria, indeed, and the other parts from whence these devout persons came, lay to the north, and Mizpeh to the south of Jerusalem, a little too far distant for them to go for a priest; and therefore others have imagined, that after the destruction of the temple, Gedaliah, by the advice of the prophet Jeremiah, and the priests that were with him, had established a tabernacle, and built an altar at Mizpeh, where the people, for the present, might resort to pay their devotions, and present their oblations, until by some happy turn of affairs, their temple might come to be built again; and that this tabernacle and altar might with propriety enough, be called ‘the house of the Lord.’

We can hardly believe, indeed, that after the temple was gone, the people were to live without any place of religious worship; and, therefore, considering that Mizpeh was all along esteemed a place of more than ordinary sanctity; that after the return of the ark, there ⁸ ‘Samuel gathered together all Israel before the Lord;’ that there he built an altar, and ⁹ ‘offered a sacrifice;’ and that in the time of the Maccabees, when the Jews were in the same case as now, without a temple, and without an altar, they here ¹⁰ ‘assembled themselves together;’ for Mizpeh, as the author of that history tells us, ‘was the place where they prayed aforetime in Israel;’ we cannot but think, that there is something of

⁵ Jer. xl. 5. ⁶ Prideaux's Connection, in the notes, anno 588.⁷ Calmet's Commentary on Jer. xli. 5. ⁸ 1 Sam. vii. 5, 6.⁹ Ibid. ver. 19. ¹⁰ Maccab. iii. 46.

Kokaiya, almost beyond the reach of vision. The people of Yajooj, says he, are of the common size, but those of Majooj (so far from being giants according to European notions) are a race of pigmies only three spans high. For farther information respecting the locality of Gog and Magog, the reader is referred to a Dissertation on the subject by D'Anville, in the *Memoires de l'Acad. des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, vol. xxxi. and Rennell's *Geog. of Herodotus*, p. 152.—*Bib. Cab.* No. xi. Rosenmuller, *Bib. Geog.*—Ed.

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reality in the supposition, and that these eighty pious mourners were going to Mizpeh, and not to Jerusalem, 'when the bloody and perfidious Ishmael circumvented them.

3. Once more : whereas it is said, ² 'that the priests and Levites, and elders of the fathers,' who had seen the first temple, wept when the foundation of the second was laid, though it is manifest, that the latter temple was ³ forty cubits larger than the former ; it must be remembered, that the reason of their weeping was, not so much because it was like to prove far inferior to that of Solomon as to its outward structure, but because it was to want those extraordinary marks of the divine favour, wherewith the other temple was honoured. The second temple was built upon the same foundations with the first ; and therefore the different measures that we find of them in the books of Kings and Ezra, are to be understood in respect of the different distances between which the said measures were taken. The twenty cubits' breadth, which is said of Solomon's temple, was from the inside of the wall on the one side, to the inside of the wall on the other ; but the sixty cubits' breadth of that to be built by Zerubbabel, was the breadth of the whole building, from the inside of the outer wall of it on the one side, to the inside of the outer wall on the other. So that the difference of the said twenty cubits' breadth, and of the said sixty cubits' breadth, is no more than this.—That the one is meant of the temple strictly so called, the other of the temple and its appertaining buildings. Both the temples then, without all doubt, were of the same dimensions ; but then here was the difference, the sad difference, which drew tears from the eyes of the elders, viz. that, in all appearance, there were little or no hopes, that the poor beginnings of the latter temple would ever be raised to the grandeur and magnificence of the former, since the one had been built by the wisest and richest king, and constantly adorned by some one or other of his posterity ; the other now begun by a small company of exiles, just returned from their captivity ; the one in a time of profound peace, and the greatest opulence, the other in a time of common calamity and distress ; the one finished with the most costly stones and timber, wrought with exquisite art, and overlaid with vast quantities of gold, the other to be raised out of no better materials than what could be dug from the ruinous foundation of the old one. But the occasion of their grief was not only this, that the materials and ornaments of the second temple, ⁴ were even as nothing 'in comparison of the first ;' but the ark of the covenant ^a and the mercy-seat, which

was upon it, ^b the holy fire ^c upon the altar, the Urim and Thummim, ^d the spirit of prophecy, ^e the Shechinah, ^f or divine presence, the five great things for which the former temple was so renowned, were lost and gone, and never to be recovered to this other.

never more be seen ; and this, though a fiction, is designed to inform us, that, in the destruction of Jerusalem, this sacred piece of furniture was lost. The Jews, indeed, upon the building of the second temple, made an ark of the same shape and dimensions with the first, and put it in the same place ; but it had none of its honours and prerogatives ; no tables of the law, no Aaron's rod, no pot of manna in it, no appearance of the divine glory over it, no oracles given from it ; the only use that was made of it was, to be a representative of the former on the great day of expiation, and to be a repository of the Holy Scriptures, that is, of the original copy of that collection which was made of them after the captivity, by Ezra, and the men of the great synagogue.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 535.

^b This was the cover of the ark of the covenant. It was made of solid gold, and at the two ends of it were fixed two cherubim of the same metal, which, by their wings extended forwards, seemed to form a throne for the majesty of God, who, in Scripture, is represented to us as sitting between the cherubim, and the ark itself was, as it were, his footstool. The Hebrew word *caphoreth*, by being translated *propitiatory*, seems to imply, that from thence the Lord heard the vows and prayers of his people, and pardoned them their sins ; and by its being, at other times, translated *oracle*, seems farther to imply, that from thence he manifested his will and pleasure, and gave responses to Moses.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

^c This fire came down from heaven, first upon the altar in the tabernacle, at the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, (Lev. ix. 24.) and, afterwards, it descended anew upon the altar in the temple of Solomon, at its consecration, (2 Chron. vii. 1.) and there it was constantly fed and maintained by the priests, day and night, in the same manner as it had been in the tabernacle. The Jews have a tradition, that Jeremiah, foreseeing the destruction of the temple, took this fire, and hid it in a pit, but that, at the rebuilding of the temple, being brought again from thence, it revived upon the altar ; but this is all a fiction : for the generality of them allow, that, at the destruction of the temple, it was extinguished ; and, in the time of the second temple, nothing was made use of for all their burnt-offerings but common fire only.—*Prideaux's Connection*.

^d Whether the Urim and Thummim lay in the high priest's breastplate itself, or only in the clearness and perfection of those oracular answers which he received from God, when he went to consult him upon any important matter, so it was, that, having put on all his pontifical robes, and presented himself in the sanctuary before the holy of holies, he knew, by one means or other, most probably by an audible voice from the mercy-seat (which was within behind the veil), what the divine pleasure was concerning the affair wherein he came to consult him. This was a singular privilege vouchsafed to the Jews ; but it does not appear from the sacred history, that there are any footsteps of consulting the Lord in this manner after the building of Solomon's temple to the time of its destruction ; and, after its destruction, all are agreed, that this was never restored ; so that there seems to be some reason for that maxim among the Jews, namely, that the Holy Spirit spake to the children of Israel, during the tabernacle, by Urim and Thummim ; under the first temple, by the prophets ; and under the second by *Bath-col*, or a voice sent from heaven, such as was heard at the baptism of Jesus Christ, and at his transfiguration.—*Patrick's Commentary* ; and *Calmet's Dictionary*.

^e This, it must be owned, was not wholly withdrawn from the Jewish church, in the time of the second temple. The prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi lived in this time and prophesied ; but, after their death (which the Rabbins say happened in one year), the prophetic spirit wholly ceased from among the Jews.—*Prideaux's Connection*.

^f The Shechinah was a sensible token of God's presence among the Jews, which consisted of a visible cloud, resting over the mercy-seat, or cover of the ark of the covenant, just above the two cherubim, that overshadowed it, (Lev. xvi. 2.) It there first appeared when Moses consecrated the tabernacle, and afterwards, at the consecration of the temple by Solomon, was trans-

¹ Jer. xli. 6.

² Ezra iii. 12.

³ Compare Ezra vi. 3. with 1 Kings vi. 20. and 2 Chron. iii. 3.

⁴ Hag. ii. 3.

^a This was a small chest, or coffer, three feet nine inches in length, two feet three inches in breadth, and two feet three inches in height, Exod. xxv. 10, 22. In it were put the two tables of the law, the broken ones as well as the whole ones (say the Rabbins), and nothing else was put therein when it was brought into Solomon's temple, 1 Kings viii. 9 ; but in process of time, Aaron's rod, the pot of manna, and the original volume of the law, written by Moses' own hand, came to be likewise put into it, Heb. ix. 4. The Jews have a tradition, which Epiphanius (in *Vita Jerem. Prophetæ*) takes notice of, that Jeremiah foreseeing the approaching ruin of the temple, carried the ark of the covenant into a cave, and by his prayers prevailed that it might be sunk, and swallowed up in the rock, so that it might

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This was a just matter of lamentation to those that had seen these singular tokens of the divine favour in the former temple, and a discouragement of their proceeding with the building of the present; and therefore the prophet Haggai was sent to inform them, that all these wants and defects should be abundantly repaired by the coming of the Messiah, the true Shechinah of the Divine Majesty, in the time of the second temple: 'I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory; the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.'

CHAP. III.—*On the History of Cyrus, and the Taking of Babylon.*

SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.

As the taking of Babylon is one of the greatest events in ancient history, and as the principal circumstances with which it was attended were foretold in the Holy Scriptures many years before it happened, it may not be improper that, by the insertion of a few observations, we enable the reader more fully to compare the predictions and the accomplishment of them together.

The pride, the cruelty, and the impiety of Babylon, provoked the wrath of God against her. With regard to her pride, she believed herself to be invincible. 'She said in her heart, I am the queen of nations, and I shall remain so for ever. I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.' As to her cruelty, God himself complains of it: 'I was wroth with my people, and have given them into thine hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.' And as to her impiety, her monarch not only preferred his false divinities to the true and only God, but fancied that he had vanquished his power, because he was possessed of the vessels which had belonged to his worship; and as if he meant to affront him, he affected to apply those holy vessels to profane uses.

If ever there was a city, as Dr Keith observes, that seemed to bid defiance to any predictions of its fall, that city was Babylon. Its walls, which were reckoned among the wonders of the world, appeared rather like the bulwark of nature, than the workmanship of man. The temple of Belus, half a mile in circumference, and a furlong in height,—the hanging gardens, which, piled in successive terraces, towered as high as the walls—the embankments which restrained the Euphrates—the hundred brazen gates—and the adjoining artificial lake,—all displayed many of the mightiest works of mortals concentrated in a single spot. Yet, while in the plenitude of its power, and, according to the most accurate chronologers, 160 years before the foot of an enemy had

entered it, the voice of prophecy pronounced the doom of the mighty and unconquered Babylon. A succession of ages brought it gradually to the dust; and the gradation of its fall is marked till it sink at last into utter desolation. At a time when nothing but magnificence was around Babylon the great, fallen Babylon was delineated exactly as every traveller now describes its ruins.

Chaldea, with its rich soil, and warm climate, and intersected by the Tigris and Euphrates, was one of the last countries in the world, of which the desolation could have been thought of by man. Yet the debasing idolatry, and brutifying wickedness of its inhabitants provoked, and brought down the vengeance of heaven.

'The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amos did see. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together; the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. Babylon the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces.'

'I will cut off from Babylon, the name, and remnant, the son and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts. Thus saith the Lord, that saith unto the deep, be dry; and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure,—and I will lose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut.—I will punish the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish and conceal not; say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodoch is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein; they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast. For, lo, I will raise, and cause to come up against Babylon, an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; and from thence she shall be taken; their arrows shall be as of a mighty, expert man; none shall return in vain. And

¹ Hag. ii. 7, 8.

lated thither; (See vol. 2, 437) and there continued, in the same visible manner, while the ark was in its own proper place, either in the tabernacle or temple (but not while it was in movement, as it often was during the time of the tabernacle), till the Babylonians destroyed the temple, after which it never appeared more.—*Prideaux's Connection.*

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Chaldea shall be a spoil; and all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the Lord. Behold the hindmost of the nations a wilderness, a dry land and a desert. Because of the wrath of the Lord, it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate; every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues. The Lord hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation; for this is the work of the Lord God of hosts in the land of the Chaldees. Come against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses; cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly, let nothing of her be left.—Therefore the wild beast of the desert, with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbouring cities thereof, saith the Lord; so shall man no more abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.¹

‘Set up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Aschenas: Lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country.’

Cyrus subdued the Armenians, who had revolted against Media, spared their king, bound them over anew to their allegiance, by kindness rather than by force, and incorporated their army with his own. He adopted the Hyrcanians who had rebelled against Babylon, as allies and confederates, with the Medes and Persians. He conquered the united forces of the Babylonians and Lydians, took Sardis, with Croesus and all his wealth, spared his life after he was at the stake, restored to him his family and his household, received him into the number of his counsellors and friends, and thus prepared the Lydians, over whom he reigned, and who were formerly combined with Babylon, for coming up against it: he overthrew also the Phrygians and Cappadocians, and added their armies in like manner to his accumulating forces. And by successive alliances and conquests, by proclaiming liberty to the slaves, by a humane policy, consummate skill, a pure and noble disinterestedness, and a boundless generosity, he changed, within the space of twenty years, a confederacy which the king of Babylon had raised up against the Medes and Persians, whose junction he feared, into a confederacy even of the same nature against Babylon itself,—and thus a standard was set up against Babylon in many a land, kingdoms were summoned, prepared, and gathered together against her.

‘They shall hold the bow and the lance,—they shall ride upon horses,—let the archer bend his bow,—all ye that bend the bow shoot at her.’ Forty thousand Persian horsemen were armed from among the nations which Cyrus subdued; many horses of the captives were besides distributed among all the allies. And Cyrus came up against Babylon with a great multitude of horse; and also with a great multitude of archers and javelin men,—that held the bow and the lance.

No sooner had Cyrus reached Babylon, with the nations which he had prepared, and gathered against

her, than in the hope of discovering some point not utterly impregnable, accompanied by his chief officers and friends, he rode around the walls, and examined them on every side, after having for that purpose stationed his whole army round the city. They camped against it round about. They put themselves in array against Babylon round about.

Frustrated in the attempt to discover, throughout the whole circumference, a single assailable point, and finding that it was not possible, by any attack, to make himself master of walls so strong and so high, and fearing that his army would be exposed to the assault of the Babylonians by a too extended, and consequently weakened line,—Cyrus standing in the middle of his army gave orders that the heavy armed men should move, in opposite directions, from each extremity towards the centre; and the horse and light armed men being nearer and advancing first, and the phalanx being redoubled and closed up, the bravest troops thus occupied alike the front and the rear, and the less effective were stationed in the middle.

A trench was dug round the city—towers were erected—Babylon was besieged—the army was divided into twelve parts, that each, monthly, by turn, might keep watch throughout the year;—and though the orders were given by Cyrus, the command of the Lord of hosts was unconsciously obeyed, ‘let none thereof escape.’

‘The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight. They have remained in their holds; their might hath failed; they became as women.’ Babylon had been the hammer of the whole earth, by which nations were broken in pieces, and kingdoms destroyed. Its mighty men carried the terror of their arms to distant regions, and led nations captive. But they were dismayed, according to the word of the God of Israel, whenever the nations which he had stirred up against them, stood in array before their walls. Their timidity, so clearly predicted, was the express complaint and accusation of their enemies, who in vain attempted to provoke them to the contest. Cyrus challenged their monarch to single combat, but also in vain;² for the hands of the king of Babylon waxed feeble. Courage had departed from both prince and people; and none attempted to save their country from spoliation, or to chase the assailants from their gates. They sallied not forth against the invaders and besiegers, nor did they attempt to disjoin and disperse them, even when drawn all round their walls, and comparatively weak along the extended line. Every gate was still shut; and they remained in their holds. Being as unable to rouse their courage, even by a close blockade, and to bring them to the field, as to scale or break down any portion of their stupendous walls, or to force their gates of solid brass, Cyrus reasoned, that the greater their number was, the more easily would they be starved into surrender, and yield to famine, since they would not contend with arms, nor come forth to fight. And hence arose, for the space of two years, his only hope of eventual success. So dispirited became its people, that Babylon, which had made the world as a wilderness, was long unresistingly a beleaguered town. But possessed of many fertile fields, and of provisions for twenty years, which in their timid caution they had plentifully stored, they derided

¹ Is. xlv. xlvj. Jer. li.

² Xenoph. Cyrop. iv. p. 290.

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Cyrus from their impregnable walls within which they remained. Their profligacy, their wickedness and false confidence were unabated; they continued to live carelessly in pleasures, but their might did not return; and Babylon the great, unlike to many a small fortress and unwall'd town, made not one effort to regain its freedom or to be rid of the foe.

Much time having been lost, and no progress having been made in the siege, the anxiety of Cyrus was strongly excited, and he was reduced to great perplexity, when at last it was suggested, and immediately determined on, to turn the course of the Euphrates. But the task was not an easy one. The river was a quarter of a mile broad, and twelve feet deep, and in the opinion of one of the counsellors of Cyrus, the city was stronger by the river than by its walls. Diligent and laborious preparation was made for the execution of the scheme, yet so as to deceive the Babylonians. And the great trench, ostensibly formed for the purpose of blockade, which for the time it effectually secured, was dug around the walls on every side, in order to drain the Euphrates, and to leave its channel a straight passage into the city, through the midst of which it flowed. But, in the words of Herodotus, "if the besieged had either been aware of the designs of Cyrus, or had discovered the project before its actual accomplishment, they might have effected the total destruction of their troops. They had only to secure the little gates which led to the river, and to man the embankment on either side, and they might have enclosed the Persians as in a net, from which they could never have escaped."¹ Guarding as much as possibly they could against such a catastrophe, Cyrus purposely chose, for the execution of his plan, the time of a great annual Babylonish festival, during which, according to their practice, "the Babylonians drank and revelled the whole night." And while the unconscious and reckless citizens "were engaged in dancing and merriment," the river was suddenly turned into the lake, the trench and the canals; and the watchful Persians, both foot and horse, so soon as the subsiding of the water permitted, entered by its channel, and were followed by the allies in array, on the dry part of the river. "I will dry up thy sea, and make thy springs dry; that saith to the deep be dry, I will dry up thy rivers."

One detachment, says Herodotus, was placed where the river first enters the city, and another where it leaves it.² And one post did run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at the end, and that the passages are short. They were taken by surprise, according to the historian just mentioned; and such was the extent of the city, that they who lived in the extremities were made prisoners before any alarm was communicated to the centre of the place where the palace stood. Not a gate of the city wall was opened; not a brick of it had fallen. But 'a snare was laid for Babylon—it was taken, and it was not aware; it was found and also caught, for it had sinned against the Lord. How is the praise of the whole earth surprised! For thou hast treated in thy wickedness, and thy wisdom, and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee, therefore shall evil come upon thee, and thou shalt not know from whence

it riseth, and mischief shall come upon thee, and thou shalt not be able to put it off.'

'In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake, saith the Lord. I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter.' Cyrus, as the night drew on, stimulated his assembled troops to enter the city, because in that night of general revel within the walls, many of them were asleep, many drunk, and confusion universally prevailed. On passing, without obstruction or hinderance, to the city, the Persians, slaying some, putting others to flight, and joining with the revellers, as if slaughter had been merriment, hastened by the shortest way to the palace, and reached it, before a messenger had told the king that his city was taken. The gates of the palace, which was strongly fortified, were shut. The guards stationed before them were drinking beside a blazing light, when the Persians rushed impetuously upon them. The louder and altered clamour, no longer joyous, caught the ear of the inmates of the palace, and the bright light showed them the work of destruction, without revealing its cause. And, not aware of the presence of an enemy in the midst of Babylon, the king himself (who had been roused from his revelry by the handwriting on the wall), excited by the warlike tumult at the gates, commanded those within to examine from whence it arose; and according to the same word by which the gates leading from the river to the city were not shut, the loins of kings were loosed to open before Cyrus the two-leaved gates. At the first sight of the opened gates of the palace of Babylon, the eager Persians sprang in. "The king of Babylon heard the report of them; anguish took hold of him." He and all who were about him perished; God had numbered his kingdom and finished it: it was divided, and given to the Medes and Persians: the lives of the Babylonian princes, and lords, and rulers, and captains, closed with that night's festival; the drunken slept a perpetual sleep and did not wake.³

'Her young men shall fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day.' Cyrus sent troops of horse throughout the streets, with orders to slay all who were found there. And he commanded proclamation to be made, in the Syrian language, that all who were in the houses should remain within; and that if any one were found abroad, he should be killed. These orders were obeyed.

'I will fill thee with men as with caterpillars.' Not only did the Persian army enter with ease as caterpillars, together with all the nations that had come up against Babylon, but they seemed also as numerous. Cyrus, after the capture of the city, made a great display of his cavalry in the presence of the Babylonians, and in the midst of Babylon. Four thousand guards stood before the palace gates, and two thousand on each side. These advanced as Cyrus approached; two thousand spearmen followed them. These were succeeded by four square masses of Persian cavalry, each consisting of ten thousand men: and to these again were added in their order, the Median, Armenian, Hyrcanian, Caducian, and Sacian horsemen,—all, as before, riding upon horses, every man in array, with lines of chariots.

¹ Herod. b. i. c. 191.² B. i. c. 191.³ Herod. b. i. c. 191.

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four abreast, concluding the train of the numerous hosts. Cyrus afterwards reviewed at Babylon the whole of his army, consisting of one hundred and twenty thousand horse, two thousand chariots, and six hundred thousand foot. Babylon, which was taken when not aware, and within whose walls no enemy, except a captive, had ever been seen, was also filled with men as with caterpillars, as if there had not been a wall around it. There is in every particular a strict coincidence between the predictions of the prophets and the historical narratives, both of Herodotus and Xenophon. The prophecies of Isaiah were delivered above one hundred and sixty years before the taking of Babylon, two hundred and fifty years before Herodotus, and nearly three hundred and fifty before Xenophon.

On taking Babylon suddenly, and by surprise, Cyrus, as had been literally prophesied concerning him, and as the sign by which it was to be known that the Lord had called him by his name,¹ became suddenly possessed of the most secret treasures of Babylon. No enemy had ever dared to rise up against that great city. To take it seemed not a work for man to attempt; but it became the easy prey of him who was called the servant of the Lord. And as at this day, from the perfect representation given by the prophets, of every feature of fallen Babylon, now at last utterly desolate, man may know that God is the Lord, seeing that all who have visited and describe it, show that the predicted judgments against it have been literally fulfilled; so, at that time Cyrus, who, for two years, could only look on the outer side of the outer wall of Babylon, and who had begun to despair of reducing it by famine, was to know by the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places being given into his hand, that the Lord which had called him by his name, was the God of Israel. When the appointed time had come, that the power of their oppressor was to be broken, Babylon was taken; and when the similarly prescribed period of the captivity of the Jews, for whose sake he was called, had expired, Cyrus was their deliverer.

‘Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations, before him.’ Cyrus, commencing his career with a small army of Persians, not only succeeded to the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, first united under him, but the Hyrcanians yielded also voluntarily to his authority. He subdued the Syrians, Assyrians, Arabs, Cappadocians, both Phrygians, the Lydians, Carians, Phœnicians, and Babylonians. He governed the Bactrians, Indians, and Cilicians, and also the Sacians, and other nations. He likewise reduced to his authority the Greeks that were in Africa, and the Cyprians and Egyptians.

On taking Babylon suddenly, and by surprise, Cyrus became immediately possessed of the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places. On his first public appearing in Babylon, all the officers of his army, both of the Persians and allies, according to his command, wore very splendid robes, those belonging to the superior officers being of various colours, all of the finest and brightest dye, and richly embroidered with gold and silver; and thus the hidden riches of secret

places were openly displayed. The past history of the land of the Chaldeans may be briefly closed in the language of prophecy; for the prophets, in their visions, saw it as it is; although historians knew not, even after its grandeur was partially gone, how to tell of its fertility which they witnessed, and hope to be believed. Those who recorded the word that the Lord spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans, had no such fear, though 2400 years have elapsed since they described what is now only at last to be seen.

Where astronomers first registered eclipses, and marked the motions of the planetary bodies, the natives, as in the deserts of Africa, or as the mariner without a compass on the pathless ocean, can now direct their course only by the stars, over the pathless desert of Chaldaea. Where cultivation reached its utmost height, and where two hundred fold was stated as the common produce, there is now one wide and uncultivated waste; and the sower and reaper are cut off from the land of Babylon. Where abundant stores and treasures were laid up, and annually renewed and increased, fanners have fanned, and spoilers have spoiled them till they have emptied the land. Where labourers, shaded by palm trees 100 feet high, irrigated the fields till all was plentifully watered from numerous canals, the wanderer, without an object on which to fix his eye, but stunted and shortlived shrubs, can scarcely set his feet without pain, after the noonday heat, on the arid and parched ground, in plodding his weary way through a desert, a dry land, and a wilderness. Where there were crowded thoroughfares from city to city, there is now silence and solitude; for the ancient cities of Chaldaea are desolations,—where no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby.

A chapter of sixty pages in length, of Mr Buckingham’s travels in Mesopotamia, is entitled, “Search after the Walls of Babylon.” After a long and fruitless search, he discovered on the eastern boundary of the ruins, on the summit of an oval mound, from seventy to eighty feet in height, and from three to four hundred feet in circumference, “a mass of solid wall, about thirty feet in length, by twelve or fifteen in thickness, yet evidently once of much greater dimensions each way, the work being, in its present state, broken and incomplete in every part;”² and this heap of ruin and fragment of wall he conjectured to be a part—the only part, if such it be, that can be discovered—of the walls of Babylon, ‘so utterly are they broken.’ Beyond this there is not even a pretension to the discovery of any part of them.

Captain Frederick, of whose journey it was the “principal object to search for the remains of the wall and ditch that had compassed Babylon,” states that, “neither of these have been seen by any modern traveller. All my inquiries among the Arabs,” he adds, “on this subject completely failed in producing the smallest effect. Within the space of twenty-one miles in length along the banks of the Euphrates, and twelve miles across it in breadth, I was unable to perceive any thing that could admit of my imagining that either a wall or a ditch had existed within this extensive area. If any remains do exist of the walls, they must have been of greater circumference than is allowed by modern geographers. I may possibly have been deceived; but I spared no pains

¹ Isa. xlv. 1—4.

² Buckingham’s Travels, vol. ii. pp. 306, 307

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to prevent it. I never was employed in riding and walking less than eight hours for six successive days, and upwards of twelve on the seventh.”¹

Major Keppel relates, that he and his party who accompanied him, in common with other travellers, had totally failed in discovering any trace of the city walls, and he adds, the divine predictions against Babylon have been so literally fulfilled in the appearance of the ruins, that I am disposed to give the fullest signification to the words of Jeremiah,² “the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken.”

From palaces converted into broken hills, as Dr Keith observes,—from streets to long lines of heaps—from the throne of the world to sitting on the dust—from the hum of mighty Babylon to the death-like silence that rests upon the grave to which it is brought down;—from the great storehouse of the world, where treasures were gathered from every quarter, and the prison-house of the captive Jews, where they served in hard bondage to Babylon, the spoil of nations, itself taken from thence, and nothing left;—from a vast metropolis, the place of palaces, and the glory of kingdoms, whither multitudes ever flowed, to a dreaded and shunned spot, not inhabited nor dwelt in from generation to generation, where even the Arabian, though the son of the desert, pitches not his tent, and where the shepherds make not their folds;—from the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, to the taking away of bricks, and to an uncovered nakedness;—from making the earth to tremble, and shaking kingdoms, to being cast out of the grave like an abominable branch;—in extremes like these, there is not a single fact that may not most appropriately be ranked under a prediction, and that does not tally entirely with its express and precise fulfilment, while, at the same time, they all united, show the destruction which has come from the Almighty upon Babylon.

“Who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Lord? and there is no god beside me;—declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done—saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” Is it possible that there can be any attestation of the truth of prophecy, if it be not witnessed here? Is there any spot on earth which has undergone a more complete transformation? “The records of the human race,” it has been said with truth, “do not present a contrast more striking, than that between the primeval magnificence of Babylon, and its long desolation.”³ Could any prophecies respecting any single place have been more precise, or wonderful, or numerous, or true, or more perfectly accomplished throughout many generations? And when they look at what Babylon was, and what it is, and perceive the minute realization of them all,—may not nations learn wisdom—may not tyrants tremble,—may not sceptics think.⁴

Before concluding this chapter, it should be remarked, that the recording of the name of Cyrus in an inspired book, and showing beforehand that God had chosen

him to overturn the Babylonian empire, is expressly mentioned as having respect to two great objects: first, the deliverance of Israel; and, second, the making known his supreme divinity among the nations of the earth.

‘For the sake of my servant Jacob,
And of Israel my chosen,
I have even called thee by thy name,
I have surnamed thee, though thou knowest me not,
I am Jehovah and none else.
Beside me there is no God.
I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me
That they may know from the rising of the sun,
And from the west, that there is none beside me.’

It was therefore intended by this proceeding, on the part of Providence, to teach not only Cyrus, but the people of his vast empire, and surrounding nations, first, that he was Jehovah, the self-subsistent, the eternal God; second, that he was God alone, there being no Deity beside himself; and third, that good and evil represented by light and darkness, were neither independent nor eternal subsistences, but his great instruments, and under his control.

The Persians who had vastly extended their empire by the conquests of the countries formerly held by the monarchs of Babylon, were thus prepared for such a reformation of their religion as Zoroaster effected. If the Magi who came from the east to seek Christ were Persians, some true worshippers of God would appear to have remained in Persia to that day; and if, as is probable, the prophecies of Isaiah and Daniel were retained among them, they might be among those who waited for redemption, not at Jerusalem, but in a distant part of the world.

CHAP. IV.—*Of the Pride and Punishment of Nebuchadnezzar.*

WHOEVER looks back upon the actions of Nebuchadnezzar, will easily perceive that he was a great and successful warrior; that, during⁵ his father’s lifetime, and, while he commanded the army as general under him, he drove the Egyptians, the only nation that pretended, at this time, to rival the Babylonish monarchy, out of Syria and Palestine, took Jerusalem, and carried away the people captive; and that, upon his own accession to the throne, he overcame the Phœnicians and Tyrians, overran all Egypt, and made it tributary, and returned home in triumph loaded with rich spoils. The Scripture, however, does not impute the occasion of his pride to the number of his conquests, or the extent of his dominions, but to the state and magnificence of his royal city, in which, as it were at one view, he saw all the fruits of his martial toil, all the spoils of his many victories, and all the revenues of his vast empire comprised, and displayed in their utmost splendour. For while he was walking upon his palace at Babylon, very probably in his hanging gardens, and in the uppermost terrace of them, from whence he might have a full prospect of the whole city,⁶ “Is not this Great Babylon,” said he to

¹ Transactions of the Lit. Soc., Bómbay, vol. i. p. 130, 31.

² Jer. li. 58.

See Keith’s Evidence of Prophecy, and Bell’s Notes to Rollin.

³ Edin. Review, No. i. p. 439.

⁵ See Prideaux’s Connection, vol. i. pp. 62, 65, 66, and 92.

⁶ Dan. iv. 30.

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himself, 'which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?'

Babylon was one of the most ancient cities of the world. It was founded by Nimrod, not long after the building of the famous tower of Babel, and was enlarged and beautified by Semiramis; but Nebuchadnezzar was the person who put the finishing hand to it, to make it one of the great wonders of the world: and therefore it may not be amiss, to take a short survey of the works that are generally ascribed to him, in order to see what grounds he might have for this arrogant vaunt.

1. The whole city, which stood on a large flat, consisted properly of two parts, which were divided by the river Euphrates. That part of it which was on the east side of the river was the old city; the other, on the west side, was added by Nebuchadnezzar, and the whole was a square of 120 furlongs, or fifteen miles every way, which made the whole circumference of it to be 480 furlongs, or exactly threescore miles. Its walls, which were in thickness eighty-seven feet, ^a in height 350 feet, and in compass 480 furlongs, were all built of large bricks, cemented together with bitumen, a glutinous slime, which, issuing out of the earth in that country, binds stronger and firmer than lime, and, in a short time, grows harder than the very brick and stone which it cements.

The city was encompassed without the walls with a vast ditch, filled with water, and lined with bricks on both sides, after the manner of a counterscarp; and, as the earth which was dug out of it made the bricks wherewith the walls were built, we may judge of the depth and largeness of the ditch from the vast height and thickness of the walls. In the whole compass of the wall there were 100 gates, that is, five and twenty on each of the four sides, all made of solid brass; and, between every two of these gates, at proper distances, were three towers, that is, at the four corners of this great square, there were four towers, ^b between each of these corners and the next gate on either side three towers; and every one of these towers was ten feet higher than the walls.

Answering to every one of these gates, there was a street which led from gate to gate; so that there were fifty in all, each fifteen miles long; whereof twenty-five going one way, and twenty-five another, they crossed each other at right angles, and so cut the whole city out into 676 squares, each of which was four furlongs and an half on every side, that is, two miles and a quarter in compass; and round these, on every side towards the

street, stood the houses, all built three or four stories high, with fronts adorned with all manner of embellishments, and with yards and gardens thrown backwards. Besides these, there were four other streets, built only on one side, because they had the wall on the other, which went round the four sides of the city, and were all of them 200 feet broad, though the other streets were but 150. ^c

Quite cross the city ran a branch of the river Euphrates, which entered in on the north, and went out on the south side; and over it, in the very middle of the city, was a bridge of a furlong in length, and thirty feet in breadth, built with wonderful art, to supply the defect of a foundation in the bottom of the river, which was all sandy. By this bridge a communication was kept up between the two parts of the city; and, at the two extremities of it, stood two palaces, the old one on the east, and new one on the west side of the river. The former of these took up four of the squares abovementioned, the other nine; and the temple of Belus, which stood near the old palace, took up another.

2. The temple of Belus, which was one of the most wonderful works in the world, was a square of a furlong on each side, that is, half a mile in the whole compass; and consisted of eight towers, or what seemed like towers, built one above another. Herodotus tells us, that the way to go up it was by stairs on the outside round it; from whence it seems most likely, that the whole ascent to it was by the benching-in, drawn in a sloping line, from the bottom to the top, eight times round it, and that this made the appearance of eight towers one above another. The eight towers, as they are called, being like so many stories, were each of them ^d seventy-five feet high, and in them were many great rooms, with arched roofs, supported with pillars, which, after that the place was consecrated to an idolatrous use, were all made parts of the temple; but the most sacred parts of all, and where the chiefest devotions were performed, was the uppermost story, over which, on the top of the tower, was an observatory, by the benefit of which the Babylonians advanced their knowledge in astronomy beyond ^e all other nations.

^c For an interesting inquiry into the extent and population of Babylon, we refer the reader to Bell's *Rollin*, vol. i. pp. 186, 187, note.—ED.

^d Some, following the mistake of the Latin version of Herodotus, wherein the lowest of these towers is said to be a furlong thick and a furlong high, will have each of these towers to be a furlong high, which amounting to a mile in the whole, is enough to shock any one's belief. But the Greek of Herodotus, which is the authentic text of that historian, says no such thing, but only that it was a furlong long and a furlong broad, without mentioning any thing of its height at all. And therefore Strabo, in his description of it, calling it a pyramid, because of its decreasing and benching-in at every tower, says of the whole, that it was a furlong high and a furlong on every side, which, without any farther addition makes it exceed the greatest of the pyramids of Egypt, I mean for its height. For, whereas the height of the tallest pyramid was no more than 481 feet, that of the temple of Belus was 600, that is, higher by 119 feet, which is one quarter of the whole.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 570.

^e The Babylonians made great boasts of the antiquity of their knowledge in this kind of learning. They reckoned 473,000 years, from the observations of their first astrologers to the arrival of Alexander the Great; but Aristotle, who was curious in inquiring into the truth of what was related of these observations, desired of Calisthenes, his scholar, who accompanied Alexander to Babylon, to send him the most certain and exact account that

^a Some authors indeed will have them to have been no more than fifty cubits; but then they speak of them only as they were after the time of Darius Hystaspes; for the Babylonians having revolted from him, and, in confidence of their strong walls, stood out against him in a long siege, after he had taken the place, in order to prevent their rebellion for the future, he took away their gates, and beat down their walls to the height abovementioned, and beyond this they were never after raised.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 570.

^b This is to be understood only of those parts of the walls where there was need of towers; for some parts of them lying against morasses always full of water, where they could not be approached by any enemy, had no need of any towers at all for their defence: and therefore in them there were none built; for, whereas the whole number of them amounted to no more than 200, had the same uniform order been observed in their disposition all round, there must have been many more.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 570.

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This tower, and the several rooms in it, were all that was called 'the temple of Belus,' until Nebuchadnezzar enlarged it with vast buildings, which were erected in a square of two furlongs on every side, or a mile in circumference. On the outside of these was a wall enclosing the whole, in which were several gates leading to the temple, all made of solid brass, very probably from the brazen sea, the brazen pillars, and the other brazen vessels, which, ¹ from the temple of Jerusalem, were carried to Babylon.

This temple stood till the time of Xerxes; but he, on his return from the Grecian expedition, having first plundered it of its immense riches, among which were several images or statues of massy gold, demolished the whole of it, and laid it all in ruins. Alexander, upon his return to Babylon from his Indian expedition, proposed to have rebuilt it, and, to that purpose, set ten thousand men on work to clear away the rubbish; but his death, in a short time after, put an end to all further proceedings in that design, and (as modern travellers assure us) the knowledge of the very place where it once stood is at this time lost. ^a

3. Near to this temple, on the east side of the river, as we said, stood the old palace of the kings of Babylon, four miles in circumference; and exactly over-against it, on the other side of the river, was the new palace, built by Nebuchadnezzar, eight miles in compass, and surrounded with three walls one within another. But the most wonderful things belonging to it were the hanging gardens, which Nebuchadnezzar made in complaisance to his wife Amylis, ² daughter of Astyages king of Media; for she, retaining a strong inclination for the mountains and forests of her own country, desired to have something like it in Babylon: and therefore, to gratify her, he erected this monstrous work of vanity.

These gardens contained a space of four hundred feet square, and were carried up aloft into the air, in the

¹ Dan. i. 2; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7.

² Herodotus calls her Nitomis.

he could gather of this matter; and accordingly he sent him astronomical observations that had been made for 1903 years, which came within 115 years of the flood, or fifteen years after the tower of Babel was built, but fell infinitely short of their other monstrous computation, though this of Calisthenes seems to be a little enlarged; because, according to our chronology, we reckon no more than eighteen hundred years from Nimrod and the tower of Babel, to the reign of Alexander at Babylon.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Babylon*.

^a This was supposed to be the case at the time our author wrote; but the investigations of Rich, Ker, Porter, Kimear, &c., have satisfactorily proved that the mound called by the Arabs, Birs Nimroud, or the Palace of Nimrod, and by the Jews Nebuchadnezzar's Prison, is the site of the celebrated temple of Belus, completed, if not begun, by Nebuchadnezzar. This mound stands in the centre of an immense court, surrounded by a canal, and which encloses a space of about two miles, the whole of which is one mass of ruins. The Birs rises in the centre of this to the height of 198 feet, surmounted by a tower, whose shattered elevation is 37 feet above the massy mound, and 22 feet broad. The country round this for many miles is covered with remains of buildings in the form of larger or smaller mounds, but clearly traceable by the masses of brick of which they are composed. A full description of these ruins would occupy more space than we can afford; but the inquiring reader may refer to Mr Bell's note on this subject in his edition of Rollin, vol. i. p. 180, et seq., where a full and satisfactory account of the ruins is given, and the exact fulfilment of all the prophecies respecting ancient Babylon clearly demonstrated.—ED.

manner of several large terraces, one above another, until the highest of them came up to the height of the walls of the city, that is to say, was three hundred and fifty feet high. The ascent was from terrace to terrace, by stairs ten feet wide, and the whole pile was sustained by vast arches built upon arches one above another, and strengthened by a wall surrounding it on every side, of two and twenty feet in thickness.

On the top of the arches were first laid large flat stones sixteen feet long, and four broad; over them was a layer of reed, mixed with a great quantity of bitumen; over this were two rows of brick, closely cemented together by plaster; over these were laid thick sheets of lead, and all this to keep the moisture of the mould from draining away; and then, lastly, upon this lead was laid such a large quantity of earth heaped together, as afforded depth enough for the largest trees to take root in it. For, in this garden there was every thing that could either delight the eye, or gratify the curiosity, beautiful and large trees, flowers, plants, and shrubs; and to keep every thing verdant and gay in the upper terrace, there was an aqueduct or engine which drew up water out of the river into a kind of reservoir above, and from thence watered the whole garden.

4. The river, indeed, at a certain season of the year, namely, in the months of June, July, and August, by the sun's melting the snow in the mountains of Armenia, used to overflow its banks (in the same manner as the Nile in Egypt does), to the great damage of the city and country of Babylon; and therefore, to prevent this inconvenience for the future, Nebuchadnezzar had two artificial canals cut, on the east side of the Euphrates, in order to carry off the superfluous water into the Tigris. One of these canals discharged itself near Seleucia, and the other over against Apania: and, for the farther security of the country, from the head of these canals down to the city, and some way lower, he made vast banks of brick and bitumen; but the most wonderful part of the work was within the city.

There, on each side of the Euphrates, he built, from the very bottom of the channel, a great wall of the same thickness with the walls of the city, that is, eighty-seven feet thick, and of an hundred and sixty furlongs (which are ^b twenty miles of our measure) in length; and over-against every street that crossed the river, he made on each side a brazen gate in the wall, and stairs leading down to the river, from whence the inhabitants used to pass by boat from one part of the city to the other.

5. It was necessary, however, that while this work was carrying on, the stream should be diverted some other way; and therefore, to this purpose, he had a vast artificial lake made to the west of Babylon, which, according to the lowest computation, was forty miles square, and an hundred and sixty in compass; and being of a proportionable depth, was able to contain all the water until the work was finished. When this was done, the river was returned to its former channel; but the lake, and the canal which led to it, were still preserved, because they were found of use, not only to prevent the

^b And therefore this work must have begun two miles and an half above the city, and continued two miles and an half below it, because the city throughout was no more than fifteen miles. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 570.

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danger of all overflowings of the river, but to keep water likewise all the year round, as in a common reservatory, which might be let out on proper occasions, by sluices, for the improvement and fertilizing of the ground.

These are some of the vast works ^a which the generality of historians ascribe to Nebuchadnezzar, and upon the view and contemplation of which he grew so arrogant and elated, as to think himself equal, if not superior to God: for, 'Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the honour of my majesty?' says he of himself; ¹ and, 'Who is god but Nebuchadnezzar?' say his sycophants concerning him. The truth is, if we will credit the account in the book of Judith relating to this prince, he was, in his temper, a professed atheist. ^b The sense of his success in life, and of the wonderful works which he had achieved, both in a civil and military capacity, had so intoxicated his reason, as to make him become fool enough, to say in his heart there was no other god but himself; for this is the avowed purpose of his sending his armies under the general Holofernes, ² 'That all nations should worship him only, and that all tongues and tribes should call upon him as god.'

Fit therefore it was, that such impious pride should be abased, and that he who set himself above the rank

of men, upon a level with God, nay, in an elevation superior to God, should be made sensible of his dependent state, and taught humility and self-annihilation, by being degraded to the condition of a brute. 'He had said in his heart,' for of him is that prophecy in Isaiah, ³ 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;—I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.—But how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning? How art thou cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the nations?—They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake all kingdoms, that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof?' And well they might, when they saw ⁴ 'him dwelling with the beasts of the field; eating grass like oxen, and wet with the dew of heaven, and his hair grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like the claws of birds.' But then the question is, what the proper sense of these words is? Or, what is the same thing, of what kind this divine infliction upon the king of Babylon was?

Origen, ⁵ who was for resolving every thing that he could not comprehend in Scripture into allegory, was of opinion, that under the name of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel intended to give us a representation of the fall of Lucifer, being probably led to think so by the above cited passage in the prophet Isaiah. But the account of the punishment which befell this prince is so often inculcated in the same chapter; foretold in the dream explained by the prophet; repeated by the voice from heaven; and all this published in a solemn declaration by the king himself after the recovery of his senses, that there is no manner of grounds to think of any figure or allegory in this piece of history.

Nebuchadnezzar's real metamorphosis into an ox, both as to his outward and inward form, is a notion too gross for any but the vulgar, who may be taken, perhaps with such fictions of the poets; and what we have no need to recur to, thereby to multiply miracles to no purpose, from any words in the text which will fairly admit of another interpretation.

The metempsychosis of an ox's soul into Nebuchadnezzar's body, thereby to communicate the same motions, taste, and inclinations, that are observable in that animal, is a notion unknown to all antiquity; for, according to the doctrine of Pythagoras, such a transmigration was never made until the body was actually dead; besides the manifest incongruity of supposing two souls, a rational and a brutal, animating the same prince, or the prince's soul departed from him, and become the substitute to a brute.

A fascination, both in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar's subjects, and in his own fancy and imagination, which might make them both believe, that he really was changed into an ox, and had the figure of one, is a notion every whit as liable to exception. For, besides that it is difficult to conceive, how a deception of this kind could abide upon a whole nation for the space of seven years, the Scripture takes notice of no evil spirit in this whole transaction, but imputes all to the sole power of God,

¹ Judith vi. 2.

² Judith iii. 8.

^a Berossius, Megasthenes, and Abydenus attribute all these works to Nebuchadnezzar; but Herodotus tells us, that the bridge, the river-banks, and the lake were the work of Nitocris, his daughter-in-law, who might possibly finish what he, at his death, left incomplete, and, upon that account, receive from this historian the honour of the whole.

^b There is nothing in the canonical books of the Old Testament, where Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned, from which it can reasonably be inferred that he was an atheist; and the Nabuchodonosor of the apocryphal book of Judith appears to have been a very different man. In that book Nabuchodonosor is expressly said to have reigned in Nineveh, and to have been the king of the Assyrians; but it no where appears that Nebuchadnezzar ever held his court in Nineveh. By Dr Hales, Nabuchodonosor is supposed, on good ground, to have been the immediate successor of Ninus III. the immediate predecessor of Sarea, or Sardanapalus II. and therefore the last king of Nineveh but one of the Assyrian dynasty. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon appears to have been an arrogant and vainglorious conqueror, but in no other sense an atheist than many such conquerors have been, even in Christian countries, who, elated by success, forgot in their practice the God of battles, by whom that success was obtained. Far from being a speculative atheist, or from demanding divine worship to himself, the Babylonian conqueror appears to have been a zealous polytheist and idolater, acknowledging, however, as most polytheists of any reflection did, that there was one God superior to all the others, and ready occasionally—perhaps always—to attribute this superiority to the God of Israel. It is probable likewise that he believed in the Metempsychosis, a doctrine which appears, from the Asiatic Researches, and other ancient records, to have prevailed over all the east from a period long anterior to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar; and, if such was the case, there was a peculiar propriety in punishing his pride by the disease called *lycanthropy*. He persisted, in opposition to his own repeated conviction, to worship the gods, in whom he appears at times to have had no confidence whatever, giving, it may be supposed, some degree of credit to this gloomy doctrine; and therefore, with wisdom truly divine, he was visited with a species of madness, which, though it has been occasionally witnessed in every age and in different countries, appears to have been most frequent where the doctrine of the metempsychosis or the transmigration of souls prevailed. See Warburton's Div. Leg. on this subject, and likewise Mosheim's edition of Cudworth's Intellectual System, with the authors referred to by the learned editor of that profound work.

³ Is. xiv. 13, &c.

⁴ Dan. iv. 32, 33.

⁵ Calmet's Dissert. on the Metamorphosis, &c.

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who can humble the proud, and chastise the wicked, as he pleases.

The most general therefore, and most probable opinion is,—that Nebuchadnezzar, by the judgment of God, was punished with madness, which so disordered his imagination, that he fancied himself a beast, and was prompted to act like one.

There is a distemper, not a very common one indeed, but what has befallen several, which naturalists and physicians call lycanthropy,^a when by the power of a depraved imagination, and a distempered brain, a man really thinks that he is a wolf, an ox, a dog, or the like, and accordingly in his inclinations, motions, and behaviour, cannot forbear imitating the particular creature which he fancies himself to be. In this manner Nebuchadnezzar, imagining that he was become an ox, walked upon all four, fed upon grass, went naked, lowed with his voice, and butted, as he thought, with his horns; and, in short, did all the actions, as far as he was able, that a real ox is known to do. ¹ Hereupon his subjects, perceiving this change in him, took him and bound him, as madmen are wont to be treated, but, at last, he escaping out of their hands, fled to the fields, where he herded with the cattle, exposed to the dew of heaven, and the inclemencies of the weather; where his neglected body became horrid and dreadful to behold; where his hair, and his nails, in process of time, grew in the hideous manner that the prophet had described them; and, where his heart, that is, his apprehension, appetite, and inclinations, by the continuance of his distemper, became quite brutal, and of the same cast with the beasts that graze.

The masters of the medics, who have treated of this kind of madness, have made it their observation, that the persons infected with it are generally so excessively strong, that no bands or chains can hold them. They can live a long while without eating or drinking, and endure wet and cold without any great inconvenience to themselves; and therefore Nebuchadnezzar, though bred up in the pleasures and delicacies of the court, might, by the strength of his distemper, be enabled to do what otherwise he would not; to live in the fields for seven years together, naked, and exposed to the injuries of the weather, without any thing to nourish him, except either the grass on the ground, or the wild fruits on the hedges; but then, whether he retained the use of his reason whilst he continued in this disastrous state, is a question that is not so easily determined.

The Scripture, indeed, at first sight, seems to intimate, that he had no sense of his misery, nor made any reflection upon himself, or upon what he was doing, until God was pleased to remove his afflicting hand: for these are his own words.² ‘At the end of my days, I Nebuchadnezzar lift up mine eyes unto heaven, and my understanding returned unto me;’ which seem to imply, that all along before this, his reason was in a kind of deli-

quium, and without any consciousness of what he was about. But then it may be asked, wherein would his punishment and humiliation consist, if the man was insensible; if he knew nothing of the matter; nay, if he took pleasure, as most madmen do, in the disorder of the imagination?

To be miserable, and not to know it, by some may be thought the very height of misery; but the person in Horace, who frequented the empty theatre every day, and delighted himself with the reveries of his own fancy, with plays and shows which nobody saw but himself, was not so well pleased with his friends when they had recovered him to his senses:—“Friends, you have of a surety killed, not cured me, since my delight is thus vanished, and the agreeable aberration of my mind expelled by medicine.”³

To answer the ends of Providence, therefore, in afflicting in this manner this haughty and assuming prince, which was to mortify his pride, and bring him to a state of humiliation and acknowledgment of God’s superior hand, we may suppose, that at certain intervals at least, he had a sense and perception of his misery; that he saw the condition to which he was degraded; but being carried away with his brutal appetite, found it not in his power to extricate himself. St Paul, in his description of a man given up to his lusts, whereof Nebuchadnezzar, in his present condition, is no improper emblem, has these remarkable words. ⁴ ‘I know that in me,’ that is, in my flesh, ‘dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not; for the good that I would, I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do. For though I delight in the law of God after the inner man, yet I see another law in my members, warring against the law in my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, that is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!’ And, in like manner, if we suppose this king of Babylon, in such a perpetual struggle and conflict with himself; seeing his error but not able to avoid it; sensible of his disgrace, but not capable to redress it; committing the things which his soul abhorred; and detesting himself for what he found himself necessitated to do, till God should think fit to restore his understanding, by allaying the ferment of his blood and humours, correcting his appetite, and ranging his ideas into their proper order: if we suppose this, I say, we have before us the image of a creature completely miserable; reasons for his humiliation, during his affliction, innumerable; ^b a fountain

^a Hor. Ep. b. ii.

⁴ Rom. vii. 18, &c.

^b What Nebuchadnezzar says of himself, with regard to this duty, is very remarkable.—‘I blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured him, that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, for he doth according to his will, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say unto him, What dost thou?’ I therefore now praise, and extol, and honour the king of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride, he is able to abase,’ (Dan. iv. 34, &c.) Which is enough, one would imagine, to make us think charitably of the conversion and final end of this prince; and with St Austin, to conclude, that whatever happened to him, by way of punishment, was designed by providence for his soul’s health. “By the hidden providence and mercy of God such a plan was adopted for the king’s salvation.”—*Epist.* 3.

¹ Dan. iv. 33.

² Ibid. iv. 34.

^a Such was the distemper of Lycaon king of Arcadia, which Ovid has described, as if he had been turned into a wolf. In terror he flies to the silent wilderness, and there endeavouring to talk articulately, he can only howl—his mouth spontaneously acquires a rabid longing for food, and his wonted fury is directed against the cattle, his delight is now in bloodshed—his garments are changed to hair, his arms to legs—he becomes a wolf, though still in shape retaining the marks of his former nature.—*Ovid. Met.* b. i.

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to supply his gratitude upon the removal of it, inexhaustible; and, from his example, this lecture of admonition to all succeeding generations: ¹ 'Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this,—that he understandeth, and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.'

SECT. II.

CHAP. I.—From the Death of Cyrus to that of Nehemiah.

THE HISTORY.

CYRUS died, when he was seventy years old, after he had reigned, from his first being made commander of the Persian and Median armies, thirty years; from his taking of Babylon, nine years; and from his becoming sole monarch of the east, seven years; and was succeeded by his son Cambyses, whom the Scripture calls Ahasuerus. As soon as he was well settled in the throne, the Samaritans, instead of applying themselves secretly to the ministers and officers of his court, presented their petition ² to him openly, desiring that the rebuilding of Jerusalem might be stopped; and though they did not prevail with him to revoke his father's decree, yet by the several discouragements which he put upon it, he, in a great measure, defeated its main design: so that the work went on very heavily in his reign. But his reign was not long: it was but seven years and five months, before he came to an untimely end, and was succeeded, for a short time, by the Magian, ^a who pretended to

¹ Jer. ix. 23, &c.

² Ezra iv. 6.

^a The word *Magian* or *Mige-gush*, in the old Persian language, signifies a person that had his ears cut off, and was a name of contempt given to the whole sect, upon account of a certain impostor among them, who had the misfortune to lose his ears, and yet had the confidence to usurp the crown of Cyrus; but before this incident they went under another name, and were held in great reputation among the Persians. They were indeed their chief professors of philosophy, and in matters of religion, made these the great articles of their faith:—"That there were two principles or gods, the one the cause of all the good, and the other the cause of all the evil in the world; but in this they were divided; that some of them held both these principles to have been from all eternity, whereas others maintained, that the good principle only was eternal, and the evil one created, in the like manner as we believe, that the devil is a creature, who is fallen from his original purity and perfection. These two principles, they believed, were in continual opposition to each other, which was to continue till the end of the world; but then the good principle having overcome the evil, they should each of them have a distinct world to himself; the good reigning over all good beings and the evil over all the wicked. They imagined farther, that darkness was the truest symbol of the evil, as light was of the good god; and therefore they always worshipped him before fire, as being the cause of light, and before the sun more especially, because they accounted it the most perfect light. They paid divine honours, in short, to light, to the sun, to the fire in their temples, and to fire in their houses; but they always hated darkness, because they thought it a representation of the evil god, whom they ever had in the utmost detestation." Such were the Magi among the ancient Persians, and such are the *Guebres*, or worshippers of fire, among the present Persians and Indians.—*Prideaux's Connection*, and *Cabnet's Dic.* under the word

be his brother Smerdis, ^b and whom the history of Ezra ^c calls Artaxerxes. To him the Samaritans, in like manner, addressed themselves, and in a memorial, represented, "That ^d the Jews were rebuilding their city and temple at Jerusalem, which might be a matter of pernicious consequence to his empire; that these Jews had always been a rebellious people, as he would find, if he consulted the records of his ancestors; that therefore there was reason to suspect, that in case they were permitted to go on, when once they had finished the work, they would withdraw their obedience, or refuse to pay tribute; ^e and that by their example, very probably, all

^b The manner in which this Magian came to usurp the Persian throne is thus related by most historians:—Cambyses had a brother, the only son of Cyrus besides himself, and born of the same mother. His name, according to Xenophon, was Tanaxares, but Herodotus calls him Smerdis, and Justin, Mergis. He accompanied him in his wars for some time; but upon a pique of jealousy, the king sent him back into Persia, and there caused him to be murdered privately. The king, when he went upon the Egyptian expedition, had left the supreme government of his affairs in the hands of Patizithes, one of the chief of the Magians (for the king was addicted to that sect of religion), who had a brother that did very much resemble Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and was, for that reason perhaps, called by the same name. Patizithes, hearing of the young prince's death, and supposing that this, and some other extravagances of Cambyses, had made him odious to his subjects, placed this brother of his on the throne, pretending that he was the true Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and so sent heralds through the empire to proclaim him king. It was the custom of the eastern princes in those days to live retired in their palaces, and there transact all their affairs by the intercourse of their eunuchs, without admitting any else, unless those of the highest confidence, to have access to them. This conduct the pretended Smerdis exactly observed; but Otanes, a Persian nobleman, having a daughter, whose name was Pthyedma, who had been one of Cambyses' wives, and was now kept by Smerdis in the same quality, and being desirous to know whether he was the real son of Cyrus or no, sent her instructions, that the first night she lay with him, she should feel whether he had any ears (because Cyrus, for some crime or other, had cut off this Magian's ears), and she acquainted her father that he had none, he immediately took six others of the Persian quality with him, among whom Darius was one, and, entering the palace, slew both the usurper and his brother who had been the contriver of the whole plot.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 522.

^c That Cambyses was the Ahasuerus, as we said before, and the false Smerdis the Artaxerxes who obstructed the work of the temple, is plain from hence,—That they are said in Scripture (Ezra iv. 5, &c.) to be the kings of Persia that reigned between the time of Cyrus and the time of that Darius by whose decree the temple was finished; but as that Darius was Darius the son of Hystaspes, between whom and Cyrus there reigned none in Persia but Cambyses and Smerdis, it must follow from hence, that none but Cambyses and Smerdis could be the Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes who are said in Ezra to have put a stop to this work.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 522.

^d After the return from the captivity, the people in general came to be called Jews, because, though there were many Israelites among them, yet they chiefly consisted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and though the edict of Cyrus gave all permission to return when they pleased, yet the sacred writers take notice only of those who returned in a body.—*Patrick's Commentary* on Ezra.

^e For this there are three expressions in the text, *toll*, *tribute*, and *custom*. By the first of these Grotius understands that which every head paid to the king, which we call *poll-money*; by the second, the excise (as we now speak) that was upon commodities and merchandise; and by the last the land-tax. But Witsius, (in his *Miscell.* part. 2.) is of opinion, that the first word rather signifies that part which every man paid out of his estate, according as it was valued; the second, that which was paid for every head; and the third, that which was paid upon the highways, by every traveller that went about the country with any kind of merchandise.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

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Syria and Palestine would be tempted to revolt; so that, in a short time, his majesty would be excluded from having any benefit from his territories on that side of the river Euphrates."

Upon consulting the records which the Samaritans referred the king to, it plainly appeared, that the Jews had defended themselves with great valour, and had been subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, not without much difficulty; whereupon he issued out an edict, wherein he prohibited the Jews to proceed any farther in their building, and ordered his officers in Samaria to put it in execution. They immediately went up to Jerusalem with an armed force, and having pursued the king's orders with the utmost rigour, put a full stop to any farther proceeding in the work, until the second year of "Darius Hystaspes.

Darius, upon the death of the pretended Smerdis, was, *b* by a stratagem, chosen king of Persia; and though the edict which prohibited the building of the temple, expired with the usurper, yet had the prophets Zechariah *c* and Haggai much ado to prevail with the

a There are some who take the Darius here mentioned, not to be Darius the Second, who was the son of Hystaspes, but the Darius who is commonly called Nothus; but then they are pressed with this difficulty, which may well be called insurmountable. For, from the first year of Cyrus, who gave orders for the building of the temple, to the sixth year of Darius Nothus, in which they supposed that it was finished, there were, at least, an hundred and thirteen years; according to some, an hundred and seventeen; and according to others, an hundred and forty-two. But now, if all this time, Zerubbabel was in the government of Judea, and Joshua in the high-priesthood, so long an authority in church or state was never heard of in any age before. Nor must it be forgotten, what the prophet Haggai, (chap. ii. 3.), supposes, namely, That some then alive remembered the glory of the first temple, and compared it with the glory of the second; which upon the supposition that this was in the sixth year of Darius Nothus, will make them at least an hundred and four-score years old, a thing almost incredible. And therefore the most probable opinion is, that the Darius here meant, was Darius Hystaspes, whose second year was the eighteenth after the first of Cyrus, as Huetius reckons.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

b The seven princes, who had slain the usurper Smerdis, and his brother, consulting together about the settling of the government, came at length to this resolution, that the monarchy should continue in the same manner that it had been established by Cyrus, and that, to determine which of them should ascend the throne, they should all meet at a certain place the next morning, against the rising of the sun, and that he whose horse first neighed, should be appointed king. For as the sun was the great deity of all the Persians, they seemed by this method, to refer their election to it; but Darius's groom, being informed of this, tied a mare on the night before the election to the place where the next morning, they were to meet, and brought his master's horse to cover her. As soon, therefore, as the princes met together at the time appointed, Darius's horse remembered the place, ran immediately thither, neighing and prancing all along; whereupon the rest dismounting, saluted him as their king; and accordingly placed him on the throne.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 521.

c Zechariah was the son of Barachiah, and grandson of Iddo; but the time and place of his birth are unknown. Some will have him to be born at Babylon, during the captivity; but others think that he was born at Jerusalem, before the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were carried away. It is certain, however, that he returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel, and very probable that he began to prophesy in the second year of Darius, the son of Hystaspes. The number, excellency, and preciseness of his prophecies made him be styled "the sun among the lesser prophets," and as he began his predictions about two months after Haggai, with him he encouraged the Jews to go on in the rebuilding of their temple, and gave them assurance of the divine protection. But these prophecies were inconsiderable, in com-

parison of those which foretold the coming of the Messiah in the plainest terms; the cruel war which Antiochus Epiphanes waged with the Jews, and God's severe judgments against this tyrant; the Jewish war with the Romans, and the siege of Babylon by Darius; the dissolution of the old covenant, and the substitution of a new one under Christ; the glorious state of the Christian church, and the conversion of the Gentiles; the persecutions which the Christians should endure, and the severe punishment of their persecutors, and other such like events, contained in the ninth and following chapters of his prophecies. Some critics, however, are of opinion, that the style of this prophet is a little interrupted, and without connexion, and that the ixth, xth, and xith chapters, which go under his name, were originally written by Jeremiah; because in Matthew, (ch. xxvii. 9, 10.) under the name of Jeremiah, we find Zechariah xi. 12, quoted; and as the aforesaid chapters make but one continued discourse, they conclude from thence, that all three belonged to Jeremiah. But it is much more natural to suppose, that the name of Jeremiah, by some unlucky mistake, has slipped into the text of St Matthew, instead of that of Zechariah. Contemporary with him was the prophet Haggai, who, in all probability, was born at Babylon, and returned with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem. They both, with united zeal, encouraged the people to go on with the work of the temple, which, by the envy of the Samaritans, who were their enemies, and the ill offices of some at the court of Cyrus and Cambyses, whom they influenced, was discontinued for some time; but upon the accession of Darius to the throne, Haggai, in particular, by reproaching the people with their indolence and insensibility, by telling them that they were careful enough to lodge themselves very commodiously, while the house of the Lord lay buried in its own ruins, and by putting them in mind, that the calamities of drought and famine, wherewith God had afflicted them since their return, were owing to their neglect in repairing the temple, prevailed with them to set about the work in good earnest; so that, by virtue of these reproofs, as well as some encouragements which God occasionally authorized him to give them, they brought the whole to a conclusion in a short time.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the words, and *Universal History*, b. ii. c. 1.

d The plea which Josephus makes Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest, urge upon this occasion, is to this effect—"That they were the servants of the great God, to whose honour this temple was built, and to his service dedicated by the greatest, the happiest, and the wisest prince that ever sat on that throne; that it stood for many ages, till, by reason of the wickedness of their forefathers, the city, by God's permission, was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Chaldaea, the temple pillaged, and laid in ashes, and the people carried away captives into Babylon; that when Cyrus came to be possessed of the throne of Persia and Babylon, he ordered, by his royal proclamation, the rebuilding of the temple, and the restoring of all the sacred vessels that had been taken away by Nebuchadnezzar, which accordingly were transported to Jerusalem, and laid up again in the temple; that by the command of the same king, Abassar was sent to see the work expedited, and accordingly was present at the laying of the foundation; but that, ever since that time, by one artifice or other, their enemies had found means to obstruct and retard it: and that, for the truth of these allegations, they desired that Darius might be wrote to, that, by consulting public records, it might be known, whether or no these facts were according to this their representation."—*Jewish Hist. b. xi. c. 4.*

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decree from Cyrus, which empowered and authorized them in what they did: whereupon the governor wrote to court, acquainting the king with the true state of the case, and desiring that search might be made into the public records, whether the Jews really had any such decree from Cyrus, and upon the whole, that he would be pleased to signify his will, what he would have him to do in this affair.

Darius, ¹ who, the better to fortify his title to the crown, had married two of the daughters of Cyrus, thought himself concerned to do every thing that might tend to the honour of that great prince; and therefore confirmed the decree which he had granted to the Jews, with a fresh one of his own, wherein he gave them an assignment upon his revenues in several provinces for whatever money they wanted, to enable them to go on with the work, and to provide them sacrifices for the service of the temple, that the priests, in their daily offices, might ^a put up their prayers for the prosperity of the king and the royal family: and wherein he ordered, that the man should be hanged, and his house pulled down ^b for timber to make him a gallows, who ever should pretend to put any let or obstruction to this his injunction.

Upon the publication of this decree, and the great care that was taken to have it fully put in execution, the work of the temple went on so very successfully, that, in the sixth year of Darius, according to the Jewish account, and on the third day of the twelfth month, (which is called *Adar*, and answers in part to our February and March,) the whole of it was finished, and its dedication celebrated by the priests and Levites, and all the congregation of Israel, with great joy and solemnity. By

¹ Prideaux's Connection.

^a Though the Jews were not allowed to desire the heathen to pray to their deities for their prosperity, because they were forbidden to acknowledge any other God but one: yet the heathen, if they thought fit, might worship their God; nor did the Jews deny them that privilege, or refuse the offerings which they brought for that purpose, until in the time of their wars with the Romans, the faction of the zealots grew to be predominant: for then, as Josephus tells us, (b. ii. c. 7.) "one Eleazar, the son of Ananias the high priest, a desperate daring young man, and a military officer then in command, pressed some of his friends among the priests to receive no offering or sacrifice but from the Jews only; by which means it came to pass, that the very offerings of Cæsar, which were used constantly to be made for the welfare of the Roman people, came to be rejected; and this proved the very ground and foundation of the war with that nation. The high priest, however, and the men of the best quality, declared themselves extremely dissatisfied with the novelty of this prohibition, and with great importunities, desired the continuance of so pious a custom, as offering up prayers for princes and governors." But all is in vain; though this place in Ezra, (chap. vi. 10.) one would think, sets the duty in a clear light.—*Le Clerc's Commentary* on Ezra.

^b The most obvious sense of the words in the text, (chap. vi. 11.) seems to be this; but Lud. de Dieu, observes, that, in the words which we there render 'being set up,' there is no proper construction; and therefore he would rather have them translated, according to the Septuagint, ^c And standing, let him be beat upon it, that is, 'whipped,' as we say, 'at a post,' for that was a punishment among the Persians and other nations. But if a greater punishment than this should here be intended, then he makes the first words refer to the timber, and the latter to the man, in this manner: 'and from above, let it fall upon him,' that is, the stake being lifted up, shall be struck into his body, and come out at his fundament, which was a cruel punishment among the Eastern people, and continues still in use to this day.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

the next month, which was the month Nisan, the first in the Jewish year, the temple was made fit for every part of divine service; and, therefore, on the fourteenth day of that month, the passover was observed in it, according to the law of God, and, by all the Jews that had returned from the captivity, solemnized with great joy and gladness of heart, 'because the Lord had made them joyful,' (as it is expressed in the book of Ezra,) 'and turned the heart of the king of Assyria ^c unto them, to strengthen their hands in the house of God, the God of Israel.'

By the decree of Cyrus, which was thus confirmed by that of Darius, the tribute of Samaria had been assigned for the reparation of the temple; but now, that the body of the temple was finished, (though the outworks remained still untouched,) the Samaritans pretended that the end of this assignment was ceased, and thereupon refused to pay the tribute any longer. But the Jews, upon sending Zerubbabel their governor, with two other principal men, to Shushan, or Susa, which was then the residence of the Persian monarch, in order to complain of this unjust detention of the royal bounty, met with a proper redress; and returned with the king's order ^d to his officers of Samaria, requiring them to take an effectual care, that, pursuant to his edict, the Samaritans paid their tribute to the temple, and gave the Jews for the future no cause to complain of their refusal herein: which put a full end to all contest about that matter, and was the last good office we find recorded in Scripture, that Darius did the Jews. For, in the six and thirtieth year of his reign ^e he died, and was succeeded by Xerxes,

^c Darius is called 'the king of Assyria,' as now reigning over all the kingdoms which were formerly under the power of the Assyrians; and from hence Archbishop Usher infers, that Babylon, (which, in the beginning of his reign, had revolted,) must necessarily have been reduced by Darius before this time, otherwise he thinks he could not have here been styled, 'king of Assyria,' whereof Babylon was then the metropolis.—*Patrick's Commentary*; and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 515.

^d A copy of the king's order, or the letter which he sent back by the Jewish commissioners to the officers and lieutenants of the province, and the senate of Samaria, Josephus has recorded in these words.

"King Darius, to Tangar and Sambaba, masters of our horse at Samaria, and to Shadrack, Bobelon, and the rest of their fellow subjects there, sendeth greeting:

"Whereas I am given to understand by Zerubbabel, Ananias, and Mardocheus, on the part of the Jews, that you stand accused of interrupting and discouraging the rebuilding of the temple, and of refusing to bear your part in the charge of the sacrifices, which, by my order and command, you ought to have done: this is to will and require you, upon sight of this letter, forthwith to supply them, out of my treasury at Samaria, with whatsoever they shall want for the use of their sacrifices and worship, to the end that they may offer up daily prayers and oblations, both for myself and all my people."—*Jewish Antiq.* b. xi. c. 4.

^e The character which our celebrated connector of the Old and New Testament has given us of this Darius, is,—That he was a prince of great wisdom, clemency, and justice, and has the honour to be recorded in holy writ, for a favourer of God's people, and a restorer of his temple at Jerusalem, and a promoter of his worship therein. For all this God was pleased to make him his instrument; and, with respect to this, I doubt not, it was, that he blessed him with a numerous issue, a long reign, and great prosperity. For, though he was not so very fortunate in his wars against the Scythians and Greeks, yet every where else he had full success in all his undertakings, and not only restored and fully settled the empire of Cyrus, after it had been much shaken by Cambyzes, and the Magian, but also added many large and rich provinces to it, especially those of India, Thrace, Macedon, and the isles of the Ionian sea.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 486.

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the ^a eldest of his sons by Atossa, daughter to Cyrus, the great founder of the Persian monarchy.

Xerxes, ¹ according to Josephus, (for we have but little account of him in the sacred records), confirmed to the Jews all the privileges that his father Darius had granted them, and particularly that which assigned them the tribute of Samaria, for the charge of the sacrifices that were to be offered in the temple of Jerusalem. It is of him that the words of the prophet Daniel are meant: ² ‘Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia,’ which were Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius Hystaspes, ‘and the fourth shall be far richer than they all; and, by his strength through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece;’ for the story is well known, with what ^b a prodigious armament, both by sea and land, he set out against the Greeks, ^c but with

what foul disgrace he returned home from the inglorious expedition, when, falling into contempt with his own subjects, not a long while after, he was murdered by the captain of his guard, and succeeded by his son ^d Artaxerxes Longimanus, whom the Scripture calls Ahasuerus, and was the same ^e who had the beautiful Hebrew Esther for his queen.

Upon ^f some occasion or other, Ahasuerus appointed a

precipitation that he could; but, at his coming thither, finding the bridge of boats which he had left there broken by storms, he, who had passed over that sea but a few months before with such pomp and pride, was forced to repass in a poor fisher-boat, a piece of history this which Juvenal has not badly represented in these words: “But how did he return after his flight from Salamis? he that used to lash the north, west, and east winds with stripes—barbarian that he was! they never endured such treatment in the Æolian prison. But how did he return? forsooth in a single bark, over blood-coloured waves, and the vessel retarded by the closely-huddled dead bodies.”—*Sat.* 10.

^d This prince, to distinguish him from others of that name, was called *Μακροχίς*, or *Longimanus*, upon the supposed length of his hands, with which it is said that he could have touched his knees, even when he stood upright; but this notwithstanding, it is reported of him, that he was both the handsomest person of the age in which he lived, and a prince likewise of a very mild and generous disposition.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 465.

^e Our learned Usher is of opinion, that Darius Hystaspes was the king Ahasuerus who married Esther, namely, that Atossa was the Vashti, and Artystona the Esther of the Holy Scriptures. But Herodotus positively tells us, that Artystona was the daughter of Cyrus, and therefore could not be Esther; and that Atossa had four sons by Darius, besides daughters, all born to him after he was king; and therefore she could not be that queen Vashti who was divorced from the king her husband in the third year of his reign, (Esther i. 3); nor he that Ahasuerus that divorced her. Joseph Scaliger is likewise of opinion, that Xerxes was the Ahasuerus, and Hamestris his queen the Esther of the Holy Scriptures. But whatever seeming similitude there may be in the names (and this is the whole foundation of his conjecture), it is plain from Herodotus, that Xerxes had a son by Hamestris, who was marriageable in the seventh year of his reign; and therefore it is impossible that he should be Esther's, because Esther was not married to Ahasuerus until the seventh year of his reign, (Esther ii. 16); and, considering that the choice of virgins was made for him in the fourth of his reign, and a whole year employed in their purifications, the soonest that she could have a son by him, must be in the sixth; and therefore we may conclude (with Josephus, the Septuagint, and the Apocryphal additions to the book of Esther), that the Ahasuerus in Scripture was Artaxerxes Longimanus, and Esther an Hebrew virgin, as she is all along represented.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 465.

^f The occasion of this great festival is, very likely, intimated to us in the phrase, ‘When the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom,’ (chap. i. 2.) that is, enjoying peace and tranquillity through his large dominions; for the history of his accession to the throne is this:—Xerxes, his father, was privately murdered by Artabanus, captain of his guard. He coming to him (who was then but the third son), made him believe that Darius, his eldest brother, had done it, to make his way to the throne, and had a design likewise to cut him off, to secure himself in it. This Ahasuerus believing, went immediately to his brother's apartment, and, by the assistance of the wicked Artabanus and his guards, slew him, thinking all the while that he acted but in his own defence. Artabanus's drift was to seize on the throne himself; but for the present, he took Ahasuerus, and placed him thereon, with a design to pull him down as soon as matters were ripe for his own ascent: but when Ahasuerus understood this from Magabyzus, who had married one of his sisters, he took care to counterplot Artabanus, and to cut him and his whole party off before his treason was come to maturity; and for this, and some other successes against his brother Hystaspes, which settled him in a peaceable possession of the whole Persian empire, very probably it was, that a festival season of above an hundred and fourscore days' continuance was appointed, which even to this day, according to some travellers, is no uncommon thing in those parts of the world.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 465; and *Patrick's Commentary* on Esther, chap. i.

¹ Jewish Antiq. b. xi. c. 5. Where we have a copy of his letter to his governors and lieutenants of Syria, but too long to be inserted here.

² Dan. xi. 2, 3.

^a Darius had three sons by his first wife, the daughter of Gobrias, all born before his advancement to the throne, and four others by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, who were all born after it. Of the former, Artabasanus was the eldest; of the latter, Xerxes: and, as Darius advanced in years, between these two was the competition for the succession. Artabasanus urged, that, as he was the eldest son, according to the custom and usage of all nations, he ought to be preferred before any that was younger. But Xerxes replied to this, that he was the son of Darius by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, who was the first founder of the Persian empire; for which reason he held it just and reasonable, that the crown of Cyrus should rather come to a descendant of Cyrus, than to one that was not; and to this he added, that though Artabasanus was the eldest son of Darius, yet he was not the eldest son of a king; that he was born when he was only a private person, and could therefore claim no more than to be heir of his private fortunes; but that, as to himself, he was the first born after his father was king, and had therefore the best right to succeed him in the kingdom. Whereupon he was nominated to the succession, but not so much for the strength of his plea, as for the influence which his mother Atossa had over the inclinations of her husband.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 486.

^b After he had passed over the Hellespont, his land-army, upon the muster, was found to be one million and seven hundred thousand foot, and fourscore thousand horse, besides his chariots and camels, for which, allowing twenty thousand more, the whole will amount to one million and eight hundred thousand men. His fleet consisted of twelve hundred and twenty ships of the line of battle, besides galleys, transports, victuallers, and other sorts of vessels that attended, which were three thousand more; and on board of all these were reckoned to be five hundred and seventeen thousand, six hundred and ten men: so that the whole number of forces by sea and land which Xerxes brought with him out of Asia to invade Greece, amounted to two millions three hundred and seventeen thousand six hundred and ten men. After his passing the Hellespont, the nations on the other side that submitted to him added to his land-army three hundred thousand men more, and two hundred and twenty ships to his fleet, on board of which were twenty-four thousand men; and the servants, eunuchs, women, suttlers, and all such other people as followed the camp, were computed to be no less than as many more. So that the whole number of the persons of all sorts that followed Xerxes in this expedition were at least five millions. This is Herodotus's account of that armament; and, considering that he is the most ancient author that has written of this war, was himself alive when it happened, and has treated of it with greater appearance of exactness than any other, there is reason to believe, that his computation is the truest.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 480.

^c For having lost most of the forces which he left behind him at the battle of Plataea, and a great many of his ships at the fight in the straits of Salamis, and being frightened with an apprehension, lest the conqueror should sail to the Hellespont, and there obstruct his return, he fled thither with all the haste and

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solemn rejoicing in the city of Shushan, ^a which lasted for an hundred and eighty days; and in conclusion thereof, for seven days successively he made a great feast for all the princes and governors of his provinces; as the queen Vashti, ^b in her apartment, did for the ladies of the best distinction. In the last day of this feast, the king, either out of a frolic, or fondness to his queen, sent seven of his chamberlains to conduct her into his presence, that he might show her to the company, for she was extremely beautiful; and ordered, at the same time, that she should come with the crown on her head. ^c

This was an order so contrary to the usage of the Persians, and so little becoming her dignity and high station in life, that rather than be made a public spectacle, she adventured to disobey the king's command;

^a Cyrus, and the rest of the Persian kings, after the conquest of the Medes, whose country lay remote, settled their royal seat at Shushan, that they might not be too far from Babylon, and made it the capital of Persia. It stood upon the river Ulai, and was a place of such renown, that Strabo calls it *Πόλιν ἀξιολογουμένην*, a city most worthy to be praised. The whole country about it was wonderfully fruitful, producing an hundred, and sometimes two hundred fold, as the same author informs us, (b. xv.) Pliny indeed supposes that Darius Hystaspes was the first founder of it, but he only enlarged and beautified it with a most magnificent palace, which Aristotle (in his book *de Mundo*) calls "a wonderful royal palace, shining with gold, amber, and ivory." Nor is it altogether foreign to this purpose, what our learned Lightfoot (*de Templo*, chap. 3,) tells us, namely, that the outward gate of the eastern wall of the temple, was called "the gate of Shushan," and had the figure of that city carved on it, in acknowledgment of the decree which this Darius granted in that place, in order to permit and encourage the Jews to rebuild their temple at Jerusalem.—*Patrick's Commentary* on Esther, chap. i., and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Shushan*.

^b It has been a great inquiry among the learned, who this Vashti was. Those who make the Ahasuerus in Scripture to be Darius the son of Hystaspes, suppose that she was Atossa the daughter of Cyrus, who was first married to Cambyzes, her own brother, then to the Magian, who would have passed for Smerdis, and last of all to Darius. Others suppose, that she was Ahasuerus's own sister, because the Persians, in those days, made no scruple of these kinds of marriages; though there is much more reason to think, that before her marriage, there had been such a collection of virgins made for the use of the king, as was before Esther's, (this is implied in chap. ii. 19,) and that having the good fortune then of obtaining the preference in the king's esteem, she was created queen; but being, perhaps, a woman of no high descent, her family extraction, for that reason, might be concealed.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the name.

^c It would appear that the general usage which obtained among the Persians, of keeping the females of the harem strictly secluded, was on particular occasions dispensed with; for Herodotus (b. v. c. 18,) relates a story of seven Persians of rank, who were sent by Megabyzus a Persian general, on a mission to Amyntas, a Grecian province. This province received them hospitably, and gave them a splendid entertainment. When, after the entertainment, they began to drink, one of the Persians thus addressed Amyntas: "Prince of Macedonia, it is a custom with us Persians, whenever we have a public entertainment, to introduce our concubines and young wives. Since, therefore, you have received us kindly, and with the rites of hospitality, imitate the custom we have mentioned." Their request was complied with, and the consequence was, what no doubt queen Vashti had reason to expect in her own case, namely, that when the Persians were warmed with wine, they began to behave indecorously towards the females. However improperly Ahasuerus may have acted in commanding his queen to be brought into the public assembly, he would appear to have done nothing contrary to general usage on such occasions; but we cannot help admiring the high sense of honour, if not virtue and modesty, which queen Vashti exhibited, in refusing to expose herself to the indecent treatment and inflamed passions of a group of drunken Bacchanalians.—*Ed.*

which ^d incensed him to such a degree, that, ^e advising with his counsellors in what manner he was to punish her for this public affront, he came to this resolution, (which was afterwards passed into an irreversible decree,) that, for fear that Vashti's ill example should encourage other women to contemn and disobey their husbands, she should be deposed from her royal dignity, and an order be issued out, for the making a collection of the fairest virgins, in every province through the whole empire, that, out of them, one might be chosen whom the king should like best to be queen in the room of the divorced Vashti.

At this time there lived at Shushan a certain Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai, a descendant of those who had been carried captive to Babylon with Jehoiachim king of Judah, and, by his attendance at ¹ the king's gate, seems to have been one of ^f the porters of the royal palace. He, having no children of his own, bred up Hadassah, ^g his uncle's daughter, who, being a very beautiful young woman, among other virgins, was made choice of upon this occasion. As soon as she ^h was carried to court, she was committed to the

¹ Esther ii. 19.

^d The expression in the text is, 'that the king was very wroth, and his anger burned in him,' (Esther i. 12.) It was more immoderate, because his blood was heated with wine, which made his passion too strong for his reason; otherwise he would not have thought it decent for the queen, nor safe for himself, to have her beauty, which was very great, exposed in this unusual manner; especially if there be any thing in what the Jewish Targum seems to suggest, namely, that he commanded her to be brought quite naked, that her comely proportion might be seen as well as her face.—*Patrick's Commentary* on Esther, ch. i.

^e The words in our translation are, 'the wise men who knew the times,' (chap. i. 13.) and from hence some have observed, that as the Persian kings did nothing without their magi, who were great pretenders to astrology, men of this sort were called to know whether it was a proper time to set about the thing which the king might then have in his mind. For such was the superstition of the eastern people, that, as the satirist remarks, "whatever came from the mouth of the astrologer, they supposed it to issue from the fountain of Ammon." (*Juv. Sat. 6*.) The explication, however, which Vitringa gives us of the original words, *Jodehe habitum*, is far from being improper, namely, that they were men well versed in ancient histories, and in the laws and customs of their country; and were therefore able to give the king counsel in all extraordinary and perplexed cases, as this certainly was.—*Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries* on Esther i.

^f But perhaps he might have been an officer of a higher rank, because it was an order instituted by Cyrus, as Xenophon, in his *Cyropæd.* (b. viii.) informs us, that all persons whatever, who had any employment at court, should attend at the palace gate, where there was, doubtless, a proper waiting room for their reception, that they might be in readiness, whenever they were wanted or called for; and that this custom was afterwards continued, we may learn from Herodotus, (b. iii. c. 120.)—*Le Clerc's Commentaries* on Esther, ch. ii.

^g This woman was born in Babylon, and therefore, in analogy to that language, they gave her the name of *Hadassah*, which, in Chaldee, signifies a *myrtle*; but her Persian name was Esther, which some, a little incongruously, derive from *astar*, a star, and others from *satar*, which signifies *hidden*, because she was concealed in Mordecai's house; or rather, because her nation was concealed, and she not known, until Mordecai's merit and services to the crown came to be rewarded.—*Patrick's Comment.*

^h The harems in the east were guarded with extreme vigilance. Chardin (*Trav.* p. 332.) informs us, that it is a crime for any person whatever to be inquiring what passes within those walls; that it is very difficult to be informed of the transactions in those habitations; and that a man may walk a hundred days, one after another, by the house where the women are, and yet know no more what is done therein than at the farther end of Tartary

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care of an eunuch, who was to have the custody of these virgins, and by her sweet and engaging behaviour, made herself so acceptable to him, that he assigned her the best apartment in the house appointed for their habitation, and gave her a preference in other matters before all the rest of the virgins.

It was the custom, at this time, that every virgin thus taken into the palace for the king's use, was to go through ^a a course of purification, by sweet oils and perfumes, for a whole year; which, when Hadassah had done, and so prepared herself for the king's bed, the king was so highly delighted with her, that intending to make her ^b more than a concubine, he continued her in his own palace, and in a short time set the royal diadem upon her head, and made her queen in the room of Vashti. The nuptials were celebrated with great magnificence. A splendid entertainment was made, which, in honour to the new queen, was called 'Esther's feast,' for that was the Persian name which had lately been given her, and the king, upon this joyful occasion, not only gave ^c rich presents to the queen, and largesses to the guests, but granted pardons likewise to his subjects, and a relaxation of tribute for some time to all the provinces of his dominions.

At Esther's first going to court, Mordecai had given her a strict caution, not to discover that she was a Jewess, lest the king should despise her for being a captive, which she carefully observed; and he for the same reason concealed his relation to her, contenting himself with the little employment he had at court, until a more favourable opportunity should present itself. In the mean time, he had the good fortune to discover a con-

spiracy, which ^d two of the king's chamberlains were forming against his life. This he communicated to the queen, and the queen acquainted the king with it in Mordecai's name, so that the conspirators were seized, convicted, and executed: but though the whole affair was recorded in the Persian annals, yet Mordecai, for the present, was no more thought on, until his merit and great services came to be remembered upon this occasion.

Haman, an Amalekite, of the posterity of Agag, king of Amalek, in the time of Saul, was become the king's chief favourite, and all the servants at court were ordered to show him great respect and reverence; which every one readily did, except Mordecai, who, upon his passing to and fro, took no manner of notice of him. ^e This so exasperated the proud Amalekite, that being informed that Mordecai was a Jew, he was resolved, in revenge of the affront, not to destroy him only, but his whole nation with him: but because there might be some danger in so bold an undertaking, he called together his diviners, to find out what day would be most lucky for putting his design in execution.

The way of divination then in use among the eastern people, was by casting lots, and therefore, having tried in this manner, first each month, and then each day in every month, they came at last to a determination, that the ^f thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is called

^d These were two great men who perhaps kept the door of the king's bedchamber, and being either incensed at the divorce of Vashti, whose creatures they were, or at the advancement of Esther, who, in all probability, would raise her kinsman Mordecai to a superiority over them, took disgust thereat, and so resolved to revenge themselves on the king for it.—*Prideaux's Connection, and Patrick's Commentary.*

^e Josephus tells us, that Haman taking notice of this singularity in Mordecai, asked him, what countryman he was? And finding him to be a Jew, broke out into a violent exclamation at the insolence of such a scoundrel, that when all the natives of the freeborn Persians made no difficulty in doing him that honour, this slave of a Jew should presume to affront him; and in this rage he took up a desperate resolution, not only to be revenged of Mordecai, but to destroy the whole race of Jews likewise: well remembering, that his ancestors, the Amalekites, had been formerly beaten out of their land, and utterly exterminated by the Jews.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. xi. c. 6. [That a man of Mordecai's character should neglect or obstinately refuse to give to any person in authority the usual marks of civil respect, cannot be supposed; and therefore we must consider that the homage which Haman received from the venial crowd that hung about the palace, was something more than this, probably that prostration of body which the Persians were accustomed to give as the profoundest act of submission, and which was nothing else than a species of worship—an act of homage which even the ancient Greeks refused to render, and which it would have been the greatest impiety in Mordecai, to render to any mortal man, however exalted his character and situation. Into his religious scruples, the ambitious favourite did not, nor could not enter, and determined at all hazards to rid himself of one who was likely to prove an obstacle in his way to universal power, he had formed the purpose of taking the life of the obnoxious Jew.]—*Jamieson's Eastern Manners*, pp. 346, 347.—Ed.

^f It was in the first month in the year, when Haman began to cast lots, and the time for the execution of the Jews was, by these lots, delayed until the last month in the year; which plainly shows, 'That though the lot be cast into the lap, yet the whole disposing thereof is from the Lord,' (Prov. xvi. 33.) For hereby almost a whole year intervened between the design and its execution, which gave time for Mordecai to acquaint queen Esther with it, and for her to intercede with the king for revoking or suspending the decree, and thereby disappointing the conspiracy: for we can hardly think, what Le Clerc suggests, that Haman gave the Jews all this time, that they might make their escape out of the kingdom, and not stay to be slain, which possi-

This sufficiently explains the reason of Mordecai's conduct.—Ed.

^a The reason is assigned in the following verse for their being kept so long in this course, namely, that for six months they might be anointed with the oil of myrrh, which, besides the fragrancy of its smell, was good to make the skin soft and smooth, and clean it from all manner of scurf: and for six more with sweet odours, which, in these hot countries, were necessary to take away all ill scents, and, as some think, to make the body more vigorous. But besides this, there might be something of state in making those vassals (for such they were counted) wait, before they were admitted to the honour of the king's bed; and something of precaution too, in keeping them seclude for so long a time, that the king might be satisfied that he was not imposed upon by a child begotten by any other man.—*Patrick's Commentary, and Poole's Annotations* on Esther ii. 12.

^b According to this account of things, this Persian monarch seems to have had but one wife, at least but one in chief favour and esteem with him, though it is certain he could not fail of having an infinite number of secondary wives or concubines. This was the name of every one that was taken from among the virgins, who had a separate house for themselves, and conducted to the king's bed; where having passed a night, she returned no more to the virgins' apartments, but was, the next morning, received into the house of the concubines, and there treated in the state and port of one of the king's wives; for such they were accounted. No man was permitted to marry them, as long as the king lived; and upon his demise, they generally fell to his successor. Of these Darius Nothus is reckoned to have had no less than 360.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^c The manner of the Persian king was, to give his queens, at their marriage, such a city to buy them clothes; another for their hair, another for their necklaces; and so on for the rest of their expenses. And as it was customary for him, according to the testimony of Herodotus, upon his accession to the throne, to remit the tribute that was due to him from all the cities; so he might upon this occasion, out of his abundant joy, make a release to the provinces, and forgive them some of the duties and imposts that they were bound to pay him.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

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Adar, would be most fortunate for his design. Whereupon he went to the king, and having insinuated to him, "That there were a certain people dispersed all over his empire, who called themselves Jews, and who, having laws and ordinances of their own, despised all his edicts and injunctions; that their principles, in short, tended to the disturbance of the good order of his government, and the breach of all uniformity; that, upon these accounts, it was not consistent with the rules of policy to allow them any farther toleration; and therefore he proposed they should be destroyed, and extirpated all out of the empire of Persia; and lest the loss of so many subjects should be thought a diminution of the king's revenue, he proposed to make up the defect out of his own private fortune." The king was easy enough to be wrought upon by this court-minion; who, having obtained his royal consent, ^a ordered the secretaries of state ^b to form a decree pursuant hereunto, which when it was

bly might bring an odium upon himself, when it came to be known by whose instigation this massacre was committed.—*Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

^a In the text it is said, (chap. iii. 10), 'And the king took his ring from his hand and gave it unto Haman.' This he did both as a token of affection and honour. With the Persians, for a king to give a ring to any one was a token and bond of the greatest love and friendship imaginable. (*Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier.* b. i. c. 26.) "Mirza Sheffield entertained us with a breakfast more elegant than any of the similar meals to which we had been invited. Just before we were rising to depart, the minister, after having talked much on the hopes which he cherished, that the friendship of the two nations would long subsist, pulled a diamond ring from off his own finger, and placed it on the envoy's, saying, 'And, that I may not be thought to be insincere in my professions, let me beg of you to accept this as a pledge of my friendship for you; and intreat you to wear it for my sake.' This gift, unlike the generosity of Persian presents, was really handsome; it was a beautiful stone, perfect in all its parts." (*Morier's Journey through Persia*, p. 149.) It may be this was given to Haman, to seal with it the letters that were or should be written, giving orders for the destruction of the Jews. Among the Romans in aftertimes, when any one was put into the equestrian order, a ring was given to him, for originally none but knights were allowed to wear them. It was sometimes used in appointing a successor in the kingdom; as when Alexander was dying, he took his ring from off his finger, and gave it to Perdicas, by which it was understood that he was to succeed him.—*See Macc.* vi. 14, 15.—*Ed.*

^b The decree itself, according to Josephus, was to this effect:—"The great king Artaxerxes, to the hundred and seven and twenty governors of the provinces, between India and Ethiopia, greeting. Whereas it hath pleased God to give me the command of so many nations, and a dominion over the rest of the world, as large as I myself desire, I being resolved to do nothing that may be tyrannical, or grievous towards my people, and to bear a gentle and easy hand over them, with an eye more especially to the preservation of their peace and liberties, and to settle them in a state of tranquillity and happiness, not to be shaken. All this I have taken into mature deliberation; and being given to understand by my trusty and well beloved friend and counsellor, Haman, a person of a tried faith, prudence, and justice, and whom I esteem above all others, that there is a mixture of a sort of inhuman people among my subjects, that take upon them to govern by their own laws, and to prescribe ways to themselves, in contempt of public order and government; men depraved both in their customs and in their manners, and enemies not only to monarchy, but to the methods of our royal administration. This is therefore to will and require, that upon notice given you by Haman (who is to me as a father) of the persons intended by this my proclamation, you put all the said persons, men, women, and children, to the sword, without any commiseration or favour, in a strict pursuance of my decree. And it is my further command, that you put this in execution upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of the present year, to make but one day's work of the destruction of all mine and your enemies, in order

was signed, he sent ^c by posts to all lieutenants, and governors of provinces, with strict charge to destroy, and cause to be killed, all the Jews, of whatever sex or condition, both young and old, that were any where within their jurisdiction, on the thirteenth of Adar following.

The publication of this horrid decree occasioned an universal grief and lamentation, wherever the Jews inhabited; and in the city of ^d Shushan, which was not well pleased with it, Mordecai in particular having put on sackcloth, and covered his head with ashes, went along the streets, ^e bemoaning his and his countrymen's

to a future peace and security of all our lives after."—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 11, c. 6.

^c The first institution of posts is generally ascribed to the Persians; for the kings of Persia, as Diodorus Siculus, (b. xix.) observes, that they might have intelligence of what passed in all the provinces of their vast dominions, placed centinels on eminences, at convenient distances, where towers were built, and these centinels gave notice of public occurrences to one another, with a very loud and shrill voice, by which means news was transmitted from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, with great expedition. But as this could be practised only in the case of general news, which might be communicated to the whole nation, Cyrus, as Xenophon relates, (*Cyropæd.* b. viii.) set up couriers, places for post-horses on all high-roads, and offices, where they might deliver their packets to one another. This, says our author, they did night and day; so that no rain or hard weather being to stop them, in the judgment of many, they went faster than cranes could fly. The like is said by Herodotus, b. viii. And he acquaints us farther, that Xerxes, in his famous expedition against Greece, planted posts from the Ægean sea to Shushan, at certain distances, as far as a horse could ride with speed, that thereby he might send notice to his capital city of whatever might happen in his army. The Greeks borrowed the use of posts from the Persians; and, in imitation of them, called them *αγγαροι*. Among the Romans, Augustus was the person who set up public posts, who at first were running footmen, but were afterwards changed into post-chariots and horses, for the greater expedition. Adrian improved upon this; and having reduced the posts to great regularity, discharged the people from the obligation they were under before of furnishing horses and chariots. With the empire the use of posts declined. About the year 807, Charlemagne endeavoured to restore them; but his design was not prosecuted by his successors. In France, Louis XI. set up posts at two leagues' distance through the kingdom. In Germany, count Taxis set them up, and had, for his recompence, in 1616, a grant of the office of postmaster-general to himself and his heirs for ever. Above eight hundred years ago, couriers were set up in the Ottoman empire: and, at this time, there are some among the Chinese; but their appointment is only to carry orders from the king and the governors of provinces, and, in a word, for public affairs and those of the greatest consequence.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

^d Not only the Jews, but a great many others in Shushan, might be concerned at this horrid decree, either because they were related to them, or engaged with them in worldly concerns, or perhaps out of mere humanity and compassion to so vast a number of innocent people, now appointed as sheep for the slaughter. They might apprehend likewise that, upon the execution of the decree, some sedition or tumult might ensue; that, in so great a slaughter, it was hard to tell who would escape without being killed or plundered, because those who were employed in this work would be more mindful to enrich themselves than to observe their orders.—*Poole's Annotations*; and *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

^e The latter Targum, upon the book of Esther, gives us this account of Mordecai's behaviour upon this sad occasion, namely, that in the midst of the streets he made his complaint, saying, "What a heavy decree is this which the king and Haman have passed, not against a part of us, but against us all, to root us out of the earth!" Whereupon all the Jews flocked about him, and having caused the book of the law to be brought to the gate of Shushan, he being covered with sackcloth, read therein these words out of Deut. iv. 30, 31, 'When thou art in tribulation

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hard fate, even until he came to the palace-gate; which, when the queen understood, and sent to inquire the cause, he returned her a copy of the king's decree, whereby she might plainly perceive what mischief was intended against all the nation, unless, by a timely intercession with the king, she would endeavour ^a to prevent it.

Esther, at first, excused herself from engaging in this affair, because an ordinance was passed, inhibiting any person, whether man or woman, upon pain of death, from approaching the king's presence, without a special order. But when he returned her in answer, 'that the decree extended to the whole Jewish nation, without any exception; that if it came to execution, she must expect to escape no more than the rest; that God very probably raised her to her present greatness, on purpose that she might save and protect his people: but that if she neglected to do this, and their deliverance should come some other way, then should she, and her father's house, by the righteous and just judgment of God, most certainly perish:' which so roused her drooping courage, that she sent him word again, that he and all the Jews in Shushan should ^b fast for her three days, as she herself intended to do, and offer up their humble supplications to God, that he would prosper her in so hazardous an undertaking, and then she would not fail to address the king, though it were at the utmost peril of her life.

The people fasted as she had enjoined them; and on the third day she dressed herself in her royal apparel, and ^c went toward the room where the king was sitting

and all these things are come upon thee in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient to his voice (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God), he will not forsake thee, nor destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he swore unto them.' After which he exhorted them to fasting, humiliation, and repentance, according to the example of the Ninevites.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^a Ever since the reign of Dejoces king of Media, Herodotus, (b. i.) informs us, that, for the preservation of royal majesty, it was enacted, "That no one should be admitted into the king's presence; but that, if he had any business with him, he should transact it by the intercourse of his ministers." The custom passed from the Medes to the Persians; and therefore we find it in the same historian, (b. iii.) that after the seven Persian princes had killed the Magian who had usurped the throne, they came to this agreement, that whoever should be elected king, should allow the others to have at all times a ready access to his presence (which is an implication that they had it not before), whenever they should desire it, except only when he was accompanying with any of his wives. This, therefore, was the ancient law of the country, and not procured by Haman, as some imagine: though it cannot be denied, but that the reason of the law at first might be, not only the preservation of the majesty and safety of the king's person, but a contrivance likewise of the great officers of state, that they might engross the king to themselves, by allowing admittance to none but whom they should think proper to introduce.—*Poole's Annotations*; and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

^b This is not to be understood, as if the people were to take no manner of sustenance for three days, because few or none could undergo that, but only, either that they should abstain from all delicacies, and content themselves with coarse fare, as Josephus expounds it, or that they should make no set meals of dinner or supper in their families, but eat and drink no more than would suffice to sustain nature, and support them in prayer to God for a blessing upon her undertaking.—*Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

^c But first, says the latter Targum, she made a solemn prayer to God, with many tears, as soon as she was dressed, saying, "Thou art the great God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of my father Benjamin; as thou didst deliver

upon his throne in the inner part of the palace. Upon the first sight of her, he held out his golden sceptre, (a token that he pardoned her presumption and spared her life, and then asked her, what the request was that she had to make to him. At the extension of this favour, she approached nearer, and having touched ^d the end of his sceptre, only desired that he and Haman would come to a banquet which she had prepared for him. Haman, who happened then to be absent, was called to attend the king; and when the king and he were at the banquet, he asked her again concerning her petition, promising that he would grant it her, even were it to extend to half his kingdom: but ^e her request again was no more, than that he and Haman would favour her again, the next day, with their company at the like entertainment, and that then she would not fail to disclose her request.

Haman ^f was not a little proud of the peculiar honour

Hananah, Mishaël, and Azariah, out of the fiery furnace, and Daniel from the lion's den, so deliver me now out of the hand of the king, and give me grace and favour in his eyes,' &c.

^d A sceptre was the ensign of the highest and most absolute authority; and therefore some have observed, that when Mordecai was advanced to the greatest dignity next the king, having the royal robes on, and other ensigns of royal dignity, no mention is made of any sceptre, for that was proper and peculiar to the king; and the queen's touching, or, as some say, kissing it, was a token of her subjection, and thankfulness for his favour. But Josephus has mightily improved upon the story; for he tells us, "that as the queen with her two handmaids approached the room where the king was, leaning gently upon one, and the other bearing up her train, her face being covered with such a blush, as expressed a graceful majesty, but at the same time, some doubtful apprehensions upon her approaching of the king, mounted on his throne, and the sparkling glory of his robes, that were all over embroidered with gold, pearl, and precious stones, she was taken all on a sudden with a trembling at so surprising a sight; and upon fancying that the king looked upon her as if he were uneasy, and out of humour, she fell into the arms of one of her maids in a direct swoon. This accident, says he, by the intervention of God's holy will and providence, put the king into a fright, for fear she might not come to herself again; so that making what haste he could from his throne, he took her up in his arms, and with the kindest words that could be, gave her this comfort:—That no advantage should be made of the law to her prejudice, though she came without calling, because the decree extended only to subjects; whereas he looked upon her as his companion and partner in the empire."—*Jewish Ant.* b. xi. c. 6.

^e Her intention in desiring thus to entertain the king twice at her banquet, before she made known her petition, was, that thereby she might the more endear herself to him, and dispose him the better to grant her request, for which reason she thought it a piece of no bad policy to invite his first favourite to come along with him. But in the whole matter, the singular providence of God is not a little conspicuous, which so disposed her mind, that the high honour which the king bestowed upon Mordecai the next day, might fall out in the mean time, and so make way for her petition, which would come in very seasonably at the banquet of wine: for as then it was most likely for the king to be in a pleasant humour, so it was most usual for the Persians to enter upon business of state, when they began to drink.—*Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*, and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 453.

^f Athenæus mentions it as a peculiar honour, which no Grecian ever had before or after, that Artaxerxes vouchsafed to invite Timagoras the Cretan to dine even at the table where his relations eat, and to send sometimes a part of what was served up at his own; which some Persians looked upon as a diminution of his majesty, and a prostitution of their nation's honour. In the life of Artaxerxes, Plutarch tells us, that none but the king's mother, and his real wife, were permitted to sit at his table; and therefore he mentions it as a condescension in that prince that he sometimes invited his brothers. So that this particular favour was a matter that Haman had some reason to value himself upon.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

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which both the king and queen had done him; but upon his return home, seeing Mordecai sitting at the palace gate, and refusing to show him the least obeisance, though ^a he restrained himself at present, yet so moved was he with indignation against him, that when he came home, and related to his family the favours which that day he had received, he could not forbear complaining of the affront and disrespect which Mordecai had put upon him; insomuch, that his wife, and others that were present, advised him to have a gibbet of ^b fifty cubits high instantly erected, and the very next morning to go to the king, and obtain a grant of him to have that insolent fellow hanged upon it.

This project he liked very well, and therefore caused the gibbet to be set up: but when he came to court in the morning, he found that things had taken quite another turn. The king, that very morning, happened to awake sooner than ordinary, and being not able to compose himself to sleep again, he called for ^c the annals of his reign, and ordered a person that was then in waiting to read them to him. The reader went on, until he came to the passage which made mention of Mordecai's discovery of the treason of the two chamberlain's; and when the king upon inquiry was given to understand, that the man, for so signal a service, had received no reward at all, he called unto Haman (who was waiting for admittance upon a quite different intent), and asked him, What it was he would advise him to do to the man, on whom he designed to confer some marks of his favour?

^a It may seem a little strange, that so proud a man as Haman was, should not be prompted immediately to avenge himself on Mordecai for his contemptuous usage of him, since he had enough about him, no doubt, who, upon the least intimation of his pleasure, would have done it; and since he, who had interest enough with his prince to procure a decree for the destruction of a whole nation, might have easily obtained a pardon for having killed one obscure and infamous member of it. But herein did the wise and powerful providence of God appear, that it disposed Haman's heart, contrary to his own inclination and interest, instead of employing his power against his enemy, to put fetters, as it were, upon his own hands.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^b That men might at a great distance see him, to the increase of his disgrace (as Haman might think), and that, struck with the greater terror by that spectacle, they might not dare for the future to despise or offend him.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^c In these diaries (which we now call journals) wherein was set down what passed every day, the manner of the Persians was to record the names of those who had done the king any signal service. Accordingly Josephus informs us, "That upon the secretary's reading these journals, he took notice of such a person, who had great honours and possessions given him as a reward for a glorious and remarkable action; and of such another, who made his fortune by the bounties of his prince, for his fidelity; but that, when he came to the particular story of the conspiracy of the two eunuchs against the person of the king, and of the discovery of this treason by Mordecai, the secretary read it over, and was passing forward to the next, when the king stopped him, and asked if that person had any reward given him for his service?" &c., which shows indeed a singular providence of God, that the secretary should read in that very part of the book, wherein the service of Mordecai was recorded. But the latter Targum, to make a thorough miracle of it, tells us, that when the reader opened the book at the place where mention was made of Mordecai, he turned over the leaves, and would have read in another, but that the leaves flew back again to the same place where he opened it at first, so that he was forced to read that story to the king.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Jewish Antiq.* b. xi. c. 6.

Haman, who never dreamed but that the person he meant of was himself, was resolved to lay it on thick; and therefore he gave advice, ^d that the royal robe should be brought, which the king, on solemn occasions, was wont to wear; the horse, which was kept for his own riding, ^e and the crown, which was used to be set upon the horse's head, ^f and that, with this robe, the person whom the king thought proper to distinguish should be arrayed, and the chief man in the kingdom appointed to lead his horse by the reins, walking before him in the quality of an officer, and proclaiming, 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honour.' 'Take then the horse and the robe,' says the king, 'and do all that thou hast mentioned to Mordecai the Jew, who has not been yet rewarded for the discovery of the treason of the two eunuchs that intended to have taken away my life.'

Nothing certainly could cut a proud man more to the

^d To form a notion of that height of pride and arrogance to which Haman (who thought all the honours he specified were designed for him) was arrived, we may observe, that, for any one to put on the royal robe, without the privy and consent of the king, was, among the Persians, accounted a capital crime. To which purpose Plutarch, in his life of Artaxerxes, has related this story:—"That one day, when in hunting, the king happened to tear his garment, and Tiribazus was telling him of it, the king asked him what he should do. Why, put on another, says Tiribazus, and give that to me. That I will, says the king, but then I enjoin you not to wear it. Tiribazus, however, who was a good kind of a man enough, but a little weak and silly, adventured to put it on, with all its fine ornaments; and when some of the nobles began to resent it, as a thing not lawful for any subject to do, I allow him, says the king, laughing at the figure he made, to wear the fine trinkets as a woman, and the robe as a madman."—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^e There was a custom, not unlike this, among the Hebrews, as appears from the history of Solomon, (1 Kings i. 33,) for the person that was to be declared successor to the crown, on the day of his inauguration, to be mounted on the king's horse: and to the like custom among the Persians, it is highly probable that the poet Statius, in his description of a young king succeeding to his father's throne, may allude:—"As an Achemenian youth, on receiving the throne and lands of his ancestors, hangs in uncertainty while deliberating to whom he may entrust the various boundaries of his kingdom, he is still afraid to handle the bow and mount his father's steed, and to himself he seems scarce able to bear the load of empire, or as yet to use the badge of majesty."—*Thebaid*, b. viii.

^f Commentators are not agreed whether this crown was placed upon the king's head or his horse's. Those who refer it to the king, will have it to be what we call a turban, made of fine white and pure linen, which it was death for any one to put on his head, without the king's express order; to which purpose Arrian (*Alex. Exped.* b. vii.) tells us this story:—"That as Alexander was sailing on the Euphrates, and his turban happened to fall off among some reeds, one of the watermen immediately jumped in and swam to it; but as he could not bring it back in his hand without wetting it, he put it upon his head, and so returned with it. Whereupon most historians that have wrote of Alexander (says he) tell us that he gave him a talent of silver for this expression of his zeal to serve him, but, at the same time, ordered his head to be struck off, for presuming to put on the royal diadem." Other commentators are of opinion, that this *keter*, which we render *crown*, being a word of a large signification, will equally denote that ornament which the horse that the king rode wore upon his head. As it must be acknowledged that this application of the thing agrees better with the signification and order of the Hebrew words; with the following verses, wherein no mention is made of the *keter*, but only of the robe and the horse to which this crown belonged; and with the custom of the Persians, who used to put a certain ornament (in Italian called *fiocco*) upon the head of that horse whereon the king was mounted.—*Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

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heart, than to be employed in such an office; but the king's command was positive, so that Haman was forced to do it, how much soever it might go against the grain: and when the irksome ceremony was over, he returned to his house, lamenting the disappointment and great mortification he had met with, in being forced to pay so signal an honour to his most hated enemy. But while he was relating this to his family, and they thereupon expressing some uneasy apprehensions, as if this were a very bad omen, one of the queen's chamberlains came to his house to hasten him to the banquet; and, having seen the gallows which had been set up the night before, he fully informed himself of the intent for which it was prepared.

When the king and Haman were set down to the entertainment, the king asked Esther again, what her request was; renewing his promise, that he would not fail to grant it her, even though it extended to the half of his kingdom. 'But my petition, O king,' says she, 'is only for my own life, and the life of my people, because there is a design laid against us, not to make us bondmen and bond-women (for then I should have been silent), but to slay and destroy us all. If therefore I have found favour in thy sight, O king, let my life and the life of my people be given at my request.' At this the king asking, with some commotion, who it was that durst do any such thing? the Haman then present, she told him, was the contriver of all the plot: whereupon the king rising up from the banquet in a passion, ^a went into the garden adjoining; and Haman, taking this opportunity, ^b fell prostrate on the bed where the queen was sitting, to supplicate his life; but the king, coming in the mean time, and seeing him in this posture, 'What, will he ravish the queen before my eyes!' cried out aloud: whereupon those that were in waiting came and covered his face, ^c as a token of the king's indignation

against him: and when the chamberlain, who had been to call him to the banquet, acquainted the king of the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, who had saved the king's life, he gave immediate orders, that ^d he should be hanged thereon (which accordingly was done), and his whole estate given to the queen, whereof she appointed Mordecai her steward. At the same time she informed the king of her near relation to Mordecai, so that he took him into his royal favour, advanced him to great power, riches, and dignity in the empire, and made him keeper of his signet, in the same manner as Haman had been before.

But though Haman was thus removed, yet the decree which he had procured remained still in full force; nor could it be repealed, because the laws of the Medes and Persians were such, that nothing written in the king's name, and signed with the royal signet, could be reversed. All therefore that the king could do, upon the queen's second petition, to have the decree cancelled, was to grant the Jews, by another ^e decree, such a power to defend themselves against all that should assault them on the day ^f when the former decree was to

bind his hands, muffle his head, hang him on the fatal tree."—Ed.

^d Josephus indeed tells us, that he died on the cross: but others have observed, that crucifixion was not a Persian punishment; and Salmasius (in his book *de Cruce*) shows that it was the manner of the Persians first to cut off the heads of malefactors, and then to hang them on a gibbet. However this be, "I cannot pass over the wonderful harmony of providence," says Josephus, "without a remark upon the almighty power, and the admirable justice and wisdom of God, not only in bringing Haman to his deserved punishment, but entrapping him in the very same snare that he had laid for another, and turning a malicious invention upon the head of the inventor." Neither is there any law more just, than to ensnare the murderer by his own artifice.—*Antiq. b. xi. c. 6.*

^e Josephus has given us a true copy, as he says, of this decree, or, as he calls it, of the letters which Artaxerxes sent to the magistrates of all the nations that lie between India and Ethiopia, under the command of a hundred and seven and twenty princes:—"Wherein he represents the abuse which favourites are wont to make of their power and credit with their prince, by insulting their inferiors, by flying in the face of those that raised them, and, to gratify their resentments, calumniating the innocent, and putting honest men in danger of their lives: wherein he makes mention of the uncommon favours and honours which he had bestowed upon Haman, the Amalekite, who had, notwithstanding, taken measures to supplant him of his kingdom, to destroy Mordecai, the preserver of his life, together with his dearest wife the queen, and to extirpate the whole nation of Jews, who were good and peaceable subjects, and worshippers of that God to whom he was indebted for the possession and preservation of his empire: wherein he acquaints them, that for these wicked and treasonable practices, having caused him and his whole family to be executed before the gates of Susa, his royal pleasure, by these presents, was that they should not only discharge the Jews from all the pains and penalties to which they are made liable by his letters which Haman had sent them; but that they should likewise aid and assist them in vindicating themselves upon those that spitefully and injuriously oppressed them; and wherein he tells them, that whereas the time appointed for the utter destruction of these people, was to have been on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, his further pleasure was, that the same month and day should be employed in their rescue and deliverance; and that if any person, either by disobedience or neglect, should act in any thing contrary to the terror of this his imperial command, he should be liable to military execution by fire and sword."

^f It might be presumed that some, out of hatred to the Jews might be inclinable to obey Haman's decree: for though he himself was gone, yet it cannot be imagined, that all the friends and creatures that he had made perished with him. He might have

^a Partly as disdaining the company of so audacious and ungrateful a person; partly to cool and allay his spirit, boiling and struggling with such a variety of passions; and partly to consider within himself the heinousness of Haman's crime, the mischief which himself had like to have done by his own rashness, and what punishment was fit to be inflicted on so vile a miscreant.—*Patrick's Commentary, and Poole's Annotations.*

^b It was a custom of the Persians, as well as other nations, to sit, or rather to lie upon beds, when they ate or drank; and therefore, when Haman fell down as a suppliant at the feet of Esther, and (as the manner was among the Greeks and Romans, and not improbably among the Persians) embraced her knees, the king might pretend that he was offering violence to the queen's chastity. Not that he believed that this was his intention, but, in his furious passion, he turned every thing to the worst sense, and made use of it to aggravate his crime.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^c The majesty of the kings of Persia did not allow malefactors to look at them. As soon as Haman was so considered, his face was covered. Some curious correspondent examples are collected together in Poole's Synopsis, in loc. From Pococke we find the custom still continues. Speaking of the artifice by which an Egyptian bey was taken off, he says, (*Travels*, vol. ii. p. 179) "A man being brought before him like a malefactor just taken, with his hands behind him as if tied, and a napkin put over his head, as malefactors commonly have, when he came into his presence, suddenly shot him dead."—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 96. This custom may be traced among the Romans in the punishment of a patrician, who, when convicted, was immediately hooded, as unworthy of the common light, (*Kennell's Rom. Antiq.* part ii. b. 3, c. 20, p. 146,) and in that form of pronouncing sentence on a criminal ascribed by Cicero (*Pro Caio Rabirio*, c. iv.) to Tarquinius Superbus. "Go, officer,

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be executed, as might render it in a great measure ineffectual.

To this purpose, a fresh edict was drawn up in the third month, signed by the king, and transmitted to the provinces: so that, when the thirteenth day of Adar came, by the means of these different and discordant decrees, a war was commenced between the Jews and their enemies, through the whole Persian empire; but as the rulers of the several provinces, and other officers of the king, well understood what power and credit Esther and Mordecai then had with him, they so favoured the Jews every where, that on that day they slew, in the whole empire, 75,000 persons, and in the city of Shushan, on that day and the next, 800 more; among whom were ^a the ten sons of Haman, whom, by a special order from the king, they hanged perhaps on the same gallows whereon their father had hung before; and in memory of this, their wonderful deliverance, the Jews did then, and have ever since, on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar, kept a great festival, which they called ^b the ‘feast of lots.’ But proceed we now to some other affairs.

a great party every where, and some of them so furiously enraged at his fall, as, even at the hazard of their own lives, would not fail to show their indignation at those who were the occasion of it: and therefore this second decree procured by Mordecai, gave them authority, if any attempt was made upon them, either in great bodies, or small parties, not only to defend themselves and repel them, but to make as great a slaughter of them as they were able, and even to take possession of their goods, as Haman had procured them license (chap. iii. 13,) to seize the goods of the Jews.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

a It is not unlikely, that many might be enraged at his death, and his sons, in particular, might set themselves at the head of those who were bold enough to attempt the destruction of the Jews in Shushan, being resolved to revenge their father's death, though in so doing they were sure to meet their own. And this seems to suggest the reason why Esther was so solicitous to have their dead bodies (for they were slain already) hung upon the gallows, (chap. ix. 13,) even because they had shown more malice and indignation against the Jews, and on the day when the cruel edict came to take place, had made more desperate attacks upon them than any; though the reason of the state, in this severity, might be to expose the family to the greater infamy, and to deter other counsellors from abusing the king at any time with false representations. For though the Jews suffered none to hang on the tree, as they called the gallows, longer than till the evening of the day whereon they were executed; yet other nations let them hang until they were consumed, as appears from the story of the Gibeonites, (2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10,) or devoured by crows, vultures, or other ravenous creatures; from whence that vulgar saying among the Romans, *pascere in cruce corvos*, had its rise.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations.*

b *Pur*, in the Persian language, signifies *a lot*, and the feast of *purim* or *lots*, which had its name from Haman's casting lots, in order to divine which day would be most lucky to prefix for the murder of all the Jews in the whole Persian dominions, is, to this very day, celebrated by the Jews, with some peculiar ceremonies, but most of them reducible to these three things, reading, resting, and feasting. Before the reading, which is performed in the synagogue, and begins in the evening, as soon as the stars appear, they make use of three forms of prayer: in the first of these, they praise God for counting them worthy to attend this divine service: in the second, they thank him for the miraculous preservation of their ancestors; and in the third, they bless his holy name, for having continued their lives to the celebration of another festival in commemoration of it. Then they read over the whole history of Haman from the beginning to the end, but not out of any printed book, for that is not lawful, but out of a Hebrew manuscript, written on parchment. There are five places in the text, wherein the reader raises his voice with all his might: when he comes to the place that mentions the names of the ten sons of Haman, he repeats them very quick, to show that they were all destroyed in a moment; and every time that the

In the beginning of the seventh year of Ahasuerus, Ezra, a priest descended from ^c Seraiah the high priest, who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar, when he buried the temple and city of Jerusalem, a man of great learning, and excellently ^d skilled in the knowledge of the Scriptures, who had hitherto continued in Babylon, with others of the captivity that had not yet returned, obtained leave of the king to go to Jerusalem, and to take as many of

name of Haman is pronounced, the children, with great fury, strike against the benches of the synagogues, with the mallets which they bring for that purpose. After that the reading is finished, they return home and have a supper, not of flesh, but of spoon-meat; and early next morning they arise and return to the synagogue; where, after they have read that passage in Exodus, which makes mention of the war of Amalek, they begin again to read the book of Esther, with the same ceremonies as before; and so conclude the service of the day, with curses against Haman and his wife Zeresh, with blessings upon Mordecai and Esther, and with praises to God for having preserved his people. Their resting on this day is observed so religiously, that they will not so much as set or sow any thing in their gardens, with full persuasion that it would not come up if they did; and therefore they either play at chess, and such like games, or spend the time in music and dancing, until it be proper to begin their feasting, wherein they indulge themselves to such an immoderate degree, that their feast of *purim* has, with great justice, been called the Bacchanals of the Jews. They allow themselves to drink wine to excess, nay, even to such a pitch, as not to be able to distinguish between the blessing of Mordecai, and the curse of Haman, as themselves speak; and amidst the other sports and diversions of the day, they used formerly to erect a gibbet, and burn upon it a man made of straw, whom they called Haman; but herein it was thought, that they might have a design to insult Christians, upon the death of our crucified Saviour; and therefore Theodosius the second, (Anno Dom. 408,) forbade them to use this ceremony, under the penalty of forfeiting all their privileges. We have only farther to remark concerning this festival, that it is always kept for two days together, and the reason hereof is this:—the Jews at Shushan had two days allowed them to revenge themselves of their enemies, (Esther ix. 13,) but the rest of the Jews in other nations had but one. This caused, at first, some difference in their time of feasting; for the Jews in all other parts of the kingdom, having done execution on their enemies on the thirteenth day, kept their rejoicing feast on the fourteenth; but the Jews at Shushan, being engaged in this work both on the thirteenth and fourteenth days, kept their festival for their deliverance on the fifteenth. When Mordecai, however, had made a record of this great deliverance, he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the dominions of Ahasuerus, to establish it as a standing ordinance among them, that they should keep both the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar every year, as the days whereon the Jews rested from their enemies: and this is the reason why the festival continues for two days, though the former of them is only kept with great solemnity.—*Patrick's Commentary*, *Howel's History*, in the notes, and *Camel's Dictionary* under the word *Purim*.

c In Ezra vii. 1, Ezra is called the son of Seraiah, but as the death of Seraiah occurred 120 years before this time, our author very properly considers the term as implying here a descendant.—Ed.

d Both the Septuagint, Vulgate, and our translation, render the words *sepher mahir*, *a ready scribe*, (Ezra vii. 6,) as if to have a quick hand at writing out the law, were any great perfection, or that any aged man, as Ezra was, should be renowned for it. It was not then for writing, but for explaining the things contained in the Scriptures that Ezra was so famous. For as *sepher* signifies *a book*, so *sepher* denotes *one skilled and learned in that book*; and as there was no book comparable to the book of the law, therefore *sepher* became a name of great dignity, and signified one that taught God's law, and instructed the people out of it; in which sense we find the word *γραμματισ*, or *scribes*, used in the New Testament. For when our Saviour is said to have taught the people, ‘as one having authority, and not as the scribes,’ this plainly shows, that these scribes were not transcribers, but teachers and expounders of the laws, though they did not do it with a proper authority.—*Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

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his own nation with him, as were willing to accompany him thither.

On the first day of the first month, which is called Nisan, and might fall about the middle of our March, he set forward on his journey from Babylon, ^a with an ample commission and authority to restore and settle the state, reform the church of the Jews, and regulate and govern both according to their own laws. When he came to the river Ahava, ^b he there halted, until the rest of his company was come up; and then, having, in a solemn fast, ^c recommended himself, and all that

were with him, to the divine protection, on the twelfth day he set forward for Jerusalem, where they all safely arrived on the first day of the fifth month, called Ab, that is, about the middle of our July, having spent four whole months in their journey from Babylon thither.

Upon his arrival, Ezra delivered up to the temple the offerings which had been made to it by the king, his nobles, and the rest of the people of Israel that staid behind, which ^d amounted to a very large sum, and having communicated his commission to the king's lieutenants and governors throughout all Syria and Palestine, he betook himself to the executing of the contents of it.

He had not been long in his government, before he found that many of the people had taken wives of other nations, contrary to the law of God; and that several of the priests and Levites, as well as other chief men of Judah and Benjamin, had transgressed in this particular. And therefore after he had, ^e in mourning and fasting and ^f prayer, deprecated God's wrath for so sad

^a It can hardly be imagined, but that some more than ordinary means were used to obtain so great a favour from the king, as this commission was; and therefore we may suppose that it was granted at the solicitation of Esther, who was become the best beloved of the king's concubines, though not as yet advanced to the dignity of queen: for seeing it was usual for the kings of Persia, on some particular days and occasions, to allow their women to ask what boons they pleased, it is not unlikely, that, by the direction of Mordecai, upon some such time and occasion as this, Esther, though she had not discovered her kindred and nation, might make this the matter of her request.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 459. [It is not improbable that the king, who in the seventh year of his reign, had made Mordecai the Jew his prime minister, and Esther the Jewish his queen, should give to Ezra the Jew, a commission conferring such full powers as we find vested in Ezra, (Ezra vi. vii. viii. 31; Esther ii.; Dan. ix. 1.) Xerxes might hope, that by thus patronising the Jews, he should obtain some favour after his unsuccessful campaigns from the God of heaven, whom the Jews worshipped, and to whom Cyrus attributed all his victories. This much seems to be intimated by the words of the edict, (Ezra vii. 23.) The commission of Ezra was given in the seventh year of the king, after the retreat from Greece. It is no objection to our hypothesis, that Ezra began his journey on the first day of the first month, and arrived at Jerusalem on the first of the fifth month, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, while Esther is said to have been declared queen in the tenth month of this year; for the book of Esther computes the months from harvest, or Tishri, while Ezra reckons from spring or Nisan. Moreover, the favour of the king towards the Jews did not commence with the elevation of Esther to the throne; for before this time Mordecai had a place among the nobles in the court of the palace, and consequently he must have been one of the royal officers. The difference of the names Artaxerxes, Xerxes, and Ahasuerus, need occasion no difficulty, for these are not so much proper names, as appellatives applied to every king at pleasure. Thus Daniel calls even Astyages, Ahasuerus of the Median line.]—*Jahn's Hebrew Commonwealth*, vol. i. p. 199.—Ed.

^b This was a river of Assyria, and very probably that which ran along the Adiabene, where the river Diava, or Adiaua, is known to be, and upon which Ptolemy places the city of Abane, or Aavane. Here, some imagine, was the country which, in the second book of Kings xvii. 24, is called Ava, from whence the king of Assyria translated the people called Avites into Palestine, and, in their room, settled some of the captive Israelites. It was a common thing for those that travelled from Babylon to Jerusalem, in order to avoid the scorching heat of the desert of Arabia, to shape their course northward at first, and then, turning to westward, to pass through Syria, into Palestine; but Ezra had a farther reason for his taking this route; for as he intended to get together as many Israelites as he could, to carry along with him to Jerusalem, he took his course this way, and made a halt in the country of Ava, or Ahava, from whence he might send emissaries into the Caspian mountains, to invite such Jews as were there to come and join him.—*Le Clerc's Commentary* on Ezra viii., and *Calmel's Dictionary* under the word Ahava.

^c This they had the greater reason to do, because they carried things of considerable value along with them; were apprehensive of enemies that lay in wait for them; and were ashamed to ask any guard of the king; who being not much instructed in divine matters, might possibly think that what they said of God's favour towards them, and the prophecies concerning their restoration, were but vain boasts, in case they should seem to distrust his power and favour, of whom they had spoken so magnificently, by

making application to the king for his protection and defence. Rather therefore than give any such umbrage, they were resolved to commit themselves entirely to God: but then it was necessary that they should beseech that of him, which, without giving offence, they could not request of the king.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d According to the account we have of them, (Ezra viii. 26, 27,) there were 650 talents of silver, which at 375 pounds to the talent, make 243,750 pounds. The silver vessels weighed 100 talents, which came to 37,500 pounds. The gold in coin was 100 talents, which at 4500 pounds per talent, made 450,000 pounds; and besides all this, there were 20 basins of gold of 1000 drachms, and two vessels of fine copper, as valuable as gold.—*Hewell's History* in the notes. [Sir J. Chardin, (MS. note,) has mentioned a mixed metal used in the east, and highly esteemed there, which might probably be of as ancient an origin as the time of Ezra. He says, I have heard some Dutch gentlemen speak of a metal in the island of Sumatra and among the Massassars, much more esteemed than gold, which royal personages alone might wear. It is a mixture, if I remember right, of gold and steel. Calmbac, is this metal, composed of gold and copper; it in colour nearly resembles the pale carnation rose, has a very fine grain, and the polish extremely lively. Gold is not of so lively and brilliant a colour.]—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 490.—Ed.

^e The manner in which Ezra is said to have expressed his concern for the people's unlawful marriages, is, by "rending his garment, and his mantle," (chap. ix. 3,) that is, both his inner and upper garment; which was a token not only of great grief and sorrow, but of his apprehensions likewise of the divine displeasure; and by "pulling off the hair of his head and beard," which was still a higher sign of exceeding great grief among other nations, as well as the Jews; and therefore we find in Homer, that when Ulysses and his companions bewailed the death of Elpinor, "they sat together lamenting and tearing their hair."—*Odyss. x*.

^f The prayer we have in Ezra ix. 6, &c. the purport of which is this:—That he was confounded when he thought of the greatness of their sins, which were ready to overwhelm them, and of the boldness and insolence of them beyond measure, even though they had seen the divine vengeance upon their forefathers, in so terrible a manner, that they had not yet worn off the marks of his displeasure. He had begun indeed to show favour to some of them; but this so much the more aggravated their wickedness, in that, so soon after their restoration and settlement in their native country, they had returned to their old provocations, notwithstanding the many admonitions in the law and the prophets, to have nothing to do with the people of Canaan, except it were to expel and root them out. What then can we expect, says he, but the utter destruction of the small remnant that is left of us, if, after all the punishments which God has inflicted on us, and his beginning now to be gracious unto us, we relapse into the same offences for which we have so severely sulked? For while we remain monuments of his mercy, and yet appear before him in our abominations, we must

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an apostasy, he caused proclamation to be made for all the people of the land, that had returned from the captivity, to meet together at Jerusalem, under the penalty of excommunication and confiscation of their goods; and when they met, he endeavoured to make them sensible of their sin, and engaged them in a promise and covenant before God, to depart from it, by putting away their strange wives, and the children that were born of them, that the seed of Israel might not be polluted by such an undue commixture; and accordingly commissioners were appointed to inspect this affair, who, in three months' time, made a proper inquiry, and a thorough reformation of this enormity.

Upon the death of Zerubbabel, the administration both of civil and ecclesiastical affairs devolved upon Ezra; but in the twentieth year of Ahasuerus, ^a Nehemiah, a very religious and excellent person among those of the captivity, and who was a great favourite with that prince, succeeded him in the government of Judah and Jerusalem. He had informed himself, from some people that were come from Jerusalem, of the miserable state and condition of that city; that ^b its walls were broken down, and its gates burned, so that its inhabitants lay open not only to the incursions and insults of their enemies, but to the reproach likewise and contempt of their neighbours. This mournful relation affected the good man to such a degree, that he applied himself in fasting and ¹ prayer to God, and humbly besought, that he would be pleased to favour the design which he had conceived of asking the king's permission to go to Jerusalem.

By his office, ^c he was cupbearer to the king; and

therefore, when it came ^d to his turn to wait, the king, observing that his countenance was not so cheerful as at other times, and being told, that the distressed state of his country, and of the city where his ancestors were buried, were the only cause of it, gave him, at his request, through the intercession of the queen (who ² was then sitting with him), leave to go to Jerusalem, and a full commission, as his governor of the province of Judea, to repair the walls, and to set up the gates, and fortify the city again in the same manner that it was before it was dismantled and destroyed by the Babylonians; but, upon this condition it was, that he should return to court again, at such a ^e determinate time.

The king, at the same time, wrote letters to all the governors beyond the Euphrates, to be aiding and assisting to him in the work. He sent his order to Asaph, the keeper of his forests in those parts, to furnish him with whatever timber he should want, not only for the reparation of the towers and gates of the city, but for the building of himself a house likewise, as governor of the province, to live in; and, to do him still more honour, he sent a guard of horse, under the command of some of the captains of his army, to conduct him safe to his government.

With these letters and powers, Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem, and was kindly received by the people; but it was three days before he acquainted any one with the occasion of his coming. On the third day at night, he, with some few attendants, went privately round the city, to take a view of the walls, which he found in a ruinous condition; and, on the next, called together the chief of the people, and, ^f having reminded them of the desolate

¹ Neh. i. 5.

be dumb and have nothing to plead in excuse of our detestable ingratitude.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^a It may well be questioned whether this Nehemiah be the same that is mentioned in Ezra (chap. ii. 2, and Neh. vii. 7), as one that returned from the Babylonish captivity under Zerubbabel; since from the first year of Cyrus to the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus, there are no less than ninety-two years intervening; so that Nehemiah must, at this time, have been a very old man, upon the lowest computation above an hundred, and, consequently, utterly incapable of being the king's cupbearer, of taking a journey from Shushan to Jerusalem, and of behaving there with all that courage and activity that is recorded of him. Upon this presumption, therefore, we may conclude, that this was a different person, though of the same name; and that *Tarshatha* (the other name by which he is called, Ezra ii. 63, and Neh. vii. 65,) denotes the title of his office, and, both in the Persian and Chaldean tongues, was the general name given to all the king's deputies and governors.—*Le Clerc's* and *Poole's Annotations*.

^b The commissions which had hitherto been granted to the Jews were supposed to extend no farther than to the rebuilding of the temple, and their own private houses; and therefore the walls and gates of their city lay in the same ruinous condition in which the Chaldeans left them after that devastation.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^c This was a place of great honour and advantage in the Persian court, because of the privilege which it gave him that was in it, of being daily in the king's presence, and the opportunity which he had thereby of gaining his favour, for the obtaining of any petition that he should make to him. And that it was a place of great advantage seems evident, by Nehemiah's gaining those immense riches which enabled him for so many years, (Neh. v. 14, 19) out of his own private purse only, to live in his government with all that splendour and expense, that will hereafter be related, without burdening the people at all for it.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 445.

² Neh. ii. 6.

^d Commentators have generally observed, that it was almost four months between his hearing of the disconsolate condition wherein Jerusalem lay, and his requesting leave of the king to go thither. But, besides that it might not come to his own turn of waiting sooner, there might be these farther reasons assigned for this his long silence and delay: as that he could not take so long and dangerous a journey in the winter; that he could no sooner meet with a seasonable opportunity of speaking with the king upon so critical an affair; or, as others will have it, that he retired all this intermediate while, and spent it in fasting and prayer.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

^e How long this was, it is not certain. It is said indeed that he was 'governor in the land of Judah for twelve years,' chap. v. 14—xiii. 6. But considering what haste he made in despatching the building of the walls, which he finished in two and fifty days, the leave which he asked might be but for a year, or perhaps half so much; after which time, it is likely, that he returned to Shushan, according to his promise; but, some time after, was sent back again by the king, who found his presence there serviceable, or perhaps necessary, for the better regulation of that province, to be his governor for twelve years.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^f The speech which Josephus puts in the mouth of the governor upon this occasion is to this effect:—"You cannot but see and understand, you men of Judea, that we ourselves are, at this day, under the power and providence of the same almighty and merciful God that did so many things for our forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, out of a gracious regard to their piety and justice: and it is by the favour of that God that I have now obtained leave from the king to enter upon the rebuilding of your wall, and the putting of an end to the work of the temple that is yet unfinished. But taking this for granted, that you live among a sort of malicious and spiteful neighbours, who would do all that is to be done in nature for the crossing of your design, when they come once to see you heartily intent upon the undertaking, I shall therefore recommend it to you, in the first place, resolutely and fearlessly to cast yourselves upon God, who will

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manner in which the walls of their city lay, and exhorted them to set about the reparation of them, he produced his commission and letters to that purpose, which, when they were read, so gladdened and revived their drooping spirits, that they joyfully and unanimously cried out ‘Let us rise and build.’

In carrying on the building, Nehemiah divided the people into several companies, and assigned to each of them the quarter where they were to work, reserving to himself the reviewal and direction of the whole. But they had not long proceeded in the work, before Sanballat, an officer of the Moabites, and Tobiah, a man of note among the Ammonites, two bitter enemies to the Jewish nation, began to scoff and ridicule their undertaking. As the work, however, advanced, they changed their note, and apprehending themselves in danger from the growing greatness of the Jews, were resolved to put a stop to their future progress.

To this purpose they entered into a confederacy with some neighbouring nations, to come upon them by surprise, demolish their works, and put them all to the sword; but the governor having notice of this their design, and sending out scouts daily to observe their motions, placed a guard well armed to defend and encourage the workmen; and ordered, that each workman should have his arms nigh at hand, in case they were attacked; while himself went often in person among them, by his precept and example, encouraging them to trust in the Lord, and, in his speeches and exhortations, putting them frequently in mind, that it was for their wives, their brethren, and children, (in case they were compelled to it,) that they fought; so that, by these means, they secured themselves against all the attempts and designs of their enemies, until the work was brought to a conclusion.

Sanballat, and the rest of his confederates, perceiving that their plot was discovered, and not daring to attack Nehemiah by open force, had recourse to craft and stratagem. To this purpose, under pretence of ending the difference between them in an amicable manner, they sent to invite him to a conference, in a certain village, in the plain of Ono, which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, intending there to do him a mischief; but Nehemiah, very probably suspecting their wicked design, returned in answer to the four messages of the same import, which they successively sent, “that the work wherein he was engaged required his personal attendance, and therefore he could not come.”

Sanballat, perceiving that Nehemiah was too cautious to be insnared by a general invitation, sent by his servant a letter, ^a wherein he informed him, that the current

most certainly defeat all the practices of your enemies; and, in the next place, to ply your business day and night, without any intermission either of care or of labour, this being the proper season for it.”—*Jewish Antiquities*, b. xi. c. 5.

^a To send an open letter, was considered a mark of great disrespect. A letter has its Hebrew name from the circumstance of its being rolled or folded together. The modern Arabs roll up their letters, and then flatten them to the breadth of an inch; and, instead of sealing them, paste up their ends. The Persians make up their letters in a roll about six inches long; a bit of paper is fastened round it with gum, and sealed with an impression of ink. In Turkey, letters are commonly sent to persons of distinction in a bag or purse; to equals they are also inclosed, but to inferiors, or those who are held in contempt, they are sent open or uninclosed. This explains the reason of Nehemiah’s ob-

report was, — “That he was building the walls of Jerusalem only to make it a place of strength, to support his intended revolt; that, to this purpose, he had suborned false prophets to favour his design, and to encourage the people to choose him king; and that therefore, to stop the course of these rumours, (which in a short time would come to the king’s ears,) he advised him to come to him, that they might confer together, and take such resolutions as were convenient.” But Nehemiah, knowing his own innocence, easily saw through this shallow contrivance, and returned him for answer, that “all these accusations were false, and the inventions only of his own naughty heart;” so that finding himself disappointed here likewise, he betook himself to this last expedient.

There was one Shemaiah, the son of Delaiah the priest, a great friend to Nehemiah, whom Sanballat had bribed to his interest. This man pretended to the gift of prophecy: and, therefore, when Nehemiah came to his house one day, he foretold, that his enemies would make an attempt to murder him that very night, and therefore advised him to go with him ^b into the inner part of the temple, and so secure themselves by shutting the doors. But though Nehemiah did not apprehend the other’s design, which he came to find out afterwards, yet, out of a sense of honour and religion, he declared positively, “That, come what would, ^c he could not quit his station, because it would badly become a man in his character, to seek out for refuge, when he saw danger approaching.”

These, and many more difficulties, the good governor had to contend with; but by God’s assistance he overcame them all, and in the space of two and fifty days, having completed the whole work, he afterwards held

servation; ‘Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me with an open letter in his hand.’ In refusing him the mark of respect usually paid to persons of his station, and treating him contemptuously, by sending the letter without the customary appendages, when presented to persons of respectability, Sanballat offered him a deliberate insult. Had this open letter come from Geshem, who was an Arab, it might have passed unnoticed, but as it came from Sanballat, the governor had reason to expect the ceremony of inclosing it in a bag, since he was a person of distinction in the Persian court, and at that time governor of Judea.—*Parson’s Illustrations*, vol. iii. p. 241.—Ed.

^b By ‘the house of God within the temple,’ (as it is in the text, Neh. vi. 10.) Shemaiah certainly meant the sanctuary; and to advise Nehemiah to retreat thither, he had a good pretence, because it was both a strong and a sacred place, being defended by a guard of Levites, and by its holiness, privileged from all rude approaches. But his real design herein might be, not only to disgrace Nehemiah, and dishearten the people, when they saw their governor’s cowardice, but to prepare the way likewise for the enemies assaulting and taking the city, when there was no leader to oppose them; to give countenance to the calumny that had been spread abroad, of his affecting to be made king, because he fled upon the report of it; and, perhaps, by the assistance of some other priests, that were his confederates, either to destroy him, or to secure his person, until the city was betrayed into the enemy’s hands.—*Patrick’s Commentary*, and *Poole’s Annotations*.

^c The words of Nehemiah, upon this occasion, are very significant, as well as magnanimous. “Should such a man as I flee? ‘I, the chief governor, upon whose presence, and counsel, and conduct, the very life and being of the whole city and nation does, in a great measure, depend: I, who have professed such resolution, courage, and confidence in God; I, who have had such eminent experience of God’s gracious, and powerful assistances, of his calling me to this employment, and carrying me through it, when the danger was greater than now: shall I dishonour God and religion, and betray the people and city of God by my cowardice?’ God forbid.”

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a dedication ^a of the walls and gates of Jerusalem, with such solemnity and magnificence as a work of that nature required.

To this purpose he separated the priests, the Levites, and the princes of the people, into two companies, one of which walked to the right hand, and the other to the left, on the top of the walls. The two companies which were to meet at the temple in their procession, were attended with music, both vocal and instrumental. When they came to the temple, they there read the law, offered sacrifices, and made great rejoicings; and as the feast of tabernacles happened at the same time, they failed not to celebrate it with great solemnity.

When the walls were finished, Nehemiah, to prevent any treachery from his enemies, either within or without the city, ^b gave the charge of the gates to his brother Hanani, and to Hananiah, marshal of his palace, ^c two men in whom he could confide; commanding them not to suffer the gates to be opened till some time after sunrising, to see them safe barred at night, and to set the watch, which should consist of settled housekeepers that were careful and diligent men. And for the still farther security of the city, observing that the ^d number of its inhabitants was too few, he ordered that the principal men of the nation should there fix their habitations; and, at the same time, caused the rest to cast lots,

^a Dedication is a religious ceremony, whereby any temple, altar, and vessel thereunto belonging, is, by the pronunciation of a certain form of blessing, consecrated to the service of God; and this dedication, we may observe, extends not only to things sacred, but to cities and their walls, and sometimes to private houses, (Deut. xx. 5.) As, therefore, Moses in the wilderness dedicated the tabernacle, and Solomon the temple, when he had finished it; so Nehemiah, having put things in good order, built the walls and set up the gates, thought proper to dedicate the city, as a place which God himself had chosen, and sanctified by his temple and gracious presence; and by this dedication, to restore it to him again, after it had been laid waste, and profaned by the devastation of the heathens.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

^b Nehemiah, very likely, was now returning to Shushan to give the king an account of the state of affairs in Judea, and therefore he took care to place such men in the city as he knew would faithfully secure it in his absence. Hanani is said to be his brother; but he chose his officers, not out of partial views to his own kindred, but because he knew that they would acquit themselves in their employment with a strict fidelity. Hanani had given proof of his zeal for God and his country, in his taking a tedious journey from Jerusalem to Shushan, to inform Nehemiah of the sad estate of Jerusalem, and to implore his helping hand to relieve it, chap. i. And the reason why Nehemiah put such trust and confidence in Hananiah was, because he was a man of conscience, and acted upon religious principles, which would keep him from those temptations to perdition which he might probably meet with in his absence, and against which a man, destitute of the fear of God, has no sufficient fence.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

^c So the house which was built for Nehemiah's residence might justly be called, because he lived there in great splendour, though wholly at his own charge, and as the king's viceroy, there gave audience to the people, as a king is wont in his palace.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

^d One reason why the bulk of the Jews (who were originally pastors, and lovers of agriculture) might rather choose to live in the country than at Jerusalem was, because it was more suited to their genius and manner of life. But at this time their enemies were so enraged to see the walls built again, and so restless in their designs to keep the city from rising to its former splendour, that it terrified many from coming to dwell there, thinking themselves more safe in the country, where their enemies had no pretence to disturb them.—*Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

^e whereby a tenth part of the whole people of Judah and Benjamin ^f became obliged to dwell at Jerusalem, though those who came voluntarily were better received.

While the walls of the city were building, there happened a kind of mutiny among the common people, which might have been of fatal consequence, had it not been timely composed: for the rich, taking the advantage of the meaner sort, had ^g exacted heavy usury of them, inasmuch, that they made them pay the *centesima* for all the money that was lent them, that is, one *per cent.* for every month, which amounted to twelve *per cent.* for the whole year. This oppression reduced them so low, that they were forced to mortgage their lands, houses, and tenements, and even to sell their children into servitude ^h to have ⁱ wherewith to buy bread for

^e Though the casting of lots be certainly forbidden, where the thing is done out of a spirit of superstition, or with a design to tempt God; yet, on some occasions, it is enjoined by God himself; and the most holy persons both in the Old and New Testament, in particular cases, have practised it. The wise man acknowledges the usefulness of this custom, when he tells us, 'that the lot causeth contention to cease, and parteth between the mighty,' Prov. xviii. 18; and therefore it was no bad policy (as things now stood) to take this method of decision, since the lot, which all allowed was under the divine direction, falling upon such a person, rather than another, would be a great means, no doubt, to make him remove more contentedly to the city.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Calmel's Dictionary*, under the word *Lot*.

^f These were the two tribes that anciently possessed Jerusalem, which stood partly in one tribe, and partly in the other; for which reason, in some places of Scripture, Jerusalem is reckoned as belonging to the children of Judah, Josh. xv. 62, and Judg. viii. 28; and in others, to the children of Benjamin, Judg. xxi. 28; but what part of the city belonged to the one, and what to the other, is not so well agreed among learned men. Since these two tribes, however, were the ancient inhabitants of the city, there was all the reason in the world, why, in this scarcity of inmates, they, above any others, should be obliged to come and dwell there.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^g This usury was the more grievous, because it was not only contrary to their law, and demanded at a time when they were hard at work, and their enemies threatening to destroy them all; but, as some have observed, that the twentieth of Ahasuerus (wherein this was done) began about the end of a sabbatical year after the law, which forbade every creature to exact any debt of 'his neighbour or his brother,' Deut. xv. 2, had been so frequently read. This raised the cry of the poor to a greater height, having been forced to sell their children, and deprived now of all power of redeeming them, because their lands were mortgaged to those oppressors.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^h As to the paternal power of the Hebrews, the law gave them leave to sell their daughters, (Exod. xxi. 7); but the sale was a sort of marriage, as it was with the Romans. Fathers sold their children to their creditors, (Isaiah l. 1); and in the time of Nehemiah, the poor proposed to sell their children for something to live upon; and others bewailed themselves that they had not wherewith to redeem their children that were already in slavery. They had the power of life and death over their children, (Prov. xix. 18). But they had not so much liberty as the Romans, to make use of this severe privilege without the knowledge of the magistrate. The law of God only permitted the father and mother, after they had tried all sorts of correction at home, to declare to the elders of the city that their son was stubborn and rebellious; and upon their complaint he was condemned to death and stoned, (Deut. xxi. 19). The same law was in force at Athens.—*Fleury's Hist. of the Israelites*, p. 140.—Ed.

ⁱ Not long before this there had been a great scarcity for want of rain, which God thought proper to withhold, in punishment for the people's taking more care to build their own houses than his, as we read, Hag. i. 9, &c. In which time the rich had no compassion on their poor brethren, but forced them to part with all they had for bread; and now (what made them

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the support of themselves and their families; which being a manifest breach of the law of God (for¹ that forbids all the race of Israel to take usury of any of their brethren), Nehemiah, as soon as he was informed thereof, resolved to remove so great an iniquity. And, accordingly, having called a general assembly of the people, wherein he set before them the nature of the offence, how great a breach it was of the divine law, and how heavy an oppression upon their brethren; what handle it might give their enemies to reproach them; and how much it might provoke the wrath of God against them all; he caused it to be enacted, by the general suffrage of the whole assembly, that every one should return to his brother whatever he had exacted of him upon usury; and should likewise release all the lands, houses, and tenements, that he had, at any time, taken of him upon mortgage; which act presently removed all uneasiness, and pacified the minds of the people.^a

The governor himself indeed was so far from counte-

¹ Exod. xxii. 25.

still more miserable) another dearth was come upon them, which might easily happen, from the multitude of people that were employed in the repair of the walls; from the building-work, which hindered them from providing for their families some other way; and from the daily dread they had of their enemies, which might keep them from going abroad to fetch in provision, and the country people from bringing it in.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

a In the text, Neh. ch. v. 15, it is said, 'even their servants bare rule over the people.' By these words it is evident that some oppressive practices are referred to. They probably relate to the forcible taking away of provisions from the people by the servants of former governors. In these countries this was no uncommon thing; many instances of it might be easily produced: the one which follows may, however, suffice. After the jealousy of the poor oppressed Greeks, lest they should be pillaged, or more heavily loaded with demands by the Turks, had prevented their voluntarily supplying the Baron du Tott for his money, Ali Aga undertook the business, and upon the Moldavian pretending not to understand the Turkish language, he knocked him down with his fist, and kept kicking him while he was rising, which brought him to complain in Turkish of his beating him so, when he knew very well they were poor people, who were often in want of necessities, and whose princes scarcely left them the air they breathed. "Pshaw! thou art joking, friend," was the reply of Ali Aga, "thou art in want of nothing except of being basted a little oftener. But all in good time. Proceed we to business. I must instantly have two sheep, a dozen of pigeons, fifty pounds of bread, four oques (a Turkish weight of about forty-two ounces) of butter, with salt, pepper, nutmeg, cinnamon, lemons, wine, salad, and good oil of olives, all in great plenty." With tears the Moldavian replied: "I have already told you that we are poor creatures, without so much as bread to eat; where must we get cinnamon?" The whip was taken from under his habit, and the Moldavian beaten till he could bear it no longer, but was forced to fly, finding Ali Aga inexorable, and that these provisions must be produced. A quarter of an hour was not expired, within which time Ali Aga required these things, before they were all brought.—*Memoirs*, vol. i. part ii. p. 10; and *Forbes's Oriental Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 231.—It was nearly dark when we reached the town, if a long straggling village may bear this appellation. Ibrahim rode first, and had collected a few peasants around him, who we could just discern by their white habits, assembled near his house. In answer to his inquiries respecting provisions for the party, they replied, in an humble tone, that they had consumed all the food in their houses, and had nothing left to offer. Instantly the noise of Ibrahim's lash about their heads and shoulders made them believe that he was the herald of a party of Turks, and they fled in all directions. This was the only way, he said, to make those misbegotten dogs provide any thing for our supper. It was quite surprising to see how such lusty fellows, any one of whom was more than a match for Ibrahim, suffered themselves to be horse-whipped, and driven from their homes, owing to the

nancing any manner of oppression, that he did not exact the daily revenue of forty shekels of silver, and the constant furniture of his table with provisions; but remitted these and all other advantages of his place, that might any way be troublesome and chargeable to the people. Nay, he not only refused the allowance which was due to him as governor, but, at his own charge,^b kept open house, entertaining every day at his table a hundred and fifty of the Jews, and their rulers, besides strangers; for which he constantly allowed an ox, six fat sheep, and fowl in proportion, and, on every tenth day, wine of all sorts. Besides this, he gave^c many rich presents to the temple; and, by his generous example, encouraged others, both princes and people, to do the like.

Thus Nehemiah, with great honour and applause, having executed the commission with which he was sent to Jerusalem, at the expiration of the time which was allowed him, he returned to Shushan, according to his promise to the king. But before he did that,^c Ezra the learned scribe, at the request of the people, produced the book of the law, which he had now completed, and having divided the company into several parts, he, with thirteen priests more, read from a wooden pulpit,^d and as he went along, expounded it to them.^e This they

² Neh. vii. 70, &c.

dread in which they hold a nation of stupid and cowardly Mahometans.—*Clarke's Travels*, vol. iii. p. 614.—Ed.

b From this great and daily expense, it seems most probable, either that Nehemiah had large remittances from the Persian court, even besides his own estate, to answer it, or that he did not continue at Jerusalem for the whole twelve years together; or that, if he did, he did not continue this expensive way of house-keeping all the time, but only during the great and present exigencies and distresses of the Jews, which ceased in a good measure after that the walls were built, the act against usury passed, and the people discharged to their ordinary course of maintaining themselves and families.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

c This Ezra, without all controversy, was the same Ezra who came from Babylon to Jerusalem, in the seventh of Artaxerxes, with a full commission to assist Zerubbabel in the reformation of the whole state of the Jewish church. After the death of Zerubbabel, the whole administration devolved upon him; but as his commission lasted but twelve years, upon its expiration Nehemiah succeeded to the government, and we hear no more of Ezra, until he is here called upon to read and expound the law to the people; whether, as some think, he returned to Babylon, to give the people an account of affairs in the province of Judea, or whether, in this intermediate time, he employed himself, in some retirement, in the great work of preparing a new and current edition of the Holy Scriptures, of which we shall give a full account in our next section.—*Patrick's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

d This pulpit was to raise him up higher than the people, the better to be seen and heard by them; but we are not to think that it was made in the fashion of ours, which will hold no more than one person; for, as we may observe by the very next words, it was made large and long enough to contain fourteen people at once.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

e The words in the text (Neh. viii. 8,) are, 'so they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.' The Israelites having been lately brought out of the Babylonish captivity, in which they had continued seventy years, according to the prediction of Jeremiah, (xx. 11,) were not only extremely corrupt, but it appears that they had in general lost the knowledge of the ancient Hebrew to such a degree, that when the book of the law was read, they did not understand it: but a certain Levite stood by, and gave the sense, that is, translated into the Chaldee dialect. This was not only the origin of the Chaldee tergums, or translations of the law and the prophets into that tongue; but

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all listened to with a very devout attention, ^a and celebrated the ensuing feast of tabernacles with great gladness of heart; and, on a day appointed for a solemn fast, confessing their own sins, in deprecating the judgments due to the iniquity of their fathers; acknowledging the omnipotence of God in creating and preserving all things, and enumerating his gracious mercies in their sundry deliverances from their enemies and persecutors, they made a covenant with him, that they would walk in his law, which was given by Moses; and, to ^b oblige themselves to a more strict performance of this covenant, it was ordered to be engrossed, that the prince, priests, and Levites, might set their ^c hands and seals to it; and those who did not set their seals, of what age, sex, or condition soever, did bind themselves with an oath, punctually to observe it.

But, notwithstanding all this precaution, Nehemiah had not been long gone from Jerusalem, before the people relapsed into their old corruptions; which, in a great measure, was owing to the mismanagement of ^d Eliashib

was also, in all probability, the origin of preaching from a text; for it appears that the people were not only ignorant of their ancient language, but also of the rites and ceremonies of their religion, having been so long in Babylon, where they were not permitted to observe them. This being the case, not only the language must be interpreted, but the meaning of the rites and ceremonies must also be explained; for we find from ver. 13, &c. of this chapter, that they had even forgotten the feast of tabernacles, and every thing relating to that ceremony. As we no where find that what is called preaching on or expounding a text, was even in use before that period, we are probably beholden to the Babylonish captivity for producing, in the hand of Divine providence, a custom the most excellent and beneficial ever introduced among men.—*Dr A. Clarke.*—Ed.

^a The words in the text are, 'since the days of Joshua, the son of Nun, unto that day, had not the children of Israel done so, and there was very great gladness,' (Neh. viii. 17.) But it can hardly be thought that this festival had never been observed since Joshua's time; because we read in the foregoing book of Ezra, that it was kept at their return from Babylon; but the meaning is, that the joy since that time had never been so great as it was upon this occasion; for which the Jews themselves assign this reason, namely, that in the days of Joshua they rejoiced, because they had got possession of the land of Canaan, and now they equally rejoiced, because they were restored, and quietly settled in it, after they had been long cast out of it.—*Patrick's Commentary.*

^b The observances, which they chiefly obliged themselves to in this covenant, were, 1st, not to make intermarriages with the Gentiles. 2dly, to observe the sabbaths and sabbatical years. 3dly, to pay their annual tribute for the reparation and service of the temple. And, 4thly, to pay their tithes and first-fruits for the maintenance of the priests and Levites: from which particulars, thus named in this covenant, we may learn what were the laws of God, which hitherto they had been most neglective of, since their return from the captivity.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 444.

^c It signifies little, indeed, what such untoward people promised; for what regard would they have to their own hand-writing, who regarded not the ten commandments, written on tables of stone by the finger of God? It was very useful, however, that there should be a public instrument to convince them of their impiety, and that they might be publicly confounded when they proved perfidious deserters, by showing them, under their own hands, their engagements to future fidelity.—*Patrick's Comment.*

^d Some are apt to imagine, that this Eliashib was no more than a common priest, because he is said to have had 'the oversight of the chambers of the house of God,' (Neh. xiii. 4,) which was an office too mean, as they think, for the high-priest. But we cannot see why the oversight of the 'chambers of the house of God' may not import the whole government of the temple, which certainly belonged to the high-priest only; nor can we conceive how any one that was less than absolute governor of the whole

the high-priest, who, being by marriage allied to Tobiah, the Jews' great enemy, had allowed him an apartment in the temple, in the very place where the offerings, and other things appertaining to the priests and Levites, used to be repositied. So that when Nehemiah returned from the Persian court with a new commission for the reforming of all abuses, both in church and state, he was not a little surprised to find such a gross profanation of the temple, and that chambers should be provided in the house of God for one who was a declared enemy to his worship.

He therefore resolved to put an end to this; but found himself under a necessity of proceeding with caution in the affair, because ^e Tobiah had insinuated himself into the good opinion of most of the people, and especially those of note. The first step therefore that he took towards this reformation was to convince them of their error, by causing the book of the law to be read publicly, and in the hearing of all the people; so that when the reader came to that place in Deuteronomy, wherein it is commanded that 'an Ammonite or Moabite ^f should not come into the congregation of God, even

¹ Deut. xxiii. 3.

temple could make so great an innovation in it. He was assistant, indeed, in the reparation of the walls of the city; but excepting this one act, where do we read of his doing any thing worthy of memory, towards the reforming of what was amiss in church or state, in the times either of Ezra or Nehemiah? And yet we cannot but presume, that had he joined with them in so good a work, some mention would have been made of it in the books written by them. Since, therefore, instead of this, we find it recorded in Ezra, (chap. x. 18,) that the pontifical house was, in his time, grown very corrupt, and, not improbably, by his connivance, began to marry into heathen families, (Neh. xiii. 28,) it seems most likely that it was Eliashib the high-priest who was the author of this great profanation of the house of God; but as he might die before Nehemiah returned from Babylon, for this reason we hear nothing of the governor's reprehending him for it.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 428.

^e By his making two alliances with families of great note among the Jews: for Johanan his son had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah, (Neh. vi. 18—iii. 4,) who was one of the chief managers of the building of Jerusalem, under the direction of the governor; and he himself had married the daughter of Shechaniah the son of Arah, another great man among the Jews; by which means he had formed an interest, and was looked upon as a worthy man, though (being an Ammonite) he could not but bear a national hatred to all that were of the race of Israel.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 428.

^f They who, by 'the congregation of God,' in this place, do understand 'the public assemblies for divine worship,' lie under a great mistake; for no man of any nation was forbidden to come and pray to God in the temple. Men of all nations, indeed, that were willing to become proselytes, were admitted into the Jewish communion; and, if they submitted to be circumcised, were allowed to eat the passover, and to enjoy all the privileges that true Israelites did, except only in the case of marriage; and therefore this phrase of not 'entering into the congregation of the Lord,' must be understood to mean no more than a prohibition of marriage; for this, according to their rabbins, was the case of such prohibitions. None of the house of Israel, of either sex, were to enter into marriage with any Gentiles, of what nation soever, unless they were first converted to their religion, and became entire proselytes to it; and even in that case, some were debarred from it for ever; others only in part; and others again only for a limited time. Of the first sort were all of the seven nations of the Canaanites, mentioned in Deut. vii; of the second sort were the Moabites and the Ammonites, whose males were excluded for ever, but not their females; and of the third sort were the Edomites and Egyptians, with whom the Jews might not marry until the third generation; but with all others who were not of these three excepted sorts, they might freely make intermarriages whenever they became thorough proselytes to

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to the tenth generation for ever :^c they being sensible of their transgression in this respect, separated themselves immediately from the mixed multitude, which gave Nehemiah an easy opportunity of getting rid of Tobiah, who was an Ammonite; and therefore he ordered the people, while they were in this good disposition, to cast his furniture out of the sacred chambers, and to have them cleansed again, and restored to their former use.

Among other corruptions that grew up during the governor's absence, there was one of which, as he was a constant frequenter of the public worship, he could not but take notice, and that was, the neglect of carrying on the daily service of the house of God, in a proper and decent manner. For the tithes, which were to maintain the ministers of the temple in their offices and stations, being either embezzled by the high-priest, or withheld by the laity, for want of them the Levites and singers were driven from the temple into the country, to find a subsistence some other way: and therefore, to remedy this abuse, he forthwith ordered the people to bring in their tithes of corn, wine, and oil, into the treasury of the temple; and having appointed proper officers to receive and distribute them, he recalled the absent ministers, and restored everything to its former order.

The neglect of the service of God had introduced a profanation of the sabbath: for, during Nehemiah's absence, the Jews had not only done all manner of servile works on that day, but had permitted strangers, Tyrians, and others, to come and sell their fish, and other commodities, publicly in the streets of Jerusalem. Against these wicked and irregular practices, Nehemiah remonstrated to the chief men of the city with some warmth; and, to let them see that he was resolved to make a thorough reformation in this matter, he gave a strict order, that towards the evening, before their sabbath began, the city gates should be shut, and not opened, until the sabbath was over: and to have this order more duly executed, he appointed^d some of his own servants for the present to guard the gates, that no burden might pass through on the sabbath day. So that when the merchants and other dealers came, and, finding the gates shut against them, took up their lodgings without the walls in hopes of selling to the country people, though

their religion. At present, however, because, through the confusions which have since happened in all nations, it is not to be known who is an Ammonite, who an Edomite, a Moabite, or an Egyptian, they hold this prohibition to have been long out of date, and that now, any gentile, as soon as proselyted to their religion, may immediately be admitted to make intermarriages with them.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 428.

^a The method of purifying any thing or person that was legally unclean is thus described:—'For an unclean person, they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin,' (that is, of the heifer that was sacrificed on the great day of expiation), 'and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel,' which being afterwards strained off and kept for this purpose, 'a clean person,' that is, the priest (for to him the work of purifying is appropriated, Lev. xiii.) 'shall sprinkle upon the unclean person;' and on the seventh day at even, after having bathed himself, and washed his clothes, he shall be deemed clean; but it is very likely that things inanimate were, immediately upon their being sprinkled with this water of separation, as it is called, (Numb. xix. 9) reputed clean.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^b It seems as if matters were come to that pass, that he could not trust the common porters of the gates, and therefore appointed some of his own domestics (who, he knew, would neither be careless nor corrupted) to see that the gates were shut, and all traffic prohibited.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

they could not to the citizens, the next day he threatened to take them into custody, if they did not go about their business; and to this purpose, appointed a guard of Levites^e to take up their station at the gate, and to stop all comers in, that might any way profane the sabbath.

Another reformation, and the last indeed that we find recorded of Nehemiah, was his dissolution of unlawful marriages among the Jews. Their law strictly forbade them to make intermarriages with any foreign nations, either by giving their daughters to them for wives, or by taking their daughters to themselves; but, since their return from captivity, people of all conditions had paid so little regard to this command, that even the pontifical house, which of all others ought to have set a better example, was become polluted with such impure mixtures, insomuch that Joiada the high priest had a son, who married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, who, at that time, very probably was governor of Samaria.

These mixed marriages, besides many other damages that accrued to the state, would, in a short time, as he observed to them, quite corrupt their native language,^d because he perceived, that the children already began to smatter the speech of their foreign parent;^e and therefore he required them all, under the penalties^f

^c The reason why he appointed the Levites to this office of keeping the gates on the sabbath-day, was, because he not only thought, that, by virtue of their character, they would meet with more deference and respect than his domestic servants, but that when he and his servants were gone from Jerusalem, he was resolved to have this watch continued, until this evil custom of admitting dealers into the city on the sabbath-day was quite broken.—*Patrick's Commentary*.

^d What the natural language of the Jews at this time was whether the Hebrew or Chaldee, is matter of some inquiry among the learned. Those who suppose that it was Hebrew, produce the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, besides the prophecies of Daniel, which, for the most part, were written in Hebrew, and which they suppose the authors of them would not have done, if Hebrew at that time had not been the vulgar language. But to this it is replied, that these Jewish authors might make use of the Hebrew language in which they wrote, not only because the things which they recorded concerned the Jewish nation only, among whom there were learned men enough to explain them; but chiefly because they were minded to conceal what they wrote from the Chaldeans, who at that time were their lords and masters, and, considering all circumstances might not perhaps have been so well pleased with them, had they understood the contents of their writings. Since it appears then, say they, by several words occurring in the books of Maccabees, the New Testament, and Josephus, that the language which the Jews then spoke was Chaldee; that this language they learned in their captivity, and, after their return from it, never assumed their ancient Hebrew tongue, so as to speak it vulgarly, it hence must follow, that what is here called the *language of the Jews*, and their native tongue, was at that time no other than the Chaldee, for the ancient Hebrew was only preserved among the learned.—*Le Clerc's Commentary*.

^e From Nehemiah xiii. 23, 24, it appears that there were children in the same family by Jewish and Philistine mothers. As the Jewish mother would always speak to her children in Hebrew or Chaldee, so they learned to speak these languages; and as the Ashdod mother would always speak to her children in the Ashdod language, so they learned that tongue. Thus there were in the same family children who could not understand each other; half, or one part, speaking one language and the other part another. Children of different wives did not ordinarily mingle together; and the wives had separate apartments. This is a better explanation than that the same child spoke a jargon half Ashdod and half Hebrew.—*Dr A. Clarke*.—Ed.

^f There are some things in the text, which, as they are made to proceed from Nehemiah's own mouth, and appear in our translation, sound a little oddly: 'I contended with them, and cursed them and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair,' c. xiii. 25,

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which he inflicted upon some that were obstinate, to put away their wives, and to have no more communion of that kind with any foreign nation: in which he proceeded with such impartiality, that when the son of Joiada refused to quit his wife, he ordered him immediately to depart the country; ^a which accordingly he did, and with several others that were in the like circumstances, went and settled under his father-in-law in Samaria.

These were some of the reformations which Nehemiah, as a wise and pious governor, made in the Jewish church and state. But after his death, it was not long before the people relapsed into the same enormities; for which reason we find Malachi, ^b the last prophet under the law; who, not long after Haggai and Zechariah, must have lived in the time of Nehemiah, reproving the

priests for their iniquity and scandalous lives, and upbraiding the people with their neglect of the worship of God; with their refusal to pay their tithes and offerings; with their divorcing their own wives, and marrying strange women; and with their inhumanity and cruel usage of their indigent brethren; the very same enormities which this good governor laboured to reform.

How long after this Nehemiah lived at Jerusalem, is uncertain: it is most likely, however, that, notwithstanding all the revolutions ^c in the Persian court, he continued in his government to the time of his death, but when that happened, it is no where said; only we may observe, that at the time when he ends his book he could not be much less than seventy years old.

CHAP. II.—*Objections answered and Difficulties obviated.*

But the sense of these words is no more than this:—‘I contended with them,’ that is, I expostulated the matter with them. ‘I cursed them,’ that is, excommunicated them, in the doing of which I denounced God’s judgments against them, ‘I smote certain of them,’ that is ordered the officers to beat some of the most notorious offenders, either with rods or with scourges, according to Deut. xxv. 2, ‘And I plucked off their hair,’ that is, I commanded them to be shaved, thereby to put them to shame, and make them look like vile slaves: for as the hair was esteemed a great ornament among eastern nations, so baldness was accounted a great disgrace; and to inflict these several punishments upon them, Nehemiah had a sufficient provocation, because in their marrying with heathen nations, they had acted contrary, not only to the express law of God, but to their own late solemn covenant and promise, Ezra x. 19.—*Poole’s Annotations.* [The author of this note, by the phrase ‘plucking off the hair,’ (Neh. xiii. 25) understands shaving the head; but there is no reason for departing from the literal sense of the words in our version, particularly as the words signify to pluck off with violence, as if one were plucking a live bird. The same word is used in the same sense Ezra ix. 3, ‘plucked off the hair of my head, and of my beard.’ Also in Isaiah l. 6, ‘I gave my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.’ Not only was this mode of punishment practised among the Jews, but it was also common in Persia, and sometimes hot ashes were put upon the skin after the hair was torn off, in order to make the pain the more exquisite.—See *Horne’s Introduction*, *Paxton’s Illustrations*, and *Gesen. Heb. Lex.*—Ed.]

^a Josephus relates the matter, as if this expulsion had been effected by the power of the great Sanhedrim; but whether the Sanhedrim was at this time in being or no, as we have no clear footsteps of it until the time of Judas Maccabæus, there was no occasion for their interposing, since Nehemiah, no doubt, as governor of the province, had authority enough to banish him out of Judea, as Bertram, (*On the Jewish Republic*, c. 13.) expounds the phrase, ‘I chased him from me,’ (Neh. xiii. 28.)

^b Whether the word *Malachi* be the proper name of a man, or only a generical name to denote an angel, a messenger, a prophet, or the like, has been a matter of some inquiry. From the prophet Haggai, (chap. i. 13.) and this other, whom we cite under the name of Malachi, (chap. iii. 1.) it appears, that in these times the name of Malach-Jehovah, or the messenger of the Lord, was often given to prophets; and under this title, the Septuagint have characterized, and the fathers of the Christian church have frequently quoted, this prophetic writer. But the author of the *Lives of the Prophets*, under the name of Epiphanius Dorotheus, tells us, that this writer was of the tribe of Zebulun, a native of Sapha, and that the name of Malachi was given him, because an angel used visibly to appear to the people after the prophet had spoken to them, to confirm what he had said; though most of the ancient Jews, as well as the Chaldee paraphrast, were of opinion that Malachi was no other than Ezra under a borrowed name. However this be, it is agreed on all hands, that he was the last of the prophets of the synagogue, and lived about 400 years before Christ; of whose coming, and the coming of his forerunner John the Baptist, and of whose religion, and the institution of a catholic and universal church, in the room of the Jewish, he speaks in very full and express terms, (chap. iii. 1.)—*Calmet’s Dictionary* under the word.

The Jewish law against marrying with heathens runs thus:—¹ ‘When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee,—Thou shalt not make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take to thy son. And the reason of the law is assigned in the following verse: ‘For they will turn away thy sons from following me, that they may serve other gods: for did not Solomon ² king of Israel,’ as Nehemiah argues with the people, ‘sin by these things?’ And if so great a one as he, who excelled all mankind in wisdom, was not safe from the seducement of these outlandish women, how shall ye be able to preserve yourselves from their enticements? And yet, as Moses goes on in his reasoning, ³ ‘Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself above all the people that are upon the face of the earth.’

Here then is an express law, enforced with weighty

¹ Deut. vii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

² Neh. xiii. 26.

³ Deut. vii. 6.

^c Upon the death of Artaxerxes, (in Scripture called Ahasuerus,) Xerxes, his only son by his queen, for he had several by his concubines, and among these, the most famous were Sogdianus, Ochus, and Arsites, succeeded in the Persian throne; but, by the treachery of one of his eunuchs, Sogdianus came upon him while he was drunk, and, after he had reigned no more than five and forty days, slew him, and seized on the kingdom. But his unjust possession did not hold long, for his brother Ochus, being then governor of Hyrcania, raised a considerable army, and, having gained many of the nobility and governors of provinces to his interest, marched against him, and, under a pretence of a treaty, having got him into his power, threw him headlong into ashes, a punishment used among the Persians for very enormous criminals; so that, after he had reigned only six months and fifteen days, he died a very miserable death, and was succeeded by Ochus; who as soon as he was settled in the kingdom, took the name of Darius, and is therefore by historians called Darius Nothus, and after he had slain his brother Arsites, who thought to have supplanted him, as he had done Sogdianus, and Sogdianus, Xerxes, and suppressed several other insurrections against him, continued to sway the Persian sceptre for nineteen years, but whether he or Nehemiah, his governor of Judea, died first, we have no certain account: all that we know is that the last act of the governor’s reformation, namely, his dissolution of strange marriages, was in the fifteenth year of this prince’s reign, and consequently but four before his death.—*Prideaux’s Connection*, anno 425.

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reasons, against these pagan marriages: and therefore, since whatever is done contrary to the law, is *ipso facto* null and void, these marriages with idolatrous women, which were strictly forbidden by God, were, properly speaking, no marriages at all; and the children which proceeded from them, were in no better condition than those whom we call bastards. ¹ No interposition of civil authority was therefore needful to dissolve these marriages. The infidelity of the party espoused was as much an interdiction, as any of the most proximate degree of consanguinity, which, by the laws of all civilized nations, is known to vacate the marriage.

But even suppose that the civil authority thought proper to interpose in this matter, yet, wherein had the Jews any reason to complain, if in just punishment for their wilful breach of a known and positive law, they were excluded from cohabiting with these illegal wives? The Jews, I say, especially, who for every light and trivial cause ^a made no scruple even to give their lawful wives a bill of divorcement, and might therefore, with much less difficulty, be supposed willing to repudiate those whom the laws of their God, for fear of their catching the infection of idolatry, had forbidden them to live with.

St Paul, indeed, is not for 'turning away an unbelieving wife,' in case she is 'willing to dwell with her husband;' but then he supposes, that this couple were married when they were both heathens, and in a state of infidelity, in which case there was no law, either divine or human, forbidding them to marry, whereas in these Jewish marriages with pagans the prohibition is strict; and therefore, as there was no sin in their coming together at first, and the Christian religion, whether it was the man or the woman that embraced it, made no alteration in the case, his advice is, that they continue to dwell together, even though they be of different persuasions in matters of religion; because, as he farther adds this reason, ² 'the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife; and how knowest thou, O man, but that by thy peaceable cohabitation with her, thou mayest convert, and save thy wife?'

Though therefore the apostle is not for encouraging any separation between husband and wife upon account of their difference in religion, when their marriage was previous to either of their conversions to Christianity; yet, if we will make him consistent with himself, we must allow, that he is utterly averse to all mixed marriages with infidels, when in his following epistle he advises all Christians, ³ 'Not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what communion,' says he, 'has light with darkness, or what concord has Christ with Belial?' &c. Whereby he gives us to think, that he esteemed all marriage with heathens illegal, and that,

had the apostle, at that time, been either of Ezra's or Nehemiah's council, he would have given his vote for their dissolution among the Jews.

We own, indeed, that it is a very gracious declaration of God, 'Behold, all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; that soul that sinneth, it shall die;' but then we are to consider, that as life signifies, in general, all that happiness which attends God's favour, so death denotes all those punishments which are the effects of divine displeasure; and among these, the miseries of the next world are chiefly intended. These indeed shall be allotted to men, according to their own demerits, without any regard to the faults of their forefathers, which shall neither be laid to their charge nor made an aggravation of their guilt; but as to temporal evils and calamities, it cannot well otherwise be, but that, in the very course of things, children should suffer for the iniquities of their parents.

Though therefore it may seem a little hard, that the children should be included in their mother's divorce, yet the laws of most nations have determined this point:—That children are to follow the condition of their mothers, be it what it will, and, consequently as they are unlawfully born, they must of course be alienated from the family, at the same time that the mother is repudiated, and in virtue of that very law which declares her marriage to be null. So that it was no arbitrary act in Ezra to abdicate the children, as well as the mothers: though, ⁴ to prevent the danger of their corrupting the other children of the family, if they were allowed to stay, and of insinuating themselves so far into their father's affections, as to prevail with them in time to recall their ejected wives, might be motive enough to a prudent ruler, considering the then situation of affairs, to put the law rigidly in execution. As this however was an act of the government, wherein Ezra, and other good men who feared the Lord, were concerned, we may reasonably presume, that some provision was made for the maintenance, and perhaps the education of these poor children, in the principles of the Jewish religion, at the public charge.

How long Nehemiah was in finishing the walls of Jerusalem, interpreters are not agreed; because some of them, supposing the space of two and fifty days, ⁵ mentioned in the Scripture, to be too short for the perfecting of the whole, have begun their computation from the time that Nehemiah returned his answer to Sanballat's first message, and others, from the time that the stone-wall was finished, and so allow the whole fifty-two days for the perfecting of the rest. But if we look into the compass of time, from Nehemiah's being at Shushan, to the day of the month when these walls are said to have been finished, we shall find, that no more than fifty-two days could well be allowed for the perfecting of the whole.

It was ⁶ in the first month, called by the Jews Nisan, that Nehemiah was at Shushan, and obtained of the king leave to go to Jerusalem: and though we have no express account what time he spent in his journey, and when he came to Jerusalem; yet if we may make a conjecture from the time that Ezra expended in the same journey, we can scarce suppose that he arrived at Jerusalem before the end of the fourth month. Ezra set out on

¹ Patrick's Commentary on Ezra x. 3. ² 1 Cor. vii. 16.

³ 2 Cor. vi. 14.

^a The school of Shammah, who lived a little before our Saviour, taught, that a man could not lawfully be divorced from his wife, unless he had found her guilty of some action which was really infamous, and contrary to the rules of virtue. But the school of Hillel, who was Shammah's disciple, taught, on the contrary, that the least reasons, such as, if she did not dress his meat well, if she was not agreeable to him in person or temper, or if he found any other woman that he liked better, were sufficient to authorize a man to put away his wife.—Selden's *Uxor. Hebraica*, b. iii. c. 18.

⁴ Poole's Annotations.

⁵ Neh. vi. 15.

⁶ Neh. ii. 1.

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the first day of the first month. He made a ¹ short stay indeed at the river Ahava ; but it was the first day of the fifth month before he reached Jerusalem. Nehemiah could not possibly set out so soon in the year, because his commission ² from the king, and instructions to the neighbouring governors, must have taken some time in passing through the several offices : and therefore we can scarce suppose that he reached Jerusalem sooner than the time specified ; and from thence to the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month, (including the three days of rest that he gave himself before he began,) the space will be much about fifty-two days, wherein we suppose that the whole work was finished : ³ for if Alexander the Great, as Arrianus and Curtius relate, built the walls of Alexandria, which was seven miles in compass, in the space of twenty days, why should it be thought a thing incredible, that a vast number, not of hired but voluntary men, full of zeal for the work themselves, animated by the example of their rulers, and ranged and distributed in a proper manner for dispatch, should, in almost thrice that space of time, be able to finish a work of less compass, when they had long summer days for it, plenty of stones, and other materials hard at hand, the foundation of the wall unrazed, some parts of it standing entire, only some breaches here and there to be amended ; and when their design in the whole was, not to study curiosity but strength, and to provide themselves with such a fortification for the present, as would secure them from any sudden invasion of their enemies ?

How ⁴ long Nehemiah continued at the Persian court, after his return from Jerusalem, the sacred history nowhere informs us. It tells us, indeed, that he came back again, after certain days ; but since the word *yamin*, which we render *days*, does equally signify years, and in many places of the Hebrew Scriptures is used in that sense, we cannot but wonder how the generality of chronologers, as well as commentators, came to overlook this sense of the word, and in so doing, to make Nehemiah's stay at Shushan much shorter than it possibly could be. For since he had been twelve years in reforming what he found amiss among the Jews, and Ezra had been doing the same for thirteen years before him ; they must, one would think, have brought their reformation to such a state and stability, that a little time could not have been sufficient so totally to have unhinged it : and therefore we may conclude, that his absence at court, which gave room for these irregularities to grow to such an height, was not for certain days, but for some years' continuance ; and consequently that the author of this part of his life had no intention, either to magnify his good offices, or to relate any thing incredible concerning him ; since, though he acquaints us with sundry corruptions that had sprung up, yet he makes the time of his absence, if we take his words in their proper sense, long enough for that purpose.

That Nehemiah was the writer of the account of his own government in Judea, for that is the subject of his book, most interpreters are agreed : ⁵ and, as he appears in that character, it cannot misbecome him to give the

world a narrative how himself behaved in that high station ; though, in doing this, he could not avoid the saying of something in his own commendation, unless he had been minded, out of his excessive modesty, to conceal from posterity (which it had been invidious to do) an excellent example of his extraordinary virtue, and love of his country.

St Paul, no doubt, was a very modest man : ⁶ he durst not, as he tells us, make himself of the number, or compare himself with such as commended themselves ; and yet, in the very next chapter, (that ⁷ he might stop the mouths of false apostles, and covetous people,) we find him telling the Corinthians, that he preached the gospel to them freely, and without desiring any contributions of them for his necessary support. ⁸ ' I robbed other churches,' says he, ' taking wages of them, to do you service ; and when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man :—for in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so will I keep myself ; as the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia ; for what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from those that desire occasion, that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we : ' and after all this, can any find fault with Nehemiah, for telling his reader, that ⁹ ' what was prepared for me daily, was an ox and six choice sheep, fowls in proportion, and once in ten days, store of all sorts of wine ; yet for all this, required not I the bread of the governor,' that is, the allowances which were made to the governors appointed by the kings of Persia, to provide them a table, ' because the bondage was heavy upon this people,' and they not in a condition, without much difficulty, to maintain themselves : wherefore ' think upon me, O God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.'

To serve God for nothing, or purely for his own sake, is a notion that perhaps may comport with our glorified state, where our service will be attended with vision ; but, at present, it is too romantic, and what the Author of our being expects not from us. He who made us, and set the springs in our nature, knows very well, that we are principally moved by hopes and fears, and for this reason has propounded rewards and punishments to us ; nor did we ever find it, till now, accounted a flaw in the character of the worthies of old, or an indication of their mercenary spirits, that, in all their good works or sufferings, they ¹⁰ ' had a respect to the recompence of the reward, which God, the righteous judge,' had promised to give unto his faithful servants.

Ezra, no doubt, was at this time a man of great esteem among his brethren, and no less favoured in the Persian court ; otherwise Artaxerxes would never have granted him a commission to reform and regulate the affairs of the Jewish church, fraught with such ample powers. Ever since that time, the Jews have looked upon him as another Moses, who, as Moses was the giver of the law, revived and restored it, after it had been in a manner quite lost and extinguished in the Babylonish captivity. There is some reason to believe therefore, that ¹¹ ' this scribe of the law of the God of heaven,' was the usual title or appellation of honour, whereby Ezra was digni-

¹ Ezra viii. 15, 31.

² Neh. ii. 6, &c.

³ Patrick's Commentary, and Poole's Annotations on Neh. vi. 15

⁴ Prideaux's Connection, anno 428.

⁵ Patrick's Commentary on Neh. v. 19.

⁶ 2 Cor. x. 12.

⁷ 2 Cor. xi. 7.

⁸ Ibid. ver. 8, &c.

⁹ Neh. v. 13.

¹⁰ Heb. xi. 26.

¹¹ Ezra vii. 12.

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fied and distinguished among his countrymen; and that Artaxerxes might take it upon common report, and so insert it in his commission, as the name whereby he was generally styled among the Jews, without ever giving himself time to consider what was the full purport and intendment of it.

But if even he did attend to this, yet, as the heathens had different kinds of gods, celestial, terrestrial, and infernal, he might easily reconcile this to his own principles, only by supposing that this God of the Jews was one of the celestial order, and, though a deity peculiar to them, might nevertheless be revered and worshipped by him in conjunction with his other gods.

But, after all, if we reflect a little on the ease and indolence, and, in a manner, total sequestration from all business, wherein these great monarchs of the east were used to indulge themselves, we shall find reason to believe, that Artaxerxes knew nothing of the matter. If he be the same who goes under the name of Ahasuerus in the book of Esther, he had been imposed on by Haman to consent to a bloody decree against the Jews, with so little thought and consideration of what he was about, that ¹ he did not so much as remember the person at whose instigation it was done: and yet, notwithstanding the great mischief which this negligence of his might have brought upon him, we find him instantly sinking into the like sleepy and careless temper. ² ‘Write ye for the Jews, says he to Mordecai and Esther, ‘as it liketh you, in the king’s name, and seal it with the king’s ring,’ and whatever is thus wrote and sealed, no man may reverse. And, by parity of reason, why may we not suppose, that when Ezra applied to court for his commission, the whole form of drawing it up was referred to him, and such other Jews as he thought proper to take into his council? For, ‘Write ye, as it liketh you, in the king’s name,’ might, in one case as well as the other, be all that the king had to say to the matter. And indeed, if we look into the contents of the commission itself, we shall soon perceive that it must have been drawn by something more than a heathen hand. For if Ezra himself had been to dictate the words, how could he have expressed the tenor of his commission more fully than in these: ³ ‘forasmuch as thou art sent by the king, and his seven counsellors, to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God, which is in thine hand:’ what Jewish king could have given more pious instructions than these: ⁴ ‘and thou Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, set magistrates and judges, such as know the laws of thy God, and teach ye them that know them not? And where can we find a livelier sense of God’s supreme authority, and of that regard which is due from the greatest kings and potentates to his commands, more emphatically expressed than here: ‘whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven?’ ‘Words,’ as Jacobus Capellus, in a kind of rapture, cries out, “fit to be written upon the palaces of kings in letters of gold, and engraven on the minds of all the faithful with a stile of adamant.”

⁵ Who the author of the six first chapters of Ezra was, is a matter of some uncertainty; though it is generally

agreed, that the same hand which composed the two books of Chronicles was concerned in writing that part of Ezra, because the Chronicle concludes with the very same words wherewith the history begins, which, in ancient authors, to connect the thread of the discourse, as Grotius observes, is no unusual thing. The Jewish doctors indeed are chiefly of opinion, that these Chronicles were written by Ezra. But this can hardly be, because the author, whoever he was, continues the ⁶ genealogy of Zerubbabel to the twelfth generation, which is lower than Ezra lived. Nor can Ezra be the author of the six first chapters of the book which bears his name, because the person who wrote it ⁷ is said to have been at Jerusalem in the time of Darius Hystaspes; whereas Ezra ⁸ did not go thither until the reign of Artaxerxes. It is most likely, therefore, that Ezra, upon his coming to Jerusalem, might meet with certain annals or memoirs kept, of the several transactions that had happened since the time of the people’s return from captivity, and that to these, after he had made an extract of such as were true and authentic, he added a farther continuation of the history of his own government. For, that the four last chapters of the book were of his own composing, is evident from this testimony. ⁹ ‘And at evening sacrifice, I arose up from my heaviness, and having rent my garment, and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord.’ Then follows the prayer which he made, and immediately it is subjoined, ¹⁰ ‘Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, and cast himself down before the house of God:’ which plainly shows, that Ezra was the author of that part of the book, which speaks of himself in the first person.

And, in like manner, that Nehemiah was the writer of what is reputed his, seems to be evident, ¹¹ not only from his own declaration in the front of it, (which was the practice of Herodotus, Thucydides, and other ancient historians in those days,) but from the testimony of the Jewish church likewise, which all along received it into their canon, and from the approbation of the seventy interpreters, who, from the very first, gave it a place in their translation under that name.

There is some difficulty, indeed, in reconciling the account of Josephus concerning Sanballat, and what is recorded of him in Nehemiah. Josephus ¹² tells us, “That he, being made governor of Samaria under the last Darius, married his daughter to one whose father had been high priest of the Jews, and that when his son-in-law was thereupon driven out of Jerusalem, he obtained leave of Alexander to build a temple on mount Gerizim, like that at Jerusalem, and to make him the priest thereof.” Now, to make this accord with what we read in Nehemiah, ¹³ the general opinion is, that there were two Sanballats, the first the Sanballat of the Holy Scriptures, and the other the Sanballat of Josephus; and that there were two marriages contracted by two different persons, sons of two different high priests of the Jews, with two different women, who were each daughters of two different Sanballats; the first the daughter of the Sanballat of the Scriptures, and the other the daughter of the Sanballat of Josephus, and that he who married the first of them

⁶ 1 Chron. iii. 19.

⁷ Ezra v. and vi.

⁸ Chap. vii.

¹ Est. vii. 5.

² Ibid. viii. 8.

³ Ezra vii. 14.

⁴ Ibid. ver. 25.

⁵ Huetii Demonst. prop. 4.

⁹ Chap. ix. 5.

¹⁰ Ezra x. 1.

¹¹ Huetii Demonst. prop. 4.

¹² Jewish Antiq. b. xi. c. 7 and 8.

¹³ Prideaux’s Connection, anno 409.

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was the son of Joiada, but he who married the second of them was the son of Johanan, and brother of Jaddua. But there is no reason to have recourse to this perplexed solution, seeing that Josephus has incurred a palpable mistake in point of chronology. For, ¹ since this marriage was consummated while Joiada, the son of Eliashib, was the high priest of the Jews, even in the fifth year of his pontificate; ² and since he entered upon that office in the eleventh year of Darius Nothus, who reigned in all nineteen years, it must follow, that the license which Sanballat obtained for the building of a temple at Samaria, was not from Alexander, but from this Darius, in the fifteenth year of his reign, and above eighty years before the Darius Codomannus whom Alexander vanquished was known. There is no occasion, therefore, to suppose any more Sanballats than one, or to extend his life to any immoderate length; only we may perceive, that Josephus was under a mistake in placing this Sanballat under the reign of Codomannus, who should have been placed under a former Darius, surnamed *Nothus*; and consequently, that all he tells us of this Sanballat's attending Alexander in his wars, and obtaining of him a license to build a temple, is a mere fiction founded on that mistake; because, in Alexander's time, the Samaritans, by murdering Andromachus, his governor of Syria, had so incensed that great conqueror against them, that, instead of granting them any favours, ³ we find him making all the havoc of them that he could.

Who the author of the book of Esther was, the opinions of the learned are various. Some ascribe it to *Ezra*, others to Mordecai, others to Mordecai and Esther in conjunction, and others again to the joint labours of the great synagogue, who, from the time of *Ezra* to Simon the Just, superintended the edition and canon of Scripture. Those who contend for Mordecai, have these words to allege in his behalf: ⁴ 'And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews, that were in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, and the Jews undertook to do as Mordecai had written to them:' ⁵ but the thing is evident, that these words relate, not to the book itself, but to the circular letters which Mordecai sent to the Jews, in all the provinces of the Persian empire, signifying what a mighty deliverance God had vouchsafed them, and, in commemoration of it, instituting an annual festival to be observed for ever.

And indeed the institution of this annual festival, and its continued observation, is a standing proof that this history of Esther is real, and not fictitious; since we can hardly conceive, how a wise nation should at first appoint, and afterwards continue the celebration of this solemn time of feasting and rejoicing every year, merely because a certain man among them had once the good fortune to write an agreeable fable or romance; much less can we conceive, from what motive a whole assembly of learned doctors should receive a writing of no better character into the canon of their Scriptures, or (to make it of more universal use) should honour it with a Greek translation.

It must be owned, indeed, that no foreign author has taken any notice of this piece of history; but the reason

hereof is obvious, namely, ⁶ because the authors who wrote of the affairs of Persia at this time, entered no farther into them than as they were coincident with the affairs of Greece; and though the last six chapters of this history are not to be found in any Hebrew copy, yet Origen is of opinion, ⁷ that once they were extant, though now lost, and that from it the Septuagint formed their translation; though others, with more probability, think, that (as the history of this memorable transaction might be recorded by divers hands) there were once two Hebrew copies of it, one in a larger, and the other in a less volume, and that, as the less is what we have at present, from the larger has proceeded the Greek copy, with its sundry additions.

Haman, we read, was an Amalekite, one of that nation ⁸ against which God pronounced a curse; and therefore, upon this consideration, Mordecai might think himself not obliged to pay him the reverence which he expected; and, if the rest of the Jews had the like notion of him, this might be reason sufficient for his extending his resentment against the whole nation. But there seems to be something more in the reverence which the people were commanded to pay him, than what is the effect of civil respect. The king of Persia, we know, expected a kind of divine adoration from all that approached his presence; ⁹ as we read of one Timagoras, upon whom the people of Athens passed sentence of death, for his worshipping of Darius, accounting the honour of their whole city debased by this mean submission of one of their citizens, though at that time Darius was one of the greatest monarchs upon earth. And as the kings of Persia did arrogate this to themselves, so they sometimes imparted it to their chief friends and favourites, as it seems at this time to have been the case with Haman. For we can hardly conceive, why the king should give a particular command, ¹⁰ that all his servants should reverence him, if by this reverence no more is intended than that they should show him a respect suitable to his station; but now, if we suppose that the homage expected from them was such as came near to idolatry, ¹¹ we need not wonder, that a Jew should deny that honour, or the outward expressions of it, to any man, since the wise and sober Greeks did positively refuse to give it to the very kings themselves. And that this was the case before us, the author of the apocryphal additions to the book of Esther seems to imply, when he introduces Mordecai as praying in these words,—¹² 'Thou knowest, O Lord, that it is not contumacy, nor pride, nor desire of vain glory, that makes me not worship Haman: for I would willingly kiss his feet for the safety of Israel. But I do it, that I may not prefer the glory of a man, to the glory of God, nor adore any one but thee, my Lord, alone.'

Though we are far from pretending to apologize, either for the injustice of Ahasuerus in abdicating his queen, or for the conduct of Esther in going to his bed, yet a good deal of this might be resolved into the custom of a nation, where the king was absolute, and his subjects mere vassals, where the will of the prince, I say,

¹ Neh. xiii. 28.

² Patrick's Commentary.

³ Joseph. contra Apion, b. ii.

⁴ Est. ix. 20, 23.

⁵ Huetii Demonst. prop. 4.

⁶ Huetii Demonst. prop. 4.

⁷ Patrick's Commentary.

⁸ Exod. xvii. 14.

⁹ Valer. Max. b. iv. c. 3.

¹⁰ Est. iii. 2

¹¹ Poole's Annotations on Esther iii.

¹² Est. xiii. 12, &c.

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was a perfect law, and a plurality of wives and concubines reputed honourable. This, however, may be said in behalf of Ahasuerus, that he did not divorce his wife, without first consulting his counsellors, and such as were best acquainted with the laws of their country; and therefore, if there was any iniquity in it, they were the persons chiefly to be blamed, who represented the queen's disobedience as a crime of such a dangerous nature, that it would have had a noxious influence upon the whole nation, had it not been severely punished. And this may be said in excuse for Esther, that the words which we render, ¹ 'she was brought,' may equally signify 'she was taken away,' namely, by violence; ² for (as the Targum upon this passage relates the matter) 'Mordecai, hearing of the king's edict for the collection of all the beautiful virgins in his dominions, hid his cousin in a private place, where the officers could not find her; but when Esther (whom all the neighbourhood knew to be a great beauty) was missing, an order from the king to Mordecai was procured, which, upon pain of death, obliged him to produce her.' However this be, it is certain, that the persons whom the king took to his bed in this manner, were not reputed harlots, but became his lawful wives, though wives of an inferior degree; and therefore it is no great wonder, that Esther, in these circumstances, though a very virtuous woman, should consent; nor can we tell, but that Mordecai and she might have a dispensation from God, (as God, no doubt, can dispense with his own laws,) supposing there were any contrariety to the divine laws in this transaction.

To account for the humour of princes, and their management of public affairs, is next to a thing impossible. We see, even among us, that great men are sometimes unmindful of the highest services that are done them, and take no care to reward them, especially if the person be in himself obscure, and not supported by a proper recommendation. And therefore we are not at all to wonder, if a prince, that buried himself in indolence, and made it a part of his grandeur to live unacquainted and unconcerned with what passed in his dominions, (as this was the custom of most eastern kings,) should overlook the great service which Mordecai had done him, or if he ordered him a reward, that, by the artifice of those at court, who were no well-wishers to the Jews, he might be disappointed of it.

There seems, however, to have been a particular direction of providence in having his reward delayed till this time, when he and all his nation were appointed to destruction, when the remembrance of his services might be a means to recommend them to the king's mercy, and the honours conferred on him a deep mortification to his adversary. These honours indeed were very remarkable; but by Haman's manner of proposing them, they seem to have been the usual marks of distinction and esteem, that the kings of Persia conferred on those whom they were minded to make conspicuous; and so far was Mordecai from being elated with them, that as soon as the solemnity was over, we read, that ³ he returned to his duty, and attendance at the king's gate.

He had declared himself a Jew, to satisfy the people at court, that he could not, with a good conscience, comply with the king's command relating to the reverence

which was to be paid to Haman; and the interposition of Providence in behalf of the Jewish nation, even during their captivity, had been so visible, that the wise men about Haman might, from experience, form a conjecture, that if their God was become their friend, (as by this strange turn of affairs in favour of Mordecai it looked as if he was,) no weapon forged against them would prosper; because they had seen so many plots, which would have crushed any other nation, turn to their advancement, as well as their enemies' destruction. The advice ⁴ which Achior gave to Holofernes, is founded upon the known experience of those times, and bespeaks a man well acquainted with the state of the Jews: 'Now, therefore, my lord, and governor, if there be any error in this people, and they sin against their God, let us consider that this will be their ruin.—But if there be no iniquity in their nation, let my lord now pass by, lest their Lord defend them, and their God be for them, and we become a reproach before all the world.' Considering, then, that Mordecai was of the seed of the Jews, a people whom God had wonderfully raised from under great oppressions, and that, at this time, there was a desperate design, by Haman's management, carrying on against them, Haman's wise men might easily, and without the spirit of prophecy, divine, ⁵ that as Mordecai (whom they knew to be a man of great courage and wisdom,) was now got into the king's favour, it would not be long before he would find an opportunity of applying to him, who was a person of a mild disposition, for a revocation of the bloody decree which Haman, by imposing upon his credulity, had procured, and consequently of ruining Haman in the king's good graces. For the known instability of court favours, and the little quarter that there is given to rivals or enemies, made it no hard matter, from Mordecai's advancement to read Haman's destiny.

Haman, indeed, was outrageously bent against the Jews, and what he offered the king in lieu of the damage which his revenues might sustain by the destruction of so many of his subjects, is a prodigious sum for any private man to be owner of; but we read of several such persons in history, who, in those ancient times, were possessors of much greater. Pithius the Lydian, for instance, ⁶ when Xerxes passed into Greece, was possessed of 2000 talents of silver, and of 4,000,000 daricks in gold, which together, amounted to near £5,500,000 of our sterling money; and ⁷ Marcus Crassus, the Roman, after he had consecrated the tenth of what he had to Hercules, feasted all the people of Rome at 10,000 tables, and gave a donative of corn to every citizen, as much as would last him three months, found the remainder of his estate to be 7,100 Roman talents, which amount to above £1,500,000 of our money. This may seem a little strange to us at present; but our wonder will cease, if we consider that, from the time of David and Solomon, and for 1500 years afterwards, the riches of this kind were in much greater plenty than they are now. The prodigious quantities of gold and silver which Alexander found in the treasures of Darius; the vast loads of them which were often carried before the Roman generals, when they returned from conquered provinces; and the

⁴ Judith v. 20, 21.

⁵ Poole's Annot. and Patrick's Comment. on Esther vi. 13.

⁶ Herodotus, b. vii.

⁷ Plutarch in Crasso.

¹ Est. ii. 8.

² Patrick's Commentary.

³ Est. vi. 12.

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excessive sums which certain of their emperors expended in donatives, feasts, shows, and other instances of luxury and prodigality, are of this proof sufficient: ¹ but at length the mines of the ancient Ophir, which furnished all this plenty, being exhausted, and by the burning of cities, and devastation of countries, which followed upon the eruptions of the Goths, Vandals, and Huns, and other barbarous nations in the west, and of the Saracens, Turks, and Tartars in the east, a great part of the gold and silver, which the world then abounded with, being wasted and destroyed by this means, the great scarcity of both, which afterwards ensued, was occasioned; nor have the mines of Mexico, Peru, and Brazil, been as yet able fully to repair it.

The great sum which Haman would have given to gratify his revenge against the Jewish nation, was an additional provocation to them, no doubt, to slay every one who came to annoy them; but then it must be considered that, in this, they acted by virtue of an edict, which authorized them to stand upon their own defence; that they were not the first aggressors, but only opposed those that openly assaulted them, and were for putting an unjust decree in execution against them; and as the Amalekites, who might be dispersed throughout the Persian dominions, were the known and inveterate enemies of the Jews, and, following now the fortune of Haman, might be forward enough to execute the decree which he had procured against them, it is therefore reasonably presumed, that most of those whom the Jews, in their necessary defence, both in Shushan and in the provinces, did destroy, were of that devoted nation; and that, by this their slaughter, the prophecies against Amalek were accomplished.

However this be, we cannot take leave of this wonderful deliverance of the Jewish nation, without making this one reflection upon it, namely, ² “That though, in the whole, there was no extraordinary manifestation of God’s power, no particular cause or agent, that was in its working, advanced above the ordinary pitch of nature; yet the contrivance, and suiting these ordinary agents appointed by God, is, in itself, more admirable than if the same end had been effected by means that were truly miraculous. That a king should not sleep, is no unusual thing, nor that he should solace his waking thoughts by hearing the annals of his own kingdom, or the journals of his own reign, read to him, &c.; but that he should lie awake at that time especially, when Haman was watching to destroy the Jews; and that, in the chronicles of the kingdom they should light on that place where Mordecai’s unrewarded services were recorded; that the king thereupon should resolve forthwith to do him honour; that Haman should come in at the very nick of time, when he was so disposed, and should ignorantly determine what honour should be done him, and be appointed to that ungrateful office himself: this was from the ‘keeper of Israel,’ who ‘neither slumbers nor sleeps,’ and was truly ‘marvellous in his people’s eyes.’ For although miracles, in their nature, are more apt to strike the sense, yet such secret contrivances of God’s wisdom and providence do more affect the understanding: the one works astonishment, the other admiration.”

CHAP. III.—Of Ezra’s edition of the Holy Scriptures and the institution of Synagogue-Worship.

EZRA, no doubt, in his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, was a great man. The sacred history gives him this character, that ³ ‘he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given.’ The Jewish doctors look upon him as the second founder of it; and are generally of opinion, that he was the prophet Malachi, ⁴ and had that title given him because he was sent as God’s messenger, to revive their religion, after it had been, in a manner, quite extinguished. Nay, ⁵ many ancient fathers of the Christian church attribute more to him, in this particular, than even the Jews themselves; for they suppose, that, in the Babylonish captivity, all the Scriptures were entirely lost and destroyed, but that Ezra, by divine revelation, renewed and recovered them again. This, however, is carrying the compliment too far, and leaving the authority of the Holy Scriptures to stand upon a very precarious bottom; since some may be apt to infer, that he who is said thus wonderfully to have restored them, might much more likely have forged the whole.

We readily acknowledge, indeed, that in the time of Josiah, through the two preceding reigns of Manasseh and Ammon, copies of the law might be very scarce. But by the pious care of that good prince, we are informed, that this defect was soon remedied; that copies were taken of the original law that was then found in the temple; that search was made in the schools of the prophets, and in all other places where they could be found, for the other parts of holy writ, and transcripts formed out of these likewise, so that, in a short time, all that were desirous to know the law of their God, either by writing them out themselves, or procuring others to do it for them, were furnished with copies both of the law and the prophets. Within a few years, indeed, the city and temple were destroyed, and with them was the authentic copy of the laws, which was repositied in the temple, burned and consumed; but before this calamity befell the Jews, all the sacred writings then extant were got into private hands, and carried away with them into captivity.

That Daniel had a copy of the Holy Scriptures with him in Babylon, is certain, because ⁶ he not only quotes the law, but makes mention likewise ⁷ of the prophecies of the prophet Jeremiah, which he could not have done, had he not had them by him. That, at the finishing of the temple, (which was in the sixth of Darius, and above fifty years before Ezra came to Jerusalem,) copies of the law were in common use, no one can doubt, who reads, how the priests and Levites were settled in their respective functions, ⁸ ‘according as it is written in the books of Moses:’ and that when the people called for the Scripture, to have it read unto them, they did not request of Ezra to get it anew dictated to him, but that he ⁹ ‘would bring forth the book of the law of Moses,

³ Ezra vii. 6.

⁴ See Chald. Paraph. in Malach.; and Buxtorf in Tiberiade, c. 3.

⁵ See Irenæus against Hæreses, b. iii. c. 15; Tertul. on the Dress of Women, c. iii; Hieronym. against Helvidius; August. on the Miracles of Scripture, b. ii; and Chrysost. Hom. 8. on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

⁶ Dan. ix. 11. 13. ⁷ Ibid. ver. 2. ⁸ Ezra vi. 18. ⁹ Neh. viii. 1.

¹ Prideaux’s Connection, anno 543.

² Patrick’s Commentary on Esther vii. 10.

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which the Lord had commanded Israel ;' which plainly implies, that all the people well knew that this book was then extant, and needed not such a miraculous expedient as that of a divine revelation for its recovery.

But if Ezra had not restore the Scripture in this manner, the question is, what did he towards it? Now, to this it may be answered, that, upon his coming to Jerusalem, ' he got together as many copies as he could meet with, either in private hands, or public repositories ; that by comparing these copies one with another, he found out the true reading, and so corrected all the mistakes that had crept into them, either through the negligence or ignorance of transcribers ; that, having thus made the copies perfect, he collected from them all the books of which the Holy Scriptures did then consist, (for some books that appeared later were admitted after this time,) disposed them in their proper order, and so far settled the canon of Scripture, that, for the illustration, connexion, and completion of these books, especially such as were historical, he added some passages that were not in them before, and changed some names that were then grown obsolete, for such as were more modern, and better understood, which, as he was a prophet, he was authorized to do ; that having thus made the books, in all their parts, perfect and intelligible, for the still greater ease and convenience of the vulgar, he caused the whole to be written out in the Chaldee character, which, after the Babylonish captivity, was in general use among the people, so that the old Hebrew letters were, from that time, laid aside among the Jews, and only retained by the Samaritans ; and lastly, that to ascertain the reading of this introduced character, he added the vowel-points that are now found in our Hebrew bibles : but whether this was of his doing, or the work of some later hand, is a matter of much debate among the learned.

Those who maintain that Ezra, whom all held to be a prophet, was the author of these points, and that they, consequently, are of the same authority with the text itself, argue in this manner,—That when the Hebrew language ceased to be the mother-tongue of the Jews, as all agree it did after the Babylonish captivity, it thence became, in a manner, impossible to teach it, without the assistance of the vowel-points ; and therefore, at least, they must have begun in the time of Ezra, and continued in use ever after : that two ancient books, called Bahir and Zohar, which are said to have been written, the one a little before, and the other a little after the time of our Saviour, made express mention of these points in more places than one : that whereas it is said, on the other side, that the Masorites of Tiberias (above five hundred years after Christ) were the inventors of these points ; this appears unlikely, because the schools which the Jews once had in Judea were at this time all suppressed : nor was there any number of learned men left in the nation, of sufficient ability for such a work : and, lastly, that if it be allowed that the present points are not of the same authority with the letters themselves, but only of a late and human invention, this will weaken the authority of the Scriptures, and leave the sacred text to an arbitrary and uncertain reading and interpretation.

Those who maintain the contrary opinion, namely,

that these vowel-points are of a later date than Ezra, fortify themselves with such arguments as these,—That the sacred books, which the Jews make use of in their synagogue-service, neither have, nor ever had, any of these points in them, which can only be imputed to this, —That when the Holy Scriptures began first to be publicly read in the synagogues, (which was presently after this edition which Ezra made of them,) there were no such vowel-points then in being : that if we compare the translation of the Septuagint, the Chaldee paraphrases, or the Latin version of St Jerome, with the present pointed Hebrew bibles, we shall in several places find, that they read the text otherwise than according to the present punctuation ; which is an argument that these points were either not in being, or not in any great authority in those times : and, lastly, that if we consult Philo Judæus, or Josephus, who are two of the oldest authors of the Jews, or any of the ancient Christian writers, for several ages after Christ, we shall not find one word mentioned of these points, though they could not but have sundry occasions to take notice of them, if either they had been in use, or of such great credit and authority with the Jews, as is pretended. And therefore, to answer the arguments on the other side, they allege, that the books of Bahir and Zohar are not near so ancient as they are reputed ; that for above a thousand years after their pretended composure, the Jews themselves knew nothing of them, nor were they once mentioned by any author whatever during that interval ; and therefore there is reason to think, that a false date of antiquity was fraudulently put to them, to give them some sanction, and to recommend them to the world with a better credit.

That the Masorites of Tiberias were certainly in being a long time in Judea, and in their way of learning were not a little eminent ; for St Jerome himself informs us, that he made use of them : that though there may be some difficulty in reading without points ; yet since we find that the Samaritans, who understand Hebrew no better than the Jews, have no points to this day, yet can read the Hebrew text, in the Samaritan character, we need not doubt but that custom, good sense, and the coherence of the discourse, will supply rules for the remedying of these inconveniences. And lastly, since there is no language in the world, wherein there are not several equivocal expressions, which may occasion an ambiguity in the sense ; though points in this case may be of some use, yet they cannot totally secure us from error, because faults in transcribing or printing and variations in pointing, are unavoidable.

To accommodate the matter then, as well as we can, between these contending parties ; though these vowel points were never anciently esteemed any part of the Sacred Scripture of the Old Testament, but only additions of human invention, for the more easy reading of the text, because they were never received by the Jews, to whom were committed the oracles of God, into the books which were read in their synagogues ; yet we have good reason to conclude, that upon the Hebrew ceasing to be a vulgar language, as it certainly did in the time of Ezra, they must of necessity have been introduced.

When every child learned the Hebrew tongue from his cradle, it was no hard matter for those who thus understood it by rote, to learn to read it by letters only,

¹ Prideaux's Connection, anno 446.

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without the vowels; but when it became a dead language, the case was altered: ¹ for then, instead of understanding it first, in order to read it, they were first to read it, in order to understand it; and therefore having not the previous knowledge of the language to direct them herein, they must necessarily have had some other helps, in order to know with what vowel each syllable was to be pronounced; and to give them this help, the vowel-points seem certainly to have been invented; and therefore the time of this invention cannot be placed later than the time when they became necessary, that is, when the Hebrew became a dead language, and so was acquirable no other way than by study and instruction.

From this necessity of instruction, and probably not long after Ezra's edition of the holy Scripture, there sprung up a set of men among the Jews, whose profession it was to write out copies of the Hebrew text, and to preserve and teach the true reading of it. What they did of this kind, is called by the Jews the Masorah, that is, the tradition; because they pretend to have the true reading, as the Talmudists pretend to have the true interpretation, of the Scriptures handed down to them from generation to generation. However, as their whole business was to study the true reading of the Hebrew text, to preserve it from being corrupted, and to teach it to others, it is highly probable that they were the first inventors of vowel-points, because the whole use of these points was to be subservient to this purpose.

But though these points might be invented by the Hebrew grammarians, whom we call Masorites, much earlier than some will allow; yet, from their late appearance in the world, it seems very probable, that as at first they might invent them only for their private use, so, for some time, they might reserve them to themselves, and teach them only to their scholars. For the Jews, we must know, had anciently two sorts of schools, those of the Masorites and those of the Rabbins: the former taught only the Hebrew language, and to read the Scriptures in it; but the other taught their pupils to understand the word of God, and all the interpretations of it. These were the great doctors of divinity among them, to whom the Masorites were as much inferior as the teachers of grammar schools among us are to the professors of divinity in our universities.

As long therefore as these vowel-points went no higher than the schools of the Masorites, they were not much regarded among their learned men; and this is the reason why we find no mention made of them either in the Talmud, or in the writings of some ancient fathers, from whom it might have been expected. But after the publication of the Talmud, the Jewish doctors thought it advisable, in order to preserve the right reading of the text, as the Mishna and Gemara were supposed to preserve its right interpretation, to take this punctuation of the Masorites into their divinity schools, and having reviewed and corrected it with great care, they added it to the text, and so gave it all the venerable aspect it now bears.

But though these vowel-points were added to the text by such persons as understood the language perfectly, and having since undergone the review and correction of many ages, may be justly accounted a work, as com-

plete in its kind, as can be done by human art; yet since it was only done by human art, it is no authentic part of the Scriptures: and therefore these points are not so unalterably fixed to the text, but that a change may be made in them, when the nature of the context, the analogy of grammar, or the style of the language, shall give a sufficient reason for it; especially considering, that notwithstanding their exact fixation at first, they are still liable to the mistakes of transcribers and printers, and by reason of their number, the smallness of their figures, and their position under the letters, are more liable to suffer by them than any other sort of writing whatever.

So that, upon the whole, it appears, that though these vowel-points were not affixed to the Hebrew text by Ezra himself; yet were they of early date after his edition of the Holy Scriptures: that, though they did not immediately appear in the world, nor are taken notice of by any writer of repute for many ages after; yet this was occasioned by their being confined to the schools of the Masorites, who in all probability were the first inventors of them: and though, being of human invention only, they cannot be supposed of equal authority with the text itself; yet are they of excellent use for the preservation of its right reading and for the prevention of innumerable perplexities and ambiguities, that would otherwise be incident to it.

The learned are not a little divided concerning the rise and antiquity of the Jewish synagogues: for some contend, that they were in use under the tabernacle and first temple, whilst others assert, that they had no being until the times of the captivity. The former, in behalf of their opinion, urge, ² that, as in the wilderness, the court of the tabernacle could not contain the hundredth part of the worshippers of the God of Israel, and, as in the promised land, the temple was too far distant for devout persons of every tribe to resort to it every sabbath day; there was a necessity for other places to be appointed for the service of God, that the sense of religion might not be extinguished and lost. To this purpose they observe that the Levites were dispersed in several cities, and the prophets and sons of the prophets settled in their respective colleges, that they might be ready at hand, upon all occasions, to expound the law, and instruct the people in their duty, whenever they met together for that purpose. And therefore we find the Shunamite's husband thus expostulating with his wife; ³ 'wherefore wilt thou go to the man of God, to-day, seeing it is neither new-moon, nor the sabbath;' which plainly implies, that at such stated seasons as these, the custom was to resort to such teachers for instruction: and, if this was the custom, there is no question to be made, but that proper places were appointed for their reception. It is an unworthy imputation therefore to think that so many temples should be built for idol-worship, and yet none should have zeal or piety enough to erect a synagogue for the God of heaven, or that the Pharisees should set up these useful inventions, and yet the elders and prophets, and holy men under the Old Testament, should want them.

These are the principal arguments on that side; but the silence of Scripture seems to be a strong confutation of them: for had these places of religious worship been

¹ Prideaux's Connection, anno 446.

² Mede's Works, b. iv. p. 1049.

³ 2 Kings iv. 23.

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in use among the Jews in the time we are now speaking of, we cannot conceive why there should not as frequent a mention have been made of them in the Old Testament, as there is in the New. The common, therefore, and indeed the most probable, opinion is,¹ that there were no such things as synagogues built before the captivity of Babylon and the destruction of the temple; that the Jews, seeing themselves carried away into a strange country, where they had no temple for divine service, came to a resolution of building such houses as were afterwards called synagogues, there to be instructed in the law, and to worship the God of their fathers, in the best manner they could, on every sabbath day; and that, upon their return, finding the great conveniency of such like buildings, they erected the same in their own country, as they had done before in the land of their captivity, and herein were followed by the Jews of the dispersion, in all parts of the world wherein they lived.

After Ezra had set forth a correct edition of the law, the prophets, and other sacred writings, which were extant in his time, his next care was to appoint proper persons, namely, the most learned of the Levites, and other scribes, that were well skilled in these writings, to read and expound them to his people.² This, no doubt, they did at first in the same manner that himself had done, that is, by gathering the people together in some wide street, or open place of the city, that was of the fittest capacity to receive them. But, in the wet and winter seasons of the year, the inconvenience of this came to be felt; so that, in process of time they erected houses and tabernacles, wherein to meet for this purpose: and this was the true cause and original^a of such edifices in Judea.

Synagogues were public edifices, situate either within or without their city, and generally in an elevated place.

³ They were usually raised above any private house, except when there was an interdiction from the civil power, because the Jews have a notion, that it is a dishonour to God to have his house inferior, nay, so much as equal, to those of men, and in whatever city this happens, they threaten it with a speedy destruction. They are always roofed, and covered over, and by this are

distinguished from the *proseuchæ*, which were commonly in the fields, and open to the heavens. In the midst of them there is a desk, or pulpit, made very probably in imitation of that, which, as⁴ we read, Ezra made use of, from whence the book or roll of the law is read very solemnly, and from whence both he that expounds it, or he that preaches to the congregation at any time, always delivers himself. At the upper end of the synagogue, and over against the door, which ever stands to the west, there is a chest, or press, wherein the book of the law is kept, wrapt in a fine embroidered cloth, and, what is uncommon in our churches, during the time of divine service the women are separated from the men, and seated in a gallery inclosed with lattices.

Every town, wherein there were ten *batelnim*, that is, ten persons of full age and free condition, always at leisure on week-days, as well as sabbaths, to attend on divine service, was thought large enough to have a synagogue built in it: otherwise it was not; because the Jewish notion is, that less than such a number could not make a congregation, and, without a congregation, no part of the synagogue service could be performed. But as their notion was farther, that any person, Gentile as well as Jew, might be permitted to erect a synagogue, because the holiness of the place, as they thought, consisted not so much in the fabric, as in its being set apart and dedicated to holy uses; it thence came to pass, that though there were but few at first, yet in process of time they became so numerous, that, in our Saviour's time, there was no town in Judea, but what had one or more in it; that, in Tiberias, a city of Galilee, there were no less than twelve, and, if we may credit the Jews, 480 in Jerusalem. The buildings were contrived much after the same manner as our parish churches; had over their door or entrance this inscription written, This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter into it; and upon the walls within, were these, or such like sentences. Remember thy Creator: Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of the Lord: Silence is commendable in the time of prayer: and, Prayers without attention, are like a body without a soul, &c.

⁵ 1. In the synagogue service the first office was prayer. Their prayers at first were but very few, but have since increased to a very large bulk, which makes the synagogue service very long and tedious. What they reckon the most solemn part of their prayers are those, which they call *Shemoneh Eshreth*, that is, the ^b *eighteen prayers*, which, according to them, were composed, and

¹ Jurien's History of Opinions, part i. c. 17.

² Prideaux's Connection. ³ Basnage's History of the Jews.

^a Mr Basnage, in his history of the Jews, is of opinion, that the origin of synagogues was not until the reign of the Asmoneans, some few ages before Christ, and he imputes it to this occasion:—The zealous traditionists, who made long commentaries upon the law, thought it a crime to keep the people, whose applause they mightily desired, in ignorance of them; and instead of confining their explications to Jerusalem, where they found themselves too much slighted and confined, they carried them into every city, where there were oratories, and public places of assembly. Before this, private persons made their prayers to God in their houses, where they had a place set apart for that holy exercise. It was generally upon the top of the house, for their houses were flat-roofed, that the family and their friends met together, to read some portion of the law on the sabbath day; and when there was any prophet in the city, the devout people assembled at his house. But after that the doctors had added their traditions and commentaries to the law, the business of interpreters became so much the more necessary, because those traditions were not written; so that the number of interpreters and interpretations increased daily. For this reason, convenient places were made choice of, that the people might the better meet together to be instructed; and from hence, in all probability, it is that they derive their synagogues.—B. v. c. 4.

⁴ Neh. viii. 4.

⁵ Prideaux's Connection.

^b These prayers were originally no more than eighteen, but R. Gamaliel, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, added the nineteenth, which is the 12th in the subsequent order, against Christians, who are therein meant by the names of apostates and heretics; and that we may judge of the merits of these prayers, a very learned hand has given us the following translation of them, in the same order as they are in the Jewish liturgies.

I. "Blessed be thou, O Lord, our God, the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the great God, powerful and tremendous; the high God, bountifully dispensing benefits; the Creator and Possessor of the universe, who rememberest the good deeds of our fathers, and in thy love sendest a redeemer to those who are descended from them, for thy name's sake, O King, our helper, our Saviour, and our shield. Blessed art thou, our Lord, who art the shield of Abraham."

A. M. 3475. A. C. 529: OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4947. A. C. 464. EZRA iv. 7—END, EST. NEH. PART OF HAG. ZECH. MAL.

instituted by Ezra, and the great synagogue; and therefore they enjoin all that are at age, of what sex or condition soever, either in private or public, to repeat them three times a day, and on every synagogue-day, they offered them up, with the greatest solemnity, in their public assemblies. These prayers, however, are but of the same nature that the Lord's prayer is in our public service, that is, the fundamental and principal part; for besides these, they have some prayers going before, some following after, and others interspersed between them, which make the liturgies very tedious, and justify our Saviour's finding fault with their long prayers.

2. In the synagogue-service there are three things that are read, the Shema, the Law, and the Prophets. The Shema consists of three portions of Scripture; the first is, from the beginning of the 4th verse of the sixth chap-

II. 'Thou, O Lord, art powerful for ever. Thou raisest the dead to life, and art mighty to save. Thou sendest down the dew, stillest the winds, and makest the rain to come down upon the earth, and sustainest with thy beneficence all that live therein; and of thy abundant mercy, makest the dead again to live. Thou helpest up those that fall; thou curest the sick; thou loosest them that are bound, and makest good thy word of truth to those that sleep in the dust. Who is to be compared to thee, O thou Lord of might? And who is like unto thee, O our King, who killest, and makest alive, and makest salvation to spring up as the herb out of the field? Thou art faithful, to make the dead rise again to life. Blessed art thou, O God, who raisest the dead to life.'

III. 'Thou art holy, and thy name is holy, and thy saints do praise thee every day. Selah. For a great king, and an holy one art thou, O God. Blessed art thou, O Lord, God most holy.'

IV. 'Thou of thy mercy, givest knowledge to men, and teachest them understanding; give graciously unto us knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who graciously givest knowledge unto men.'

V. 'Bring us back, O our Father, to the observance of thy law, and make us to adhere to thy precepts; and do thou, O our King, draw us near to thy worship, and convert us unto thee by perfect repentance in thy presence. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who vouchsafest to receive us by repentance.'

VI. 'Be thou merciful to us, O our Father, for we have sinned: pardon us, O our King, for we have transgressed against thee, for thou art a God, good and ready to pardon. Blessed art thou, O Lord most gracious, who multiplieth thy mercies in the forgiveness of sins.'

VII. 'Look, we beseech thee, upon our afflictions: be thou on our side, in all our contentions; and plead thou our cause in all our litigations; and make haste to redeem us with a perfect redemption, for thy name's sake: for thou art our God, our King, and a strong Redeemer. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the Redeemer of Israel.'

VIII. 'Heal us, O Lord our God, and we shall be healed; save us, and we shall be saved; for thou art our praise. Bring unto us sound health, and a perfect remedy for all our infirmities, for all our griefs, and for all our wounds; for thou art a God, who healest, and art merciful. Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, who curest the diseases of thy people Israel.'

IX. 'Bless us, O Lord, our God, in every work of our hands, and bless unto us the seasons of the year, and give us the dew, and the rain to be a blessing unto us upon the face of all our land, and satiate the world with thy blessings, and send down moisture upon every part of the earth that is habitable. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who givest thy blessing to the years.'

X. 'Convocate us together by the sound of the great trumpet, to the enjoyment of our liberty; and lift up thy ensigns to call together all of the captivity, from the four quarters of the earth to our own land. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who gatherest together the exiles of the people of Israel.'

But this is enough for a specimen. The rest are much of the same strain; but the reader that is desirous to see them, will find them in Dr Prideaux's Connection of the Old and New Testament, part I. b. vi.

ter of Deuteronomy, to the end of the 9th verse: the second, from the beginning of the 13th verse of the eleventh chapter of Deuteronomy, to the end of the 21st verse: and the third, from the beginning of the 37th verse of the fifteenth chapter of Numbers, to the end of the chapter: and because the first of these portions, in the Hebrew bible, begins with the word *Shema*, that is, *hear*, therefore the reading of the whole is called *the reading of the Shema*, which, next to their saying of the *Shemonech Eshreth*, or the famous *eighteen prayers*, is reckoned the most solemn part of their religious service.

The five books of the law were divided, as some say, by Moses himself, but not improbably by Ezra, into fifty-four sections, because in their intercalated years, (when a month was added to the year,) there were fifty-four sabbaths, and so a section, being read every sabbath day, completed the whole in the space of a year; but when the year was not thus intercalated, those who had the direction of the synagogue-worship, reduced the sections to the number of sabbaths, by joining two short ones several times into one, because they held themselves obliged to have the whole law, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy, read over, in this manner, every year.

In the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, when the reading of the law was prohibited, in the room of the fifty-four sections of it, the Jews substituted fifty-four sections of the prophets, which were ever after continued; insomuch that when the reading of the law was again restored by the Maccabees, the section which was read every sabbath out of the law, served for the first lesson, and the section out of the prophets for the second; for that is the meaning of ¹ St Paul's 'standing up to preach, after the reading of the law and the prophets;' that is, after the reading of the first lesson out of the law and the second lesson out of the prophets.

3. The exposition of the law and the prophets went along with the reading of them: for after that the Hebrew language had ceased to be the mother-tongue of the Jews, and the Chaldee grew up into use instead of it, the custom of the synagogue was, that one should first read a paragraph of the Scriptures to the people in the Hebrew tongue, and then another interpreted it in the Chaldee, which they better understood. And this seems to suggest the reason why these sections of Scripture came to be divided into verses, namely, that by this means the reader might certainly know how much he was to read; and the interpreter how much he was to interpret at every interval.

4. After that the reading and expounding were over, any person of learning, and knowledge in the Scriptures, might address himself to the people, upon what moral or divine subject he thought proper; only we may observe, that this was a compliment usually paid to strangers; and therefore when St Paul and his company came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the place of divine worship on the sabbath day, ² 'after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.'

From what has been said it appears, that the ministration of the synagogue-service was not confined to the

¹ Acts xiii. 16.

² Ibid. 51.

A. M. 3475. A. C. 529; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 4947. A. C. 461. EZRA iv. 7—END, EST. NEH. PART OF HAG. ZECH. MAI.

sacerdotal order; for the priests were consecrated only to the service of the temple, which was widely different from this, as consisting chiefly in the offering up of sacrifices and oblations, but to this in the synagogue any one that by learning was qualified for it, was admitted. Only for the preservation of order, there were in every synagogue some fixed officers, whose business it was to take care that all religious duties were therein decently performed.

The first of this kind are those whom the Scriptures of the New Testament call ‘rulers of the synagogue;’ but how many of these belonged to each synagogue we cannot tell, only we may presume, there were more than one, because they are mentioned in the ¹ plural number, in respect of the same synagogue. Next to them, and perhaps one of them, was the minister of the synagogue, whose business it was to offer up to God the public prayers of the congregation; and being for this purpose delegated, as it were, by them to God, is therefore in the Hebrew language, called *Sheliach Zibber*, that is, *the angel of the church*, or congregation: from whence the name of the bishops of the seven churches, mentioned in the Revelations, is manifestly borrowed. Next to this angel of the church, were the deacons, and inferior ministers of the synagogue, called in Hebrew *Chazanim*, or *overseers*, who, under the rulers of the synagogue, had the charge and oversight of all things in it, and kept the books of the holy Scriptures, the liturgies, and utensils, which they brought forth, and carried away again, as there was occasion: and next to these overseers was the interpreter, whose office it was to recite in Chaldee the lessons, as they were read in Hebrew, to the congregation; and because a good deal of skill in both languages was requisite for such an undertaking, whenever the rulers of the synagogue found a person fit for this purpose, they retained him by a salary, and so made him a standing minister among them.

We have nothing more to add concerning this synagogue-worship, but that the times appointed for it were three days a week, besides their holidays, whether fasts or festivals, and thrice on every one of those days, that is, in the morning, in the afternoon, and at night: and that when at any of these times the blessing was to be given, if there was a priest present in the congregation, he always did the office; but if there was none there, the *Sheliach Zibber*, who read the prayers, in a form of benediction made proper for him, dismissed the people.

Before we dismiss this subject, there is one common inquiry which, by this time, we may be able to satisfy, and that is,—How it came to pass, that the Jews were so prone to idolatry before the Babylonish captivity, and so strongly bent against it, even to a degree of superstition, after that captivity was ended? which can hardly be imputed to any other cause, but that they had the law and the prophets every week read unto them, after that captivity, which they had not before. Before the captivity they had no synagogues for public worship, or instruction, nor any places to resort to for these purposes, but either the temple at Jerusalem, or the cities of the Levites; and from hence great ignorance grew among the people: God was little known among them, and his laws in a manner wholly forgotten; and therefore, as occasions offered, they were easily drawn into all the

superstitions and idolatrous practices of the heathen nations that lived about them. But now, when, after the Babylonish captivity, synagogues were erected in every city, to which they constantly resorted for public worship, and where, every week, they had the law at first, and afterwards both the law and the prophets read to them; and where, by sermons and exhortations, they were, at least every sabbath day, instructed in their duty, and excited to the performance of it; this kept them in a thorough knowledge of God and his laws, as the comminations in the prophets, when once they came to be read among them, deterred them from transgressing against them; for, ² ‘all Scripture,’ as the apostle speaks, ‘is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God,’ or every man who resolves to be godly, ‘may be perfect, wise unto salvation, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’

One thing we may observe farther:—That, since there was a public liturgy established in the Jewish church, and forms of prayer, though very empty and jejune in comparison of those that are in use among us; our blessed Saviour, when upon earth, was contented to join with the public in these forms, and to frequent the synagogue ³ every sabbath day. And this may inform us, that to break the union of a church, upon the account of better edification, or more ecstatic prayers, is a refinement that the great Teacher of all righteousness knew nothing of. In the course of his preaching, he spared not to tell the Jews freely of all the corruptions that, in his time, they had run into: and therefore had it been contrary to the will of God, to use set forms of prayer in his public service, or had it been displeasing to him to be addressed in such mean forms, when much better might have been made, we may be sure he would have told them both, and joined with them in neither: but since he never found fault with them for using set forms, but, on the contrary, he taught his own disciples a set form to pray by, since he no where expressed a dislike of the forms then in use, upon account of their meanness, but, on the contrary, testified his approbation of them, by joining with them in their synagogues; this should convince our separatists, one would think, that neither our using set forms of prayer in our public worship, nor the using of such as they think not sufficiently edifying, can be objections sufficient to justify them in their refusal to join with us in them; because in both these cases they have the example of Christ directly against them.

The truth is, whether there be a form or no form, or whether the form be elegantly or meanly composed; nothing of this availeth to the recommending of our prayers unto God. It is the true and sincere devotion of the heart alone, that can make them acceptable unto him: for it is this only that gives life and vigour, and a true acceptance, to all our religious addresses. Without this, how elegantly, how movingly, soever the prayer may be composed, and how fervently, how zealously, soever it may seem to be poured out, yet all this is dead matter, and of no validity in the presence of our God. But, on the contrary, the very heathens can tell us, that, be our prayers and oblations ever so mean, they will be a ‘sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour’ unto him, if we

¹ Mark v. 35, &c. Luke viii. 41—xiii. 11.

² 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

³ Luke iv. 16.

A. M. 3596. A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 341. 1 MAC. i.—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7—b. vii. c. 14.

bring but to his worship, “a fixed purity of purpose, and a mind holy at its inmost core, with a will untarnished by low chicanery; the suppliant yielding these, shall prove grateful to the gods.”¹

SECT. III.*

CHAP. I.—*From the Death of Nehemiah, to the Death of Antiochus Epiphanes.*

THE HISTORY.

MANASSEH, as Josephus calls him, (for we have now left the sacred history, and have nothing but the books of the Maccabees, Philo Judæus, and Josephus, with some fragments of the Greek and Latin writers, to depend on,) being expelled from Jerusalem, with several others, who would not submit to Nehemiah’s order for their parting with their idolatrous wives, went to Samaria, as we said before, and there put himself under the protection of Sanballat, his father-in-law; who, applying to Darius Nothus, the then king of Persia, did so far insinuate himself into his favour, as to obtain a grant for the building of a temple on Mount Gerizim, near Samaria, and for making Manasseh, his son-in-law, the high priest of it.^a

¹ Pers. sat. 2.

^a On the supposition that Nehemiah returned to Judea in the latter part of the reign of Darius Nothus, it is easy to see what gave occasion to the mistake of Josephus, who assigns Sanballat, the chief of the Samaritans, contemporary with Nehemiah, to the reign of Darius Codomannus; and makes Manasseh, the son of Joiada and son-in-law of Sanballat, the son of the high priest Jaddua. Misled by the similarity of the names, he confounded Darius Nothus with Darius Codomannus; and this is not at all surprising, for Josephus in his Antiquities treats of this period very negligently, and has fallen into numerous errors. The more modern Jews were very ignorant of the later periods of Persian history. If we correct this oversight of Josephus, it will no longer be necessary to maintain the very improbable assumption, that there were two chiefs of the Samaritans of the name of Sanballat, separated from each other by a century, (B. C. 431 and 331,) each of whom had a daughter married to a fugitive son of the Jewish high priest. There was but one Sanballat, chief of the Samaritans, whose daughter was married to a son of the high priest Joiada, and that about the year B. C. 408. That important historical fact, therefore, which Josephus has placed in the reign of Darius Codomannus, properly belongs to the last years of Darius Nothus. It was from this last mentioned monarch that Sanballat obtained permission to build a temple for the Samaritans on mount Gerizim. This chief had distinguished himself, perhaps by his alacrity in furnishing with provisions the army destined for Egypt; and having thus ingratiated himself with the king, his request was the more readily granted. In this temple Manasseh the son of the high priest Joiada, whom Nehemiah had expelled from Judea on account of his connexion with the daughter of Sanballat, was appointed high priest. Afterwards, according to the testimony of Josephus, those Jews, who in their own country had been guilty of criminal offences, or who from any cause became dissatisfied, took refuge in Samaria. By means of these emigrants the Samaritans were recalled from idolatry, and brought to worship Jehovah alone. But this circumstance, far from allaying the enmity between the two nations, tended rather to increase it, at least on the part of the Jews, to whom this temple, built after the year B. C. 408, and the reception of fugitive Jews, was a constant source of provocation. In this manner every thing falls naturally and without violence into its proper order of time, and the succession of the high priests, (Neh. xii. 10, 11,) is completely reconciled with history. For though this table was evidently completed by a later hand, this circumstance alone, without other reasons, cannot prove it incorrect. And no such other proof of its incorrectness now remains; for if Joiada entered on the priest-

The Samaritans^b were originally the Cutheans, and such other of the eastern nations, as Esarhaddon, after the deportation of the Israelites, planted there; but after this temple was built, and Samaria became a common refuge for all refractory Jews, this mixture of inhabitants in a short time produced a change in religion. For whereas they had hitherto worshipped the God of Israel, in conjunction with the gods of the east, from whence they came, when once the Jewish worship came to be settled among them, and the book of the law of Moses to be read publicly, they conformed themselves wholly to the worship of the true God, and in their performance of this were as exact as the Jews themselves. The Jews, however, looking on them as apostates, hated them to such a degree, as to avoid all manner of converse and communication with them. This hatred first began from the malice which the Samaritans expressed against them, both in the rebuilding of their temple, and in the repairing the walls of their city. It was afterwards much increased by the apostasy of Manasseh, and his setting up an altar and temple, in opposition to those at Jerusalem; and it was all along kept up, on account of some particular tenets wherein the two nations were

hood B. C. 412, there are for the eighty years which intervene between this period and the time of Alexander, three high priests, namely, Joiada, Jonathian or Johanan (John) and Jaddua; and it is known that Jaddua was very aged when Alexander visited Jerusalem. It is accordingly no longer necessary to assume, without evidence, that there were two high priests of the name of Jaddua, one at the time of Nehemiah, and a second in the days of Alexander.—*Jahn’s Hebrew Commonwealth.*—Ed.

^b If we believe their chronicle, which they tell us is of great antiquity, though others who have examined it, will not allow it to be as old as Constantine’s days, they give us an account of their origin quite different from what we gather from sacred writ. They pretend to be descended from Joseph by Ephraim, in a direct line; and that when Joshua entered into the promised land, he caused a temple to be built upon Mount Gerizim, and appointed one Buz of the seed of Aaron, to officiate as high priest, from whom they have an exact genealogy, and uninterrupted succession ever since. They neither own Jeroboam’s schism, nor the transmigration of the ten tribes, but give this account of their leaving their country, and returning to it again:—That when the kings of Jerusalem and Syria had revolted against Bahtnezzar, so they called Nebuchadnezzar, he came with an army and took Jerusalem, and thence marching to the Shechemites, for that is the name they give themselves, ordered them to leave their country in seven days, upon pain of military execution, which they readily did: that when he sent Persians to inhabit the cities which they had left, they could not live there, because the fruits which seemed fair to the eye, were tainted with poison, and so destroyed them: that upon complaints of this, the king consulted with some of the ancient inhabitants of these provinces, who informed him that the only remedy was to send the Hebrews back again into their own country, which when he consented to, a place was appointed for their general rendezvous: that when they came to this place a dispute arose between them, whether they should go and rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, or that of Gerizim, and when Zerubbabel was for the former, and Sanballat for the latter, each pleading the sanction of the Pentateuch, and each pretending that the copy of his opponent was corrupt, they resolved to end the controversy by a fiery trial: that Zerubbabel’s copy being thrown into the fire, was immediately consumed, but that Sanballat’s endured the flames three times together, and received no manner of harm; whereupon the king honoured the Shechemites with rich presents, and sent Sanballat as the head of the ten tribes, to take possession of Mount Gerizim. But who sees not that this whole history, full of falsities and absurdities as it is, was only invented to wipe off the shame and disgrace of the Samaritans, for being the offspring of proselytes, and a medley of foreign nations?—*Basnage’s History of the Jews*, b. ii. c. 1., and *Universal History*, b. ii. c. 1.

A. N. 3596. A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 341 1 MAC. i—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii—x. JOS. HIST. b, xi. c. 7—b xii. c. 14.

known to disagree. For the Samaritans received no other Scriptures than the five books of Moses; they rejected all traditions, and adhered only to the written word itself; and they maintained, that Mount Gerizim, ^a whereon their temple was built, was the only proper place for the worship of God; and from this variety of causes did ensue all the hatred and virulence, which, in the course of this history, we shall have but too frequent occasion to take notice of.

After the death of Nehemiah, who was the last governor that the kings of Persia sent to Jerusalem, Judea being added to the prefecture of Syria, was from thenceforward subjected to the rulers of that province; and under them the administration of all public affairs, both civil and ecclesiastical, was committed to the high priest, which made that office much more coveted than it used to be, and many times tempted those who had no right to it, to invade it.

Upon the death of Darius Nothus, Artaxerxes, who for his extraordinary memory, is by the Greeks called *the remembrancer*, succeeded his father in the throne of Persia; ^b and towards the latter end of his reign,

^a Josephus, in his Jewish Antiquities, (b. xiii. c. 6,) relates a dispute, which arose in Egypt, in the reign of Ptolemy Philopater, between the Jews and Samaritans, concerning their temples. The Samaritans maintained, that their temple upon Mount Gerizim was the only true temple of the Lord; and the Jews on the contrary affirmed that theirs at Jerusalem was the only true one. The dispute was brought before the king; advocates on both sides were named; and it was agreed, that they who did not make their allegations good, should be condemned to death. Both parties promised that they would produce all their testimonies from the law only. Andronicus, advocate for the Jews, spake first, and proved so very evidently from the Scriptures, the antiquity of the temple of Jerusalem, the succession of the high priests, and the value which the Asiatic princes always had for that holy place, while at the same time they never so much as thought of the temple at Gerizim, that the king and his assessors, declared he had carried his cause, and ordered Sabbæus and Theodosius, the advocates for the Samaritans, to be put to death. Whether there be any reality in this account of Josephus or no, it is certain that the Samaritans, on behalf of Mount Gerizim, have to plead,—That there Abraham, (Gen. xii. 6, 7, and xiii. 4,) and there Jacob, (Gen. xxxiii. 20,) built altars unto God, and by their offering up sacrifices thereon consecrated that place above all others to his worship; that for this reason God himself appointed it (Deut. xxvii. 12,) to be the hill of blessing; and that accordingly Joshua on his entrance upon the land of Canaan, caused the blessings of God, to such as would observe his laws, from hence to be pronounced; and, lastly, that when he passed the Jordan, he built here an altar of the twelve stones, which he took out of the river in his passage, (Deut. xxviii. 2—7,) according to what God had commanded him by Moses. But herein the Samaritans are guilty of a great prevarication; for they have changed the words in the text of Deuteronomy, and instead of Mount Ebal, as it is in the original, have put Mount Gerizim, the better to serve their cause. The truth of the matter is, since Manasseh was resolved to make a schism in the Jewish church, and Sanballat to build a temple for him, the reasons above mentioned might be inducement enough for them to make choice of that place, rather than any other; but from thence to pretend to vie with the temple at Jerusalem, is highly arrogant; because the Jews have authentic testimonies, that the public exercise of the true religion was settled among them, and solemnized at Jerusalem long before this temple at Gerizim was thought of. In short, the religious observances of the Jewish worship did always attend the ark of the covenant, but the ark was never once at Gerizim, nor indeed was it fixed in any settled place, until David took it to his palace at Jerusalem, and Solomon had built a temple for it in the same city.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 409, and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Gerizim*.

^b Artaxerxes the second, surnamed Mnemon, also called

made Bagoses governor of Syria and Phœnicia, who took upon him to confer the pontificate, even while Johanan the high priest, who had been several years invested with it, was alive, upon the high priest's brother Joshua, and who accordingly came with this grant to Jerusalem, in order to take possession of the office. ¹ But while the one endeavoured by force to get possession, and the other by force to keep him from it, it so happened, that Johanan slew Joshua in the inner court of the temple; which, when Bagoses heard, he came in great wrath to Jerusalem; went into the temple, notwithstanding the remonstrances that were made against it; and, having taken a thorough cognizance of the fact, imposed a mulct for the punishment of it, and obliged the priests to pay, out of the public treasury, for every lamb that they offered in the daily sacrifice, ^c the sum

¹ Jewish Antiq. b. xi. c. 7.

Arsaces, ascended the throne on the death of his father, notwithstanding the exertions of his mother Parysatis to secure the succession to her younger son Cyrus. Though at the commencement of his reign he permitted his queen Statira to be guilty of an act of the most horrid cruelty, and generally yielded too far to the wickedness of his mother, he was on the whole a just and magnanimous prince. He pardoned his brother Cyrus, who, on the information of Tissaphernes, was detected in an attempt to assassinate him at his coronation, and even reinstated him in his government of Asia Minor. But Cyrus was so little affected by his brother's generosity, that he now determined on accomplishing his object by open rebellion. Under pretence of making war upon Thrace, and afterwards upon Tissaphernes, he levied a powerful army, and was powerfully supported by the Lacedæmonians, whom he had assisted with money in the Peloponnesian war. Clearchus, a Lacedæmonian general joined his forces, already consisting of 100,000 men of various nations, with a body of 13,000 Greeks. With these forces Cyrus marched to Babylon, B. C. 401, the same year in which Socrates was put to death. Artaxerxes, who had been seasonably informed of the revolt by Tissaphernes, came against him with an army of 900,000 men. They engaged in a bloody battle at the village of Cunaxa, which was situated about thirty English miles south of Babylon, between the Tigris and Euphrates. The 13,000 Greeks had already half gained the victory, when Cyrus, pressing on too zealously against his brother, whom he wounded, was himself slain by the royal guards. This expedition, and particularly the astonishing retreat of the 10,000 surviving Greeks by a route of more than eighteen hundred English miles, have been described by Xenophon, the eye-witness and director of that achievement.—*Jahn's Hebrew Commonwealth*.—Ed.

^c This, if extended only to the ordinary sacrifices which were offered every day, amounted to 365,000 drachms for the whole year, which is no more than one thousand one hundred and forty pounds twelve shillings and sixpence of our money: but, if it extended also to the extraordinary sacrifices, which on solemn days, when added to the ordinary, it will come to about half as much more. For the ordinary sacrifices, which were offered every day, and therefore called 'the daily sacrifices,' were a lamb in the morning and another in the evening, which are called 'the morning and evening sacrifices;' and these, in the whole year, came to seven hundred and thirty. But, besides these, there were added, on every sabbath, two lambs more, (Numb. xxviii. 9, 10;) on every new moon, seven, (Numb. xxviii. 11;) on each of the seven days of the paschal solemnity, seven, (Numb. xxviii. 16—24;) besides one more on the second day, when the wave-sheaf, was offered, (Lev. xxiii. 12;) on the day of Pentecost, seven, (ver. 17, 18;) on the feast of trumpets, seven, (Numb. xxviii. 27;) on the great day of expiation, seven, (chap. xxix. 8;) on each of the seven days of the feast of tabernacles, fourteen, (chap. xxix. 13;) and on the eighth day, seven, (Numb. xxix. 36;) so that the additional lambs being three hundred seventy and one, these, if reckoned to the other, make the whole number annually offered at the morning and evening sacrifices, to be eleven hundred and one: and therefore, if the mulct of fifty drachms a lamb were paid for them all, it would make the whole of it to amount to 55,050 drachms, which comes to seven hundred and twenty pounds six shillings and threepence of

A. M. 5596. A. C. 478; OR. ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5075. A. C. 311. 1 MAC. i.—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7.—b. xii. c. 14.

of fifty drachms, which is about one pound eleven shillings and three pence of our money.

After the death of Artaxerxes *Μνημων*, Ochus succeeded his father, but obtained the crown ^a by very wicked and indirect means. He reigned, however, for one and twenty years, after which ¹ he was poisoned by his favourite eunuch ^b Bagoas, who put the crown upon the head of Arsēs, his youngest son; but, in a short time, dispatched him likewise, and made Codomannus ² (one of the same family, but at some distance, and who, upon his accession, took the name of Darius) king of Persia.

In the third year of the reign of Ochus, about 356 years before the birth of Christ, Alexander the Great, who overthrew the Persian empire, was born at Pella in Macedonia. His father Philip had been chosen captain-general of all Greece, which, at this time, made a very considerable figure in history, for carrying on the war against Persia; but when he was just ready to set forward upon that expedition, ^c he was slain at home, while he was celebrating the marriage of Cleopatra his daughter with Alexander king of Epirus.

Upon his death, Alexander his son succeeded him in the kingdom of Macedon, when he was twenty years old; and ³ having been chosen, as his father was, to command the Grecian forces against Persia, he took the field, and in one campaign only, overran almost all Asia Minor; vanquished Darius in two pitched battles; took his mother, wife, and children prisoners; and, having subdued all Syria, came to Tyre; but there he

met with a stop; for the Tyrians, ⁴ in confidence of the strength of the place, and of assistance from their allies, when he would have entered the city, denied him admittance.

While his army was besieging Tyre, he sent out his commissioners, requiring the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries, namely, of Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, to submit to him, and to furnish him with what he wanted. Other provinces complied; but the Jews, pleading their oath to Darius, by which they thought themselves bound not to acknowledge any new master so long as he was alive, refused to obey his commands. This exasperated the conqueror not a little, who, ^d in the flush of his many successes, could bear no contradiction; and therefore, as soon as he had done with Tyre, ^e he marched directly against Jerusalem.

⁴ For an account of the ancient and present state of Tyre, see b. iv. s. iii. c. 4, pp. 342, 343.—Ed.

^d No sooner was he chosen general of all the Grecian cities confederated against the Persian empire, but he subdued the Tyrians and Triballians in Thrace; and, upon his return, took Thebes, that had revolted from the confederacy, and razed it to the ground. After this, setting out upon the Persian expedition, he vanquished Darius near the Granicus; and after the action, took Sardis, Ephesus, Miletum, and Halicarnassus, the next year he made himself master of all Phrygia, Lycia, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Paphlagonia, and Cappadocia. The next year he gave Darius a second defeat (and a terrible one it was) at Issus, took his mother, wife, two daughters, and a young son, prisoners; seized Damascus, and in it immense riches; subdued in short, all Syria, Cœlo-Syria, and Phœnicia: for every place yielded to him, none pretending to make any resistance till he came to Tyre.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 333.

^e As soon as he had taken the town, he burned it down to the ground, and destroyed and enslaved all the inhabitants. Eight thousand he slew in the sackage of the town, and two thousand of those whom he took prisoners he caused to be crucified, a piece of cruelty this highly unbecoming a generous conqueror. But, to palliate the matter, he gave out, that it was done by way of just revenge upon them, for their murdering their masters, and that, being originally but slaves, crucifixion was the proper punishment for them. But this depended upon an old story. Some ages before, the slaves of Tyre, having made a conspiracy against their masters, murdered them all in one night, (except only Strato, whom his slave secretly saved) and having married their mistresses, continued masters of the town, and from them the present Tyrians were descended. So that Alexander pretended, on this occasion, to revenge on them the murder that was committed by their progenitors so many ages before, though, in reality, it was to gratify his rage for being so long detained before the place, and there so valiantly resisted. Recovering, however, its beauty and riches again, it was invested with the privileges of a Roman city for its fidelity, and in the flourishing times of Christianity was distinguished as the first archbishopric under the patriarchate of Jerusalem. It shared the fate of the country in the Saracen invasion, in the beginning of the seventh century. It was reconquered by the crusaders in the twelfth, and formed a royal domain of the kingdom of Jerusalem, as well as an archiepiscopal see. William of Tyre, the well-known historian, an Englishman, was the first archbishop. In 1289, it was retaken by the Saracens, the Christians being permitted to remove with their effects. When the Sultan Selim divided Syria into pachalics, Tyre, which had probably gone into decay with the depression of commerce, was merged in the territory of Sidon. In 1766, it was taken possession of by the Mutoalies, who repaired the port, and enclosed it on the land side with a wall twenty feet high. This wall was standing at the time of Volney's visit (1784). It was a miserable village: its exports consisted of a few sacks of corn and cotton, and the only merchant of which it could boast was a solitary Greek, in the service of the French factory at Sidon, who could hardly gain a livelihood. It is only within the last five and twenty years that it has once more begun to lift its head from the dirt.—See page 343.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 333; *Maunderell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*, and *Wood, Traveller*.

¹ Diodorus Siculus, b. xvii.

² Ibid.

³ Justin, b. xi. c. 2.

our money. But even this sum being too small for a national mulct, it seems most probable, that all the lambs which were offered in the temple in any sacrifice, and upon any account whatever, were taken into the reckoning. We may observe, however, that whatever this mulct was, the payment of it lasted no longer than seven years; for, on the death of Artaxerxes, the changes and revolutions which then happened in the empire, made a change in the government of Syria, and he that succeeded Bagoas in that province no farther exacted it.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 366.

^a Artaxerxes, when he died, left three sons, Ariaspes, Ochus, and Arsames; Ariaspes was an easy credulous prince; and therefore Ochus so terrified him with menaces, which he pretended came from his father, that for fear of being put to death, he poisoned himself. Arsames he caused to be assassinated by Harpates; and this loss, added to the other, so overwhelmed the old king with grief, that he broke his heart and died.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 359.

^b This eunuch having poisoned both Ochus and his son Arsēs, set the crown upon Darius's head; but, finding that he would not answer his purpose, in permitting him to govern all in his name, which was the thing he aimed at in his advancement, he was resolved to have removed him, in the same manner as he had done his predecessors; and accordingly had provided a poisonous potion for him. But Darius, being advised of the design, when the potion was brought to him, made him drink it all himself, and so got rid of the traitor by his own artifice.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 335.

^c The occasion of his death is said to be this.—Pausanias, a young noble Macedonian, and one of his guards, having had his body forced, and sodomically abused by Attalus the chief of the king's confidants, had often complained to Philip of the injury; but, finding no redress, he turned his revenge from the author of the injury upon him who refused to do him justice for it, and slew him as he was passing in great state to the theatre, having the images of the twelve gods and goddesses, and his own in the same pompous habit, carried before him. Hereby he arrogated to himself the honour of a god; but being slain as soon as his image entered the theatre, he gave a signal proof that he was no more than a mere mortal man.—*Justin*, b. ix., *Diodor. Sicul.* b. xvi.

A. M. 3596. A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 341. MAC. i.—vi. 7, 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7, b. xii. c. 14.

¹ Jaddua the high priest, who at this time had the chief government of the Jews under the king of Persia, was in dreadful apprehensions of what the event might prove: but having no protection to depend on but God's, he, and all Jerusalem with him, made their cries and supplications to him, imploring his mercy for their deliverance from the approaching storm; whereupon he was ordered, in a vision of the night, to go out and meet Alexander, whenever he should come, in his pontifical robes, with the priests attending him in their proper habits, and all the people in white garments.

Jaddua, next day, with the priests and people, habited in the manner directed, went out of the city to a certain eminence, which commanded the prospect of all the country round, and there waited the coming of Alexander. As soon as the high priest saw him at some distance, he moved towards him in this solemn pomp; which struck the king with such an awe, that, as he drew near, he bowed down to him, and saluted him with a religious veneration, to the great surprise of all that attended him.

While every one stood amazed at this behaviour, Parmenio, his first favourite, took the freedom to ask him, how it came to pass, that he whom all mankind adored, paid such adoration to the Jewish high priest? To which his reply was, "That he did not pay that adoration to him, but to the God whose high priest he was; that while he was at Dio in Macedonia, and deliberating with himself how to carry on the war with Persia, that very person, and in that very habit, appeared to him in a dream, encouraging him to pass boldly over into Asia, and not to doubt of success, because God would be his guide in the expedition, and give him the empire of the Persians; and that therefore from hence he was assured that he made the present war under the conduct of that God to whom in the person of this high priest, he paid adoration." And hereupon, turning to Jaddua again, he embraced him very kindly: and so, going into the city with him, offered sacrifices to God, in the temple, where the high priest showed him the prophecies of Daniel, ^a predicting the overthrow of the Persian empire by a Grecian king, which he applied to himself, and thereby confirmed his opinion that God had chosen him to execute this great work.

When he left Jerusalem, he offered to grant the people whatever immunities the high priest should desire; but he requested no more than a toleration to live according to their own laws and religion, and an exemption from the payment of tribute every seventh year, because on the sabbatical year the Jews were forbidden to till their ground. This he readily consented to, and having signified his pleasure, that if any of them were minded to list in his troops, he would readily receive them, great multitudes did hereupon offer their service, and followed him in his other expeditions.

² No sooner was he well got out of the city, but the Samaritans met him in great pomp and parade, desiring

of him, that he would likewise honour their city and temple with his presence. "He was then hastening to Egypt, he told them, but that when he returned, if his affairs would permit him, he would not fail to comply with their desires: and when they requested of him an immunity from all taxes every seventh year, because they, as well as the Jews, did every seventh year suffer their land to lie fallow, he asked them if they were Jews, because to them only he had granted that privilege. Their answer was, that they were Hebrews, but that the Phœnicians called them Sichemites: whereupon, having no leisure to make any farther inquiry into the matter, he referred this likewise to his return, when he promised to examine into their pretensions, and to do them justice; but before his return, they had done enough to incense him against them.

On his going from these parts into Egypt, he had made Andromachus, a special favourite of his, governor of Syria and Palestine; who ³ coming to Samaria, in order to settle some affairs, was burnt to death in his house, which the people set on fire, out of rage and discontent, very probably, that the privileges, which were granted to their enemies the Jews, were denied to them. This barbarous action exasperated Alexander not a little; inasmuch that, having caused those who had acted any part in the murder of the governor to be put to death, he drove all the rest of the inhabitants out of Samaria, planted therein a colony of Macedonians, and gave the rest of their territories to the Jews.

After the death of Alexander, ^b who did not long sur-

³ Quint. Curt. b. iv, 17. c. 8.

^b It is not well agreed among historians, how this great conqueror of the world died. Some of them are of opinion, that he was poisoned by the procurement of Antipater, whom he had left governor of all his dominions in his absence, and who, for his mal-administration, had been lately dismissed; and, therefore, fearing to be called to an account, did, by the hands of his sons, who were about the person of the king, and one of them his cupbearer, execute this treason upon his master's life, in order to save his own; but in the judgment of other historians he died by nothing but excessive drinking; and thus they relate the story. "One day after he had been sacrificing to the gods for the many victories which he had obtained, he made an entertainment for his friends, wherein he drank very hard, and continued the debauch till late at night; when returning from the feast he and his company were invited by a physician of Thessalia to come and drink a little more at his house. Alexander accepted of the offer: and, as there were twenty in company, he first drank to each of them in their order, and so pledged them again, and then called for the Herculean cup. There was in company one Prodeas, a Macedonian, but a terrible drinker, and to him the king drank this Herculean brimful, which they tell us held six of our quarts, and not long after pledged him in the same; but immediately after the second cup he dropped down upon the place, and then fell into a violent fever, of which he died, in the thirty-third year of his age, after a reign of twelve years, six years as king of Macedon, and six more as monarch of Asia." He was a man of a bold enterprising spirit, but fuller of fire than discretion. His actions, though they were attended with success, were carried on with a furious and extravagant rashness; and the few virtues that he had were obscured with much greater vices. Vain-glory was the predominant passion of his soul; and the fables of the ancient Greek heroes, the only chart by which he steered his conduct. This was the reason that he dragged Betis round the walls of Gaza, in the same manner as Achilles had used Hector; that he undertook that hazardous expedition into India, as Hercules had done before him; that he made a drunken procession through Caramania, because Bacchus is said to have done the like in the same place; and that he affected to be called the son of Jupiter, because most of the

¹ Joseph. b. xi. c. 8.

² Ibid.

^a Namely, what is written of the ram and the he-goat, chap. viii. where that he-goat is interpreted to be the king of Grecia, who should conquer the Medes and Persians, ver. 20. As likewise what is written by the same prophet, of the same Grecian king, chap. xi. 3; for both these prophecies foretold the destruction of the Persian king.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 333.

A. M. 3596. A.C. 408; OR. ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A.C. 341. 1 MAC. i.—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7.—xii. c. 14.

vive the unfortunate Darius, ^a the Grecian or Macedonian empire, for so it was now become, was divided among the chief commanders of his army, who soon fell to leaguings and fighting against each other, till after some years they were all destroyed, except four, and these agreed to make a partition of the whole among themselves, and so cantoned it into four kingdoms, though all this while Aridæus, ^b a bastard brother of Alexander's, that took upon him the name of Philip, and after him Alexander Ægus, his own son by his wife Roxana, bore both of them the title of kings.

In this division, Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, whom the Greeks call *Soter*, having taken possession of Egypt, thought that the provinces of Syria, Phœnicia, and Judea, would be an excellent barrier for him; and therefore

ancient heroes pretended, that they had for their fathers one god or other. The truth is, this young conqueror, having the *Iliad* of Homer in great admiration, always carried them with him, laid them under his pillow when he slept, and read in them on all leisure opportunities; and therefore finding Achilles to be the great hero in that poem, he thought every thing said of him worthy of imitation, and the readiest way to become a hero himself, which was the main impulsive cause of all his undertakings: but in reality, were actions to be duly estimated, he could deserve no other character than that of the great cut-throat of the age in which he lived. The folly of mankind, however, and the error of historians is such, that they usually make the actions of war, bloodshed, and conquest, the subjects of their highest encomiums, and those their most celebrated heroes that most excel in these; whereas those only are the true heroes, who most benefit the world, by promoting the peace and welfare of mankind. In a righteous cause indeed, and the just defence of a man's country, all actions of valour are just reasons of praise; but in all other cases victory and conquest are no more than murder and rapine, and those who thus oppress the world with the slaughter of man, the desolation of countries, the burning of cities, and the other calamities which attend war, are the scourges of God, the Attilas of the age in which they live, and the greatest plagues and calamities that happen to it; and therefore to make these the subject of praise and panegyric, is to lay ill examples before princes, as it such oppressions of mankind were the truest ways to honour and glory.—*Diod. Sic.* b. xvii; *Arrian.* b. vii; *Justin.* b. xii; *Quin. Curt.* b. x; *Plutarch.* in *Alexandro*; and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 328, and 332.

^a After the battle of Arbela, wherein he was sore discomfited, he made his escape into Media, and having got some few forces together, thought to have tried his fate in one battle more; when Bessus, his governor of Bactria, and Nabazanes, another Persian nobleman, conspired together; and having seized the poor king, and made him their prisoner, put him in chains, and shut him up in a close cart, and so carried him with them towards Bactria, intending, if Alexander pursued them to purchase their peace by delivering him up into his hands; but if he did not, to kill him, and seize his kingdom, and so renew the war. Alexander having heard what these traitors had done, made all the haste he could to rescue Darius out of their hands; but when, after several days' march, he came up with them, (because Darius refused to mount on horseback, for his more speedy flight with them,) they gave him several mortal wounds, and left him dying in the cart. He was dead before Alexander came; but when he saw his corpse, he could not forbear shedding tears at so melancholy a spectacle: and having cast his cloak over it, he ordered that it should be wrapped up therein, and carried to his mother Sisymbria, at Shushan, where he had left her with the other captive ladies, to be buried there with a royal funeral, for which himself allowed the expense, in the sepulchres of the kings of Persia.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 330.

^b Aridæus, with his wife Eurydice, was put to death by Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, after he had borne the title of king for six years and seven months; and Alexander Ægus, with his mother Roxana, after a long imprisonment in the castle of Amphipolis, was, in like manner, murdered by Cassander, to make way for himself to the crown of Macedon.

¹ He first of all attempted to bribe Laomedon, a Mitylenian captain of Alexander's, (who after the death of Andromachus, very probably was made governor of Syria, and the adjacent countries,) with a vast sum of money, to deliver them up into his hands; but not being able to prevail this way, he sent Nicanor, one of his captains, with an army into Syria, whilst himself, with a fleet, invaded Phœnicia; and so having vanquished Laomedon, and taken him prisoner, he made himself master of all these provinces.

² The Jews, however, for some time, stood out against him, and upon account of the oath they had taken to the deposed governor, refused to submit to his authority. Hereupon he marched into Judea, and, having got possession of most of the country, laid siege to Jerusalem. The place was strong enough, both by nature and art, to have made a considerable defence against him; but the Jews had then such a superstitious notion for the observance of the sabbath, that they thought it a breach of their law, even to defend themselves on it: which when Ptolemy understood, he made choice of that day to storm the place, and in the assault took it, because there were none that would defend the walls against him. At first he dealt hardly with the inhabitants, and carried above an hundred thousand of them captives into Egypt; but afterwards, considering how faithful they had been to their former governors, he employed them in his army and garrisons, and granted them large immunities and privileges; whereupon the whole nation of the Jews became subject to the power and dominion of the kings of Egypt.

In the fifth year of this Ptolemy's reign, Onias, the Jewish high priest, died, and was succeeded by Simon his son, who, from the holiness of his life, and the great righteousness which shone forth in all his actions, was called 'Simon the Just.' He continued in his office for nine years, in which time he did many beneficial acts ^c both in the church and state of the Jews; but what is chiefly commemorated of him, is his completing the canon of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. What Ezra, ³ and the men of the great synagogue, who, as some say, assisted him, did in this work, we have taken sufficient notice of before. The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi, as well as the two Chronicles of the kings of Judah and Israel, could not possibly be inserted by Ezra himself, because some of these books claim him for their author and in others

¹ *Diod. Sic.* b. xviii; *Plutarch.* in *Demetrio*.

² *Jewish Antiq.* b. xii. c. 1.

³ *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 292.

^c The commendation which the author of *Ecclesiasticus* gives of this high priest, is thus expressed:—'He, in his lifetime, repaired the house again, and in his days fortified the temple. By him was built from the foundation, the double height, the high fortress of the wall above the temple. In his days, the cistern to receive water, being in compass as the sea, was covered with plates of brass. He took care of the temple that it should not fall, and fortified the city against besieging. How was he honoured amidst the people, in his coming out of the sanctuary? He was as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full, or the sun shining upon the temple of the Most High, and as a rainbow giving light in the bright clouds:—When he put on the robe of honour, and was clothed with the perfection of glory, and when he went up to the holy altar, he made the garments of holiness honourable.'—*Ecclus.* b. i. ii. &c.

A. M. 3556. A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 341. 1 MAC. i.—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7.—b. xii. c. 14.

there are some particulars which refer to times as low as Alexander the Great, and therefore a later time must be assigned for their reception into the canon. And if so, there seems to be none so proper as that when the men of the great synagogue, who, under the direction and presidency of Simon the Just, were employed in this work, ceased to be.

Simon was succeeded in the pontificate by his brother Eleazar, (for his son Onias was but a minor when he died); and, upon the death of Ptolemy Soter, his son Ptolemy Philadelphus succeeded in the throne of Egypt, and pursued his father's example in continuing the museum, ^a or college of learned men, which he had erected, and in augmenting the noble library ^b which he had left behind him at Alexandria. To this purpose, hearing that the Jews had among them a famous book, namely, the book of their law, which well deserved a place among his collection, he sent to Eleazar ^c the high

priest, to desire an authentic copy of it: and, because it was written in a language that he did not understand, he desired him, at the same time, to send a competent number of learned men, well versed in both the Hebrew and Greek tongues, who, out of the former, might translate it for him unto the latter. This Eleazar failed not to do; and, from the joint labours of the LXX. or rather LXXII. translators, that were employed in the work, the version has ever since gone under the name of the Septuagint: but of this piece of history we have already had occasion to say what we thought sufficient, towards the conclusion of our ^d apparatus.

After the death of Ptolemy Philadelphus, ^e his son Euergetes came to the crown of Egypt, and Onias succeeded his uncle, though not immediately, in the pontificate. He was the son of Simon the Just; but in many things, the very reverse of his father. At the best he was but a weak and inconsiderate man; ¹ but being now grown very old, and very covetous, he took no care to pay Ptolemy Euergetes the annual tribute of twenty talents, which his predecessors used to do; so that, when the arrears were swelled to a large sum, the king sent one Athenion, an officer of his court, to Jerusalem, to demand the full payment of the money, upon peril of having an army sent among them to dispossess them of their country.

² Onias had a nephew by his sister's side, whose

¹ Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 3.

² Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 4.

them from slavery, and employing several of them both in his court and camp; and that, as a farther testimony of his kindness to them, he proposed to make a translation of their law into the Greek language, for which he desired them to send a proper number of such men as he knew were qualified for the undertaking." In answer to which, Eleazar acknowledges the receipt of his most gracious letter, and of the valuable presents which he had sent; and, in return promises, that the people should not fail to pray to God daily for the protection of his person, and the prosperity of his royal family; and that, pursuant to his commands, he had sent an authentic copy of the law, and six men out of each tribe to assist in the translation of it.—*Jewish Hist.* b. xii. c. 2.

^d Those who would see more at large what are the opinions of learned men concerning the Septuagint, and the account which Aristæas gives of the manner in which it was done, may consult the critics who have expressly handled this matter, such as Scaliger, Usher, Walton, Frassen, Dupin, Valdal, Hody, Calmet, Whiston, and Prideaux in his Connection, anno 277.

^e After the death of his beloved wife Arsinoë, Ptolemy did not long survive her: for, being of a tender constitution himself, and having farther weakened it by a luxurious indulgence, he could not bear the approach of age, or the grief of mind which he fell under upon this occasion; but, sinking under these burdens, he died, in the sixty-third year of his life, after he had reigned in Egypt thirty-eight years. As he was a learned prince, himself, and a great patron of learning, many of those who were eminent for any part of literature resorted to him from all parts, and partook of his favour and bounty. Seven celebrated poets of that age are said to have lived at his court: four of which, namely, Theocritus, Callimachus, Lycophron, and Aratus, have their works still remaining; and, among these, the first of them has a whole Idyllium, and the second, part of two hymns, written in his praise. Manetho, the Egyptian historian, dedicated his history to him; and Zolus the snarling critic, came also to his court; but how great soever his wit was, he could never recommend himself to king Ptolemy, who hated him for the bitterness and ill-nature of it: and, for the same reason, having drawn on himself the odium and aversion of all men, he at length died miserably; for some say that he was stoned; others that he was burned to death; and others again, that he was crucified by king Ptolemy, for a crime that deserved that punishment.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 249.

^a This was a large edifice in Alexandria, which stood in that quarter of the city called Brachium, and was designed for the habitation of such learned men as made it their study to improve philosophy, and all useful knowledge, like that of the Royal Society at London, and the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris. This building, which was not far distant from the palace, was surrounded with a portico or piazza, where the philosophers walked and conversed, and had in it a common hall, where they used to eat together. The members of this society were under the government of a president, whose office was of that consideration and dignity, that, during the reign of the Ptolemies, he was always constituted by those kings, and afterwards by the Roman emperors. The revenues appointed for the maintenance of this college, from the first foundation of it, were large. From it did proceed men of very excellent literature; and to it was owing, that Alexandria, for a great many ages together, was the greatest school of learning in all those parts of the world; until, in the war which the Alexandrians had with Aurelian the Roman emperor, all that quarter of the city where the museum stood was destroyed, and with it this college of learned men dissolved.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 285.

^b This library was at first placed in the museum; but, when it was filled with books to the number of 400,000 volumes, there was another library erected within the Serapeum, or the famous temple where the image of Serapis was set up, which increased in time to the number of 300,000 volumes, and these two put together made up the number of 700,000 volumes in the whole, of which the royal libraries of the Ptolemaic kings at Alexandria are said to consist. Their manner of collecting them was not so very honourable; for whatever books were brought by any foreigner into Egypt, these they seized, and sending them to the museum, where they maintained people for that purpose, they caused them to be transcribed, and then sent the copies to the owners, but laid up the originals in the library. When Julius Cæsar waged war with the Alexandrians, it so happened, that the library in the Brachium was burned, and the 400,000 volumes that were laid up there were all consumed. But that of the Serapeum still remained, and soon grew to be larger, and of more eminent note than the former; but at length, in the year of our Lord 642, when the Saracens made themselves masters of the city, they totally destroyed it. For, when the general of the army wrote to Omar, who was then the caliph or emperor of the Saracens, to know his pleasure concerning it, his answer was, "that if these books contained what was agreeing with the Alcoran, there was no need of them, because the Alcoran alone was sufficient for all truth; but if they contained what was disagreeing with it, they were not to be endured;" and therefore he ordered, that whatsoever the contents of them were, they should all be destroyed.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 285.

^c Josephus hath given us both Ptolemy's letter to Eleazar, and Eleazar's answer at large; but whether these pieces are genuine or no, is a matter of some dispute among the learned. They are too long, however, to be here inserted; but the substance of the letter is,—“That both Ptolemy and his father had been extremely kind to the Jews; his father, in placing them in offices of trust; and himself, in redeeming great numbers of

A. M. 3596. A. C. 108; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 341. 1 MAC. i.—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7—b. xii. c. 14.

name was Joseph, a young man of great reputation among the Jews, for prudence, justice, and sanctity of life. He, as soon as he heard of the message, which Athenion had brought, and of the people's great consternation thereupon, went immediately to his uncle, and severely upbraided him with his ill management of the public interest, who, for the lucre of a little money, had exposed the whole nation to such imminent danger, which now there was no way to avoid, as he told him, but by his going immediately to the Egyptian court, and, by a timely application to the king there, endeavouring to pacify his wrath.

The bare mentioning of a journey to Alexandria ^a so terrified the high priest, that upon his declaring, that he would quit his station both in church and state, rather than undertake it, Joseph offered, with his permission, and the people's approbation to go in his stead. In the mean time he took care to entertain Athenion at his own house, as long as he continued in Jerusalem, in a very splendid and magnificent manner: when he departed, he presented him with several very valuable gifts; and so sent him away in a good disposition, to make as favourable a representation to the king as the case would bear, until himself should come to the Egyptian court, in order to give him a full satisfaction.

Athenion was so taken with this prudent behaviour, and kind entertainment of Joseph, that when he came to give the king a report of his embassy, he could not but mention his name with pleasure; and when he told him of his intentions to come and wait upon him himself, he set forth his character with so much advantage, that the king expressed a desire to see him. In a short time Joseph

set out for Alexandria; and falling in upon the road with several of the chief nobility of Cœlo-Syria and Phœnicia, whose business at court was to farm the royal revenues of these provinces, he joined company with them, and having learned from their discourse of what value these revenues were, he made use of that intelligence afterwards, both to his own and the king's advantage.

When they all arrived at Alexandria, the king was gone to Memphis; ^b so that Joseph made haste thither, and had the good fortune to meet him, the queen, and Athenion, all in the same chariot, returning to Alexandria. The king, upon Athenion's signifying who he was, called him into the chariot; and having mentioned his uncle's ill-usage, in not paying him his tribute, he was thereupon entertained with so handsome an apology for that neglect, which he chiefly imputed to his uncle's old age, and other infirmities, that he not only satisfied the king, but gave him withal so good an opinion of the advocate, that, when they came to Alexandria, he ordered him to be lodged in the palace, and entertained at his expense.

When the day of farming out the revenues to the best bidder was come, the Syrian and Phœnician noblemen, with whom Joseph had travelled to Alexandria, beat down their price, and would give no more for all the duties of Cœlo-Syria, Phœnicia, Judea, and Samaria, than eight thousand talents: but Joseph having found fault with them for undervaluing the king's revenues, offered to give twice as much, even exclusive of the forfeitures, which used before to belong to the farmers; and was thereupon admitted to be the king's receiver-general of all these provinces.

Upon the credit of this employment, he borrowed at Alexandria five hundred talents, wherewith he satisfied the king for his uncle's arrears; and having received a guard of two thousand men, to support him in the collection of the duties, he left Alexandria, and immediately entered upon it. In some places he met with opposition, and very opprobrious language; but having ordered the chief ringleaders to be seized, and exemplary justice to be executed upon them, he hereby so terrified the rest, that they readily paid him his demands without any molestation. And in this office he continued for the space of two and twenty years, under Ptolemy Euergetes, and

^a This city, which was built by Alexander the Great, A.M. 3673, was, after his death, made the capital of Egypt, by Ptolemy and his successors, for almost 300 years. Dinocrates, who rebuilt the temple of Diana at Ephesus, after it had been burned by Erostratus, was the architect who drew the plan of it, and had the chief direction of the work; but to have it carried on with more expedition, Alexander appointed Cleomenes, one of his captains to be the surveyor of it; and for this reason, Justin (b. xiii. c. 4.) calls him the founder of it. The happy situation of this city between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and upon the river Nile, drew thither the commerce of the east and west, and made it in a very little time one of the most flourishing cities in the world. It has still some small repute for merchandise; but what has occasioned the decay of its trade, is the discovery of the passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, on the south of Africa. Before this discovery the whole spice trade was carried into this part of the world through this city; for the spices were brought from the East Indies, up the Red Sea to Egypt, and from thence were carried by land on camels to Alexandria. When Egypt became a province of the Roman empire, this city continued the metropolis of it, and when the Arabians took it, which was about 640 years after Christ, there were 4000 palaces still standing in it, 4000 bagnios, 40,000 Jews paying tribute, 400 squares, and 12,000 persons that sold herbs and fruits. Here, as we said, was the famous Serapeum, or temple of Serapis, for beauty of workmanship and magnificence of structure, inferior to nothing but the Roman capitol. Here was the museum, or college of philosophers; and here that noble library, which was erected by Ptolemy Philadelphus, but unhappily burned in the war between Caesar and Pompey, but notwithstanding all its former splendour and magnificence, this city is now become a poor village, by the Egyptians called Rachot, without any thing remarkable in it, except its ruins, and the remains of its former grandeur; only without the city, Pompey's pillar, the shaft whereof is six fathoms high, all of one piece of curious granite, is justly admired as one of the finest columns that is any where to be seen.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word; and *Wells' Geography of the New Testament*.

^b This was a very famous city, and, till the time of the Ptolemies, who removed to Alexandria, the place of residence for the ancient kings of Egypt. It was situated above the parting of the river Nile, where the Delta begins. Towards the south of this city stood the famous pyramids, two of which were esteemed the wonders of the world; and, in this city, was fed the ox Apis, which Cambyzes slew in contempt of the Egyptians worshipping it as a god. The kings of Egypt took great pleasure in adorning this city; and in all its beauty it continued, till the Arabians made a conquest of Egypt under the Caliph Omar. The general who took it built another city just by it, which was called Fustat, because his tent had been a long time set up in that place, and the Caliph's Fatamites, when they became masters of Egypt, added another to it, which is known to us at this day by the name of Grand Cairo. The Mameluke Sultans, of the dynasty of the Caraccians, having afterwards built a strong fort on the eastern shore of the Nile, did, by degrees, annex a city to it, which came to be called the New Cairo, as what the Fatamites had built was called the Old; but it must be observed, that the ancient Memphis stood on the western shore of the Nile, whereas whatever the Arabians have there built, from time to time, is on the eastern shore of that river.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

A. M. 3596. A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 341. 1 MAC. i.—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7—b. xii. c. 14.

Philopater his son, until Ptolemy Epiphanes, the son of Philopater lost these provinces to Antiochus the Great.

On the death of Ptolemy Euergetes his son Philopater (not without some suspicion of having poisoned his father) succeeded to the throne; and, in the fifth year of his reign, having, at Raphia, a town not far from Gaza, defeated the army of Antiochus the Great, he afterwards visited the cities which by this victory he had regained, among which Jerusalem was one. Here he took a view of the temple, gave valuable donatives to it, and offered up many sacrifices to the God of Israel: but, not being content with this view from the outer court, beyond which no Gentile was allowed to pass, he was for going into the sanctuary, nay, even into the holy of holies itself, where no one but the high priest (and that only on the great day of expiation) was allowed to enter. This made a great uproar all over the city. The high priest informed him of the sacredness of the place, and of the law of God, which forbade his entrance. The priests and Levites were gathered together to hinder it. The people did earnestly deprecate it; and great lamentations were every where made, upon the apprehension of the approaching profanation of their holy temple. But all to no purpose. The king, the more he was opposed, the more resolute he was to have his will satisfied, and, accordingly, pressed into the inner court; but as he was passing farther to go into the temple, he was seized with such a sudden terror and consternation of mind, that he was carried out of the place, in a manner half dead, and, in a short time, departed from Jerusalem, highly incensed against the whole nation of the Jews, and venting many bitter threatenings against them.

Nor was he forgetful to put his threats in execution. For no sooner was he returned to Alexandria, but he published a decree, and caused it to be engraven on a pillar erected at the gate of his palace, excluding every one who would not sacrifice to the god whom he worshipped, from having any access to him; degrading the Jews from the rights and privileges they had in the city; and ordering them all to come, and ¹ be stigmatised with the mark of an ivy leaf (the badge of his god Bacchus) by a hot iron impressed upon them, and, as many as refused to come, commanding them to be put to death.

Nor did his rage end here: for, being determined to extirpate the whole Jewish nation, as many at least as were in his dominions, he sent out orders to his officers, requiring them to bring all the Jews who lived any where in Egypt, bound in chains to Alexandria; and having shut them up in the Hippodrome, (a large place, without the city, where the people used to assemble to see horse-races, and other shows,) he proposed the next day to make a spectacle of them, by having them destroyed by his ^a elephants. The elephants, to make

them more furious, were intoxicated with wine, mingled with frankincense: but the king, the night before, having sitten up late at a drunken carousal, overslept himself, so that the show was put off till the day following; and, the next night, having done the same again, the show, for the same cause, was put off to the third day. All this while the Jews, continuing shut up in the Hippodrome, ceased not with lifted up hands and voices, to pray unto God for their deliverance, which, accordingly, he vouchsafed them. For, on the third day, when the king was present, and the elephants were let loose, instead of falling upon the Jews, they turned all their rage upon those that came to see the show, and destroyed great numbers.

This wonderful interposal of providence, in the protection of these poor people, together with some strange appearances, at the same time, seen in the air, so terrified the king, and all the spectators, that he ordered all the Jews to be set free; restored them to their former privileges; revoked every decree that had been made against them, and, among other favours, indulged them with his liberty—even to put to death all those Jews, who, in fear of persecution, had apostatized from their religion, which accordingly they put in rigorous execution.

Upon the death of ^b Ptolemy Philopater, his son Ptolemy Epiphanes, a child but of five years old, succeeded him in the throne: but Antiochus the Great, taking the advantage of the young king's inability to oppose him, marched an army into Cœlo-Syria and Palestine, and, in a very short time, made himself master of them. The Egyptians; however, under the command of Scapas their general, endeavoured to regain them, and had actually recovered Jerusalem into their possession; but, upon the approach of Antiochus in person, and the defeat which he gave them at Paneas, the Jews, who had been but badly used by Scapas, a very covetous and rapacious man, submitted to him very cheerfully; and receiving him and his army into the city, assisted him in the reduction of the castle, where Scapas had left a garrison. In acknowledgment of which services, he, by a public edict, granted them many favours, and, among the rest, a liberty to live according to their own laws and religion, and a power to prohibit any stranger to enter within the sept of the temple, alluding to the attempt which Philopater had lately made that way.

But Antiochus had greater things in view, than the subjection of a province or two; and therefore, to have

more mad and furious. When they are thus irritated and inflamed, their strength is prodigious, and nothing can stand before them. Every creature that comes in their way, they trample under foot, overthrow whole squadrons, knock down trees, and demolish houses.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

^b This Ptolemy was a man entirely given up to his lusts and voluptuous delights. Drinking, gaming, and lasciviousness, were the whole employments of his life. Agathoclea his concubine, and Agathocles her brother, who was his catamite, governed him absolutely; and when Arsinoe, who was both his sister and wife, complained of the neglect, which, by means of these two favourites, was put upon her, this so offended the king and his catamite, that orders were given to have her put to death. But he did not long survive her; for, having worn out a strong constitution by his intemperance and debaucheries, he ended his life before he had lived out half the course of it.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 204.

¹ 2 Mac. vi. 7.

^a In the books of the Maccabees, we find frequent mention made of elephants, because after the reign of Alexander the Great, these animals were very much employed in the armies, which the kings of Syria and Egypt raised. They were naturally of a very quiet and gentle disposition, and never made use of their strength, but when they were irritated, or compelled to it: and for this reason, we find that the elephants which were in the army of Antiochus Eupater, had the blood of grapes and mulberries shown them, thereby to animate them to the combat, (1 Mac. vi. 34,) as those, which here Ptolemy Philopater kept, were intoxicated with incense dipped in wine, to make them

A. M. 3596, A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070, A. C. 341. 1 MAC. i.—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7.—b. vii. c. 14.

his armies at liberty to engage the Romans, ^a who, since the defeat of Hannibal, in the second Punic war, were become justly formidable, made a peace with Ptolemy, and, giving him his daughter Cleopatra in marriage, with her he resigned the provinces of Cælo-Syria and Palestine, by way of dower.

By this means Judea reverted to the Egyptian crown, and Joseph, the nephew of Onias, the high priest, was reinstated in the office of collecting the king's revenues, in that and the neighbouring provinces. But, as Ptolemy, in a short time, had a son by Cleopatra, upon which occasion it was necessary for Joseph, among other great officers of state, to congratulate the king and queen, and to make them such presents as were usual, he, being now too old to take such a journey, and his other sons refusing to go, was obliged to send Hyrcanus, who was the youngest, but the best qualified for such a negotiation, to make his compliment in his stead. But the history of the young man's birth is somewhat remarkable.

¹ As Joseph's occasions, in his less advanced years, called him frequently to Alexandria; one night while he was at supper with the king, ² he fell desperately in love with a beautiful damsel that danced before him; and, not being able to master his inordinate passion, he communicated it to his brother Salimius, who had accompanied him in his journey, and carried with him a daughter of his, with an intent to marry her at Alexandria, and desired of him, if possible, to procure him the enjoyment of her; but, as secretly as he could, because of the sin and shame that would attend such an act, Salimius promised that he would: but instead of that, he conveyed his own daughter into his bed, and, the next morning, as secretly conveyed her away, so that his brother never discovered the deceit. In this manner Joseph accompanied with her several nights; till, every time growing more and more enamoured, he made his complaint one day to his brother, of his hard fate, who, by the laws of his religion, was forbidden to marry the woman that he loved, because she was an alien: whereupon the other discovered the whole matter to him, and how, instead of the admired dancer, he had put his daughter to bed to him, as thinking it more eligible to wrong his own child, than to suffer him to join himself to a strange woman, which their law expressly forbade. The surprisingness of this discovery, and the singular instance of his brother's kindness, so wrought upon Joseph's heart, that he immediately made the young woman his wife, ^b and of her, the next year, was born this Hyrcanus.

¹ Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 4.

² Ibid.

^a It was by Hannibal's instigation that he entered upon this war, wherein he was far from having the success which he expected. Two years he took up in preparations for it; and had got together an army consisting of seventy thousand foot, twelve thousand horse, and fifty-four elephants; but the Romans, with less than half the number, met him near Magnesia, under mount Sipylus, and there gave him a total overthrow.

^b According to the Jewish law, an uncle might marry his niece, though an aunt (Lev. xviii. 12, 13, and xx. 19,) might not marry her nephew, for which the Jewish writers assign this reason:—That the aunt being in respect of the nephew, in the same degree with the father or mother, in the line of descent, had naturally a superiority over him; and therefore for him to make her his wife, and thereby to bring her down to be in a degree below him, as all wives in respect of their husbands are,

Hyrcanus, when he undertook the journey to Alexandria, persuaded his father not to send his presents from Judea, but to purchase them rather at Alexandria, obtained, by this means, an unlimited credit upon his agent in that city: and therefore, when he came thither, instead of ten talents, as might be expected, he demanded a thousand, which in our money amounts to above two hundred thousand pounds.

With this money he bought an hundred beautiful boys for the king, and an hundred beautiful young maids for the queen, at the price of a talent a head; and when he presented them, they carried each a talent in their hands, the boys for the king, and the young maids for the queen; so that this article alone cost him four hundred talents. The rest he expended all in valuable gifts to the courtiers, and great officers about the king, except what he kept for his own private use.

By these means growing highly in favour with the king, queen, and all the court, he made use of his interest to supplant his father; and under pretence of his old age and imbecility, obtained of the king a commission to be the collector of the royal revenues in all the country beyond Jordan; which so enraged his brothers, that, with their father's connivance at least, if not direct approbation, they conspired to waylay him, and cut him off, as he returned: but the guards who attended him, and were to assist him in the execution of his office, proved too strong in the assault, wherein two of his brothers fell.

When he came to Jerusalem, however, his father would not see him, and nobody would own him; so that he passed over Jordan, and entered upon the execution of his office: but upon his father's death, which happened soon after, a war commenced between him and his surviving brothers, about the paternal estate, which, for some time, disturbed the peace of the Jews at Jerusalem. But as the high priest, and generality of the people, sided with the brothers, he was again forced to retreat beyond Jordan, where he lived in a strong castle; until Antiochus Epiphanes, succeeded to the throne of Syria, and threatening to punish him according to his deserts, made him, for fear of his threats, fall upon his sword and slay himself.

Upon the unhappy death of Antiochus the Great, ^c his son Seleucus Philopater succeeded him in the kingdom of Syria, to which was annexed Judea, and the other

would be to disturb and invert the order of nature; but that there is no such thing done, when the uncle married the niece, in which case, both keep the same degree and order that they were in before, without the least mutation.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 187.

^c On his coming into the province of Elymais, hearing that in that country there was a great treasure in the temple of Jupiter Belus, and being in great difficulties how to raise money to pay the Romans, he seized the temple by night, and spoiled it of all its riches; which so enraged the people of the country, that to revenge this sacrilege, they rose upon him, and slew him, and all that were with him. He was a prince of that laudable character for humanity, clemency, beneficence, and of great justice in the administration of his government, and till the fiftieth year of his life, managed all his affairs with that valour, prudence, and application, as made him prosper in all his undertakings, and deservedly gained him the title of the Great; but in the latter part of his life, declining in the wisdom of his conduct, as well as in the vigour of his application, every thing he did then lessened him as fast as all his actions had aggrandized him before.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 187.

A. M. 3596. A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 341. 1 MAC. i—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7—b. xii. c. 14.

adjacent provinces. At his first accession, he favoured the Jews, and supplied them with all things for the service of the temple at his own expense; but being, some time after, informed by one Simon a Benjamite, that there were great riches in the temple, he sent his treasurer Heliodorus, to make seizure of them, and bring them to Antioch. But Heliodorus, going into the temple for that purpose, and entering into the sacred treasury, was stopped in his attempt by an apparition of angels, armed, as it were, to defend the place against his sacrilegious hands; for these are the words wherein the history of the Maccabees relates the matter: ¹ 'There appeared unto him an horse, with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely, and smote at him with his fore-feet; and he that sat upon the horse, seemed to have a complete harness of gold. Moreover, two other men appeared before him, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on either side, scourging him continually, and giving him many sore stripes,' insomuch that he fell to the ground; but being taken up by those that attended him, and carried off in a litter, he continued speechless, and without all hopes of life, for some time, till, at the intercession of his friends, the high priest prayed to God for him, and so he recovered.

Not long after this, the same Heliodorus, aspiring at the crown, poisoned his master Seleucus, in hopes of succeeding him; but Eumenes, king of Pergamus, and Attalus his brother obstructed his design, and placed Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes; ^a another son of Anti-

ochus the Great, upon the Syrian throne, who proved a very terrible enemy and persecutor of the Jews. No sooner was he settled in the kingdom, but being destitute of money, and having an heavy tribute to pay to the Romans, ² he deposed Onias, a man of singular piety and goodness, from the high priesthood, and for 360 talents, which he engaged to pay yearly, sold it to his brother Jason. But as Jason had supplanted Onias, so his brother Menelaus, being sent to Antioch with this tribute-money, for 300 talents more than Jason had given, purchased the priesthood, and had him, in like manner deposed: whereupon he withdrew to the country of the Ammonites, waiting for some revolution in his favour.

Thus Menelaus got the chief priesthood by outbidding his brother; but being summoned to appear before the king at Antioch, for non-payment of the money, ³ he left Lysimachus, another of his brothers, his deputy in his absence, and, by his means, got many gold vessels out of the temple, which he selling at Tyre, and the cities round about raised money enough, not only to pay the king his tribute, but to bribe Andronicus ^b likewise to murder his brother Onias, because he supposed, that at one time or other he might stand in his way, and because he had lately taken the freedom to reprove him sharply for this gross piece of sacrilege.

Andronicus did it to earn the money, but was soon overtaken with justice at Antioch, ^c and Lysimachus ^d

² 2 Mac. iv. 7; Joseph. on Mac. c. 4. ³ 2 Mac. iv. 29.

cities; and often he would give gold to any person whom he chanced to meet, though an entire stranger; and to another he would make a present of a few dates, or some such trifle. He outdid all his predecessors in the splendour of the games which he celebrated at Daphne in honour of Jupiter Olympius; but his conduct was so ridiculous that the foreigners who were present thought him insane. Yet he was so strict as to exclude all females from the exhibition. He paid little regard to the other gods, but for Jupiter Olympius he built a magnificent temple, made offerings to him at an unprecedented expense, and attempted to compel all his subjects, and the Jews among the rest, to worship him. But without referring to this persecution of the Jewish religion, the other parts of his conduct are amply sufficient to justify the appellation *rich, vile, contemptible*, which Daniel gives him.—*Jahn's Hebrew Commonwealth*.—Ed.

^b This Andronicus seems to have been left by Antiochus at Antioch, to govern in his absence, and without this governor's interposition, Menelaus could not compass his end, to murder his brother; for Onias had fled to the asylum at Daphne, a small distance from the city, which always used to be a place of retreat, secure and inviolable: and therefore Menelaus was forced to give the governor a round sum, to engage him, by false promises of safety, to prevail with his brother to come out, and as soon as he had him in his power, to dispatch him.—*Cutler's Commentary*.

^c For Onias having, by his laudable carriage, while he lived at Antioch, gained much upon the esteem and affections of the people of the place, Greeks as well as Jews, they took his murder in such high indignation, that they both joined in a petition to the king against Andronicus for it. Hereupon, cognisance being taken of the crime, and the wicked murderer convicted of it, Antiochus caused him, with infamy, to be carried to the place where the murder was committed, and there put to death for it, in such a manner as he deserved. For Antiochus, as wicked a tyrant as he was, had sorrow and regret upon him for the death of so good a man; and, therefore, in the revenging it, he satisfied his own resentments, as well as those of the people who had petitioned him for it.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 172.

^d When it came to be known that Lysimachus had been the chief instrument in robbing the temple, the multitude, fired with indignation, gathered themselves together against him, and though he attempted to form a party, under the command of one Tyrannus, an old experienced officer, in order to resist their

¹ 2 Mac. iii. 25, &c.

^a If we may credit the conjecture of Appian he was surnamed *Επιφανής* (the *Illustrious*) because he vindicated the claims of the royal family against the usurpations of the foreigner Heliodorus. He also bore the surname of *δαίς*, which is still seen upon his coins. But as he is represented by historians, he well merited the surname of *Επιμανής* (the *Insane*) which his subjects gave him instead of *Επιφανής*. He often lounged like a mere idler about the streets of Antioch, attended by two or three servants; and, not deigning to look at the nobles, would talk with goldsmiths and other mechanics in their workshops, engage in trifling and idle conversation with the lowest of the people, and mingle in the society of foreigners and men of the vilest character. He was not ashamed to enter the dissipated circles of the young, to drink and carouse with them, and to promote their revelries by singing and playing on his flute. He often appeared among the common people at the public baths, engaging in every kind of foolish jest without the least regard to the dignity of his station and character. Not unfrequently did he appear in the streets in a state of intoxication, when he would scatter his money about and practise various other fooleries equally extravagant. Sometimes he exhibited still more decisive tokens of madness. He would parade the streets of his capital in a long robe and with a garland of roses upon his head, and if any attempted to pass by or to follow him, he would pelt them with stones which he carried concealed under his garments. When the humour pleased him, he would array himself in a white robe like the candidates at Rome, and in this dress go about Antioch, saluting the citizens whom he met, taking them by the hand, embracing them and supplicating their suffrages for some Roman office, of which they probably had never before heard even the name. When he had thus obtained a number of votes, sufficient to constitute him a tribune or an edile, he would with great solemnity seat himself in an ivory chair in the market-place, after the manner of the Romans, listen with deep attention to the most trifling disputes, and pronounce judgment upon them with all the gravity of a Roman magistrate. At other times he publicly appeared in familiar intercourse with panders and common prostitutes. His liberality was profusion without bounds, and often ridiculous. He sometimes presented great sums of money to

A. M. 3596. A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 341. 1 MAC. i—vi. 7, 2 MAC. iii—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7—b. xii. c. 14.

slain by the people of Jerusalem; yet such was the power of bribery at the Syrian court, that by the strength of this Menelaus, who was the contriver of all these mischiefs, found means to clear himself before Antiochus, and to get the three delegates from the sanhedrim, who came from Jerusalem on purpose to accuse him, condemned and executed.

While Antiochus was engaged in war with Egypt, a false rumour was spread in Palestine that he was dead; and Jason thinking this a fine opportunity for him to recover his station in Jerusalem as high priest, marched thither with above a thousand men; and having, by the assistance of the party which he had there, taken the city, and driven Menelaus into the castle, he acted all manner of cruelties upon his fellow-citizens, and put to death, without mercy, all that he could light on, whom he took to be his adversaries.

Antiochus, hearing of this, and supposing that the whole Jewish nation had revolted from him, marched with all haste out of Egypt into Judea; and ¹ being informed, on his march, that the people of Jerusalem, on the news which came of his death, had made great rejoicings; the sense of this so provoked him against them, that laying siege to the city, and taking it by storm, ^a he slew of the inhabitants, in three days' time, 40,000 persons, and having taken as many more captives, sold them to the neighbouring nations.

Nor did all this satisfy his rage; for, notwithstanding his father's edict, he forced himself into the temple, ^b and

¹ 1 Mac. i. 20, &c.; 2 Mac. v. 5, 6.—*Joseph. Antiq.* b. xii. c. 8.

rage, and defend himself; yet the mob fell on them with such fury, that wounding some, and killing others, they forced the rest to flee; and then seizing upon Lysimachus, him they slew beside the treasury within the temple, and thereby, for that time, put an end to this sacrilege.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 172.

^a Both the author of the second book of the Maccabees, (chap. v. 11.) and Diodorus Siculus, (b. xli.) tell us, that Antiochus took Jerusalem by force; and yet Josephus (in his 12th book of Antiquities, c. 7.) affirms, that he made himself master of it without any manner of difficulty, because the gates were set open to him by the treachery of a party he made in the town: but herein he is contrary to himself. For in his history of the Jewish wars, (b. i. c. 1.) he says, that Antiochus took it *κατὰ κράτος*, that is, by force; and there represents him as enraged by what he had suffered in the siege; and in the same history, (b. vi. c. 11.) he speaks of those who were slain at the siege, fighting in defence of the place. But the history of the Jewish wars, and that of his Antiquities, he wrote at different times, which might make him, in some places, not so consistent.—*Prideaux's Connection*.

^b Several heathen authors, in their account of their king Antiochus, make mention of his taking a city, that was at peace and in alliance with him, meaning thereby Jerusalem, committing many cruelties there, and plundering the temple, wherein he found great riches; but Diodorus Siculus, in his relation of this matter, (b. xxxiv.) is more particular and express.—“That this prince having intruded into the most sacred place of the temple, which none but the high priest was permitted to enter, found there a stone statue of a man with a long beard, and a book in his hand, mounted upon an ass. This he took for Moses, the author of the law, and founder of the nation of the Jews, and of the city of Jerusalem; and, therefore, to remove the cause of that universal hatred which all nations bore to the Jews, he went about abolishing of their law; and, to this purpose, caused a large sow to be sacrificed to this image of their legislator, on an altar which he found there; and, having sprinkled the blood and the broth that he made of the victim, and therewith polluted the sacred volume of their law, he made the high priest, and other Jews, eat of its flesh, and put out the lamp which used to be kept perpetual-

polluted, by his presence, both the holy place, and the holy of holies. He sacrificed a great sow upon the altar of burnt-offerings, and caused the broth (which was made of some part of the flesh) to be sprinkled all over the temple, that he might defile it as much as possible. He took away the altar of incense, the showbread table, the candlestick of seven branches, and several other golden vessels, utensils, and donatives of former kings, to the value of 800 talents of gold; and making the like plunder in the city, he returned to Antioch, ² leaving behind him Philip a Phrygian, a man of a cruel and barbarous temper, to be governor of Judea; Andronicus, another of the like disposition, to be governor of Samaria; and Menelaus, who was worse than all the rest, to continue still over them in the office of high priest.

Not long after this, ³ there were seen at Jerusalem, for forty days together, strange sights in the air of horsemen and footmen, armed with shields, spears, and swords, and in great companies fighting against, and charging each other, as in battle array; which foreboded those calamities of war and desolation that soon after happened in that city and nation. For Antiochus, still breathing out rage against the poor Jews, sent Apollonius, one of his generals, with an army of 22,000 men, and an express order to kill all the men that remained in Jerusalem, and to sell the women and children for slaves. ⁴ On his first arrival, Apollonius, carried himself peaceably, concealing his intent, and forbearing all hostilities, till the return of the sabbath, when he put his bloody commission in execution. ⁵ For, falling upon the city while the people were at their devotion, he massacred many of the inhabitants, plundered the place, led away the women and children captives, and forced the few that escaped to betake themselves to deserts and caves for shelter. Nor was this all; for in a short time after Antiochus made a decree, commanding all nations to leave their ancient rites and usages, and to conform to the religion of the king; which, however expressed in general terms, was chiefly designed against the Jews.

⁶ The officer who was sent to see this decree put in execution, was one Athenæus, a man well versed in all the ceremonies of the Grecian idolatry, and therefore thought a proper person to initiate the people into the observance of them. On his coming to Jerusalem, ⁷ all sacrifices to the God of Israel were superseded, and the rites of the Jewish religion suppressed. The temple itself was dedicated to Jupiter Olympius, ^c (whose image

² 2 Mac. v. 22, 23.

⁴ 1 Mac. i. 29, 30.

³ Ibid. ver. 2, 3.

⁵ 2 Mac. v. 24, &c.

⁶ Chap. vi. 1.

⁷ 1 Mac. i. 44, &c.; Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 7.

ly burning.” But several of these circumstances, (more especially that of a man mounted on an ass,) are nowhere to be found in any other history; and may therefore, not improperly, be placed among those fables, which the heathens invented and published, on purpose to give some colour for their inveterate hatred against the Jews.—*Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Mac. i. 23.

^c This profanation of the temple, and the erecting of this idol in it, had long before been foretold by the prophet Daniel, under the name of ‘abomination of desolation,’ chap. xi. 31. For this is the description which he gives of the reign of Antiochus, and the bitter persecutions which he raised: ‘He shall return with indignation against the holy covenant, and have intelligence with them that forsake it. Armies shall stand on his side, and he shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and there place the abomination, or abominable

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was set up on the altar of burnt-offerings,) and all the people, upon pain of death, were obliged to sacrifice to it. Those who met in caves to keep the sabbath, if they happened to be discovered, were burned. The book of the law was torn and cast into the fire; the circumcising of infants was forbidden; and women accused of having circumcised their children, were led about the streets with those children hanging about their necks, and then both cast headlong over the steepest part of the walls.

No less severity was used to enforce upon the people the heathen worship, which the decree enjoined, than there was to deter them from their own. In every city, altars, groves, and chapels, for idols were set up, and officers sent to compel them, once every month, to offer victims to the Grecian gods, and to eat of the flesh of swine, and of other unclean beasts, that were at that time sacrificed. In short, no manner of cruelty was omitted to force the Jews to abandon their religion, and turn idolaters; but though, in this terrible persecution, some of these wretched people yielded to violence, many of them chose rather to die, than to forsake the law of their God.

Among the latter sort, 'those of the most memorable note were ^a Eleazar, a chief doctor of the law, and that heroine Solomona, and her seven sons. Eleazar was a very aged man; yet, when his persecutors would

¹ 2 Mac. vi.; Joseph. on Maccab.

thing, that maketh desolate, or (as in the margin) quite astonisheth. Such as do wickedly against the covenant, shall he corrupt by flatteries, but the people that know their God, shall do great exploits; and they that have understanding, shall instruct many; and they shall fall by the sword, by famine, by captivity, and by spoil: and the king shall do according to his will, and shall exalt and magnify himself above every God. He shall speak wonderful things against the God of gods, and shall prosper, till the indignation be accomplished; for that which is determined shall be done,' ver. 30.

^a Some interpreters are of opinion, that this was the same Eleazar, who, at the head of the seventy-two interpreters that were to translate the Sacred Scriptures, was sent into Egypt, and that he suffered at Jerusalem, in the presence of the governor named Felix; but Rufinus (in his Latin paraphrase on the book of Josephus, concerning the Maccabees) will needs have it, that not only Eleazar, but the mother and her seven sons, namely, Maccabeus, Aber, Machir, Jadas, Ahas, Areth, and Jacob, (for these are the names which he gives them,) were all carried from Judea to Antioch, and there suffered martyrdom. The reason of the thing, however, as well as the tenor of the history, which is given us by the author of the second book of Maccabees, chap. vi. and vii. and by Josephus in the above-mentioned book, made it much more likely, that Jerusalem, and not Antioch, was made the scene of this cruelty; especially since it being designed for an example of terror to the Jews in Judea, it would have lost its force had it been executed in any other country. But wherever this happened, it is certain that Eleazar deserved all the commendation which the fathers have given him: for, whether we consider the purity of his sentiments or the sublimity of his doctrine, or the delicacy of his conscience, we must acknowledge, that there are few saints in the Old Testament that have given us a more exact pattern of charity, sincerity, and magnanimity. 'It becometh not our age,' saith he, 'in any wise to dissemble, whereby many young persons might think, that Eleazar being fourscore years old and ten, was now gone to a strange religion, and so they, through my hypocrisy, and desire to live a little time, and a moment longer, should be deceived by me, and I get a stain in my old age, and make it abominable. For though, for the present time, I should be delivered from the punishment of men, yet should not I escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor dead; wherefore now, manfully changing his life, I will show myself such a one, as my age requireth,' 2 Mac. vi. 24, &c.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 167.

have compelled him to eat swine's flesh, which they forced into his mouth, he spit it out, and even when some, in pity to his age, would have given him leave to elude the sentence, by taking a piece of any other flesh and eating it as swine's flesh, he scorned to purchase his life at so sordid a rate, desiring them to dispatch him, rather than suffer him to be guilty of dissimulation, and stain the honour of his grey hairs with so mean an act. Nor were the seven brothers and their mother inferior to him in religious courage and magnanimity: for when the king, pretending pity to their youth, and respect to their family, which was noble, persuaded them to renounce their religion, and embrace that of the Gentiles, promising them great rewards and promotions, if they would comply; and when finding that this would have no effect, he ordered the great variety of torments, which he had provided, to be shown them, thinking thereby to affright them with the sad prospect of what they were to suffer; the instruments of death did no more terrify, than the allurements of the tyrant did persuade them; but inspired with a truly holy zeal and celestial bravery, "they unanimously declared their obedience to the law of God, and the precepts which he had delivered by Moses; assuring him, that all his cruelty could not hurt them; that the only effect their tortures could have, would be to secure to them the glorious rewards of unshaken patience and injured virtue; but, at the same time, admonishing him, that, by the murder of so many innocent men, he would arm the divine vengeance against him, and for the momentary pains which he inflicted on them, would himself become obnoxious to everlasting torments."

This is the main purport of most of their speeches; but the variety of their tortures was almost innumerable, and for the horror of them inexpressible. All this while their mother stood by, beholding their sufferings, and exhorting every one, as it came to his turn, to behave gallantly. At length when herself was only left, and the soldiers were approaching to carry her to execution, she prevented their rage, and all attempts upon her person, by throwing herself voluntarily into the fire.^b Thus ended this doleful, but glorious day, with the death of the victorious Solomona, who triumphed in the sharpest agonies of her sons, and her own sufferings, and through a sea of the most exquisite pains, waded to the port of eternal rest!

While this persecution raged at Jerusalem,² Mattathias, the son of John, the son of Simeon, the son of Asmonæus, from whom the family had the name of Asmonæans, a priest of the course of Joarib,^c with his five

² 1 Mac. ii. &c.; Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 8.

^b The Latin version says, that she was dragged on the ground to execution, where having cut off her breasts, and scourging her naked body, they flung her into a boiling caldron: but the Arabic version, on the contrary, confirms, that, having lived to see her seven sons martyred, and lying dead on the ground before her, she flung herself into the midst of them, and praying to God to take her out of the world, immediately expired.—*Universal History*, b. ii. c. 11.

^c This was the first of the twenty-four courses of the priests that served in the temple, (1 Chron. xxiv. 7) and because Mattathias undertook to determine for the necessity of fighting on the sabbath, in case they were assaulted by the enemy, some have from hence inferred, that the people had made choice of him for their high priest: but, besides that, this decision is not sufficient to prove this, and that it no where appears, that he ever performed

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sons, John, Simeon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan, retired to Modin, a little place in the tribe of Dan, and there bemoaned the hard fate of their religion and country. But they had not been long in this retreat, before Antiochus sent one of his military officers, named Apelles, to put his decree in execution.

Apelles having called the people together, and told them the intent of his coming, addressed himself more particularly to Mattathias; persuading him to comply with the king's commands, that, by his example, he might influence others; and promising him withal, that in case he would do so, he should be taken into the number of the king's friends, and promoted to great honour and riches. But to this Mattathias made answer, with a loud voice, and in the audience of all the people, that no consideration whatever should ever induce him, or any of his family, to forsake the law of their God; that the examples of those who had apostatized, were no rule to him, nor the commandments of the greatest monarch of any validity, when they were sent to oblige him to embrace idolatry: and with these words, seeing a Jew of the place presenting himself at the heathen altar, in order to offer sacrifice according to the king's injunctions, he ran up to the apostate, and, with a zeal like that of Phineas, slew him with his own hand; and then turning upon the king's commissioner, by the assistance of his sons, and those that were with them, dispatched him likewise, and all that attended him.

After this, Mattathias overturned the altars, and pulled down the idols that were in the place; and, having got together his own family, and invited all that were zealous for the law, to follow him, he retired to the mountains, in order to make there the best defence he could: but the Jews ^a had one principle, which, in the

the office of high priest, but only put himself at the head of a poor distressed people, as being a person of the greatest power and authority among them, it is certain, that both Menelaus and Alcimus were then alive; and though they were wicked men, and intruders into the office, yet they were nominated by king Antiochus, who then assumed the right of nomination, and so were looked upon as high priests.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Mattathias*.

^a By the law of Moses, the Jews were commanded 'to do no manner of work on the sabbath day;' but this was a precept which would admit of some exceptions, and what some people took in a more rigorous sense than others. The Samaritans, for instance, thought themselves obliged to observe it to such a degree of strictness, as not to stir out of their places on that day, because the law is literally so expressed. (Exod. xvi. 29;) but the Jews were of opinion, that they were permitted to make their escape from danger, or to walk such a compass of ground, which they called a 'sabbath day's journey,' if it were for any necessary occasion on that day. In our Saviour's time, it was allowable, they thought, to pull any animal out of a pit, or a ditch, on that day, (Mat. xii. 11.); but the Talmudical doctors were for revoking that permission, and found fault with him for even healing the sick and the lame, on the sabbath. Mattathias, and his company, by sundry experiences, were convinced, that too scrupulous an observance of the sabbath had brought several calamities upon their nation: that Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, the first king of Egypt of that name, by assaulting Jerusalem on the sabbath day, (wherein the Jews would do nothing to defend themselves,) became master of it without opposition; and that, but just lately, a great number of their brethren had been passively slain, because they would not so much as handle their arms on that day; and thereupon they came to a resolution to defend themselves, whenever they were attacked, be the day what it would; but we do not find that they came to any decision, whether they themselves were to attack the enemy on the sabbath. On the contrary, it seems as if they had determined, that

beginning of this resistance, had like to have ruined them quite, and that was the scrupulous observation of the sabbath, even to such a degree, as not to defend themselves on that day; whereof their enemies taking the advantage, destroyed great numbers of them, without their making the least opposition. Mattathias however and his followers, finding the fatality of their mistake in this particular, ¹ made a decree, (which was confirmed by the unanimous consent of all the priests and elders among them,) that, whenever they were attacked on the sabbath day, it was lawful for them to fight for their lives, and to defend themselves in the best manner they could, which afterwards became a general rule in all their wars.

While Mattathias abode in the mountains, great multitudes of Jews, who had any true concern for their holy religion, came, and joined him; and, among these, there was a good company of Assidæans, ^b men mighty in valour, and extremely zealous for the law; so that, when he had got together such a number, as made the appearance of a small army, ² he came out of his fastnesses, and, going round the cities of Judah, pulled down the heathen altars; re-established the true worship; caused the children to be circumcised; cut off all apostates, that fell in his way; and destroyed all persecutors, wherever he came. Having thus acted the part of a brave and prudent general, for the small time he had the command of his little army, Mattathias was

¹ 1 Mac. ii. 40, 41; Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 8.

² 1 Mac. ii. 44, &c.; Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 8.

they were only permitted to repel force by force; and therefore we read, that, when Pompey besieged the temple, observing that the Jews did barely defend themselves on the seventh day, he ordered his men to offer no hostilities, but only to raise the batteries, plant their engines, and make their approaches on that day, being well assured, that in doing of this, he should meet with no molestation from them; and, by this means, he carried the place much sooner, than he otherwise would have done.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. xiv. c. 8; *Jewish Wars*, b. i. c. 5; and *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Mac. ii. 14.

^b When the Jewish church came to be settled again in Judea, after the return of the Babylonish captivity, there were two sorts of men among the members of it; the one, who contented themselves with that only, which was written in the law of Moses, and these were called *zadikim*, that is, *the righteous*; and the other, who, over and above the law, added the constitutions and traditions of the elders, and, by way of supererogation, devoted themselves to many rigorous observances; and these being reckoned in a degree of holiness, above the others, were called *chasidim*, that is, *the pious*. From the former of these were derived the sects of the Samaritans, Sadducees, and Karaites, and from the latter the Pharisees, the Essenes, and Assidæans. These Assidæans, or Chasidæans, rather, as they should be written, were a kind of religious society, whose chief and distinguishing character was, to maintain the honour of the temple; and therefore they were not only content to pay the usual tribute for the reparation of it, but charged themselves with farther expenses upon that account; for every day, except that of the great expiation, they sacrificed a lamb, besides those of daily oblation, which was called the 'sin-offering of the Assidæans.' They practised greater hardships and mortifications than the rest, and their common oath was by the temple, for which our Saviour reproves the Pharisees, (Mat. xxiii. 16. who had learned that oath of them. Mattathias, however, being joined by men of this principle, who made it one of the main points of their piety to fight zealously for the defence of the temple, which was then fallen into the hands of the heathen, was not a little strengthened in his party, and in some measure able to take the field.—*Scaliger*, in *Elench. Tricheresii*, &c.; *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 197; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

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forced at last to submit to the weight of 146 years; but before his death,¹ he called his five sons together, and, having exhorted^a them to stand up valiantly for the law of God, and, with a steady courage and constancy, to fight the battles of Israel against the present persecutors, he appointed Judas to be their captain in his stead, and Simeon to be their counsellor; and so, giving up the ghost, he was buried at Modin, in the sepulchres of his forefathers, and all the faithful in Israel made great lamentation for him.^b

Judas, who is surnamed Maccabæus, as he had taken upon him the command, went round the cities of Judea,

¹ Mac. ii. 49, &c.; Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 8.

^a The speech which Josephus puts in the mouth of old Mattathias upon this occasion, is widely different from what we find in 1 Mac. ii. 49, &c., but not undeserving of our observation. "My dear sons," says he, "my life is drawing to an end; but I am to charge you, upon my blessing, before I leave you, that you stand firm to the cause that your father has asserted before you without any staggering or shrinking. Remember what I have told you, and do as I have advised you. Do your utmost to support the rights and laws of your country, and to restore the order of a nation that wants but very little of being swallowed up in confusion. Have nothing to do with those that, either for fear or for interest, have betrayed it. Show yourselves to be sons worthy of such a father; and, in contempt of all force and extremity, carry your lives in your hands, and deliver them up with comfort, if any occasion should require it, in defence of your country; computing with yourselves, that this is the way to preserve yourselves in God's favour, and that, in consideration of so unshaken a virtue, he will in time restore you to the liberty of your former life and manners. Our bodies, it is true, are mortal; but great and generous actions will make us immortal in our memory; and that is the glory I would that you aspire to, that is to say, the glory of making the history of your lives famous to after ages by your illustrious actions." The rest of his speech agrees with what we find in the book of Mattathias, wherein he distributes to each son the office that he knew him best qualified for; and then concludes, "Do but mind your business, and depend upon it, that all men of honour and piety will join with you."—*Jewish Antiq.* b. xii. c. 8.

^b Why Judas and his successors were called Maccabees is uncertain. The book from which this epithet is derived, being written in Greek, we have no certainty which were the original letters of the word. It might seem, at first sight, to be derived from the Hebrew term *maccabeh*, a word which signifies *hid*, as a contemptuous epithet bestowed on them by their adversaries, or their apostate countrymen, because they concealed themselves in caves and rocks; but who having afterwards wiped off that reproach by their bravery, still retained that appellation in memory of their former concealment; or, from the word *makkebah*, a cavern; and so, they might be called caverners, or those who lurked in caverns. The book itself, which contains the history of Judas and his successors, down to the death of the high priest Simon—a period of forty years,—was originally written in that dialect of the Hebrew which the Jews used after their return from the Babylonish captivity, but of which book we now possess only the Greek version; but by whom the translation was made, or the original composed, is unknown. It is plain, however, that the author of this book has forfeited all title to an honest veracious historian; his exaggerations are so monstrous, and his discrepancies so manifest. I by no means dispute the fact, that a number of faithful Jews stood out against the invaders of their country, and were zealous for the God of their fathers. I as really believe this, as I believe in the existence of Wallace, the hero of Scottish romance. It is the tissue of gross exaggeration which runs through the whole narrative of the Jewish hero's exploits, with which fault is here found. Of this I am firmly persuaded, that no sensible, well-informed man, will ever place such a romantic history as that of the first book of the Maccabees on a level with the historical books of the Old Testament; as the facts there narrated bear internal evidence of their truth, and are perfect sobriety compared with the deeds of a hero, whom his biographer has made,

in the same manner as his father had done, destroying every where all utensils and implements of idolatry; slaying all idolaters and apostate Jews; rescuing the true worshippers of God from the hands of their oppressors; and for their better security for the future, fortifying their towns, rebuilding their fortresses, and placing strong garrisons in them. These proceedings gave the Syrian court some umbrage; and therefore Antiochus² ordered Apollonius,^c his governor in Samaria, to raise forces, and go against him; but Judas having defeated and slain him, made a great havock among his troops, and, finding the governor's sword among the spoils, he took it for his own use, and generally fought with it all his life after. Seron, the deputy governor of some part of Cælo-Syria, hearing of Apollonius's defeat, got together all the forces that were under his command, and, in hopes of gaining himself honour,³ came in pursuit of Judas; but, instead of that, he met with the same fate, being vanquished and slain in the manner that Apollonius was.

Enraged at these two defeats, Antiochus sent three eminent commanders, Ptolemy-Macron, Nicanor, and Gorgias, to manage the war against the Jews; who, with an army of forty thousand foot, and seven thousand horse, together with a great number of auxiliaries from neighbouring nations, and renegado Jews,⁴ came, and encamped at Emmaus,^d not far from Jerusalem. Judas, on the other hand, marched with his men to Mizpeh,^e where, having implored God's merciful assistance in this time of distress, and^f encouraged them in words

² 1 Mac. iii. 10; Jewish Antiq. b. xi. c. 10.

³ 1 Mac. iii. 13, &c.; Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 10.

⁴ 1 Mac. iii. 39, &c., and Josephus, *ibid*.

in the number and splendour of his victories, to exceed all those recorded of a Joshua and a Jephthah, a Barak and a Gideon: with this difference, that, in the former, the Israelites obtained peace and rest in consequence of divine interpositions, whilst, in the latter, such were wholly unavailing, till the growing weakness of the Syrian power, and the frequent political struggles for the crown among the worthless descendants of Seleucus, enabled the Jews gradually to throw off the yoke of their pagan rulers, and secure their independence.—*Bell's Rollin*, vol. ii. p. 609.—*En*.

^c This, in all probability, was the same Apollonius whom Antiochus sent at first to plunder Jerusalem, and afterwards to set up the statue of Jupiter Olympius, and to compel the Jews to relinquish their religion.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d This was a village lying to the west of Jerusalem, and between seven and eight miles from it. It was honoured with our Saviour's presence after his resurrection, and therein were hot baths, for Emmaus comes from the Hebrew *Chamath*, which signifies *baths of hot water*, that were very beneficial to those that used them.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

^e At this time Jerusalem was in the hands of the heathen, and the sanctuary trodden under foot; so that Judas could not assemble his men there to implore the assistance of God in this time of imminent danger; and therefore he repaired to Mizpeh, a place where the people oftentimes used to assemble for prayer, (Jud. xx. 1. 1 Kings xv. 22. 2 Chron. xvi. 6.) Here he and all his army addressed themselves to God, in solemn fasting and prayer, for his assistance and protection; and herein he acted the part of a wise and religious commander, as knowing that the battle was the Lord's, and that therefore it would be impious to begin any such enterprise, without first imploring the divine aid.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 166.

^f The speech which Judas makes to his men upon this occasion, as we have it in Josephus, is a very excellent one:—"We shall never have," says he, "my fellow soldiers and companions, such an opportunity again of showing our bravery in the defence of our country, and the contempt of all dangers, as we have now

A. M. 3596. A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 341. 1 MAC. i.—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7.—b. xii. c. 14.

proper on such an occasion to fight for their religion, laws, and liberties, with a courage undaunted, and, as the cause was God's, with a firm assurance of success, he led them forth to the engagement. But, having first caused proclamation ¹ to be made, that all such as had that year built houses, planted vineyards, betrothed wives, or were in any degree fearful, should depart, his six thousand men, which he had at first, were reduced to three thousand.

² With this handful of men, however, he was resolved to give the enemy battle. But hearing that Gorgias was detached from them with five thousand foot, and a thousand horse, to surprise his camp by night, he countermined his plot by another of the same kind: for, quitting his own camp, and marching towards the enemy, he fell upon them, while Gorgias with the best of his forces was absent, and put them into such a surprise and confusion, that they took to their heels, and fled, leaving him master of their camp, and three thousand of their men dead upon the spot.

Gorgias, coming to the Jewish camp, found it empty; and concluding from thence, that Judas had fled into the mountains for fear, he pursued him thither; but, when he found him not, and was returning to his own camp, he understood that it had been entered and burned; that the main army was broken and fled; and that Judas was ready in the plains to give him a warm reception. Hereupon he could no longer keep his men together; for, seized with a panic fear, they flung down their arms, and fled: when Judas, putting himself in pursuit of them, slew great numbers more, so that the whole amounted to nine thousand, and of those that escaped from the battle, most were sorely wounded and maimed. Judas, ³ with his victorious army, returning from the chase, entered the enemy's camp, where he found plenty of rich plunder; and so proceeding in triumph to Jerusalem, celebrated the next day, which was the Sabbath, with great devotion, rejoicing and praising God for this signal and merciful deliverance.

Judas, after this, having intelligence, that Timotheus, ⁴ governor of the country beyond Jordan, and Bacchides, another lieutenant in those parts, were drawing forces

together, in order to invade him, marched directly against them; and, having overthrown them in a great battle, slew above twenty thousand of their men, enriched his army with their spoils, and, out of them, provided himself with arms, and other things necessary for the future carrying on of the war.

⁵ Lysias, whom the king, when he went upon his expedition into Persia, had constituted chief governor of all the country from Euphrates to Egypt, being vexed and ashamed at all these defeats, put himself at the head of an army of sixty thousand foot, and five thousand horse; and marched into Judea, with a full intent to destroy the country, and all its inhabitants, he pitched his camp at Bethzura, ^a a strong place lying to the south of Jerusalem, near the confines of Idumea. ^b There Judas met him with ten thousand men only; and having engaged his numerous army, and slain five thousand of them, the rest he put to flight, and sent Lysias back again with his baffled forces to Antioch, but with a purpose to come again with a greater strength another year.

By this retreat of his, Judas having made himself master of all Judea, thought it his duty to purge the house of the Lord, and to remove those profanations, which for three years last past it had been forced to submit to. To this purpose, he appointed a certain number of priests to cleanse the sanctuary, to pull down the altar which the heathens had set up, and to build another of ⁶ unhewn stones, to consecrate the courts anew, and to make all things again fit and commodious for the service of God.

Antiochus, in his sacrilegious pillage of the temple, which we have related, had taken away the altar of incense, the table of the showbread, the golden candlestick, and several other vessels and utensils, without which the service could not regularly be performed; but out of the spoils ⁷ which Judas had taken from the enemy he was able to have all these things made anew, of the same metal, and in the same manner as they were before; and having thus put all things in their proper

⁵ Mac. iv. 26, &c.; Jewish Antiq. b. xi. c. 10.

⁶ Exod. xx. 25; Deut. xxviii. 5; Josh. viii. 31.

⁷ 1 Mac. iv. 49.

^a It had been fortified by king Rehoboam, (2 Chron. xi. 7.) and was, at this time, a very important fortress, as being one of the keys of Judea on the south side of Idumea.—*Universal Hist.* b. ii. c. 11.

^b Wherever the name of Idumea, or the land of Edom, occurs in any of the writings of the Old Testament, it is to be understood of that Idumea, or land of Edom, which lay between the Lake of Sodom and the Red Sea, and was afterwards called Arabia Petraea. But the inhabitants of this country, being driven out by the Nabathæans, while the Jews were in the Babylonish captivity, and their land laid desolate, they then took possession of as much of the southern part of it as contained what had formerly been the whole inheritance of the tribe of Simeon, and half of the tribe of Judah, where, at this time, they dwelt, but had not as yet embraced the Jewish religion. And this is the only Idumea, and the inhabitants of it the only Idumeans, or Edomites, which are any where spoken of after the Babylonish captivity. After their coming into this country, Hebron, which had formerly been the metropolis of the tribe of Judah, became the capital of Idumea, and between that and Jerusalem lay Bethzura, a strong fortress, which the author of the second book of Maccabees, (ch. xi. 5.) places at no more than five furlongs' distance from Jerusalem; but this is a visible mistake; for Eusebius makes it, at least, twenty miles distant from it.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 165.

¹ Deut. xx. 7, 8.

² 1 Mac. iv. 1, &c.

³ 1 Mac. iv. 23, &c.; Jewish Antiq. b. xi. c. 10.

⁴ Mac. viii. 30, 31.

before us; for, upon the issue of to-morrow's combat depends, not only our liberty, but all the comforts and advantages that attend it; and, over and above the blessing of such a freedom, our very religion lies at stake with it too, and we cannot secure the one but by preserving the other. Bethink yourselves well, therefore, what it is you are to contend for, and you will find it to be no less than the sum and substance of the greatest happiness that you have ever enjoyed, that is to say, in the peaceable possession of your ancient laws, rites and discipline. Now, whether you will rather choose to perish with infamy, and to involve the miserable remainder of all your countrymen in the same ruin, or to venture one generous push for the redemption of yourselves and your friends, that is the single question. Death is the same to the coward that it is to the valiant man, and as certain to the one as the other; but there is great difference in point of honour, and everlasting fame, between a gallant man, that falls in vindication of his religion, liberties, laws, and country, and a scoundrel that abandons all for fear of losing a life which he cannot save at last. Take these things into your thoughts, and make this use of the meditation. You have nothing to trust to but God's providence, and your own concurring resolutions, and, at the worst, while we contend for victory, we can never fail of glory."—*Jewish Antiq.* b. xii. c. 11.

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order, he had the temple dedicated again, with as much solemnity as the present state of affairs would permit, and in commemoration hereof, appointed a festival ^a of eight days' continuance, which began on the fifth of the month Chisleu, much about the twentieth of our November, to be annually observed.

But though the temple was recovered and restored to its former use, yet Apollonius, at his taking Jerusalem, had erected a fortress on mount Acra, ^b which commanding the mountain of the temple, and being still in the hands of the enemy, gave him the advantage of annoying all those who went up to the temple to worship. To remedy this inconvenience, Judas at first blocked up the fortress; but finding that he could not conveniently spare such a number of men as were necessary for that purpose, ^c he caused the mountain of the temple to be fortified with strong walls and high towers, and placed therein a sufficient garrison, both to defend it, and protect those who went up to worship.

When the neighbouring nations came to understand that the Jews had recovered the city and temple of Jerusalem, and again restored the worship of God in that place, ² they were moved with such envy and hatred against them, that they proposed to join with Antiochus in the extirpation of the whole nation; and accordingly had put all to death whom they found sojourning among them: but Judas having first fortified Bethzura, to be a barrier against the Idumæans, who, at this time, were bitter enemies to the Jews, made war against them, and all the other nations that had confederated against him, in such a manner, and with such success, as shall hereafter be related.

Antiochus, in his expedition into Persia, was not so

1 Mac. iv. 60; Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 11.

² 1 Mac. v. 1, &c.

^a This festival is commemorated in the gospel, (John ii. 23.) and our blessed Saviour, we are told, came up to Jerusalem on purpose to bear a part in the solemnizing of it. Some indeed are of opinion, that it was another dedication-feast, which Christ thus honoured with his presence: but besides that the dedications both of Solomon's and Zerubbabel's temples, who, though they were very solemnly celebrated at the first erection of these temples, had never any anniversary feast afterwards kept in commemoration of them, the very history of the gospel, which tells us that it was kept in winter, confines us to this dedication of Judas only. That of Solomon was on the seventh month, which fell about the time of the autumnal equinox: and that of Zerubbabel was on the twelfth month, which fell in the beginning of the spring; but that of Judas Maccabeus was on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which fell in the middle of winter. So that the feast of the dedication which Christ was present at in Jerusalem, was no other than that which was instituted by Judas, in commemoration of his dedication of the temple anew, after that it had been cleansed from idolatrous pollutions; and from hence Grotius, in his commentary on the gospel of St John, (ch. x. 22.) very justly observes, that festival days, in memory of public blessings, may be piously instituted by persons in authority, without a divine command.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 166.

^b The word *Acra*, which is of Greek original, signifies in general a citadel, in which sense the Syrians and Chaldeans used it; but when Antiochus gave orders for the building of a citadel on the north side of the temple upon an eminence, that commanded it, the hill itself was called by the name of Acra: which, according to Josephus, (b. xii. c. 7, and 14.) was in the form of a semicircle. John Maccabeus took it out of the hands of the Syrians, who there kept a garrison, and pulled down its fortifications, and in their room were afterwards built the palace of Helena, and that of Agrippa, a place where the public records were kept, and another where the magistrates of Jerusalem assembled.—*Cabinet's Dictionary* under the word.

successful as he expected: for, ³ being informed that Elymais, a city in that country, was an opulent place, wherein stood the temple of Diana, ^c where immense riches were to be found, he marched his army thither, with an intent to plunder both it and the temple: but the country round about, taking the alarm, joined with the inhabitants in the defence of the city and temple, and having beat him off, they obliged him to return to Ecbatan in Media, where, with shame and confusion, having received news of the ill success of his arms in Judea, and how the Jews had pulled down the images and altars that he had erected, recovered their temple at Jerusalem, and restored that place to its former worship, he made all the haste home he possibly could, threatening, as he went along, utterly to destroy the whole nation, and make Jerusalem the common place of sepulchre to all the Jews. But ⁴ while these proud words were in his mouth, the judgments of God overtook him; for he was instantly seized with a pain in his bowels, and a grievous torment in his inward parts, which no remedy could assuage. Being resolute however in his revenge, he ordered his charioteer to double his speed; but in the rapid motion, the chariot was overturned, and he thrown to the ground with such violence, as sorely bruised his whole body, and mashed, as it were, his limbs with the fall; so that being able to travel no farther, he was forced to put in at Tabæ, a little town in the confines of Persia and Babylonia, where he suffered most exquisite torments both of body and mind. In his body, a filthy ulcer broke out in his privy parts, wherein were bred an innumerable quantity of vermin, continually flowing from it, and such a stench proceeding from thence, as neither those that attended him, nor even he himself could well bear: and in this condition he lay, languishing and rotting, till he died. In his mind, his torments were no less, by reason of the several spectres and apparitions of evil spirits which he imagined were continually about him, reproaching and stinging his conscience with accusations of the evil deeds which he had been guilty of. Being made sensible at length by his

³ 1 Mac. vi. 1, &c.

⁴ 2 Mac. ix. 5, &c.

^c Other authors agree with the account in the first book of Maccabees, that the temple of Elymais was prodigiously rich; and both Polybius and Diodorus Siculus (as they are cited by St Jerome, on Dan. xi.) mention this attempt of the king of Syria to plunder it. But the manner in which he came to be disappointed, is related quite differently in the second book of Maccabees. For therein we are told, that when Antiochus, pretending that he would marry the goddess of the temple, whose name was Nanea, that thereby he might have the better title to the riches of it, by way of dowry, was let into the temple, to take possession of them, the priests opened a secret door that was in the ceiling, and from thence threw upon him and his attendants such a shower of stones as quite overwhelmed them, and so cut off their heads, and cast them out, (2 Mac. i. 13, &c.); but who the goddess Nanea, who had this temple at Elymais, was, the conjectures of the learned are various, since some will have her to be Venus, and others Cybele the mother of the gods, because the word in the Persian language signifies mother, though the most common opinion is, that she was Diana, or the moon, the same that Strabo calls Anais, or Anaitis: for that she was held to be a virgin goddess is plain, because Antiochus pretended to espouse her, and that she was a chaste goddess, Plutarch (*de Artaveres*) seems to intimate, when he tells us, that Artaxerxes took the beautiful Aspasia, with whom he himself was in love, from his son Darius, and devoted her to a perpetual virginity, in the service of Anais, the goddess of Ecbatan.—*Cabinet's Commentary* on 1 Mac. vi. 1.

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afflictions, that all his sufferings were from the hand of God, for his plundering and profanation of his temple at Jerusalem, and for his hatred and cruelties to his servants, who worshipped there, ¹ he made an ample acknowledgment of this before he died, and many vows and solemn promises of a full reparation, in case he recovered. But his repentance ^a came too late: and therefore, after having languished out a while in this miserable condition, and under these horrid torments of body and mind, at length, being half consumed with the rottenness of his ulcer, he gave up the ghost, and died, after he had reigned eleven years.

CHAP. II.—*Objections answered.*

OF what weight and authority both the history of the Maccabees, and that of the Jews by Josephus ought to be accounted, we shall have occasion to inquire in the two following chapters, and need only here observe, that what the Maccabean history has recorded of Antiochus Epiphanes is, in a great measure confirmed by the testimony of Polybius, an exact historian, who was contemporary with him, and could not therefore be at a loss for proper instructions in what he wrote, Epiphanes, according to ² him, was a man of great expense, and squandered away vast sums in the gratification of his lusts and amours, in the gifts he bestowed upon his favourites, and the entertainments he made for the people: but then Athenæus ³ informs us, “that all these expenses were made, partly out of the gifts which his friends sent him, partly out of the prey which he took from Ptolemy king of Egypt, when he was a minor; but chiefly out of the spoils of the many temples which he sacrilegiously robbed.”

⁴ ‘I was bountiful, and beloved in my power, and ⁵ I have done great benefits,’ both public and private, to the Jews. These were the vain boasts of the dying tyrant: but since the same Polybius ⁶ tells us, that his distemper so far grew upon him, as to come to a constant delirium, or state of madness, these expressions, we may suppose, came from him, ⁷ when he was in that condition. For we know no instance of his kindness, but many of his cruelty to the people of God; and, as to his bounty, as he calls it, this he usually committed in his drunken frolics, ⁸ in which he spent a great part of his revenues, and used often to go out into the streets, and to scatter his money in handfuls among the rabble. We may therefore reasonably suppose, that such a wild, crack-

brained creature as this, had seldom any serious thought of establishing an uniformity in religion, though that religion, by the bye, was impious, in his dominions; but that, to justify the depredations that he made upon the Jews, and to revenge the defeats which they had so frequently given to his armies, these were the true reasons of his exasperation against them; because it is not conceivable, how he could have any sober sense of religion, who, to satisfy his greedy avarice, was not afraid to rob the temple of Diana.

This robbing of temples, in the opinion of all sober heathens, was accounted a crime of so heinous a nature as justly deserved the vengeance of heaven; and therefore Polybius, ⁹ as well as the author of the Maccabees, informs us, that Antiochus, before he died, was scared with visions, and apparitions of evil spirits; but then he supposes, that it was the goddess Diana, that thus haunted him, for his attempting to pillage her temple at Elymais; whereas he himself, in the presence of all his friends, openly declares, that these troubles were come upon him, because ¹⁰ he ‘had taken all the vessels of gold and silver that were in Jerusalem,’ and had destroyed ‘the inhabitants of Judea without a cause.’

The sacrilege at Elymais was only intended, not executed: but that at Jerusalem was committed, with horrid impiety against God, and as horrid cruelty against all those that served him there. But even if the former had been committed, it was only against a false deity; whereas the latter was against the true God, the great and almighty Creator of heaven and earth: and therefore we need less wonder, that the marks of a divine infliction were so visible in the nature of his disease. Appian ¹¹ and Polybius, ¹² as well as Josephus, and the author of the books of Maccabees, have informed us, that he died with ulcers, and putrefying sores in his secret parts; and, upon this occasion, we cannot forbear remarking, that most of the great persecutors of the church of God have been smitten in the like manner; that thus died Herod, the great persecutor of Christ, and the infants at Bethlehem; thus Galerius Maximianus, the author of the tenth, and greatest, persecution against the Christians; and thus Philip the second, king of Spain, who was as infamous for the cruelty of his persecution, and the numbers destroyed by it, as any of the other three. ¹³ It is no small confirmation therefore of what the Jewish writers relate concerning the judgments of God upon Antiochus, that these heathen authors, whose credit is thought indubitable, do agree with them as to the matter of fact, though they differ from them, in assigning a wrong cause for it.

¹⁴ ‘If you will walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them, ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you: five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.’ This is the promise which God made to the children of Israel, upon their entrance into the land of Canaan; and, in virtue of this promise, we find that their leader Joshua was so very successful, that, after he had relieved the city of Gibeon, destroyed twelve kings,

¹ 1 Mac. vi. 12, 13; 2 Mac. ix. 11, 18; Joseph. Antiq. b. xii. c. 13.

² Deipnosoph. b. vi.

³ Apud Athenæum, b. v.

⁴ 1 Mac. vi. 11.

⁵ 2 Mac. ix. 26.

⁶ In the Extracts of Valesius.

⁷ Calmet's Commentary.

⁸ Athenæus, b. x.

^a This wicked king is an example of all hardened sinners, and false penitents, whose only motive of turning to God, is their fear, or feeling of punishment. The Maccabean martyrs had threatened, or rather foretold, that ‘through the judgment of God, he should receive a just punishment for his pride,’ (2 Mac. vii. 36.), and, therefore, ‘when he called, God would not answer;’ but, as the royal penman expressed, ‘laughed at his calamity, and mocked when his distress and anguish came upon him,’ Prov. i. 26, 27.

⁹ In the Extracts of Valesius.

¹⁰ 1 Mac. vi. 12, 13.

¹¹ In Syriac.

¹² In the Extracts of Valesius.

¹³ Prideaux's Connection, anno 164.

¹⁴ Lev. xxvi. 3, &c.

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and made himself master of their dominions, in one campaign only, it is said of him, that ¹ ‘he returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal,’ and therefore we need less wonder, that the Jews, who at this time were under the conditions of God’s promise, nay, under a state of persecution upon the account of their religion, and were consequently the proper objects of his more immediate care and compassion, should come off victorious, even though they were but poorly armed, and sometimes without the loss of one man, having the Lord of hosts on their side, both to inject terror into their enemies, and to ‘cover their heads in the day of battle;’ but, even without this supposition of a divine interposal, might there not be some remarkable difference in the soldiers and generals themselves?

Judas Maccabæus, an excellent commander, bold and enterprising, with a small body of men, but all determined to conquer or die, attacks one of no capacity, with a much larger army indeed, but made up chiefly of raw men, and forces levied in haste. He attacks him, I say, and defeats him; and are not miracles of this kind very common? Do not both ancient and modern history furnish us with victories in great abundance of this sort, and much more surprising than any obtained by the Maccabees? ² The contempt of a weak enemy, whose forces are so disproportionate to the numerous army which comes against them, is one of the greatest errors, as well as dangers, that can happen in war; because in this case people are less upon their guard, not thinking the enemy capable of daring to undertake any thing against them, until they are surprised in their security; and an army surprised in their camp, we know, is an army half conquered.

Though therefore the Jews, under the command of the gallant Judas, were always fewest in number, yet, considering the boldness of their undertakings, and the prudence of their conduct, their skill in the military art, ³ and the providence of God, which attended and prospered their arms, the wonder is not much, that they were, in a manner, always superior to their enemies.

‘There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars,’ that is, in the heavens, where they move, ‘and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity:’ these were the presages, which our Saviour foretold; and, accordingly Josephus ³ informs us, that, before the last siege of Jerusalem, there were seen in the air, a little before sunset, for some days together, chariots and armed men, passing along the clouds, round about the city; “which I would hardly venture to report,” says he, “but that I can produce sundry eye-witnesses, that are still alive, to confirm the truth of it.” Several accounts of this kind we have in Livy and Suetonius: and though it must be owned, that too great a credulity in some historians may possibly have enlarged, or multiplied these prodigies, yet we must not there-

fore imagine, that there never were any such things, because very good reasons may be given why God should exhibit them: and, as to the phenomena that ⁴ are now under consideration, they certainly have all the marks of credibility in them that we can well desire. For they are related by an author that was contemporary, or very near contemporary, with them. They were seen, not transiently, and by a few weak superstitious people; but, for forty days together, they appeared to the view of a whole city, wherein were above an hundred thousand inhabitants, most of sound intellects, and some of them of so little superstition, as to abandon the laws and customs of their country for fear of persecution.

The Jews have a tradition, founded upon what we read in the second book of the Maccabees, ⁵ namely, that, some time before the Babylonish captivity, the prophet Jeremiah received instructions from God to hide the ark of the covenant in a cave in Mount Nebo, which accordingly he did, and at the same time declared that the place should not be discovered until the people’s return from their captivity; that, after the people’s return, in the time of Nehemiah, this ark was found out, and replaced in the sanctuary of the temple; that when Pompey ⁶ entered the sanctuary, he saw an ark and cherubim, like those which Moses had made; and that, some time after, the same ark was carried before Vespasian, when, from the Jewish wars, he returned to Rome in triumph.

Now, upon the supposition that there is any truth in this tradition, and the ark of the covenant was in fact replaced in the second temple, the history of Uzzah will inform us of what sacred account, in the esteem of God, this repository of the divine covenant was, and how severely God, in his case, was pleased to avenge the least violation of it. For, if the ‘anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah,’ so that he smote him dead upon the spot ‘for his rashness in taking hold of the ark,’ even because he was no priest, no descendant of the house of Aaron; why should it be thought a strange thing, that God should show some tokens of his displeasure against an heathen prince, intruding into the place which he had consecrated for his own presence and inhabitation? Or, if we suppose, that the shekinah, or presence of God, was not resident in the second temple; yet still the holy of holies was reserved for the entrance of none but the high priest; and therefore it is no more than what might be expected, that he, who, in contempt of the divine command, and the remonstrances of all about him, would intrude into it, should meet with some severe rebuke, that thereby he might be convinced of the power of the God of Israel, and of the divine institution of their religion. And, though it be acknowledged that Pompey met with no remarkable judgment, in the instant when he was guilty of the like profanation, yet ⁷ our learned connector of the sacred and profane history has observed, that after this act he never prospered; that this put an end to all his successes; insomuch, that this, over the Jews, was the last of his victories. So mindful has God all along been, not to suffer the profaners of his sanctuary to go unpunished!

¹ Josh. x. 43. ² Calmet’s Dictionary, under the word Bethzur.

³ On the Jewish Wars, b. vii. c. 12.

⁴ It is indeed surprising, that Polybius, an historian, in other things so punctual, and so well acquainted with the affairs of Asia, should make no mention of the Maccabees, nor of the wars which they maintained with so much glory against Antiochus, and his successors, especially since he describes the wars of the same Antiochus, in other respects, with all the care and exactness that can be desired.—*Calmet’s Dictionary*, under the word Modin.

⁵ Calmet’s Commentary.

⁶ Chap. ii. 4—9.

⁷ Calmet’s Dissert. on the Ark of the Covenant.

⁸ Anno 64.

A. M. 3596. A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 341. 1 MAC i.—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7.—b. xii. c. 14

The intended destruction of all the Egyptian Jews at Alexandria, in the barbarous manner wherein the author of the second book of the Maccabees has related it, can hardly be thought an incredible thing to those who have read in Philo, ¹ the like, if not worse, cruelties, which the same people underwent in the same town, in the reign of Caligula, and under the administration of Flaccus.—That they were not only driven from their habitations, plundered of their goods, and cooped up in a narrow corner of the city in order to be starved; but that, if any attempting to make their escape were apprehended, they were either knocked on the head, torn limb from limb, or tortured to death, and their dead bodies dragged through the streets; and, if any pretended to lament them, they were immediately seized, whipped without mercy, and having suffered all the torments that cruelty could invent, were condemned at last to be crucified:—That, without any regard to sex or condition, without any respect to the aged, or compassion to the young, not only whole families were burned together, but some, being tied to stakes, had fires of green wood kindled round them, in order to prolong their torments, and that the spectators might have the horrid pleasure of seeing the poor creatures suffocated in the smoke.—That, on the very festival of the emperor's birth-day, which generally lasted for some time, thirty-eight of their council, persons of the most distinguished note among them were bound like criminals, some with chains, and so dragged through the market-place to the theatre, and were whipped so unmercifully, that some of them did not long survive it.—Nay, that at this time more especially, it was a usual thing with the people, when they came to the theatre, first to entertain themselves with scourging, racking, and torturing the poor Jews at their pleasure, and then, to call for their dancers and players, and other diversions in use among the Romans: whoever has read, I say, the account of these cruelties, as Philo has related them, need not much wonder to find an exasperated prince, as Ptolemy was, intending the total destruction of a people he imagined had offended him; when a bare Roman prefect, as Flaccus was no more, without any provocation that we hear of, was not afraid to treat the same people in this inhuman manner.

But then, as to the former case, if we will allow the providence of God, and its interposition in the occurrences of this world, we need not want a reason, why he should turn the elephants, which were designed to destroy the innocent, upon the spectators, who could not be so; because both his justice and mercy seem to plead for the deliverance of those, whose only crime was their profession of his true religion, and for the punishment of such as came to glut their eyes with the hellish pleasure of seeing their fellow creatures trampled to pieces. In this sense, there seems to be a necessary call for a divine interposition; but, abstracted from this consideration, the wonder is not great, that creatures intoxicated, as these elephants are said to have been, should mistake their objects, and fall foul upon those that they were least of all intended to destroy.

There is something, we confess, more wonderful, in the appearances of angels mounted, as it were, on horse-

back, ² heading the Jewish army, ³ protecting the Jewish general, and ⁴ defending the sacred treasures of the temple; but as we esteem these books of the Maccabees no part of divine writ, we leave the proper defence of them to those who have received them as canonical, and shall only add, ⁵ with the learned Huetius, upon this subject,—That, how improbable soever these accounts may be thought by some, they are not destitute of examples of the like nature in several heathen histories; that, in the battle which the Romans had with the Latins, at the lake Regillus, Castor and Pollux were seen mounted on horseback in the Roman army, and, when the victory was wavering, they restored the fight, and gained the field, and carried the news thereof to Rome that very evening; that, when the Romans invaded the Lucani and Brutii, Mars, the great founder of their nation, led their forces to the onset, and assisted them not a little in taking and destroying great numbers of their enemies; and, to name no more, that, at the battle of Marathon, Pan appeared on the side of the Athenians, made great slaughter among the enemy's army, and injected such a terror into them all, as, from that time, it has obtained the name of a *panic* fear.

Now, though there might be a good deal of fiction in these instances, yet since we find some of the best Roman historians relating them, and so grave an author as Tully, even ⁶ in some of his most serious pieces, making mention of the first of these as a matter of just credibility, we cannot but suppose, that the common tradition at this time was, that, to the victorious army, especially when it was much inferior in numbers, some celestial and superior beings were always assistant; and, consequently, that the author of the book of the Maccabees, in this respect, wrote nothing but what at that time was the common sense of mankind; nothing, indeed, but what the sense of the royal palmist, in military matters, authorized him to write: for ⁷ 'let them be turned back,' says he, 'and brought to confusion, that imagine mischief against me; let them be as the dust before the wind, and the angel of the Lord scattering them.'

CHAP. III.—Of the Jewish Sanhedrim.

BEFORE we proceed to examine into this great national council among the Jews, which we suppose might have its rise much about this period of time, it may not be improper to take a short view of the sundry forms of civil administration that were previous to it.

The government of the Jewish republic was originally divine: for, ⁸ if we call a state where the people govern a democracy, and that where the nobles govern an aristocracy, there is the same reason why this should be styled a theocracy; because God was not only the deity they were bound to worship and adore, but the sovereign, likewise, to whom they were to pay all the honours and rights that were due to supreme majesty. Their republic, however, was not completely settled until God had given

² 2 Mac. xi. 8. ³ Ibid. ver. 10. ⁴ Chap. iii. 25, &c.

⁵ Quest. Alnetana, b. ii. c. 12.

⁶ Tuscul. Quest. b. i. et. de Nat. Deor. b. ii.

⁷ Ps. xxxv. 4. 5.

⁸ Lamy's Introduction, b. i. c. 11.

¹ Vol. ii. p. 525, &c. ex edit. Mangerana.

A. M. 3596. A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 341. 1 MAC. i.—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7.—b. xii. c. 14.

them the law from Mount Sinai, when the noise and thunderings in which it was delivered were so very terrible, that ¹ the people requested of him not to speak any more to them himself, but to make use of the ministry of Moses as his interpreter.

Thus Moses, by the people's own election, was appointed to the administration of all public affairs; and, in this important office, as the author of the Hebrews ² testifies of him, acquitted himself with much faithfulness: but, in a short time, he found, that he had undertaken a work of too much labour and fatigue for any single person to sustain; and therefore, in pursuance of his father-in-law's advice, he made choice of some of the most prudent and understanding men in every tribe, divided them into several classes, and gave them names according to the authority wherewith he invested them, or the number of the persons over whom they were to preside; ³ 'he made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among the tribes.'

But this establishment lasted not long, or at least received some change or addition to it. For, as soon as the Israelites were arrived at Kibroth-Hattaavah, or the 'graves of lust,' as the place is called, but three days' journey from Mount Sinai, ⁴ God appointed a body of seventy elders, to whom he communicated his Spirit, to assist Moses in bearing the burden of the people; and from hence it is that the defenders of the antiquity of the sanhedrim date the first institution of that great council. But, however this be, it is certain, that this council continued among them all the while that they sojourned in the wilderness; and was, indeed, ⁵ an institution proper enough for a people in their circumstances, who, being all of one community, could assemble together with ease, and, having no great matters in possession, could have but few processes, and, consequently, might dispense with a lesser number of judges.

Moses, however, foreseeing that this institution would not be sufficient, when once the people were settled in the land of promise, ⁶ left it as an injunction behind him, that, whoever had the government of the nation should appoint judges and magistrates in every city, to determine the controversies that came before them; but that, when any thing of great moment, or of difficult discussion, should happen, the contending parties should carry their cause ⁷ 'to the place which the Lord had chosen,' propose it to 'the priests, and to the judge, that should be in their days;' and, upon pain of death, acquiesce in their decision.

Moses was succeeded by Joshua; but his time was spent in making a conquest of the land of Canaan, and, till he had done that, he could not put the order which his predecessor had left him in execution. However, at his first accession to the government, we find that ⁸ all the people promised the same obedience to him that they had paid to Moses; and that, when himself grew old, ⁹ 'he called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers,' that is, all the judges and magistrates which Moses had enjoined him

to establish in the country, for the security of the state and administration of justice.

On this footing Joshua left the civil administration; and thus it stood, till the people revolted from the service of God, and then all things ran to confusion. In what manner the state was governed, and justice dispensed during the long succession of judges, it is difficult to determine: but, towards the conclusion of that form of government, we find Samuel ¹⁰ 'going, from year to year, in a circuit round the country, to judge Israel,' and when himself grew impotent and unable to travel, ¹¹ making his sons judges in his stead; but their mal-administration occasioned an alteration in the government.

The institution of regal power dissolved that polity which Moses had settled; but though he both foreknew and foretold this change in the constitution, yet we nowhere find him giving any particular directions how kings were to conduct themselves in the administration of the state, and the dispensation of justice; ¹² whether it was that God did not vouchsafe to communicate any fresh discovery to him upon that subject, or whether he might think that the rules which he had already prescribed were not incompatible with the authority and government of kings.

Saul seems to have concerned himself with nothing but military affairs, leaving the priests and judges the same jurisdiction that they had before; but David, when he came into a peaceable possession of the kingdom, ¹³ did himself, in causes of great consequence at least, administer justice to the people. The famous decision between the two mothers, ¹⁴ who both laid their claim to the living child, is a plain proof, that, in perplexed and intricate cases, Solomon himself did sometimes the office of a judge; and when we read of this prince, that he came to ¹⁵ Gibeon, 'with the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the judges, and the chief of the fathers,' we may learn from hence, that magistrates of the same kind that Moses had ordained were at this time existing in the kingdom of Israel.

By the revolt of the ten tribes from the house of David to that of Jeroboam, the civil constitution of the Jews suffered very much; because the avowed purpose of that prince was, to change the religion, and reverse the orders which Moses had instituted: and, therefore, from henceforward, we must look only into the kingdom of Judah for the succession of the true discipline and form of ancient government of the Jews.

When Jehoshaphat formed the design of introducing a reformation both in church and state, he pursued the rule which Moses had given him; for ¹⁶ 'he set judges in the land, through all the fenced cities,' and in Jerusalem the capital, erected two tribunals; ¹⁷ one composed of priests and Levites, to hear appeals from lesser courts relating to religious matters; and the other, composed of the 'chief of the fathers of Israel,' to hear such as related to civil. Nor is their conjecture much amiss, who suppose, that the seventy men, whom ¹⁸ Ezekiel saw in a vision, 'burning incense to idols,' and the 'five and twenty,' who, ¹⁹ 'between the porch and the altar, were

¹ Exod. xx. 19. ² Chap. iii. 2. ³ Deut. i. 15.

Num. xi. 16.

⁵ Calmet's Commentary on the Government of the Hebrews.

⁶ Deut. xvi. 18.

⁷ Deut. xvii. 9.

⁸ Josh. i. 16, 17.

⁹ Chap. xxiv. 1.

¹⁰ 1 Sam. vii. 15, 16.

¹¹ Chap. vii. 1

¹² Calmet's Dissert. on the Government of the Hebrews.

¹³ 2 Sam. xv. 2.

¹⁴ 1 Kings iii. 16, &c.

¹⁵ 2 Chron. i. 2.

¹⁶ Chap. xix. 5.

¹⁷ Ibid. ver. 8.

¹⁸ Ezek. viii. 11.

¹⁹ Ibid. ver. 16.

A. M. 3596, A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070. A. C. 141. 1 MAC i—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7—b. xii. c. 14.

worshipping the sun in the east,' are the rather mentioned, because they were men of eminence, and very probably the judges of civil and ecclesiastical matters.

What kind of judicature prevailed in the time of the captivity, it is difficult to say. From the story of Susannah we may learn, that in these circumstances the Jews were allowed their own courts and judges, even in Babylon itself; but of what number, order, or authority these judges were, none can tell. It is plain, however, that upon the restoration Ezra returned with full power from Artaxerxes, ¹ 'to set magistrates and judges in all the land,' who might punish criminals according to their demerit, either with death, or banishment, imprisonment, or confiscation of goods: and in this condition the Jewish state continued, namely, in the form of an aristocracy, with the high priest at the head of it, sometimes under the king of Egypt, and sometimes under the king of Syria, for a considerable time after the return from the captivity.

The persecution which Antiochus Epiphanes raised among the Jews, ruined all the economy of their government: but Matthias, and his sons, endeavoured to restore ² 'the decayed state of the people', as it is called, as far as those troublesome times would permit them. Judas Maccabæus, in a general assembly held at Maspha, revived the ancient order, and appointed rulers ³ 'over the people, even captains over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens:' and when Jonathan, his brother and successor, took upon him both the sovereign and sacerdotal authority, he, nevertheless, governed by the advice of a senate, not excluding the people from some share in their deliberations, as appears by the letters ⁴ 'which the Jews, at this time, sent to the Lacedæmonians.

Aristobulus, who was the first of the Asmonæan race that took upon him the diadem and title of a king, continued the senate in great authority, but excluded the common people from having any part in the administration; as the kings who succeeded him, endeavoured to confirm their own power, by curtailing that of the senate, till Pompey came, and quite overturned the Jewish state, by subjecting it to the empire, and making Judea a Roman province.

From this short review of the Jewish republic, we may perceive, that its form of government, at different times, has been various; that Moses (with the concurrence of seventy chief magistrates) as God's vicegerent, governed the people in an absolute manner; that under the judges the state had been sometimes without any ruler at all, independent sometimes, and, at other times, under the jurisdiction of its enemies; that the ancient kings of Judah vouchsafed to administer justice to their subjects, but that towards the decline of the kingdom, its princes affected state, and a despotic power; that from the captivity to the time of the Asmonæans, the government, under the high priest, was partly aristocratical, and partly popular; and that the Asmonæan kings made it monarchical, till the Romans destroyed it: and so we proceed to consider, in which of these periods the famous council of the Jews, which is usually called their sanhedrim, might have its rise, with some other particulars relating to its authority and proceedings.

When Moses, in conducting the children of Israel through the wilderness, was teased and wearied out, as we say, with the perpetual complaints and murmurings of that people, in the impatience of his soul, he addressed himself to God in these words: ⁵ 'wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?—I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me,' &c. Whereupon the Lord said unto him, 'Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them, and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee; and I will come down and talk with thee there; and I will take of the spirit, which is upon thee, and will put it upon them, and they shall bear the burden with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.' This command Moses took care to put in execution: the elders accordingly met at the 'tabernacle of the congregation, and when the Spirit of the Lord rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.' These words, as we said before, are held by the generality of the rabbins, as well as by some Christian writers, to be the true origin of that great sanhedrim, 'which, from its first institution here under Moses, subsisted all along in the Jewish nation, even to the time of their utter dispersion under Vespasian, and had the cognizance of all matters of the greatest moment, both civil and ecclesiastical.'

But for the better understanding of the sense and design of them, we may observe, 1st, that Moses does not here speak of the difficulty or multiplicity of business that was laid upon him, but of the perverse temper of the people, always addicted to mutiny and sedition, which he himself alone was not able to withstand. To ease himself of the labour of judging the people in all civil and capital causes, he had, by the advice of his father-in-law, ⁶ appointed a certain number of judges, and it seems not unlikely, that some of these seventy were of the number of these judges, because they are called by God himself, 'the elders and officers of the people.' Moses wanted no assistance therefore in the administration of affairs of this nature; but what he wanted, was a sufficient number of persons of such power and authority among the people, as might restrain them from seditious practices, and awe them into obedience; and for this reason it was, that God, when he made choice of them, gave them the Spirit of prophecy, as an evident sign of his having appointed them coadjutors to Moses, in the exercise of his supreme authority, and as a means to procure them the greater reverence and esteem among the people.

2dly, We may observe farther, that it does not appear from the foregoing passage, that this assembly of seventy persons was to be perpetuated in the Jewish state, and when any died, others submitted in their room: on the contrary it rather seems to have been an occasional institution, or present expedient for the relief of Moses, that by the addition of other rulers, (all endued with gifts extraordinary as well as he,) the murmurs and complaints of the people might not fall all upon him, but be diverted, some of them at least, upon others; and that by the joint influence of so many persons, all possessed with the same spirit of government, they might either hinder

¹ Ezra vii. 25, 26.

² 1 Mac. iii. 13.

³ Ibid. ver. 35.

⁴ Ibid. xiv. 19.

⁵ Num. xi. 14, &c.

⁶ Exod. xviii. 24.

A.M. 3596. A.C. 498; OR ACCORDING TO HALES, A.M. 5070. A.C. 341. 1 MAC. i.—vi. 7. 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7.—b. xii. c. 14.

or appease them. And as this was an institution only for that purpose, there is no reason to believe that it continued any longer than Moses lived; because, if we take a view of the history of succeeding ages, we shall find no footsteps of it.

After the death of Moses, we find Joshua ruling the people with an absolute authority; settling the portions of the several tribes in the land of Canaan; dismissing those who had assisted their brethren in the conquest of it; receiving all appeals, redressing all grievances, and acting, in short, as the only governor of the nation, without one word mentioned of any supreme council to control him. After the death of Joshua, God raised up judges, men of courage and wisdom extraordinary, to deliver his people from the oppressions of their enemies, and to attend to the administration of justice among them; and yet we read of no act or decree of this pretended sanhedrim all this while,¹ which could no more have been omitted in the account of these times, had it been then existing, than the mention of the Roman senate is in any of their historians.

² 'In those days,' as the sacred history informs us, 'there was no king in Israel, but every man did what was right in his own eyes;' and ³ where then was this venerable assembly, whose authority, according to the rabbins, was superior to that of princes, to interpose in this time of need? The Jews certainly could never have degenerated into such a state of licentiousness, had there been a court of seventy or seventy-two elders, chosen out of every tribe, and invested with a supreme authority to punish criminals, and reform abuses; nor can we see what reason the Levite had to cut in pieces the body of his concubine, abused by the Gibeonites, and to send it to the several tribes, in demand of justice, if there had been such a constant tribunal, as this is represented, to resort to.

The kings who succeeded the judges, acted in such a manner, as to make us believe, that there was no such thing as a sanhedrim then in being. ⁴ They displaced high priests without opposition; they waged war without advising with any; they made and deposed judges, as they pleased; and in short did every thing that other princes are wont to do, without the sanhedrim's ever interposing its authority, that we read of, to stop the course of their extravagancies, or curb their exorbitant power. Some of these kings, we know, were for extinguishing the true worship of God, and establishing idolatry in its stead: here then was a proper opportunity for this venerable body to step in, by condemning idolatry in some public act of theirs, and opposing the innovations of the court. But of this we hear not one word; neither do we find, that ⁵ the prophets, who so severely inveighed against the wickedness of the people, ever referred them to the sanhedrim, or complained, that that court was too remiss or negligent in the punishment of crimes.

If ever mention were to be made of this great council, it would be, one would think, in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which were written after the Babylonish captivity, when there was no king in the land, and consequently a fit opportunity for the sanhedrim to appear; and yet, even here, we find several matters of great mo-

ment transacted, such as the reformation of the people's manners, the dissolution of illegal marriages, a stop put to the profanation of the sabbath, and a covenant of obedience to God, made and signed by the deputies of the priests, Levites and common people; but not one word of the great sanhedrim all this while.

In short, not only the sacred writers, but even Josephus, Philo, Origen, Eusebius, and St Jerome, who were all well versed in the ancient government of the Jews, make no manner of mention of any such body of men in the times that we are now upon; and therefore we cannot but think, that this universal silence, in writers of all kinds, is a very good argument, that this supreme national council did not then subsist. Its name is confessedly of Greek derivation; to which purpose Livy⁶ observes, that those senators whom the Macedonians intrusted with the administration of their government, were called *synedri*: and therefore it seems somewhat incongruous to look into the first centuries of the Jewish church for the original of a council, whose very name is of later extract.

Before the times of the gospel, wherein frequent mention is made of this council, we find it in so great authority, as even to call Herod,⁷ though then governor of Galilee, upon his trial for some misdemeanour: and therefore it is no improbable conjecture, that in the time of the Maccabees, either Judas or Jonathan was the first institutor of it; and the reason they might have for this institution, might be the change which they had made in the nature of the government, for which they wanted the consent of the people, or at least of a body that represented them, that thereby they might act with more authority: and though, as yet, they did not assume the title of kings, yet they thought it a matter of prudence to have their resolutions ratified by a council.

The Maccabees, who, in all probability, were the first institutors of this council, would hardly exclude themselves from it; and therefore we may presume, that the high priest was the settled president, who, for that reason was called *nasi*, or *prince of the sanhedrim*, and in his absence had a deputy called *ab-beth-din*, or *father of the house of judgment*, and a sub-deputy called *chacam*, that is, *thes wie*; but all the rest had the common name of elders or senators.

These senators, which are usually taken from other inferior courts, were to be some priests, and some laymen, but all persons of untainted birth, good learning, and profound knowledge in the law, both written and traditional. All eunuchs, usurers, gamblers, those that brought up pigeons to decoy others to their dove-houses, or made any gain of their fruits in the sabbatical year, all old men, deformed persons, and such as had no children, because they were suspected of being cruel and hard-hearted, were excluded from this council; and those only who were of mature age, competent fortunes, and comely personages, were admitted to it.

The room in which this council met, was a rotunda, half of which was built without the temple, and half within. The *nasi*, or prince of the council, sat upon a throne elevated above the rest, at the upper end of the

¹ Le Clerc's Dissert. de Synedrio.

² Judg. xxi. 25.

³ Sentiments of some Theologians on Critical History.

⁴ Calmet's Dissert. on the Government of the Jews.

⁵ Basnage's History, b. v. c. 1.

⁶ It was decreed by the Macedonian state, that senators, whom they name *synedri*, should be commissioned for the administration of the kingdom.—B. xiv. c. 32.

⁷ Jewish Antiq. b. xiv. c. 17.

A. M. 3596 A. C. 408; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5070, A. C. 341. 1 MAC. i.—vi. 7, 2 MAC. iii.—x. JOS. HIST. b. xi. c. 7.—b. xii. c. 14.

room, having his deputy on his right hand, and his sub-deputy on his left. The senators were ranged in order on each side; and the secretaries who were to record the matters that came before them, were three; whereof one wrote the sentences of those that were absolved, the other had the condemnations under his care, and the third entered into their books the several pleadings of all contending parties.

The vanity and ridiculous pride of the rabbins appear in nothing more, than in the excessive power which they give to this high-court of judicature. For, according to them, it not only decided such cases as were brought before it by way of appeal from other inferior courts, but had under its jurisdiction likewise ^a the king, the high priest, and prophets. ¹ The king, for instance, if he offended against the law, if he married above eighteen wives, if he kept too many horses, if he hoarded up too much gold or silver, the sanhedrim had him stripped and whipped in their presence. But whipping, it seems, among the Jews ² was not so ignominious a thing, but that the king bore it by way of penance, with great patience, and himself made choice of the person that was to exercise this discipline upon him. However this be, it is certain, that all private controversies of difficult discussion, all matters relating to religion, and all important affairs of state, were submitted to the determination of this august assembly, from whose sentence no appeal could be made, because a demurring to the jurisdiction of their court was punished by death, that is, while the power of life and death was in their hands; but how long this lasted, after that Judea became a Roman province, has been a matter of some dispute among the learned.

Josephus ³ tells us expressly, that the senate and emperors of Rome took no ancient rights from the nations whom they conquered; and by the words of Pilate concerning our Saviour Christ, ⁴ ‘Take ye him and judge him according to your law,’ it seems, as though they still retained their power, though perhaps it might be under some limitations.

Upon St Peter’s ⁵ speech before the great council, we find them so exasperated against the apostles, that they began to think of putting them all to death, and might, very probably, have proceeded in their design, had they not been dissuaded from it by the wise advice of Gamaliel. The stoning of St Stephen was not the effect of any hasty judgment of some zealots, but of the regular proceedings of this court. He ⁶ ‘was brought before the council,’ we read; false witnesses accusing him of blasphemy were produced against him; in his own defence, he made a long discourse; but his own defence was not admitted, nor his innocence acknowledged; and there-

fore they sentenced him to be stoned ⁷ according to the law.

St Paul himself declares before this very court, that before his conversion to Christianity, ⁸ he ‘persecuted those of that way’ unto death, and ‘received letters from the estates of the elders,’ or the sanhedrim, to bring ‘Christians from Damascus to Jerusalem in bonds, in order to be punished.’ Tertullus, who, in the trial of this apostle, was counsel for the sanhedrim, ⁹ tells Felix, the governor of Judea, that having apprehended the criminal at the bar, they thought to have proceeded against him ‘according to their law; but that the chief captain, Lysias, came upon them, and took him out of their hands.’

The true reason why Lysias exerted his power upon this occasion, and took him out of their hands, was, because they had accused him, not only of blasphemy, and profanation of their temple, but of sedition likewise, which was a crime falling more properly under the cognizance of the civil government, and for which Paul was therefore brought before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. ¹⁰ So that from an examination of these particulars, wherein the power of the sanhedrim was concerned, we may conclude, that even after the subjection of the Jewish state to the Roman empire, this sanhedrim had the power of life and death in crimes committed against their own law; but that in matters of sedition, and crimes committed against the civil administration, the Roman governors interposed their authority, and in cases of this nature took the dispensation of justice out of their hands.

¹¹ What formality was observed in bringing a lawsuit before the sanhedrim, Maimonides has in this manner described:—“The business,” says he, “was first to be examined in the inferior courts; but if it could not be decided there, the judges sent to Jerusalem to consult the judgment-chamber, that sat upon the mount of the temple. From this first tribunal they proceeded to that which sat at the temple gate; and if the matter was not determined there, they came at last to the great council chamber, which was held in one of the apartments belonging to the temple; and this last council determined with so much justice and authority, that there were no divisions seen, during all the time that the second temple lasted.” And what caution was taken, in passing the sentence of death upon criminals, by the same tribunal, the Jewish doctors (if we will believe them) have thus informed us.—“After the witnesses were heard, and the matter in question decided, the judge put off the sentence till next morning. Hereupon the sanhedrim went home, eat but little, drank no wine, and then met again, two by two, in order to weigh all the particulars of the trial. The next morning, he that had given his opinion for condemning of the criminal, had power to revoke it; but he who had once given it for absolving him, could not alter his mind. As soon as the judge had pronounced sentence, the malefactor was conducted to the place of execution, while an herald, on horseback, proclaimed, as he went along, ‘such an one is condemned for such a crime; but if any body can allege any thing in his behalf, let him speak.’ If it happened that any one came to the gate of the court, the door-keeper made a sign to the herald to bring back the malefactor, while

¹ Calmet’s Dissertation on the Government of the Hebrews.
² Calmet’s Dictionary, under the word *Sanhedrim*.

³ Against Apion, Jewish Antiq. book ii. c. 17.

⁴ John xviii. 31. ⁵ Acts v. 29, &c. ⁶ Acts vi. 22, &c.

^a This is directly the opinion of Maimonides, (in *Sanhed.* per. 2, 3.), but that learned rabbi was strangely prejudiced in favour of this great council; and though Josephus is of the same opinion, yet to allow such an extent of jurisdiction to this court, so as to inflict corporal punishment upon the persons of their kings, is contrary to the general notions of sovereignty, and the laws of all kingdoms and nations; besides that the Holy Scriptures are absolutely silent in this particular, and nothing can be inferred from them, to countenance such a coercive power.—*Lewis’s Hebrew Antiq.* vol. i. c. 6.

⁷ Deut. xvii. 7. ⁸ Acts xxii. 4, &c. ⁹ Chap. xxiv. 6. 7.

¹⁰ See Beausobre and L’enfant’s Gen. Pref. to the New Test.

¹¹ Basnage’s History of the Jews, b. 5. c. 2.

A.M.3841.A.C.163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A.M.5247.A.C.164 1MAC.v.1. JOS. HIST. b. xii. c. 14—END of MAC. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19.

two judges were appointed to receive what his friend had to say in his favour, and to consider whether there was any thing material in it.

These formalities are indeed related in the Mishneh; but it is much to be questioned, whether they were not invented since, on purpose to recommend the justice and equity of the ancient Jewish tribunals. For, besides that no other nation did ever yet observe such favourable proceedings, in relation to those that were found guilty, there is not the least mention of any thing of this kind in the sacred history; and in the Talmud itself we meet with maxims and matter of fact quite contrary to it. For ¹ therein we are told, that though a prisoner declare upon oath, at the place of execution, that he was innocent, and in confirmation of this the false witnesses recanted; yet the judges took no notice of their retraction, but only said, "Let the false witnesses perish; but a judge cannot recall his sentence, when once it is pronounced."

Upon the whole therefore we may observe, that what the Jewish doctors tell us of the origin and succession, the authority and proceedings of their sanhedrim, is in a great measure fabulous; that the council of seventy men, which God instituted in the wilderness, was designed only to serve a particular purpose, and was therefore of short continuance in the Jewish state; that from the time of Joshua till after the return from the Babylonish captivity, there are no footsteps to be found, either in sacred or profane history, of such an assembly, as the rabbins represent their sanhedrim to have been; but that in the times of the Maccabees we read of the senate of the nation, which, under the Asmonæan princes, grew into great power, and in the days of our Saviour's ministry, had matters of the highest consequence committed to their determination; till in the final destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation, the very name and authority of that senate was entirely lost.

SECT. IV.

CHAP. I.—*From the Death of Antiochus Epiphanes, to that of John Hyrcanus.*

THE HISTORY.

AFTER the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, ²his son Antiochus Eupator, a minor, nine years old, succeeded in the throne of Syria. His father, upon his death-bed, had constituted Philip, one of his chief favourites, regent of the kingdom, during the minority of his son, and had delivered to him his crown, his signet, and other ensigns of royalty, giving him strict charge to educate him in such a manner as would qualify him to reign well; but Philip, when he came to Antioch, found his office usurped by another. For Lysias, who in the king's absence was left governor in chief, hearing of the death of Epiphanes, took Antiochus his son, who was then under his care, and, having placed him on the throne, assumed to himself the tuition of his person, and the government of his kingdom, without any manner of regard to the will and appointment of the late king: and Philip, finding himself too

weak at present to contest it with him, fled into Egypt, in hopes of procuring some assistance there, which would enable him at one time or other to make good his claim.

³ Not long after the death of Epiphanes, Judas Maccabæus, hearing of the confederacy which the neighbouring nations were engaged in, namely, to destroy and extirpate the whole race of Israel, and that they had already begun to cut off as many as were within their power, ⁴ marched first against the Idumæans, who were the forwardest in the conspiracy, and having fallen into that part of their country which was called Acrabatene, ^a he there slew twenty thousand of them. He next fell upon ⁵ the children of Bean, ^b another tribe of these Idumæans, and having vanquished them in the field, pursued them to their fortresses, which he besieged, took, and therein slew twenty thousand more. He then passed over the Jordan into the land of the Ammonites, wherein he defeated them in several engagements; slew great numbers of them; took Jahazah, ^c and its appendant villages; and after his return to Judea, when Timotheus, the governor in those parts, pretended to follow him with a numerous army, he fell upon him, and overthrew him with a great slaughter, so that himself was forced to fly to Gazara, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, where his brother Chereas was governor: but Judas, pursuing him thither, beset the place, took it in five days, and there slew Chereas, Timotheus, and Apolophanes, another great captain of the Syrian forces.

In the mean time, the heathen nations about Galaad ⁶ had fallen upon the Jews that dwelt in the land of Tob, which lay on the east of Gilead; had slain to the number of a thousand men; taken their goods for a spoil; and carried away their wives and children into captivity: whereupon most of the other Jews inhabiting those parts betook themselves to a strong fortress in Gilead, called Dathema, with a resolution to defend themselves. This when the heathens understood they drew together, in a great body, under the command of Timotheus, the successor, and (very probably) the son, of the late Timotheus, who was slain at Gazara, in order to besiege them, while the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon, Ptolemais, and other parts thereabout, were laying their schemes to cut off all the Jews that were in Galilee; so that Judas was sent to, both from Gilead and Galilee, to come to the succour and assistance of his poor distressed countrymen.

⁷ In this critical juncture of affairs he consulted the sanhedrim, or general council of the nation; and, by their advice, divided his army into three parts. With the first, which consisted of eight thousand men, he, and

³ 1 Mac. v. 1, &c. ⁴ 2 Mac. x. 14, 15. ⁵ 1 Mac. v. 4, 5

⁶ 1 Mac. v. 9—13.

⁷ Ibid. ver. 16, 17.

^a It is a canton of Judea, upon the frontiers of Idumæa, towards the southern extremity of the Dead Sea.

^b Who these children of Bean were, it is difficult to say. Some think, that this Bean was the name of an ancient king, whose descendants lived in hostility with the children of Israel; but others (with more probability) account it the name of a place; and if in the confines of the Dead Sea there was, as some affirm, a city of this name, without all controversy this was it.—*Calmét's Commentary* on 1 Mac. v. 4.

^c This city, which lay beyond the Jordan, was first of all given to the tribe of Gad, and afterwards to the Levites, Josh. xxi. 36. It was situated at the foot of the mountains of Gilead, near the brook Jazah, which forms a rivulet or torrent, that falls into the Jordan.

¹ Ex Gemara, tit. Sanhed. c. 6. f. 4.

² 1 Mac. vi. 17; 2 Mac. x. 10, 11; Joseph. Antio. b. 12. c. 14.

A.M.3841. A.C.163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A.M.5247. A.C. 161. 1 MAC. v. 1 JOS. HIST. b. xii. c. 14—end of MAC. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19.

Jonathan his brother, marched for the relief of the Gileadites: with the second, consisting of three thousand, Simon, another of his brothers, was sent into Galilee; and the rest were left at Jerusalem, under the command of Joseph, for the defence of the place, and the country adjacent, but with a strict charge from Judas, not to enterprize any thing against the enemy, but to stand wholly upon the defensive, until he and Simon should return again.

¹ Judas and Jonathan passing the Jordan, and marching into Gilead, had intelligence, that, at Bassora, a town of the Edomites, a great number of Jews were imprisoned, in order to be destroyed, as soon as Dathema was taken: whereupon, by hasty marches, they came upon the city sooner than was expected, and, having slain all the males, taken their spoils, and freed their brethren, they set it on fire, and so proceeded on their way to Dathema. On the morning, when they arrived, (for they marched all night,) Timotheus and his men had begun to storm the place; but Judas, coming upon them when they little expected so sudden and violent an assault, put them all to the rout, and, in the pursuit, slew eight thousand of them. He thence marched his army from place to place, where he understood that any Jews were oppressed or imprisoned; and having treated them in the same manner as he did Bassora, slain all the males, taken their spoils, and set their cities on fire, he returned to Jerusalem.

While Judas and his brother Jonathan were thus successful in Gilead, the other brother Simon was not idle in Galilee. For he defeated the enemy ² in several encounters, drove them out of the country, and pursued them, with a great slaughter, to the very gates of Ptolemais: and, being now ready to return, he took along with him all the Jews, men, women, and children, that he could find in those parts, because he thought them too far distant from Jerusalem to be under the eye and protection of their brethren; and, having brought them safe into Judea, with them he re-peopled these places which had been desolated by the enemy, during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes.

³ Joseph, who, with the remainder of the army, was left in Jerusalem, hearing of these great successes in Gilead and Galilee, would needs be doing something; and therefore, contrary to the orders that had been given him, led forth the forces on an ill-projected expedition against Jamnia, a seaport on the Mediterranean, thinking to take the place: but Gorgias, who commanded in those parts for the king of Syria, fell upon Joseph's army, put them to flight, and, in the pursuit, slew about two thousand of them; which rash attempt ended in the confusion of those that undertook it; for Judas had given contrary orders, and by his wise conduct, and undaunted bravery, was every where attended with success.

Enraged at these successes, Lysias, ⁴ who was commander-in-chief of the Syrian forces, having raised an army of eighty thousand men, marched against Judas, with all the horse of the kingdom, and eighty elephants; and coming to Bethzura, thought it necessary to take that place in his way; but while he was besieging it, Judas came upon him, and having slain eleven thousand

foot, and sixteen hundred horse, put the rest of his army to flight: so that Lysias, who with much ado escaped to Antioch, growing weary of so unprosperous a war, and not knowing where to raise fresh recruits, made a peace with Judas and his people, whereby the decree of Antiochus Epiphanes, obliging them to conform to the religion of the Greeks, was rescinded, and a liberty granted them to live according to their own laws.

This peace was ratified by Antiochus Eupator, but it did not last long, ⁵ because the governors of the several neighbouring places did not like it. The people of Joppa were the first that broke it, by drowning in the sea two hundred of the Jews, who lived among them in that city; but Judas severely revenged their cruelty: for, falling upon them by night, he burned their shipping, put all to the sword that had escaped the fire, and then hearing that the people of Jamnia had but badly treated the Jews, he set fire to that haven likewise, and burned all the ships in it.

Timotheus was one of the governors that was dissatisfied with the peace; and therefore, when Judas understood that he had drawn all his forces together, ⁶ to the number of an hundred and twenty thousand foot, and two thousand five hundred horse; and that he was going to give the Jews in Gilead fresh vexations, he marched against him; and, having defeated a strong party of wandering Arabs ^a in his way, and made peace with them, he first took the city of Caspis, ^b slew the inhabitants, and destroyed the place; then attacked Caraca, which was garrisoned with ten thousand men, whom he put to the sword; and, at last, coming up with Timotheus, near a place called Raphon, on the river Jabboc, he there gave him battle, slew of his army thirty thousand men, and ⁷ took him prisoner; but, upon condition that he should release all the Jews that were captives in any places under his command, he gave him both his life and his liberty. Understanding, however, that a great part of the vanquished army had fled to Carnion, a city in Arabia, he pursued them thither, and having taken the place, slew twenty-five thousand more of Timotheus's forces, that had there taken refuge.

In his return to Jerusalem, he took along with him all the Jews that were in the land of Gilead, for the same reason that Simon had carried them out of the land of Galilee the year before, namely, to inhabit and fortify the cities of Judea, which were not sufficiently peopled: ⁸ but being in his way to pass through Ephron, c

⁵ 2 Mac. xii. 2, &c. ⁶ 1 Mac. v. 37, &c.; 2 Mac. xii. 20—23.

⁷ 2 Mac. xi. 24, 25.

⁸ 1 Mac. v. 46, &c.; 2 Mac. xii. 27, 28.

^a These people lived in tents, and stayed in a place no longer than it afforded them provision for themselves and their cattle. They were the descendants of Ishmael, and according to the angel's prediction of them (Gen. xvi. 12.) 'their hand was against every man, and every man's hand against them:' for they lived chiefly upon plunder; but as they were a stout and warlike people, and well acquainted with the course of those countries, it was no bad policy in the Jewish general, after he had forced them to sue for peace, and had obliged them to furnish him with a certain quantity of cattle and provisions, to secure their friendship and future services.—2 Mac. xii. 11; *Universal History*, b. 2. c. 11.

^b This is the same as Hesbon, in the tribe of Reuben.

^c The Scripture makes mention of this city of Ephron, as standing upon the Jordan, only in this place; and therefore it is hard to define its particular situation.

¹ Mac. v. 21, &c.

² *Ibid.* ver. 21, &c.

³ *Ibid.* ver. 53, &c.

⁴ 2 Mac. xi. 1, &c.

A. M. 3841. A. C. 163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5247. A. C. 164. 1 MAC. v. 1. JOS. HIST. b. xii. c. 14—END OF MAC. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19.

a strong city, and well garrisoned by Lysias, the people refused to open their gates; whereupon he assaulted the place, and, having taken it by storm, put all the males, to the number of twenty-five thousand persons, to the sword, took their spoils, and razed the city to the ground. After this, repassing Jordan, and returning to Jerusalem, ¹ he and his company went up to the temple, to give God thanks for the great success wherewith he had been pleased to prosper this expedition, and for his singular and wonderful protection of them, in that, notwithstanding all the hazardous enterprises they had been engaged in, they had not so much as lost one man.

This continued series of success gave Judas ² encouragement to carry the war into the southern parts of Idumæa, where he took and dismantled Hebron, the metropolis thereof: and thence passing into the land of the Philistines, took Azotus, formerly called Ashdod; pulled down their heathen altars, burned their carved images, and spoiled the place; and having done the like to all the other cities of that country, where he prevailed, he led his victorious army, laden with the spoils of their enemies, back again to Judea.

But, notwithstanding all these successes, the Jews could not call themselves entirely masters of Jerusalem. The fortress of Acra still held out for the king of Syria, and the garrison, consisting of Macedonians and renegade Jews, was very troublesome to such as resorted to the temple. Judas therefore thought it highly necessary to attempt the reduction of the place; and having got engines ^a and machines for that purpose, he soon straitened the garrison. The besieged, however, found means to acquaint king Antiochus with their distress, who promised to relieve them, and, for that end, gathered an army of an hundred and ten thousand foot, twenty thousand horse, thirty-two elephants, with castles on their backs full of archers, and three hundred armed chariots of war. With all this force, Antiochus, marching to the relief of the fortress of Jerusalem, passed through Idumæa, where, in his way, he laid siege to Bethzura, which made a brave defence; for the inhabitants, by bold sallies, so burned and disordered his engines, that he spent much time about it to no purpose. Judas all this while pressed the fortress of Acra with all his might; but fearing lest the Bethzurians should be forced to submit to the superior strength of the enemy, he left the siege of it, and went to the relief of them.

⁴ His train was to surprise the king's forces; and therefore marching in the night, he fell upon one quarter of the army in the dark; killed four thousand of them; and having put the whole army into confusion, retreated on break of day, without suffering any loss. In the morning, when both sides prepared for an open battle, Judas and his men, with great fierceness, began the onset, and did wonders: for Eleazar, ⁵ a brother of Judas, observing one particular elephant, which was higher than

the rest, ^b armed with royal harness, and supposing thereby that the king was upon it, at once, both to deliver his country, and gain himself immortal honour, he made at it with all his might; and having slain every one that stood in his way, got under its belly, and thrust his spear into it, so that the creature fell down dead, but unhappily crushed him to death by its weight in the fall.

At length, after having slain about six hundred of the king's forces, perceiving that they must be overpowered by so great a number, ^c they withdrew from the fight, and made a safe retreat to Jerusalem. Antiochus followed after with one part of his army, but left the other to carry on the siege of Bethzura, which the inhabitants, seeing no prospect of relief from their friends, were forced to surrender. From Bethzura the king's forces ⁷ marched to Jerusalem, where Judas had shut himself up, and his friends, in the temple. They defended the place with great resolution, but must inevitably have been compelled to surrender, had they not been relieved by this lucky and unexpected accident.

In the absence of the king, and the regent Lysias, that Philip, whom, as we said before, Antiochus Epiphanes, at his death, constituted guardian of his son, had made himself master of Antioch, and taken upon him the government of the Syrian empire. ⁸ Upon the receipt of this news, Lysias found it necessary to make peace with the Jews, that he might be at liberty to return, and expel the intruder. Accordingly a peace was granted them upon honourable and advantageous terms, and ratified by oath; but when Antiochus came to see the strength of the fortifications belonging to the temple, he caused them, contrary to the articles he had sworn, to be all pulled down and demolished, and then returned towards Syria, where he found that Philip had seized on the imperial city; but by one easy battle, wherein Philip was worsted and slain, he soon recovered the possession of it.

⁹ In this expedition against Judea, Menelaus, the high priest, accompanied Antiochus, and was as busy in offering him his service against his own people as any: but falling by some means under the displeasure of Lysias, he was accused, and condemned, as the author and fomentor of this Jewish war, and accordingly was carried to Berhæa, ^c a town in Syria, and there cast headlong

^a 1 Mac. vi. 47.

⁷ Ibid. ver. 48, &c.

⁸ Ibid. ver. 55, 56; 2 Mac. xiii. 23.

⁹ Ibid. ver. 3—9.

^b Though elephants have an hide impenetrable almost in every part, except their belly, yet for their greater safety, those that are appointed for the wars, are usually armed and covered all over, as it were with a coat of mail. The kings of India, according to Q. Curtius, (b. 2.) when they took the field, were drawn by elephants all covered over with gold; and Florus described the elephants made use of in battles, as brilliant with gold, silver, purple, and their own ivory, (b. 2. c. 8.) harnessed, and set out, much after the fashion of the war-horse in Virgil: "he pricked on his foaming steed, covered over with a skin of brazen scales, clasped together with gold."—Æn. 11.

^c This was one of the punishments of the Persians, whereby great criminals among them were put to death. The manner of it is described in the 13th chapter of the second book of the Maccabees, to be thus: "An high tower was filled a great way up with ashes; the criminal, being from the top thrown down headlong into them, there had the ashes by a wheel continually stirred up, and raised about him, till he was suffocated and died. 'Such was the death of that wicked man,' says the author of the book above cited, 'that he had not a burial in the earth, and that very justly.' But then the reason which he gives for this pro-

¹ 1 Mac. v. 54. ² Ibid. ver. 65—68. ³ Chap. vi. 19, &c.

⁴ Ibid. ver. 32.

⁵ 2 Mac. xiii. 15, &c.

^a These, in Jeremiah vi. 6, are rendered in the margin 'engines of shot,' and, without doubt, resembled in some measure, the baliste and catapultæ among the Romans, which were used for throwing stones and arrows, and were to them of old instead of mortars and carcasses.—*Lewis's Jewish Antiq.* b. 6. c. 46.

A. M. 3841. A. C. 163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5247. A. C. 164.1 MAC. v. 1. JOS. HIST. b. xli. c. 14.—END OF MAC. JOS. HIST. b. xlii. c. 19

into a tower of ashes; but after his death, ¹ Antiochus conferred the office of high priest upon one Alcimus, a man altogether as wicked as the other.

All this while Antiochus Eupater held the crown of Syria, by an unjust title; for Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater, elder brother to Antiochus Epiphanes, was the legal heir thereof. He, in exchange for his uncle Antiochus, had been sent an hostage to Rome, the very year that his father died; and Antiochus returning at the very nick of time, was unanimously declared king, in the absence and minority of the rightful heir. But Demetrius, being now in the twenty-third year of his age, when his uncle died, and his son Eupater, who was appointed king in his room, ^a thought it high time to put in his claim; and accordingly moved the senate of Rome for their assistance in the recovery of his father's kingdom; and as an inducement thereunto, he alleged, that having been bred up in that city from his childhood, "he should always look on Rome as his country, the senators as his fathers, and their sons as his brothers." But the senate having more regard to their own interest, than the right of Demetrius, and judging it more to their advantage to have a boy reign in Syria, as Eupater then was, than a man of mature understanding, as they knew Demetrius to be, instead of asserting his right, to whom it belonged, they confirmed Eupater in the kingdom.

Demetrius being excluded from all hopes of any favour or assistance from the senate, had nothing left to do, but to endeavour to make his escape from Rome, and to risk his fortune in his own country: this he did; ² and landing at Tripolis in Syria, made it believed, that he was sent by the Roman senate, which would support his pretensions, to take possession of the kingdom. Hereupon Eupater's cause, being in the general opinion given up for lost, every one deserted from him to Demetrius; nay, the very soldiers seized on him, and the regent Lysias, with an intent to deliver them up to this new comer, as soon as he arrived at Antioch; but he refusing to see them, ordered them both to be put to death,

and so, without any farther opposition, became thoroughly settled in the whole kingdom.

He had not been long so settled, before Alcimus, who, on the death of Menelaus, had by Antiochus Eupater been constituted high priest of the Jews, but was never acknowledged as such, because in the time of persecution he had apostatised, came, and implored his protection against Judas Maccabæus and his party; accusing them of being enemies to the kings of Syria, fomentors of sedition, and murderers and persecutors of his most faithful subjects. By this representation Demetrius was so exasperated that ³ he immediately ordered Bacchides, the governor of Mesopotamia, to march with an army into Judea; and having confirmed Alcimus in the office of high priest, joined him in the same commission for carrying on the war in Judea.

No sooner were they arrived in Judea, with a considerable body of troops, but the scribes ^b and doctors of the law met together, and consulted what they were to do upon this occasion. Very desirous they were to have an high priest again settled among them, and not at all suspicious that any of the sons of Aaron would do them any wrong; and therefore upon promise of safe conduct, they waited upon them, in order to bring matters to a peaceable accommodation: but the perfidious Alcimus, having got them in his power, caused sixty of them to be seized, and all put to death on one day, which made the people more cautious of him for the future.

Bacchides, however, returning to Antioch, put Alcimus in possession of the country, and left him some forces to support him in it. With these the wicked high priest did much mischief, and committed many murders upon those that were not for him: but as soon as Judas, ⁴ with his men, appeared in the field again, he left the country for fear, and returned to the king with fresh accusations against him and his brothers, who, as long as they were permitted to live, as he told him, would never suffer the king's authority to take place, nor any lasting peace to be established in the country. So that, upon this representation, Demetrius sent another army against the Jews, under the command of Nicanor, with strict orders to destroy Judas, disperse his followers, and thoroughly establish Alcimus in the high priest's office.

Nicanor was not insensible of the courage and conduct of Judas; and therefore, loath to come to an engagement with him, he endeavoured to compose matters by a treaty, and accordingly entered into articles of peace with him: but the high priest, ⁵ not liking the peace, because his interest, as he imagined, was not sufficiently secured in it, went, the third time to the king, and so possessed him against it, that he refused to ratify what was agreed, and sent his positive commands to Nicanor, to go on with the war, and not cease prosecuting it, until he had either slain Judas, or taken him prisoner, and sent him bound to Antioch. Upon these these instructions, Nicanor being obliged, though much against his will, to alter his conduct, marched his army

¹ 2 Mac. xiv. 3; Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 15.

² 1 Mac. vii. 1, &c.; 2 Mac. xiv. 1, 2; Joseph. Antiq. b. xii. c. 16; Justin. b. xxxiv. c. 3.

vidential judgment upon him is very light and trifling: 'forasmuch as he had committed many sins about the altar, whose fire and ashes were holy, he received his death in ashes,' v. 7, 8.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 424.

^a What excited him the rather to do it at this time, was the murder of Cn. Octavius: for the Roman senate having sent three ambassadors into Syria, whereof Octavius was chief, to administer the affairs of the nation, during the minority of the king, these ambassadors, finding that there were more ships in the navy, and more elephants in the army, than the treaty made with Antiochus the Great, after the battle of Mount Siphilus, allowed of, caused the ships to be burned, and the elephants to be slain, that exceeded the number stipulated. This occasioned great murmurings and discontent among the people, and provoked one Leptines to such a degree of indignation, that he fell upon Octavius, as he was anointing himself in the gymnasium at Laodicea, and there slew him. Eupater and Lysias did all they could to clear themselves from having any hand in this vile act, and to this purpose sent ambassadors to Rome to inform the senate of their innocence: but the senate, after having heard what the ambassadors had to say, gave them no answer, expressing their resentment by their angry silence: and therefore Demetrius thought this no improper time to move the senate, when he perceived them thus out of humour with Eupater, the usurper of his kingdom.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 162.

³ 1 Mac. vii. 8—20.

⁴ 1 Mac. vii. 23, 24.

⁵ Ibid. ver. 26—29. 2 Mac. xiv. 12—25.

⁶ 1 Mac. vii. 26—29.

^b These, in all probability, were a deputation from the great sanhedrim, which, at this time, had the government of the nation in their hands; and why Judas, who was at the head of them, did not think proper to accompany them, the reason is pretty obvious.—*Calnet's Commentary* on 1 Mac. vii. 12.

A.M.3341. A.C. 163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A.M. 5247. A.C. 1641. MACC.V. I. JOS. HIST. b. xii. c. 14—END OF MACC. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19.

up to Jerusalem, and designing, by craft and treachery, to get Judas into his power, ¹ invited him to a conference, which the other, upon the presumption of the depending peace, readily complied with, and came to the place appointed: but when he found that an ambush was laid for his apprehension, he fled from his presence, and so began the war afresh. This war was carried on with various successes for some time, and with some particular cruelties on Nicanor's side, ^a but at length, coming to a decisive battle near a village called *Bethoron*, Nicanor was slain in the first onset, which the rest of the army perceiving, cast away their arms, and fled; so that, what with Judas's pursuing them, and the country rising upon them as they endeavoured to escape, not one of the whole army, which consisted of five and thirty thousand men, was left to carry home the tidings of their overthrow.

After the pursuit was ended, the victorious army returning to the field of battle, took the spoils of the slain; and having found Nicanor's body among the dead, they cut off his head, and this right hand which he stretched out so proudly in his threatenings against the temple, and hanged them up upon one of the towers of Jerusalem. A general joy overspread the whole city upon this occasion, and in commemoration of so great a deliverance, it was ordained, that the thirteenth day of their month Adar, (which answers in part to our February,) the day whereon this victory was obtained, should be ever after observed as an anniversary day of solemn thanksgiving; and so it is kept even to this present time, under the name of the day of Nicanor.

² Judas, having now some respite after this victory, was thinking of making a league with the Romans. He had heard much talk of their power, prowess, and policy; and was therefore desirous of making an alliance ^b with them, in hopes of receiving thereby some protection and relief against the oppressions of the Syrians. To this purpose he sent Jason and Eupolemus, men of sufficiency for such an embassy, to Rome, who were kindly received by the senate, and from them obtained a decree, acknowledging the Jews for friends and allies to the Romans, a league of mutual defence between them, and a letter to Demetrius, requiring him, upon the peril of having war denounced against him, to

desist from giving the Jews any farther molestation; but before the return of these ambassadors Judas was dead.

³ For Demetrius, having received an account of the defeat and death of Nicanor, sent Bacchides, with Alcimus, the second time into Judea, at the head of a very numerous army, made up of the prime forces and flower of his militia. Judas, at their coming, had no more than three thousand men to oppose them; and these were so terrified with the strength and number of the enemy, that they deserted their general, all to eight hundred men. However, with these few, he resolved to try his fortune; and when his soldiers advised him to retreat, and wait for a supply; "God forbid," says he, "that the sun should ever see me turn my back to my enemies. If providence has ordained that we should die, let us die manfully, fighting for our brethren; and let us never stain the honour of our former valorous deeds by an ignominious flight:" and so animating them by his own example, he charged and broke the right wing, where Bacchides commanded in person, and pursued them as far as the mountains of Azotus; but having not forces enough to keep the left wing in play, he was followed and encompassed. The action was very hot and obstinate: the Jews sold their lives at a dear rate: their general did every valiant thing that man could do; till, being overpowered by numbers, he was slain, and his men, thus deprived of their heroic leader, were forced to fly.

Thus fell the great Judas Maccabæus, the restorer and preserver of the true worship of God, and the reliever and protector of his distressed countrymen, while he lived. His two brothers, Simon and Jonathan, took up his dead body, and conveying it to the city of Modin, they there buried it, in the sepulchre of his ancestors, with all the funeral honour that was due to the memory of so brave a man, and so excellent a commander.

After the death of Judas, Bacchides made himself master of the country, and used all the friends and adherents to the Maccabees, wherever he found them, with the utmost barbarity; ⁴ so that Jonathan was in a manner necessitated to take upon him the command in the room of his brother Judas, and to become the captain of all those who had preserved their integrity. To this purpose, taking with him his brother Simon, and those that had resorted to him, he retired into the wilderness of Tekoa, and there encamped, with a morass on one side, and the river Jordan on the other, so that they could not easily be come at. But Bacchides ⁵ marching after them, and having made himself master of the pass that led to their encampment, assaulted them in it on the sabbath day, expecting to meet with no resistance. Jonathan, however, reminding his men of the determination that was made in this case in the time of his father Mattathias, encouraged them to dispute it bravely; which accordingly they did, even till they had slain about a thousand of the assailants: but then, finding that they should be overpowered with numbers, they cast themselves into the river, and, by swimming over to the other side, made their escape.

Bacchides thought it not proper to pursue them any farther, but rather to go back to Jerusalem; where, hav-

^a 2 Mac. vii. 27—31.

² Mac. viii.—Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 17.

^a One instance of this kind was practised upon Razis, an eminent and honourable senator of the Jewish sanhedrim, who had not only persevered in his religion through the worst of times, but upon all occasions been very munificent to the people. Him Nicanor was resolved to cut off, the rather, because he thought it would be an act of high displeasure to the Jews; and therefore sent a party to seize him. Razis was, at this time, at a castle of his which he had in the country, where he defended himself against them for some time with great valour; but at length finding that he could hold out no longer, he fell upon his sword. The wound however was not mortal, and therefore he threw himself headlong over the battlements of the tower whereon he fought; but finding himself still alive, he thrust his hand into his wound, and pulling out his bowels, cast them upon the assailants, and so died, 2 Mac. xiv. 46.

^b Josephus takes notice, that this was the very first treaty that ever the Jews made with the Romans, which is very probable from the manner in which the author of the first book of Maccabees prefaces his account of it; for there it appears that the Jews, till this time, had very little knowledge of the Roman state.—*Jos. Antiq.* b. xii. c. 17; and 1 Mac. viii. 1.

³ 1 Mac. ix. 1, &c.

⁴ 1 Mac. ix. 28—33.

⁵ Ibid. ver. 43—53.

A.M.3841.A.C.163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A.M.5247, A.C.161. 1 MAC.v.1. JOS.HIST.b.xii.c.14—END OF MAC.JOS.HIST.b.xiii.c.19.

ing fortified Mount Acra, and the neighbouring towns, and put garrisons in them, he took hostages for the fidelity of the inhabitants, and so returned to Syria: ^a but, before he departed, Alcimus, the great troubler of Israel, and whom he had, not long before, settled in the high-priesthood, was smitten with a palsy, whereof he suddenly died; so that the land had rest for two years, and Jonathan an opportunity of bringing his affairs to some better settlement in Judea.

¹ The adverse party, however, was not long easy; but, at the end of two years, prevailed with Bacchides to return with his army into Judea, proposing to seize Jonathan, and all his abettors, as soon as he was arrived with his forces to support the enterprise: but when Jonathan had intelligence of this, he laid hold on fifty of the principal conspirators, and put them to death, which quelled all the rest. Being sensible, however, that he could not stand against so great a force as Bacchides had brought against him, he retired to Beth-basi, a place strongly situate in the wilderness, and here he purposed to make a stand against the enemy.

Bacchides, as soon as he arrived in Judea, went after Jonathan; but, upon his approach, Jonathan left Simon his brother with one part of the forces to defend the place, whilst himself, with the other part, took the field to harass the enemy abroad: in which capacities they both acted so well, Jonathan, by cutting off several of their parties, and now and then falling upon the outskirts of their army employed in the siege; and Simon, by making frequent sallies upon them, and burning the engines they had brought against the place; that Bacchides, ² growing weary of this undertaking, and not a little enraged at those who were the occasion of his return and disgrace, put several of them to death. This opportunity Jonathan laid hold on, and therefore sent messengers to him, to desire an accommodation, which Bacchides readily came into, so that a peace was concluded. The prisoners whom he had in his custody were all restored, and himself took an oath, never to molest the Jews any more: which accordingly he fulfilled; for as soon as the peace was ratified on both sides he went away, and never more returned into the country.

When the wars were thus happily ended, Jonathan retired to Michmash, a town about nine miles' distance to the north of Jerusalem, where he governed the people according to law; cut off all those that had apostatised from him; and, as far as in him lay, reformed all abuses, both in church and state; repairing the city of Jerusalem; fortifying it on every side, and causing the wall round the mount of the temple, which had been pulled down, to be rebuilt.

At this time Alexander, (for that was the name which he assumed,) pretending to be the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, ^b laid claim to the Syrian monarchy; and being

well supported by foreign powers, seized Ptolemais, a city of Palestine, and was making preparations to drive Demetrius out of the throne. On this occasion the two rival princes did both make their court to Jonathan, as thinking him a good ally: Demetrius ³ sent him letters, constituting him his general in Judea, with full authority to raise forces, and to provide them with arms to come to his assistance, and commanding, at the same time, that the hostages, which were in the fortress of Jerusalem, should be delivered to him; which accordingly was done. ⁴ Alexander, on the other hand, ^c having sent him a purple robe and a crown of gold, as ensigns of great dignity, made him a grant of the high-priesthood, and of the honour to be called the king's friend. Demetrius hearing of this, ⁵ and being resolved to outbid Alexander, made him still more advantageous offers: but the Jews, remembering what a bitter enemy he had been to all those that had adhered to the true interest of their country, and suspecting that these offers proceeded only from the necessity of his affairs, which would certainly be revoked as soon as the storm was blown over, resolved rather to enter into league with Alexander: and therefore Jonathan, ^d accepting of his grant of the high priest's

³ 1 Mac. x. 25, &c.; Joseph. Antiq. b. 13. c. 4.

⁴ Ibid. x. 15—20. Joseph. Antiq. b. 13. c. 5.

⁵ 1 Mac. x. 25, &c.; Joseph. Antiq. b. 13, c. 5.

Timarchus, another favourite of the king's, was governor of it; but on the coming of Demetrius to the crown, they were both found guilty of great misdemeanours, for which Timarchus was put to death; but Heraclides made his escape out of the kingdom, and took up his residence at Rhodes. While he was there, Demetrius, having given himself up entirely to luxury and sloth, so neglected the affairs of government, that his subjects justly took a disgust against him, and were ready to enter into any conspiracy to depose him; which Heraclides understanding, in hopes of making a revolution in favour of himself, he contrived this plot.—In the isle of Rhodes there was a youth of a very mean and obscure condition, called Balas, but, in other respects, every way fit for his purpose. Him he prevailed with to pass for the son of Antiochus Epiphanes; and having thoroughly instructed him how to act his part, he carried him to Rome, where, by his craft and earnest solicitations, he not only prevailed with the senate to own him, but procured a decree from them likewise, permitting him to recover the kingdom of Syria out of the hands of Demetrius, and promising their assistance in doing it. By virtue of this decree he raised forces, and with them sailing to Ptolemais in Palestine, seized that city; and there, by the name of Alexander, son of Antiochus Epiphanes, took upon him to be king of Syria. Great numbers, out of disaffection to Demetrius, flocked to him; so that, at length, Demetrius being defeated and slain, Alexander obtained the full possession of the Syrian empire.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 152.

^c The letter which he sent him, together with these, is to this effect:—'King Alexander, to his brother Jonathan, &c. Being informed of your power and valour, and that you are worthy of friendship, we constitute you high priest of your nation; and it is our pleasure that you should be enrolled in the number of the king's friends. To this end we have sent you a purple robe, and a golden crown, not doubting of a suitable return from you, for our affection and friendship.'—*Joseph. Antiq. b. 13. c. 5.*

^d From the time of the return from the Babylonish captivity, the office of high priest had been in the family of Jozadack, and, in a lineal descent, was transmitted down to Onias, the third of that name. He was supplanted by Jason his brother, as Jason was by his brother Menelaus, and after the death of Menelaus, Alcimus, who was of a different family, was put into the office by the command of the king of Syria. Whether the Asmoneans were of the race of Jozadack, or not, it is no where said; but it is certain that they were of the course of Joarib, (1 Mac. ii. 1.), which was the first class of the sons Aaron; and therefore, upon the failure of the former pontifical family, they had the best right

¹ 1 Mac. ix. c. 53—61.

² 1 Mac. ix. 69—73; Joseph. Antiq. b. 12, c. 1, and 2.

^a It is most likely, that Demetrius had, by this time, received the letters which were sent to him by the Romans in behalf of the Jews, and thereupon gave Bacchides orders to surcease his vexations of that people; and that, in obedience to these orders, Bacchides took occasion, on the death of Alcimus, to leave the country.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 160.

^b In the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, one Heraclides was his treasurer in the province of Babylon, while his brother

A.M. 3841. A.C. 163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A.M. 5247. A.C. 164. 1 MAC. v. 1. JOS. HIST. b. xii. c. 14—END OF MAC. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19.

office, did, on the feast of tabernacles, which soon ensued, put on the pontifical robe, and officiate as high priest, after that the place, from the death of Alcimus, had been vacant seven years.

In the mean time, the two contending kings having drawn together all their forces, committed the determination of their cause to a decisive battle, in which Demetrius^a being defeated and slain, and Alexander, by this victory, made master of the whole Syrian empire,¹ he sent to Ptolemy king of Egypt, demanding his daughter Cleopatra in marriage. To this marriage (which was performed at Ptolemais) Jonathan the high priest was invited, and was received by both the kings (for Ptolemy was likewise at the nuptials) with great favour, especially by Ptolemy, who, to do him a particular honour, caused him to be clothed in purple, and to take place near himself, among the first princes of his kingdom; and, besides making him general of all his forces in Judea, gave him an office^b of great credit and renown in his palace.

But Alexander himself did not long enjoy this prosperous state. Demetrius,² the son of the late Demetrius, resolving to revenge his father's death, and recover his kingdom, came from Crete, (where he and his brother Antiochus had been concealed in the late troubles,) and with an army of mercenaries, landed in Cilicia. It was not long before he gained over to his interest Apollonius^c

the governor of Cælo-Syria, who, to oblige Jonathan to quit Alexander's party, and join with Demetrius,³ marched an army as far as Jamnia, and from thence sent a challenge to Jonathan to leave his fastnesses on the mountains, and come and fight him on the plains.

Provoked at this message, Jonathan marched out with ten thousand men. He first took Joppa, in the sight of Apollonius and his army, and then joining battle, not only vanquished him in the open field, but pursued his broken forces to Azotus. Here was a famous temple of the god Dagon, unto which the Syrians fled for shelter; but Jonathan entering the town, burnt it to the ground, and set the temple on fire; so that the number of those who were slain in battle, and perished by the flames, amounted to no less than eight thousand men. After this, having treated the neighbouring towns, that belonged to the enemy, in the like manner, he led his victorious army back to Jerusalem, loaded with spoils; whither he had not been long come, before Alexander, hearing of his renowned actions in favour of his cause,⁴ sent him a^d buckle of gold, such as none but the royal family were allowed to wear, and, at the same time, made him a present of the city of Ekron, and all the territories thereunto belonging.

⁵ When Apollonius, governor of Cælo-Syria, had declared for Demetrius, Alexander called in his father-in-law, Ptolemy Philometer, to his assistance. He marched into Palestine with a great army; and as he passed, in all the cities (which, by Alexander's orders, opened their gates to him) he left a good number of his own soldiers to strengthen the garrisons. But, whether or not this might give some umbrage to Alexander, so it was, that Ptolemy discovered a design, which Ammonius, Alexander's great favourite, had formed, to have him cut off at his coming to Ptolemais; and upon his demanding justice to be done to the traitor, by Alexander's refusing to give him up, he plainly perceived that the king was a party to the treason, and thence began to harbour an implacable hatred against him.

He therefore marched his army to Antioch; and, hav-

³ 1 Mac. x. 9—77; Joseph. Antiq. b. 13. c. 8.

⁴ 1 Mac. x. 88, 89.

⁵ 1 Mac. xi. 1—5; Joseph. Antiq. b. 13. c. 8.

under Seleucus Philopater; and this I take to be the same Apollonius, who, being continued in the same government by Alexander, now revolted from him, to embrace the interest of Demetrius, the son of his old master, and to engage Jonathan to do the like, marched his forces against him. Another Apollonius is spoken of, (2 Mac. iv. 21,) as the chief minister of Antiochus Epiphanes, who from him was sent as ambassador, first to Rome and afterwards to Ptolemy Philometer, king of Egypt; and him I take to be the same, that, with a detachment of two and twenty thousand men, was sent to destroy Jerusalem, and build a fortress on Mount Acra. There are, besides these, two other persons, in the history of the Maccabees, mentioned under the name of Apollonius. The former of these, being governor of Samaria in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, (1 Mac. iii. 10,) was slain in battle by Judas Maccabeus; and the latter (who is called the son of Genneus,) (2 Mac. xii. 2,) being governor of some toparchy in Palestine, under Antiochus Eupater, did then signalize himself by being a great enemy to the Jews. —*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 148.

^d The golden buckle, which was worn upon the shoulder, was a very singular mark of distinction both among the Greeks and the Persians, from whom the Macedonians took it, and was generally made the reward of great and gallant actions in war. —*Calmel's Commentary* on 1 Mac. x. 89.

¹ 1 Mac. x. 54; Joseph. Antiq. b. 13. c. 7.

² 1 Mac. x. 67; Joseph. Antiq. b. 13. c. 8; Justin. b. 35. c. 2.

to succeed. With this right it was, that Jonathan took the office: and in his family it became settled, and continued for several descents, until the time of Herod, who, from an office of inheritance, changed it into that of arbitrary will and pleasure. Whoever had the power after him, put the high priests in or out, as they thought fit, till at length the office was extinguished by the destruction of the temple by the Romans. —*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 253.

^a In the first onset, Demetrius's left wing put the opposite wing of the enemy to flight; but as he pursued them too far, (a fault in war which has lost many victories,) by the time that they came back, the right wing, in which Demetrius fought in person, was overborne, and he slain in the rout: for his horse having plunged him into a bog, they who pursued him shot at him there with their arrows, till he died. —*Joseph. Antiq. b. 13. c. 5; Justin. b. 35. c. 1 Apion, de Syriacis; and Polybius, b. 3.*

^b The word *meridarches*, which we translate a *duke*, Grotius, in his commentary on 1 Mac. x. 65, makes to be the *chief sewer*, which, even in the German empire, is an office that one of the electors bears: but, in his commentary on Matth. xix. 28., he makes it denote the *governor of a province*: and if, in this place, it were so taken, it would better become Jonathan, one would think, to be made governor of some part of the Syrian empire, than to be the regulator of the dishes at the royal table. —*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 150.

^c Apollonius was a common name among the Syro-Macedonians and Greeks; and in the history of the Maccabees we find so many mentioned of that name, that, for the prevention of mistakes, it may not be improper to give some account of the several persons who bore it. The first that we meet with of that name, is Apollonius, the son of Thrasesas, (2 Mac. iii. 5,) who was governor of Cælo-Syria and Phœnicia, under Seleucus Philopater, when Heliodorus came to Jerusalem, to rob the temple. He was chief minister of state to Seleucus; but, on the accession of his brother Antiochus Epiphanes to the crown, he left Syria, and retired to Miletus. He had a son of his own name, that was bred up at Rome, and resided with Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater, who was then an hostage in that place. When Demetrius recovered the crown of Syria, this Apollonius became his prime favourite, and was made governor of Cælo-Syria and Phœnicia, the same government which his father held

A. M. 3841, A. C. 163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5247, A. C. 164, 1 MAC. v. 1, JOS. HIST. b. xii. c. 14—END OF MAC. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19.

ing taken his daughter from Alexander, gave her to his rival Demetrius, and with her assurance to restore him to his father's throne. ¹ The Antiochians, taking the opportunity of Ptolemy's approach to execute their resentments upon Ammonius, rose in a tumult, and slew him; and then opening their gates to Ptolemy, were all disposed to make him their king; but he modestly declining that offer, recommended to them the restoration of Demetrius, the true heir: whereupon Demetrius was received into the city, and placed on the throne of his ancestors.

Alexander, who was then in Cilicia, hearing of this, came with all his forces towards Antioch, wasting the country with fire and sword; but when Ptolemy with his new son-in-law, met him, and gave him battle, his army was routed, and himself was forced to fly to Arabia, where Zabdiel, king of the country, cut off his head, and sent it as a present to Ptolemy, who was not a little pleased with the sight of it. His joys however did not last long; for in five days' time he died of the wounds he had received in battle, leaving Demetrius in quiet possession of his father's kingdom, which he having recovered by virtue of this victory, did thenceforward take upon him the name of Nicanor, that is, conqueror.

During these transactions, Jonathan ² laid siege to the fortress at Jerusalem; but some of the garrison, escaping by night, came and acquainted Demetrius with it, who thereupon marched from Antioch with an army to relieve it. But coming to Ptolemais, he stopped there and sent for Jonathan to appear before him, and answer to such accusations as were preferred against him. Jonathan went thither, though he ordered the siege still to go on; and, when he came to Demetrius, by his rich presents and wise management, he so mollified the king, and insinuated himself into his good graces, that he not only confirmed him in the possession of what he had, but honoured him likewise with many new favours, and upon the payment of 300 talents, agreed to exempt from all tolls, taxes and tributes, all the places that were under his government.

Jonathan, upon his return to Jerusalem, pressed the siege of the fortress very closely; but finding little or no success therein, he sent an embassy, ³ to Demetrius, desiring him to withdraw the garrison, which he could not expel. This and much more Demetrius promised to do for him, if he would but send him some forces to reduce the inhabitants of Antioch, who, incensed by his cruelty and oppression, had taken up arms against him. Jonathan immediately dispatched 3000 choice men to his aid, who coming to Antioch, when the people had beset the place with an intent to murder the tyrant, as they called him, fell on with fire and sword, and having burned a great part of the city, and slain of the inhabitants about 100,000 persons, obliged the rest to have recourse to the king's clemency, and pray for peace. But all this service availed nothing. Demetrius, ⁴ seeing this storm overpast, forgot the bargains which he had made with Jonathan at Ptolemais; and, though he had received the 300 talents in lieu of them, threatened him with military

execution, unless he sent the taxes and tribute which were usually paid by his predecessors; and would certainly have done all that he had threatened, had not Tryphon found out another employment for his arms.

This Tryphon had formerly served Alexander, as governor of Antioch, but, in the present king's reign, was laid aside. Observing, however, that the cruelty and tyranny, which were every where practised, the disbanding the Syrian soldiers, and retaining only foreigners in pay, together with many more grievances, which the people laboured under, had quite alienated their hearts, and made them ready for a general defection, he thought this no unfit opportunity to put in practice his long concerted scheme of advancing himself to the crown of Syria.

To this purpose he goes into Arabia; ⁵ gets Antiochus, son of the late Alexander, into his hands; brings him into Syria, claims the kingdom for him; and, to support this claim, all the soldiers whom Demetrius had disbanded, and several others, whom his ill conduct had made his enemies, flock in great numbers to the pretender. With these Tryphon marches against Demetrius, vanquishes him in battle, forces him into Seleucia, and having taken possession of Antioch, places Antiochus upon the throne, and gives him the name of Theos, or the Divine.

The ill return which Demetrius made Jonathan, was, doubtless, the chief reason for his declaring for this new king; ⁶ who, by the advice of those that were about him, took care, not only to confirm him in the office of high priest, and in all his other places and dignities, but to make likewise his brother Simon commander of all his forces, from Tyre to the frontiers of Egypt. Upon this defection from him, Demetrius sent all the troops that were left in Cælo-Syria and Phœnicia, to chastise him for it: but he not only repulsed them twice, but took Gaza likewise, and all the country as far as Damascus; while Simon, ⁷ whom he left in Judea, penetrating into the land of the Philistines, took Joppa, and placed a strong garrison in it. Tryphon, who had no other aim in getting young Antiochus into his hands, than to serve his wicked purposes, knew very well, that, as long as Jonathan continued in his interest, it would be in vain for him to attempt the crown; and ⁸ therefore, having prevailed with him to dismiss his army, and to accompany him to Ptolemais, under pretence of putting that place into his hands, with no more than a thousand men, they were no sooner entered, but the garrison, having shut the gates upon them, seized Jonathan, and put his men to the sword.

Having thus circumvented Jonathan, he took him along with him, and marched his army into Judea; but the Jews by this time had chosen Simon his brother for their commander, and were ready to give him a warm reception. Not finding himself therefore able to engage them, he sent Simon this deceitful message,—⁹ “That he had seized Jonathan only because he owed 100 talents to the king; but that in case he would send the money, and Jonathan's two sons to be hostages for their father's fidelity, he would set him again at liberty.” Simon soon

¹ 1 Mac. xi. 13; Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 8.

² Ibid. ver. 20, 47; Joseph. Antiq. b. xvii. c. 8.

³ Ibid. ver. 47—52; Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 9.

⁴ 1 Mac. xi. 53

⁵ 1 Mac. xi. 54—56; Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 9; and Apion, de Syriacis.

⁶ Ibid. xi. 57—59; Joseph. ibid.

⁷ 1 Mac. xi. 64; Joseph. ibid. Ibid. xii. 39—52.

⁹ Ibid. xiii. 12—19; Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 11.

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saw through this deceit; but he complied with the traitor's demand, for fear it should be said that he had not done all that lay in his power to save his brother's life; and accordingly sent the money, and two young men. But when the villain had got them in his power, he put both them and their father to death; and thinking that he had now nothing to obstruct his main design, he caused Antiochus to be murdered privately; and then assuming the crown, declared himself king of Syria in his stead.

When Simon heard of his brother's death, and that he was buried at Bascama in the land of Gilead, ¹ he sent and fetched his dead body from thence; and, having buried it with great funeral solemnity in his father's sepulchre at Modin, he erected over it a stately monument, ² all built of white marble, and curiously wrought and polished.

² Simon, as soon as he was admitted to the government of the land, sent to Demetrius, who was then at Laodicea, a crown of gold, and ambassadors to treat with him about terms of peace and alliance. The king granted to Simon a confirmation of the high priesthood and principality, and to the people a release of all taxes, tolls, and tributes, with an oblivion of all past acts of hostility, on condition that they would join with him against the usurper: in virtue of which treaty, Simon, being made sovereign prince of the land, and the land freed from all foreign yoke, the Jews from this time, instead of dating their instruments and contracts by the years of the Syrian kings, as hitherto they had done, dated them by the years of Simon and his successors.

Having thus obtained the independent sovereignty of the land, ³ he took a progress through it, to inspect what was wanting for its security; repairing the fortifications that were decayed, making new ones where they were wanted, and besieging and taking the places that stood out against him. He had no occasion however to besiege the fortress of Jerusalem, because the wall which his brother Jonathan had built against it had so cut off all communication with the city, that the garrison being sore distressed for want of provisions, and all other necessities, was forced to surrender the place; and Simon, wisely considering how much the city of Jerusalem had been infested by that citadel, pulled it down to the ground, that it might no longer be a retreat to sedition and faction; and, to prevent its being built at any time, levelled the hill on which it was situated; so that now no eminence was left but the mount of the temple only.

Demetrius ^b at this time was prisoner in Parthia, and

Cleopatra his queen had shut up herself and her children in Seleucia; ^c but, fearing to fall into the hands of the traitor Tryphon, and being provoked at her husband's marrying the daughter of Mithridates, king of Parthia, ^d she sent to his brother Antiochus, who still continued in Crete, offering him the crown, and herself in marriage, if he would come and join his interest with hers against Tryphon. This offer he readily accepted of; and, in the beginning of the next year, landed in Syria, with an army of mercenaries, which was soon augmented by a large accession of the usurper's forces, which every day deserted from him: so that, not being able to keep the field, he fled from place to place, till at length, coming to Apamea, ^e his own native city, he was there taken and put to death. This end being put to his usurpation, Antiochus became fully possessed of his father's throne; and, being a man much addicted to hunting, he had for that reason the name of *Sidetes*, which, in the Syrian language, signifies *the hunter*.

Before Antiochus had landed in Syria, to gain Simon over to his interest, he wrote him a letter, ^f wherein he made him many grants, and promised him more; but, as soon as he was settled in the kingdom, he forgot his promises,

⁴ Joseph. Antiq. b. 13. c. 12. ⁵ 1 Mac. xv. 2—5.

thians had at this time overrun in a manner all the East, and had made themselves masters of every country from the river Indus to the Euphrates, those who were of the Macedonian race in those parts, not bearing their usurpation and insolence, invited Demetrius, by repeated embassies, to come to their relief, promising him a general revolt from the Parthians, and such assistance of forces against them as would enable him to suppress these usurpers, and recover to his dominions all the provinces of the East. Upon confidence of these promises, he undertook the expedition; and found as soon as he appeared, that the Elymans, the Persians, and the Bactrians, declared for him. By the assistance of these nations he overthrew the Parthians in several conflicts; but at last, under the show of a treaty of peace, being drawn into a snare, he was made prisoner, and all his army cut to pieces. The king that reigned in Parthia at this time was Mithridates, the son of Priapatites, who, having thus got Demetrius into his power, carried him round the revolted provinces, that, by seeing the prince whom they confided in reduced to this ignominious condition, they might more easily be brought to submit to their former yoke: but, when he had done this, he allowed him a maintenance suitable to the state of a king, and gave him one of his daughters, whose name was Rhodaguna, in marriage.—*Justin*, b. 41. c. 5, and 6; *Joseph. Antiq.* b. 13. c. 9 and 12; and *Orosius*, b. 5. c. 4.

^c Seleucia was a city of Syria, situate upon the Mediterranean, near the place where the Orontes discharges itself into that sea. It was generally called *Pieria*, to distinguish it from other cities of the same name; and from it the country adjoining received the name of *Seleucia*. To the natural strength of the place, were added so many fortifications, that, in the opinion of Strabo, the city was rendered impregnable. Pompey, the Roman general, conferred on it the privilege of a free city, a privilege which was confirmed by several emperors, as appears from many ancient medals. The chief deity of the inhabitants, previous to the reception of Christianity, was Jupiter, whose worship was splendidly celebrated on Casius, a neighbouring mountain. It was from the port of this city that Paul and Barnabas embarked for Cyprus, Acts xiii. 4; and, like the neighbouring city of Antioch, where the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians. The city of Seleucia also very early received the gospel, probably about A. D. 43. At a subsequent period it became an eminent Christian city; but nothing remains of Seleucia at the present time, except ruins, among which are those of some of its ancient churches and convents.—*Ed.*

^d It is a city of Syria, lying upon the Orontes, and was built, as is believed, either by Seleucus the first king of Syria, or by his son Antiochus Soter, in honour of Queen Apamea the wife of Seleucus, the mother of Antiochus.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

¹ 1 Mac. xiii. 25—30; Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 11.

² 1 Mac. xiii. 31—42; Joseph. *ibid.* ³ 1 Mac. xiv. 7—33.

^a This edifice, being erected on an eminence, was seen far off at sea; and, on that coast, was taken notice of as a good sea-mark. Near to the monument Simon placed seven pyramids, two for his father and mother, four for his four brothers, and the seventh for himself, and then encompassed the whole with a stately portico, supported by marble pillars, each of one entire piece, and whereon were engraved ships and arms, and other military ensigns. Josephus tells us, that this whole fabric was standing entire in his days, and looked upon as a very curious and excellent piece of architecture; (*Antiq.* b. 13. c. 11.) and Eusebius mentions it as still in being in his time, which was two hundred years after the time of Josephus.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 144.

^b The reason of Demetrius's being in this condition in this place, by profane historians, is said to be this:—As the Par-

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and sent an ambassador, demanding him to deliver up Joppa and Gazara, and other places, or else to pay him a thousand talents of silver for them. ¹ These conditions were thought too unreasonable to be complied with; and therefore, when Antiochus sent an army under the command of Cendebeus, to enforce them, Simon, though very far advanced in years, with a juvenile courage, prepared to give him a warm reception; and, with his two sons, Judas and John, who was afterwards called Hyrcanus, put his army to flight almost at the first onset, and, in the pursuit, cut off a great number of them: but, to be revenged of him for this defeat, Antiochus concerted the most abominable measures.

Simon had a son-in-law named Ptolemy, whom he had appointed governor of the plains of Jericho. ² This man, who was rich and ambitious, had laid a design, which he communicated to Antiochus, for the usurpation of the government to himself; but this could not well be done without the destruction of Simon and his family. As Simon, therefore, and two of his sons, Judas and Mattathias, were making a progress through the cities of Judah, when they came to Jericho, Ptolemy invited them to an entertainment which he had prepared for them in a castle of his own building: but, while they were drinking and making merry, he caused them, and all that attended them, to be assassinated; and, thinking thereupon to make himself master of the whole land, he sent a party to Gazara, where John Hyrcanus, ^a Simon's third son, resided, with a design to slay him likewise. But Hyrcanus having had intelligence of what passed at Jericho, was prepared to receive his intended murderers, and having dispatched them, hastened to Jerusalem to secure the city, and the mount of the temple, against those whom the traitor had sent to take possession of both. After this Hyrcanus was declared high priest and prince of the Jews, in place of his father Simon, who was greatly ^b lamented; but what finally became of this

execrable villain, ^c we have no manner of account in history.

³ Antiochus having received from Ptolemy an account of the death of Simon and his sons, thought that he had now a fair opportunity to reduce Judea again under the Syrian empire; and therefore he immediately marched a large army thither; and having overrun the country, and driven Hyrcanus out of the field, he shut him up and all his forces within the walls of Jerusalem, and there besieged him. The siege was carried on vigorously; and the defence of the place was executed as gallantly: but Hyrcanus being distressed for want of provisions for so vast a number of people as was in the city, was forced to sue for peace, which was granted him upon these terms, that the besieged should deliver up their arms; that Jerusalem should be dismantled; that tribute should be paid to the king for Joppa, and the other towns which were held by the Jews out of Judea; and that, to buy off the fortress of Jerusalem, from being rebuilt, which Antiochus much insisted on, they should pay him five hundred talents; ^d three hundred down in hand, and the

¹ 1 Mac. xvi. 18; Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 16.

off, no grief and lamentation, too great for a man of his uncommon merit.—*Universal History*, b. ii. c. 11.

^c Josephus has something peculiar in his account of this vile miscreant, namely, that after he had killed his father-in-law Simon, he seized on his wife, and two of her children, and with them betook himself to a certain castle not far from Jerusalem, called Dagon; that when Hyrcanus came to besiege it, the villain's custom was, to bring out his mother and brothers, and to whip and torment them in the sight of all the people, with menaces to cast them headlong from the battlements, unless Hyrcanus withdrew the siege; that when Hyrcanus, out of tenderness to his mother and brothers, was thinking of raising the siege, and suffering the traitor to escape, his mother called aloud to him from the walls, not to regard her, or her children's sufferings, but to proceed in the siege with vigour, that so he might do himself and his family right, in taking a just vengeance upon that execrable monster; that, notwithstanding this magnanimous exhortation, he could not bear to see his relations tortured, and therefore delayed the siege, until the sabbatical year came on, wherein the Jews were obliged to rest; so that Ptolemy, by this means, being delivered from the war, and the siege, after he had slain the mother and brothers of Hyrcanus, withdrew to Zeno, surnamed Catyla, a tyrant who at that time had usurped to himself the government of Philadelphia; (*Antiq.* b. xiii. c. 15.) But our learned Usher is of opinion, that this whole account of Josephus is fabulous.

^d Josephus tells us that Hyrcanus, to find some money for this, and other occasions of the government, broke up the sepulchre of David, and took from thence three thousand talents, and that Herod the Great did afterwards the like, *Antiq.* b. xvii. c. 16, and b. xvi. c. 11. But both these stories are highly improbable. David had now been dead nearly nine hundred years, and what is told of this treasure, supposes it to have been buried with him all this time. It supposes, that as oft as the city of Jerusalem, the palace, and the temple, during the reigns of the kings of Judah, had been plundered of all their wealth and treasure by prevailing enemies, this dead stock still remained safe from all rifle or violation. It supposes, that as oft as these kings were forced to take all the treasure that was found in the house of the Lord, as well as in their own, to relieve the exigencies of the state, they never meddled with this, that was uselessly buried with David in his grave. It supposes, that when one of the worst of their kings (2 Kings xv. 8, &c. and 2 Chron. xxviii. 21, &c.) plundered the temple of its sacred vessels, and cut them in pieces, to melt them down into money for his common occasions; and that when one of the best of them (2 Kings xviii. 15, 16.) was forced to cut off the gold wherewith the gates and pillars of the temple were overlaid, to bribe a destroying enemy, this useless treasure still continued untouched. Nay, it supposes, that when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed both the city and the temple of Jerusalem; so that, for many years they both lay in rubbish, this

¹ 1 Mac. xv. 30—36.

² Ibid. xvi. 14—22; Joseph. Antiq. b. 13. c. 14.

^a Why this captain was called Hyrcanus, some impute to the victory which he obtained over Hyrcanus, whom the books of the Maccabees, and Josephus, call Cendebeus, though others say, that he had this name from a gallant action against the Hyrcanians, perhaps in the expedition wherein he accompanied Alexander Sidetes beyond the Euphrates.—*Calmei's Dictionary*, under the word.

^b The commendation which the author of the first book of the Maccabees, (chap. xiv. 4.) &c. bestows upon Simon, is worth our observation; for he therein tells us, that he 'sought the good of the nation,' in every thing, 'so that his authority always pleased them well;' that during his administration, whilst Syria, and other neighbouring kingdoms were almost destroyed by wars, the Jews lived quietly, 'every man under his own vine and fig tree,' enjoying, without fear, the fruits of their labours, and beholding with pleasure the flourishing state of their country; their trade increased by the reduction of Joppa, and other maritime places; their territories enlarged; their armies well disciplined; their towns and fortresses well garrisoned; their religion and liberties secured; their land freed from heathen enemies, and Jewish apostates; and their friendship courted by all the nations about them, even by the Romans and the Lacedemonians. He observes further, that this Simon was no less zealous for the service of God, in exterminating apostasy, superstition, idolatry, and every thing else that was contrary to his laws; that he was a great protector of the true Israelites, and a friend to the poor; that he restored the service of the temple to its ancient splendour, and repaired the number of its sacred vessels: so that we need not wonder, if the Jewish sanhedrim thought no dignity or honour, while he lived, and when he was so basely and barbarously cut

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other two in a reasonable time, for which they were to give hostages.

The treaty being thus concluded, Hyrcanus invited the king and his army into the city, where he gave them a splendid and most magnificent reception, and afterwards, with some of his forces, attended him to the Parthian war: for Antiochus, under pretence of rescuing his brother Demetrius Nicanor from the hands of Phraortes king of Parthia, who had long detained him as prisoner, marched against him with a powerful army. In three pitched battles he gained the victory, and recovered Babylonia, Medea, and some other provinces that formerly belonged to the Syrian monarchy; and as Hyrcanus had his share in all these actions, he returned with the glory of them at the end of the year; but Antiochus¹ and his army, who chose to winter in the east, were all, in one night,² destroyed by the inhabitants of the country.

In the mean time, Demetrius,² whom Phraortes^b had set at liberty, was returned to Syria, and, upon his brother's death, had recovered his kingdom; but still persisting in his vicious courses, and tyrannical way of government, he had not been long reinstated, before his subjects rebelled against him, and one Alexander Zabina,

pretending to be the son of Alexander Balas, laid claim to his crown; and by the assistance of Ptolemy Physcon, king of Egypt,³ defeated him in a pitched battle. Demetrius fled for refuge to Ptolemais, where his wife Cleopatra^c then resided; but she ordered the gates to be shut against him, so that he was forced to betake himself for refuge to Tyre, where he fell into the hands of his enemies, who first made him prisoner, and then put him to death. Zabina, by this means, ascended the throne of Syria, but he did not sit long there; for Physcon, expecting that he should hold it in homage from him, which the other was not inclinable to do, resolved to pull him down as fast as he had set him up; and therefore, having married his daughter Tryphæna to Antiochus Gryphus, the son of the late Demetrius, he assisted him with an army, which vanquished Zabina, and compelled him to shut himself up in Antioch: but the Antiochians, being informed that he intended to rob their temple of Jupiter of a golden statue, which was very massy, to enable him to carry on the war, thrust him out from thence, so that wandering from place to place, he fell at last into the hands of those who carried him to Antiochus, by whose direction he was put to death.

During these divisions and disturbances, Hyrcanus laid hold on the opportunity, not only to enlarge his own territories, but to shake off the Syrian yoke likewise, and make himself wholly independent. He built the stately tower, or rather castle of Baris,^d upon a steep rock, that was fifty cubits high, and on all sides inaccessible, except towards the temple. He took several cities, which the great draughts of men the kings of Syria had made for their foreign expeditions, had left unprovided with garrisons: he subdued Shechem, the chief seat of the sect of the Samaritans, and destroyed their temple which Sanballat had built them on Mount Gerazim: ⁴he conquered the Idumeans, and prevailed with them all to become proselytes^e to the Jewish reli-

¹ Justin, b. xxxviii.

² Justin, b. xxxviii; Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 16.

treasure in David's sepulchre lay, all the while, safe and secure under it; and that when Antiochus Epiphanes, in like manner, destroyed the city, and robbed the temple of all that he could find, this treasure still escaped his rapacious hands, nor was ever molested, till Hyrcanus, at this time, was forced to make bold with it: all which suppositions seem highly improbable, and beyond belief. There is this, however, to be said in the matter, that as there certainly was a bank or treasury in the temple where money was laid up for the support of the poor, for the relief of widows and fatherless children, and for the maintenance of divine service; and where the great men, and rich men of the nation, were used to deposit their wealth, for its better security: it is not improbable, that upon the account of the frequent invasions and depredations they were liable to, this treasure might be kept in some secret and subterraneous place, unknown to all, but such as were at the head of affairs; that Hyrcanus, being now under great difficulty to raise money, might borrow it out of this bank, till better times enabled him to repay it; and that Herod, when he plundered it quite, might trump up this plausible story, that it neither belonged to church, nor poor, nor any private person, but had been deposited there by David and his successors, as a proper supply for the state in times of need.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 135; and *Universal History*, b. ii. c. 11.

^a The army, which, together with its attendants, amounted to the number of nearly four hundred thousand persons, being forced to disperse all over the country, were quartered at too great a distance from each other to be able in any time to gather together in a body; and as they had grievously oppressed all places wherever they lay, the inhabitants took the advantage of this their dispersion, and conspired with the Parthians, in one and the same day, to fall upon them in their several quarters, and cut their throats; which accordingly they did, and when Antiochus, with the forces which he had about him, hastened to the assistance of the quarters that were near him, he was overpowered, and slain; so that of this numerous army, there scarce returned a man into Syria, to carry the doleful news of this terrible overthrow. Phraortes, however, (who was then king of Parthia,) caused the body of Antiochus to be taken up from among the dead, and having put it into a silver coffin, sent it honourably into Syria, to be there buried among his ancestors.—*Justin*, b. xxxviii. c. 12; *Joseph. Antiq.* b. xiii. c. 16.—*Apion de Syriacis*.

^b The reason of his releasing Demetrius, and sending him into Syria, was, that by raising troubles there for the recovery of his crown, he might force Antiochus to return, in order to suppress them.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 130.

³ Justin, b. xxxix. c. 1, and 2; Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 17.

⁴ Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 17.

^c This Cleopatra was the daughter of Ptolemy Philometer, king of Egypt, and Cleopatra his wife. She was at first married to Alexander Balas, and afterwards to this Demetrius, in her father's lifetime. While Demetrius was detained a prisoner in Parthia, she became the wife of his brother Antiochus Sidetes; but, upon the death of Sidetes, the restoration of Demetrius, and recovery of his kingdom, she returned to his bed again, but never had any great esteem for him, because in his captivity he had married the daughter of the king of Parthia.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 127.

^d The word *baris*, which is originally Chaldee, signifies properly a house, or castle, inclosed on every side, as this was encompassed with the wall which Simon built to stop the communication between the temple and the fortress of Acre. Here it was that Hyrcanus built an apartment, for the safe keeping of his pontifical robes and ornaments, whenever he undressed himself; and here the Asmonean princes took up their abode, and made it their royal palace, until Herod ascended the throne, and having rebuilt, enlarged, and beautified it, gave it the name of *Antonia*, in honour of his friend M. Antony.—*Universal History*, b. ii. c. 11.

^e Among the Jews there were two sorts of proselytes, namely, the proselytes of the gate, and the proselytes of justice. 1. The proselytes of the gate, were so called, because they were permitted to dwell with the Jews in the same cities, and the occasion of their name seems to have been taken from that expression in the fourth commandment, 'the strangers which are within thy gates': where the word *ger*, which we render *strangers*, does every

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gion, so that thenceforward they were incorporated into the same church and nation, and in time lost the name of Idumeans or Edomites, and were all called Jews. He renewed the alliance with the Romans, and, by a decree^a from them, obtained greater privileges and advantages than the Jews ever had before; and now, being much increased in riches and power, he sent his two sons, Aristobulus and Antigonus, to besiege Samaria, who on this occasion gave good proofs of their valour and conduct. The place held out for a whole year; but, being forced to surrender at last, by the direction of Hyrcanus, it was utterly demolished: for he caused not only the houses and walls to be pulled down, and razed, but trenches to be dug every way across the ground whereon it stood, and to be filled with water, that it might never again be built.

After the taking of Samaria, the remainder of his life Hyrcanus enjoyed in full quiet from all foreign wars; but, ¹ towards the conclusion of it, met with some trouble from the Pharisees, a prevailing sect among the Jews. They, by their pretences to extraordinary strictness in religion, had gained to themselves a great reputation and interest among the common people; and, for this reason, Hyrcanus endeavoured to gain their esteem by all manner of favours. Having therefore, one day, invited several of their leading men to a splendid entertainment, when the banquet was over, he desired them to tell him, 'if, in the conduct of his life, he had done any thing contrary to justice and religion, according to the maxims received and taught amongst them.' As soon as he had ended his discourse, all began to praise his

administration, and to give him all the commendations due to a brave man, and a just and worthy governor.

When the rest had done their encomiums, Eleazar, who had hitherto said nothing, rose up, and, directing his discourse to Hyrcanus, "Since you desire," said he, "to have the truth freely told you, if you would show yourself a just man, resign the high priesthood, and content yourself with the civil government of the nation." Hyrcanus then asking him for what reason he gave him that advice? "Because," replied he, "we are assured, by the testimony of the ancients among us, that your mother was a captive taken in the wars, and being therefore the son of a strange woman, you are incapable of that high office and dignity."

This was an allegation false in fact, and therefore all the company resented it with a just indignation; but Hyrcanus was so exasperated at it, that he resolved to be revenged in a very signal manner. This disposition one Jonathan, an intimate friend of his, but a zealous Sadducee, observing, took the opportunity to endeavour to set him against the whole sect of the Pharisees, (among whom Hyrcanus had been bred up,) and to draw him over to that of the Sadducees. To this purpose he suggested to him,—"That this was not the single act of Eleazar, but, most certainly a thing concerted by the whole party; that Eleazar, in speaking it out, was no more than the mouth of the rest; and that, to satisfy himself in these particulars, he needed only refer it to them in what manner the calumniator deserved to be punished." Hyrcanus followed his advice: and therefore, consulting the chief leaders of the Pharisees with relation to the penalty which he might deserve, who had thus slandered the prince, and high priest of his nation, he received for answer,—"That as calumny was no capital crime, all the punishment that it merited could be only whipping^b or imprisonment:"² which fully convinced Hyrcanus, that what Jonathan had suggested was true, and, from that very moment, he became a mortal enemy to the whole sect of the Pharisees. Their traditional constitutions he forthwith abrogated; he enjoined a penalty on all that should observe them; and he himself for ever renouncing their party, went over to that of the Sadducees. But, notwithstanding this, he was an excellent governor; and, from the time of his father's death, having had the administration of all affairs, both in church and state, for the space of nine and twenty years, at his death he left the high priesthood and sovereignty to Judas Aristobulus, who was the first that, in a formal manner, took upon him the title of a king, by putting a diadem on his head.

¹ Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 18.

whit as properly signify *proselytes*. Now, this kind of proselytes was obliged only to renounce idolatry, and to worship God according to the law of nature, which the doctors of the Talmud reduced to seven articles, called by them the 'seven precepts of the sons of Noah.' Whoever performed these were looked upon as in a state of acceptance with God; and allowed, not only to live quietly in their cities, but to resort likewise to their temple, there to offer up their prayers; but then they were permitted to enter no farther than into the outer court, which was called the 'court of the Gentiles.' 2. The 'proselytes of justice' were so called, because they took upon them to observe the whole law, both moral and ceremonial, in the latter of which some of the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, made justification to consist. The former sort of proselytes had no form of initiation, but these were admitted by baptism, sacrifice, and circumcision; and when they were thus admitted, they were received into the Jewish church, and to all the rights and privileges of church-membership, in the same manner as if they had been natural Jews.—*Præface Generale sur le Nov. Test. par de Beausobre, and L'enfant; and Prideaux's Connection*, anno 129.

^a The ambassadors whom Hyrcanus sent to Rome to renew the league, which his father Simon had made with the senate, made their complaint—That Antiochus Sidetes had made war upon the Jews, contrary to what the Romans had in their behalf decreed in that league: that they had taken from them several cities, and made them become tributary to them for others, and forced them to a dishonourable peace, by besieging Jerusalem: Whereupon the senate decreed, that whatever of this kind had been done against them, since the time of the late treaty with Simon, should be all null and void; that all the places which had either been taken from them, or made tributary by the Syrians, should be restored, and made free from all homage, tribute, and other services; that, for the future, the Syrian kings should have no right to march their armies through the Jewish territories; that for all the damages which the Syrians had done the Jews, reparation should be made them; and that ambassadors should be sent from Rome to see this decree put in execution.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. xiii. c. 17.

CHAP. II.—Objections answered and Difficulties obviated.

THE name of Maccabees relates not only to Judas and his brothers, but to all those who joined him in the same

² Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 18.

^b This punishment, among the Jews, was not to exceed forty stripes, Deut. xxv. 3; and therefore the whip wherewith it was inflicted, was made with three thongs, and each blow gave three stripes, they never inflicted upon any criminal more than thirteen, because thirteen of these blows made thirty-nine stripes, and to have added another blow, would have been a transgression of the law, by inflicting two stripes more than what was prescribed.

A.M. 3811. A.C. 163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A.M. 5217. A.C. 164. 1 MAC. v. 1. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 14.—END OF MAC. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19.

cause; and, not only to them, but also to all others, who suffered in the like cause under any of the Grecian kings, whether of Syria or Egypt, though some of them lived long before them. Thus those who suffered under Ptolemy Philopater, at Alexandria, fifty years before the time of Judas, were afterwards called Maccabees, as were likewise Eleazar, and the mother, and her seven sons, though they suffered likewise before Judas erected the standard which gave occasion to the name.

¹ As therefore those books which give us the history of Judas and his brethren, and their wars against the Syrian kings, in defence of their religion and liberties, are called the first and second books of the Maccabees; so that which gives us the history of those, who, in the like cause, under Ptolemy Philopater, were exposed to his elephants at Alexandria, is called the third book of the Maccabees; as that which contains the account of the martyrdom of Eleazar, and of the seven brothers and their mother, is called the fourth.

² According to the order of time, indeed, and the subject matter which they treat of, these books are wrong placed; for the third should be set first, the second placed before the first, and the fourth immediately after it; so that, to reduce them to right order, the first should be put in the place of the third, and the third in the place of the first. Grotius, indeed, is of opinion, that the third book, though it treats of matters antecedent to what is the subject of the first and second, was nevertheless written after them, even after the book of Ecclesiasticus, and upon that account had the name of the third book given it; but the true reason of its being postponed is:—that, being of less repute and authority than the two former, it has always been reckoned after them, according to the order of dignity, though it be before them in the order of time.

The first of these books ³ was originally written in the Chaldee ^a language of the Jerusalem dialect, which was the only language spoken in Judea after the return from the Babylonish captivity, and is a very accurate and excellent history, coming nearest to the style and manner of the sacred historical writings of any extant. The second is a compilation of several pieces; of two epistles from the Jews at Jerusalem to those of Alexandria, ⁴ which seem to be spurious; ^b of a preface preceding

the history; and of the history itself, which is an abridgement of a larger work, composed by one Jason, an Hellenist Jew of Cyrene; but the whole is by no means equal to the excellence and accuracy of the first. The third, ^c which seems to have been written by an Alexandrian Jew, ^d in the Greek language, is set off with enlargements and embellishments of the author's own invention; but, as to the main ground-work of it, or the reality of such a persecution raised against the Jews at Alexandria, it is undoubtedly true; and, though its style be a little too theatrical, its sentiments in many places are both beautiful and sublime. The fourth, ^e which is generally allowed to be the same with what is ascribed to Josephus, the Jewish historian, under the title of "The governing power of reason," is designed to enlarge and adorn the history of old Eleazar, and of the seven brothers, who, with their mother, suffered martyrdom under Antiochus, as it is related more succinctly in the second book of ^f Maccabees.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews ^g has stamped some authority upon these books, by alluding to their history, and the punishment which the Maccabees were made to undergo; but we must not therefore receive them as canonical, because, according to the report of St Jerome, neither the Jewish nor the Christian church ever looked upon them in that capacity: the church indeed read the books of Maccabees but did not receive them among the canonical writings. They read them as books which contained lessons of wholesome instruction, and excellent examples of worthy patriots, and glorious martyrs suffering manfully in the defence of their religion and liberty, and ^h not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.²

⁵ In the whole compass of history, where can we find a pattern in all respects equal to Judas Maccabeus? Most of

³ Chap. vi. and vii.

⁶ Heb. xi. 35, &c.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Calmet's Commentary on 1 Mac. ix. 18.

the second, it is not only written in the name of Judas Maccabeus, who was slain six and thirty years before, the date which it bears, but also contains such fabulous and absurd stuff, as could never have been written by the great council of the Jews, assembled at Jerusalem for the whole nation, as this pretends to be.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 166.

^c This book, though it is in most of the ancient manuscript copies of the Greek Septuagint, and quoted by several fathers as an holy and divine book, yet was it never inserted in the vulgar Latin translation of the bible; and, as our first English translations were made from that, none of them have it among the apocryphal books; nor has it ever since been added, though it certainly deserves a place therein much better than several other pieces that are there.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 214. This is a mistake. It was added to the other books in Beke's bible, (1551) and, lastly, in a new version, in Bishop Wilson's bible.—*Bp. Gleig*.

^d To this day it is extant in most of the ancient manuscript copies of the Greek Septuagint: as, particularly in the Alexandrian manuscript in our king's library, and in the Vatican manuscript at Rome. But, as it was never inserted in the vulgar Latin version of the bible, and as that version was the only one in use through the whole western church, until the reformation, it thence came to pass, that, in the first translations which we have of the bible in the English, the third book of Maccabees has never yet been inserted among other apocryphal tracts, though it certainly deserves a place there much better than some parts of the second book of the Maccabees.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 216.

^e This book, in like manner, though it be found in most of the ancient Greek manuscripts, is not to be met with in any of our Latin bibles; and has therefore no place among our apocryphal books.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 216.

¹ *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 216.

² Calmet's Preface on the third book of Maccabees.

³ *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 166.

⁴ *Ibid*.

Rather than do this therefore, the usual way was, to give one too few; and therefore St Paul tells us, 2 Cor. xi. 24, that when he was whipped by the Jews, he received forty stripes, save one.² *Prideaux's Connection*, in the notes, anno 108.

^a It was extant in this language in the time of St Jerome; for he tells us, that he had seen it, and that the title which it then bore, was *Sharbit sar bene El*, that is, *the sceptre of the prince of the sons of God*, a title which well suited Judas, who was so valiant a commander of God's people then under persecution. From the Chaldee it was translated into Greek by Theodotion, as some think, though others account that version elder; and, from the Greek, both the Latin translation and our English did proceed.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 166.

^b The former of these epistles calls the feast of the dedication, *Συναγωγὴ ἐν Κασίῳ*, that is, *the feast of making tabernacles or booths in Cisten*. Now, as the month Cisten fell in the middle of winter, it can hardly be presumed, that the people could either lie abroad in these booths, or find green boughs enough at this time of the year wherewith to make them. This is an incongruity enough to explode the former epistle. And then, as to

A. M. 3841. A. C. 163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5247. A. C. 164. 1 MAC. v. 1. JOS. HIST. b. xii. c. 14—END OF MAC. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19.

the commanders we read of were carried away with their ambition, vanity or vain glory; and while they valued themselves upon the subduing of others, had no rule or command over their own passions. But in this Jewish leader we find all the characters of a great hero: courage and intrepidity, guided by counsel and wisdom, and without any alloy either of rashness or pride. And what a profound knowledge he had of the laws of God, and the principles of true morality, every speech that he makes to his men, when he is animating them to the combat, and inspiring them with a contempt of the greatest dangers, is a sufficient indication.

He died indeed a little unfortunately, and, when his army had forsaken him, encountered his enemies with an incompetent strength; but, as he had all along fought under the protection of God's good providence, he had no more reason to be diffident at this time than he had been formerly. In his first engagement with the Syrians, when he was to encounter ¹ 'forty thousand horse, and seven thousand foot,' he made proclamation in the camp, that all such ² 'as had betrothed wives, or were building houses, or planting vineyards, or were any ways afraid,' might return home, which could not but reduce his army considerably; and yet we find him, with this handful of men, routing three generals that were sent against him at once, forcing and burning their camp, defeating their troops, and returning loaded with their spoils. His notion was, that God could save with a few as well as with a multitude; and therefore he might look on the desertion of his forces as a providential thing, to make the victory more conspicuous, and to magnify the divine interposition in his deliverance.

³ 'The people that are with thee,' says the Lord to Gideon, 'are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine hand hath saved me: proclaim therefore in the tents of the people, that whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return, and depart from mount Gilead;' which reduced the Jewish army to ten thousand, and these again, by another expedient, were reduced to three hundred; and yet even these, by the assistance of the Lord of Hosts, utterly subdued the vast army of the Midianites. Upon this presumption, then, that Judas thought his army under the care and direction of the same Lord of Hosts, there was no discouragement in the desertion of his forces, nor any false reasoning in his speech: "If our time is come, let us die manfully for our brethren; which, in the present juncture of our affairs, is the best thing we can do: but if it be not, God, we know, is able to give us victory, and to defend us. For how often have we experienced the effects of his almighty power? Is not conquest always in his hands? Or is there any difference, with regard to him between a larger or a smaller number?" These seem to be the reasons that determined Judas in his choice of engaging the enemy, though superior in force: and if these reasons are built upon right notions of God, and confirmed by a long experience of his goodness, they will certainly clear him from all imputation of rashness, or presumptuous tempting of God in this action: an action for which St Ambrose, in particular, has represented him as a perfect model of true heroism: for ⁴ "You

have here," says he, a "warlike bravery, in which there is no silly appearance of honour and decency, because he preferred death to slavery and disgrace."

The message which Moses sent to the king of Edom was delivered in these words,—'Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country. We will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of thy wells. We will go by the king's highway; we will not turn to the right hand or to the left, until we have passed thy borders: and Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword.' But hereupon a question has arisen, whether the Edonites might lawfully, and according to the rules of strict right, deny the Israelites a passage through their country.

⁵ Selden is of opinion, that princes have always a right to deny foreign troops a passage through their country, not only to preserve their territories from being invaded, and their subjects from being plundered, but to prevent their being corrupted likewise, by the introduction of strange manners and customs into their kingdom. But ⁶ Grotius, on the other hand, asserts, that this refusal of the Edonites was an act contrary to the just rights of human society; that, after the promise which the Israelites had made of marching through their country quietly and inoffensively, they might very justly have fallen upon the Edonites, had they not been restrained by a divine prohibition: that, for this very cause, the Greeks thought proper to make war upon the kings of Mysia; and that the principal reason which the powers of Christendom gave for their carrying their arms against the Saracens was, because they hindered their brethren going in pilgrimage to Jerusalem from passing through their country.

However the sentiments of these two great men may be, it is certain, that Gideon's severity against the inhabitants of Succoth, for denying his army some necessary refreshments when they were pursuing the enemy, is justified upon the presumption, that such a refusal was a kind of rebellion against the state, that those who exposed their lives for the public safety had a right to be maintained at the public expense, and that no man might call any thing his own when a demand of this nature came upon him. And if Gideon, ⁷ who was sent immediately by an angel to deliver his brethren, and, in all his achievements, was supported by the Spirit of God, thought it no injustice to put the people of Succoth ⁸ to exquisite tortures for denying his army what they wanted; why might not Judas give the people of Ephron up to military execution, for being so cruel and inhuman as to deny him a passage through their city, when there was no possibility of taking his route any other way?

What the particular situation of this Ephron was, we can no where learn; but the author of the book of Maccabees seems to imply, that the country all about it was impassable, that is, was very probably so full of water and morasses, that the ⁹ company which Judas had along with him must have been lost, had they been obliged to turn either to the right hand or to the left. In their own defence, therefore, they were necessitated to make their way through the town; and if, in the siege and

⁵ Mare Clausum, c. 20.

⁶ On the law of War and Peace, b. ii. c. 2; and Mare Clausum, b. i. c. 1.

Judas vi. 14.

⁸ Chap. viii. 16.

⁹ 1 Mac. v. 45, 46.

¹ 1 Mac. iii. 39. ² Ibid ver. 56. ³ Judges vii. 2, &c.

⁴ Ambros. b. i. Offic. c. 41.

A.M.3841. A.C.163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M.5247. A. C.164. 1MAC.vi.1 JOS. HIST.b. xii. c.14—END OF MAC.JOSH ST. b. xiii. c. 19.

sackage of it, great numbers of people were put to the sword, this was properly the effect of their own folly and obstinacy, in refusing not so much to do a favour as an act of common right, even when it was humbly requested by a general, at the head of a victorious army.

The strength of the behemoth (which by most interpreters, is supposed to be the elephant ^a) is thus expressed in the book of Job: ¹ 'His bones are as strong pieces of brass, and his small bones like bars of iron;' and therefore it is no wonder, that creatures of this prodigious strength (when the method of fighting was chiefly by force) should be made use of in all military expeditions. ² Some of these creatures have been known to carry two cannons, fastened together by a cable rope of three thousand pounds' weight each, for five hundred paces together, with their teeth; and what reason have we to doubt, but that they are able to carry a much greater weight upon their backs?

The largest and strongest species of these animals is said to be bred in India, (for those that come out of Africa are not near so big;) and therefore, if we suppose that the elephants which Antiochus carried to the wars with him were of this Indian breed, (as ³ the circumstances of the whole story make it highly probable that they were) there cannot be so much difficulty as is imagined in one of these creatures carrying upon its back two and thirty men light armed, (as archers are known to be,) with towers, or other such vehicles as might be thought proper to give them an ascendant in the fight, and so secure them from the darts and other weapons of the enemy. For, upon supposition that each of these men, one with another, weighed an hundred and fifty pounds, the amount of the weight of thirty-two will be no more than four thousand eight hundred pounds; and yet it is a common thing to meet with elephants of a moderate size, that will carry you five or six thousand pounds' weight; so that, upon the lowest computation, we have full two thousand pounds' weight allowed for the wooden machine wherein the slingers and archers were seated and secured.

The danger indeed of approaching this animal, with such a number of armed men upon its back, is very visible; but most of the Jewish doctors and fathers of the Christian church look upon Eleazar's action in killing the royal elephant, (as he took it to be,) though at the expense of his own life, as a singular instance of courage and magnanimity. Fool-hardiness it would have been, had he been certainly persuaded, that the creature would have fallen upon him so directly and so suddenly as it did; but why might he not rather think, that it might possibly tumble down on one side, so as to miss him, or live for some moments after it had received the wound, so as to give him an opportunity to escape?

⁴ The motives which the history assigns for his adventuring upon this exploit are not discommendable. The preservation of our laws, liberties, and religion, requires,

upon a proper occasion, the hazarding our lives: our reputation, too, is a natural good, which we are not only bound to preserve, but, by all lawful means, allowed to improve and increase; and therefore charity ⁵ will not suffer us, without very good reasons, to believe, that these motives, which in themselves were laudable, lost all their merit, and were adulterated by any sinister ends that Eleazar might propose to himself. We cannot, I say, without rashness, blame him, or deny him that justice which we owe to all actions that are apparently commendable, that is, to believe them really good, so long as we have no proofs to the contrary: and, as it is no uncommon thing in such heroic acts as these, to find persons (under the Jewish economy more especially) instigated by a divine impulse, it will best become us to suspend our judgments concerning this action of Eleazar's, until we can find arguments to prove that he had no motive extraordinary to attempt it.

But there is not the like reason, I think, to suspend our judgment concerning the action of Razis, which, upon due consideration, was no better than self-murder. ⁶ To consider it, indeed, according to the notion which some heathens had of courage and magnanimity, contempt of death, and love of liberty, it comes nearer to what they called true heroism, than all the great actions that history has recorded of the Greeks and Romans. Nay, the Jews themselves are willing to place this man in the number of their most illustrious martyrs, and from his example (as well as some others) pretend, that upon certain occasions, self-murder is not only allowable, but highly commendable; never considering, ⁷ that, in the sixth commandment, it is as much prohibited as the murder of any one else, and that, if I must not shed the blood of another man for this very reason, because ⁸ 'he is made in the image of God,' I must not shed the blood of myself, because I also am a man, and made in the image of God as well as he.

⁹ Razis, indeed, was sorely beset, and ready to have been taken by his enemies on every side; but then he should have surrendered himself to their treatment, and testified his magnanimity, not in butchering himself, but in manfully enduring whatever inflictions they laid upon him. Had the martyrs of old thought themselves at liberty to dispose of their own lives upon any emergent danger, or apprehension of suffering, we had read little of their being ¹⁰ 'mocked and scourged,' and tormented, and less of their being 'stoned, and sawn asunder,' but a great deal of their stepping out of the world, as some call it, when any difficulty or persecution came to press upon them.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that as this was not the practice of these worthies of old, who ¹¹ 'obtained a good report by faith,' it was not true courage, but the want of it, that put Razis upon committing this barbarous cruelty to himself; that it was pride, not patience, which is the proper virtue of a martyr, that made him fly to death, merely for refuge against these outrages which he had not strength of mind to withstand; and therefore St Austin's short reflection upon the whole is, ¹²

¹ Mac. xl. 18. ² Calmet's Commentary on 1 Mac. vi. 37.

³ Ibid.

⁴ 1 Mac. vi. 44.

^a This seems to be a mistake. Most of the modern interpreters suppose the behemoth to be the hippopotamus or river-horse. For the arguments in favour of this, see Taylor's, Calmet's, and Harris's Natural Hist. of the Bible.—Ed.

⁵ 1 Mac. vi. 44. ⁶ Calmet's Commentary on 2 Mac. xiv. 42.

⁷ Bishop Fleetwood against Self-murder. ⁸ Gen. ix. 6.

⁹ 2 Mac. xiv. 42.

¹⁰ Heb. xi. 36, 37.

¹¹ Heb. xi. 39.

¹² Epist. 61.

A. M. 3841. A. C. 163; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5247. A. C. 1641. MACC. I. JOS. HIST. b. xii. c. 14—END OF MACC. JOS. HIST. b. xii. c. 19.

“The deed hath been told, but not applauded, it is rather to be considered than imitated.”

This reflection indeed will hold good in several other matters related in the history of the Maccabees, namely, that the author of it neither commends nor discommends, but only relates them. Demetrius Soter, for instance, was the rightful heir to the crown of Syria, and Alexander Balas no more than a vile impostor; and yet Jonathan thought proper to adjoin himself to him, because ¹ he remembered what a bitter enemy Demetrius had all along been to the Jewish interest; how oft he had sent his generals with positive orders to take his brother Judas dead or alive; and what ruin and oppression his frequent invasions had brought upon the whole nation. And therefore no wonder, that we find him taking a contrary part to the man, whom he looked upon as an enemy to his country. Demetrius Nicanor, in like manner, was the true heir to the same crown, and Alexander Zabina no more than a broker's son of Alexandria; and yet we find John Hyrcanus entering into a league and alliance with the latter, because indeed Demetrius had behaved so ungratefully to the Jews, (who had rescued him from the rebellion of his subjects,) as to load them with heavy taxes, even though he had promised them an immunity from them to engage their assistance.

The truth is, the kingdom of Syria was always in hostility with Judea. Its kings were tyrants, and great persecutors of the Jewish religion; and therefore what reason had any Jewish prince to trouble himself with the right of succession in an enemy's country? All that he seemed to be concerned in was, ² to make what advantages he could of their divisions, and by adjoining himself to the party, from whence he might expect the best treatment and support, to secure and establish his own, and his country's interest.

It is a mistake, however, to think, that Hyrcanus destroyed Samaria, out of the hatred which the Jews bore to the sect of the Samaritans, because, upon examination, we shall find, that none of that sect did, at that time, live in that place. ³ The ancient Samaritans, who were of the sect that worshipped God on mount Gerizzim, had slain in a tumult, (as we related before,) one Andromachus, a favourite of Alexander the Great, whom he had constituted governor of Syria; and in revenge for this base act Alexander had expelled them all from Samaria, and in their stead, new planted the city with a colony of Macedonians, Greeks, and Syrians mixed together, and they were the descendants of those who inhabited Samaria, when Hyrcanus made war against it; for the expelled Samaritans retired to Shechem, where they settled their abode, and made it the head seat of their sect ever since.

In like manner, it is a mistake to think, that, because Hyrcanus is said to have left the Pharisees, and adjoined himself to the Sadducees, therefore he espoused their doctrine against the resurrection and a future state. ⁴ On the contrary, it seems highly probable, that at this time the Sadducees had gone no further in the doctrine of this sect, than their rejecting all the unwritten traditions which the Pharisees held in so much veneration. Josephus mentions no other difference, in his time, be-

tween them; ^a nor does he say, that Hyrcanus went over to the Sadducees in any other particular, than in the abolishing the traditional constitutions of the Pharisees; and therefore we can hardly think, that so good and righteous a man, as he is represented to have been, would, upon any provocation whatever, have been induced to renounce the great and fundamental articles of his religion; but it can be no diminution to his character we hope, that he made it his business to oppose those false interpretations of the law, which our blessed Saviour, in the course of his ministry, so severely condemned.

CHAP. III.—Of the Original and Tenets of the Jewish Sects.

It seems very probable, indeed, that during the times of the prophets, who, by their commerce with God, were immediately instructed in his will, no disputes about matters of religion could possibly arise, because their authority was sufficient for the decision of every controversy; but that when this race of prophets disappeared, and their authority ceased, men soon began to wrangle and dispute, and to form themselves into different sects and parties, upon the first occasion that offered.

After the return of the people from Babylon, Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the governor, together with the chief elders, their contemporaries and others that afterwards succeeded them, collected together all the ancient and approved usages of the Jewish church, which had been in practice before the captivity. These, and whatever else pretended to be of the like nature, Ezra brought under a review, and, after due examination, having settled them by his approbation and authority, he thereby gave birth to what the Jews call their Oral Law. For ⁵ they pretend, that when God gave unto Moses the law on Mount Sinai, he gave him, at the same time, the interpretation of it, with a strict injunction to commit the former to writing, but to deliver the other down to posterity only by word of mouth; that, pursuant to this injunction, Moses wrote several copies of the law, which he left behind him among the several tribes, but, in the interpretation of it, he took care more especially to instruct his successor Joshua; that, after his death, Joshua delivered this interpretation, or oral law, to the elders who succeeded him, and that they delivered it to the prophets, who transmitted it down to each other, until it came to Jeremiah; that Jeremiah delivered it to Baruch; Baruch to Ezra; Ezra to the men of the great synagogue, until it came to Simon the Just; and that Simon delivered it to others, who handed it down in a continued succession, until it came to Rabbah Judah Hakkadosh, who wrote it into the book which they call the Mishnah.

But all this is a mere fiction, spun out of the fertile

⁵ Prideaux's Connection, anno 446.

^a There is good ground for supposing that the Sadducees held the impious tenets ascribed to them in the New Testament, long before the time of Josephus, and that even Sador, the founder of the sect, denied that there was any future state of rewards and punishments. Indeed the author seems to allow as much in the succeeding dissertation.—Ed.

¹ Prideaux's Connection, anno 153.

² Ibid. 331.

³ Ibid. 109.

⁴ Ibid. 108.

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invention of the Talmudists, and the little truth that there seems to be in it, is only this,—that after the death of Simon the Just, there arose a sort of men, (whom the Jews call Tannaim, or Mishnical doctors,) that made it their business to study and descant upon these traditions, which had been received, and allowed by Ezra and the men of the great synagogue, to draw such consequences and inferences from them, as they thought proper; to ingraft these into the body of the ancient traditions, and to expect from others that they should receive them, as if they had been as authentic as the other. But this imposition was too gross and palpable not to be attended with remonstrances from several: so that, in a short time, the Jewish church came to be divided into two grand parties, namely, those who adhered to the written law only, among whom the Sadducees were the chief; and those who, over and above this, received the traditions and constitutions of the elders, among whom the Pharisees made the greatest figure.

¹ The most ancient sect among the Jews, was that of the Sadducees, which took its name from Sodoek, the founder of it. This Sodoek (as the Talmudic story is) was the disciple of Antigonus Socho, who lived, according to the Jewish calculation, about three hundred years before Christ, and used often to inculcate to his disciples, that they ought to serve God disinterestedly, without any view of compensation, and not like slaves, who only serve their master for the sake of a reward: and from hence his disciples Sodoek and Baithus made this wrong inference, namely, that there was no reward to be expected in another world, and consequently that the soul dies, and the body will not rise again. Whether this mistake of the doctrine of Antigonus, or, as others suppose, the dissoluteness of manners which at that time might prevail, gave occasion to the opinion of the Sadducees, but so it was, that, in process of time, they grew to be very impious and detestable. They denied the resurrection of the dead, the being ^a of angels, and the exist-

tence of the spirits or souls of men departed. Their notion was, that there was no spiritual being, but God only; that, as to man, this world was his all; that, at his death, his soul and body die together, never to live any more; and that therefore there is no future reward or punishment. They acknowledged indeed, that God made this world by his power, and governs it by his providence, and for the carrying on of this government, hath ordained rewards and punishments; but then they suppose, that these rewards and punishments are in this world only; and for this reason alone it was, that they worshipped him, and paid obedience to his laws. All unwritten traditions, as well as all written books, ^b except the five books of Moses, they absolutely rejected; and the probable reason why they did so, is, that they could not so well maintain these opinions, which are not so flatly contradicted in the Pentateuch, as in the other sacred books, if once they admitted these books to be canonical. All supernatural helps to their duty they utterly denied: for their doctrine was, that God had made man perfect master of all his actions, with a full freedom to do either good or evil as he thinks fit, without any assistance to him for the one, or restraint upon him as to the other; and for this reason, because they looked upon all men to have an inherent power to make their condition better or worse, according as they took right or wrong measures, whenever they sat in judgment upon criminals, they were always remarked to pass the severest sentences; as indeed their general character was, that they were a very ill-natured sort of men, churlish and morose in their behaviour even to each other, but cruel and savage to every one besides. Their principles, one might suppose, would have naturally led them into all manner of riot and excess; but it was not always so. Some of them were men of rigid virtue and strict probity; for ² though they had cast off the belief of a future state, yet as they admitted of a providence to punish vice, and reward virtue, in this life, their desire

² Basnage's History of the Jews, b. ii. c. 6.

¹ Prideaux's Connection, anno 446; L'amy and Beausobre's Introduction.

^a In what sense the Sadducees denied the existence of angels, it is difficult to determine, since they certainly acknowledged the authority of the Pentateuch. Some pretend, that they accounted the invention of angels but a novel thing, and that their very name was never heard of, until the return from the captivity, and therefore they rejected them; whilst others suppose, that they looked upon them as the inseparable powers of God, which, like the rays of the sun, without being parted from that planet, shine and shed their influence here below. But now, considering that the Sadducees received the five books of Moses, they could hardly entertain any such notions as these. As therein they read of frequent apparitions of angels, they could not fancy them a new invention of the Rabbins that returned from the captivity. As they saw in these books, that they properly came down from heaven upon earth, they could not imagine that they were beings inseparable from the Deity; and therefore we may suppose, that they rather looked upon them only as so many phantasms; and that, as the bodies, which these angels put on, had perhaps only the appearance of human bodies, the same notion they might have of the spirits which animated them: because every thing, except God, in their opinion, was material.—*Basnage's History of the Jews*, b. ii. c. 6. [Mr Taylor, in his supplements to Calmet, remarks, that it is more likely when the Sadducees are charged with denying the existence of angels, we misapply the term; intending by it celestial angels, whereas they meant it of disembodied human spirits. If this were the case, it easily accounts for the reception of the Pentateuch.]—*Ed.*

^b Mr Basnage, in his History of the Jews, (b. ii. c. 6.) though he allows the question to be difficult, seems to be of a contrary opinion. 1st, because the Sadducees taught and prayed in the temple, where the prophets, and other holy writers, were read, as appears from the example of Christ, who explained a passage out of Isaiah. 2dly, because Josephus, who ought to have been well acquainted with the principles of this sect, relates of them, (b. vi. c. 9.) that they received what was written. And, 3dly, because the Pharisees, in their disputes with them about the doctrine of the resurrection, quote, not only the writings of Moses, but those of the prophets likewise, and other hagiographers, whose authority the others do not deny, but only endeavour to elude the force of the passages that are thence produced against them. Upon the whole, therefore, Scaliger (*Elench. Triher.* c. 16.) is of opinion, that these Sadducees did not absolutely reject all the sacred writings, but rather looked upon them as books composed by holy men, whose memoirs they revered, though they could not believe them of the like authority with the law of Moses, which to them was the only rule of faith. But notwithstanding this, "the account which is given us in the gospel," says the learned Prideaux, "of the disputation which Christ had with the Sadducees, plainly proves the contrary. For seeing there are so many texts in the prophets and hagiographa, which plainly and directly prove a future state, and the resurrection from the dead, no other reason can be given why Christ waved all these proofs, and drew his argument, only by consequence, from what is said in the law, but that he knew, that the Sadducees, had rejected the prophets and the hagiographa, and therefore would admit of no arguments, but from the law only."—*Anno 107.*

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of present and temporal happiness put a restraint upon their appetites, and kept them within the bounds of their duty. And for the same reason, they were not without their expectations of a Messias to come. Nay, upon this subject they argued with more consistency than the other Jews did. For confining all their hopes to the present state of things, and looking upon him as a temporal king and deliverer only, they had a more than ordinary interest and concern in his appearance in their lifetime, that thereby they might reap the fruits of his conquests, and enjoy the happiness which the prophets had promised during his reign. Their number was the fewest of all the sects of the Jews; but they were men of the best quality and greatest estates: and as all those who were of the greatest power and riches, were cut off in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, it is generally supposed that this whole sect then perished with them. ^a

¹ The Jews, who were carried captive into Egypt, though they kept themselves clear from the idolatry of the country, did nevertheless, about the time of Ptolemy Philometer, fall into their method of handling divinity, and were not a little fond of their allegorical interpretations. This mystical treatment of the scriptures alarmed others, who, from the word *Kara*, ² which signifies to read, obtained the name of Karraites, that is, such as adhered to the text, and were literal expounders of scripture. Josephus indeed takes no notice of any people of this denomination; but his silence is no argument against their existence, because we find him omisive in other particulars of the like nature. The Herodians, for instance, a sect well known in the gospel, and remarkable for their political as well as doctrinal principles, he makes no mention of, and might therefore well pass by the Karraites, who, having no peculiar tenets, but only that of teaching and expounding the law according to its literal sense, could not well be discriminated by the name of any particular sect. These Scripturists, as they were called, ³ when they came to be headed by Shammai, a learned doctor of the law, who about an hundred years before our Saviour Christ, opened a great school against Hillel, who was for the

mystical way of interpretation, made a considerable figure: but at length the school of Hillel, by the determination of a voice from heaven, as was pretended, carried it against the school of Shammai, so that the Karraites were quite absorbed, till they appeared again about the sixth century after Christ.

At this time the 'Talmud, a vast voluminous book which contained all the traditions of the Jewish church was published, and a great deal of deference and veneration was required to be paid to it: but when men of learning and judgment came to look into it, and found it, as it is, stuffed with trifling and incredible stories, they rejected its authority, as not deserving their belief, and betook themselves wholly to such as were of undoubted credibility, 'the writings of the law and the prophets.' In consequence of which there arose two parties, one standing up for the Talmud and its traditions, and the other disavowing both, as containing, in their opinion, the inventions of men, and not the doctrines and commands of God. Those who stood up for the Talmud and its traditions were chiefly the rabbins and their followers, from whence their party had the name of rabbinites, and the others, who were for the scripture only, were again called Karraites; under which two names the controversy was at that time carried on between them, and so continues even to this day.

Among all the Jewish doctors, these Karraites are justly accounted the most learned set of men; but their number, in these western parts especially, is but small, ⁴ About the middle of the last century there was a particular account taken of them, wherein it appeared that in Poland there were 2000; at Caffa in Crim-Tartary, 1200; at Cairo, 300; at Damascus, 200; at Jerusalem, thirty; in Babylon, 100; and in Persia, 600, which, in all, amount to no more than 4430; a small number in comparison of the bulk of the nation, which is of the party of the rabbinites.

The Pharisees were so called from the Hebrew word *Pharas*, which signifies to separate; because the prevailing passion, or rather ambition, of this sect was, to distinguish and separate itself from the rest of the people, by a greater degree of holiness and piety, but accompanied with very much affectation and abundance of vain observances. ⁵ At what time this sect began first to appear, is no easy matter to determine. Josephus makes mention of them in the government of Jonathan, an hundred and forty years before Christ, as a very powerful body of men at that time; nor is it improbable, that their origin was somewhat earlier, and that, as soon as the Sadducees discovered their principles to the world, these men of different sentiments might not long after rise up in opposition to them: for it is evident from the character which the Jewish historian gives of them, that, in the main articles of their belief, they were entirely repugnant to the Sadducees. ⁶ The Pharisees believe in a fate, says he, and attribute all things to it, but nevertheless they acknowledge the freedom of man; but how they made these two apparent incompatibles consist together, is no where sufficiently explained. They teach, that God will one day judge the

¹ Basnage's History of the Jews, b. ii. c. 9.

² Lamy's Introduction, b. i. c. 9.

³ Prideaux's Connection, anno 37.

^a This is not true. The sect of the Sadducees was not extinguished; it was much reduced by the destruction of Jerusalem, and by the dispersion of the Jews; but it revived afterwards. At the beginning of the third century it was so formidable in Egypt, that Ammonius, Origen's master, thought himself obliged to write against them; or rather against the Jews, who tolerated the Sadducees, though they denied the fundamental points of their religion. The emperor Justinian mentions the Sadducees in one of his edicts, banishes them out of his dominions, and condemns them to the severest punishments, as a people that maintained atheistical and impious tenets. Annas or Ananus, a disciple of Juda, son of Nachman, a famous rabbin, about A. D. 755, declared himself, it is said, in favour of the Sadducees, and strenuously protected them against their adversaries. They had also a celebrated defender in the twelfth century in the person of Alpharagius, a Spanish rabbi. *Gazor Tornick*, David, p. 125. There are still Sadducees in Africa, and other places, who deny the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body; but few declare themselves for these opinions. Some have confounded the Sadducees with such as hold the metempsychosis, and with the defenders of the two principles, that is, the Manichees; but it is certain these sects are different from the Sadducees.—Taylor's *Calmet*, 4vo.—Ed.

⁴ Calmet's Dictionary under the word.

⁵ See Lamy's Introduction, and Prideaux's Connection.

⁶ Josephus on the Jewish Wars, b. ii. c. 12.

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world, and punish or reward men according to their merits. They maintain, that souls are immortal, and that, in the other world, some will be shut up in an eternal prison and others sent back again; but with this difference, that those of good men shall enter into the bodies of men, those of wicked men into the bodies of beasts; which exactly agrees with the famous transmigration of Pythagoras. Their adherence to the law was so exact, that, for fear of violating the least precept of it, they scrupulously observed every thing that had the least relation to it, even though the law had neither commanded nor forbidden them. Their zeal for the traditions of the elders was such, that they derived them from the same fountain with the written word itself, pretending that Moses received both of them from God on Mount Sinai, and therefore ascribing an equal authority to both. They had a notion, that good works were meritorious; and therefore they invented a great number of supererogatory ones, upon which they valued themselves more than upon a due observance of the law itself. Their frequent washings and ablutions,¹ their long prayers in public places, their² nice avoidance of reputed sinners, their fasting and great abstinence, their penance and mortification,³ their minute payment of tithes, their⁴ strict observance of the sabbath, and⁵ ostentatious enlargement of^a phylacteries, were all works of this kind; which nevertheless gained them such esteem and veneration, that while the common people loved, the greater ones dreaded them, so that their power and authority in the state was considerable, though generally attended with pernicious consequences, because their hearts were evil: for notwithstanding their show of mighty zeal and great austerity, they were in reality, no better than what our Saviour calls them, vain and ostentatious, spiteful and malicious, griping and voracious, lovers of themselves only, and despisers of others; inasmuch, that it was hard to say which was most predominant in them, their insatiable avarice, their insupportable pride, or abominable hypocrisy.

In conjunction with the Pharisees, the Scribes are often mentioned in the Scriptures of the New Testament. They were not however any particular sect, but a profession of men of divers kinds, following literature. For generally all that were any way learned among the

Jews were, in the time of our Saviour and his apostles, called scribes, but especially those, who by their skill in the law and divinity of the Jews, were advanced to sit in Moses' seat, either as judges in their sanhedrim, or teachers in their schools or synagogues. Both their name and profession began immediately after the Babylonish captivity, about five hundred years before the birth of Christ; for Ezra himself was one of the first. They were a body of the most learned men of the nation, and chiefly of the sect of the Pharisees, though some of them might possibly be Karrites, or Anti-traditionists, as it seems to appear from one of them asking our Saviour,⁶ 'which was the first commandment of all, and being so highly pleased with his answer.

Those who were descended from the stock of Levi, were usually called scribes of the clergy; but such as were sprung from any other tribe, were named scribes of the people. The business of the latter was to take care to preserve the purity of the text in all the bibles which they copied out, and to see that no corruption was crept into the original. It was not held proper for every vulgar pen to transcribe the great mysteries of the law, and therefore this peculiar order of men was appointed to that purpose; but they did not so entirely apply themselves to it, as not to take in many other matters both of civil and religious concern, being public notaries in the sanhedrim and courts of justice, as well as registers in the synagogues. The office of the scribes of the clergy was to teach in public, and instruct the people, by expounding to them the law in their sermons and set discourses; by which practice they grew into such repute in the Jewish state, that it was hard to say, whether the Pharisees or they were held in the greater veneration: for what the Pharisees gained among the common people by their pretences to extraordinary sanctity, these more justly obtained by their zeal for the written word, in preserving it from the dangers of corruption, and expounding it in the ears of the people.

It is supposed, with a good deal of probability, that the sect of the Essenes began about 150 years before Christ, and during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, when great numbers of Jews were driven into the wilderness, where they inured themselves to a hard and laborious course of living. Why we find no mention made of them in all the New Testament, the probable reason may be, that the major part of them lived in Egypt at a considerable distance from Judea, which at this time was infested with such persecutions and intestine broils, as were abhorrent to their retired and hermitic course of life, which, as it secluded them from all places of great resort, might make them less curious to inquire after our Saviour's person and doctrine, thinking, very probably, that if he was really the Messiah, he would not fail to seek and find out them; but that if he was not, he had already enemies enough to oppose him, without their leaving the solitary and contemplative life they were accustomed to, merely to bear testimony against him. Philo, who gives a full account of these people, tells us that they were called *Essenes*, from the Greek word *εσως*, which signifies *holy*, and that there were two sorts of them: some who, living in society and marrying, though with a great deal of wariness and circumspection, lived

¹ Mat. vi. 5, &c. ² Luke vii. 39. ³ Mat. xxiii. 23.

⁴ Chap. xii. 2.

⁵ Chap. xxiii. 5.

^a The word *phylactery*, in the Greek, signifies a *place to keep any thing in*; in the Hebrew, it is called *tephillim*, which signifies *prayers*, because the Jews wear their phylacteries chiefly when they go to their devotion. It is a common opinion, that these phylacteries were long pieces of parchment, whereon were written certain passages out of Exodus and Deuteronomy, which they tied to their foreheads and left arm, in memory of the law; but a late explainer of the Jewish customs assures us, that they were parchment cases, formed with very great nicety, into their proper shapes: that the case for their head had four cavities, into each of which they put a piece of parchment rolled up, wherein were written some sections of the law; but that which was for the arm, had but one cavity, and into it they put one piece of parchment, wherein four passages of Scripture were written. (*Lamy's Introduction*, b. i. c. 16.) The whole of this custom is founded on Exod. xiii. 9, and Deut. vi. 8; but the words are only metaphorically to be understood, as a command to have God's laws perpetually before our eyes, and his deliverance always in remembrance. It cannot be denied, however, that these phylacteries were generally worn by the Jews in our Saviour's time, and were not disused so late as St Jerome's.—

Lamy's Introduction.

⁶ Mark xii. 28, &c.

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in villages, and applied themselves to husbandry and other innocent trades and occupations, and were therefore called practical; but others who, living a kind of monastic life, gave themselves wholly up to meditation, and were therefore called the contemplative Essenes: but however they differed in their manner of life, they were both of the same belief, and followed the same maxims.

They had not indeed the like traditions with the Pharisees, but as they were allegorists, they had several mystical books which served them for a rule in explaining the sacred writings, all of which, contrary to the Sadducees, they acknowledged and received. They believed that God governs the world, but by such an absolute predestination of every thing, as allowed mankind no liberty of choice in all their actions. They acknowledged a future state, thinking that the souls of good men went into the Fortunate Islands, while those of the wicked were shut up in subterraneous places; but as for the resurrection of the body, and the soul's returning to it again after they were once parted, of this they had no manner of notion. All practical religion they reduced to these three kinds. 1, The love of God; 2, the love of virtue; and, 3, the love of mankind. 1, Their love of God expressed itself in accounting him the author of all good, and, consequently, applying to him every morning and night for the blessings they wanted: in their abstaining from swearing, from lying, and all other sins that are abhorrent to his nature; and in their strict observance of the sabbath, and all other holy rites, except sacrificing; for though they sent their gifts to the altar, yet they themselves went not thither, presuming that the sanctity of their lives was the purest and most acceptable sacrifice to God that they could offer. 2, Their love of virtue was shown in the government of their passions, their refraining from pleasures, their contempt of riches, their abstinence in eating, their continence, their patience, the simplicity of their speech, and the modesty of their carriage. And, 3, their love of mankind appeared in their great benevolence and strict justice; their charity to the poor, and hospitality to strangers; and there needs no other proof of their love to one another, than the union in which they lived. For they had the same houses, the same provisions, the same habits, the same tables; their gains were put in the common stock; they divided the care of the sick among them; and honoured the elder men of their society with the same reverence, as if they had been their fathers.

This strictness and regularity of theirs gave them an eminent character, and made it a matter of no small consequence to be admitted into their society. For when, after a due course of probation, any one presented himself for that purpose, they bound him under the most solemn vows and protestations, "To love and worship God, and do justice to all men; to profess himself an enemy to the wicked, and a friend to the lovers of virtue; to keep his hands from theft, and all fraudulent dealings, and his soul unpolled with the desire of unjust gain; not to usurp upon his inferiors, nor distinguish himself from them by any ornaments of dress or apparel; not to conceal any of the mysteries of religion from his brethren, nor to disclose any to the profane, though it were to save his life; but to preserve the doctrine he professed, the books that were written of it, and the names of those from whom he had it." This was the form of admission into their communion which whoever violated in any

gross instance, was immediately excluded, and never received again without the deepest humiliation and repentance. And if such was the religion and manner of life of the Essenes, we have less reason to be surprised, at our finding some authors so much extolling their courage and magnanimity upon several occasions, as persons who, under distresses and persecutions, suffered death, and the most grievous torments, even with joy and cheerfulness, rather than say or do any thing contrary to the law of God. They are said, however, to have¹ greatly degenerated from their primitive purity of life and doctrine. In the time of Trajan and the reign of Justinian, though they were known under the pompous title of "angels or angelic persons," yet were they found to come infinitely short of the beings whose names they assumed, and, upon that account, falling into great disesteem, in a very short time^a they dwindled into nothing.

There was another sect among the Jews,² mentioned in the gospels, which, though of later original, may not improperly be considered in this place, and that is the Herodians,^b who, in their main principles, were not very different from the Sadducees. They sprang up, no doubt, in the time of Herod the Great, some twenty or thirty years before Christ, and had their denomination from him; but upon what account is not so well agreed. The common opinion is, that they looked upon Herod as the promised Messiah: but it is a very improbable thing, that any Jew should, in the time of our Saviour's ministry, above thirty years after the death of Herod, hold him to have been the Messiah, when they had found no one of those particulars which they expected from the Messiah performed by him, but rather every thing quite contrary.³ Others therefore suppose, that they were called Herodians, because they constituted a sodality, or club, as we call it, in honour of Herod at Jerusalem, as there were several in Rome in honour of their emperors.^c But, since the earliest of these sodalities in Rome were not instituted till after the death of Augustus, who outlived Herod sixteen years and upwards, this could be no pattern or foundation for the institution of the like in memory of Herod, who died so long before.

¹ Basnage's History of the Jews, b. ii. c. 13.

² Mat. xxii. 16; Mark iii. 16; viii. 15; xii. 13.

³ Scaliger in Animadver. ad Eusebii Chron. et Casaubon. Exercit. &c.

^a Some indeed are of opinion, that these Essenes did renounce Judaism, and were converts to Christianity; and that such among them as were called *Therapeutæ* became monks, and were formed into that order by St Mark, who was the first founder of the Christian church in Alexandria. But though it seems not unlikely, that some of this sect might be converted, yet, that the main body of them should embrace Christianity, and so be lost in the societies of Christian hermits, is far from being probable; especially since we find no traces of any such institution as monkism till after the beginning of the second century, when these ascetics, who had formerly fled from persecution, finding the sweets of their retirement and solitude, began to multiply, and so erected themselves into bodies.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 107; and *Basnage's History of the Jews*, b. ii. c. 13.

^b Accordingly St Mark (chap. viii. 15.) calls that 'the heaven of Herod,' which Christ styles 'the heaven of the Sadducees,' Mat. xvi. 6.

^c Such were the Augustales, Adrianales, Antonini, &c. constituted in honour of Augustus, Adrian, and Antoninus, and the rest of the emperors, after their death.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 107.

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Herod, no doubt, came into the government with great opposition, and, as he was by birth a foreigner, and had made his entrance with much blood, his title was not acknowledged by the greater part of the Jews, especially as long as Antigonius was alive. Those, therefore, that would own his title and espouse his interest, might, for this reason, perhaps, go under the name of Herodians; but this seems not to be the whole of the matter. Our blessed Saviour cautions his disciples ¹ ‘against the leaven,’ that is, against the evil and erroneous tenets, of Herod; which seems to imply, that Herod himself was the author of some false notions, which constituted a particular sect differing from the other sects of the Jews; and that his followers, imbibing these principles from him, had the denomination of Herodians. ² Forasmuch, then, that Herod, ³ the better to secure his possession of the throne, had put himself under the Roman protection, ⁴ contrary to an express precept of the law; and, to ingratiate himself with the great men at Rome, built temples, and erected images in them for idolatrous worship, excusing himself to the Jews, that all this he did purely in compliance to the commands he was necessitated to obey, and might probably lay it down for a maxim in religion, that, in case of compulsion, it was lawful to submit to unjust injunctions; there is no wonder at all that some bold men should rise up to justify the king’s practice, and, by the royal permission, call themselves by his name, whose distinguishing tenet might probably be, “That although they professed the Jewish religion, and abominated idolatry in their hearts, yet, to humour the Romans, and make themselves easy with their governors, it was not unlawful to comply sometimes with their demands, and, at least outwardly, to become occasional conformists.” This is the leaven of the Herodians, which our Saviour cautions his disciples against; but it was not of long continuance in the Jewish church: for Herod Antipas ⁵ having lost his credit at Rome, and being deposed and banished out of Judea, the sect that was instituted by his father, and supported by his favour and countenance, could not support itself after his disgrace.

Another sect, mentioned by Josephus ⁶ as rising after this time, was that of Judas of Galilee: for when Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, was sent into banishment, and Judea reduced to a Roman province, Judas, ^a a native of Galamala, took occasion from some new exactions, to exhort his countrymen to shake off the Roman yoke; pretending, that to pay tribute to any foreign power was a shameful badge of their slavery. An aversion to the Roman dominion, and an hatred of the publicans, who had the care of receiving the taxes and tributes, was natural enough to all the Jews; but they, whose zeal led them to join Judas, and form a particular sect, valued themselves upon their holiness and justice, because they would not acknowledge any other sovereign but God; and, rather than submit to the dominion of man, or give him the title of Lord, they chose to subject

themselves to any torments, or even to death itself. Judas indeed perished, ‘and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed for a while;’ ⁷ but in the time of the Jewish wars they gathered again, and soon became a faction strong and considerable enough to put every thing in confusion. They affected the title of zealots, says ⁷ Josephus, as if their undertakings had been good and honourable, even while they outdid the very worst of men in wickedness. They looked upon themselves, indeed, as the true successors of Phinehas, ⁸ who, out of zeal for the honour of God, did immediate execution upon Zimri and Cosbi, for which he received the divine thanks and approbation. And, in imitation of him, these men took upon them to execute judgment upon such as they called notorious offenders, without staying for the ordinary formalities of law. And, therefore, they made no scruple of robbing, and plundering, and killing the principal of the nobility, under pretence of their holding correspondence with the Romans, and betraying the liberty of their country. At last, joining with the Idumæans, they committed all manner of outrage, seized on the temple, and profaned the sanctuary, and slew many of the high priests themselves. So that, when Jerusalem came to be besieged, they were perpetually raising tumults and distractions within, which ended at last in the destruction of their city and temple, and the total dissolution of their state.

These were the several sects, which, much about this period of time, sprang up in the Jewish church; and, if the like differences in opinion have since appeared in the Christian, it is no more than what the Spirit of God hath foretold: ⁹ ‘For there must be heresies among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you.’

SECT. V.

CHAP. I.—*From the Death of John Hyrcanus, to the Birth of Jesus Christ*

THE HISTORY

HYRCANUS, when he died, left five sons: Aristobulus, Antigonus, and Alexander, were the three first; who the fourth was, we no where read; but the name of the fifth was Absalom. Aristobulus, as eldest, succeeded his father, both in the pontificate and principality of the nation, and, as we said before, was the first in Judea, since the Babylonish captivity, who put on a diadem, and assumed the title of a king; but he was a man of a bloody and suspicious disposition. His own mother, because, in virtue of his father’s will, she claimed some share in the sovereignty, he first cast into prison, and there starved to death. All his brothers he put under the like confinement, except Antigonus, who was his great favourite, and, at first, shared in the government with him: but he soon cooled in his affections, and at last had him put to death; though in this piece of cruelty the instruments about him were more to blame than he.

¹ Mark viii. 15.

² Prideaux’s Connection, anno 107.

³ Joseph. Antiq. b. xv. c. 12.

⁴ Deut. xvii. 15.

⁵ Basnage’s History, b. ii. c. 14. ⁶ Joseph. Antiq. b. xviii.

^a Augustus furnished him with a plausible pretence for it, by issuing out his edict to have the whole province of Syria new surveyed and taxed about this time.

⁷ Of the Jewish War, b. iv.

⁸ Num. xxv. 13.

⁹ 1 Cor. xi. 19.

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As soon as he was settled in the throne, he engaged in a war with the Ituræans; ^a and having subdued the greatest part of them, he forced them to become proselytes to the Jewish religion, in the same manner as his father had done to the Idumæans; but returning sick from the war to Jerusalem, he left his brother behind him to finish it, which accordingly he did with success; and so, returning in triumph, at a time when the feast of tabernacles was celebrating, he went directly to the temple, as did the guards that attended him, with his armour on, to pay his devotions to God.

The queen, and the courtiers of her party, who envied the interest which Antigonus had with the king, were always buzzing in his ears such stories as they thought would excite his jealousy; and now they come and tell him, "That it was high time for him to look to himself; that his brother was gone into the temple in an equipage not becoming a private man; and that, in all probability, it would not be long before he could come with a troop of his armed soldiers, and execute his wicked design against him."

This representation made some impression upon Aristobulus, so that he sent to his brother to put off his armour, and immediately come to him, concluding that if, pursuant to his orders, he came unarmed, there was no mischief intended, but that if he did otherwise, there might be something in what the queen had suggested; and therefore placing his guards in a subterraneous passage, which led from the palace ^b to the temple, and through which his brother was to come to the king's apartment, he ordered them, that, if he came unarmed, they should let him pass, but if otherwise, they should instantly fall upon him, and dispatch him.

The queen, knowing this, prevailed with the messenger whom Aristobulus sent to bid his brother come unarmed, to tell him, on the contrary, that the king being informed of a very beautiful suit of armour which he had brought with him from the wars, was minded to see how it became him, and therefore desired him to come in it; which accordingly he did, suspecting no ill. When he came to the place where the guards were posted, they, seeing his armour on, executed their orders, and immediately

slew him; but, no sooner was the fact committed, than Aristobulus severely repented it.

For the sense of the loss of a good brother brought to his remembrance the murder of his mother, and his conscience flew in his face for both at once. The anxiety of his mind increased the distemper of his body; so that, finding no ease for the one, and no cure for the other, in the utmost agonies of guilt, and with many bitter accusations of himself, he gave up the ghost, ^c and, after a reign of no more than one year, was succeeded by his brother Alexander Jannæus.

Ever since his father's death, he had been kept in prison by the late king; but, upon his decease, his widow Salome released him, and his other two brothers, from their confinement; so that, being now on the throne, and having discovered that the elder of these brothers had formed a design to supplant him, he caused him to be put to death; but the other, who was called Absalom, desiring to live quietly, and in a private condition, he took into his favour, and under his protection.

As soon as he had settled his matters at home, he led forth his forces to make war with the people of Ptolemais; and, having vanquished them in a pitched battle, shut them up in the city, and laid close siege to it. This place, and Gaza, together with the tower of Straton, and the fortress of Dura, which Zoilus possessed, were the only places on the coast, which were not under Alexander's dominion; and, therefore, dividing his forces, with one part he besieged Ptolemais, and employed the other in ravaging the territories of Zoilus, and those of Gaza. In the mean time, the besieged had sent to Ptolemy Lathyrus, ^d the expelled king of Egypt, who reigned then in Crete, to come to their relief; but afterwards, bethinking themselves better, they came to a resolution, which they communicated to Ptolemy, to trust to their own strength, rather than admit of any auxiliaries.

Ptolemy however was already set to sea, when he heard this news; and therefore proceeding in his voyage, and landing his army in Phœnicia, he advanced towards Ptolemais; but the people in the town would neither receive his messengers, nor send him any answer, so that he was in no small perplexity what course to take, when

^a Ituræa, the country where these people dwelt, was part of Cœlo-Syria, bordering upon the north-east part of the land of Israel, and lying between the inheritance of the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, and the territories of Damascus. It is the same country that is sometimes called Auranitis, and had its name from Itur, one of the sons of Ishmael, (Gen. xxv. 15.) who, in our English version, is wrongfully called Jetur.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 107.

^b When Hyrcanus built the palace of Baris, he caused this passage, which led from thence to the temple, to be made, that upon all occasions he might have a ready communication with it: and as over this passage there was a turret, or tower of the palace, called Straton's tower, Josephus tells us a very remarkable story concerning it, namely, that one Judas, an Essene, having foretold that Antigonus should, that very day, be slain in Straton's tower, which he took to be a town so called, lying on the sea coast, and two days' journey from Jerusalem; and seeing Antigonus come into the temple, he fell into a great passion, and began to exclaim against truth itself, as supposing his prediction impossible now to be fulfilled; but, while he was in this agony, news being brought, that Antigonus was slain in that part of the subterraneous gallery which was directly under the turret called Straton's tower, the Essene rejoiced in the comfort and satisfaction of having his prophecy verified, at the same time that every one else was lamenting the murder of this young prince.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. 12. c. 19.

^c Aristobulus was a great favourite of the Greeks, for which reason he was called Philellen, and the Greeks indeed had an equal favour for him: for, as Josephus tells us out of Strabo, one of their historians has left his character of him:—"That he was a prince of equity, and had in many things been very beneficial to the Jews, in that he had augmented their territories, and ingrafted into the Jewish state part of the nation of the Ituræans"; but the actions of his short reign show him to have been a man of a quite different disposition.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 106.

^d This Ptolemy Lathyrus, by his mother Cleopatra, was made king of Egypt; by his affecting to reign without her, he so far incurred her displeasure, that she procured his expulsion by this artifice. Some of her favourite eunuchs she caused to be wounded; and then bringing them out into the public assembly of the Alexandrians, she there pretended, that they had suffered this from Lathyrus, in defence of her person against him, and thereupon accused him of having made an attempt upon her life; and by this means she so far incensed the people, that they rose in a general uproar against him, and would have torn him in pieces, had he not fled for his life. Hereupon Cleopatra sent for Alexander, her younger son, who, for some time had reigned in Cyprus, and having made him king of Egypt, forced Lathyrus to be content with Cyprus, upon his brother's leaving it.—*Justin*, b. xxxix. c. 4.

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Zoilus, and the Gazeans sent ambassadors, desiring his assistance against Alexander's forces, which they were not able to oppose.

Ptolemy, being very glad of any opportunity to make an honourable retreat from before Ptolemais, readily marched his army to their relief; but Alexander, not thinking it advisable to hazard an engagement with him, withdrew his army into their quarters, and there thought to gain by policy, what he could not attain by force.

To this purpose he entered into a treaty with Lathyrus, and engaged to pay him four hundred talents of silver, on condition that he would deliver Zoilus, and his territories, into his hands, which Lathyrus agreed to do, and accordingly had got Zoilus into his custody; but when he came to understand, that at the same time Alexander was clandestinely treating with Cleopatra, to bring her upon him with all her forces, he, detesting such double dealing, broke off all friendship with him, and resolved to do him what mischief he could.

The two armies therefore met the next year, and a very fierce battle ensued near Asophus, not far from the river Jordan, wherein Alexander being vanquished, lost thirty thousand of his men, besides those that were taken prisoners. After this victory, Ptolemy made every where great havoc, and spread the terror^a of his name throughout all the province; but his mother Cleopatra being fearful, lest so much success should make him powerful enough to invade Egypt, set out with a large fleet, and a numerous army, which she landed in Phœnicia, and thence proceeded to Ptolemais, expecting that the people would have opened their gates to her; but finding the contrary, she invested the place to take it by force; while Ptolemy, believing that it would be easy for him to recover Egypt in the absence of his mother and her army, left Syria, and went upon that expedition; but meeting with more opposition than he expected, he was obliged to return to Gaza, where he passed the winter, and from thence went back again to Cyprus.

As soon as Cleopatra had taken Ptolemais, Alexander went thither with considerable presents, and was kindly received as an unhappy prince, who was Ptolemy's enemy, and had no other refuge but the queen's protection: and therefore when some about her suggested, that now she had an opportunity to seize on him and his dominions, Ananias, one of her generals, who by birth was a Jew, and by descent a relation to Alexander, by representing to her the danger and injustice of such a procedure; how base and injurious to her own honour, which for no considerations whatever ought to be tarnished; how prejudicial to her interest, by provoking all the Jews in the world against her; and how contrary to the rules of faith and common honesty, which are observed among all mankind, it would be to treat a friend and ally in this manner; he prevailed with her to desist

^a There is a very cruel and barbarous act, which he is said to have done at this time, namely, that, coming with his army in the evening after the victory, to take up his quarters in the adjoining villages, and finding them full of women and children, he caused them to be all slaughtered, and their bodies to be cut in pieces, and put in caldrons over the fire to be boiled, as if they had been for supper; that so he might leave an opinion in that country, that his men fed upon human flesh, and thereby create the greater dread and terror of his army. This barbarous cruelty Strabo and Nicholaus, as Josephus tells us, make mention of.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. xiii. c. 21.

from all thoughts of it; so that, having concluded an amicable alliance with Alexander, she returned with her army to Egypt.

As soon as the country was clear of these foreigners, and Alexander had recruited his shattered forces, he marched into Cœlo-Syria, where, after a siege of ten months, he took Gadara, and after that, the strong fortress of Anathus, where Theodorus, the son of Zeno, prince of Philadelphia, had laid up all his treasure; but Theodorus falling suddenly upon him, as he was returning from the conquest, not only recovered his treasure again, but slew ten thousand of his men, and took all his baggage from him.

All these misfortunes, however, did not discourage this prince. The next year he marched his forces again over the Jordan; and after having taken some neighbouring places, came, and sat down before Gaza, with a design, if he took it, to use the people with the utmost severity; but Apollodorus, who commanded the town, made a gallant defence, and in a sally with twenty thousand of his men, one night fell so furiously upon Alexander's camp, that he had like to have ruined him and his whole army; but as soon as the day appeared, the Jews, discovering who they were, (for they thought in the dark that Lathyrus was come again to the assistance of Gaza,) rallied again, and repulsed the Gazeans into the city, with the loss of a thousand of their men.

The city, however, still held out, till Lysimachus, enjoying the credit and esteem which his brother Apollodorus had gained in the defence of the place, treacherously slew him, and then as treacherously delivered up the city to Alexander; who, as soon as he had got possession of it, let loose his soldiers upon it, with a full license to kill, plunder, and destroy, which produced a sad scene of barbarity. The Gazeans, thus finding that they were to have no quarter, stood upon their defence, and sold their lives at so dear a rate, that in the carnage and sackage of the place, Alexander lost as many men of his own, as he killed of the enemy; but had the horrid pleasure, before he went away, to see this ancient and famous city reduced to utter ruin and desolation.

When he returned to Jerusalem, he was far from finding matters there in any peaceable posture. For, in the feast of tabernacles, while he was offering the usual sacrifices as high priest, the people who were assembled in the temple, had the insolence to pelt him with citrons, (for during the festival it was a custom among the Jews to carry^b branches of palm-trees, and lemon-trees in their hands) and to give him very opprobrious language, telling him, that he was a slave,^c

^b The word in the original is *Attrog*, which the Jews imagine to have been the forbidden fruit, that our first parents ate in paradise. It very much resembles a citron or lemon, except that it has a very rough and uneven rind, which they fondly imagine, was originally occasioned by Eve's impressing her teeth on it, and that these marks it has still retained. The custom of carrying these in their hands is in testimony of their joy, but on the seventh day, which closes the festival, they break their branches, and throw them away; and therefore it is supposed, that it was on this day, when the mutinous multitude pelted the high priest with these *attrogs*, which, at this time, were very common in Palestine.—*Universal History*, b. ii. c. 11.

^c In this they alluded to what Eleazar, a leading Pharisee, had said to his father Hyrcanus, namely, "That his mother was

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and unworthy to go up to the holy altar to offer solemn sacrifices, which enraged him to such a degree, that he fell upon them with his soldiers, and slew six thousand of them. After this he surrounded the court of the priests, wherein the altar and the temple stood, with a wooden partition, to hinder the people from coming near him, while he was officiating, and to secure his person against all future attempts, he took guards into his pay from Pisidia and Cilicia, (for he durst not trust his own countrymen,) and of these he had six thousand always about him.

Having thus, in some measure, laid the storm at home, he marched his forces against the Moabites and Ammonites, and made them become tributary to him. He attacked again the fortress of Anathus; but Theodorus, not daring to stand his coming, had removed his treasure, and withdrawn the garrison, so that he took it without opposition: but in his war with Thedas, an Arabian king, he had not the like success; for falling into an ambuscade which that prince had laid for him near Gadara, he there lost most of his army, and not without some difficulty escaped himself.

This loss, added to the hatred which the Jews had conceived against him, made them fly out into an open rebellion, so that here a civil war commenced, which lasted for six years. In most encounters he had the advantage of his subjects; but so exasperated were they against him, that he could never bring them to submit: for having one day asked them what they would have him do to please them, they all with one voice replied, "That he should cut his own throat; for upon no other terms would they be at peace with him; and well it were," they said, "considering the great ^a mischiefs he had done them, if they could be reconciled to him, even after he was in his grave;" and thereupon they sent deputies to Demetrius Eucharus who was then king of Damascus, to desire succours from him against their sovereign.

Demetrius, at their request, came into Judea with an army of three thousand horse, and forty thousand foot, Syrians and Jews. Alexander marched against him with six thousand Greek mercenaries, and twenty thousand Jews, who continued faithful to him; but in the engagement he was quite vanquished. All his foreign troops were lost to a man; and the greatest part of his other forces was so miserably broken, that he was forced to flee for shelter to the mountains, with the poor remnant he could get together.

This misfortune, which, in all appearance, must have totally ruined his affairs, proved the very means of re-establishing them. Six thousand of those very Jews, who had so lately appeared in arms against him, when

they saw him reduced to this distressed condition, were moved with compassion, and went over to him: and Demetrius, being content with the first advantage he had gained, or fearing, perhaps, that the rest of the Jews would do the same, retired into Syria, leaving the rebels to make war against their king with their own forces.

In most of the conflicts that happened between them Alexander defeated them, but still he could bring them to no terms of peace; till at last coming to a decisive battle, he cut off the major part of them, and the rest he shut up in a place called Bethome. This he besieged, and took; and having carried eight hundred of the rebels prisoners to Jerusalem, he there caused them to be crucified all on one day, and their wives and children to be slain before their faces, as they were hanging on the crosses, whilst he made an entertainment for his wives and concubines near the place where this scene of terror was acting, with an intent chiefly to feast himself and them with this horrid sight. This was a savage and unheard of cruelty: and, upon this occasion, the people of his own party called him Thracides, that is, as cruel as a Thracian, as no man indeed could be bad enough to express so inhuman a procedure.

After these civil wars were ended, Alexander led his army against the two kings of Damascus, Antiochus first, and afterwards Aretas, ^b who, at different times, had invaded his kingdom. He took several strong places in the neighbouring territories, and, after an expedition of three years' continuance, returned to Jerusalem, and was well received by his subjects. But that felicity he did not long enjoy: for having at a certain time drank to a great excess, he thereupon fell sick, and was afterwards seized with a quartan ague, which he was never able to shake off. This, however, did not interrupt his military undertakings, till, being quite exhausted, he was forced to submit to fate, while he was besieging the castle of Ragaba, in the country of the Gerasens. His queen Alexandra, who was with him at the siege, observing him to draw near his end, was exceedingly troubled at the ill state wherein she and her children should be left at his death. She knew how much he had exasperated the Pharisees, then a powerful sect among the Jews, and how great hatred the generality of the people, at their instigation, had contracted against them; and therefore she saw nothing else, but that she and her family would be given up to destruction, and made victims to the public rage; and thus she sat by his bedside, lamenting and bemoaning herself, while he lay a-dying.

To ease her mind from these dismal apprehensions, the advice which he gave her was this:—"That she should conceal his death till the castle was taken, and then, carrying his dead body with her, should lead back the army in triumph for this success; that, as soon as she was come to Jerusalem, she should send for some of the leading men of the sect of the Pharisees, lay his dead corpse before them, and tell them, that she resigned it wholly to their pleasure, either to treat it with indignity, as his treatment of them had deserved, or to dispose of it as they thought fit; and, withal, that she should not forget

a captive taken in the wars, and he, consequently, disqualified to be their high priest." But assuredly the true reason of their exasperation against him was, that he followed his father's steps, and not only gave countenance to the contrary sect, but continued the penal laws against those who should observe the traditions and customs introduced by the Pharisees.—*Universal History*, b. 2, c. 11.

^a The fourth book of the Maccabees (chap. xxix.) tells us, that this war was chiefly between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and that Alexander, having declared himself against the former, had put fifty thousand of them to death within the space of six years, which so exasperated the rest, that they would hearken to no accommodation.—*Universal History*, b. 2, c. 11.

^b Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. c. 23.

^b This Aretas was king of Arabia Petraea, but, upon the death of Antiochus, was chosen king of Damascus likewise.

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to assure them, that, as her husband had made her regent during her children's minority, she would do nothing in the administration without their advice and participation."^a

After the reduction of Ragaba, Alexandra returned to Jerusalem in the manner that was prescribed, and in every thing else observed her husband's directions most punctually: which succeeded so well, that the usual invectives against him were changed into encomiums. All deplored the loss of so valiant a prince, and honoured his funeral with a more than ordinary pomp and solemnity; all pitied the queen-dowager, and, in obedience to her husband's will, settled her in the supreme government of the nation.

Alexander, when he died, left behind him two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus; but the regency he invested in the queen, who had indeed the name of the government, but the administration was entirely in the power of the Pharisees. The first thing therefore that they did, was to have the decree of John Hyrcanus against their traditionary constitutions abolished; next to release all the prisoners, and recall all the exiles that were concerned with them in the late civil wars; and then to demand justice against all those by whose instigation and advice the eight hundred rebels above mentioned had been crucified.

To this purpose they exhibited articles against one Diogenes, a noted confidant of the late king's; had him condemned and executed; and proceeded in like manner against several others; so that the late king's friends and adherents, seeing no end of these persecutions, went at length to the queen in a body, with Aristobulus, her younger son, at the head of them, to remonstrate against these proceedings. They had been old officers to the king, and had faithfully adhered to him in all his wars and difficulties; and therefore they requested, that if no regard were to be had to their services, they might at least be permitted to depart the land, and seek their safety elsewhere, or else, to be out of the reach of their enemies, might be sent into the several garrisons of the kingdom: and to this last demand of theirs the queen consented.

In the mean time news was brought to Jerusalem, that Tigranes, king of Armenia, with an army of five hundred thousand men, had invaded Syria, and would in a short time be in Judea. This put the queen, and all the Jews, into a terrible fright; and therefore they immediately dispatched away ambassadors, with presents of great value, to court his friendship, and divert the storm. The ambassadors found him laying close siege to Ptolemais, and when they were introduced, for he was a man ^a of great pride and state, he commended their forward-

ness in applying to him, accepted their presents, and assured them of his good inclinations: but the true reason of all this civility was, that Lucullus, the Roman general, in pursuit of Mithridates, had entered Armenia, and was putting the country under military contribution, which obliged Tigranes to return home, and so delivered the Jews from the apprehensions of an invasion from that quarter.

Alexandra, when she was declared queen, made Hyrcanus high priest, and left Aristobulus to lead a private life; but a private life was not agreeable to his aspiring temper. As soon therefore as he perceived that the queen was sick and past all hopes of recovery, he privately in the night went out of Jerusalem, attended only with one servant; and having visited all the castles, in which, by his procurement, his father's friends had been placed in garrison, in fifteen days' time he secured to his interest twenty of these fortresses, and thereby in a manner made himself master of the rest of the strength of the kingdom; so that when his mother died, which was not long after his departure from Jerusalem, though she had declared his brother Hyrcanus her successor, he nevertheless met him in the plains of Jericho; but as the two armies were going to engage, most of the forces of Hyrcanus deserted, and went over to Aristobulus, which obliged Hyrcanus to come to a treaty with his brother; in which it was agreed, that he should make resignation of the crown and high priesthood to Aristobulus, and submit to live quietly upon his own private fortune; which accordingly was ratified by public sanction.

Hyrcanus was a quiet and peaceable man, a lover of retirement and ease, and therefore his resignation of the crown was not so great a grievance to him, as it was to some about him. Among these Antipater, ^b the father of Herod, surnamed the Great, was the chief; who having persuaded Hyrcanus, that, while he continued in Judea, his life was in danger, and that he had no other choice left, but either to reign or die, advised him to make his escape to Aretas, king of Arabia, and with him

he appeared before Pompey, he plucked his crown or royal tiara from off his head, and cast himself prostrate on the ground before him.—*Plutarch in the Life of Lucullus and Pompey.*

^b Eusebius and Julius Africanus tell us, that the father of this Antipater was a heathen, and an inhabitant of Ascalon; that a company of robbers having pillaged a temple near Ascalon, took this young Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, who, at that time, was the priest of the temple, away with them; and that his father being not able to redeem him, they carried him into Idumæa, where he settled, and made his fortune. But there is much more probability, that what Josephus, in the history of the Jewish wars, (b. i. c. 5.) tells us of this great man may be true, namely, that he was the son of another Antipater, who was made governor of Idumæa by Alexander Jannæus; and as to his religion, there is no question to be made, but that he was a Jew and circumcised: because the Idumæans had long before received circumcision and the religion of the Jews, even when Hyrcanus made a conquest of their country. This Antipater, having had his education in the court of Alexander Jannæus, and Alexandra his queen, who reigned after him, had wrought himself into the good graces of Hyrcanus, the eldest of their sons, in hopes to rise by his favour, when he should come to the crown after his mother; but when Hyrcanus was deposed, and Aristobulus made king in his place, all the measures which he had taken for his advancement were broken; and being too obnoxious to Aristobulus ever to have any prospect of favour from him, he thought himself obliged, both in his own interest and defence, to act the part we find he did.—*Calmel's Dictionary*, under the word; and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 65.

^a This vain man assumed to himself the title of king of kings; and, to make his claim to it the better appear, having taken several petty princes prisoners in his wars with them, he made them wait on him as his domestic servants. He never went abroad but he had four of them to attend him; two running by him on one side of his horse, and two on the other; and thus, in like manner, he was served by some of them at his table, in his bed chamber, and on all other occasions, but more especially when he gave audience to ambassadors; for then, to make the greater ostentation of his glory to foreign nations, he made all these captive kings, in the posture and habit of servants, to range themselves on each side of him. But as proud as he was, when once he came to feel the power of the Roman arms, he was soon brought to such a state of mean and abject humiliation, that when

A. M. 3935. A. C. 69; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5342. A. C. 69. JOS. HIST. b. xii. c. 19—END OF b. xv.

to stipulate for forces for the recovery of his kingdom. Hyrcanus did so; and upon condition that he would restore the towns which his father Alexander had taken from him, Aretas supplied him with fifty thousand men, who, being joined with the Jews that were of Hyrcanus's party, gave battle to Aristobulus, and having obtained a complete victory, pursued him to Jerusalem, and thence to the mount of the temple, where they besieged him, and committed some outrageous acts. "In the mean time, Scaurus, one of Pompey's lieutenants, being come with a Roman army as far as Damascus, Aristobulus took care, with the promise of four hundred talents, to engage him on his side; so that he sent to Aretas to withdraw his forces from Jerusalem, and threatened him with the Roman arms in case of refusal. Hereupon Aretas was forced to raise the siege and march off; but in his retreat Aristobulus fell upon his rear, and destroyed about seven thousand of his men.

Not long after this Pompey himself came into Syria, and took up his residence at Damascus, where he was attended with ambassadors from several nations, and, among the rest, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus sent their deputies, desiring both his protection and determination of the controversy depending between them. But when Pompey had heard what they both had to say, he ordered that the two brothers should appear in person before him, that so he might be better able to inquire into the merits of the cause, and determine it in such a manner as justice should direct.

The two brothers accordingly waited upon Pompey to receive his decision; and, at the same time, several chief men of the Jews came to remonstrate against them both. The Jews pleaded, "That it had been formerly the usage of their nation to be governed by the high priest of the God whom they worshipped, who, without assuming any other title, administered justice to them, according to the laws and constitutions transmitted down to them from their forefathers. They owned, indeed, that the two contending brothers were of the sacerdotal race, but then they alleged, that they had changed the old, and introduced a new form of government, in order to enslave the people, and thereupon they prayed that they might not be governed by a king."

Hyrcanus on his part urged, "That, being the elder brother, he was unjustly deprived of his birthright by Aristobulus, who, leaving him only a small portion of land for his subsistence, had usurped all the rest, and, as a man born for mischief, practised piracy at sea, and rapine and depredation at land, upon his neighbours." And for the attestation of all this, there appeared above

a One barbarous action of this kind is thus related by Josephus:—At this time there was at Jerusalem one Onias, a man of great reputation for the sanctity of his life, and who, by his prayers, had been thought to have once obtained rain from heaven in an extremity of drought. Upon a fond imagination, therefore, that his curses would be as prevalent as his prayers, the besiegers brought him into the camp, and there pressed him to curse Aristobulus, and all that were with him. He opposed their request as long as he could; but at length, finding no rest from their importunities, he lifted up his hands to heaven, and, as he was standing in the midst of them, said, "O Lord God, ruler of the universe, since both we, that stand here before thee, are thy people, and they that are besieged in the temple, are thy priests, I humbly beseech thee not to hear the prayers of either of them against the other." Whereupon they who brought him thither, were so enraged against the good man, that they fell upon him, and stoned him to death.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. xiv. c. 3.

a thousand of the principal Jews. What Aristobulus had to say, in answer to this, was, "That Hyrcanus was superseded in the government, by reason of his incapacity to rule, and not through any ambition of his; that his sloth and inactivity had brought upon him the contempt of the people, and that therefore he was forced to interpose, merely to preserve the government from falling into other hands." And, to witness the truth of this, he produced several young gentlemen of the nation, who by the gaudiness of their dress, and the levity of their carriage, did no great credit to the cause which they pretended to support.

Upon this hearing, Pompey could not but perceive the injury which Aristobulus had done his brother; but for the present he dismissed them with fair words, and referred the full determination of the matter, until himself should come to Jerusalem, which he would not fail to do, as soon as he had finished the Arabian war. Upon the whole, Aristobulus perceiving which way Pompey's discourse and inclinations tended, left Damascus without ever taking leave, and, returning to Judea, there armed the country in his defence. Pompey had soon done his business in Arabia, and thence coming to Judea, found that, upon his approach, Aristobulus had shut himself up in the castle of Alexandrion, which was a strong fortress, built by his father (and therefore called by this name) on a high mountain, that stood in the entrance of the country of Judea, towards the Samaritan side. Hither Pompey marched his army; and, having encamped before it, sent a messenger to Aristobulus to come down to him. Aristobulus, though with much reluctance, was forced to comply; and when Pompey demanded of him to deliver up his castles, and to sign orders to that purpose to all who commanded in them, he durst not refuse doing it, though he complained of the force that was thus put on him; and, as soon as he got out of Pompey's hands, fled to Jerusalem, and there prepared for war.

Pompey was not long before he marched after him; but when he drew near to Jerusalem, Aristobulus, repenting of what he had done, went out to him, and, endeavouring to reconcile matters with him, promised an entire submission for the future, and a considerable sum of money besides, if he would but withdraw his forces. Pompey accepted the proposal; and accordingly sent Gabinius, one of his lieutenants, with a body of men, to receive the money; but, when he came to Jerusalem, he found the gates shut against him, and was told from the walls, that those within would stand to no such agreement.

This was such treatment, that the Roman general, without any more to do, clapped Aristobulus, whom he had taken with him, in chains, and so marching forward with his whole army, was, by the prevalence of Hyrcanus's party, received into Jerusalem; but the other faction, retiring to the mount of the temple, broke down the

δ The fourth book of the Maccabees (chap. xxxvi.), says nothing of this submission of Aristobulus to the Roman general, but tells us, that Pompey marched directly against Jerusalem, where observing the situation of the place, the strength of its walls, towers, &c. he resolved to try to gain Aristobulus by fair means; that he invited him to come into his camp, and promised him all the safety that he could desire; that accordingly he came to him, and engaged to deliver up all the treasure of the temple, if he would but declare for him; but that the priests having refused to ratify the king's promise, this made the general lay siege to the temple.—*Universal History*, b. ii. c. 11.

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bridges over the deep ditches and valleys that surrounded it, and so resolved to defend the place: but there was no withstanding a Roman army long. In three months' time Pompey ^a became master of the mount, which he carried sword in hand; and, having made a dreadful carnage upon this occasion, he caused afterwards all such prisoners ^b to be put to death, as were found to have been the principal incendiaries of this war.

Before he left Jerusalem, he, with several other chief officers accompanying him, went into the temple, and caused the most sacred parts of it, even the holy of holies, into which himself entered, to be opened. He visited the treasuries likewise, where he found two thousand talents of silver, besides vessels, and other things of great value; but ^c touching nothing of all this, he left it entire for the sacred uses to which it was appropriated. He thought it advisable, however, to destroy the walls of Jerusalem; and though he restored Hyrcanus to the high priesthood, and made him prince of the country, yet he deprived him of all the new conquests which his predecessors had made; would not permit him to wear a diadem; and obliged him to pay an annual tribute to the Romans: and having thus regulated all matters, he set forward on his journey home, carrying with him Aristobulus, his two sons, Alexander and Antigonus, and two of his daughters, as captives, to be led before him in his triumph.

Alexander, on the way, found means to make his escape; and, after three years, returning into Judea, gathered forces, and possessed himself of several places; but Gabinius, the Roman governor in Syria, defeated him in all his attempts, and then coming to Jerusalem, confirmed Hyrcanus in the priesthood: but the civil administration ^d he took from the sanhedrim, and

^a It is supposed by Josephus, that the mount of the temple would have hardly been taken so soon by the Romans, had it not been for the superstition of the Jews in their observation of the sabbath. For though they now held it lawful to defend themselves vigorously on that day, yet they would not stir a hand to annoy the enemy, or obstruct them in any of their works. This Pompey observing, ordered his men to employ the sabbath-day in nothing else but in making their approaches, wherein the besieged giving them no molestation, their engines of battery were brought forward, and without opposition placed just as they pleased; and so being fitted, and raised to advantage, soon made a breach in the wall large enough for an assault.—*Josephus's Jewish Wars*, b. i. c. 5.

^b Among these, it is supposed, that Absalom, a younger son of the famous John Hyrcanus, suffered; he had lived a private life, without meddling with public affairs, under the protection of his brother Alexander Jannæus: but having unhappily married his daughter to his nephew Aristobulus, he was, by that means, drawn into his son-in-law's party, and being taken prisoner, in all probability was put to death: because from that time we find no farther mention made of him.—*Joseph. Antiq.* b. xiv. c. 8; and *Universal History*.

^c But though Pompey was thus modest, yet Crassus soon after coming that way, not only extorted the two thousand talents, and a large bar of gold, by way of bribe, to restrain him from farther plunder, but, contrary to the promise which he had given upon oath, ransacked the temple all over, and robbed it of every thing that he thought worth taking away, insomuch, that the whole of his sacrilegious plunder amounted to the value of ten thousand talents, which is above two millions of our money.—*Joseph. Antiq.* b. xiv. c. 12, and *Jewish Wars*, b. i. c. 6.

^d Before this, the government had been managed under the prince by two sorts of councils, or courts of justice; one consisting of twenty-three persons, called the 'lesser sanhedrim;' and the other, of seventy-two, called the 'greater sanhedrim.' Of the first sort there was one in every city; only in Jerusalem,

put into the hands of such magistrates as himself made choice of; and having divided the whole land into five provinces, appointed a court of justice, with power ultimately to determine every thing, over each of them. Aristobulus, late king of Judea, after he had been five years a prisoner at Rome, having with his son Antigonus made his escape, returned to Judea, with some few forces which he had got together, was endeavouring to raise fresh troubles. But Gabinius came upon him before he was prepared to make a sufficient resistance; and having taken him and his son prisoners, sent them both again to Rome, where his father was kept in durance; but his children, upon the intercession of Gabinius, were immediately sent back to Judea.

Not long after this, the difference between Cæsar and Pompey occasioned a distraction in the Roman affairs, and a general contention all the empire over. Pompey had left some forces in Syria; and Cæsar, to oppose against these, had set Aristobulus at liberty, and proposed to have sent him with two legions into Judea, in order to secure that province; but before he could get out of Rome, he was poisoned by some of Pompey's party, and his body remained a long time there, embalmed in honey, till M. Anthony procured it to be carried into Judea, where it was honourably interred in the royal sepulchre.

When Cæsar returned from the Alexandrian war, Antigonus, the second son of Aristobulus, (for Scipio, by Pompey's order had caused his elder brother's head to be struck off at Antioch,) met him in Syria, and having complained of the hard fate which his father and brother had met with, he charged Hyrcanus and Antipater with having possessed themselves of the government by force; but Antipater, who was then with Cæsar, defended his own and Hyrcanus's cause so very well, that Cæsar, instead of restoring Antigonus, as he desired, made it a ^e decree, that Hyrcanus should hold the office of high

because of the greatness of the place, there were two, which sat apart from each other in two distinct rooms. Of the latter sort there was only one in the whole land. The lesser sanhedrim despatched all affairs of justice arising within the respective cities where they sat, and the precincts belonging to them. The great sanhedrim presided over the affairs of the whole nation, received appeals from the lesser sanhedrims, interpreted the laws, and, by new institutions from time to time, regulated the execution of them. All this Gabinius abolished; and, instead thereof, erected five courts, or sanhedrims, and invested them all with sovereign power, independent on each other. The first of them he placed at Jerusalem; the second at Jericho; the third at Gadera; the fourth at Amathus; and the fifth at Sepphorus; and having, under these five cities, divided the land into five provinces, he ordered the inhabitants of each to repair to the court which he had there erected, and from which there was no appeal, except it was to Rome. Besides the two sorts of sanhedrims above-mentioned, there was a third court among the Jews, which was not affected by any of these alterations, and that was the court of three, instituted for the deciding of all controversies about bargains, sales, contracts, and all other such matters of common right between man and man. In all which cases, one of the litigants chose one judge, and the other another, and these two chose a third, which three constituted a court to hear, and ultimately determine the matter in contest.—*Talmud on the Sanhedrim; Lightfoot's Prospect of the Temple*, c. xx. and xxii; and *Joseph. Antiq.* b. xiv. c. 10.

^e This decree, which at once abolished the aristocracy which Gabinius had lately set up, and restored the Jewish state to its pristine sovereignty, according to Josephus, runs in this form:—"Julius Cæsar, emperor, the second time dictator, and Pontifex Maximus, &c. Forasmuch as Hyrcanus, the son of Alexan-

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priest at Jerusalem, and the principality of Judea with it, to him and those of his family in a perpetual succession; by which he restored the government to its ancient form, and abolished the aristocracy which Gabinius had instituted, and that Antipater should be the procurator of Judea under him.

This Antipater, who was a person of great wisdom, of powerful interest in several places, and in high favour with the Romans, had two sons, Phasael and Herod; to the former of which he gave the government of the country about Jerusalem, and to the other that of Galilee. Phasael behaved himself in his administration with great lenity; but Herod was a man of a different character, and his boisterous temper made him less acceptable to the Jews.

At this time there was a gang of thieves that infested Galilee, and the neighbouring parts of Cælo-Syria, whom Herod fell upon, and having taken one Hezekiah their ringleader, with several of his associates, put them all to death. Those who envied the prosperity of Antipater, and the growth and greatness of his power, made this a handle to accuse Herod to Hyrcanus for executing men without a legal trial, and obtained a citation from him to summon Herod to answer for it before the sanhedrim. He came; but as he made his appearance in a purple robe, and surrounded with his guards, he so overawed that great council, that they all sat silent without saying a word against him, until Simeas, a man of great justice and integrity, rose up, and with a becoming presence of mind, complained, that he never saw a criminal appear in a court of justice so attended; that it looked as if he meant to make the administration thereof more dangerous to the judges, than the malefactor: "but this," says he, turning to the high priest, "is not so much to be imputed to his insolence, as to your connivance, which encourages it: yet know," continued he, "that his person whom you screen from the justice of the laws, will be a scourge to you all." Nor was he in this a false prophet.

For Herod having, by the persuasion of the high priest, for fear that the sentence of the sanhedrim should pass against him, made his escape from Jerusalem, and retired to Damascus, where Sextus Cæsar, the prefect of Syria, then resided, and put himself under his protection, he so far insinuated himself with him, that for a sum of money, with which he presented him, he obtained the government of Cælo-Syria, where he soon raised an army, and marched it into Judea, with an intent to have deposed Hyrcanus, and cut off the whole sanhedrim for the indignity they had put upon him by their late process; but his father Antipater, and his brother Phasael, met

him, and dissuaded him from it; so that, for the present, he dropped his resentment.

As long as Julius Cæsar lived, the Jews were held in great honour and esteem by the Romans, and had several decrees passed in their favour: but ^a after his untimely death, their country became a prey to every hungry general of Rome. Cassius, having made himself master of Syria, exacted of the Jews about seven hundred talents of silver, which Antipater prevailed with his two sons to pay him, and so preserved himself the longer in the government of Judea. He was, as we said, procurator of the province under Hyrcanus; and the next man to him in power and authority was Malicus: but not being contented to be the second man next the prince, he would fain have been the first; especially since he was a natural Jew, and Antipater but an Idumean. Antipater had all along been his fast friend, and upon more occasions than one saved his life: but he, like an ungrateful wretch, was continually laying plots against him; and, at length, taking the opportunity of his dining one day with Hyrcanus, he bribed the butler to give him poison in his wine, of which he died, and then, with an armed force, seized on the government of Jerusalem. Phasael and Herod had, for a long time, suspected this traitor's design against their father, and when they heard of his death, they concluded that he was the author of it. They thought proper, however, to conceal their resentment for the present; but as soon as Herod found a fit opportunity, ^b he had him taken off.

^a While Julius Cæsar was preparing for an expedition against the Parthians, in order to revenge the death of Crassus, and the Romans that were slain with him at the battle of Carrhæ, on the ides of March, that is, on the fifteenth day of that month, four days before he intended to set out upon that expedition, he was murdered in the senate-house, by a conspiracy of the senators. This was the most villainous act, and the more so, because the prime authors of it, namely, Marcus Brutus, Decimus Brutus, Cassius, Trebonius, and some others of them, were the very persons whom Cæsar, in the highest manner, had obliged; yet it was executed under the notion of a high heroic virtue, in thus freeing their country from one, whom they called a tyrant: and the manner in which it was executed, is this: as soon as he came into the senate-house, Attilius Cimber, who was one of the conspirators, presented himself, according as it was agreed among them, to demand his brother's pardon, who was banished; but upon Cæsar's refusal, under pretence of begging it with greater submission, laid hold of the bottom of his robe, and pulled it so hard, that he made him bend his back: then Casca drew his dagger, and stabbed him in the shoulder, but the wound proved but slight, so that Cæsar fell upon him: but as they were scuffling, another of the conspirators came behind and stabbed him in the side, Cassius at the same time wounded him in the face, and Brutus pierced his thigh. With much courage he still defended himself; but the blood he lost through so many wounds having much weakened him, he went to the foot of Pompey's statue, where he fell and expired, after having been stabbed in three and twenty places by the hands of those whom he thought he had disarmed by his good offices.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 44, and *Vertot's Revolution of Rome*, c. 13.

^b The matter was conducted thus:—Cassius being informed by Herod of the manner of his father's death, gave him leave to revenge himself on the murderer, and sent his orders to the forces, under his command at Tyre, to be assistant to him therein. On Cassius's taking Laodicea, all the princes and chief lords of Syria and Palestine hastened thither with their presents and congratulations. Hyrcanus, together with Malicus and Herod, put himself upon the road for the same purpose; and as they drew near to Tyre, where they were to lodge that night, Herod invited all the company to sup with him; and sending his servants before, under pretence of providing the

der, a Jew, has, at all times, as well in war as peace, approved himself to be our good and trusty friend and ally, as appeareth by several attestations of unquestionable credit, &c. These services and good offices duly considered, I do hereby confirm and establish to him and his heirs, the perpetual government of the Jews, both as their prince and high priest, after the manner and method of their own laws; and from this day forward, enrol them among the number of my trusty and well beloved friends, and ratify an affinity with them as my associates. I ordain likewise that all the legal pontifical rights and privileges be devolved upon him, and his sons for ever; and that in case any controversy shall arise among the people concerning the Jewish discipline, himself and his family, in the course of succession, shall be the only judge of it."—*Joseph. Antiq.* b. xiv. c. 17.

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No sooner was the death of Malicus, and the manner of it known at Jerusalem, but a party of his friends rose in arms to revenge it on the sons of Antipater; and having gained Hyrcanus, and Felix the commander of the Roman forces on their side, put the whole city in an uproar. Herod was then with Fabius, the Roman governor of Damascus, and there laid up with sickness; so that the whole storm fell upon Phasaël, which he weathered with full success: for he drove Felix and all that tumultuous party out of Jerusalem, and when his brother recovered and returned, they both together soon quelled the faction, and would doubtless have resented the high priest's behaviour upon this occasion with more severity, but that, at this time a match was set on foot between Herod and his grand-daughter Mariamne, ^a which reconciled all differences. But though the faction was, for the present, suppressed, it was not long before it revived.

After the defeat of Brutus ^b and Cassius, by M. Anthony and Cæsar Octavianus ^c at Philippi, Anthony, coming into Asia, was attended by the deputies of most princes and states in that part of the world, and, among others, with several principal persons of the Jewish nation, who were sent to accuse Phasaël and Herod of usurping the government from Hyrcanus: but partly by money, and partly by interest, Herod had so far pre-

supper by them, he communicated the orders of Cassius to the commanders of the Roman garrison in the city, who accordingly sent out a party of armed men, that fell upon Malicus as he drew near to the place, and slew him.—*Joseph. Antiq.* b. xiv. c. 10; and *Jewish Wars*, b. i. c. 9.

^a She was the daughter of Alexander, the son of king Aristobulus, by Alexandra the daughter of Hyrcanus the second, and therefore was grand-daughter to both these brothers. She was a lady of extraordinary beauty and great virtue, and in all other laudable qualifications, accomplished beyond most of her time; but the true motive for Herod's desiring to make her his wife was, because the Jews at this time had a very zealous affection for the Asmonean family; and therefore he thought that, by marrying this lady, he should the easier reconcile the hearts of the people to him.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 38.

^b Philippi is a town of Macedonia, to the inhabitants of which St Paul wrote his epistle; but what made this place the most remarkable, was the famous battle that was fought near it, between the army under Octavianus and Anthony, and that under Brutus and Cassius, consisting of near a hundred thousand men each. Brutus and Cassius both commanded in the action; but Octavianus being sick in his tent, the command of the other army fell wholly upon Anthony. The forces commanded by Cassius were soon repulsed, so that he retired to a hill, there to wait for an account of that part of the army which was commanded by Brutus; but in the confusion and dust, not being able to perceive what was doing, his mind misgave him that Brutus was overcome, and thereupon he commanded his servant Pindarus to cut off his head. Brutus, in the first day of action, was so successful, that he made the enemy retire, and took Octavianus's camp; but in a few days after, coming to a second engagement, he was entirely routed; and being loath to fall into the enemy's hands, prevailed with his friend Strabo to despatch him: and what is very remarkable in these two men's deaths, is, that they both killed with the same swords wherewith they had murdered Cæsar.—*Plut. on Brutus*; *Velleius Paternulus*, b. ii. c. 70; *Appian on the Civil Wars*, b. iv.; and *Dion Cassius*, b. xlvii.

^c Octavianus was the son of Caius Octavius, by Atia the daughter of Julia, sister of Julius Cæsar; and therefore Julius adopted him, as being his nephew and next male relation, to be his son: upon his uncle's death he took upon him the name of Caius Julius Cæsar Octavianus, and by this name he was afterwards known, till that of Augustus, which was given after the victory at Actium swallowed up all the rest.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 42.

vailed with Anthony, that he would not so much as hear them. This, however, did not discourage the Jews that were his enemies: for when Anthony came to Daphne near Antioch, a hundred of the most considerable among them waited upon him with the like complaints. Here Anthony gave them a hearing; and when he put it to Hyrcanus, whether the two brothers or their accusers were in his opinion fittest to govern the state under him, he gave it for the two brothers; and Anthony, being minded to do them a farther favour, made them both tetrarchs, ^d and committed all the affairs of Judea to their administration. This he confirmed by letters to the Jews; and to oblige them to obey what he had done, he detained fifteen of the hundred as hostages, and would have put them to death, had not Herod saved them by his intercession.

This notwithstanding, they did not still give over their solicitation; but when Anthony came to Tyre, they sent a thousand of their principal men with the like accusations against the two brothers: but looking on this as a tumult, rather than embassy, he directed his soldiers to fall upon them, so that some of them were slain, and more wounded; and at the same time he sent a peremptory order to the magistrates to assist Herod in the recovery of his government. With this order Herod went to Jerusalem, and would have persuaded the people to receive him, by expostulating the danger of disobeying him, and provoking the Roman general; but instead of regarding his threats or advice, they fell upon him; and by killing some and wounding others of his attendants, so enraged Anthony against them, that he ordered their fifteen hostages to be put to death, and threatened a severe revenge against the rest.

In the mean time Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, having had long before attempted to possess himself of Judea, but being defeated, and expelled by Herod, fled to Parthia, and was there kindly received and protected. After he had been there some time, and established an interest among the most considerable persons of that nation, he promised them 1000 talents, and 500 of the finest ^e women in the country, if they would assist him in the recovery of his father's kingdom. The Parthians accepted of the proposal, and the king sent his general along with Antigonus, at the head of a powerful army, to invade Judea. As soon as they had entered the country, great numbers of the Jews joined them in their march; and when they came to Jerusalem, the faction that hated the two brothers declared for them: so that

^d This word, which sometimes occurs in scripture, and is pretty frequent among the descendants of Herod the Great, according to the force of the Greek, signifies a lord that has the fourth part of a state, province, or kingdom, without wearing a diadem, or bearing the title of a king: but it must not always be understood in a rigorous sense, because the name of tetrarch was given to him that possessed sometimes a half, and sometimes a third part, of any principality; nay, oftentimes the name of a king was given to him that was but a tetrarch, and that of a kingdom, to a tetrarchy.—*Culmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

^e The fourth book of Maccabees (chap. xlix.) says 800 women, the fairest and best bred in all the country: but Josephus adds, that Antigonus was not able to make good his contract, by reason that Herod had seized on most of the fine women, and sent them away with his wife and family to Massada, a place of safe retreat, whilst himself stayed behind with his guards, to cover their march, and prevent their being pursued.

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Herod, not being able to defend the city, especially after he found that Hyrcanus, and his brother Phasaël were taken by the Parthians, and put in chains, made his escape by night; and taking his mother Cypros, and his sister Salome, Mariamne his bride, and Alexandra the mother of Mariamne with him, made the best of his way to Massada, a prodigious strong fortress, built on the top of a very high mountain, near the west side of the lake Asphaltites; and having furnished it with provisions for several months, he there left his mother, and the other women of quality, whom he had brought with him from Jerusalem, under the care and government of Joseph, another of his brothers, and so took his way to Petra in Arabia, hoping to procure some assistance from Malchus, who had succeeded Aretas, as king of that country: but before he reached Petra, he received a message from Malchus, desiring him to depart his dominions, because he was afraid he should offend the Parthians, who were his neighbours, if he should receive him.

The Parthians, when they found that Herod was gone from Jerusalem, after they had plundered the place, and the country round about, made Antigonus, as they had agreed, king of Judea, and delivered to him Hyrcanus and Phasaël in chains. Phasaël, knowing that his death was determined, put a voluntary end to his life and sufferings. For not having the liberty of his hands to dispatch himself, he beat out his brains against the wall of the prison, and Hyrcanus, to incapacitate him from being any longer high priest, had his ears cut off, and was then delivered back again to the Parthians, by them to be carried into the east, who, upon their return, left him at Seleucia.

Herod, having met with this unworthy treatment in Arabia, made what haste he could into Egypt, but when he came to Rinocorura, he there was informed of his brother's death, and in what manner he had effected it; from thence he went to Pelusium, and so to Alexandria, where he took ship, and after a voyage of no small danger and difficulty, landed at Brundisium, from whence he proceeded to Rome; and having acquainted M. Anthony with the miserable state of his affairs in Judea, he most earnestly prayed his aid.

Anthony, remembering his friendship which he had with his father first, and afterwards with him, and being exasperated against Antigonus, whom he always looked upon as an enemy to the Roman people, and not a little affected with the promises which Herod had made, of giving him a large sum of money, if ever he should be reinstated; not only warmly espoused his cause himself, but engaged likewise Octavianus, who was afterwards called Augustus, so closely in his interest, that, by the help and influence of these two men, the senate unanimously decreed that Herod should be king of Judea, and Antigonus declared an enemy to the commonwealth. Having in the short space of seven days dispatched his affairs thus prosperously, he left Rome, and landing at Ptolemais, began to raise forces, with a design to march against Antigonus, who, ever since his departure, had besieged the fortress of Massada. With these, and such Roman auxiliaries as he received from Ventidius, Anthony's general, and Silo his lieutenant in Palestine, he

made himself master of the greatest part of the country, took Joppa, relieved Massada, and, taking the castle of Ressa in his way, marched directly to Jerusalem, and there encamped on the west side of the city. Antigonus had provided the place with all warlike munitions, and a good garrison, which, with darts and stones from the walls, and flying parties frequently making excursions, very much infested Herod's army. Herod, in hopes of making easy work of it, sent a herald about the walls, to proclaim indemnity to all that would submit. Antigonus, on the contrary, directed his speech to Silo and the Romans, complained of the injustice they did him, in transferring the crown from him, who was of royal descent, to a plebeian, and half Jew, as Herod was: and from these, and such like reproaches on both sides, they came at length to acts of hostility, wherein Antigonus and his men behaved themselves so valiantly, that they soon drove the enemy from the walls.

Ventidius, indeed, had left Silo in Judea, to be assistant to Herod in the reduction of Jerusalem: but in his manner of managing the war, which was to get great sums from Herod to promote his interest, and greater from Antigonus to hinder it, he did him more harm than good: for he did not only take all methods to squeeze him, but encouraged his soldiers likewise to mutiny, on pretence of wanting forage and provisions, more commodious quarters, and better pay; which, when at any time Herod endeavoured to remedy, Antigonus, having notice of all that passed, with flying parties and ambuscades, frequently intercepted and cut off the convoys that were designed for the united army: though Herod, who was as active and diligent as the enemy, very often came up with them, and pursued his advantage so closely, that, having with some difficulty recovered all Galilee from Antigonus, he, after that, betook himself to rid it of those gangs ^a of thieves and banditti, which at that time very much infested it.

All this while the siege of Jerusalem went on but slowly; and Herod, perceiving that the Roman generals were very cool to his interest, was resolved to go again to Anthony, who was then besieging Samosata, a city upon the Euphrates, to make a representation of their behaviour. During his absence, he left his brother Joseph to command in Judea, giving strict orders to put nothing to the hazard until his return; but Joseph forgetting this, ventured upon an expedition against Jericho, where, being circumvented by the enemy, he was slain himself, and most of his forces cut to pieces; which gave those that were disaffected to Herod, both in Galilee and Idumæa, an opportunity of revolting. Anthony, when he heard that Herod was coming, drew out his army to receive him, and, while he staid with him, showed him all the marks of friendship and esteem: but, designing himself to go into Egypt, ^b he left the

^a These thieves had so sheltered themselves in the caves, and holes of the mountains, that it was no easy matter to come at them, because the steepness and cragginess of the mountains made it almost impossible, either to scale them from below, or from above to get down to them by any passage; and therefore, to ferret them out of their dens, Herod was forced to make certain large chests, and, filling them with soldiers, to let them down into the entrance of these caves by chains from engines which he had fixed above; by which means, he either destroyed all that lurked in them, or else reduced them to terms of submission.—*Joseph. Antig. b. xiv.*

^b Where Cleopatra, at this time, was queen: who, by the

¹ Lev. xxi. 18—24.

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army with Socius, ordering him to assist Herod upon all occasions; and he accordingly gave him two legions for the guard of his person, and marched after himself with the rest of the forces.

Upon his return from Anthony, Herod, while he was at Daphne, had an account of his brother's death and defeat, which made him hasten to mount Lebanon, where he raised eight hundred of the natives, and with these and the Roman forces came to Ptolemais, and thence marching by night, he passed through Galilee, subdued all that came in his way, and forced the rest into their strongholds. But while he was hastening towards Jericho, with an intent to avenge his brother Joseph's death, a party of six thousand of the enemy came resolutely down the hills, and put the Romans into great consternation, beating back the vanguard, and pursuing them home to their camp, where they so warmly engaged them, that Herod himself was wounded in the conflict: but, not long after, when Antigonus, flushed with this success, had sent Pappus his general, with the main strength of his forces against him, he gave them an entire defeat, slew Pappus in the rout, and, had it not been for the severity of the winter, which was now approaching, had gone immediately to Jerusalem, and so made an end of the war: but that he was forced to refer to the operations of the next campaign.

When Herod came before Jerusalem, his own army consisted of about thirty thousand, to which Socius^a brought eleven legions of foot, and six thousand horse, besides the auxiliary troops of Syria. However, the city held out several months with a great deal of resolution; but, at last, the besieged being beaten out of all their places of defence, and the enemy exasperated at the length and tediousness of the siege, all things were in the utmost confusion. Rapine and devastation was the general work; and death and slaughter raged every where, without distinction of age or sex. In vain did Herod endeavour to put a stop to this rage and cruelty. "The spoils of the city, he was told, were the soldiers' due, as a reward for their labour and valour in taking it." So that, with a large sum of money, he was forced to preserve and redeem it.

charms of her beauty and wit, had drawn him into those snares which held him enslaved to her as long as he lived, and, in the end, caused his ruin. She was a woman of great parts, and spoke several languages, as well as Latin and Greek, very fluently; but then she was a person of great vices, and, among others, of such insatiable avarice and ambition, that she made a conscience of nothing if she could but get by it. Her brother, a youth of about fifteen years of age, she caused to be dispatched, and prevailed with Anthony to have her sister Arsinoe cut off at Ephesus, even in the temple of Diana. Anthony indeed was a man of a sweet temper, and great generosity, an eloquent speaker, and a complete master in all military abilities: but then he was a great libertine in his way, and so eager in the pursuit of his unlawful pleasures, that he stuck at nothing to attain them; by which means he brought himself so absolutely under the command of this wicked and voluptuous woman, that, as Josephus expresses it, "she seems, not only to have captivated, but bewitched him."—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 30, and *Joseph. Antiq.* b. xv. c. 4.

^a It is generally thought, that a legion was composed of ten cohorts; a cohort, of fifty maniples; a manipule, of fifty men, and consequently that a legion was a body of six thousand soldiers; but others are clearly of opinion, that it was an uncertain number, and contained sometimes four, sometimes five, and sometimes six thousand men.—*Calmel's Dictionary*, under the word, and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 37, in the notes.

Antigonus, seeing all lost, surrendered himself to Socius, and, in a submissive and abject manner, fell at his feet, imploring mercy: but Socius, insulting his meanness of spirit and want of courage, had him put in chains; and so leaving Herod in full possession of the kingdom, took his prisoner along with him to Anthony. Anthony, at first, intended to have reserved Antigonus in order to grace his triumph; but Herod, not thinking himself safe in his kingdom, as long as this remainder of the royal family continued alive, never left soliciting him, till at length, by a good sum of money, he obtained that this poor prince should be put to death; and, with him ended the reign of the famous and illustrious house of the Asmonæans; illustrious in itself, for the long continuance of the regal and sacerdotal succession in it, and no less famous for the many signal services which they and their ancestors, from time to time, had done the public, after it had lasted, from the beginning of Judas Maccabæus to this time, one hundred and twenty-nine years.

As soon as Herod had got full possession of the kingdom of Judea, he began to revenge himself on all those whom he looked upon as his enemies; and, among these, put all the members of the great sanhedrim to death, except Pollio^b and Simeas, who, during the siege, were all along for delivering up the city to Herod, whereas all the rest opposed the motion, and did what they could to excite the people to that fierce and obstinate resistance which they made. All this while Hyrcanus was captive in Parthia; and, as the people wanted a high priest, Herod's business was to choose a man of obscurity to that office, who, having no credit or interest at Jerusalem, might not be capable, notwithstanding his high station and dignity in the church, to interfere with

^b They are so named by Josephus; but the Jewish writers generally call them Hillel and Shammai; and of Hillel, in particular, they give us this account, namely, that he was born in Babylonia, and there lived till he was forty years old; that when he came to Jerusalem, he betook himself to the study of the law, in which he grew so eminent, that, after forty years more, he became president of the sanhedrim, and that in this office he continued forty years after; so that, according to this account, he lived full a hundred and twenty years; but the Jewish writers, for the sake of a round number, are frequently negligent whether they are exact or not in their chronological computations. Of Shammai they likewise tell us, that he was for some time the scholar of Hillel, and upon the removal of Manahem into Herod's service, was made vice-president of the sanhedrim in his room; and that of all the Tannaim or Mishnaical doctors, he came nearest to his master in eminence of learning, though in many points he differed in opinion from him. What we are chiefly to observe in relation to these two men at present is,—that Herod should thus generously forgive them both, though Shammai, or Simeas, was the person who appeared so intrepid against him at his trial before the sanhedrim, and Hillel, or Pollio, had all along warmly espoused the party of Hyrcanus. It must be presumed, however, that these two great men, whom he not only spared above all the rest, but took into his especial favour and confidence, had, during the siege, taken care to make their peace with him, by exhorting the besieged to a surrender: for while the contrary faction was encouraging the people with crying out, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,' and making them expect some miraculous deliverance, these two wise politicians, foreseeing that the city could not hold out much longer against such a vigorous siege, and under the excessive want of all provisions, told them, in short, that all resistance was in vain, since God, for their sins, was now bringing them into subjection to this foreigner; and this piece of service, had Herod been of a more vindictive temper than he really was, could not well fail of reconciling them to his favour.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 37; and *Joseph. Antiq.* b. xv. c. 1.

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the regal authority; and accordingly he sent for one Ananel from Babylon, who was of the pontifical family indeed, but of no farther merit, than that he was an acquaintance of Herod's, and put him into the office.

Mariamne, his best beloved wife, had then a brother, whose name was Aristobulus, to whom by right of birth the high priesthood did belong; and, as she was continually soliciting him in behalf of her brother, so her mother Alexandra, who was the daughter of Hyrcanus, and a woman of a high spirit, wrote to Cleopatra queen of Egypt, who had an absolute ascendant over Anthony, to incline him to bestow the pontifical honour upon her son: so that for fear of offending Anthony, more than for gratifying of the ladies, he deposed Ananel,^a and made Aristobulus, who was then but a youth of seventeen years old, high priest in his stead.

When Phraortes came to be king of Parthia, and was informed of Hyrcanus's character and quality, he treated him with great courtesy: for he ordered him to be released from his chains, and allowed him to reside at Babylon, which was then part of the Parthian empire, and where a great number of Jews dwelt, who paid him both the reverence due to a high priest, and the honour due to a king.

In this condition Hyrcanus might have lived and ended his days very happily; but, being desirous of returning to his native country, he began to entertain great hopes of Herod's friendship, as having been once the preserver of his life, when he was arraigned before the sanhedrim, and the founder indeed of all his fortunes. Herod, on the other hand, was as desirous to have Hyrcanus in his power as the other was to come: and therefore he not only invited him with great earnestness and greater promises, but sent an embassy to Phraortes to solicit his return. Thus having obtained the king's dismission, the unfortunate old prince was carried back to Jerusalem, and, for some time, treated by Herod with all the outward tokens of kindness and respect.

His daughter Alexandra having, by her interest with Cleopatra, obtained the high priesthood for her son, thought that (as it was his right) she might by the same means procure him the crown, and therefore went on intriguing with Cleopatra, which when Herod came to understand, he confined her to the palace, and set spies upon her. This she resented with great indignation, as being made a prisoner, and therefore formed a design to make her escape, and to carry her son with her into Egypt to Cleopatra, who, upon this occasion, had invited them thither. But the design was discovered, and

their journey stopped. Herod, however, for fear of Cleopatra, was forced to suspend his resentment, and making a virtue of necessity, pretended with great clemency to pardon in both what he could not well punish in either: but in a short time he had his revenge.

At the approach of the feast of tabernacles, Aristobulus was to officiate as high priest. He was a very beautiful person, tall and well shaped, and in the eighteenth year of his age. In the time of his officiating he discharged himself with so becoming a reverence, and the splendour of the pontifical robes added such a lustre to the gracefulness of his person, that by both these he captivated the affections of the people, and every man's mouth was full of his praises; which raised the tyrant's jealousy to such a degree, that as soon as the festival was over, he had him drowned at Jericho,^b though, to make his death pass for an unhappy accident, wherein he had no hand, he acted the part of chief mourner, and expended a large sum in a splendid funeral for him: but his hypocrisy was seen through, and detested by all.

Alexandra, in particular, was inconsolable for the loss of her son; nor could she have survived it, but for the hopes of having an opportunity of being revenged. To this purpose, having acquainted Cleopatra with the murder, she so represented Herod's villany, and her own distress, as moved the queen's compassion, and engaged her to do her utmost to revenge her cause: for she never left soliciting Anthony, till, at length, she prevailed with him to call Herod to an account for this wicked fact. But when Herod appeared before him, by fair words and large presents, he so effectually wrought upon Anthony, that instead of condemning, he seemed to vindicate him for what he had done: whereupon, returning with much joy, and in triumph as it were over his accusers, he grew more tyrannical than ever, and in a short time shut up Alexandra in close confinement.

When he went to appear before Anthony, he left his uncle Joseph in the administration of the government, and gave him particular charge, that in case Anthony should put him to death, he should not suffer Mariamne, his best beloved wife, to survive the first news of it, that none, as he proceeded,^c might enjoy so rare a beauty but himself. In his absence, some words had passed between Mariamne and his sister Salome, wherein the queen reproached her with the meanness of her original, in comparison of the royal stock of the Asmonæans, from whom she descended. This the other was resolved

^b Herod had invited him to an entertainment at Jericho, and when after dinner several of his attendants bathed themselves in a fish pond, Aristobulus was prevailed upon to bear them company; but no sooner was he plunged into the water, but those that were in it before, according as they were directed by Herod, ducked and dipped him, by way of sport and play, as they pretended, so long under water, that at length he was actually drowned.—*Jewish. Antiq.* b. xv. c. 3.

^c This he did, not so much that none else might have the enjoyment of the beautiful Mariamne, as that none might be left alive of the Asmonæan family to claim the crown, in opposition to that disposal which he had made of it to his brother Pheroras. Alexandra, the mother of Mariamne, he knew very well was a crafty and aspiring woman; and, therefore, being apprehensive that the scheme which he had laid for the succession, could not take place, if either she, or her daughter were left alive after him, he ordered that both of them should be put to death, in case he should miscarry in his application to Anthony.—*Jos. Antiq.* b. xv. c. 11.

^a This is the third person that had been deposed from the pontifical dignity since the time of the return from the Babylonish captivity; and Herod was so sensible of the illegality of it, that when Anthony sent to him to desire him to put Aristobulus into Ananel's place, at first he excused himself, by alleging, that such depositions were contrary to the Mosaic law, which enjoined that the dignity should last as long as the life of the possessor, unless some defect happened to disqualify him. The first instance we meet with of this kind is that of Jason's supplanting his brother Onias, and by a larger sum of money, buying that office of Antiochus, in prejudice of the incumbent. The other was that of Hyrcanus, by his nephew Aristobulus, who wrested that dignity from him by main force. But these depositions became afterwards so frequent, that there was hardly any other way of coming into that office, but by the expulsion of the incumbent.—*Universal History*, b. ii. c. 11.

A. M. 3978. A. C. 26; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5374. A. C. 74. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19—END OF b. xv.

to revenge; and, therefore, as soon as Herod returned, she accused Mariamne of having too great a familiarity with Joseph, whom, though he was her own husband, as well as her uncle, she was content to sacrifice rather than not obtain her will upon the other. One thing that might contribute to the increase of Herod's jealousy, and the confirmation of what his sister had told him, was the fatal secret which Joseph had indiscreetly blabbed out, and Mariamne, in her passion, could not retain; for nothing less than an adulterous conversation, he thought, could have produced such a discovery; and, therefore, when she upbraided him with it, he was going to draw his dagger, and strike her to the heart; but though his love interposed to save her, he ordered his uncle immediately to be executed, without allowing him leave so much as to speak for himself; which when he came to know his innocence, and the queen's virtue, he could not but regret.

While these things were thus going on in Judea, there happened a grievous breach ^a between Anthony and Octavianus, which terminated in a civil war, wherein Anthony at the battle of Actium was quite ruined and undone. During the whole course of this war, Herod had always followed Anthony's party, and had therefore reason to fear that the conqueror would deprive him of his kingdom for being so firm a friend to his enemy, and perhaps restore again Hyrcanus, who had once reigned under the protection of the Romans; and, therefore, to prevent this, upon pretence of his holding correspondence with Malchus king of Arabia, in order to accomplish some treasonable designs against him, he ^b caused him to be put to death, after he had passed the eightieth year of his age. His wife Mariamne, and her mother, he secured in the castle of Alexandrion, with a strong guard under the command of Sohemus, and with the same order that he had left with his uncle Joseph before; and having committed the government of the kingdom to the care of Pheroras, another of his brothers, he set forward on his journey to meet Octavianus.

Octavianus was then at Rhodes, where Herod, having obtained audience, as he entered into his presence, laid aside his diadem, and in his address to him freely owned all that he had done for Anthony, and what he was far-

ther ready to have done, had he required it of him. "This," he said, "he thought himself obliged to, by the friendship that was between them; and would he be pleased to think the like friendship worthy of his acceptance, since Anthony was now quite lost, he would not fail to serve him with the same zeal and fidelity." This Herod delivered with such an intrepidity, that Octavianus, pleased with the spirit of the man, caused him to put on his diadem again, accepted of his friendship, and confirmed him in the kingdom of Judea.

Pleased with this good success, Herod went back to Judea with great joy; but on his arrival found all his felicity soured with the troubles of his own family. Mariamne, his most beloved wife, in whose conversation he took the greatest delight, having bribed the secret out of Sohemus, conceived thereupon such a strong hatred and aversion to him, that she received his embraces with scorn, and concealing the true cause of her resentment, was perpetually upbraiding him with the murder of her nearest relations; so that, by this provoking treatment, his patience was almost quite worn out. Hearing, however, of the death of Anthony and Cleopatra, and how Octavianus had thereupon made himself master of all Egypt, he thought himself obliged to wait on him there likewise.

He was received with great kindness, and having, in his return, accompanied him to Antioch, he so far ingratiated himself with him on the way, that he granted him several places in augmentation of his dominions, and, for ever after, of all the tributary princes in the Roman empire, gave him the first place in his favour. But how prosperous soever he was in his affairs abroad, when he returned, he found nothing but trouble and vexation at home. Mariamne still retained her resentment, for the cruel commission given to Sohemus; so that, when he offered her his caresses, she not only rejected them, as usual, with the utmost aversion, but added, over and above, such bitter reproaches for the death of her relations, as provoked and enraged him to so high a degree, that he could hardly forbear laying violent hands upon her. This fit of rage her implacable enemy Salome took the advantage of, and sent in his butler, whom she had before suborned for that purpose, to accuse the queen of having tempted him to give the king poison; whereupon he ordered her favourite eunuch, without whose privacy he knew she did nothing, to be put upon the rack; but all that he confessed was, that something which Sohemus had told Mariamne, was the cause of her being out of humour.

Upon the hearing of this, Herod fell into a rage of jealousy; and, supposing that nothing but a criminal intimacy could have induced Sohemus to betray this secret to her, he ordered him immediately to be put to death; and then, calling together a council of his friends, and accusing her of an intention to take away his life, he had her condemned, but not with a design to have her put to death; but the malice of his mother and sister was so bitter against her, they would not let him be quiet. They knew very well his temper; and, being apprehensive, that as long as she was alive, he might easily relapse into his former fondness, they urged the necessity of her speedy execution, and had that influence over him, that he commanded her immediately to be put to death. But he soon repented him of his rashness.

^a Anthony had provoked Octavianus against him, by the wrong done to Octavia his sister, whom Anthony had married, and yet divorced her for the gratification of his adulterous love to Cleopatra, though Octavia was much the handsomer of the two. Anthony had likewise given out, that Cleopatra had been married to Julius Cæsar, and that Cæsarion, whom she had by him, was his lawful son, and consequently had the proper right to the inheritance, which Octavianus held only as his adopted son. These things were objected against Anthony; and Anthony, by his agents and letters, was not forgetful to reiterate. But these things were no more than pretences: the true reason of their disagreement was, that both these two great men, being not contented with half of the Roman empire, were each resolved to have all, and accordingly agreed to throw the dice of war for it.—*Plutarch on Antonius*; and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 33.

^b The character which Josephus gives of this prince is to this effect:—He was a man of eminent candour, justice, and moderation; but a lover of his ease, and so conscious to himself of his own insufficiency for the offices of public administration, that, for the most part, he intrusted that charge in other hands. This facility of his was the making of Antipater and Herod's fortune, though, without any colour of law or equity, it cost him his life.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. xv. c. 9.

A. M. 3378. A. C. 26: OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5374. A. C. 74. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19—END OF b. xv.

For, after that his rage was quenched by her blood, his love revived, and the consideration of what he had done filled his mind with the agonies of remorse, and the regret of her loss affected him so, that he fell dangerously ill; but, upon recovery, he nevertheless gave orders for the execution of Alexandra, for having too easily credited the news that was spread abroad of his death.

He had two sons by Mariamne, Alexander and Aristobulus, whom he had sent to Rome for the benefit of education; but, upon their return home, by the same instruments that had procured their mother's death, they fell under their father's displeasure. For having in the heat of their youth let fall many rash words, which expressed their resentment of their mother's hard usage, with threats of revenge upon those that had been the chief authors of it; all this was carried to their father, with such malicious glosses and comments upon it, as made him believe that they were hatching ill designs against his person. He was naturally of a jealous temper, and this was so improved by the artifices of Pheroras and Salome, his brother and sister, that, in a council which consisted of none but his own creatures, he procured their condemnation, ^a and so ordered them to be strangled: and it was upon the account of their fate, and the execution of An-

tipater, ^b another of his sons after this, (who was, in reality, for procuring his father's death,) that Octavianus, then called Augustus, was used to say, that it was better to be Herod's hog than his son.

But whatever opinion Augustus might have of Herod, it is certain that Herod had no small veneration for him, or at least carried his compliments very far. For he not only built two stately cities, and called them both by his name, ^c but in the very city of Jerusalem built a theatre and an amphitheatre, and, in honour of Augustus, celebrated games, and exhibited shows, which gave great disgust to the Jews, as things inconsistent with the legal constitutions and religion of their country. Nay, to such a degree of complaisance proceeded he, as not only to set up the Roman ensign, ^d which was the figure

^a Josephus has represented this whole proceeding in this light: When Herod had complained to Augustus of the undutiful behaviour of his sons, how they had plotted against his life, and designed to have made their escape out of his dominions, Augustus advised him to call together a council at Berytus in Phœnicia, and so to inquire into the nature of their offences. This Herod accordingly did; but when he came into the assembly, which consisted of a hundred and fifty persons, such as Augustus had directed him to, (except Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, who, being father-in-law to Alexander, was thought by Herod too much engaged by that relation, to be an impartial judge in this matter,) he began to accuse his sons with great vehemence and passion, and, after having spoken in terms very unbecoming a father, he said, "that not only Augustus made him master of his sons' destiny, but that the very laws of the Jews declared, that if a son was accused by his parents, and they put their hands upon his head, all who were present should stone him, and put him to death; and therefore, though he might treat his sons in this manner, after the crimes whereof they stood convicted, yet he chose rather to have their opinions upon the matter, not doubting but that they would join with him in giving an example to future ages, of that just severity which ought to be exercised upon unnatural children." Saturninus, a man of consular dignity, who was at the head of the council, was for punishing Alexander and Aristobulus, but not with death; and three sons, who were present with him, concurred in the same opinion; but Voluminus pronounced that they were worthy of death, which the majority of the assembly too readily coming into, carried the question. On this occasion every one pitied the two princes, but no one durst speak plainly, for fear of incurring the king's displeasure: but at last, an old soldier of the king's, who had a son about Alexander's age, and his particular friend, took the liberty to make some sharp remonstrances to the king, telling him withal, that not only the officers and soldiers, but the whole body of the people, was moved with compassion for the young princes, and pitied their sad fate. Whereupon the king, losing all patience, commanded the soldier and his son to be seized, and all besides whom he had named. When the old man was put upon the rack, he confessed that he had taken up a resolution to kill the king, and to expose himself, for the love of Alexander, to all sorts of punishment. This confession both enraged and intimidated Herod, so that he sent his sons immediately to Sebaste, (formerly called Samaria,) and there ordered them to be strangled. And thus ended the life of these two unfortunate brothers, who, by too much expressing their resentment for their mother's death, provoked those who had been the chief authors of it, by the like artifices, to procure theirs.—See Josephus's relation hereupon.—*Joseph. Antig.* b. xvi. c. 17.

^b This Antipater was Herod's eldest son by Doris, a woman of no quality, whilst himself was a private man; for which reason he kept him and his mother, for some time, at a distance from court: but when he began to take offence at Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne, he thereupon treated him with a great deal of distinction, and, in a full assembly of the people, declared him his immediate heir to the crown. After the death of Mariamne's sons, he had nothing that stood in his way, but only the life of his father Herod: and, to get rid of him, he formed a conspiracy with his uncle Pheroras, (who, at this time, was in some disgrace with his brother the king,) to have him poisoned: but, that there might be no suspicion of his being concerned in the thing, he procured some of his friends to send for him to Rome, where he had been before under Agrippa's protection, on pretence of waiting upon Augustus. Herod, however, having found out the whole plot, wrote to his son, without giving him the least hint of it, to hasten his journey home, lest something should happen in his absence to his great disadvantage; whereupon he returned into Palestine, without the least suspicion of what had passed. When he came to Jerusalem, his friends, who attended him, were not permitted to enter the palace; and when he went to embrace the king, the king thrust him from him, upbraiding him with the murder of his brothers Alexander and Aristobulus, and with the parricide which he intended to have committed on his person, and whereof he accused him the next day, before Quintilius Varus, the governor of Syria. The proof was so plain against him, that Antipater, having nothing to say in his justification, was loaded with irons and put in prison. But while he was there, a false report being spread, that Herod was dead, he begged of his keeper to set him at liberty, and made him large promises if he would do it, which being brought to his father's ear, as weak as he was, (for he died in a few days after,) he raised himself upon his elbow, and calling one of his guards, sent him that moment to dispatch his son.—*Joseph. Antig.* b. xvii. c. 7. and 9; and *Jewish Wars*, b. i. c. 21.

^c The one was Sebaste, which signifies the same in Greek as Augustus does in Latin. It was situated on the same place where stood Samaria, which Hyrcanus had destroyed, and was in part rebuilt by Gabinius, when he was governor of Syria, and called after his name: but as he was soon turned out of his government, it advanced no farther than a good large village, until Herod, who, from his stately structures, was afterwards called the Great, undertook to finish it, and, in so doing, spared no cost to make it one of the richest and most beautiful cities in his kingdom. The other was Casarea, so called in honour of the emperor, though its former appellation was "the Tower of Straton." It stood by the sea side, on the coasts of Phœnicia, upon the pass into Egypt, and was very convenient for trade, but that it had a bad harbour. To remedy this, therefore, he ordered a mole to be made in the form of a half moon, and large enough for a royal navy to ride in. The buildings of the town were all of marble, private houses as well as palaces; but the master-piece of all was the port, whereof we meet with a description in *Joseph. Antig.* b. xv. c. 13.

^d This gave great offence to the Jews, because the Romans were known to pay divine honours to their ensigns, which they used to set up in some eminent place in their camp; according to that known passage of Tertullian, "the religion of the Romans was wholly of a warlike nature; the standard they venerated, by

A. M. 3978. A. C. 26; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5374. A. C. 74. JOS. HIST. b. xii. c. 19—END OF L. XV

of an eagle, over one of the gates of the temple, but even to raise a sumptuous temple, all of white marble, in memory of the favours which Augustus had conferred on him; though, by this act of idolatrous flattery, he alienated the hearts of the Jews, and raised some conspirators ^a against his life.

To recover therefore their good opinion, and to make some amends for these breaches upon their law, in the nineteenth year of his reign he formed a design for rebuilding the temple, ^b which, by length of time, having

the standard they swore, the standard they preferred to all their gods.”

^a There is a remarkable one of this kind, which is related by Josephus to this effect:—Ten citizens, taking offence at Herod's bringing in the rites of heathenish superstition, entered into a conspiracy to cut him off by an assassination. One of these conspirators was blind, and though in no condition to act any thing for the public good, offered to bear his part in suffering for it, and by his generous offer settled them all in their determinations. They therefore provided themselves with daggers under their garments, and went to the theatre, where Herod was to come, with a full intent to slay him there. But, as he was entering the theatre, one of his spies, for he had great plenty of them, having got some notice of the matter, made a discovery of it to him; so that, returning to his palace, he sent for the conspirators, who were so far from denying their design, that they produced the very daggers that were to have done the execution, alleging for themselves, “that they were not engaged in any criminal combination, to gratify their passions or interests, but in a secret league, for the common good, and the defence of their laws, which all true patriots and professors were bound to maintain with their lives.” After this declaration they were hurried away to death, and made to undergo the most exquisite torments. But the infamous informer did not long survive them; for, having incurred the general odium of the people, he was met by some in a private place, and torn to pieces.—*Jewish Antiq.* b. xv. c. 11.

^b Whatever some Jewish Rabbins may tell us, it is certain that the temple of Herod was widely different from that of Solomon, and from that which was built by Zerubbabel after the captivity; for the description of it, according to Josephus, who himself had seen it, is much to this purpose:—The front of this magnificent building, which resembled that of a royal palace, was adorned with many rich spoils, which the kings of the Jews had dedicated to God as the monuments of their victories. The middle of it, which was much higher than the two extremes, afforded a very agreeable prospect to the extent of several furlongs to those that either lived in the country, or were travelling to the city. The gate of it was a very curious piece of workmanship. From the top of it hung a variety of rich tapestry, of several colours, embellished with purple flowers. On each side of it stood a stately pillar, with a golden vine creeping and twining about it, whose branches were laden with a cluster of grapes, that hung dangling down from the cornices. Round about the temple were large galleries, answerable to the rest of the work in magnificence, and in beauty much exceeding all that had been before. The temple was surrounded by three courts or inclosures. The first inclosure, which was a square of a furlong on every side, had a gate on the east, another on the south, and another on the north side; but it had four towards the west; one leading to the palace, another into the city, and two more into the fields. It was secured without by a strong wall, and within was adorned with stately porticoes or galleries, sustained by no less than 162 columns of Corinthian work, and all so very thick, that hardly three men could grasp one with their arms. They supported a roof of cedar very curiously wrought, and made three galleries; the two outermost of which were of the same dimensions, that is, thirty feet in breadth, fifty in height, and a furlong in length; but that in the middle was half as broad again as the other, and twice as high. The court or area before these galleries was paved with marble of several colours, and, at a little distance, was a second inclosure, formed by a handsome balustrade of stone, and pillars at equal distances, whereon were inscriptions in Greek and Latin, giving warning to all strangers not to proceed any farther upon pain of death. To this inclosure there was but one entrance towards the east, but towards the north and south, at equal distances, three. In the middle of

now stood five hundred years, as well as the violence of enemies, was in a very decayed and ruinous condition. In two years' time he got together all proper materials, and in nine ^c and a half more, had it so far finished as to make it fit for divine service; though, to carry on the outbuildings, workmen were continued about it to the time of our Saviour's ministry, and longer.

While these things were doing in Judea, the temple of Janus was shut at Rome. In times of war the custom was to have its gates laid open, but shut in the time of peace; and it was now the fifth time, since the building of that city, that the gates of this temple had been shut. The first time was in the reign of Numa; the second, after the end of the first Punic war; the third, after Augustus's victory over Anthony and Cleopatra; the fourth, upon his return from the Cantabrian war in Spain; and the fifth, now in the twenty-sixth year of his reign, and in the thirty-third of Herod's, when a general peace, which lasted for twelve years together, prevailed over the world, and was a proper prelude for ushering in the advent ^d of the Prince of peace, even

these two inclosures, there was a third, which included the temple, strictly so called, and the altar of burnt sacrifices, which was fifty cubits high, and forty cubits wide every way, all built of rough stone, on which no tool had ever been used. Into this court, which none but priests were permitted to enter, there were nine gates; one towards the east, four towards the south, and as many towards the north; but towards the west there was no gate, only one great wall ran all along from north to south. At the entrance of each gate within were large rooms in form of pavilions, of thirty cubits square, and forty high, supported by a pillar of eighteen feet in circumference; and the whole was adorned with porticoes, sustained by two rows of pillars, to the east, north, and south, but towards the west there was nothing but the wall just now mentioned. This is the description of the temple, as it was repaired by Herod, that may be extracted from *Joseph. Antiq.* b. xv. c. 13; but whoever is desirous to know these things more minutely, must consult those authors that have written upon them professionally; among which Mess. de Beausobre and L'enfant, in their general preface to the New Testament, have given us no bad sketch; and Jurieu, in his *History of Opinions*, &c. has rectified some mistakes in the account of Josephus, part iii. c. 4.

^c And yet the Jews could tell our Saviour, that ‘ forty and six years had the temple been building,’ (*John* ii. 20); but this is easily reconciled. For, though at the time, when the Jews spake to our Saviour, six and forty years had passed from the time that this building was begun, yet in nine years and a half it was made fit for divine service. The outbuildings however were far from being finished; and therefore a great number of labourers and artificers were continued at work all the time that our Saviour was upon the earth, and for some years after; till upon the coming of Gessius Florus, to be governor of Judea, eighteen thousand of them were discharged at one time, and these for want of other employ, began those mutinies and seditions, which at last drew on the destruction of Jerusalem, and the temple with it.—*Joseph. Antiq.* b. xx. c. 8.

^d According to the vulgar era, Christ was born in the four thousand and fourth year of the world's creation; but this way of computation, though it be commonly used, especially in this western part of the world, is a manifest mistake, which Dionysius Exiguus, a Scythian by birth, and afterwards a Roman abbot, was the first author of. In the first ages of Christianity, Christians had no particular epocha to themselves; they generally used that of the building of the city, or the years of the Cæsars in common with the Romans. The first that they made use of, was the era of Dioclesian; for his terrible persecution had made such an impression on their minds, that the time when it happened was long had in remembrance. It was in the year 527 of the vulgar Christian era, and not sooner, that the world began to compute time from our Saviour's birth; and therefore the wonder is less, that, after so great a distance of time, this Roman abbot should make a mistake in fixing the first year of it; but the mis-

A. M. 4001. A. C. 3; OR. ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5410. A. C. 1. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 10—END OF B. XV.

Christ our Lord, who, according to the exactest computation, was born in the 4000th year ^a [the 5411th year according to Hales] of the world's creation.

CHAP. II.—*Objections answered.*

IT cannot be expected, indeed, that any human composition should be without faults, and least of all can history promise itself that exemption, when it has so many distant and abstruse matters to inquire into, and is forced in many cases to take up with the testimony, and sometimes the conjectures of others. It may be said, however, in favour of Josephus, that the records from whence he compiled his history of the Jews, were either those of their own sacred Hebrew books; those of the prophets during the continuance of their succession; or those of the most authentic writers that flourished in their nation all along afterward. For, in the main, he was not so much an original historian himself, as an abridger of such ancient histories as he found in the highest esteem and veneration; and how fair and impartial he has been, about these times more particularly, in making this compilation, any one may perceive that will but give himself the trouble of comparing his abridgment of the first book of the Maccabees with the book itself. So

fortune was, that, before the mistake was discovered, our countryman Bede's taking it without examination from him, and using it in all his writings, gave it a sanction; nor has the learned world as yet thought fit to correct it, out of a persuasion, I presume, that there may be some danger in altering things that are settled. It is thought sufficient for the purposes of chronology, that there is a certain Christian era fixed, which every one knows, and reckons by, though there may be some mistake, as to the particular time when it should have commenced. In short, this error has been too long followed to be corrected, which must of course alter all dates, and give the world too much trouble; and therefore it is but calling it a vulgar Christian era, and remembering that Christ was born four years before it began; it is but remembering, I say, that the year which we now write, 1743, ought to be 1747, and all is well.—*Prideaux's Preface to the first part of his Connection*; and *Hearne's System of Universal History*, b. i. c. 3.

^a This, we may observe, falls in exactly with the time where an old tradition of the Jews places the beginning of the days of the Messiah. According to that tradition, the world was to last six thousand years; two thousand before the law, two thousand under the law, and two thousand under the Messiah. This tradition is of great antiquity, and esteemed as authentic as any of this sort; and though its pretending to foretel when the world shall end, (which the scriptures make a secret that God has reserved for himself,) sufficiently shows its vanity; yet since the Jews have thought fit to place it among the most authentic of their traditions, it serves against them, 1st, To prove the time when, according to their own doctrine, the Messiah was to come; and, 2dly, To convict them of their gross and most perverse infidelity, in that, though Christ was born in the 4000th year of the creation, from which, according to this their tradition, his appearance was to commence, they have now suffered above seventeen hundred and twenty years to pass, and have not yet acknowledged him.—*Prideaux's Connection* anno 4. [This is very well argued, if the Jewish tradition respecting the ages of the world, were exactly such as it is here said to have been; but there is good reason to believe that it was very different. According to the rabbinical tradition founded, as the Jews pretended, on prophecy, the world was to last 7000 years, and the Messiah to make his appearance about the middle of the sixth millenary, or the year of the world 5500; and, according to Dr Hales's computations, he actually appeared in the year 5411.]—*Bp. Gleig*.—Ed.

justly might Suidas give ¹ Josephus the title of a “lover of truth;” and so truly might Josephus say of himself, at the conclusion of his Antiquities, as well as of his Jewish Wars, “As for the style and manner of my writing them, that I submit to the judgment of my readers; but as for the candour and sincerity of my accounts, I do here declare to the world, that I have kept strictly to the truth, and have had nothing else in view, through the course of my whole work.”

² That Alexander the Great, after his having taken the city of Tyre, invaded the northern parts of Judea, and went as far as the balsam trees, near Jericho, not only Eusebius in his Chronicon, but Pliny, ^b in his Natural History likewise, directly informs us; and that he not only subdued that part of Syria, which is called Palestine, but went also about at this time to those cities that refused to submit to him, we have the concurring testimony both of Curtius ³ and Arrian; ⁴ and if their testimony be true, it is very presumable that he did not forget to visit Jerusalem in his indignation for its having refused to send him supplies.

The Samaritans, indeed, acted another part: they obeyed Alexander's summons, and went in a body of 8000 men to his assistance at Tyre. As soon as he had carried the place, they marched with his army to Jerusalem, and these are the men whom Josephus joins with the Phœnicians, though by an error of the press, or transcription at first, they are called *Χαλδαίους*, instead of *Χυθαιούς*, according to Bishop Loyd's emendation, Chaldeans, instead of Cutheans or Samaritans, the old inveterate enemies of the Jews, and who therefore were glad of this opportunity of destroying them, and promised themselves, as Josephus ⁵ expresses it, “all the licence of blood and pillage upon the high priest himself, as well as upon the citizens, that rage or revenge could draw from a victorious prince, under the sense and provocation of the affront he had received.”

Alexander accordingly comes, breathing out wrath against the Jews, and, with his victorious army, is ready to revenge the insolent message of their being unwilling to fight for any but his enemy Darius: but, instead of that, in a day or two he goes away with the greatest love and kindness for them; permits them to live by their ancient laws; forgives them the tribute of the sabbatical year; readily invites them to fight for him as his allies, and, the very next year, in his own new built city of Alexandria, gives them all equal privileges with the Macedonians themselves. Now this sudden alteration of his cannot well be imputed to any thing else but a divine interposition; and therefore, since Plutarch ⁶ informs us, that it was no unusual thing for this great man to be influenced in his conduct by dreams and visions on other occasions, it is highly probable, that this remarkable change in him did likewise depend upon the remembrance of the vision which he had at Dio in Macedonia, as himself relates in the history.

¹ Page 1261.

² Mr Whiston's Alexander at Jerusalem.

³ B. iv. c. 17.

⁴ B. l.

⁵ Jewish Antiq. b. xi. c. 8.

⁶ In Alexandro

^b Therein he tells us, that as this tree was peculiar to Judea, he might have said to that part near Jericho, Alexander, when he waged war there, caused an experiment to be made of the quantity of balsam that distilled from one of these trees; and upon trial it was found, that, on a summer's day, so much would drop from one as filled a coucha.—*Natural History*, b. xii. c. 25.

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¹ The like is to be said of the change that was made at this juncture in the conduct of the high priest, and all the people. For since, before this, they durst not fight against Darius for their oath's sake, and yet could now, without any scruple, go into that very army which had twice conquered his forces, and was then going to take away all his dominions, they must have had such a divine warrant for doing this, as the vision and admonition which, the night before, was given to the high priest, may be interpreted to imply. This, indeed, we own, is all providential and miraculous: but, if we look into their histories, whether canonical or apocryphal, we shall find, that from the days of Abraham to the days of Josephus himself, things of this nature were very common among the Jews.

The short of the matter is this,—The Jews at this time had certainly a great and eminent deliverance; but then the question is, Whence did this deliverance come? ² If we judge by the entire history of the Jewish nation, we shall expect it to have been after some extraordinary and providential manner. The Jewish records tell us, that it was really so, and give us the particular account of it. The heathen records say nothing at all, either against it or about it; and therefore we must be left at liberty to think, that the authority of the Jewish historian who relates it, if nothing absurd or incongruous appears in his relation, does certainly preponderate such a negative argument, as the bare omission of one transaction by some later heathen historians can amount to.

Upon the supposition then, that Alexander, by this supernatural direction, entered Jerusalem in a peaceable manner, his offering sacrifice to the God of Israel, whom, according to the principles of his own religion, he might take for the national god of the Jews, was exactly agreeable, as appears by the several accounts of his life, to his usual method upon the like occasions; and his promising to grant the same immunities he had given to them in Judea, to the Jews in Media and Babylonia, though he had not as yet conquered these countries, was the natural result of his having seen the prophecy of Daniel, which, both he and the high priest fully persuaded themselves, that he was the person appointed by Providence to fulfil.

Now, whoever considers the natural effects of conquests, what changes and revolutions they make, not only in the constitution, but in the language likewise, of any kingdom, and how fatally prone the very conquered are to learn the speech, as well as imitate the manners, of those that have brought them under subjection, will have no occasion to wonder, that, after the reduction of Judea, by a Grecian prince, and a prince who had distinguished that nation above all others with his royal favours, the Grecian language should soon grow into request, especially among the people of the better fashion, and such as made learning their profession.

³ The Macedonians had not long made themselves masters of Babylon, before Berosus, who is said by Tatian to have lived in the time of Alexander, became such a proficient in the Greek tongue, that in it he wrote the history of the affairs of the Chaldeans, and the actions of their kings, whereof we have some fragments in the

writings of Josephus and Eusebius; and, ⁴ not long after him, Manetho, a priest of Heliopolis in Egypt, in the same language wrote his commentaries of the Egyptian affairs, which he dedicated to this very Ptolemy Philadelphus, for whose use the Septuagint translation was made. The Greek language, in short, spread itself abroad wherever Alexander's arms prevailed, and soon became the universal language of the polite and learned; and therefore we can hardly suppose, but that in a populous nation there should be found a competent number of persons duly qualified to translate a short book, for the Pentateuch ^a was all that they translated, and this, every one knows, is far from being a long one, into a language that was then in the highest vogue, from another in which some of their doctors are said to have been so critically, so minutely skilled, as to be able to tell how often each letter occurred in the whole.

Demetrius Phalereus was not only a learned philosopher, but a person likewise of great wisdom, justice, and probity, as appeared by his government of Athens, ^b under Cassander, one of Alexander's captains: but being expelled from thence by the prevailing power of Demetrius, the son of Antigonus, and, after the death of Cassander, forced to withdraw into Egypt, he was there received with great favour and honour by Ptolemy Soter, and became one of his chief counsellors. He dissuaded the king from making any of his sons co-partner with him in the kingdom, and ^c told him the inconvenience of it: but we do not perceive from Laertius, or any other historian, that he any ways opposed the succession of Philadelphus. The king indeed did not follow his advice in this particular; but still we find him in great favour and request at court both with the father and son: and therefore, if, after the son's accession he fell into some disgrace, whatever the occasion of it might be, it is but supposing, either that this misfortune befell him some years after the king's accession, or that he, after a short disgrace, was restored to favour again, and then we may allow him space enough, and without any disparagement to his character, to have, at one and the same time, both the direction of the Septuagint version, and the superintendency of the royal library. For whatever some may think of the servile employment of looking after books, it is very well known ^d that, at Rome, one of the prime cardinals always holds the office of librarian to the pope, and, as to the king's library in France, it is not long since the archbishop of Rheims, who is by his place primate of the Gallican church, and first peer of the whole realm, thought it no disparagement to his honour to be appointed to the same office.

It is natural to suppose, that a prince, who himself was a man of great learning, and had always a long train of learned men about him, should be for making some trial of the abilities of the Jewish interpreters, before he

⁴ Prideaux's Connect. anno 250. ⁵ Diod. Laertius in Phalereo.

⁶ Prideaux's Connection, anno 284.

^a Aristæas, Aristobulus, and Philo say, that the law only was translated by the LXX; and Josephus in the preface to his Antiquities, expressly tells us, that they did not translate for Ptolemy the whole scriptures, but the law only.

^b In acknowledgment of his just government, the Athenians erected for him as many statues in their city as there were days in a year, which was the greatest honour that ever was done to any citizen in that place.—*Diog. Laertius in the Life of Demetrius Phalereus*; and *Diodor. Sicul.* b. xviii.

¹ Mr Whiston's Alexander at Jerusalem.

² Ibid.

³ Prideaux's Connection, anno 260.

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set them about the work; and therefore, if the questions which the king made, and the answers which the interpreters returned, be but adapted to their respective circumstances, instead of being an argument against, they will prove a confirmation of the truth of the account which Josephus gives us of this transaction. Now, whoever looks into these questions and answers, as they are set down in Aristæus, will find that the former, which are said to have been suggested by Demetrius, are chiefly philosophical, such as savour of the museum or college of learned men that had lately been erected at Alexandria; ¹ such as became an inquisitive heathen philosopher, who, in a great measure, was grown weary of the gross polytheism and idolatry of the Egyptians, and, by his conversation with the Alexandrian Jews, more inclinable to the belief that one invisible and true God, whom they worshipped: and that the latter are every one made with such a distinct regard to God and his providence, as is always uppermost both in the words and writings of every wise and religious Jew.

The character which Appian ² gives us of Ptolemy Philadelphus, is, that “he was the most splendid and magnificent of all the kings of his time in expending his money;” and therefore we may less wonder at his giving so much for the redemption of the captive Jews, ³ when we find him bestowing upon Aratus the Sicyonian, for his having been serviceable to him in the collection of some books and pictures, the sum of 150 talents to adjust the properties and settle the peace of his city; ⁴ may less wonder at his sending away the Jewish interpreters so amply rewarded, when we find him presenting the Roman ambassadors every one of them with a crown of gold, and upon their taking their leave, heaping upon them gifts of an inestimable value; may less wonder, in short, at his profusion in this particular, when we find him, ⁵ as Athenæus assures us, spending 2200 talents in one pompous festival to Bacchus.

His own inclination, ⁶ prompted by Demetrius Phalareus, led him to be prodigiously fond of the most complete and authentic copies of any curious book. Fifteen talents he gave for such copies of the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and yet these were already written in Greek and needed no translation; ⁷ whereas the bare permission of a version of the Jewish law, that nation’s peculiar and inestimable treasure, was a favour that had never been asked before, and what, upon any common application, would probably have been denied: and as the authenticity of this version must entirely depend on the skill and faithfulness of the Jewish translators, since they were the only persons that understood the Hebrew language, the king had no other way to obtain a confidence herein, than by gaining the entire good opinion of the high priest and people of the Jews.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that though the sums bestowed upon the Jews upon account of this translation be very large, yet considering the king’s vast liberality upon other occasions, the objection would have been stronger, had the sums been less; since,

upon the highest computation, his whole expense in redeeming the captives, in presents to the temple and altar, and in rewards to the interpreters and high priest, being all put together, does not amount to so much as he spent in one festival to Bacchus.

In so great and pompous a court as this of Philadelphus must needs have been, we need not be solicitous to answer the objection of his being addressed to by way of letter, or memorial, even by persons that had otherwise a constant access to him; because in matters of great importance, this, in most courts, is the common method of proceeding even now. But this we may safely add, that how warmly soever some modern critics have attacked the history of this Septuagint version, yet the ancient testimonies of such authors as have made mention of it, namely, of Alexander Polyhistor, ⁸ a learned heathen, who was greatly inquisitive about the affairs of the Jews; of Aristobulus, the peripatetic philosopher, and tutor to Ptolemy Philopater; of Philo, who lived at Alexandria, the very place where this version was made; of Tertullian, one of the most accurate writers of Christian antiquity; of Eusebius, a learned and faithful ecclesiastical historian; of St Jerome, a vehement enemy to this very version, as compared with the Hebrew copy; and of several others, that might be produced, are a confirmation of what Josephus (a priest of that very temple, to which the presents from Philadelphus were sent) relates concerning it, and such strongholds and fastnesses, as the maintainers of its antiquity have not yet been prevailed upon to give up.

CHAP. III.—Of the Profane History during this period.

Most of the historical facts in profane authors, that had any relation to the sacred records, we have, in the course of this history, endeavoured to abridge, and reduce into notes, at their proper periods; and have nothing more now to do, but only to take notice of some extraordinary and remarkable events in the Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires, down to our Saviour’s time, which did not then so properly fall in with our design.

After the dissolution of the ancient Assyrian monarchy, by the death of Sardanapalus, there arose up two lesser empires in its stead; one founded by Arbaces, governor of Media, and the other by Belesis, governor of Babylon, the two principal commanders who headed the conspiracy, whereby the former empire was brought to an end.

Arbaces, who in scripture ⁹ is called Tiglath Pileser, had the larger share of empire, and therefore fixed his seat at Nineveh, where the former Assyrian kings used to have their residence, and there governed his new erected empire for nineteen years. He was succeeded by his son Salmanassar; Salmanassar by Senacherib; Senacherib by Esarhaddon; Esarhaddon by Suosduchinus, in ¹⁰ the book of Judith called Nabuchodonosor; Suosduchinus by Chyniladanus; Chyniladanus by Nabopolassar; and Nabopolassar by his son Nebuchadnezzar the Great,

¹ Whiston’s Defence of Aristæus. ² In Prefat. ad Opera Hist.

³ Plutarch in Arato.

⁴ Livy xiv.; Eutropius, b. ii. Diog.

⁵ Laertius in Strato.

⁶ Van Dale’s Dissert. de Aristæa.

⁷ Whiston’s Defence of Aristæus.

⁸ Whiston’s Defence of Aristæus.

⁹ 2 Kings xv. 29, and xvi. 7, 10.

¹⁰ Judith i. 1.

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of whom we have said so many things; Nebuchadnezzar the Great was succeeded by his son Evilmerodach; Evilmerodach by Neroglossor; and Neroglossor by Belshazzar; in whom the united empire of the Assyrians and Babylonians terminated.

Belshis, who in scripture is called ¹ Baladan, took up his residence at Babylon, and was succeeded by his son Merodach; but who were his successors, we have no account to be depended on, only we know, that Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, conquered the kingdom of Babylon, and that he and his successors Suosduchinus and Chyniladanus possessed it, until Nabopolassar, governor of Babylon, and general of the Assyrian forces, joining his arms with Astyages, the son of Cyaxares king of Media, slew Chyniladanus, took and destroyed Nineveh, and translated the empire to Babylon.

After the terrible blow which Sennacherib's forces received in Judea, the Medes, understanding in what a low condition he was, returned to Nineveh, immediately shook off his yoke, and made Dejoces, who in scripture is called Arphaxad, their king; who, having beautified and enlarged Ecbatana, made it the royal seat of his kingdom, and there reigned for fifty-three years. He was succeeded by his son Phraortes; Phraortes, by Cyaxares I.; Cyaxares I., by Astyages; Astyages, by Cyaxares II., called in scripture Darius the Mede, who conquered Belshazzar, and began to lay the foundation of the Persian monarchy, which, during his life, was called the empire of the Medes and Persians, but, after his death, was united by Cyrus.^a

Cyrus succeeded his father Cambyses in the kingdom of Persia, and his uncle Cyaxares, in the kingdom of the Medes, and empire of Babylon, by this means founded the second great monarchy, which was the Persian. His wars with the Assyrians, his defeat of Croesus king of Lydia, his wonderful taking of Babylon, and obliging all the east to submit to his power, are subjects that we have already touched upon, either in our history or notes: but there are some things in his war with the Scythians, might we but credit their story, that justly deserve our observation.

² At the time when he made his expedition into Scythia, Tomyris was queen thereof, a woman of great courage and bravery of mind; for, though she could have hindered Cyrus's army from passing the river Araxes, she permitted them to do it, in confidence of fighting them with more advantage within her own dominions, and of making their retreat more difficult, by their having the river on their backs. Cyrus took this opportunity to pass the river, and, having marched a little into the country, and pitched his camp, the next day he abandoned it as if he had fled for fear, leaving plenty of wine, and other provisions behind him. Tomyris having intelligence of this, sent her son, with the third part of her forces, in pursuit of the enemy; but when he came to their camp, as if he had been sent to a banquet, not a battle, he suffered his men, who were strangers to that

kind of liquor, to intoxicate themselves with wine to such a degree, that when Cyrus marched his army back again in the night time, and came upon them, he found them incapable of fighting, or of making any resistance, and therefore put them all to the sword.

Upon the loss of so great an army, and, what more nearly concerned her, the loss of her only son, Tomyris did not betake herself to tears, the usual refuge of women upon such occasions, but cast about in her mind how she might revenge herself of the enemy; which, in a short time, she did by the like stratagem, and with the like success. For, observing that the Persians were now grown secure by reason of their late victory, she retired before them with her army, as if she had been afraid to venture the decision of a battle, until she had drawn Cyrus unawares into a defile, where, having placed an ambuscade in the mountains, she killed two hundred thousand of his men, inasmuch that there was not one left to carry home the news, and himself upon the spot. Thus fell this great prince, in the seventieth year of his age, though Xenophon, and from him other historians, are clearly of opinion, that he died peaceably in his ^a bed.

^b Xenophon adds, (b. viii.) that finding his death approaching, he called his nobility together, his two sons, Cambyses and Tanaoxares, to his bedside, and after a long speech concerning the immortality of the soul, and rewards or punishments consequent upon every man's good or ill conduct in this life, he exhorted his sons, by the strongest arguments, to a perpetual concord and agreement, and uttered many other things, which make it not improbable, that he received the knowledge of the true God from Daniel, when he governed Shushan in Persia. Strabo assures us, (b. xv.) that he was buried in a city called Pasargardes, which himself had built, and where his monument, even in his time, was with this inscription, "O man, whoever thou art, and from whatever place you come, for I was not ignorant that you would come here; I am Cyrus, who gave laws to the Persians; do not envy me this little heap of earth with which my body is covered o'er." This very tomb, Alexander the Great, according to Q. Curtius, opened, either in hopes of some treasure, which he imagined might have been there deposited, or with a desire rather to do honour to his remains: for so we are told, that he caused the coffin, wherein his body lay, to be covered with his own garment, and a crown of gold to be set upon it: all which gives credit to the account we have in Xenophon, but derogates not a little from Herodotus, who leaves his body in the hands of Tomyris.—*Raleigh's History*, b. iii. c. 6. [The whole story of the invasion of Scythia by Cyrus is rejected as false, by Dr Hales, who produces, from Scripture, the Persian writers, Xenophon, and others, such evidence in support of his own opinion, that Cyrus, far from being a mad conqueror, thirsting for blood, was revered as the father of his people, as is much more than sufficient to counterbalance the testimony of Herodotus and Justin. "Herodotus viewed Cyrus with aversion as the enslaver of his country. And this antipathy biased an historian, elsewhere so candid and impartial, to prefer a worse account before the better, of which he was not ignorant, and which was afterwards furnished by Xenophon, tacitly vindicating the character of his hero from the aspersions of Herodotus."—"The Persian writers relate, that after a long and bloody war Khesru (Cyrus) subdued the empire of Turen, and made the city of Balk, in Choresen, a royal residence, to keep in order his new subjects; that he repaid every family in Persia the amount of their war taxes, out of the immense spoils that he had acquired by his conquests; that he endeavoured to promote peace and harmony between the Turenians and Irenians; that he regulated the pay of his soldiers, reformed civil and religious abuses throughout the provinces; and at length, after a long and glorious reign, resigned his crown to his son Lo-horsh (Cambyses), and retired to solitude, saying, 'that he had lived long enough for his own glory, and that it was now time to devote the remainder of his days to God.'" That Cyrus was a monotheist; that he was well acquainted with the prophet Daniel; and that the God whom he worshipped was the Lord, the

¹ Isa. xxxix. 1.² Justin. b. i. c. 8.

^a This series of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Median kings is not perfectly correct. Such parts of it as may seem to affect the credit of the Scripture History have been already corrected in different notes on the preceding books of this work; and those who are desirous to see the whole adjusted and rendered consistent with itself, and with unquestionable eras, may have recourse to Dr Hales's *Analysis of Ancient Chronology*.—*Bp. Gleig*.—ED.

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He was succeeded by his son Cambyzes, and Cambyzes by the Magian, who, under the false name of Smerdis, usurped the throne, and brought discredit upon the whole sect, until its character came to be restored again by the management and reformation of Zoroastres.

At what time this Zoroastres, or Zardusht, as the Persians call him, lived, there is a wide difference both among the Greek and oriental writers; since some of them will have it, that he lived many years before the flood, others in the days of Abraham, and others again not before the reign of Darius the son of Hystaspes. Moses, according to the sentiments of several learned men, speaks of the *pyræa*, or temples consecrated to the worship of fire, when he brings in God threatening the Israelites, ¹ 'to overthrow their high places, and destroy their chaminim, or places appointed for the worship of fire, and to cast their carcasses upon the carcasses of their idols;' ^a although they are certainly mistaken who think, that the fire which he ordered to be kept always burning upon the altar of the Lord, was in imitation of the fire of the Magians.

If then we suppose that Zoroastres was the first author of the worship of fire, we must acknowledge him more ancient than Moses, but if we look upon him only as the reformer or restorer of it, though we cannot tell the precise time when he flourished, it must not be long after the Magians fell into disgrace, and may therefore very properly be thought to be in the reign of Darius Hystaspes.

He was a man of a mean and obscure parentage; ^b by

¹ Ezek. vi. 4, &c.

God of heaven, who 'had given to him all the kingdoms of the earth, and charged him,' as he said himself, 'to build him a house at Jerusalem,' there seems to be no room for doubt.]—*Hales's Analyses*, vol. iv. second edition.—*Bp. Gleig*.—Ed.

^a That the worship of the sun—the source of light and heat, was more ancient than Moses there can be no doubt; but that the worship of the element of fire or of fires burning on earth was more ancient can never be proved by this text of Ezekiel. They were the idolatrous Jews of his own age that the prophet thus addressed in the name of Jehovah; and they certainly had idols or images, perhaps indeed images of the sun, which the prophet assured them should be broken; but the Persian worshippers of fire or light allowed no other images of their god. No ground therefore is furnished by this text from which an argument can be drawn to ascertain the era of Zoroaster.—*Bp. Gleig*.—Ed.

^b To this purpose we may observe, that most of his reformations in the old religion of the Magians are taken either from the ancient writings or the ancient usages of the Jews. For whereas Moses heard God speak to him out of a flame of fire in the bush, Zoroastres pretended that he in like manner heard God speak to him, at the time when he was taken up to heaven. Whereas the Jews had a visible shechinah of the divine presence among them, resting over the mercy-seat in the holy of holies, unto which they turned themselves when they prayed; Zoroastres taught his disciples, that in the sun, and in the sacred fires in their temples, God more especially dwelt; and therefore he obliged them to offer up all their prayers with their faces turned to both these. Whereas the Jews had a sacred fire which came down from heaven upon their altar of burnt offerings, which as long as Solomon's temple stood, was preserved with the utmost care from extinguishing; Zoroastres pretended, that when he was in heaven, he brought some of that holy fire out of which God spake unto him: and therefore he enjoined that it should be kept with diligent care, and that all the fires on the altars of the new erected fire temples, should at first be lighted only from thence: and whereas the Jews were very nice in using no wood on the altar of their temple, but what was reputed clean, and had it therefore all barked and examined, before it was laid on, and when it was laid on, allowed of no bellows to blow it, but left it to kindle and flame out of itself; Zoroastres ordained his followers, in relation to the sacred

birth and education very probably a Jew, and, as some suppose, a servant to the prophet Daniel; because he was certainly a man of great learning, and thoroughly acquainted with the books of Moses. As soon as he took upon him the prophetic office, he retired into a cave, and there lived a long time as a recluse, pretending to be abstracted from all worldly considerations, and to be given wholly to prayers and divine meditations. In this retirement he composed the book, ^c wherein all his pretended revelations are contained. ² The first part of it contains a liturgy, which the Magians, in all their oratories and fire temples, make use of to this day. The rest is an historical account of the life, actions, and prophecies of its author, the several articles and branches of his superstition, together with rules and exhortations to morality, wherein he is very pressing and exact, except his allowing of incest; and the whole being interspersed with several things taken out of the Old Testament, abundantly shows that his original was from the Jews.

Upon leaving his retirement, he went into India among the Brachmans, where, having learned all their knowledge in mathematics, astronomy, and natural philosophy, he came back, and taught his disciples these sciences, which gained him so great a reputation, that, for many years after, a learned man and a Magian became equivalent terms. Nay, he pretended, that, once upon a time, he was taken up into heaven to be instructed in those doctrines which he was to deliver unto men; that there he heard God speak out of the midst of a great and bright flame of fire; and for this reason he taught his followers that fire was the truest representation of the divine presence, and the sun, as the most perfect fire, the more immediate throne of his glory; that of the fire from whence God spake, he upon his return brought some with him, and placed it on the altar of the first fire-temple he erected; from whence, as they say, it was propagated to all the rest, and this is the reason they give for keeping it so carefully, and treating it with so much superstition.

Having thus qualified himself to be a prophet, he made his first appearance in Media, in the city of *Ziz*, say some, or in *Ecbatan*, now *Taurus*, according to others; where the principal doctrines that he professed, as a refinement upon what the old Magians maintained, were these,—"That there was one Supreme Being, independent, and self-existing from all eternity; that under him there

² Prideaux's Connection, 486.

fires of their temples, to observe both these particulars, commanding them to bark all their wood, and use no other means for the kindling it up into a flame but the pouring oil, and leaving it to the blasts of the open air; and that he should, in so many singular and unobvious things, imitate the Jewish religion in the scheme of his reformations, it can hardly be imagined, without supposing, that at first he had his education in it; nor is it improbable, that if, as some think, he was the disciple of Daniel, his seeing that great and good man arrive at such a height of dignity, by being a true prophet of God, might put him upon the thoughts of being a false one, in hopes that, if he acted his part well, he might obtain to himself the like advancement.—*Lightfoot's Temple Service*; *Hyde's Religion of the Ancient Persians*; and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 486.

^c This book is called *Zendavesta*, and by contraction, *Zenda*, which signifies a *fire-kindler*, such as a tinder box is with us; and this fantastical name the impostor gave it, because, as he pretended, all that would read this book, and meditate thereon, might from thence kindle in their hearts the fire of all true love to God, and his holy religion.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 486.

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were two angels, one the angel of light, who is the author and director of all good, and the other the angel of darkness, who is the author and director of all evil, and that these two out of the mixture of light and darkness, made all things; that they are in perpetual struggle with each other, and that where the angel of light prevails, there the most is good, where the angel of darkness, there the most is evil; that this struggle shall continue unto the end of the world, when there shall be a general resurrection, a day of judgment, and a retribution to every one according to his works; and that after this, the angel of darkness and his disciples shall go also into a world of their own, where they shall suffer, in everlasting darkness, the punishments of their evil deeds; and the angel of light and his disciples, shall go also into a world of their own, where they shall receive, in everlasting light, the reward due to their good deeds, whereupon they shall remain separated for ever, and light and darkness are to be no more mixed together to all eternity." And all this, the remainder of that sect, which is now in Persia and India, do, after so many ages, still hold without any variation, even to this day.

After Zoroastres had acted the part of a prophet in Media, and there settled all things according to his intentions, he removed from thence into Bactria, the most eastern province of Persia, and their settling in the city of Balch, which lies on the river Oxus, in the confines of Persia, under the protection of Hystaspes the father of Darius, he soon spread his imposture through all that province with success. From Bactria he went next to the royal court at Susa, where he managed his pretensions with so much address and insinuation, that he made Darius likewise a proselyte, and, from his example, drew over the courtiers, nobility, and great men of that city into the same profession: but when, upon his return into Balch, he attempted the like upon Agarsp, king of the oriental Scythians, and a zealous Sabian, and pretended an authority from Darius to that purpose, the Scythian prince resented it with such indignation, that he invaded Bactria with an army, and, having there defeated the forces that opposed him, slew Zoroastres, with all the priests of his patriarchal church, amounting to the number of eighty persons, and demolished all the fire-temples in the province; but it was not long before Darius ^a fell upon him, and revenged the injury. ^b

^a After he had overthrown him with a great slaughter, and driven him out of the province, he rebuilt all the fire-temples, and especially that of Balch, which, as it was the patriarchal temple of the sect, he failed not to erect with a grandeur suitable to its dignity, and had it called after his own name. For he was a zealous promoter of this religion, and after the death of its author, continued to propagate it with the same ardour as before. —*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 486.

^b According to Dr Hales there were two Zoroasters—the former contemporary with Abraham, and king of Bactria; the latter a disciple of the prophet Daniel, who flourished in the reign of Darius Hystaspes. Of the religion taught by the former, he speaks in terms of the highest praise, as a sublime system of pure atheism, similar to the religion of Abraham and the other patriarchs of the Old Testament; and the object of the teaching of the latter, was to bring back the religion of Persia to its original purity, by the expunging from it the corruptions which had been introduced into it from Zebism. All this seems to be very probable; but what the modern Persian writers, together with Abulfaragi, say of his foretelling the precise time of the birth of a Divine Child in Palestine, and his doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and a future state of rewards and punish-

This Darius was one of the seven lords who slew the false Smerdis; and by an artifice he obtained the kingdom of Persia; but it was by the cruel policy of Zopyrus, that he made himself master of the city of Babylon. This city having for many years, during the Babylonish empire, been mistress of the east, and domineered over all its neighbouring countries, could not bear the subjection it was fallen under to the Persians; especially since the removal of the imperial seat to Shushan, whereby its wealth and grandeur were much diminished. Taking the advantage therefore of the late revolution which had happened in the Persian empire, the Babylonians resolved to set up for themselves; and accordingly, having stored the city with a sufficient quantity of arms and provisions, in the fifth year of the reign of this Darius, they broke out into an open revolt.

¹ The city, by reason of the strength and height of its walls, was impregnable against all storms, batteries, and assaults; and as it was furnished with provisions for a great many years, and had large quantities of void ground within the walls, from whence it might annually be supplied with more, could never have been starved into a surrender, and must have worn out Darius and all his army, had it not been for a stratagem of Zopyrus, one of his commanders.

The army had now lain before the city a year and eight months, without having made any great progress in the siege, which raised the indignation of Zopyrus to such a degree, that, having cut off his nose and ears, and mangled his body all over with stripes, in this condition he fled to the besieged, and feigning to them that he had suffered all this by the cruel usage of Darius, he thereby insinuated himself so far into their confidence, that at length they made him the chief commander of their forces, which trust he made use of to deliver the city, which could not otherwise have been taken, into his master's hand; and, for this remarkable piece of service, was rewarded with the highest honours that his prince could heap on him, all his life after.

By this hardy stratagem Darius recovered the city of Babylon; but in his war with the Greeks he was so far from having any good success, that, ² at the battle of Marathon, his vast army received a total overthrow by Miltiades, prince of the Thracian Chersonesus, and his two generals, Dotis and Artaphernes, were forced to return home with baffle and disgrace.

He was succeeded by his son Xerxes, who, ³ after ten

¹ Prideaux's Connection, anno 516.

² Herod. b. vi.; Justin, b. ii. c. 9. ³ Herod. b. ii.; Diod. Sic. b. ii.

ments, much more perspicuous than any thing on the subject that is to be found in the Old Testament, is unquestionably a legend forged since the general propagation of Christianity. This led Warburton to deny the very existence of the second Zoroaster, and to treat with contempt, as a set of fablers, all the Persian writers by whom he is mentioned; but this was surely going too far. That the Sedder and Zendaviste are unworthy of the Persian reformer, or of regard, is indeed true; but, as Dr Hales well observes, the rejection of such spurious productions, as well as of the legends of Abulfaragi and others, by no means invalidates the actual existence of such a reformer of the Magian religion, as Zerdusht or the younger Zoroaster; for what ancient teacher of religion has there been, of whom fables have not been told in the course of ages? In all probability Zoroaster himself never pretended to have gone to heaven for the sacred fire, of which he may have conceived the idea from Daniel's account of the sacred fire among the Jews.—*Ep. Gleig.*—ED.

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years' preparation, renewed the war with the Greeks; but with worse success than his father: for, at the straits of Thermopylæ, Leonidas, the king of the Lacedæmonians, with a handful of men, slew twenty thousand of his forces: at the straits of Salamis, Themistocles, the general of the Athenians, ruined the greatest part of his fleet: in Sicily, Gelo, the king thereof, made great havoc among his confederates the Carthaginians: at Platea, Pausanias slew his general Mardonius, and cut his army to pieces; and at Mycale, Leotychides both vanquished his troops by land, and burned the remainder of his fleet; so that never was there a man who set out with so great an armament both by sea and land, and returned in so abject and disgraceful a manner. He was succeeded by his son Artaxerxes; Artaxerxes by Xerxes II.; Xerxes II. by his brother Sogdianus; and Sogdianus by his brother Ochus, who is commonly called Darius Nothus. Ochus was succeeded by Artaxerxes II., surnamed Mnemon; Artaxerxes II. by another Ochus, who took upon him the name of Artaxerxes III.; this Ochus by Arses; and Arses by Darius Codomanus; in whom the Persian monarchy, terminating by Alexander the Great, was translated to Greece.

The army which Alexander carried into Asia, according to the highest computation, amounted to no more than thirty thousand foot, and five thousand horse; and yet, with these few forces, he not only attempted, but accomplished likewise the conquest of the whole Persian empire, and added India likewise to his acquisitions: but what was the most remarkable thing in his expedition is, that he set out upon it with no more than seventy talents, which was scarce enough to supply the army with necessaries for thirty days; but, as he trusted in providence, providence did not fail him. In a few days, at the river Granicus, he encountered Darius, and, having vanquished his troops, though they were five times more in number, he thereby got possession of a great part of his treasure, and all the provinces of the Lesser Asia. Not long after this, at Issus in Cilicia, he gave him another defeat; where, having taken all his camp, bag and baggage, with his mother, wife, and children, he left a hundred thousand Persians dead upon the field of battle: and about two years after, not far from Arbela, he gave him a final overthrow: for there, with no more than fifty thousand men, he vanquished the vast army of the Persians, which consisted of above twenty times as many, and thereby determined the fate of the Persian, and established the third great monarchy, which was the Grecian, in the person of Alexander. It lasted no longer than six years and ten months: for, after his death, it was divided among his generals, and, as Judea lay between Syria and Egypt, according as their arms prevailed, it was generally under the dominion of one of these, until the Roman power began to exert itself.

The Romans, having built their city, and out of the neighbouring villages¹ (as we related the story before) furnished themselves with wives, for seven successions lived under the dominion of kings; but in the family of Tarquin, which had justly incurred the people's displeasure,^a that form of government was quite dissolved.

Many, however, and fierce were the wars which, both in their regal and consular state, the Romans waged with the nations round about them, but their conquests were confined to the bounds of Italy only; nor was the glory of their name much known to foreign nations, until the war which they had with Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, gave them an opportunity^b to signalize their bravery and greatness of mind, which excited Ptolemy Philadelphus, then king of Egypt, to send them an embassy, congratulating their successes, and desiring to enter into alliance with them.

² To make a return of the like respects, the Romans next year sent Q. Fabius Gurgus, Cn. Fabius Pictor, and Q. Ogulinius, their ambassadors to the Egyptian court, whose behaviour, in that capacity, was very remarkable; for when the king, having invited them to supper, in the conclusion of the entertainment, presented each of them

² Livy, b. xiv.; Eutropius, b. ii.; Valerius Maximus, b. iv. in-law Servius Tullius, and, upon his ascending it, put all his friends to death. The affairs of the state he managed by himself alone, slighted the senate, diminished their authority, cut off several of them upon frivolous pretences, and seized upon their estates. Among these Marcus Junius was one, who left behind him a son named Lucius Junius; but he, fearing the fate that his father and brother had undergone, counterfeited the fool (and was thence called Brutus) so very artfully, that he was taken by Tarquin into his house to make his children sport. In the mean time, Sextus, one of Tarquin's sons, inflamed with the beauty of Lucretia, got privately to Collatia, where she resided, and ravished her; whereupon she sent for her father from Rome, and her husband Collatinus from the camp, which was then before Ardea, desiring them to bring along with them some of their particular friends. Publius Valerius came with her father Lucretius, and Lucius Junius Brutus with her husband; to whom, as soon as they were arrived, she related the whole story, and then with a poniard stabbed herself to the heart. Upon the sight of this they were all filled with grief and indignation; but, to their great surprise, Brutus, throwing off the disguise of his folly, declared his resolution, and made them swear upon the bloody poniard to assist him in revenging this, and the other wickednesses of Tarquin and his family, by expelling him and them from the government, which accordingly they did, thereby putting an end to the regal power at Rome, and turning it into a consular state.—*Hearne's System*, b. iii.

^b One great instance of this appeared in the course of this war, which is thus related by Plutarch:—When Fabricius was consul, and at the head of his army, an unknown person came into the camp, and delivered him a letter from king Pyrrhus's chief physician, offering to take him off by poison, and so end the war without any farther hazard to the Romans, if he might have a reward proportionable to his service. Fabricius, enraged at the villany of the man, and disposing the other consul to the same opinion, sent dispatches immediately to Pyrrhus to caution him against the treason. His letter was to this effect:—"Caius Fabricius, and Quintus Æmilius, consuls of the Romans, to Pyrrhus the king, health. You seem to have a very ill judgment both of your friends and enemies. You will understand by this letter, which was sent to us, that you are in war with honest men, and trust knaves and villains; but we have not discovered this to you to insinuate into your favour, but lest your ruin might bring a reproach upon us, as if we had ended this war by treachery, when we were not able to do it by our courage and virtue." When Pyrrhus had read the letter, and made strict inquiry into the treason, he caused the physician to be executed, and, in acknowledgment of this civility of the Romans, sent to Rome the prisoners without ransom, and again employed Cineas to negotiate a peace for him. The Romans, who were above receiving from their enemy a recompence for not having been guilty of the vilest injustice, disdained to accept of the prisoners, without returning to him an equal number of Samnites and Tarentines; but, as for the peace, they would not suffer Cineas so much as to mention it, until Pyrrhus had removed his arms and forces out of Italy, and sailed back to Epirus in the same ships that brought him over.—*Plut. on Pyrrhus*.

¹ See p. 675.

^a To make his way to the throne, he murdered his father—

A. M. 4001. A. C. 3; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5410. A. C. 1. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19—END OF b. xv.

with a crown of gold, they accepted of the crowns, upon account of the honour that was done them, but, next morning, they crowned therewith the statues of the king that stood in the public places of the city; and when again, at their audience of leave, he presented them with very valuable gifts, they took them indeed for fear that their refusal should give offence; but as soon as they were returned to Rome, they delivered them all into the public treasury, before they appeared in the senate to give an account of their embassy, whereby they declared, that they desired no other advantage from the service of the public, than the honour of discharging it well.

This spirit of moderation and disinterestedness, while it continued in the state, and the many great instances of invincible courage and resolution, which upon all occasions they showed, made the Romans of great note in the world, and after the defeat of the Carthaginians in the second Punic war, they became indeed the terror of all other nations.

Hannibal was certainly the most dangerous enemy that ever Rome had. As soon as war was declared between these two states, he left Spain, where he then was, and at the head of fifty thousand foot and nine thousand horse, marched directly towards Italy. He crossed the Pyrenean mountains into Gaul, crossed the Rhone, and came to the foot of the Alps, which, in fifteen days' time he got over, but not without much danger and difficulty, as well as the loss of half his army. When he got footing in Italy, he defeated Scipio, one of the Roman consuls, at Pavia, and his colleague Sempronius, in another action near Trebia. Near the lake Trasymene he cut off the Roman army, and their consul Flaminius, even after he had destroyed a detachment of forty thousand, which the other consul Servilius had sent to his assistance; but in the famous battle at Cannæ, he made the greatest slaughter of them; for therein he defeated the whole army, and slew Æmilius, one of their consuls; killed 50,000 men, two questors, twenty-one tribunes, eighty of the senatorian, and of the equestrian order a much greater number.

This last defeat caused a dreadful consternation in Rome, but did not abate the people's courage, who still refused to hearken to any overtures of peace; till, having sent Scipio the Younger into Africa, they by that means gave the Carthaginians so much disturbance, that they were forced to recall Hannibal, who, coming to a decisive battle, was routed by the Romans, and his countrymen forced to sue for a peace, which was granted them upon terms very honourable and advantageous to Rome.

After this peace with the Romans, Hannibal¹ lived quietly at Carthage for the space of six years; but, being under a suspicion of holding correspondence with Antiochus, surnamed the Great, (between whom and the Romans there was at that time a misunderstanding,) and of plotting with him to bring a new war upon Italy, some of his enemies at Rome procured ambassadors to be sent to Carthage, in order to inquire into the matter, and if they found any reason for it, to have him delivered into their hands; which when Hannibal understood, he made his escape before the ambassadors had time to deliver

their message, and put himself under the protection of Antiochus.

² Antiochus, at this time, was in debate with himself on the point of entering into war with the Romans, but at the coming of Hannibal he soon determined for war; and had he taken Hannibal's advice of carrying it into the bowels of Italy, he might probably have met with a better event; ^a but his resolution was to begin it in Greece, where being shamefully defeated in every engagement, both by sea and land, he was forced at last to send an embassy to the Roman consuls, desiring conditions of peace, which were granted him upon these hard terms:—That he should pay the whole expenses of the war, which were estimated at fifteen thousand talents of Eubæa; ^b should quit all Asia on that side the mount Taurus, and deliver up Hannibal the Carthaginian, and Thoas the Ætolian, as the chief incendiaries of the war: but as soon as these heard that a treaty was begun, they easily foresaw what would be the result of it, and therefore both took care ^c to get out of the way before it came to a conclusion.

¹ Livy, b. xxxvii.; Justin, b. xxxi. c. 8; Appian, de Syriacis.

^a Antiochus's army is said to have consisted of seventy thousand foot, twelve thousand horse, and fifty-four elephants: whereas all the Roman forces amounted to no more than thirty thousand, and yet Antiochus was totally overthrown: for in the field of battle he lost fifty thousand foot, and four thousand horse; fourteen hundred were taken prisoners, and himself with much difficulty escaped to Sardis.—*Appian, in Syriacis; Livy, b. xxxvii. and Justin, b. xxxi. c. 7.*

^b There is a difference between Livy and Polybius in this matter; for whereas in Polybius the words are, that the money to be paid to the Romans should be ἀργυρίου Ἀττικῶν ἀγισίων, Livy, mistaking the meaning of the Greek phrase, rendered it Attic talents; whereas Polybius meant it only the Attic standard; for as the Eubæan talent was the greatest weight, so the Attic money was the finest silver of any in Greece, and by this treaty the money was to be paid according to both, that is, the Romans, having conquered Antiochus, not only obliged him to pay this vast sum for his peace, but also made him pay it in talents of the highest weight, and of silver of the best and finest standard in all Greece.—*Prideaux's Connection, anno 290.*

^c What became of the Ætolian we are not concerned to inquire; but Hannibal, after he was deserted by Antiochus, fled to Prusias, king of Bithynia; where, being slighted by him, and in danger of being delivered to the Romans, it is generally said that he put an end to his days, for which purpose he carried poison always about him concealed under the stone of his ring. This is the account we have in Livy, b. xxxix. c. 51; and what Plutarch and the Roman satirist does more than allude to.—“O glory, what art thou! The same man, (namely, Hannibal,) is vanquished, and flies precipitantly into exile, where he sits, the great and wonderful suppliant! beside the king's tent, until it pleases the Bithynian tyrant to protect him. Neither swords nor stones, nor darts, but that ring, the avenger of Cannæ, and the punisher of so much slaughter, shall put an end to that soul which once confounded all human affairs.”—*Juv. Sat. x.* He was born a soldier; and a continual exercise of arms made him a great captain. He was always just in his schemes, and immense in his views: had an admirable genius at hitting the true means for the execution of his designs, and the greatest artifice in acting without being discovered. He was infinite in expedients, and as skilful in recovering himself out of danger, as he was in drawing others into it. But then he was a person of no fidelity, no religion, no humanity, though he had the art of putting on the appearance of all these virtues, whenever he thought it subservient to his interest.—*Pertol's Revolution of the Roman Republic.* [The author seems to have founded his opinion of Hannibal from the Roman writers, who have loaded his memory with every imputation of cruelty and perfidy. It is however evident that the Romans were actuated by feelings of the most bitter hostility and resentment against Hannibal, and were therefore little in-

¹ Livy, b. xxxiii.; Cornelius Nepos, on Hannibal; Justin, b. xxxi. c. 2, 3.

A. M. 4031. A. C. 3; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5410. A. C. 1. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19—END OF b. XV.

^a Next to the Carthaginian war, the longest and most obstinate that the Romans ever had, was the war which Mithridates king of Pontus, in the reign of Alexander Jannæus at Jerusalem, waged with them. For, having very unjustly seized on the kingdoms of Cappadocia and Bithynia, when the Romans interposed for the surrender of them to the persons to whom they had decreed them, he refused to obey, and thereupon hostilities ensued. ¹ For some time at first Mithridates was successful; but ^b was very cruel, while he had the superiority; till, having sent into Greece an army of three hundred and ten thousand men, under the command of three of his best generals, Sylla alone, with no more than fifteen thousand foot, and fifteen hundred horse, vanquished them all in several battles; and Fimbria, the next year, with another Roman army, pressed Mithridates himself so very close, that in Patana, a maritime town in Ætolia, he was in imminent danger of being made a prisoner, ² which terrified him to such a degree that he sued for peace, which, upon these conditions, was granted him:—"That he should restore Bithynia to Nicomedes, and Cappadocia to Ariobarzanes, and to the Romans whatever he had taken from them in the late war; that he should content himself with his paternal kingdom of Pontus, yield to the Romans seventy of his ships; and pay them three thousand talents for the charge of the war."

¹ Plutarch on Sylla; Appian on Mithridates; and Velleius Paterculus, b. ii. c. 23.

² Ibid.

clined to do justice to his character. It cannot be denied that he was one of the most consummate masters of the art of war recorded in ancient history, and although profuse of human blood, and but little scrupulous as to the manner in which he accomplished his ends, he showed on several occasions that he was not destitute of noble and generous sentiments. For a particular account of this illustrious general, and a vindication of his character from the aspersions of Livy, see Hooke's Roman History.]—Ed.

^a The war with Jugurtha intervened indeed, but this was not of any long continuance, nor is it any where referred to in the sacred history; however, it may not be improper to mention thus much of it:—That this Jugurtha was nephew to Micipsa, king of Numidia, who left behind him two sons, Adherbal and Hiempsal, both of whom Jugurtha murdered, and then usurped their kingdom; that when the Romans were for calling him to an account for all this wickedness, he for a long while bribed the commissioners and generals that were sent against him, till at length, being defeated first by Metellus, and afterwards by Marius, he was betrayed by Bocchus king of Mauritania, who was both his ally and father-in-law; that being thus betrayed and seized, he was laden with chains, and given up to Sylla, who delivered him into the hands of the general Marius, and he, in the triumph that was given him, dragged him like a slave at the wheels of his chariot; and that, after this ceremony was over, he was led to prison, stripped of his royal robes, and then pushed naked into a dungeon, where he was condemned to be starved to death.—*Sallust's Jugurthine War.*

^b To this purpose historians have observed, that when, upon a defeat given the Roman forces, he had taken Manlius Aquilius and Quintus Oppius, the two generals, prisoners, he not only treated them with the utmost indignity, but afterwards with equal cruelty tortured them to death; and that, finding a great number of Romans and Italians, upon one occasion or other, dispersed through all the provinces and cities of the Lesser Asia, he sent secret orders to all the governors of these provinces, and magistrates of these cities, to put them all to death in one and the same day, which was accordingly executed with such rigour, that no less than eighty thousand, say some, near double that number, say others, of Romans and Italians were then massacred in that country.—*Appian. in Mithrid. epist.; Liv. b. lxxviii. lxxviii.; and L. Florus, b. iii. c. 5.*

But the terms of this peace were too hard long to be submitted to by a man of Mithridates's spirit; and therefore, as soon as Nicomedes, who left the Roman people his heirs, was dead, he again seized on Bithynia and Paphlagonia; and the Romans again were forced to declare war against him.

³ The two consuls for the year, Lucius Lucullus and Marcus Cotta, were sent to carry on this war; but the latter of these, being no ways skilled in military affairs, was overcome by Mithridates not far from Chalcodon, with the loss of most of his men, and a good part of his fleet, which was there to defend the coasts; till Lucullus, coming to his assistance, not only drove Mithridates from the siege of Cyzirus, a city on the Propontis, that was in the Roman interest, but destroyed his fleet in the Hellespont, retook Bithynia and Paphlagonia from him, pursued him into his kingdom, besieged his very capital, and in one engagement ruined all his forces, and compelled him to flee into Armenia, there to implore the protection and assistance of Tigranes, his son-in-law.

Nor was this all; for, as soon as Lucullus understood that Tigranes was engaged in the war with him, he immediately marched his army against him, passed the Euphrates, passed the Tigris, defeated the forces that were sent against him, and having besieged his metropolis, with not the twentieth part of their number, in one battle gained a complete victory over an army of three hundred and six thousand men that were coming to relieve it. Lucullus, in short, had in every place the advantage against these two confederate kings, ⁴ until, by the management of Publius Clodius, his own soldiers began to mutiny against him, insomuch, that having lost all the power and authority of a general, he was forced to deliver up the army to Pompey, and return to Rome.

Pompey, at his first entering upon the war, had taken into alliance with him Phraortes king of Parthia; but the mutiny which had happened in the latter end of Lucullus's time, had given Mithridates an opportunity of recovering a good part of his kingdom, and of getting together a great number of forces, wherewith he endeavoured to harass and distress the Roman army, till Pompey at length fell upon him by surprise, vanquished his troops, made him flee for shelter northward beyond the springs of the Euphrates, and then marched directly against his confederate Tigranes; but Tigranes, terrified at this, and not sufficiently provided to resist the power that was coming against him, was resolved to surrender both himself and his kingdom into the hands of the Roman general; who, upon his paying the Romans six thousand talents for making a causeless war against them, and yielding up to them all his conquests on this side the Euphrates, ordered that he should still reign in his paternal kingdom of Armenia the Greater, and his son ^c in

³ Plutarch on Lucullus; and Appian on Mithridates.

⁴ Plutarch on Lucullus and Pompey; and Dion Cassius, b. xxxvi.

^c The reason why Pompey made this partition of Tigranes's kingdom, was, because Tigranes's son had put himself under the protection of the Romans. The father Tigranes had three sons by Cleopatra, the daughter of Mithridates, two of whom he had, upon slight occasions, put to death; and therefore this third, not thinking his life safe within the power of so cruel a father, fled to Phraortes, king of Parthia, whose daughter he had married, and by him was assisted to invade his father's dominions, and lay siege to Artaxata, his capital city; but, being routed by Tigranes the father, and driven out of the country, he betook himself to

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Gordena and Sophena, two provinces that bordered upon it.

¹ In the mean time Mithridates, having passed through several Scythian nations, came at last into the Cimmerian Bosphorus, now the country of the Crim Tartars, which was part of his dominions, and where he had appointed one of his sons, called Machares, ^a to reign. From hence he sent ambassadors to Pompey, offering in his behalf, that in case he might be allowed to hold his paternal kingdom, as Tigranes had been, he would pay tribute to the Romans for it, and relinquish to them all his other dominions; but, when he understood that Pompey would listen to no proposals of peace, upon any other condition than that he should come and surrender himself as Tigranes had done, he could not bring himself to submit to that; and, therefore, having got together a considerable number of forces out of the Scythian nations, wherewith he augmented his own army, and sent agents to engage the Gauls to join him, as soon as he approached the Alps, ² he resolved to make a desperate expedition ^b through the way of Panonia, and the Tarentine Alps, into Italy itself, and there assault the Romans, as Hannibal had done, at their very doors. But when the army was to go upon their march, they were so frightened at the thoughts of it, that they conspired against him, and made Pharnaces his son their king.

Mithridates dreaded nothing so much as to fall into the hands of the Romans, and be led in triumph by them; and, therefore, being apprehensive that his son might deliver him to Pompey, and finding no possibility of making his escape, he retired into his apartment, and having there distributed poison to his wives, his concubines, and daughters, that were with him, he took a dose of it himself; but when he found it did not sufficiently operate upon him, he had recourse to his sword to finish the work, ^c and so died, after he had lived seventy-two years, and reigned sixty of them.

¹ Appian. in *Mithrid.*; *Epit.* Liv. b. ci.; and Dion Cassius, b. xxxvi.

² Plutarch on Pompey; Dion Cassius, b. xxxvii.; Appian, in *Mithrid.*; *Epit.* Liv. b. cvi.; and L. Florus, b. iii. c. 5.

the Roman camp, and there by way of a supplicant, cast himself at the feet of Pompey. Pompey at first received him very kindly; but when he seemed dissatisfied with the portion of his father's kingdom that he had allotted him, and was for exciting the nobility of Armenia to renew the war against the Romans, and the Parthians to join in it, Pompey put him among those whom he reserved for his triumph, and after that triumph left him in prison. —*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 66.

^a This young prince having been hard pressed by the Romans, while they lay at the siege of Sinape, and had then by their fleet the mastery of the Euxine sea, which lay between Sinape and the kingdom of Machares, had made a peace with them, and ever since maintained the terms of it. By this means he had much incensed his father, and dreaded his approach. While, therefore, he was on the way, he sent ambassadors to him to make his peace, and to urge in excuse, that what he had done in that respect was by the necessity of his affairs, and not by choice: but, finding his father implacable, and no possibility of making his escape, he slew himself, to avoid falling into his hands.—*Appian. in Mithrid.*

^b A desperate expedition indeed, which contained a march of about two thousand miles, through all those countries which are now called Tartaria Crimea, Podolia, Moldavia, Walachia, Transylvania, Hungaria, Stiria, Carinthia, Tyrol, and Lombardy, and over the three great rivers of the Boristhenes, the Danube, and the Po.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 64.

^c The character which Velleius Paterculus gives us of this great man, is expressed in these words:—"During these times Mithridates a king of Pontus lived. He was a man whose

The Romans, after they had overcome all foreign powers and potentates that pretended to rival them, and thereby become masters of the greatest part of the then known world, fell soon into contests with one another about the government of it, and in every age some one appeared, who, at the expense of the public peace, affected to become the sole regent of it: but the most remarkable struggles of this kind, that any way relate to the scripture history, were between Sylla and Marius, Cæsar and Pompey, Anthony and Augustus.

The occasion of the difference between Sylla and Marius was the choice of a general to the Mithridatic war. Marius, ³ who was by birth a plebeian, and of a very mean parentage, had, by his military prowess and interest with the common people, raised himself to the chief command of the Jugurthine war; and, in the war against the Teutones and Cimbri, had gained himself immortal honour; but, being now upwards of seventy years old, in the late confederate war he had not so well maintained his reputation; whether it was that old age rebated his activity, or fortune had not thrown occasions of signalizing himself in his way. Sylla, on the contrary, a patrician by birth, and one of the most illustrious families in Rome, was lively, active, and impetuous, had gained great battles, taken considerable towns, and, through the whole course of the war, so distinguished himself by his many and glorious successes, that he soon had the consulate conferred on him, and was afterwards declared governor of Asia Minor, and commander-in-chief in the war against Mithridates. Marius, who thought that all the preferments of the commonwealth did of right belong to him, looked upon this preference as an injustice done him, and was therefore resolved to carry by force, what he had not attained by the people's choice.

³ Vertot's *Revolutions of Rome*, c. x.

character can neither be passed over in silence, nor spoken of without care. In war he was most acute, in valour most illustrious; sometimes by fortune and always with judgment was his success obtained; in the closet he was a leader, in the field a soldier, and his hatred towards the Romans was that of a Hannibal;" and from other historians we may learn, that he was naturally a man of great capacity and understanding, which he had taken much care to improve: for he was not only well skilled in all the learning of those times, but, though he had two and twenty different nations under his dominions, yet he could speak to every one of them in their own proper language. He was a prince of great undertakings; and though he failed in most of those wherein he had to do with the Romans, yet, after every overthrow, we find him still rising up again with new vigour; for his last design of invading Italy sufficiently shows, that, though his fortune often forsook him, yet his stout heart, his courageous spirit, and his enterprising genius never did. After all, he was a man of great vices, as well as virtues. His cruelty was shown in the murder of his mother, and his brother, and the great number of his sons, friends, and followers, whom, at several times, and often on slight occasions, he put to death. His ambition was manifest by his many unjust invasions of other men's rights for the augmentation of his own dominions, and the many wicked methods of treachery, murder, and perfidiousness, that he took to accomplish his end. And his lust appeared in the great number of wives and concubines he had to serve it: for, in the one or other of these capacities, wherever he found a handsome woman, he always took her to him, and carried some of these with him wherever he went: but, when reduced to any distress, he always poisoned those whom he could not carry off, in like manner as he did his sisters and daughters in this case, that none of them might fall into the enemy's hands.—*Velleius Paterculus*, b. ii. c. 18; *Vale-rius Maximus*, b. viii. c. 7; *Appian. in Mithrid.*; and *Plutarch on Lucullus and Pompey*.

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To this purpose he drew over to his interest a tribune, called Publius Sulpicius, an inveterate enemy to Sylla, and who, by his power and authority among the people, procured a law to pass, which took from Sylla the command of the army against Mithridates, and conferred it upon Marius. Marius accordingly sent some officers of his party to take possession of the command of the army, until he himself could come to them; but Sylla had prevented them, and made so sure of the affections of the soldiers, that, instead of obeying the orders sent from Marius, they killed his officers, and besought Sylla to lead them against his enemies at Rome, before he transported them into Asia. Incensed at the death of his officers, Marius had caused several of Sylla's friends to be put to death, and their houses to be plundered. This made Sylla hasten his march to Rome, where he soon defeated the body which Marius and Sulpicius had raised to oppose him, and entered the city sword in hand. The decree which transferred the command of the army from him to Marius, he caused to be repealed, and articles of impeachment drawn up against C. Marius, young Marius his son, the tribune Sulpicius, and twelve senators, who were of their party, for having been the authors of the late insurrection. Hereupon they were declared enemies to the Roman commonwealth; were interdicted water and fire, that is, all manner of sustenance, or assistance from any body; had rewards set upon their heads, and troops on all sides detached to hunt them down.

Sulpicius in the search was apprehended by some of Sylla's soldiers, who cut off his head, and carried it to Rome, and nailed it to the rostrum; but Marius had the good luck to make his escape, though ^a he underwent many dangers and hazards of his life during the time of his exile.

In the mean time, Cornelius Cinna, who, though a

^a After he was upwards of seventy years of age, and had been six times consul, he was forced to fly from Rome on foot, without either friend or servant to accompany him; and to avoid Sylla's people, that pursued him, to throw himself into a morass, where he lay the whole night, sunk, and buried in mud up to the neck. In the morning, when he got out, and endeavoured to gain the sea shore, in hopes of meeting some vessel to carry him out of Italy, he was known by the people of Minturnæ, seized and carried into the town, with a rope about his neck, all naked and muddy. The magistrates of the place, in obedience to the decree of the senate, which had attainted him, and set a price upon his head, sent a public slave, a Cimbrian by birth, to put him to death; but as the slave approached with his naked sword, "Canst thou, thou barbarian," said he with a loud voice, "have the assurance to assassinate Caius Marius!" Whereupon the slave, frightened at the sound of a name so terrible to his countrymen, threw down his sword, and ran out of the prison in great disorder, crying out, "that it was not in his power to kill Marius." The magistrates of Minturnæ, looking on this as an interposition of heaven for the preservation of this great man, not only set him at liberty, but furnished him with a vessel, wherein he sailed first into the island of Ænaria, and thence, designing for Africa, he was forced, either by stress of weather, or want of water, to go on shore on the coasts of Sicily, where he met with new dangers. For a Roman questor, who had the chief command there, offered to seize him; so that Marius, being forced to defend himself, lost sixteen of his men, who made a stand just upon the shore whilst others helped him on board. From Sicily he sailed to Africa, and landed at Carthage; but from thence he was expelled by Sextilius, who, as pretor, commanded in that province, and, notwithstanding the rigour of the season, was forced to go on board, and spend a good part of the winter in his ship, wandering up and down those seas, till being informed of what was doing at Rome by a messenger from Cinna, he returned to Italy, joined Cinna, besieged Rome, and revenged himself too severely on his enemies.—*Vertot's Revolutions of Rome*, b. x.

patrician by birth, had devoted himself to the plebeian party; when once he was created consul, and Sylla was gone to his command in Asia, was for rescinding the decree, whereby Marius was proscribed: but, when the senate perceived his design, they soon passed sentence upon him, declaring him fallen from the right of a citizen, and deprived of the dignity of a consul, and in his room they elected Lucius Merula. Cinna, who was naturally proud and fiery, upon hearing of this sentence, raised an army with purpose to revenge himself upon the authors of it, and sent to Marius to come to his assistance, who, as he passed through the cities of Italy, was joined by some veterans that had formerly served under him, and, by promising freedom to all slaves that would come under his banner, had got together a good body of men. With these, and the forces that Cinna had collected, they both marched directly to Rome, where, of the two consuls, Octavius was killed on his tribunal, and Merula, to prevent the enemy from putting him to a worse death, had his veins opened; where several senators of great note were by the order of Marius murdered in the streets, their heads cut off, and laid upon the rostrum, and their mangled bodies left to be devoured by dogs; and where he caused Sylla's house to be razed, his goods confiscated, his wife, children, and friends to be proscribed, and himself to be declared an enemy to the commonwealth, even while he was adding large provinces and kingdoms to the Roman state.

In the mean time, his wife, children, and friends, who had fled to his camp for protection, were continually soliciting him to turn his arms against his private enemies, and to free his country from these tyrants, who had so long oppressed it: so that, having concluded a peace with Mithridates upon very advantageous terms, he passed over with his army into Italy. But, before he was arrived, Marius was dead of a pleurisy, occasioned by excessive drinking, to which, in the decline of life, he accustomed himself; and young Marius, who inherited his father's cruelty, as well as power, entered into a close league with Cinna, and engaged Valerius Flaccus, whom they procured to be made consul, in their interest, and design of opposing Sylla. But Sylla, as soon as he landed in Italy, defeated Marius, and reduced him to the necessity of laying violent hands upon himself; and having vanquished all his other enemies, entered Rome at the head of his victorious forces, and there gave a loose to his licentious passion of revenge. All the people, that had appeared against him in arms, even though they came to beg quarter, he ordered to be massacred. Fourscore senators, and six hundred knights, together with an infinite number of the richest citizens of Rome, he caused to be proscribed: their sons and grandsons he degraded from all their rights and privileges: those that should protect or harbour any of them, he threatened with the like proscription; and to those that should apprehend or murder any of them, he promised a reward of two talents; so that it became no uncommon thing for slaves that had murdered their masters, nay, for children that had murdered their fathers, to come, with their hands reeking in blood, to demand the reward of their treason or parricide.

Nor was it only the party that favoured Marius which suffered in this barbarous manner, but, as Sylla ¹ made

¹ Vertot's Revolutions of Rome, b. x.

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little or no account of any man's life, he permitted his friends and officers, with impunity, to revenge themselves of all their private enemies, insomuch, that fresh numbers were proscribed, and murdered every day, and no one, especially if he was rich and wealthy, was secure of his life for a moment: nay, to such an excess of cruelty and arbitrariness did he proceed at last, that, without naming any particular persons, he proscribed whole cities and nations, and, by way of confiscation, seized on all the estates, houses, and territories, belonging to such towns in Italy as had declared for Marius during the civil war, which, to attach them more firmly to his interest, he took care to distribute among his soldiers.

Some, however, that were about him, and had probably been benefited by these usurpations, being apprehensive that such violent proceedings might not last long, to give them the better sanction, and some colour of law, advised him to take upon him the office, not of a temporary, but perpetual dictator. The power of this supreme magistrate was boundless. The authority of the consuls, and all other magistrates, except that of the tribunes, was superseded by it. He had power of life and death over his fellow citizens, was sole arbiter of peace and war, was at liberty to raise or disband forces as he thought fit, and under no obligation to give an account of his conduct to any body. In a word, he had all the power of the most absolute king, greater indeed than any of the ancient kings of Rome ever had; but then it was only in the times of the greatest exigences of the commonwealth, when it was endangered either by powerful enemies abroad, or by civil commotions at home, that such an officer was appointed; and, lest such a large power should be abused, no man was invested with it for longer than six months. But Sylla, who had terrified the people into a tame submission, and made himself absolute at Rome, would have it conferred on him for a time undetermined; so that the Romans, who had changed kingly government into the republican under consuls, and military tribunes, after many ages, relapsed again into the absolute power of one; though Sylla, to lessen the aversion which all republicans could not but have to such a form of government, took care to disguise what was in reality a royalty, under the less odious title of a ^a dictatorship.

This success of Sylla's in climbing up to the empire, and supporting himself therein, made it apparent to those

^a One thing is wonderful in this Sylla, that after he had destroyed more than a hundred thousand of his fellow citizens in the civil war, and had caused ninety senators, of which fifteen had been consuls, and more than six and twenty hundred knights to be put to death, he had the courage to lay down the dictatorship, and to reduce himself to the level of a private citizen, without fearing the resentment of so many illustrious families, whose heads he had destroyed by his cruel proscriptions. The Romans in general looked upon this his abdication of the sovereign power, as an instance of the greatest magnanimity, and gladly forgave him all the murders, for the sake of the liberty which he thereby restored them; but his enemies imputed it to the natural uneasiness of his mind, and his continual fear, lest some Roman might be bold enough, at one stroke, to deprive him of both his empire and his life. However this be, it is certain, that, after having shed so much blood, he died peaceably in his bed, and a few days before his death, composed his own epitaph, which comprises his true character, namely, "That no body had ever outdone him, either in obliging his friends, or persecuting his enemies."—*Vertot's Revolutions*, b. xi.

that came after him, that the Romans could bear a master, and gave occasion to the violent contests which afterwards happened between Cæsar and Pompey, who, after the death of Crassus, ^b and the Parthian war, were the two great competitors for the sovereignty of Rome.

Cneius Pompeius, whose father being of the same name, had been consul, and served his country faithfully in the wars, was, from his very youth, the darling of the Roman people; created a general before he had been a soldier; and through the whole course of his life attended with a wonderful train of victories and successes: ¹ but being all along accustomed to the command of armies, he could not so well, upon the expiration of his commission, reduce himself to the simplicity of a private life; and therefore, whenever he appeared in public, he was always followed by a crowd of his dependents, whose numerous appearance looked more like the court of some great prince, than the attendants of a citizen of any republic. It must be owned, however, that in his pursuit of dignities, he was less fond of the power that is inseparable from them, than of the honours and splendours that surround them; that, in short, he was a man of show rather than real ambition; and, if he affected any high office in state, it was chiefly to raise himself above all the commanders of his time; for the great pride of his soul was, to be thought the only general of the commonwealth, whereas, he ought to have contented himself with being the first.

² Caius Julius Cæsar was born of the illustrious family of the Julii, and was indeed the most extraordinary person of his age. Nature, which seemed to have formed him for the command of the rest of mankind, had given him an air of empire, and a dignity of aspect inexpressible; but then this air of grandeur was allayed by the gentleness and sweetness of his behaviour, which gained him the hearts of those he conversed with, and laid the foundation of his future greatness. He was a man of exalted courage and insinuating eloquence, extensive in his designs, indefatigable in pursuing them

¹ Vertot's *Revolutions*, b. xiii.

² *Ibid.*

^b When Crassus led his army into Mesopotamia, there came to him a certain chief of an Arabian tribe, who, having served in the wars under Pompey, had contracted an acquaintance with several of the Romans, and was therefore a proper instrument for Surenas, the Parthian general, to employ upon this occasion. He told Crassus, inquiring about the strength of the enemy, that they were unable to stand before him, and that, to obtain a complete victory, he had nothing to do but to march directly against them, for which purpose he offered himself to be their guide; Crassus was weak enough to accept of his offer; and accordingly the crafty man led them along the plains of Mesopotamia, until he had brought them into a sandy desert, where the Parthians, he knew, would have the best opportunity of destroying them, and then rode off to acquaint Surenas with it, who immediately fell upon them, and gave them a terrible defeat. Nor was this the only false step that Crassus made: for having rested the remains of his army for one day at Carrhæ, not far from the place where the battle was fought, when, in the night following, he endeavoured to make his escape, he committed himself to the guidance of one Andromachus, another traitor, who led him into the midst of bogs and morasses, where Surenas overtook him, slew him, and gave his army the greatest overthrow that the Romans had ever received since the battle of Cannæ; for, in this engagement, twenty thousand were slain, and ten thousand taken prisoners; and the rest forced to make their escape by several ways into Armenia, Cilicia, and Syria.—*Plutarch. in Crasso; Appian. in Parthicis; and Dion Cassius*, b. xl.

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and ambitious of the great offices of state, chiefly for the increase of his interest and power, and for the means and opportunity which they afforded him, by gentle degrees, of becoming the master and sovereign of his country.

Upon the death of Crassus, who held the balance between these two great men, the emulation between them began to break out. Cæsar was in Gaul, pursuing his victories against the Helvetians, the Germans, the Belgæ, the Britons, and several other nations, and astonishing all the world with the fame of his great exploits; but Pompey, since the time of his victories in Asia, had continued, now for the space of twelve years, for the most part in Rome, notwithstanding he had obtained a large commission to govern the provinces of Spain and Africa.

By his constant residing at Rome, he had got a perfect ascendancy over the senate; and some, to remedy the disorders they then laboured under, were for creating him dictator, till Cato, who was always watchful for the public liberty, proposed rather to choose him sole consul, without a colleague; because a consul was responsible to the people and senate for his conduct, which a dictator was not.

The senate approved of this expedient, and accordingly made Pompey the sole consul. They continued him likewise in his former governments, and for the payment of the forces he had under him, gave him an annual allowance of a thousand talents out of the exchequer: but, as all good understanding between him and Cæsar was now vanished, he took care to prefer two laws, which the senate readily agreed to, namely, "That the miscarriages of officers, for twenty years last past, should be inquired into; and that all absent persons should not be allowed to demand any public employments;" the latter of which was more immediately levelled at Cæsar: for Pompey's design herein was, to oblige him to abandon the government of the two Gauls, and the command of his army, in order to come in person to solicit the consulate, which he in his return, as he assigned by his letters, expected to have conferred on him.

Cæsar was very well aware of Pompey's design; but, instead of relinquishing his government and returning to Rome, he chose to remain at the head of his forces, and when the senate, by Pompey's procurement, came to a resolution of taking the government from him by naming his successor, he wrote several letters to them, with a great deal of temper, requesting either that they would continue him in his government, as they had done Pompey, or permit him, though absent from Rome, to put up for the consulate; but the majority of the senate, that was entirely under Pompey's direction, rejected every proposal that he sent; so that, finding himself treated with contempt, he passed the Alps at the head of the third legion, and halted at Ravenna, from whence he sent Fabius, one of his lieutenants, with letters to the senate,¹ "wherein he magnified his own exploits, expecting that some regard should be had to his services; and wherein he declared his readiness to lay down his command, in case Pompey would do the like; but that if that general pretended to retain his forces, he knew very well how to defend himself at the head of his le-

gions, and would in a few days be at Rome, to revenge the injuries which were done to him, as well as the public."

This letter, when read to the senate, was represented as a kind of declaration of war, and accordingly procured a "decree that Lucius Domitius should be Cæsar's successor, and have four thousand new levies to enable him to go and take possession of his government; and that in case Cæsar refused to disband his army within such a time, he should be prosecuted as an enemy to the commonwealth." When Cæsar was informed of this decree, he sent orders to such of his troops as were nearest at hand, to advance towards the Rubicon, a small river that parted his government of Gallia Cisalpinga from the rest of Italy. When he came up the next day, he found there five thousand foot, and three hundred horse; and having halted a while on the bank of the river, he is said there to have been seized with some remorse upon consideration of what he was about to do; till having reflected on the hatred and inveteracy of his enemies, he threw himself into the river at once, passed it, and took Ariminum by surprise; and from thence put all Rome in such a disorder, that Pompey, not having sufficient forces to resist him, with the consuls and a great number of senators, retired to Capua, and thence to Brundisium, where taking shipping, they soon arrived at the port of Dyrrachium, a city of Epirus, where Pompey intended to gather together such an army as might enable him to make a stand.

Upon the retreat of Pompey, Cæsar, in the space of sixty days, made himself master of all Italy, and came to Rome, where he promised the people every thing should be done for the good of the commonwealth: and having filled up the senate, and settled some kind of government among them, he marched his army directly into Spain, where Pompey was governor, and had left several troops attached to his interest. As soon as he came thither, he fell upon Afranius and Petreius, Pompey's lieutenants; and having driven them out of the province, he made himself master thereof, and so returned to Rome, where he was declared dictator, though after eleven days, he laid down that office, and, together with Servilius Isauricus, was elected consul for the year ensuing.

Pompey, by this time, had been in Epirus for the space of a year, and had got together a considerable army out of Greece, Asia, and all the eastern countries, to support his interest; but when Cæsar went after him, the season of the year was too far advanced, either for the fleets to be at sea, or the armies to take the field, and so both sides lay still in their winter quarters.

In the spring both armies took the field, and encamped against each other near Dyrrachium, now Durazzo, where, in several skirmishes, Cæsar had the better; but at length in one of them he received so great a defeat, that himself acknowledged he must have been utterly undone, had Pompey seen his advantage, and pursued it. For fear of the like disaster, therefore, or the want of provisions for his army, Cæsar decamped the next day, and marched towards Thessaly, where he found plenty of all things, and there waited to give Pompey battle. Pompey had an army of forty-five thousand foot, and five thousand horse, but they were most of them raw inexperienced men, raised out of the effeminate nations of

¹ Vertot's *Revolutions*, b. xiii.

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Asia, and some Roman senators, and other gentlemen, who knew very little of war. Cæsar, on the other hand, had an army of twenty-two thousand foot, and one thousand horse; but then they were most part of them veteran soldiers, who, for the space of ten years, had been accustomed to war and victory in Gaul. On the plains of Pharsalia these two armies met with two of the greatest generals in the world at the head of them, disputing for universal empire. The engagement for some time was sharp on both sides: but, at length, Pompey's army was vanquished and broken. Fifteen thousand of them were slain; twenty-four thousand made prisoners; their camp was taken, and their general, with much ado, forced to make his escape in disguise, and, after having wandered from place to place, was, at length, in Egypt, ^a perfidiously slain in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

After the death of Pompey, and the return of Cæsar to Rome, the senate decreed him uncommon honours, and an unlimited authority. He was appointed consul for ten years, and perpetual dictator; had the name of 'imperator' given him, and the august title of 'father of his country.' His person was declared sacred and inviolable; and at all public games he had the privilege of sitting in a gilded chair, with a golden crown upon his head; but, notwithstanding all this profusion of honours, we find in what a barbarous way he was murdered at last.

After the death of Julius Cæsar, great confusion and disorders happened in the Roman state, till at length Anthony and Octavianus, upon the forced abdication of Lepidus, became the two great men in the empire. Anthony had all the east, and Octavianus all the west; but not content with this, they soon took occasion to differ with each other, and entered into contest who should have the whole.

^a After the defeat of his army, Pompey, not well knowing which way to betake himself, determined at last to go to Egypt. He had been a very considerable friend to the late king Ptolemy Auletes, and therefore he expected a kind reception from his son. Taking therefore his wife Cornelia, and his younger son Sextus with him, he steered his course towards Egypt, and, as he drew near to land, sent messengers to the king, desiring his protection and aid in his present distress. The king was then a minor, under the tuition of Pothynus a eunuch, and Achilles the general of his army, who, taking Theodotus, and some others into the consultation, advised together what answer to send. Some were for receiving, and others for rejecting him; but Theodotus was of opinion, that their only safe way was to despatch him: for should they receive him, as he argued, Cæsar would revenge it; should they reject him, if ever he recovered power, himself would revenge it; and therefore the only method to secure themselves from both, was to cut him off; for hereby they would certainly make Cæsar their friend, and prevent the other from doing any mischief: 'for dead men,' said he, according to the proverb, 'never bite.' This advice prevailed, and accordingly Achilles, with Septimus a Roman commander, then in the service of the king of Egypt, was sent to put it in execution. Under the pretence therefore of conducting Pompey to the king, they took him out of the ship into a boat; but as soon as they came near the shore, they fell upon him, and slew him, cut off his head, and cast his dead carcass on the strand. His wife and son, seeing this barbarous murder, raised bitter cries and lamentations: but all to no purpose: perceiving therefore themselves in the like danger, they hoisted sail and made off, leaving this great man, who, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, came to this woful end, no other funeral, than what Philip, an enfranchised bondman of his, and a poor Roman, who came thither by accident, could give him, by making a funeral pile of the broken pieces of an old boat, that lay wrecked on the shore.—*Plutarch on Pompey*; and *Appian on the Civil Wars*, b. ii.

Anthony was a person of great note for his military skill and abilities. At the battle of Pharsalia he did wonders: and in that of Philippi, where Octavianus ^b behaved but very meanly, the whole victory was owing to his courage and conduct; but he was exceedingly addicted to vice, especially to the love of women, which Cleopatra observing, laid hold on him on this weak side, and for the gratification of her ambition and avarice, which were the two predominant passions in her, put him upon such measures, as gave a general offence to the Romans.

Octavianus, on the other hand, though he was always successful, yet for this he was indebted not so much to his courage, as his cunning and management; for, though he had a genius capable of framing the greatest projects, yet, in cool blood, he found himself incapable of facing the meanest danger. And therefore being conscious of his weakness in this respect, he contented himself with supplying the schemes, and called in the valour of other men to put them in execution. In most of his military undertakings, he borrowed, as it were, Agrippa's courage, and the rather made use of him, because he was a mere soldier of fortune, and, consequently, incapable of creating any jealousy, or making himself head of any party.

After ^c a vast preparation for war, these two great men, of different characters, met with their armies and fleets near Actium, a town on the coast of Epirus, there to decide the empire of the world. Canidius, who had the chief command of Anthony's army, persuaded him to de-camp and march into the country of Thrace, or Macedonia, there to try his fortune in a battle at land, because his army was much more to be depended on than his fleet: but Cleopatra, who was then in company with Anthony, advised him rather to decide the matter by a fight at sea; and her advice prevailed.

On the second of September, therefore, A. M. 3973, A. C. 31, the two fleets engaged before the mouth of the Ambrasian gulf, in the sight of the two armies, the one drawn up on the north, and the other on the south, side of the straits which entered the gulf, there to attend the event of the battle. The fight for some time continued dubious, with as fair a prospect of success for Anthony as for his adversary, until Cleopatra forsook him: for she, being frightened with the noise and terror of the battle, gave orders to the captain that commanded her ship to sheer off, and so drew after her the whole Egyptian squadron, which consisted of sixty large men of war.

Anthony, giving all for lost, made after her as fast as he could, and so, by his flight, yielded the victory to Octavianus; but after he was gone, his ships fought so

^b On the eve before the battle at Philippi, under pretence of some indisposition, he left the body which he commanded, and, while the two armies were engaged, hid himself amongst the baggage; and, in a sea fight against young Pompey, he had not the courage to see the two fleets engage, but lay in the bottom of the ship, with his eyes lift up to heaven, as if he had been in a trance, and never once showed himself to his soldiers, until news was brought him that the enemy was fled.—*Vertot's Revolutions of Rome*, b. xiv.

^c Anthony's forces, by land and sea, consisted of a hundred thousand foot, twelve thousand horse, and five hundred ships of war: and Octavianus's of eighty thousand foot, twelve thousand horse, and two hundred and fifty ships of war.—*Plutarch on Antony*; and *Dion Cassius*, b. lxxx.

A. M. 4091. A. C. 3; OR, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5410. A. C. 1. JOS. HIST. b. xiii. c. 19—END OF b. xv.

valiantly, that, though the engagement began at noon, it was not ended till it was night.

In the mean time, Anthony and Cleopatra got to Tenedos, in Laconia, whither some of his ships, that had escaped the fight, and several of his friends, repaired to him, from whom we understand, that though his fleet was destroyed, his land-army was still safe; and therefore he wrote to Canidius to retire with it through Macedonia into Asia, in hopes of being able, by that means, to renew the war: but Canidius, in his march, being overtaken by Octavianus, fled by night to Anthony, and the army, finding themselves deserted by their generals, went over to the enemy, as the foreign forces, which had come to the assistance of Anthony, fled all home to their respective countries, and made their peace afterwards with the conqueror on the best terms they could.

By this time Anthony and Cleopatra were both returned to Alexandria, and it was not long before Octavianus went in pursuit of them. On their first coming, Anthony fell upon the Roman troops, while under the fatigue of their march, and put them to a total rout; but in a second engagement with them, he was vanquished, and driven back into the city with great loss. The next morning, when he went down to the harbour to put the fleet in order to engage the enemy, no sooner were they drawn up in line of battle, but he saw them desert and go over to them, and, to his great mortification, when he returned to the city, he found that all the land-forces, both horse and foot, had in like manner revolted from him.

When Anthony understood that all this was done by Cleopatra's treachery, and in hopes of making her peace with Octavianus, he could not forbear expressing his resentment of it in loud complaints; so that Cleopatra, for fear of him, but, as she pretended, to secure herself from the enemy, fled to a monument, which she caused to be built of a great height, and wonderful structure, and having there shut herself up with two maids and one eunuch, she had it given out that she was dead. Anthony no sooner heard the news, but, supposing it to be true, fell upon his sword; however, having intelligence some time after, that Cleopatra was still alive, he ordered those about him to carry him to her monument, where might be seen one of the most deplorable spectacles that can be imagined. Anthony, all over bloody, and breathing out his last, was, by the hands of Cleopatra and her two maids, drawn up by the ropes and pulleys that were employed in the building, to the top of the monument, and there, in a few moments, expired in her arms.

After the death of Anthony, the great care of Octavianus was to make himself master of Cleopatra's person and riches; of her person to adorn his triumph; and of her riches to defray the expenses of the war: but after he had luckily compassed both, she, having private notice given her of her being designed to be carried to Rome, to make part of the show in her conqueror's triumph, caused herself ^a to be bitten with an asp, and so, to avoid this

infamy, ^b died, after she had reigned, from the death of her father, twenty-two years, and lived thirty-nine.

Octavianus, ¹ though much concerned for having thus lost the chief glory of his triumph, did nevertheless make for Cleopatra, as he had permitted her to make for Anthony, a splendid and royal funeral. He had them both deposited in the same monument which they had begun, and gave orders to have it finished. Having thus settled his affairs in Egypt, and cut off all those from whom he might expect any fresh disturbances, he made a review of the several provinces of the Lesser Asia, and the isles adjoining, and so, passing through Greece, returned to Rome, where he triumphed for three days successively, for his victory over the Dalmatians, and for the sea-fight at Actium, and for the conquest of Egypt; in the last of which were led before him the children of Cleopatra, and though herself had escaped that fate, her effigy was carried in procession, with an asp hanging at her arm, to denote the manner of her death.

After this triumph, he held a private consultation with Agrippa and Mecænas, his two chief ministers and principal instruments of his greatness, whether he should restore the commonwealth to its ancient state, or retain the sovereign power. Agrippa was for restoring, but Mecænas for the retaining part; whereupon Octavianus, knowing that the senate was filled with his creatures, whose fortunes depended on his holding the sovereignty, proposed indeed, in a formal speech, to resign his authority; but, no sooner was the proposal made, than the whole senate, with a unanimous voice, dissuaded him from it, and, with all manner of arguments, pressed him to take upon him the sole administration of the government, which, with much seeming reluctance, at length he consented to. But by no means would he submit to accept of it for a longer term than ten years, though from ten years to ten years, upon one pretence or other, he continued himself in it as long as he lived, and so transmitted it to his successors.

With this new power the senate was determined to confer on him a new name. Himself had taken upon him the common title of *imperator*, which the soldiers, during the times of the republic, used to give to victorious generals; but this was not thought adequate to his merit: and therefore, since the word *Augustus* seemed to signify something that, above human, was *sacred* and *venerable*, this was made choice of, and, by the general suffrage of the senate, first given to him, with many more things decreed to his honour, by the flattery of some who courted his favour, and the fear of others, who dreaded his power.

Augustus, for so we must now call him, having raised himself to this height of power and glory, as soon as Lepidus, ^c who had been pontifex maximus, or high

¹ Dion Cassius, b. ii.; and Suetonius on Octavianus.

her arm, and, soon after its biting her, fell into a sleep, and so died.

^b In her death ended the reign of the family of the Ptolemies in Egypt, which hereupon was reduced into the form of a Roman province, and was governed by a prefect sent thither from Rome. Under this form it continued a province of the Roman empire six hundred and seventy years, till it was taken from them by the Saracens, in the year of our Lord 641.—*Prideaux's Connection*, anno 30.

^c This Lepidus was one of the triumvirate with Octavianus and Anthony, but a man of no manner of merit. He joined

^a The asp is a serpent of Egypt and Libya, and proper only to those climates. Those that are bitten by it die within three hours, in a kind of gentle sleep or lethargy, without any sensation of pain; and therefore Cleopatra, who had experienced all kinds of poisons upon other creatures, made choice of this, as the easiest way of dying; and, to deceive her keepers, kept an asp always hid in her chamber, under figs, grapes, and flowers, which, when she was determined to die, she took and held to

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priest of Rome, was dead, assumed to himself, as did his successors in the empire, that office; and the first thing he did, was to examine into the prophetic books, which at that time went abroad under the name of the sibyls.⁴

That in the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, there came a strange woman to Rome, who offered to sell to the king nine volumes of these sibylline oracles, but, upon his refusing to purchase them, burnt three of them, and afterwards coming with six, and being rejected, burnt three more, and yet at last obtained the full amount of what she had asked at first for the three remaining: that these volumes when purchased,¹ were laid up in the capitol, committed to the custody of proper officers, never consulted but upon great exigences of state, and carefully preserved, until at the burning of the capitol in the civil wars between Sylla and Marius, they happened to be consumed: that, upon the rebuilding of the capitol,² the Romans, with great care, made another collection of sibylline oracles from several countries, and, after they had selected such as their church and state did approve of for their purpose, laid them up in the new capitol, instead of those which the fire had consumed: that, besides those capitoline volumes, there were a great many more sibylline oracles in the world,³ which Augustus, in the beginning of his office of pontifex maxi-

¹ Dionys. Halicar. b. iv.; Pliny's Natural History, b. xxiii.; Solin. Polyhist. b. ii.: and Aul. Gel. b. i. c. 19.

² Tully on Divination, b. i.; Dionys. Halicar. and Aul. Gel. ubi supra.

³ Lactantius on a false Religion, b. vi. and on the Wrath of God, c. xxii.

Octavianus, in carrying on the war against Sextus Pompeius, the son of Pompey the Great; but when he arrogated the whole honour of their successes to himself, Octavianus drew over all his army to desert him, and so reduced him to the necessity of begging his life, and of being content to lead the remainder of it in a private and mean condition, at Circeii, a small maritime town among the Latins, where he was sent into banishment, and there died in obscurity and contempt.—*Suetonius in Octavio*, b. xvi.; *Appian on the Civil Wars*, b. v.; *L. Florus*, b. iv. c. 8.

a The sibyls were women of ancient times said to be endued with a prophetic spirit, and to have delivered oracles, foreshowing the fates and destinies of kingdoms. We have in the writings of the ancients, mention made of ten of them: the Cumean, the Cumanian, the Persian, the Hellespontian, the Lybian, the Samian, the Delphian, the Phrygian, the Tiburtine, and the Erythrean: but some are of opinion, that the Cumean and the Erythrean was one and the same sibyl: that she was born at Erythre in Ionia, and therefore was by the Greeks called Erythra; but, having removed from Erythra to Cumæ in Italy, and there delivered all her oracles, she was from thence by the Romans and Italians called Cumæa. These sibyls, among the pagans, were what the prophets and prophetesses were accounted among the Hebrews; and, as the most ancient of these were named Sibylla, so all others of the same sex, who pretended to the like fatidical spirit, were called sibyls. The place from whence these sibyls gave out their oracles, was generally a cave or subterranean vault, if we may judge of others by that at Cumæ, whereof Justin Martyr gives us this account. "I have seen the place," says he, "which is a large chapel, or oratory, hewn out of the main rock, and must have been a work of great labour. Here the sibyl, as the inhabitants, who had a tradition thereof, told me, gave forth oracles. In the middle of the chapel they showed me three hollow places hewn out of the same rock, in which, when filled with water, the Sibyl used to bathe herself, and so having put on her garment retired into the innermost cell of the chapel, which was likewise hewn out of the same rock, and having placed herself upon an elevated seat, which jutted out into the middle of the cell, she there uttered her oracles."—*Lactantius on a False Religion*, b. i. c. 6; *Salmasius in his Essays to Solinus*, p. 8: and *Justin Martyr's Exhortation to the Greeks*.

mus, endeavoured to collect, and what he reputed genuine, or rather what suited his purpose best, these he deposited likewise in the capitol, burning the rest: that⁴ Tiberius made another review of these oracles, and condemned several volumes of them to the flames; but the capitoline copies were still held in great veneration,⁵ until they fell into disgrace in the reign of Honorius, and, by his order and appointment, were burnt and destroyed;⁶ these are facts that are confirmed by all antiquity, and what comprise indeed the whole history of these sibylline writings. But if they were all thus finally destroyed, the question is, how came we by the present collection of Greek verses, comprised in eight books, which go under the name of sibyls, and of what merit and authority are we to account them?

Now, in answer to this, it is to be observed,⁷ that, long before the times of Christianity, there were extant, among the heathens, several oracles, or predictions of future events, ascribed to one or more of these prophetesses, who were styled sibyls, that these predictions were held in great esteem among the ancients, as containing notions consonant to true religion, the worship of one God, the conflagration of the world, the renovation of it again, the general resurrection, and the rewards and punishments hereafter; and that both heathen, Jewish, and Christian authors, who make mention of these sibyls give a strong sanction to their authority. Varro looks upon them as inspired prophetesses; Virgil does them honour in citing their predictions; Josephus thinks them useful to establish some positions in sacred history; and Clemens Alexandrinus, as he quotes a more ancient author for it, brings in St Paul addressing himself to a heathen audience in these words: "Take the Greek books in your hands, read the sibyls, and see what they say of the unity of God, and how they foretel what is to come, and you will there clearly find the Son of God." It must be acknowledged, indeed, that the whole collection of these sibylline oracles, as they are now extant, in eight entire books, is far from being genuine. The first, second, and most of the fifth, all the sixth, seventh, and eighth books, seem to be a manifest forgery, the spurious production of some zealous Christian, perhaps about the middle of the second age after Christ, for the promotion of the religion he professed.

⁸ In one place, he explicitly declares himself to be a Christian, and speaks of the whole mystery of our salvation, and of the methods whereby it was accomplished; of the incarnation and birth, the circumcision and death, the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour Christ, with as much accuracy as do the evangelists. ⁹ In another place he mentions Christ's future reigning here upon earth, according to the notion of the millenarians, which was not started till the second century; and, ¹⁰ in another, gives us a succession of the Roman emperors, in their order, from Julius Cæsar to Antoninus Pius, together with the adoption of Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus, which has much more the air of an historical narrative, than a prophetic prediction.

⁴ Sueton in Octavio.

⁵ Dion. Cassius, b. lvi.; Tacit. Annal. b. vi.

⁶ Aug. de Civitate Dei, b. xviii. c. 53, 54.

⁷ Whiston's Vindication of the Sibylline Oracles.

⁸ B. viii.

⁹ Ibid. b. ii.

¹⁰ Ibid. b. v.

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These things discover a forgery, at least a great part of these pretended oracles, a little too palpably; but then, it must be observed, that neither the heathens before, nor the Christians for the three first centuries after Christ, knew any thing of these spurious pieces, because we no where find them making any citations from them; but now,¹ from the whole proem, the greatest part of the third, all the fourth, and a small branch of the fifth book, which are the only parts of the present collection, that are either cited or referred to by the ancient heathens, their quotations are innumerable: and therefore we may justly infer, that the present copy of eight books is not the same with what was extant before, and in the first ages of Christianity, but widely different from it; that those are the genuine prophecies only, which we find the ancient heathens, and primitive Christians, so frequently citing, and so generally esteeming, upon the account of their divine inspiration; and that the rest, which have visible marks of forgery upon them, were probably the spurious additions of such conceited Christians as called themselves Gnostics: because Epiphanius tells us, that this set of men boasted of having books written by the daughter of Noah, even as the pretended prophetess, at the end of the third book, which is a spurious addition to what went before, gives us to know that she was a wife to one of the three sons of Noah, and was with him in the ark during the whole time of the deluge.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that though in the collection which we now have of the sibylline prophecies, several whole books, and some parts in others, are confessedly spurious, yet others there are, which have all the evidences we can desire of their being genuine: and therefore to condemn them all in the lump, and, because some appear to be palpable forgeries, to include all under the same category, is an act of great injustice.

If indeed we attend ever so little to the contents of those oracles, which we deem genuine, we cannot but perceive, that neither heathens, Jews, nor Christians, could consistently with themselves, be any ways the forgers of them.² The heathens could not, because they are directly levelled against their wickedness, idolatry, and polytheism. The Jews could not, because they foretell the subversion of their state and temple by the Romans, which we all know they would never believe: and the Christians could not, because many quotations out of these oracles are found in other authors previous to Christianity; and in the beginning of it several of them are cited by the first Christians, in the open view of all men, as very ancient at that time, very well known, and universally received over all the heathen world.

If then these genuine prophecies of the sibyls were not of human contrivance and invention, the conclusive question is, from whence was it that they derived their original? God, no doubt, who forced Balaam, contrary to his will, to bless the Israelites, and to prophecy³ 'the coming of his Son out of Jacob,' could, in what manner he pleased, control the diabolical spirits, which pre-

sided in the heathen oracles, and make them utter things even relating to the kingdom of the Messiah, which otherwise they might have no inclination to utter. But there is no necessity for our having recourse to this extraordinary expedient; since the contents of the sibylline oracles, those I mean that are genuine, are every where agreeable to the scriptures, and foretell, for the main part, the same great revolutions of providence that they do; it is no way inconsistent with the divine attributes to suppose, that though God gave positive laws, or an institution of religious worship to the Jews only, and intrusted none but them with those divine oracles, which related to that worship; yet he might not wholly confine divine inspiration to that nation, but might support the law and religion of nature, and the right worship of himself, as the one true God, among the heathens likewise, by the help of these oracles, until⁴ 'the day dawned,' that is, a more perfect revelation came, and 'he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, gave the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'^a

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

^a The most rational and consistent account of the sibylline oracles, that is perhaps anywhere to be found within a small compass, is given by Bishop Horsley in his ingenious 'Dissertation on the prophecies of the Messiah dispersed among the Heathen.' In that dissertation there are one or two positions strenuously maintained, which I cannot admit; but the general principle on which the reasoning rests as its foundation, no reflecting Christian can, I think, call in question. It is, that the rise and progress of idolatry were partial and gradual: that all nations did not become idolaters at the same period of time; that the first idolaters no where abjured the worship of the true God, when they began to worship subordinate deities in conjunction with him; and that they carefully collected and religiously preserved the prophecies of the patriarchal ages, until they degenerated so far as to forget the worship of the true God entirely. Even then they would not destroy the sacred books of their more orthodox and pious ancestors, but would rather add to them other predictions or pretended predictions, derived from an impure source; for, as he justly observes, superstition has uniformly been in its own nature timid, and more likely to give credit to false predictions than to destroy the books which contain predictions that are true. He supposes therefore that the sybils were fictitious beings who never really existed; but that the oracles attributed to them were collections of true and false prophecies—of prophecies which had really been delivered under the influence of the Spirit of God to the patriarchs of the human race, and of false prophecies which had been added to these by the heathen priests and soothsayers, to whom were committed the original sacred oracles. Such a mixture of truth and imposture he supposes to have constituted the matter of the sybilline books which were preserved in the capitol of Rome; which the early fathers of the Christian church, such as Justin Martyr and Clemens Alexandrinus quoted; and which furnished Virgil with the ideas which run through his sublime eclogue entitled *Pollio*. Four-fifths of the oracles quoted from these books by the latter fathers, after pious frauds became frequent, he justly considers as palpable forgeries by some indiscreet Christians, who absurdly hoped to serve their cause by means calculated to injure it among thinking men. It is not, I confess, clear to me that Virgil took his ideas from the sybilline books, though he quotes them, or rather refers to them; for the Old Testament, having long before been translated into Greek, was accessible to Virgil, who was himself a learned man of great curiosity; though, wishing to pay a compliment to a great man of Rome, he might not choose to rest the foundation of that compliment upon the sacred books of a people so generally hated and despised as were the Jews by the Romans.—*Bp. Glag.*—Ed.

¹ Clemens Alexandrinus, b. v.

² Whiston's Vindication of the Sibylline Oracles.

³ Num. xxiv. 5, &c.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAP. I.—*Judaism preparatory to Christianity.*

“THAT the Mosaic dispensation was from the first intended not for the exclusive benefit of the chosen people, but as instrumental to the introduction of an universal blessing to mankind, is evident from the very first promise made to Abraham; which to the personal and national blessing, with which it encouraged and rewarded the faith and obedience of the patriarch, added this remarkable declaration, as the crown and completion of all: ‘And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed;’ a declaration again repeated to the same patriarch on two solemn occasions. ² First on disclosing to him the intended punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and receiving with the most gracious condescension, his humble but earnest intercession in favour of those few righteous who might be found in those receptacles of guilt; and again still more emphatically, in consequence of his obeying the voice of God, and ³ ‘and not withholding his son, his only son.’

“It deserves to be particularly noticed, that in the former of these transactions, the patriarch interceding with God, ⁴ ‘as Judge of all the earth,’ was an evident representation of the Great Intercessor whose appearance was predicted in the promised blessing: and that in the latter he beheld, in the commanding sacrifice, and the providential restoration of his only begotten son, the clear representation of the only begotten Son of God; prefiguring at once the voluntary sacrifice and the triumphant resurrection of that Christ who was the promised seed, ‘in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.’ So that in both cases, but especially the last, the nature of the promised blessing was not obscurely intimated, by the immediate circumstances attending the divine declaration.

“As the patriarch thus ‘rejoiced to behold the day of Christ,’ it cannot be doubted but he communicated to his

family this joyful hope, and explained the great object to which it was directed; so that when the same promise was solemnly renewed, first to Isaac, ⁵ and afterwards to Jacob, ⁶ its meaning and object were distinctly understood by these patriarchs: and that wherever the blessing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is referred to, or the covenant which God made with them and their posterity recognized as the glory and the hope of Israel; this essential part of it, the promise of the Messiah, and the blessing by him to be communicated to all the nations of the earth, must have been equally and perpetually recognized as the great object of the Jewish scheme, to which every other part of it was instrumental and subordinate. So that the original foundation and primary characteristic of this scheme, far from being partial and exclusive, avowedly extended to all the nations of the earth, and centered in that Messiah, who is the grand object of all the divine dispensations, from the creation of the world to its close.

“This original and perpetual purpose of God, to extend the effects of the Jewish dispensation to all the nations of the earth, is also most clearly recognized in the celebrated prophecy of Jacob; ^a ‘The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.’ Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the event described, and the period marked out by the ‘sceptre’s departing from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet;’ there appears no reasonable ground for doubting, that the word Shiloh designates the Messiah, and that the gathering of the people to him,

^b Gen. xxvi. 4.

^c Ibid. xxviii. 14.

^a Gen. xlix. 10. I am disposed to adopt Warburton’s interpretation of this prophecy, in preference to any other; and to believe that it denoted the continuance of the theocratic sceptre over the Jews, which remained until our Saviour came, who instituted in its place his kingdom ‘not of this world.’ (See Warburton, b. v. sect. 3. subsect. 3. vol. iv. p. 243—266.) The interpretation of Patrick from Wagenseil, seems the next in clearness and probability. Consult also Newton’s fourth Dissertation, Poli Synopsis, Dodd, and the Bibliotheca Biblica, in locum.

¹ Gen. xii. 3.

² Ibid. xviii.

³ Ibid. xxi. 18.

⁴ Ibid. xviii. 25.

presignifies the extension of the church to all nations without distinction.

"The admission of the Gentiles into the church of God, is indeed an event which the inspired psalmist predicts in a variety of passages with the greatest clearness; and which all the prophets dwell on with such distinctness, copiousness and animation, as prove beyond controversy, that this great consummation was uninterruptedly the leading object of the divine purposes and communications, to which the whole Jewish scheme was merely preparatory and subordinate. It is expedient to cite a few passages to illustrate this assertion; a few, however, will be sufficient, for its truth is so certain, it scarcely requires confirmation, and the passages establishing it are so numerous, to transcribe them all would be at once tedious and unnecessary.

"In the second psalm, which is clearly and exclusively prophetic of the Messiah, the psalmist asks, 'Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his ^a Anointed; saying, Let us break the bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' This clear prophecy of the resistance which would be attempted, against the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, is followed by as clear a prediction that this opposition would be ineffectual. 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion; I will declare the decree the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' Thus, emphatically and distinctly does the inspired penman predict the divine nature and supreme exaltation of the Messiah, and he then proceeds to declare the universal extent of his dominion. 'Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession: thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way; when his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.' It seems impossible to describe in clearer terms the Messiah's reign, as not confined like the Mosaic law to a single nation, but including within its sway all nations and regions of the earth.

"In the twenty-second psalm, which describes with equal distinctness, the rejection, the sufferings, and the death of the appointed Saviour, even to the minutest

particulars of 'their piercing his hands and his feet, parting his garments among them, and casting lots upon his vesture.' The prophecy goes on to declare that, notwithstanding this apparent depression, God would regard and exalt the sufferer. 'He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him, but when he cried unto him he heard him.' And it proceeds to declare that the final event would be, his extending universally the dominion of true religion. 'All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee; for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations.'

"With equal sublimity does the forty-seventh psalm call on all nations; 'O clap your hands, all ye nations; shout unto God with the voice of triumph, for God is the king of all the earth; sing ye praises with understanding, God reigneth over the heathen, God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness; the princes of the people are gathered together unto the people of the God of Abraham; for the shields of the earth belong unto God, he is greatly exalted.'

"The sixty-seventh and the seventy-second psalms, are not less express in predicting that a period should arrive, when the dominion of the God of Israel should be acknowledged by all the nations of the earth. The seventy-second especially declares, that a Son should inherit the kingdom of David, 'who should judge the people with righteousness, and the poor with judgment;' and the extent and effects of his dominion are described in terms applicable only to the Messiah's reign. 'In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth; they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents, the kings of Arabia and Seba shall offer gifts; yea all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.' The nature of this homage and its motives are declared to be spiritual and religious: 'for he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also and him that hath no helper; he shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the soul of the needy; he shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence, precious shall their blood be in his sight. His name shall endure for ever, his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed.' Enraptured at the glorious prospect of the universal dominion of him, in whom, according to the promise made to Abraham, 'all nations were to be blessed,' the psalmist exclaims, 'Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory: amen and amen.'

"Isaiah, the great evangelic prophet is still more explicit, in predicting the extension of the Messiah's kingdom over the Gentile world: and that the character of the religion to be by him established, would be in the highest degree spiritual and comprehensive, free from any local or national restriction, and unincumbered with

^a All the versions agree in translating this passage in a manner applicable to the Messiah. The Chaldee Targum uses the very word, Messiah, and the Seventy the word Christ or Anointed. See *Biblia Polyglotta* Waltoni: indeed the seventh, eighth, and twelfth verses are entirely incapable of being fully accomplished or clearly understood, except as applied to the Messiah. The only variety of any moment is in the eleventh verse, where instead of 'kiss the Son,' that is, as we explain it, adore him, all the versions except the Syriac read, 'receive instruction lest the Lord be angry,' &c. This makes the sense more clear and coherent, and is justified by a very slight change in the original. Yet Houbigant, whose authority is considerable, retains the present reading of our Hebrew text, and translates it, 'adore the Son.'

Ps. xx. 17, 18, 19.

^b See Mat. xxvii. 46, where our Lord appropriates this psalm as directly applicable to his sufferings.

any burdensome ritual or ceremonial observances. Yet that Israel should be instrumental in forming this kingdom, and should, ultimately at least, partake of the blessings it confers. ‘It shall come to pass,’ says he, ‘in the last (or latter) days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.’

“This prediction of the extent and effects of the Messiah’s reign, though exactly descriptive of the genuine character of the Christian religion, and its perpetual tendency to produce the full effect here described, yet undoubtedly peculiarly relates to a period in the history of the church of Christ not yet arrived; to the final result of a system yet in progress: which, whenever it shall be accomplished, will display in full lustre the wisdom and the mercy of the divine dispensations; but it is such a result as the continuance of the Jewish ritual, and the restrictions of the Jewish law could never produce. It therefore implies an improvement of that law, and a breaking down of that wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, founded on the Mosaic ritual, which the Messiah, appearing as a new lawgiver, could alone have authority to remove.

“In various subsequent chapters, the prophet with still greater clearness predicts the extension of the Messiah’s kingdom over the heathen world. I select only one passage; as remarkable from its connecting this prediction with the declaration of the Messiah’s humiliation; and therefore proving the kingdom described by the prophet was spiritual not temporal. ² ‘And now, saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him; though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, it is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Judah, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee as a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One: to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers; kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship the name of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.’

“Thus expressly do the prophets foretell the universal extent and the spiritual nature of the Messiah’s reign. Now, had no distinct and direct intimation been given, that a change must take place in the character of the religion established by divine interposition, in order to fit it for this greater extension, and more spiritual efficacy;

yet the nature of the case would compel us to infer the necessity of such a change.

“A religion which was to be received in every nation and region of the globe, could not, like the Jewish law, require that all the adult males of every nation professing it, should visit the temple at Jerusalem, three times each year, to celebrate the three great festivals: this would be physically impossible. It could not enjoin the observance of those various rites, ceremonies, and institutions, which were either commemorative of events, in which the Jewish nation alone were interested; or which were calculated to separate them from all other nations, by a marked opposition of laws and manners: this would be totally unnatural and irrational, when it was predicted that the Jewish dispensation should terminate in a religious system, calculated to attract, not to repel the rest of mankind, and destined to embrace all the nations of the earth.

“It is indeed unreasonable to expect, that the Jewish lawgiver at the very moment he was delivering his law, should be directed by God to weaken the reverence of the nation for it, by declaring that its duration would be short, and its obligation transitory; or that while he was labouring to impress the necessity of avoiding all similarity of manners, principles, and religion, with the surrounding nations, he should at the same moment distinctly announce, that it was for the sake of these very nations ultimately, that the peculiar scheme of the Jewish institutions was formed, and that this scheme would terminate in the abolition of all the distinctions now established.

“We know the Jews were at that time at once dull and carnally minded, very averse to the restraints their law imposed, and above all to its prohibitions against imitating the manners of their neighbours, sharing in their festivities and idolatries, and uniting with them by inter-marriages. And we can hardly conceive it possible for Moses to have expressed to them such sentiments as these, without utterly alienating them from the system he proposed, and subverting the influence of his laws, by the very manner of promulgating them: and this without the least conceivable necessity for acting so hazardous a part, or the prospect of any advantage to be derived from it.

“The divine wisdom is indeed most conspicuous in the conduct of this, as of every other part of the Jewish scheme. In the infancy of the Jewish people, while they were immature in intellect, and wedded to external objects, a law adapted to that state, and calculated at the same time to prepare for a more universal and perfect religion, was employed to control them by its restraints, while it attracted and engaged them by its ceremonies and its festivals. During this stage of their progress it was unnecessary, and would probably have been injurious, to have announced distinctly the future abrogation of the ceremonial law, and the admission of the Gentiles into the church of God. But as soon as the adherence of the people to that law was sufficiently secured by its long establishment, and by the erection of the temple, the prophets were empowered to predict this constantly intended change in the divine dispensations with perpetually increasing clearness, as that change approached.

“It ought however to be observed, that the Jewish lawgiver, to prevent all suspicion of inconsistency in the divine conduct, not only recorded the promise to, Abraham and the prophecy of Jacob, but was himself em-

¹ Is. ii. 2 et seq

² Is. xlix. 5.

^a Instead of this line, ‘he shall rebuke many people,’ Lowth translates, ‘he shall work conviction in many peoples,’ which gives a much more clear and consistent sense.

power to intimate the purpose of God, to send, at some future period, another lawgiver, authorized to promulgate a new law.

“ This seems plainly the purport of his celebrated prophecy, delivered towards the close of his own ministry. ‘ The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thy brethren, like unto me : unto him ye shall hearken. According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God, in the day of the assembly, saying ; Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that they have spoken, I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee ; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him ; and it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.’ ”

“ It has been justly observed, ^a that this prophet to be like unto Moses must be a lawgiver ; for this appears the essential distinction between him and all inferior prophets. We cannot suppose the divine messenger thus pre-eminently marked out, was to do nothing more than cause the ancient statutes of his predecessor to remain as originally established ; since that essential character of similarity would thus be wanting, and no sufficient reason would appear for his mission being peculiarly predicted. And since the promulgation of a new law implies a change of the pre-existing system, the certainty of such a change being intended, may be fairly inferred from this prophecy.

“ We cannot but observe how accurately the meek and humble tenor of our Saviour’s life, and the merciful nature of all his stupendous miracles, accords with the motive assigned by the Jews, for imploring that they might not again receive the will of God in the same manner as they had done at Mount Sinai ; even the overwhelming terror with which they were then filled, ‘ Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more that I die not.’ God, indulgent to this weakness of human nature, approves of and grants this entreaty ; and as the mode of impressing the Jewish law was suited to its nature as a system of coercion ; so the gospel scheme, which proclaimed not only ¹ ‘ glory to God in the highest,’ but ‘ on earth peace and good will to man,’ was ushered in with the most attractive manifestations of mildness and mercy, benignity and love. As Moses deserved the epithet of the ‘ meekest of men,’ so the Son of God displayed meekness and forbearance as much greater, as the dignity from which he stooped was unspeakably exalted, his voluntary humiliation profound, and his sufferings unparalleled. How wonderful the coincidence of the prophetic de-

scription and the real history ! ² ‘ Behold,’ the evangelic prophet thus anticipates the facts, ‘ my servant whom I uphold, mind elect in whom my soul delighteth ; I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles ; he shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street ; a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench. He shall bring forth ³ judgment unto truth ; he shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law.’ And again, ³ ‘ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth ; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.’ Yet notwithstanding this humiliation, he displayed a dignity as a divine lawgiver, which no other prophet presumed to claim. ‘ He spake as one having authority,’ as exercising a right not only to explain and enforce the Mosaic laws, but to repeal, to alter, and to improve them ; as in the instance of the liberty with respect to divorce, which our Lord states Moses to have yielded to the Jews ‘ for the hardness of their hearts ;’ but which he disallows, as inconsistent with the original strictness of the marriage tie, and the perfect purity of the gospel scheme.

“ And to complete the accurate accomplishment of the Mosaic prediction, how awfully is that clause fulfilled, which declares in the name of Jehovah, ‘ Whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.’ The Jewish nation did not hearken to the promised prophet, and of the whole nation how awfully has it been required ? 1800 years’ dispersion and degradation has not yet closed the effect of that dreadful imprecation, ‘ his blood be on us and on our children.’ ”

“ Thus is Jesus of Nazareth, though in his divine nature infinitely superior, yet as a prophet accurately like unto Moses ; ^c in his office as legislator ; in his full participation of the divine councils and the divine influence, for ‘ God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him :’ in the magnitude and variety of his miracles : in the importance and permanence of that religious system which he introduced : in the meekness of his character, and the signal punishments with which God has vindicated the authority and punished the neglect of his laws.

“ Subsequent intimations of the intended substitution of a more spiritual religion, and a more refined and perfect law, in place of the Mosaic, are frequent and clear. The fact recorded by the Jewish lawgiver, of the great patriarch Abraham having paid religious reverence to Melchizedek, ‘ the priest of the most high God ;’ receiving his blessing and paying him tithes, is alluded to by the inspired psalmist, at the very period when the Levitical priesthood and the ceremonial law were most fully established : when he describes that promised ruler whom he terms ‘ his Lord,’ declaring, ‘ the Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make

¹ Luke ii. 14.

^a See Newton’s sixth dissertation, where it seems to me clearly proved, that this prophecy cannot be applied either to Joshua or any other successor of Moses, as judge or king ; nor yet to any single prophet or succession of prophets ; particularly from the three concluding verses of Deuteronomy, probably added by Ezra, and the history in Numbers xii. from 1 to 8. See also Mr Faber’s *Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. ii. b. ii. sect. 3. ch. 3. This learned writer has very fully treated of the subject of this entire Lecture in his second book, to which I would refer my reader ; as I conceive it unnecessary for me to dwell more fully than I have done, on a subject which has been so lately and amply discussed by this learned divine.

² Is. xlii. 1.

³ Is. liii. 7.

^b Lowth for the words ‘ he shall bring forth judgment unto truth,’ reads ‘ he shall publish judgment so as to establish it perfectly ;’ which gives a much more clear sense.

^c For a variety of more minute points of resemblance consult Bishop Newton’s sixth dissertation : Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelicæ*, b. i. c. 3, and b. ix. c. 11, and *Colatio Philippi a Limbore cum erudito Judeo*, pp. 4, 31, 289, et seq. ; and Faber’s *Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. ii. pp. 145 and 266.

thine enemies thy footstool;' to whom he ascribes a distinguishing feature of his character, his possessing a priesthood similar to that of Melchizedek. 'The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.' This declaration the apostle to the Hebrews^a argues on at large, and irrefutably proves, that it implies the abrogation of the Levitical law, and the substitution of a more perfect religion. 'If' says he, 'perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the law, what farther need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron; for the priesthood being changed there is made of necessity a change also of the law.' For the full illustration of this argument, I refer to the learned commentators who have explained the passages in which it is contained, the conclusion thus stated by the apostle, is evidently contained in the scriptures, and is that which I wish to impress, as it proves the consistency, and illustrates the connexion, of the Mosaic and the Christian codes.

"With equal clearness the same great apostle argues from the very nature of the Levitical law, that it was intended as the type and introduction of the Christian scheme; and here again adduces the prophetic declaration of the inspired psalmist. 'The law having a shadow^b of good things to come, and not the very image

^a The general scope of the apostle's argument is, that Abraham acknowledged the superiority of Melchizedek; that his order of priesthood was therefore prior and superior to the Aaronical order, and that Christ being of that order, as the psalmist prophesies, his priesthood is superior to and supersedes the Aaronical, which must therefore be changed, and with it the Levitical law. In the second verse the apostle declares Melchizedek was by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, that is, 'king of peace.' In these great and peculiar characters the priesthood of Christ was pre-eminently distinguished. The apostle then in the third verse, describes the priesthood of Melchizedek by additional characters, which belong not to him as a human individual, but to the priesthood he possessed. 'In this sense he was without,' that is, independent of, 'father, without mother, without descent,' that is, independent of his descent, 'having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,' as to his priesthood, 'but being made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.' See Macknight's very clear illustration of this passage, in his view and illustration prefixed to this chapter. Like Melchizedek: Christ is a king as well as a priest, being the Son of God and Lord of all. He is also king of righteousness, to promote which is the object of his moral government. He is also king of peace, reconciling sinners to God and to one another. Like Melchizedek Christ is not descended from parents who were priests, but derives his priesthood from the special designation of God, independent of all limitations of descent, and his priesthood is of a nature so excellent as to have no companion nor successor in it, but he liveth for ever to execute it himself. Like Melchizedek, Christ's priesthood did not, as that of the Levites, begin at thirty and end at fifty years; but he exercised it from the first, and retains it through his whole existence: and finally, like Melchizedek, he acts as priest, not for one particular nation, but for all the true worshippers of God.

^b 'The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things.' On these words it is remarked, "The word *σικωα*, rendered *image*, seems from the tenor of the apostle's argument, to be used for the essential or substantial form of a thing, that is, for the very thing itself, as opposed to its *σικια*, shadow or delineation; so it is paralleled to *σωμα*, the body or substance, which the apostle elsewhere opposes in like manner to its *σικια*, or shadow, (Col. ii. 17.) Accordingly the Syriac version explains *σικωα* by the *substance*, and Chrysostom by the *truth* or *reality* as opposed to *types* or *emblems*. Cicero has used almost the same expression in the same sense; "We have no solid and express substance of true law, the sister of justice; we use only its shadow and semblance." (*De Officiis*, b. iii.

of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect; for then would they not have ceased to be offered, because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year; for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he, (the promised Redeemer predicted by the psalmist in the fortieth psalm,) cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body thou hast prepared me; in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sins, thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, lo I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst thou pleasure therein (which are offered by the law). Then he said, lo I come to do thy will, O God; he taketh away the first that he may establish the second; by the which will we are sanctioned, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.'

"The prophet Jeremiah, who is also appealed to by the great apostle of the Gentiles, foretells the propagation of a pure and spiritual religion, the abolition of legal ordinances, the call of the Gentiles, and the final restoration of Israel. Calling upon 'back-sliding Israel' to return from her transgressions and idolatries. The prophet encourages their repentance by declaring, 'I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding; and it shall come to pass when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, the ark of the covenant of the Lord, neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel; and they shall come together out of the land of the north, to the land that I have given for an inheritance to their fathers.' And still more expressly in a subsequent chapter, 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those

¹ Jer. iii. 14—19.

² Jer. xxxi. 31, et seq.

c. 17.) The apostle means to illustrate the imperfection of the law, that it could not bring men to perfection, that the good things it promised were but a shadow of the great realities secured by Christ, the veriest sketch or outline, in comparison of the perfect and exact picture. See Dodd, Macknight, Heylin, and Wolfius on Heb. x. 1. and Suicer's Thesaurus, and Parkhurst on the word *Εικων*. It is necessary to remark, that in the words 'a body hast thou prepared me,' the apostle follows the Septuagint, and not the Hebrew text as it now stands. But for the probability of a corruption in the Hebrew text, consult Dr Thomas Randolph's comparison of the citations in the New Testament, with the Hebrew and the Septuagint, No. 159, p. 22 and 44, and the authors by him referred to.

days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know ye the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more.' According to this prediction the ancient Levitical covenant was to be dissolved, and the ordinances of Moses to be succeeded by a law not in any degree typical, but entirely promotive of real virtue; not requiring ceremonies to preserve it, but in its very essence practical and influential, regulating the temper and written in the heart."

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C HAP. II.—*Judaism preparatory to Christianity,*
continued.

"LET us next proceed to evince, that as the law and the prophets were thus avowedly designed to predict and introduce the gospel of Christ; so they did in fact accomplish this design, their pre-existence being indispensably necessary to prepare for the reception of that gospel, and in a variety of ways illustrating its importance and facilitating its promulgation.

"To place this conclusion in a clear light, let us reflect what would probably have been the situation of mankind as to religion and morality, if no such nation or system as the Jewish had existed, before the appearance of our Lord. It seems certain that the whole world would have been sunk in the most gross idolatry, and an almost total ignorance of the principles of natural religion. The very idea of the Supreme Creator and Ruler of the universe would have been obliterated from the minds of men; or at most thought of only by a few speculative philosophers, who had never ventured to inculcate the necessity of confining adoration to the one true God, or openly to condemn the absurdities and profanations of idolatry, which would have prevailed over the world, uncensured, we may almost say unsuspected of error or depravity; since no purer system would have existed, to which an appeal might have been made, as clearly true, or supported by any acknowledged authority.

"In such a state of religious blindness, all expectations of a future retribution would have appeared ridiculous or incredible, from the falsehoods and extravagancies with which that opinion had been universally encumbered and disgraced. The evidence from prophecy could not have existed; and any appeal to miracles would have been disregarded or discredited, from the multitude of lying wonders which had usurped that name, without a single instance of any plainly supernatural interposition.

"Had the world been permitted to sink thus universally into ignorance, idolatry, and depravity; almost deprived of all ideas of true religion, and totally estranged from every feeling of pure morality; without any fixed principles to recur to on these subjects, nay almost without a language in which to speak of them: it seems nearly impossible to conceive any means, by which mankind could have been instructed or reformed, without utterly subverting the whole course of nature, and forcibly controlling the moral character of man. Darkness would have overspread the earth and thick darkness the nations;

and amidst this universal moral chaos, no spot could have been found, on which the foundation of the church of God could have been laid; no nation, or tribe, or family, who, if the standard of true religion were reared, could be expected to rally round it and support the sacred cause.

"A degeneracy so fatal and irremediable was effectually prevented by the operation of the Jewish scheme. The world was rapidly sinking into idolatry with all its profanations and crimes, the pure principles of that patriarchal religion, which had originally enlightened mankind, were preserved in the family of Abraham by the transmission of parental instruction, until that family became a nation: that then this nation, which would otherwise have been hurried away by the resistless torrent of universal corruption, was placed under the immediate government of Jehovah, as their national Lord and King; rescued from Egypt and settled in Canaan, by a series of miraculous interpositions, which exhibited an irrefragable proof of the power, the providence, and the majesty of the true God, as well as the impotence and nullity of those base idols, who usurped his honour in a deluded world.

"To preserve this nation as a lasting monument of the divine supremacy, and a permanent asylum, where the truths of religion and the principles of morals might take refuge, and be preserved for a more favourable period, when their salutary influence might be again extended to all mankind with effect by the promised Messiah, 'in whom all nations were to be blessed,' the Mosaic law was given, which in this infancy of human reason and human virtue, was to act as the 'schoolmaster to bring men to Christ;' a task which it effected by a variety of means which can here be only briefly hinted at.

"First, it maintained the radical principles of true theology, while it clothed them in such a form, and promulgated them in such circumstances, as without detracting in the slightest particular from their purity and truth, rendered them interesting and attractive to a nation, which could scarcely have been induced to attend to any mere abstract doctrines concerning the being and attributes of the Deity, if he had not authorized them to look up to him as their peculiar, national, and guardian God.

"The same law inculcated the principles of pure morality, with a similar attention to the feelings and the character of the Jewish nation; enforcing the entire system by temporal sanctions, which alone were capable of influencing a people, short-sighted, incredulous, attached to present objects, and habituated from the example of the rest of mankind, to consider temporal prosperity and success as the criterion of the power and fidelity of that God, who allowed them to consider him as their national and peculiar Lord and King.

"Such a system could be carried into effect, only by a particular providence proportioning the visible prosperity both of the state and of individuals, to their obedience to the divine law. The continued display of this wonderful providential interference, supplied a perpetually increasing proof of the power, the justice, and the mercy of Jehovah, and exhibited the most awful and instructive examples to mankind, of the general conduct of God's moral government.

"The Mosaic law not only promulgated a system of true religion and pure morality, and supported that system by the most powerful sanctions; but it guarded it from the contagion of that idolatry and vice which universally prevailed, by a corresponding system of peculiar

laws and manners, rites and ceremonies, calculated to form a barrier between the chosen people and the idolatrous world: while by the multitude of its rites, the magnificence, first of the sanctuary, and afterwards of the temple, the solemnity and attraction of its festivals, and finally by the influence of the priests and Levites, who were set apart as the public instructors of the nation in morals and religion, it supplied the means of counteracting the attractions of idolatry.

"Further, the Mosaic institution combining the civil government, the national religion, the tenure of private property, and the regulations of domestic life in one connected scheme; all whose parts tended to one object, the permanence of the entire system: it effectually secured that object, notwithstanding the crimes and errors of the chosen people, their idolatries and apostasies both private and public, which no system of moral government could totally prevent; amidst the powerful temptations from without, and the wrong propensities from within, necessarily arising from the general state of the world, and the peculiar character of the Jewish people, during the entire period from Moses to Christ.

"In truth, the adherence of the Jewish nation to their law from its delivery to this hour, a period of near 3300 years, is an event so unparalleled in the history of mankind, particularly when we consider the calamitous circumstances of the Jews for the last 1750 years, as seems sufficient, even if considered singly, to prove the reality of a providential interposition, unprecedented in the history of any other nation. But when we reflect that the chastisements which should attend the misconduct of the Jews, were distinctly announced by their lawgiver, the preservation of their nation as a peculiar people, predicted by him, nay the circumstances of their present dispersion not obscurely sketched out; such a prophecy, decidedly antecedent by ages to the events which it predicts, and predicting events which as nothing but an immediate and peculiar interposition of Providence could bring about, so nothing but a divine sagacity could foresee; seems to supply a decisive proof of the divine original of the Jewish scheme.

"But we are still to view this scheme in another light clearly illustrative of its divine original, as introductory to the Gospel. And here we must observe, that the chief rites and festivals of the Mosaic ritual were not only calculated to commemorate the leading interpositions of God, in the deliverance and settlement of the nation, and to exclude the infection of idolatry; but that they had a prospective signification, and were clearly a typical and figurative of the Messiah's character and kingdom.

"This typical character of the ritual law has been illustrated by so many eminent writers, and above all has been so clearly established by the great apostle of the

Gentiles, in the epistle to the Hebrews, that I need only touch on it; and observe, that the whole system of bloody sacrifices, which had plainly preceded the Mosaic institutions, and leads us, when tracing its origin to the very earliest revelations of God to man; as it served to awaken in the minds of the offerers a strong sense of the danger of sin, and the punishment it merited even unto death; so it most evidently prefigured that great sacrifice, by which Christians 'are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.'

"This prefiguration of the Messiah is peculiarly remarkable in the ceremonies observed in the great day of atonement, when the high priest entered once a year into the holy of holies, 'not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people, being,' says the apostle to the Hebrews, 'the figure of him, who by his own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,' a redemption which, as the apostle explains, essentially implies 'a purification of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.'

"Of the three great festivals of the Jewish law, two, the passover and the feast of pentecost, as they were commemorative of the deliverance from Egypt, and the promulgation of the law on Sinai; so were they as clearly figurative of the sacrifice of Christ and the effusion of the Spirit by which the gospel was disseminated over the world.^b

^b The analogy between the paschal sacrifice and our Lord's suffering, between the delivery of the law and the effusion of the Holy Spirit, has been remarked from the earliest period of the gospel. But it has not, as far as I can recollect, been noticed by any, that our not having as yet discovered any event in the history of Christianity, corresponding to that commemorated in the Feast of Tabernacles, or any Christian festival similar to that feast; instead of supplying an instance of dissimilitude between the two systems, strongly confirms their perfect analogy, when we consider the further progress of the gospel, which the word of prophecy leads us to expect. This observation has been suggested to me by my learned friend the Rev. Dr Elrington, late fellow of Trinity College, Dublin; and who, in the course of sermons he preached and published as Donnellan's Lecturer, in the year 1796, has so ably illustrated the truth of the gospel miracles, and exposed the sophistry of Hume. As his ideas on the present topic appear to me both original and just, I annex his own statement of them. "That the Jews annually observed three great festivals at Jerusalem, and that two of them, the passover and the feast of pentecost, had a reference to events, which were to happen under the Christian dispensation, is well known. Hence we are led to consider, whether the third solemnity was of a similar nature and has received a similar completion. This was the feast of tabernacles, beginning on the fifteenth day of the seventh month; when for seven days all that were Israelites born were to dwell in booths in remembrance of their dwelling in booths when they were brought out of the land of Egypt, and on the eighth day to return to their houses, celebrating it with great rejoicings, Lev. xxiii. 34—36, 42, 43. Now it is evident that no circumstance attending the establishment of Christianity, had any resemblance to the journey through the wilderness, and the dwelling there under tents; nor has any attempt, I believe, been made, to prove a similarity of the sort. We must therefore either admit, that this feast of tabernacles differs from the others in having no prospective reference; or we must seek in some future event its completion or antitype. And it will probably incline us to this latter opinion, when we consider, that the Jews will undoubtedly be brought back to Judea when the fullness of the Gentiles shall be come in; and if we suppose the season of the feast of tabernacles, to coincide with that of their future return, as it appears to have done with their return from the Babylonian captivity, we shall have a fulfilment of the three Jewish festivals completed finally in the conversion of the Jews to Christianity; which, with their return to their own land, will

^a This typical significance of Judaism has been fully and learnedly expounded by the Rev. Samuel Mather, a clergyman of Dublin, in a quarto volume published in 1683, entitled the *Figures and Types of the Old Testament, &c.* Consult particularly the Gospel of the Perpetual Types, pp. 208—218, also the Gospel of the Sacrifices and Offerings, pp. 232—254, and the Gospel of the Jewish Festivals, from pp. 520—545; see also the learned Mr Faber's *Horn of Mosaic*, b. ii. sect. 2, on the Connection between Judaism and Christianity by Means of Types, vol. ii. pp. 40—173; also the learned Outram on Sacrifice, particularly b. i. c. 18, and b. ii. c. 7: also Hartley on the Truth of Christianity, propos. 30—33.

"The Jewish law not only prepared for the introduction of the gospel, by its types and prophecies, and by preserving the principles of sound theology and pure morals; which without it would probably have been almost irrecoverably banished from the earth. But by the strictness of its moral prohibitions, and its denunciations of God's displeasure against sin, it probed and exposed the moral maladies of man. It proved to him by decisive experience, his proneness to violate the commands of his God, even when most distinctly promulgated, and his culpable neglect of duties of the most obvious necessity; so that he could not but acknowledge how infinitely improbable it was, that he could by his own unassisted strength escape sin; and that consequently far from being able to claim eternal happiness, as a reward which human merit might challenge from divine justice, he was liable to condemnation and punishment.

"Thus the law prepared men to hail with fervent gratitude the glad tidings of the gospel of peace, which offers the aid of the Divine Spirit, to assist the weakness of those who will humbly implore and diligently improve it; and proclaim free pardon to all who, repenting of their sins, and acknowledging their own inability to escape from their power, or expiate their guilt, embrace with faith and joy those gracious terms of pardon and acceptance, offered by the mediation of that Jesus, who was ¹ 'delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification; who still liveth to make intercession for us: thus destroying the power of death, and ² 'bringing life and immortality to light.' Not that in the gospel the doctrine of a resurrection and a future retribution was first promulgated, for they were intimated by Moses and clearly taught by the prophets, but because the means ^a

of securing life and immortality were then first clearly and satisfactorily ascertained, and placed within the reach of all who would embrace the gracious offers of pardon and mercy held out by the Redeemer of man.

"Such is the strict unity of design and the accurate harmony of parts, between the Jewish and the Christian schemes, so clearly establishing their common and heavenly original. As the period approached when the promised Messiah was to appear, we have seen this unity and harmony display itself in more illustrious characters. The visible and immediate interference of Providence in rewarding virtue and punishing vice, seems to have been gradually withdrawn from amongst the Jews after the Babylonish captivity; and the expectations of a future retribution, now plainly and authoritatively established by their sacred writers, left to operate in its room; so that at the time of our Lord's appearance, these expectations were a leading article of the popular creed: and when promulgated anew with additional miracles, to impress them on mankind in general, found amongst the Jews minds prepared to receive them, wherever worldly views or vicious propensities did not resist and defeat the influence of truth.

gospel, to perseverance in the faith, for which he himself cheerfully sustained persecution and bonds; and for this purpose he describes in the strongest terms the blessedness of a true Christian's temper, views, and hopes. 'God,' says he, 'hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,' that is, strength to resist evil, derived from the assistance of the Holy Spirit; accompanied with a sincere and active love of God, and a just discrimination of things, which clearly recognizes the superiority of future and heavenly objects above present and sensual; thus comprehensively describing a perfect Christian; whose will is rectified, whose affections are purified, and whose understanding is spiritually enlightened. To attain or preserve such a character is the most glorious object of human ambition; 'Be not thou therefore,' says the apostle, 'ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God, who hath saved and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.' Now is it not evident, that the apostle here means to unfold the whole scheme of the gospel, the eternal purpose of God to admit in the fulness of time the Gentiles into his church, notwithstanding their antecedent idolatries and crimes; the abolition of death, by depriving it of its terrors and its sting, and redeeming men from the power of death eternal; and aid to secure eternal life, arising from that spirit of power and love and religious wisdom, with which divine grace supplies the true Christian. It is not then the simple promulgation of the doctrine of a future life, which the apostle here understands; but a promulgation of it, accompanied with such clear instruction how to seek, and such merciful assistance to obtain life and immortality, as were now first brought to light by the gospel. Thus, to adopt the words of the pious Doddridge, "hath Jesus Christ in effect abolished death, hath deposed it from its tyrannical empire, and thrown a light on the important doctrine of life and immortality by the gospel, which gives us a more express assurance and a more lively view of it, than any former dispensation had ever done or could possibly do." See also Parkhurst's exposition of this passage as quoted by Dodd in locum: Bishop Sherlock's opinion in opposition to Warburton, illustrated and vindicated by Dr Parry, in his defence of the bishop of London: and the judicious Benson in his paraphrase and notes on this passage, who admits "the Jews had expectations of a resurrection even before the coming of our Saviour, and refers to Matt. xxii. 32, and Dan. xii. 2; but the more full and clear discovery is owing to the Christian revelation."

¹ Rom. iv. 25.

² 2 Tim. i. 10.

furnish a perpetual cause for thanksgiving and religious observance. Of the reference of this festival to the final restoration of the Jews, some of their traditions and practices may perhaps afford a further confirmation. It was their custom on the last day of the feast, to bring water from the fountain of Siloah, which the priest poured on the altar, singing the words of Isaiah, (xii. 3.) 'With joy shall ye draw water from the fountain of salvation;' which words the Targum interprets, 'With joy shall ye receive a new doctrine from the elect of the just;' and they appear, from the preceding chapter, to relate to the final restoration of the Jews. The feast itself was also called *Hosanna, save we beseech thee*; and was the time when our Lord spoke the remarkable words mentioned in St John (vii. 37, 38,) marking the relation which the ceremony of pouring out the water bore to his ministry. And amongst the traditions of the Jews we find that the defeat of Gog and Magog shall fall out upon the feast of tabernacles, or that the consequent seven months' cleansing of the land (Ezek. xxxix. 12.) shall terminate at that period; and there seems little reason to doubt the reference of that prophecy to the final restoration of the Jews.

^a I am aware that commentators in general interpret this verse solely of the gospel's bringing to light the doctrine of life and immortality; and Warburton advances as an irrefutable argument, that as it was reserved to be so brought to light by the gospel, it must have been unknown under the Old Testament. Now as I think I have proved it was not unknown under the Old Testament, it follows it was not reserved to be brought to light by the gospel alone. Undoubtedly where the Jewish religion was unknown, the doctrine was first clearly promulgated by the gospel, and even amongst the Jews it was supported by such additional miracles and examples, as threw round it a brightness of conviction, compared with which, the assent previously yielded to it was doubtful and dim. So that this expression may bear the sense usually given it, without supporting the inference which Warburton would deduce from it. But I cannot but think the apostle meant to express much more than a bare promulgation of the doctrine of life and immortality. He encourages his beloved son in the

"Thus also the gracious intention of Providence, to admit the heathen world into the church, and for this purpose abrogate that ritual which formed the wall of separation excluding them, was gradually more plainly notified; until by the last prophets it was distinctly announced; and as we perceive, clearly understood by all, whom national pride and prejudice did not induce to close their eyes against the light. Of this we find signal instances in John the Baptist and the devout Cornelius; and certainly there were multitudes of others amongst the Jews and Gentiles, who like them looked for salvation by the appearance of that Messiah, 'who was to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel;' and we know that the whole nation of the Samaritans acknowledged the same truth.

"As this glorious era drew near, we see various events crowding on our observation preparatory to its arrival; the translation of the Jewish scriptures into Greek; the general expectation of a great king to arise in Judea, diffused over the East; the increasing light of philosophy; the extension of the Roman empire; all combine to prepare for and facilitate the promulgation of the gospel. But still the Jews are the more immediate instruments whom God meant to employ in effecting his gracious purposes; and accordingly we find that, after the Babylonish captivity, they are rapidly prepared to act their part in the great and important change which now approached.

"It is certain that in the interval between the Babylonish captivity and the advent of the Messiah, the Jews were gradually settled and multiplied, not only in Egypt, but in all Asia, Greece, Italy, and the western regions of Europe. The Jewish historian¹ cites numerous decrees of the magistrates, the senate, and the emperors of Rome, encouraging and protecting them. Julius Cæsar ordered that tables of brass, containing his decrees to this effect, should be fixed in the capitol, and communicated to the quæstors and prætors where the Jews resided. We find similar decrees formed by, or directed to the governors and people of Ephesus, Sardis, and Miletus, Athens and Pergamus, as well as the islands of the Ægean Sea: and we have the most decided classical authorities,² to prove the multitude of the Jews at Rome, the number of their proselytes, and the popularity of their opinions.

"As the Jews were thus dispersed and situated, so that they might most generally spread their opinions, there is also reason to believe that their general character and conduct, especially in heathen countries, were such as to

recommend them; they seem in general to have been humble and rational, peaceable and industrious. "Natural justice," says their historian, "is most to the advantage of all men equally, Greeks and barbarians, to which our laws have the greatest regard; and thereby render us, if we abide in them after a pure manner, benevolent and friendly to all men; on which account we have reason to expect the like return from others, and to inform them that they ought not to esteem difference of positive institutions, a sufficient cause of alienation, but join with us in the pursuit of virtue and probity."

"By this providential distribution and settlement of the Jews, in almost every part of the civilized world; they were every where to be found carrying with them their law and their prophets, establishing their synagogues, celebrating their sabbaths, bearing constant testimony to the unity, the supremacy, and the providence of God, in opposition to pagan superstition and idolatry; and numbers of them declaring their firm belief in a future state of retribution; while all maintained a constant connexion with Jerusalem, attended there at the three great festivals, whenever it was practicable, sent thither their pious and charitable contributions, and universally gloried in the expectation of that Messiah, 'who was to be a light to lighten the Gentiles,' as well as 'the glory of his people Israel.'

"The influence of such a preparation for the reception and diffusion of the gospel, must have been great and salutary; every where its preachers found synagogues, where the law and the prophets were expounded each sabbath; every where they found not only Jews, but proselytes of righteousness, who, without binding themselves under the heavy yoke of the Mosaic ritual, acknowledged the great truths of natural religion, and complied with the sacred precepts of the moral law; every where some, like the officer³ of Candace queen of Ethiopia, studied the scriptures; others there were like the devout Cornelius,⁴ 'who feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.' Hence the preachers of Christianity almost every where instantly found hearers who could understand and feel their addresses. Thus at Antioch in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas⁵ were invited to preach by the rulers of the synagogue; and after the Jews went out of it, 'the Gentiles and religious proselytes besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath: and on that day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.' Thus also at Iconium,⁶ when these apostles went to the synagogue, they found an audience not only of Jews but of Gentiles, who were undoubtedly such proselytes, and 'when they had preached, a multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed.' Thus again at Thessalonica,⁷ 'of the Jews some believed, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.' And finally we see that⁸ at Jerusalem were dwelling Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven; who were attracted by the very first sound of the gospel of Christ, for when the apostles 'were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because every man heard them speak in his own language; Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the

¹ See Josephus's *Antiquities*, b. iv. c. 10, where extracts from the original decrees are given; also b. xvi. c. 2, and xix. c. 5; also Lardner's *Credibility*, part 1. b. ii. c. 2 and 3.

² See Horat. *Sat.* b. i. satyra ix. line 69—71, and still more expressly *sat.* iv. line 140; and *sat.* v. line 100; where the "credat Judæus Apella" is used as a proverbial expression, opposed to the incredulity of the Epicureans. The sarcasm of Persius, *sat.* v. line 184, "You shudder at the sabbath of the circumcised," equally shows the prevalence of the Jewish opinions. See also Martial's epigram, b. iv. 4, "fastings of the sabbatarians," &c., and various passages of Juvenal, *sat.* iii. line 13, *sat.* vi. 158, and from line 541 to 546, and particularly *sat.* xiv. from 95 to 105. See also Lardner's *Credibility*, part 1. b. i. c. 2, on the state of the Jews in Judea, who gives also much information on the general state of the nation in Egypt and elsewhere; but especially his second chapter, on the state of the Jews out of Judea. See also Tacitus *Annal.* b. ii. c. 85; Suetonius, *Vita Tiberii*, c. 36.

³ Acts viii. 27, &c. ⁴ *Ibid.* x. ⁵ *Ibid.* xiii. 15, 42, and 44.

⁶ *Ibid.* xiv. 1—3.

⁷ *Ibid.* xvii. 1—4.

⁸ *Ibid.* ii.

dwellers in Mesopotamia, and Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, exclaimed, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.¹

“Of this assembly, which may be considered as a collective representation of all the nations of the earth, three thousand souls converted on this memorable day, and at least two thousand¹ on a second illustrious miracle within a few days after, formed a body of missionaries, to bear to their respective countries the tidings of the appearance of that promised Messiah, ‘in whom all the kindreds of the earth were to be blessed;’ a promise which in these signal instances began to be so conspicuously verified.

“The rejection of Christianity by the great bulk of the Jewish nation, assuredly forms no valid objection to the connexion and consistency of the law and the gospel. This rejection was not² obscurely intimated by the prophets, was expressly³ predicted by our Lord; and was^a the natural consequence of that national ambition, that carnal and worldly temper, which induced the great bulk of the Jewish people to misunderstand and misinterpret the prophecies; by directing their attention exclusively to those predictions, which speak of the supremacy and extent of the Messiah’s kingdom, and which they understood of a temporal instead of a spiritual reign, by which the Jewish nation, as they vainly imagined, was to be rescued from the Roman yoke, and exalted to the dominion of the world; while they wilfully overlooked the equally clear predictions of the same Messiah’s humiliation and sufferings, and the express declarations, that the new dispensation should not be confined to one chosen people, like the old; but should embrace without distinction all nations, who, according to the original promise of God to the great patriarch Abraham, were to ‘be blessed in his seed.’ But the true interpretation and application of the prophecies is not obscured, or the proof of divine foreknowledge, and co-operation in the establishment of the gospel arising from them subverted by the errors or the obstinacy of the Jews. The prophecies are open to our inspection as well as theirs; and when by combining the temporal humiliation with the spiritual dominion of the Messiah, both which the gospel attests, we perceive all the predictions respecting him accomplished, however apparently opposite; the proof thence resulting is the more decisive as it was more difficult for mere human sagacity to anticipate, or mere human agency to produce so extraordinary a coincidence.

“The rejection of the gospel by the Jews is indeed so far from weakening, that it greatly confirms the proof from prophecy, by establishing the authenticity and un-

corruptedness of these great records of divine truth, of which the Jews are unsuspected, because hostile vouchers. Had their nation universally or generally embraced the gospel at its first publication, the sceptic might with some plausibility allege, that the prophecies might have been fabricated or altered to fit them to the events; the contrary is now certain. And so great is the importance of this circumstance, as appears to me, to establish the truth of Christianity; that I firmly believe it to be one of the great causes, why the national conversion of the Jews is delayed⁴ ‘until the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in.’ They are to continue the guardians of the prophetic records, till these shall have had their contents examined, and their application ascertained, by every other nation in the world.

“A little reflection will also evince, that the rejection of Christianity by the Jewish nation, does not subvert, but on the contrary confirms the certainty of the miracles recorded in the gospel history. It not only appears from that history,⁵ but from the admission⁶ of the Jews themselves, that the cotemporaries of these miracles did not deny their performance, but on the contrary admitted it; though they would not upon their evidence embrace the gospel, because they conceived this contrary to the Mosaic law, whose obligation their carnal and ambitious views led them to believe was eternal, and which they conceived no miracles could prove was abrogated. They therefore contented themselves with asserting, that the miracles of Christ and his apostles must be ascribed to magical influence, diabolical agency, or the mysterious potency of the ineffable name of God, which they conceived our Lord had learned to pronounce. But these opinions of the Jews affect not the reality or greatness of the gospel miracles: we can judge as clearly as they could possibly do, whether the scriptures describe the Mosaic law as of strictly eternal obligation, or on the contrary represent it as designed to introduce a more perfect and universal religion; and our improved reason and philosophic knowledge reject without hesitation the wild and absurd causes to which they imputed works, which the fair and candid reasoners amongst themselves confessed, ‘no man could do except God was with him.’

“In truth the hostility of the Jewish nation to Christianity from the first, confirms the truth of the gospel miracles. Had the Jews been universally or even generally converted by them, the sceptic might argue with some appearance of probability, that the facts had been invented or exaggerated to gratify the national propensity, credited without examination or proof, and all inquiry into them checked at the only period when inquiry could have detected imposition. On the contrary, we are now certain, that the gospel miracles were wrought in the presence of enemies, and thus subjected to the severest scrutiny, and that they carried with them conviction to multitudes, notwithstanding the fiercest opposition which national prejudice, bigotry, and vice could excite, and the strictest research which could be formed by the most vigilant hostility.

“Undoubtedly the most powerful cause of the rejection

¹ Acts iv. 4.

² See Doddridge’s Lect. lect. cxxx. prop. 112; Is. xlix. 16, 11. lii; the entire liii. 1—9, and the passages quoted in the first chapter.

³ Mat. xvi. 21; xxvi. 2, and the parallel passages.

^a I refer for a full refutation of the objection against the truth of the gospel history, derived from the rejection of Christianity by the Jews, to two sermons preached in the chapel of Trinity College, by Dr Elrington, and published at the desire of the provost and senior fellows. I have only taken such a brief view of it as my subject indispensably required. See also Lardner’s Collection of Jewish Testimonies, c. ii. and vii.

⁴ Rom. xi. 25.

⁵ Matt. ix. 34; xii. 24; Mark iii. 22; Luke xi. 15, and the corresponding passages.

⁶ See Wagenseil’s Fiery Darts of Satan, and Lardner’s Jewish Testimonies, ch. v. and vii.

of the gospel by the Jews, was the deplorably vicious and depraved character of the nation at large, ¹ so strongly attested by their own historian, and incontrovertibly established by the facts which he relates. And this depravity, it may be said, disproves every thing I have adduced to show, that Judaism was designed or adapted to prepare for the reception of the gospel. But let it be remembered, that notwithstanding this allowed depravity of the Jews in general, it has been proved that amongst them were preserved the principles of true theology and pure morals, which the gospel adopts, and which were banished from all mankind beside. Let it be remembered, that amongst them, and the various descriptions of persons connected with and enlightened by their religion, the gospel found its first teachers and hearers, its first converts and missionaries; and that the noblest and purest principles of piety adorned these great instruments, employed by God for dispensing his mercies to mankind; instruments which through every other region of the world would have been sought in vain. Finally, let us recollect the great probability, that the gospel attracted, and as it were detached from the Jewish nation every thing pure and pious, candid and virtuous; and left behind the dregs and dross alone, the hypocritical Pharisees, the epicurean Sadducees, the worldly-minded Herodians, the fierce zealots, the depraved and seditious rabble. Thus, according to the intimation of its divine founder, sifting the chaff from the wheat, separating the tares from the good seed, ² 'gathering the one into his barn, and consuming the other with fire unquenchable.'

"In truth, after the Jewish nation had obstinately rejected the Messiah, rebelled against his authority, and in opposition to his religion maintained, that the perpetual observance of the Mosaic ritual was an indispensable condition of divine acceptance, and their own nation exclusively the chosen people of God. It was indispensably necessary to put an end to their national establishment, and destroy that temple with which the observance of their ritual was essentially connected; in order to maintain the universal sovereignty of the Messiah, in opposition to their rebellion, as well as to prevent all possibility of corrupting Christianity by the adoption of their errors, and of their now burdensome because useless ceremonies. Whoever observes the struggles of the Judaizing Christians, thus to encumber the religion of Christ, and the extreme difficulty with which their efforts were resisted, even by direct revelation, and apostolic authority, in the very first and purest era of the church, will easily perceive the necessity of this precaution, to preserve the purity, and extend the dominion of the gospel; and that in this view, ³ 'through the fall of the Jews salvation is come unto the Gentiles.'"—*Graves' Lectures on the Pentateuch.*

CHAP. III.—On the Genuineness and Authenticity of the Books of the Old and New Testaments.

"THERE are now, in various parts of the world, a numerous body of people called Christians; and others

¹ See Josephus's History of the Jewish War, particularly b. iv. v. and vi.: or Lardner's judicious view of his testimony to the fulfilment of our Lord's predictions, in his Jewish Test. c. iii.

² Mat. iii. 12; xiii. 30.

³ Rom. xi. 11.

denominated Jews, who are scattered among the various nations of the earth. When we inquire into the reason of these denominations, we find the former are so called from their belief in, and adherence to, a divine teacher, called Christ; and the latter, from their being the descendants of Judah, one of the twelve patriarchs, sprung from Jacob. The former maintain certain opinions which were taught by Christ; they observe certain rites appointed by him; and they meet on the first day of the week to worship the Deity by prayer and praise. They have among them written books which they account sacred; and one part of their worship is, for a person properly qualified to read some portion of these books, and to explain to them the various duties which man owes to his Creator, himself, and his neighbour.

"In every country where Christians are numerous, they erect edifices for the purpose of divine worship; and where they are few, they assemble in some house with the same design. For public worship is essential to Christianity; and one day in seven has been, and is now, kept sacred, and spent in the exercises of devotion. When we inquire into its origin, the most authentic history carries us back near eighteen centuries; and, from the testimony of those who then lived, we are sure that there were persons at that period denominated Christians, and that they had among them the same sacred books which they now have, and that they observed the same rites, and believed the same doctrines. Happily we have not only the testimony of Christian writers, but of polytheists who were the avowed enemies of Christianity.

"Tacitus, writing the life of Nero, who set the city of Rome on fire, the report of which rendered him odious, tells us, that Nero imputed it to a set of people called Christians. The founder of that name was Christ, who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius, under his procurator Pontius Pilate. This pernicious superstition, thus checked for a while, broke out again; and spread not only over Judea, where the evil originated, but through Rome also, whither every thing bad upon earth finds its way and is practised. Some, who confessed their sect, were first seized, and afterwards, by their information, a vast multitude were apprehended, who were convicted, not so much of the crime of burning Rome, as of hatred to mankind. Their sufferings at their execution were aggravated by insult and mockery; for some were disguised in the skins of wild beasts and worried to death by dogs; some were crucified; and others were wrapt up in pitched shirts, and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve as lights to illuminate the night.

"This testimony proves, first, that the founder of Christianity was put to death: secondly, that, in the same country in which he was put to death, the religion, after a short check, broke out and spread: and, thirdly, that it so spread that, within thirty-four years from the author's death, a very great number of Christians were found at Rome. This testimony from a heathen historian establishes the leading facts of the Christian records. His opinion of this sect is what we might expect from his habits and principles. Suetonius gives the same account of the sufferings of Christians at that period.

"On examining the books held as sacred and divine by Christians, we find that four of the disciples of Christ wrote narratives of his life. They differ in their manner, style, and in the order they observe, but agree in a most wonderful manner as to the facts they record. They

write like persons who had heard and seen what they relate, or who had received information from such as had; and through the whole of their narratives an artless simplicity prevails which strongly prepossesses the mind in favour of their veracity. Another book contains a history of the persecutions of Christians, and the progress of Christianity, during a period of about thirty years. The remaining books are letters directed to different Christian societies; and were evidently written on particular occasions, either to oppose some error or to explain and enforce some part of Christian truth. One book is so peculiar in its style, imagery, and design, that it has been considered prophetic, and as emblematically setting forth the events, whether adverse or prosperous, of the Christian church till the consummation of all things.

"It is generally admitted that Matthew wrote his gospel for the use of the church in Jerusalem, and of the Jews in Palestine. According to the testimony of antiquity, it was written in Hebrew,^a or the language the Jews then spoke; and of course it would be accessible to the whole Jewish nation. The time when this gospel was composed has not been precisely ascertained. Dr H. Owen thought that it was written as early as Anno Domini 39 or 40, or about six years after our Lord's ascension. Lardner, however, supposes it was not written till the year 64. It is most probable that Matthew wrote his gospel while Peter and Mark were in the northern part of the Lesser Asia, which might be while Paul was preaching in Greece, about the year 54. Peter, we know, was at Antioch about this period; and might with Mark thence go to Pontus and Bithynia.

"On the establishment of Christian societies beyond the boundaries of Judea, it is natural to suppose that an authentic narrative would be given in Greek, the language then most generally spoken. Accordingly, the gospel of Mark is said to have been the second narrative presented to the church; but when published is uncertain. He was the companion and attendant of Peter, as the Christian fathers relate: and, with the greatest probability, is supposed to be the person he mentions in his first epistle, chap. v. 3, and calls his son.

"It is not improbable that, while Paul was at Rome, Peter again visited Antioch, and afterwards, the churches in Pontus, Galatia, &c.; and Mark, his convert and attendant, as the fathers relate, might write his gospel for the use of those churches; and as it would have the approbation of Peter, it would often be called the gospel of Peter, as in fact it was called; Peter afterwards going to Rome, and communicating a copy of Mark's gospel to that church, the tradition might arise that it was written for that church. After weighing the statements of the fathers and the opinions of learned men, this seems the most probable hypothesis.

"The evangelist Luke has given to the church the fullest history of its founder and head. There is no ground for doubt but that he is the person who accompanied Paul, and who wrote afterwards the Acts of the Apostles. Paul has mentioned him with the highest respect in his epistles.¹ From Acts, it appears that he

regularly attended Paul from his voyage into Macedonia till he was carried prisoner to Rome, whither the evangelist also went with him. Compare Acts xx. 5, where Luke speaks of himself as with Paul, and he ever after uses the same mode of speaking.

"The style of Luke proves that he was a Jew by descent; and most probably one early converted to the faith. It does not appear, from what he says, that he had personally seen Christ, but had derived his knowledge from the apostles, who had been eye and ear witnesses of what our Lord did and taught; and especially from Paul, to whom the gospel had been communicated by special revelation.² Dr Campbell thinks it highly probable that he was a native of Antioch, the capital of Syria, where the Greek language had been long cultivated, and was generally spoken by the higher classes. If Mark wrote his gospel while Paul was a prisoner at Rome, whither Luke had accompanied him, and where he continued till the release of the apostle, as is nearly certain from Paul's mentioning him in the epistles which he there wrote,³ he could not, I think, have written his gospel sooner than A. D. 63, and most probably in Greece.

"It has been observed that the language of Luke is more pure and copious, and there is more of composition in his sentences than in those of the other evangelists. From his profession as a physician, he might have received a superior education; and from his intercourse with men might have derived his superior accomplishments in the Greek language. In relating the same facts which Matthew and Mark had related, he uses, in some instances, the same expressions, and in others there is but little variation. From him we learn whatever relates to the birth of John the Baptist, the annunciation, and other important circumstances concerning the nativity of the Messiah; the occasion of Joseph's being then in Bethlehem; the vision granted the shepherds; the early testimony of Simeon and Anna; the wonderful manifestation of our Lord's proficiency in knowledge when only twelve years old; his age at the commencement of his ministry, connected with the year of the reigning emperor.⁴

"He has given us also an account of several memorable incidents and cures which had been overlooked by the rest; the conversion of Zaccheus the publican; the cure of the crooked woman, of the dropsical man, the cleansing of the ten lepers, the repulse he met with when about to enter a Samaritan city, and the instructive rebuke he gave on that occasion, to two of his disciples for their intemperate zeal: also the affecting interview he had, after his resurrection, with two of his disciples, in the way to Emmaus, and at that village. Luke has likewise added many edifying parables to those which had been recorded by the other evangelists. Of this number are the parable of the creditor who had two debtors; of the rich fool who hoarded up his increase, and, when he had not one day to live, vainly exulted in the prospect of many happy years; of the rich man and Lazarus; of the reclaimed prodigal; of the pharisee and the publican praying in the temple; of the judge who was prevailed on by a widow's importunity, though he

¹ Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Phil. 24.

^a Eusebius has preserved the testimony of Papias to this fact, who informs us that "Matthew wrote his Divine Oracles in the Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as well as they were able." (Euseb. b. iii. c. 39.) Irenæus and the following fathers give us the same account.

² Gal. i. 11, 12.

³ Col. iv. 14.

⁴ These facts he might learn from some of the kindred of our Lord, or from John, with whom his mother Mary dwelt after the crucifixion, who had preserved and would not fail to communicate them to him and to the church.

feared not God nor regarded man; of the barren fig-tree; of the compassionate Samaritan; and several others; most of which so early a writer as Irenæus has specified as peculiarly belonging to this gospel.

"On comparing these three gospels, it is clear that one was not copied from another; for in this case there would have been not only the same facts, but the same order. It is equally clear that the two latter could not be translations of Matthew's Hebrew original; we must then deem them independent testimonies to the same facts, and account for the coincidences and verbal agreement from the materials they possessed; and for the variation of the order and arrangement, from the judgment of each writer, and from the circumstances and design he had in view.

"Luke also wrote the Acts of the Apostles, which contains the history of the church till Paul obtained his liberty, about the year 63. He has traced the most material occurrences during this period, and the history may be considered as a continuation of his own gospel. His information was derived from the best sources; and, in regard to many transactions, he was personally concerned. This book is of the greatest value, as it shows the manner in which the apostles fulfilled their commission and propagated the gospel abroad.

"The gospel of John is uniformly stated to have been written the last; and he has designedly omitted most of what the others had related, with whose writings he was acquainted; and has given many interesting discourses of our Lord at great length. It is generally admitted that John lived to an advanced age; and that one design of his gospel was to refute the errors which had already sprung up in the church. John himself mentions the Nicolaitans,¹ a sect of the Gnostics. They introduced into the Christian church the most absurd speculative doctrines respecting the person of the Saviour, his works, sufferings, and resurrection. John, in consequence, begins his gospel, with establishing his glory as God, and the Creator of all things. He is wonderfully simple and artless in his style and manner; and every where discovers the most amiable and affectionate temper. From internal evidence he is supposed to have written previously to the destruction of Jerusalem.² In the year 70, this city was taken and in a great measure destroyed; and had John written after that event, it is natural to think he would have referred to it.

"The epistles of Paul have been generally admitted genuine. When considered in connexion with the Acts of the Apostles, there is such an undesigned coincidence of persons, circumstances, and facts, as not only proves their genuineness, but their truth. It is concluded, from evidence contained in the Acts and epistles themselves, that they were written in the following order, according to Dr Wall. 1. The first epistle to the Thessalonians, A. D. 54, from Corinth. "The copiers at the end of this epistle say it was written from Athens: and the English have thought that note of theirs worth translating: but whoever reads Acts xviii. 5, will see that it was at Corinth that Silas and Timothy came to Paul; and they join in the epistle." 2. The second epistle to the Thessalonians, in the same year, 54, from the same place. 3. The epistle to the Galatians from Ephesus, A. D. 55. 4. The first epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus, A. D.

57. 5. The second epistle to the Corinthians from the same place, in the following year. 6. The epistle to the Romans from Corinth, A. D. 60, Usher; 58, Pearson. 7. The epistle to the Philippians from Rome, during his imprisonment, A. D. 62. 8, 9, and 10. The three epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were written from the same place, and sent by the same person, Tychicus, during the same period. From internal evidence it is now generally admitted that the epistle to the Ephesians is the same as that to the Laodiceans, and Paley considers that the true reading is "Laodicea."³ 11. The epistle to the Hebrews, soon after the former, in the opinion of Wall, but whether sent to the church at Jerusalem, or some other church of Judea, is not known.⁴ 12. After Paul obtained his liberty, he travelled into various parts; and having left Timothy at Ephesus, he sent from Laodicea the first epistle to Timothy, about A. D. 65.⁵ 13. About the same time, he wrote the epistle to Titus, whom he left the year before in Crete. 14. Paul was again a prisoner at Rome when he wrote the second epistle to Timothy. This last letter of the great apostle contains intimations that he considered his course as now run, and that he was ready to be offered up as the victim of persecution.

"The first epistle of John and the first of Peter are, by the consent of antiquity, admitted to be genuine. The second and third of John, and the second of Peter, as well as of James and Jude, were not so generally received. They possess, however, such internal evidence as must satisfy any impartial inquirer, and, accordingly, they have been admitted into the canon. The book of Revelation was for some time undisputed, and, as far as external authority goes, it is better supported than most others.

"James is called the brother of our Lord, that is, kinsman; and is said to have been the first stated bishop or pastor of the church at Jerusalem. He was eminently pious, and was called James the just. Josephus has mentioned the manner in which Herod, to please the Jews, put him to death in the latter end of the year 62, or the beginning of 63. The epistle might be written the year before. It is directed to the twelve tribes of Israel, or to those who dwelt among the Gentiles; but I consider it as particularly referring to such as had embraced the gospel. It is wholly practical.

"The first and second epistles of Peter were addressed to believing Jews and Gentiles, scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. It is evident, from the design of the first epistle, that those to whom it is directed were in a state of suffering and per-

³ See Griesbach's Greek Testament.

⁴ This epistle was not so soon known or admitted into the canon as the rest. As it was written to the Hebrews, and chiefly respected them, it is natural to infer, it might be some time before it was communicated to the Gentile churches. On having examined the testimonies of the fathers, Lardner observes, "It is evident that this epistle was generally received, in ancient times, by those Christians who used the Greek language, and lived in the eastern parts of the Roman empire. Professor Stuart, in his valuable critical examination of this epistle, has made it probable that it was composed and sent to the Christian church at Casarea, where Paul had resided as a prisoner more than two full years.—Acts xxiv. 27.

⁵ Bishop Pearson, Paley; and others, have justly observed, that the epistle to Timothy and that to Titus must have been written subsequent to Paul's imprisonment at Rome, recorded in the Acts.—See *Horæ Paulinæ*, pp. 320—322.

¹ Rev. ii. 15.

² Ibid. v. 2.

secution: and some think it was written about the same time with the above. The second is supposed to have been written just before the breaking out of the Jewish war, A. D. 66.

"The epistle of Jude is thought to refer to the second of Peter, v. 17, and of course was written after it. He calls himself the brother of James. It might be written soon after the above, about the year 70. The epistles of John are thought to have been written as late as the year 90. The first breathes the spirit and manner of the evangelist; the two latter are directed to two pious individuals, and the sameness of style would justify us in considering John the author, had we no other testimony.

"The Revelations were communicated to John in the isle of Patmos, and contain the last divine revelations given to the church. They are, with the greatest probability, supposed to have been given about the year 96.

"The four gospels and the epistles were communicated by one church to another, and were most of them read and commented on in the churches on the Lord's day. Some of them are quoted or alluded to by Clement of Rome, by Hermes, by Ignatius, by Polycarp, disciples and contemporaries with the apostles, and by every Christian writer that followed in the next age; by Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and others. Tertullian refers to the churches as then possessing the very letters which Paul addressed to them. He bids "any one who is willing to exercise his curiosity profitably in the business of his salvation, to visit the apostolical churches, in which their very authentic letters are recited, *ipsæ authenticæ literæ eorum recitantur*." Then he goes on: "Is Achala near you? You have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi, you have Thessalonica. If you can go to Asia, you have Ephesus; but if you are near to Italy, you have Rome."

"Little more than seventy years after the death of our Lord nearly the whole of the canonical books were translated into Syriac, which still remains. The accurate Lardner observes, 'In the remaining works of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian, there are perhaps more and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament, than of all the works of Cicero, in the writings of all characters for several ages.'

"Having stated, according to the best evidence extant, the manner and the time when the books of the New Testament were published, we may justly infer that nothing can be brought to invalidate either their genuineness or authenticity. ^a As far as the authority of external testimony goes, it is wholly in their favour, without any direct opposing testimony.

"There is strong reason to believe that, within forty years after the ascension, the evangelists and the chief part of the epistles were collected together, and read and commented on in the Christian churches, as the law and the prophets were in the Jewish synagogues. Ignatius contrasts the gospel with the prophets. 'Ye ought,' says he, 'to hearken to the prophets, but espe-

cially to the gospel, in which the passion has been manifested to us, and the resurrection perfected.'

"Supposing the books of the New Testament the mere invention of men, and the facts they relate respecting the person of Jesus Christ to be without foundation, it is difficult, nay impossible, to account for the rise, spread, and duration of Christianity in the world. General experience supports the remark, that on no subject are men, in general, more indisposed and disinclined to entertain and cordially receive a new sentiment than on religion.

"Were the Christian records merely the invention of artful and designing men, how could it have been possible to persuade either Jews or heathens to become Christians? It cannot be denied that these books contain doctrines and precepts wholly opposed to the known prejudices, sentiments, and practices of both those classes of men. By the doctrine of Christ their religious ritual and ceremonies were represented as of no intrinsic importance, and, unless accompanied with faith, purity of heart, and integrity of life, unavailable in the sight of God. Another part of the Christian doctrine was equally opposed to Jewish pride and prejudices, that the Gentiles should enjoy equal privileges with them under the Messiah's reign.

"In the same manner was the Christian doctrine opposed to the opinions and prejudices of the heathens. They had gods many and lords many; and were ready to admit any new god to a place in their pantheon. The Christian doctrine on this point was opposed to every article of their mythology; it denied the very existence of every object of their worship. It taught that an idol was nothing but an imagination. It is evident that such a sentiment must have tended to overthrow every statue, altar, and temple in the world; and how could a doctrine like this prevail, unless founded in truth, and supported by such evidence of its divine origin, as must have been most convincing to those who embraced it?

"Were men induced to become Christians by the prospect of temporal gain? Were riches and honours the consequence of embracing Christianity? No; this was a sect every where spoken against; and Christians had nothing to expect but reproaches, insults, and persecutions. During a considerable part of the first three centuries, Christians had to endure whatever the malice of Jews and heathens could inflict. The civil power was exerted in every way to induce them to renounce Christianity, and to conform to the established and prevailing superstition. They were plundered of their property, many were banished, many immured in prisons, and great numbers tortured and put to death in the most painful manner.

"The arguments in proof of the reality and certainty of the Christian doctrine, derived from these sufferings, undergone only on account of their testimony to Jesus, and their adherence to him, are strong and decisive. When was it found that men, without any temporal interest, and in the face of the most formidable difficulties, persisted in a scheme of falsehood? The Christian records only assign adequate causes of the effects which are acknowledged to exist; and from them we see why the first Christians chose rather to suffer than to be silent, or to deny their Lord. The objects then which usually influence the human mind are here out of question; and it must be admitted, either that the first Christians

^a Bishop Watson has pertinently observed, that there is an important distinction between the genuineness and authenticity of any book. "A genuine book is that which was written by the person whose name it bears, as the author of it. An authentic book is that which relates matters of fact as they really happened. A book may be genuine without being authentic; and a book may be authentic, without being genuine."

acted contrary to the known principles of human nature, or that the facts they believed, on the evidence of their own senses, were true. To admit the former supposition is to admit a miracle; for what is a miracle, but a fact above, or contrary to, the usual course of nature? To admit the latter, is to admit that Christianity is founded in truth.

"The facts contained in the New Testament were the continual topics on which the apostles of our Lord dwelt in their public ministry; and if these facts were not true, their enemies would not have failed to expose them; as they could not have wanted either the inclination or the opportunity. The books of Christians were not locked up, but alike accessible to friends and to foes. Curiosity, as well as a desire to invalidate their authority, must have stimulated the latter to peruse them; and had they not been supported by the most decisive evidence, we should have had refutations without end. After a lapse of more than a century, an attempt was made, not to prove that the Christian records were a mere fiction, but to account for the miracles they contained from the supposed powers of magic. The Christian records could not, therefore, be a cunningly devised fable, but must have been allowed to contain a faithful narrative of facts, which courted the strictest scrutiny, and which did not admit of refutation.

"These three circumstances support both the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the New Testament. First, the recognition of the facts, doctrines, and precepts they contain, by a series of succeeding writers; secondly, the total absence of any account of the origin of Christianity substantially different; thirdly, the early and extensive prevalence of rites and institutions, founded on the facts and doctrines contained in the Christian records.

"Admitting the authenticity of the New Testament, we cannot reasonably doubt that of the books of the Old. The evangelists and apostles appeal to them, and often quote largely from them. We have in their writings references to most of the books of the Old Testament: to the five books of Moses, to Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, and the Prophets. Independently of this evidence, we have a translation of these books into the Greek language, made, at least in part, in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, more than two hundred and fifty years before the Christian era. The Samaritans, who were opposed to the Jews in many things, retained the law, or the five books of Moses, in the old Hebrew character, which the Jews used prior to their captivity in Babylon. This carries us back a considerable period; and the existence of the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the version of the Seventy, incontestably prove that the authenticity of the books of the Old Testament was then admitted.

"The books of Moses contain the civil and religious institutions of the Jewish nation, and the body of their laws; and it cannot admit of doubt that their civil polity and religious ritual and conduct were regulated by these laws. Their whole history proves this; and the unvarying testimony of Greek and Roman writers corroborates the fact. All the subsequent writers of the Old Testament refer to the facts and laws contained in the five books of Moses; the state of the earth when created—the primeval darkness—the division of time into weeks which has obtained among the most ancient na-

tions—the creation of man, and the happiness of the paradisiacal state—his fall and consequent depravity and misery—the longevity of the antediluvians—Noah's flood, and the manner in which he and all with him were saved in the ark—the increase of mankind and rise of ancient nations, have been either more expressly or more obscurely referred to by the most ancient heathen historians and poets. Josephus refers to Berossus, Manetho, Hesiod, Hecataeus and others in proof of what Moses relates.¹

"The history of Abraham, and of his posterity, is so full of particulars and incidents that it may be regarded as a family memorial. The promises and predictions made to him we find subsequently fulfilled. His posterity increased wonderfully on their having gone down to Egypt, and were afterwards enslaved and greatly oppressed. Moses was raised up, by a special providence, to be their deliverer, lawgiver, and ruler. God furnished him with talents and power to do what he designed; and by a series of miracles and judgments, Pharaoh and his people were compelled to permit the Israelites to depart from Egypt. The events which followed the exodus, the passage of the Red Sea, journey to Sinai, the giving of the law, the idolatry of the people, erection of the tabernacle, the pillar of cloud and of fire, the manna, &c., are clearly described, and by one who was eye-witness of what he relates. The historians and prophets of after-times borrow their language and imagery from the facts Moses relates.

"On the whole, there is no ground for doubt as to the genuineness or authenticity of the Old any more than of the New Testament. The external evidence is as complete as could be expected in respect to writings by far the most ancient in the world. The internal evidence arising from the style, foreign terms, simplicity, brevity, sublimity, and grandeur, the pure morality, elevated views of the divine nature, of the works of God, of his providence, his universal dominion, power and glory, not only prove the truth of the Old Testament, but its inspiration and divine authority.

"The scriptures are not only genuine and authentic, but inspired. Inspiration consisted in a supernatural influence on the human mind, elevating and directing its natural powers, and imparting such truths, and such knowledge of God's will, as could not be otherwise attained. Inspiration must, from its very nature, have been personal, and the inspired person must have been fully assured of it from his own consciousness. Inspiration included both the divine influence, and the effect of it, in the communications or discoveries made; and these communications and discoveries, when embodied in language, constituted a divine revelation. A revelation indeed might be made without inspiration. God might, and from scripture we know, he actually did, assume some form, and make known his will to men; or without any form, speak in human language, as at the giving of the law, and on many other occasions. In these cases, the discoveries made would be of the same nature and deserve the same regard as truths directly inspired.

"From this statement, it appears that inspiration was miraculous. An uncommon influence was exerted, and knowledge imparted, without the intervention of the us-

¹ Antiquities, b. i. c. 8.

ual means. How was it possible for the inspired person to convince others that God had inspired him; and that the truths he announced were divine revelations? Such a pretension would be regarded with suspicion, as being contrary to general experience; and, without some sensible, evident proof of divine power and influence, would command no respect, nor produce any beneficial effects. If the inspired person should work miracles, or should miracles be wrought at his word, this must with all reasonable men, establish his claim; for it would be absurd to suppose the God of truth would give his sanction to falsehood and imposture. As a miracle is an effect above the power of created beings to produce, and a deviation from the laws and course of nature, it is the strongest and most convincing proof of the agency of God. Nicodemus reasoned justly, when he said to our Lord, 'We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.'

"1. Inspiration has been properly divided into that of superintendence and that of suggestion. 'The former implies such a divine influence on the mind, as to secure the person who speaks or writes from error in the statements of facts, or the declaration of any doctrine.' It cannot be denied that such an influence is possible. Such an influence as this is also consistent with the free exercise of the person's own faculties: so that he would express himself in his own usual manner, in words and phrases to which he had been accustomed. Such an inspiration, the writers of the historical books of the holy scriptures enjoyed; so that what they wrote contained only truth, though expressed in their own style. And though they availed themselves of well-authenticated documents, and the oral testimony of honest and competent witnesses, yet, in arranging these materials, and stating circumstances, they enjoyed this superintending inspiration.

"From the Acts, it is evident that the apostles and other disciples were in a most wonderful manner inspired by the Holy Spirit. They were originally Galilean fishermen; and their circumstances must have precluded any literary advantages. They attended the ministry of Jesus, but they had no opportunity of acquiring the knowledge of any foreign language. How then was it possible for these men to speak at once in various languages, unless they had been inspired? Whoever reflects on the nature of language must be sensible that there could, in this, be no collusion. When the multitude heard the disciples speaking and praising God, each in his own tongue, well might they be amazed, and say, 'Are not all these who speak Galileans?' The gift of tongues was essentially necessary in their circumstances to spread the doctrines of their Lord and Saviour; and the power of conferring this gift seems to have been bestowed on the apostles. Hence, those who went forth to preach the gospel were, by this supernatural gift, qualified for the work, and with the strictest truth the apostle might say, that the gospel was preached, 'not in the enticing words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit.'

"If inspiration were necessary to those who first preached the gospel, and if the preachers assert that they enjoyed it, it is not reasonable to suppose that those apostles and evangelists who wrote the life, and stated and illustrated the doctrines of our Lord, should be con-

sidered as having been unaided in this important work. The interests of Christianity were involved in the accuracy, faithfulness, and truth of their writings, and had they not enjoyed as full an inspiration as was necessary, their writings would have been of less authority than their oral testimony. Examine their writings, and, unless I am greatly deceived, their agreement in the facts they record, their harmony in doctrinal sentiments, in moral precepts, directions, cautions, and exhortations to duty, will produce the fullest conviction that they wrote under the influence of the same Spirit. In short, the excellence of the doctrines delivered in their writings, their elevation, holiness, and spirituality, their obvious tendency to raise the moral state of man, and to promote his happiness, demonstrate their divine origin.

"As the miracles which the Saviour wrought demonstrated his divine mission, so those of the apostles and disciples support the inspiration and truth of their writings. Those to whose writings we are most indebted wrought miracles, and by this clearly evinced that they were under a special divine influence.¹

"Think of the lustre of those astonishing works which were wrought by Paul wherever he went, and of those wrought in his favour, which showed him so eminently the care of heaven: demons ejected, distempers cured, sometimes with a touch, and sometimes without, by a garment sent from him to the patient; his motions guided from place to place by a divine oracle; Elymas struck blind for opposing him; his bands loosed by an earthquake; his strength and vigour instantaneously restored, when the rage of the mutable and barbarous populace at Lystra had stoned him and left him for dead; and, to add no more, his safety in a shipwreck, with that of near three hundred more in the same vessel for his sake, promised by an angel, and accomplished without the loss of a single person.

"John is associated with Peter in the cure of the impotent man;² and to him Jesus appeared in the isle of Patmos, and made use of him as his amanuensis, expressly dictating to him the letters he was to send to the seven churches of Asia. Is it possible then to think that he was not under an inspiration of superintendency, or of suggestion, when he wrote his gospel and his epistles?

"The sacred writers expressly assert such a divine inspiration.³ They represent their Lord and Saviour, while he was yet with them, as giving them power to effect miraculous cures and other wonders in his name; and also as promising that, after his departure from them, he would send them the 'Spirit of truth.'⁴

"If the apostles and evangelists did not receive this Spirit, and were not divinely inspired in their preaching and writing, they furnished their enemies with an argument to prove that Jesus was a deceiver; but their writings show us that our Lord fulfilled, in the most ample manner, the promises which he had made. Under the influence of this 'Spirit of truth,' their mistakes respecting the nature of our Lord's kingdom were corrected, their timidity was converted into a holy boldness, and they displayed, through the whole course of their ministry, a wisdom truly heavenly, a fortitude, patience, meekness, love, and zeal suitable to the cause they ad-

¹ Acts iii. 7; v. 5—10; ix. 32—43. ² Acts iii. 3, 4.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 10, 12, 13; iii. 21—23; Gal. i. 11, 12; Eph. iv. 11, 12; 1 Peter i. 12; 1 John iv. 6.

⁴ John xiv. 26, 27; xvi. 7.

vocated, and according with the example of their Lord and Saviour.

"Collateral proof of the inspiration of the New Testament may be derived from a comparison of these writings with the spurious writings handed down to us under the name of the apostles. Let any man read the gospel of Nicodemus, of the Egyptians, or the remains of that of the Ebionites, and compare them with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John: and if he possess any judgment, he will not hesitate to conclude that, while the latter possess all the characters of truth, and are worthy of the high claims which they maintain, the former contain ridiculous stories, in language and style below notice.

"The belief of the first Christians in the divine authority of the scriptures, the regard they paid to them, and the care with which they read and transcribed them, furnish a strong presumptive proof of their genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration.^a They found here recorded the facts and doctrines taught them by the apostles and the first Christian preachers; and thus their faith would be strengthened. On the doctrines taught by our Lord and his apostles, and contained in the writings of the New Testament, the Christian church was founded; and on the preservation of these, its purity, perpetuity, and safety depended. If our Lord intended that his kingdom should continue among men, that the great purposes of his divine mission, sufferings, and death should be accomplished, it was necessary, either that the power of miracles should be continued to his disciples, or, that they should leave behind them written records of whatever was requisite for faith and practice, and that these records should contain nothing but the truth; or in other words, that they should be sanctioned by divine authority. Such authority was at first admitted, and on the same authority Christians now build their faith and their hopes.

"2. The second kind of inspiration is that of suggestion, in which God by his Spirit speaks directly to the mind, making such discoveries as could not otherwise be in any manner known. Thus, if a man was to give a just account of what another did at a distance, at any given moment, it must be evident that this was given to him by an inspiration of suggestion. In like manner, if a man declare what will come to pass in any future period, and the event happen accordingly, he must be under the influence of the same kind of inspiration. For instance, should a man inform us that a person of such a name shall exist a hundred or a thousand years hence, that he shall obtain power, and reign over such a kingdom, and vanquish the surrounding nations, and should it happen accordingly, who could doubt but that this had been revealed to him? In the New Testament we have many instances of this inspiration. Indeed, every prediction of future events, and every revelation of doctrines and truths, which unfolds what are the designs of the divine wisdom and mercy, comes under this species of inspiration. When the inspired person was to commit such discoveries to writing, that of superintendence was

necessary to preserve him from mistake or error. Hence both kinds were often united.^b

"The marks and evidences of inspiration, in the books of the New Testament, are equally manifest in those of the Old. The prophetic books contain many singular predictions of events which were to happen at distant periods, and which in the New Testament are said to be fulfilled. In the writings of the prophets there is a frequent reference to the future Saviour; his incarnation and his miraculous birth, his family, his poverty, his miracles, his sufferings, his death, his resurrection, his kingdom and glory are described with an accuracy which defies misapplication. Circumstances the most minute are noticed; and though the Jews have rejected our Lord as the Messiah, they still apply the same prophecies to him whom they expect. Of the inspiration of the prophets, in the highest sense, there can be no doubt; unless it can be proved that they wrote after the events which it is pretended they predicted; but this is impossible, as the Jews never would have supplied arguments in favour of Christianity.

"In regard to the Psalms, some are prophetic, others didactic, and others only commemorative. The Proverbs and Ecclesiastes contain maxims of prudence and wisdom. The evident design and tendency of these writings establish their claim to a divine inspiration, either of superintendence or suggestion. The same view may be taken of the historical books. We may also add that our Lord affirms their divine authority, and he directs his hearers to search them. As to the writings of Moses, they have the highest authority. God spoke to him with an audible voice, 'as a man speaketh with his friend.'

"Considering the laws of Moses, in respect to civil polity or religion, they are so peculiar that little doubt can be entertained of their divine origin. On these laws the Jewish state was founded, and continued with little interruption for a period of more than fifteen hundred years. The prophets refer to these laws as of divine origin, and our Lord and his apostles in like manner. We may then conclude that the writings which Jews and Christians deem sacred, are not only genuine and authentic, but, in the sense explained, divinely inspired. They mutually illustrate and support each other.

"We may fairly, and in all reason, incontrovertibly infer, the inspiration of the holy scriptures from a comparison with the writings of the most enlightened and polished heathens. The Jews were never celebrated for their attainment in science or literature. We have reason to believe that they never carried the arts to any high degree of perfection. Solomon, in erecting the temple, and in accomplishing his other works, availed himself of the superior skill of the Tyrians, and proba-

^a The attachment of the early Christians to the word of God was exceedingly strong, and manifested itself in various ways, according to the circumstances and inclinations of different persons. Women wore it hanging at their necks. Children were trained up from their infancy to repeat it by heart. Most persons carried it about with them. Some washed their hands before they took it up to read. And many have been found buried with the gospel lying on their breasts."—*Fleury, Mœurs des Chrétiens*, s. 7.

^b God, in communicating his will, spoke at various times and in various manners to the fathers, by the prophets. Sometimes in a dream. (Compare Gen. xv. 12—15, and xxviii. 12—17, and other places.) Sometimes in a vision. By this term is meant, such a representation to the mind of things, distant or future, as occupied and abstracted it from all other things. In a dream, the person was asleep; but in a vision awake. The prophets in general received the divine will in the latter method. (Compare Ezek. viii.) Sometimes the word of Jehovah came to the prophet in an audible voice, and he was expressly told what to speak or do. (Compare 1 Sam. iii. 1, &c.) It is probable that this was the case when the prophets assert that, 'Thus saith the Lord.'

bly of other neighbours. The Jews were employed in agriculture, a calling which, while it furnishes the means of subsistence, does not require to call forth the active and inventive powers of the human mind. A people devoted to the labours and toils of agriculture have neither leisure, means, nor inclination to indulge in speculation, to investigate the laws of matter or the properties of mind. Content with the produce of their lands and flocks, their vine-yards and olive-yards, they remain nearly stationary in arts and speculative sciences.

“Such being the general state and character of the Jews, from their origin down to their dispersion, the question forces itself on the mind, how did this people attain such just notions of the divine nature, of the unity, spirituality, omnipotence, omniscience, and other natural and moral perfections of God? How did they discover the Creator in his works, and inform others that he made the world and governed it? Are these things so evident that men in the lowest state of mental culture perceive and understand them? Why then has not pure theism every where prevailed? It is well known that the reverse is the fact, and that men have in every age and country where divine revelation has not been enjoyed, worshipped the creature and not the Creator. Will it be said that they received these just and noble sentiments from Abraham? The question still recurs, whence did he receive them? To say, by tradition from his fathers, will not satisfy the inquirer after truth. For why did not others secure and retain the same truths in the same manner?

“Will it be said that Moses, by the force of his own genius, aided by the learning of Egypt, discovered these truths, and founding his civil and religious polity on them, perpetuated them among that people? It may readily be granted that Moses possessed great powers of mind, and that these were improved by the literature of Egypt: but this supposes that the Egyptians also possessed great powers of mind; and how is it that, so far from acknowledging the unity and perfections of the divine nature, they were the most degraded for worshipping the vilest idols? Had Moses received no instruction but from the Egyptians, from the penetration, genius, and force of his mind, he might, like Homer, have written an epic poem, and converted the Egyptian pantheon into the machinery of it: but there is no reason to think that his ideas would have excelled those of the Grecian bard.

“In short, the just sentiments respecting the divine nature, good and evil, providence, the state and condition of man, his civil, social, and relative duties, his accountability, and final state, scattered through every part of the holy scriptures, clearly prove that the authors were

inspired; or else we must admit, what must be deemed altogether miraculous, that shepherds, herdsmen, and Galilean fishermen, without literature, possessed wisdom, and made discoveries in moral science unattained, and it may be said, unattainable by all the heathen sages of the east and west, north and south. It has already appeared that the sacred writers ascribed all their knowledge to divine influence, they asserted that Jehovah spoke by them, and that his word was on their tongues. It remains for those who deny their divine inspiration to account for their attainments, which has not yet, and on their principles, never will be done.

“Another argument may be derived from the harmony of the sacred writers. From Moses to the close of revelation elapsed a period of above fifteen hundred years; and the sacred authors lived and wrote at successive intervals. In matters of opinion, we find one writer differing from another, and each controverting the reasoning of his antagonist. The sentiments of one age are exploded by the following; and on a variety of interesting subjects the human mind is kept in suspense. The schools of philosophers were only the arenas where the masters and scholars exercised their powers in opposing one another; and after an impartial person has read all that they have said on religion and morals, he will be constrained to admit that they have done little more than ‘darken counsel by words without knowledge.’

“Go to the sacred scriptures, examine them closely and critically. Can you find one writer controverting the statements or opinions of his predecessor?—one historian who disputes any fact which another had stated? Is there in the prophets any discrepancy in doctrines, precepts, or predictions? However they vary in style or manner of illustration, the sentiment and the morality is the same. In their predictions they exceed one another in particularity and clearness: but where is there any contradiction? The same remarks apply to the New Testament. Whence then arises this harmony of scripture? Had the writers been under no peculiar divine influence, they would have reasoned and speculated like others, and their writings would have opposed each other. But if they were inspired, if they all spoke and wrote under the influence of the same Spirit, then is this harmony accounted for, and it is impossible to account for it on any other principle. Hence we may conclude that all scripture is not only genuine and authentic, but divinely inspired, ‘and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’”—*Boothroyd's Introduction to the Holy Bible*, chap. i.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK VIII.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THINGS FROM THE BIRTH OF CHRIST TO THE COMPLETION OF THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, IN ALL ABOUT 97 YEARS.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

WE have now perused the history of the divine dispensations from the beginning of the world to the coming of Christ. We are, therefore, about to survey those great events by which human redemption was procured, and the mighty effects which resulted from these events.

The incarnation of the Son of God is one of those events, and one which may well awaken our surprise and gratitude. He who was God, assumed the likeness of sinful flesh, and the form of a servant. He did so, that he might be capable of acting as the Surety and Saviour of sinners, in obeying and suffering in their room; and that he might thus satisfy divine justice, and reconcile them to God. He came into the world at a time, which to infinite wisdom appeared the most fit and proper. ¹ 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, and that they might receive the adoption of sons.'

The time chosen for this great event was, on every account, the most fitting. During the interval which intervened since the fall, the effects of the curse had been developed; the hardening nature of sin, and the misery which it produces, had been shown; and the necessity of the gracious interposition of God for the redemption of mankind had been fully demonstrated.

What were the means by which this redemption was procured? These were the obedience which was rendered by the Son of God, and his atoning sufferings and death. His satisfaction for sin was not only by his last sufferings, though it was principally by them; but all his sufferings, and all the humiliation that he was subject to, from the first moment of his incarnation to his resurrection, were propitiatory or satisfactory. In like manner, his meriting eternal life for his people, consisted not only in the obedience of his whole life, but in his laying down his life in compliance with the will of his father. One and the same act of Christ, as Edwards remarks, consi-

dered with respect to the obedience there was in it, was part of his righteousness, and procured heaven; but considered with respect to the self-denial, and difficulty, and humiliation with which he performed it, had the nature of satisfaction for sin, and procured our pardon. Thus, his going about doing good, preaching the gospel, and teaching his disciples, was a part of his righteousness, and purchase of heaven, as it was done in obedience to the Father; and the same was a part of his satisfaction, as he did it with great labour, trouble, and weariness, exposing himself to reproach and contempt. His laying down his life had the nature of satisfaction to God's offended justice, considered as his bearing our punishment in our stead; but considered as an act of obedience to God, who had given him his command that he should lay down his life for sinners, it was a part of his righteousness and purchase of heaven.

He obeyed all the commands of the moral law;—all the precepts of the ceremonial law;—all the obligations of the mediatorial law. And the history recorded by the evangelists consists in an account of this infinitely perfect and meritorious obedience of the Son of God:—an obedience which he rendered in room of his people, during the whole of his life, public and private; and in the rendering of which, he exercised all the virtues of sinless humanity.

In making atonement for sin, he was subject to great humiliation and suffering. Born in a low condition, he became the object of persecution from his infancy. The Son of God, the Creator of heaven and earth, veiled his glory, and made himself of no reputation. 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head.' He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He came to his own, and his own received him not. He endured the contradiction of sinners, and the reproach and derision of the wicked. It was, however, in the close of his course of deep humiliation, that he suffered more peculiarly the wrath of God due to us for sin. It was then that his soul was sorrowful, even unto death;—that he was smitten, stricken of God, and afflicted;—that he was wounded for our

¹ Gal. iv. 4.

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transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace having been laid upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed. It was thus he finished the great work which had been given him to do—the work of redeeming sinful men from the condemnation and the misery of sin, and of making provision for bringing them to God and to happiness.

But it was necessary for carrying on the great and gracious designs of his death, that he should rise from the dead. This formed a part of his promised reward. 'Because he humbled himself, God highly exalted him, and gave him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' Till Christ rose from the dead, the Old Testament Dispensation remained; but with that event it ceased, and that new and glorious economy began, which is to continue till the end of time, and under which all the nations of the earth are to be blessed.

The reader will observe, that, at the commencement of this dispensation, the Saviour commissioned his apostles to go into all the world, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. After his ascension into heaven, he copiously poured out the Holy Spirit, and plentifully endued his servants with his saving influences and miraculous gifts. Hence the extraordinary success of the gospel in all parts of the world, and the establishment of the Christian church. Hence, also, the clear and full revelation of those glorious doctrines of the gospel, which, under the Old Testament, had been obscurely made known:—'even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.'

"A person was selected and qualified for the apostolic office, who was eminently instrumental in the furtherance of the great designs of redeeming mercy. As Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, so it was mainly by his ministry that the Gentiles were called, and the gospel spread through the world; and our nation, and the other nations of Europe, have the gospel among them chiefly through his means. To the labours, trials, and sufferings of this apostle, our attention is directed in the greater part of the Acts of the Apostles. This extraordinary man, as presented to our view in that inspired record, and in his own epistles, belongs not particularly to the period in which he lived, but is equally the property of the Christian church in every successive age. Time does not diminish our interest in him. He is as fresh to every country as to his own; and the truth he preaches will be as intimately connected with that age which shall precede the dissolution of the world, as with that in which he wrote. By the Christians of all countries Paul will be considered as a cosmopolite, and by those of all ages as a contemporary."

The books of the New Testament were committed to writing by the direction and infallible inspiration of the Spirit of God. With the exception of Mark and Luke, the penmen were the apostles. The historical books are the writings of the four evangelists, giving us the history of Christ and his purchase of redemption, and

his resurrection and ascension: and the Acts of the Apostles, giving an account of the great things by which the Christian church was first established and propagated. The doctrinal books are the epistles, fourteen of which were written by Paul; two by Peter; three by John; one by Jude. There is one prophetic book which takes place after the end of the history of the whole Bible, and gives an account of the great events which were to come to pass, by which the work of redemption was to be carried on to the end of the world.

All these books are supposed to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, excepting those which were written by the apostle John, who lived the longest of all the apostles. To this beloved disciple it was that Christ revealed those wonderful things which were to come to pass in the church to the end of time; and he was the person who put the finishing hand to the canon of scripture, and sealed the whole of it. A curse is denounced against him that adds anything to it, or diminishes anything from it. The means of grace, and ordinances of religion, were settled by divine authority before the death of the apostle John, and are to remain unaltered to the day of judgment.

SECT. I.

CHAP. I.—*From the Birth of Christ, to the beginning of the first Passover.*

THE HISTORY.

As soon as the time foretold by the prophets,^a for the incarnation of the Son of God, began to draw near,^b

^a The two principal prophets who determine the period when our Lord was to appear in the world, are Daniel and Haggai. Daniel foretells, that, at 'the end of the seventy' prophetic 'weeks,' that is, at the expiration of four hundred and ninety years after the building of the walls of Jerusalem, the 'Messiah should come,' chap. ix. 25; and Haggai prophesies that, before the destruction of the second temple, (even when the 'sceptre was departed from Judah,' Gen. xlix. 10,) the 'desire of all nations should come,' and by his frequent personal appearance in the temple, make the 'glory of that latter house' much 'greater than that of the former,' chap. ii. 7, &c.

^b The word *εγγύλιον* signifies, in general, *good news*, and is of the same import with our Saxon word *gospel*; only in the sacred use of them both there seems to be a metonymy, whereby the words that denote *good news* are set to signify the *history* of that good news, namely, of the birth and life, the miracles and doctrine, the death and resurrection of our Saviour Christ; all of which put together do make up the joyful tidings which we call the *gospel*; and from the etymology of the words the persons who have recorded the life and actions of our Saviour are called *evangelists*, or *writers of the gospel*. The works of this kind, which are received as canonical, are but four, namely, that of St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, and St John; but the spurious pieces which are handed down to us, even though several of them be lost, do exceed the number of forty. The truth is, the ancient heretics began generally with attacking the gospels, in order either to maintain their errors, or excuse them. To this purpose some rejected all the genuine gospels, and substituted others that were spurious in their room. This produced the gospels of Apelles, Basilides, Cerinthus, the Ebionites, and Gnostics. Others corrupted the true gospels, by suppressing whatever gave them any trouble, and inserting whatever might favour their erroneous doctrines. Thus the Nazarenes corrupted the original gospels

¹ Mrs H. More's Essay on St Paul, vol. i. p. 251.

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the evangelist St Luke gives us this account of the birth of his great forerunner John the Baptist. ^a

While his father ^b Zacharias, who was a priest of the eighth course, namely, the course of Abia, was executing his office at Jerusalem, which was in the latter part of

of St Matthew, as the Marcionites did that of St Luke; while the Alogians rejected St John, as the Ebionites did St Matthew, and the Valentinians only acknowledged St John, as the Cerinthians did St Mark. — *Hammond's Annotations; M. Fabricius's Codex apocryphus N. Test.; and Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Gospel*.

^a There are two places in the prophets referred to, both by our Saviour and his evangelists, wherein the Baptist is described under this character. The former is in the prophet Isaiah, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an high way for our God,' chap. xi. 3; and the latter, which is more plain and express, is in Malachi, 'Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me,' &c., chap. iii. 1. Both the passages allude to harbingers, and such other officers as, upon the journeys of princes, are employed to take care that the ways should be levelled and put in order, and all such obstructions removed as might hinder their passage, or render it less commodious; and the manner in which the Baptist thus prepared the way of the Lord was by his preaching and by his baptism. By his preaching he endeavoured to bring the Jews to a due sense of their sins; to abate their confidence in being of Abraham's seed, and punctual observers of the ceremonial law; and to forewarn all of the dreadful effects of God's anger, who did not bring forth fruits worthy of repentance: and by his baptism, when administered to such persons as were under the obligation of the law, he plainly showed, that he was therein admitting them to some privileges which they had not before, namely, the remission of their sins, upon their faith and obedience to him who was the messenger of the covenant. Since therefore the Baptist was born six months before our Saviour, and entered upon his ministry six months before our Saviour began his; and since no part of his doctrine terminated in himself, and his baptism referred every one to Christ for acceptance and salvation; he is very properly said to be his harbinger, 'a messenger sent to prepare his way before him,' or to set all things in readiness for his approach, by putting an end to the old, and making an entrance into the new dispensation, in which sense he is represented by the fathers as a kind of middle partition between the law and the gospel; of the law, as a thing now come to a period; and of the gospel, as commencing under him who was shortly to make his appearance. — *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. i.

^b Some of the fathers were of opinion that this Zacharias was, at this time, high priest, upon a false supposition that the offering of incense was reserved to the high priest only: but, besides the testimony of Josephus, who tells us expressly that Simon, the son of Boethus, was high priest this year; it appears from St Luke himself, that Zacharias was no more than an ordinary priest of the family or course of Abia, which, of the four and twenty courses appointed by David for the service of the temple, when it should be built, was the eighth, 1 Chron. xxiv. 10. For though it was the high priest's prerogative, on the great day of expiation, to enter into 'the holy of holies,' and there burn incense, which no ordinary priest might do, Lev. xvi. 12; yet, in the common service of the day, each priest whose lot it was, went every morning and evening into the *sanctum*, or body of the temple, and there burnt the daily incense upon the altar, which was placed before the veil of the most holy place, Exod. xxx. 6, &c. For these, and several other reasons which annotators have produced, it seems plain that Zacharias could not possibly be high priest at this time; and, whatever credit may be given to the tradition, — That, by the order of Herod the Great, he was put to death between the porch and the altar, namely, in the inclosure that surrounded the altar of burnt-offerings; and that, when every one was ignorant of this murder, a certain priest, thinking that he staid too long, entered into the temple, and found him dead, and his blood congealed upon the ground, and, at the same time, hearing a voice that it should never be wiped out until his revenger came: — whatever credit, I say, may be given to this tradition, it was doubtless upon this foundation that many of the ancients thought, that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was that Zachariah, son of Barachiah, mention-

the reign of Herod the Great, ^c it came to his lot ^d to go into the temple with his censer in his hand, in order to burn incense, while the people without were ^e offering up their supplications in the court that was called 'the court of Israel.' At the altar of incense ^f he was greatly surprised with the sight of an angel standing on the right side of it: but the angel soon dissipated his fears with the joyful news, that God intended to bless him with a son, whose name should be *John*, who would prove a person of uncommon merit, and be appointed to the office of harbinger to the Messiah, ^g who, in a short time, was to make his appearance.

ed by our Saviour in the gospel, whose blood was shed between the temple and the altar. — *Poole's and Whitby's Annotations; and Calmet's Dictionary*.

^c St Luke, in particular, takes notice, that the time when our Lord's forerunner was to be conceived, was in the reign of Herod, son of Antipater, (for it was Herod Antipas that put him to death,) commonly called the Great, who, under the Romans, fought his way to the government of the Jews, and came to his throne by the slaughter of their sanhedrim, by which means he extinguished all the dominion which, till that time, they held in the tribe of Judah, not in a single person indeed, for that was extinguished in the Asmonæan family, but in a select number out of that royal tribe, and so verified the prophecy of Jacob, (Gen. xlix. 10,) 'that the sceptre,' or government, 'was departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet,' which was a certain sign that Shiloh, that is, the Messiah, was shortly to come. — *Poole's Annotations*.

^d The several courses of the priests began on the sabbath day, and continued to serve till the sabbath following; but because they were now increased to a great number, (Josephus tells us there were no less than a thousand in each course,) there were several parts of the priestly office, whereof burning of incense was one, which the course that then ministered seems to have divided among themselves for the week that they were to attend by lot. — *Poole's and Whitby's Annotations*. See also Jennings's *Jewish Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 269.

^e A Jewish congregation, for the most part, consisted of all the priests of the course which was then in waiting, of the Levites, and of certain stationary men, as they called them, who represented the body of the people, besides some accidental worshippers; and when the priests went into the sanctuary, or within the first veil, to offer incense, notice was given by the sound of a bell, that it was then the time of prayer; whereupon every one present offered up his supplications to God silently: and though this silent prayer was not commanded, yet there seems a manifest allusion to it in those words of St John, where, 'at the offering of incense with the prayers of the saints,' it is said 'there was silence in heaven for half an hour,' (Rev. viii. 1, &c.) Nor is that passage in Ecclesiasticus, (chap. i. 19, 20,) any bad representation of this part of the Jewish worship, 'And the people besought the Lord, the Most High, by prayer before him that is merciful, till the solemnity of the Lord was ended; and then he went down,' namely, Simon the high priest, 'and lifted up his hands over the whole congregation of the children of Israel, to give the blessing of the Lord with his lips.' — *Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations*.

^f The Jews had a peculiar notion, that such like apparitions were always fatal to those that had them, and a sure token of their instantaneous death (Gen. xvi. 7; xxii. 11, 15; Exod. xx. 19, &c.); but if this were not, it is natural for men to be affrightened at sudden and unusual things, especially at any divine appearances, whether of God himself taking a visible shape, or authorizing an angel so to do. For though God does not make the appearances to affrighten us, yet such is the imbecility of our nature, that we cannot but be startled at them; and reason good there is that God, by this means, should both declare his own glory and majesty, and humble his poor creatures, in order to make them more susceptible of his divine revelations. — *Poole's Annotations, and Calmet's Dictionary*.

^g This word is derived from the Hebrew *mashach*, to anoint, and is the very same with *Χριστός*, the anointed, in Greek. It is a name sometimes given to the kings and high priests of the Hebrews, (1 Sam. xii. 5, &c., Ps. cv. 15.); but principally, and by way of eminence it belongs to that sovereign Deliverer who was

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The sense of his own great age, as well as his wife's long sterility, made Zacharias "express a kind of diffidence in this promise, and for his farther satisfaction, desire some miracle in confirmation of it; whereupon the angel let him know, "That he was no less than Gabriel, a special attendant on God's throne, and despatched on purpose to inform him of this great happiness; but that, since he was so incredulous as to require a sign, he should have such an one as would be both a punishment of his unbelief, and a confirmation of his faith; for, until the birth of the child, he should be both deaf and dumb;"^b which accordingly came to pass: for, when he came

out to the people, who waited to¹ receive his benediction, he made signs, that he was not able to speak to them, and they thence inferred that he had seen some extraordinary vision within. After the time of his ministration, however, was over, he returned home, and it was not long before his wife Elizabeth perceived herself with child, though her modesty made her conceal it for the space of five months.

Six months after Elizabeth's conception the same angel Gabriel was sent to^c Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to a virgin named Mary, a near relation to Elizabeth, and of the house of David, who had lately been^d es-

expected by the Jews, and whom they vainly expect even to this day, since he is already come at the appointed time, in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Jews were used to anoint kings, high priests, and sometimes prophets. Saul, David, Solomon, and Joash, kings of Judah, received the royal unction. Aaron and his sons received the sacerdotal; and Elisha received the prophetic, at least God ordered Elijah to give it to him. But now, though Jesus Christ united in his own person all the offices of prophet, priest, and king, yet we no where find that he received any outward or sensible unction; and therefore the unction which the prophets and apostles speak of, with regard to him, is the spiritual and internal unction of grace in the Holy Ghost, of which the outward unction was no more than a figure and symbol.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

^a The words of Zacharias to the angel are, 'Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years' (Luke i. 18.) much of the same import with those of Abraham upon a like occasion, 'Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit the land of Canaan?' (Gen. xv. 8.) How then came it to pass that Abraham was gratified with a sign in the same request for which Zacharias was punished with dumbness? Now, though there may be a very great similitude in the words which are spoken by several persons, yet there may, at the same time, be a very considerable difference in the heart and habit of mind from whence they proceed, which, we must allow, God can see much better than we can perceive by words. In relation to Abraham, then, the Holy Spirit bears him testimony, that 'he staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able to perform' (Rom. iv. 19, 20, &c.); and therefore if he asked a sign, it was not to beget, but to nourish and confirm this faith in him. But in Zacharias, the asking of a sign savoured of perfect infidelity, in that he believed not an angel appearing to him in the name of the Lord, and in a place where evil angels durst not come: an angel telling him his prayer was heard, which evil angels could not know; and acquainting him with things which tended to the glory of God, the completion of his promises, and the welfare of mankind, which evil angels would not do. His punishment therefore was the just result of his unbelief; but, (what shows the mercy of God in inflicting it,) it was a punishment of such a nature, as carried with it an answer to his desire, being no more than a privation of speech, until the words of the angel were fulfilled.—*Poole's and Whitby's Annotations*.

^b The words of the text are, 'Behold thou shalt be dumb and not able to speak,' (Luke i. 20.) "The affirmation of a thing, joined with the denial of its contrary, is an idiom peculiar to the Jewish language, and is used to express the strongest affirmation possible. The style of the evangelist John is remarkable for the frequency of this idiom, and many instances of it are to be found in the Old Testament.—*Macknight*. There is no authority whatever in the text for the author's assertion, that Zacharias was deprived of his hearing, as well as of the power of speech. In verse 62 it is indeed said that his friends made signs to him, how he would have his son called, and some have inferred from this that he was both deaf and dumb, because, if he had only been dumb, there was no necessity for making signs to him, or for not asking the question directly in words. "But it must be observed, that we often use signs and gestures to those who hear us very well. So John xiii. 24. And this is especially done towards those who have lost the faculty of speech. Nor are we told that the friends of Zacharias did not also use words, and it is very probable that they did so."—*Bloomfield*.—*En*.

¹ Num. vi. 24.

^c Nazareth was a little town of Zebulun in Lower Galilee, west of Tabor, and east of Ptolemais, celebrated for having been the residence of Christ for the first thirty-three years of his life. It is situated upon the side of a barren rocky elevation, facing the east, and commanding a long valley of a round concave form, and encompassed with mountains.—*Calmet*. "It seems," says our writer, "as if fifteen mountains met to form an enclosure for this delightful spot; they rise round it like the edge of a shell to guard it from intrusion. It is a rich and beautiful field in the midst of barren hills." The place is shown where the house of the Virgin Mary stood! but the house itself, say the Catholics, was transported by angels to Loretto!! Dr E. D. Clarke, who describes Nazareth, mentions the village of Sephourn, in which is shown the house of St Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, five miles from the town; the fountain near Nazareth, called "the Virgin Mary's fountain;" the great church or convent, at that time the refuge of wretches afflicted with the plague, hoping for recovery from the sanctity of the place; Joseph's workshop converted into a chapel; the synagogue wherein Jesus is said to have preached, now a church; the precipice whence the inhabitants would have thrown our Lord, concerning which the words of the evangelist are remarkably explicit, and it is probably the precise spot alluded to in the text of St Luke's gospel. A stone that is said to have served as a table to Christ and his disciples is an object of worship to the superstitious of Galilee. Buckingham estimates the inhabitants of Nazareth at about 2000, and the houses at 250, which are built of stone, flat-roofed, and of one story, but sufficiently spacious and commodious for the accommodation of a large family. The streets are steep, from the inclination of the ground on which they stand, narrow from custom, and dirty from the looseness of the soil.—*En*.

^d Espousing or betrothing was nothing else but a solemn promise of marriage, made by two persons, each to other, at such a distance of time as they agreed upon. The manner of performing this espousal was either by a writing, or by a piece of silver given to the bride, or by cohabitation. The writing that was prepared on these occasions ran in this form—"On such a day, of such a month, in such a year, A, the son of A, has said to B, the daughter of B, 'Be thou my spouse according to the law of Moses and the Israelites, and I will give thee for the portion of thy virginity, the sum of two hundred zuzims, as it is ordained by the law.' And the said B has consented to become his spouse upon these conditions, which the said A has promised to perform upon the day of marriage. To this the said A obliges himself; and for this he engages all his goods, even as far as the cloak which he wears upon his shoulders. Moreover, he promises to perform all that is intended in contracts of marriage, in favour of the Israelitish women. Witnesses, A, B, C." The promise by a piece of silver, and without writing, was made before witnesses, when the young man said to his mistress, "Receive this piece of silver as a pledge that you shall become my spouse."—*Poole's Annotations*; *Calmet's Dictionary*.—The espousals by money, or a written instrument, were performed by the man and woman under a tent or canopy erected for that purpose. Into this chamber the bridegroom was accustomed to go with his bride, that he might talk with her more familiarly; which was considered as a ceremony of confirmation to the wedlock. While he was there no person was allowed to enter; his friends and attendants waited for him at the door, with torches and lamps in their hands; and when he came out he was received by all that were present with great joy and ac-

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poused to one Joseph, a person of the same pedigree indeed, but of no higher profession than that of a carpenter. The angel, approaching the pious maid, began to congratulate her with 'being highly in the favour of God, and blessed above all the rest of her sex; because she should have the happiness of bearing a son, called by the name of *Jesus*^a or *Saviour*, the long expected Messiah; to whom God would give the throne^b of his

clamation. To this ancient custom the psalmist alludes in his magnificent description of the heavens: 'In them he set a tabernacle for the sun; which, as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, rejoices as a strong man to run a race.' A Jewish virgin legally betrothed, was considered as a lawful wife; and by consequence could not be put away without a bill of divorce. And if she proved unfaithful to her betrothed husband, she was punished as an adulteress; and her seducer incurred the same punishment as if he had polluted the wife of his neighbour. This is the reason that the angel addressed Joseph, the betrothed husband of Mary, in these terms: 'Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.' The evangelist Luke gives her the same title: 'And Joseph also went up from Galilee unto Bethlehem, to be taxed, with Mary his espoused wife.' Ten or twelve months commonly intervened between the ceremony of espousals and the marriage; during this interval the espoused wife continued with her parents, that she might provide herself with nuptial ornaments suitable to her station. This custom serves to explain a circumstance in Samson's marriage, which is involved in some obscurity: 'He went down,' says the historian, 'and talked with the woman (whom he had seen at Timnath), and she pleased him well.' These words seem to refer to the ceremony of espousals; the following to the subsequent marriage, 'And after a time he returned to take her.' Hence, a considerable time intervened between the espousals and their actual union. From the time of the espousals, the bridegroom was at liberty to visit his espoused wife in the house of her father, yet neither of the parties left their own abode during eight days before the marriage, but persons of the same age visited the bridegroom and made merry with him. These circumstances are distinctly marked in the account which the sacred historian has given us of Samson's marriage: 'So his father went down unto the woman, and made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. And it came to pass when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.' These companions were the children of the bridechamber, of whom our Lord speaks: 'Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?'—*Paxton's Illustrations of the Holy Scriptures*, vol. iii. pp. 137, 138.—Ed.

a We read but of few instances in scripture, where men had names determined for them by particular appointment from heaven, and before the time of their birth; and, as such names appear to be very significant, so the persons distinguished by them were always remarkable for some extraordinary qualities or events which their respective names were designed to denote. Our Lord's name indeed, in sense and substance, is the same with Joshua, that famous leader heretofore, who, after the death of Moses, settled the Israelites in the promised land, and subdued the enemies that opposed their entrance into it. But, as that earthly was a figure of the heavenly Canaan, so was the captain of that an eminent type of our salvation; and if he was worthy to be called a Saviour, much more is this Jesus what his name imports; for he delivers us from the heaviest of all bondage, and from the most formidable of all enemies, as he, and he only it is, who saves his people from their sins.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. i.

b The prophets in their predictions are very full and express, that the Messiah should be a great king, and descend from the line of David; (see Ps. x. 16, Is. ix. 6, 7, Dan. vii. 14, and Ezek. xxvi. 7) and therefore the angel in his message to Mary characterizes him as a successor to that prince's throne, and seems to accommodate himself in some measure to the prejudices of the Jews, and perhaps of the virgin-mother herself, who, being bred up in the synagogue, might expect that the Messiah should be a temporal prince, as well as they; but our Lord's kingdom, as himself plainly declares, is not of this world,

father David, and of whose sovereignty and dominion there should be no end.^c

Conscious of her own virtue, and yet surprised at this uncommon appearance and salutation, the holy virgin^d began to expostulate with the heavenly messenger the possibility of the thing, since she had all along lived in a strict state of virginity. But the angel, to satisfy her in this particular, told her 'that this wonderful work was to be effected by the invisible power and operation of the Holy Ghost;'^e and, to show her that nothing was

nor of the like nature with other empires upon earth. His reign is in the hearts and minds of men, and his dominion is in the church, against which 'the gates of hell shall not prevail,' and in which, 'of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,' (Is. ix. 7) 'until the end cometh, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father,' (1 Cor. xv. 24).—*Calmet's Commentary*.

c So the prophet Isaiah, ch. ix. 6, 7, 'Unto us a child is born,' &c. 'Of the increase of his government and peace' there shall be 'no end.' The kingdom of Christ is twofold: 1. His spiritual kingdom, or the dominion of righteousness in the minds of men: 2. His temporal kingdom, or the outward dispensation of the gospel, together with an exercise of government over the world, by which all events are ordered, so as to promote the empire of righteousness in the hearts of men. This distinction removes the difficulty arising from 1 Cor. xv. 28, where we are told, that after the worlds are judged, Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God the Father: compared with what Gabriel said to Mary on this occasion, and with the other passages of scripture, which affirm that our Lord's kingdom shall be everlasting. His temporal kingdom, or the gospel dispensation, will end with the world being of no farther use. At that period likewise he will deliver up to God the government of the world that was committed to him for the good of his church, after having accomplished the end of his coming, by putting down all rule, and all authority and power opposite to God's. But his spiritual kingdom, or the dominion of righteousness in the minds of reasonable beings, which he came down to establish, will continue with them to all eternity. Or we may suppose, that after the management of the world is delivered up to God, Jesus will still preside as head over the redeemed society in heaven, and perform such acts of government as their condition allows and circumstances require, though still in subordination to God. For the apostle says expressly, that 'then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.' Or the epithet *everlasting*, when applied to Christ's kingdom, may be taken in a popular sense, for a duration to the end of time, in opposition to the short continuance of earthly kingdoms.—*Macknight's Harmony of the Gospels*.

d The words of her expostulation are, 'How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?' Which some look upon as no more than a reply of admiration, and a desire to be further informed in what manner God intended to effect such a wonderful work; though others perceive in them some small indications of diffidence, but what might be more excusable, because there had been no such precedent of the divine power made in the world, as to cause a virgin to conceive, and bring forth a son.—*Poole's Annotations*.

e The words in the text are, 'the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee;' wherein, according to the usual modesty of scripture language, is implied all that action of the Holy Ghost whereby the blessed virgin was enabled to become fruitful, and the place of ordinary generation was in this case supplied. Now, when this action is in scripture represented as entirely the work of God, and yet is attributed to the Holy Ghost in particular, we are not to understand it so peculiarly his, that the two other persons, subsisting in the Godhead should have no concern in it: for here that rule of the school takes place, that the entire union of the divine nature makes all such actions common to all the three as do not refer to the properties and relations by which they stand distinguished from each other. As therefore the Holy Spirit began the first creation by moving, or brooding, as it were, upon the face of the waters, so did he here begin the new creation, by conveying a principle, or power of fruitful-

A. M. 3999. A. D. 1: ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5406. A. D. 5. FROM BEGIN. OF GOSP. TO MAT. ix. 8, MARK ii. 23. LUKE vi. 1.

impossible to the Almighty, gave her to understand that her cousin Elizabeth, notwithstanding her old age, and former sterility, had been now six months with child." Whereupon the holy Virgin humbly acquiesced in whatever God had determined to do with her; and, as soon as the angel was departed, made preparations for her journey to Hebron,^a where her cousin lived.

As soon as she arrived at Zacharias's house, Elizabeth, upon hearing her first salutation, perceived that the child^b sprang in her womb, and, being inspired with the Holy Ghost, she cried out, "Blessed art thou above thy sex! blessed is the fruit of thy body! and how vast is my felicity to be visited by the mother of my Lord!" And having, by the same prophetic spirit, assured Mary of the accomplishment of every thing that the angel had told her, she so transported the blessed virgin, that she broke out into a rapture of thanksgivings^c to God, where-

ness, into a person otherwise incapable of it. And yet, as there, without the Father, and his divine Word or Son, 'not any thing was made that was made,' (John i. 3,) so did he here bring this second, 'this creation of a new thing,' (Jer. xxxi. 22,) to effect, by the same co-operation of the whole undivided Trinity, as he had done the former.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. i.

^a This very probably was the place where Zacharias and Elizabeth lived, and where John the Baptist was born; because it was not only one of the cities appointed for the priests to dwell in, (Josh. xx. 7.) but situated likewise in mountains, which running cross the middle of Judea from south to north, gave the tract which they run along, the name of the 'hill-country.' Hebron was ten leagues distant from Jerusalem, and about forty from Nazareth, which made it a long journey for the blessed virgin, had not her zeal to go and partake in her cousin's joy (more than to satisfy her curiosity, whether what the angel had told her was true) made her surmount all difficulties.—*Well's Geography of the New Testament*; and *Calmet's Commentary*. [Mary and Elizabeth might be cousins, as the text affirms, although the former was a descendant of David, and the latter a daughter of Aaron; because the law (Num. xxxvi. 6.) forbidding women to marry out of their own tribes, related only to heiresses, and consequently did not include the tribe of Levi, which had no particular heritable possessions that could be alienated by such marriages. Accordingly (Lev. xxii. 12.) it is supposed, as a common case, that a priest's daughter might be married to a stranger.—*Macknight's Harmony*.—Ed.]

^b It is said indeed of the Baptist, that he 'should be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb;' and from hence some have thought that this extraordinary motion of the child in Elizabeth was an act of his own, and proceeded from a sensation of joy, which himself felt at the salutation of the blessed virgin: but, besides that being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, means no more, than that the power of the Holy Ghost should be discerned to be upon him very early, it is certain that infants in the womb are not capable of any joy themselves, as having no apprehensions of good to be enjoyed, or evil to be avoided; but, as they are sensibly affected with the joy, or grief, or surprise of the parent, to whom they are united, the uncommon motion of the child, at this conjuncture, must have been occasioned by the joy which transported his mother.—*Hammond's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^c It was customary among the Jews, for pious and devout persons, when they found themselves inspired, upon great and solemn occasions, to celebrate the praises of God in songs made on purpose. Several of this kind we meet with in the Old Testament; but this of the blessed virgin is the first that occurs in the New, and, for the majesty of its style, the nobleness of its sentiments, and that spirit of piety which runs through the whole, is inferior to none.—*Calmet's Commentary*. [The song of the virgin is considered by many to be the first piece of poetry in the New Testament; but the address of the angel to Zacharias, (ver. 13—17.) is delivered in the same way; so is that to the virgin, (ver. 30—33,) and so is also Elizabeth's answer to Mary, (ver. 42—45.) All these portions are easily reducible to the *Kemistich* form, in which the Hebrew poetry

in she recounted his mercies, and the promises which he had made to the people of Israel, and which, by making her the blessed instrument of them, he was now about to fulfil.

About three months Mary continued with her cousin Elizabeth, and then returned home. Elizabeth, not long after, was delivered of a son; but, on the eighth day,^d when the child was to be circumcised and named, his relations and friends were not a little surprised to hear that he was to be called John,^e since none of the family bore that name; but their surprise became much greater when they found that, upon this occasion, his father's speech was immediately restored to him,^f which he employed in the praises of Almighty God, who had wrought such prodigies among them.

The holy virgin, being returned to Nazareth, still concealed the mystery which God had wrought in her from her espoused husband; but her pregnant symptoms soon discovered it; and though her deportment had been extremely chaste and modest, yet he might be well assured that she was with child. This raised no little concern in his breast; but, being a merciful good man,^g and

of the Old Testament is found in many MSS., and in which Dr Kennicott has arranged the psalms and other poetical parts of the sacred writings.—*Dr A. Clarke on Luke i. 46.*—Ed.]

^d The Jews had a positive command in their law, that no child should be circumcised before the eighth day; because the mother for seven days was reputed unclean, and so was the child by touching her, (Lev. xii. 1, 2,) but the law appointed no certain place in which circumcision was to be done, nor any certain person that was to perform it; neither did it enjoin that the child should have his name given him at that time, only the custom prevailed of doing it then; because, when God instituted the rite, he changed the names of Abraham and Sarah.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^e The Jews, from their first beginning, seem to have made it a point of religion, to give such names to their children as were significative either of God's mercy to them, or of their duty to God, and from the passage now before us, (though it was no ancient usage,) it seems to be a custom introduced, at least in the days of Zacharias, to call children by the name of their parents, or the nearest relations, as it is usual now among us, if there was no particular reason to the contrary.—*Poole's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^f These extraordinary circumstances, I mean the appearing of the angel to Zacharias in the temple; Zacharias's dumbness; Elizabeth's pregnancy, when past the age of child-bearing; and the restoration of Zacharias's speech on the day of his son's circumcision, were all wisely ordered by Providence, to accompany the conception and birth of John, that he who was the Messiah's forerunner might not seem an obscure and ordinary man, but one that was the peculiar object of the decrees and counsels of Heaven. He was introduced into the world in this magnificent manner, that, the attention of his countrymen being awakened, and high expectations of him raised, he might execute the duties of his ministry with greater advantage, and effectually prepare the people for receiving the Messiah himself, who was soon to appear in person.—*Macknight's Harmony*.—Ed.]

^g The words in the text, as we translate them, are—'Joseph her husband being a just man;' but, if he was a just man, and was satisfied that his intended wife had, some way or other, violated her chastity, (as he knew nothing to the contrary at that time,) instead of screening her crime, he ought to have brought her to punishment, (Deut. xxii. 20, 21.) Now, it is to be observed that, upon the discovery of his wife's pregnancy, Joseph had the choice of three things. 1st, either he might, notwithstanding this, have taken her to his house as his wife, because the law of divorce laid none under an obligation, but gave a permission only, in case of some discovered uncleanness, to put away the wife: or, 2dly, he might give her a bill of divorcement, either in public or in private, (for that was

A. M. 3999. A. D. 1; ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5406. A. D. 5. FROM BEGIN. OF GOSP. TO MAT. ix. 8. MARK ii. 23. LUKE vi. 1

unwilling either to expose the honour of her family, which he thought she had stained, or to inflict public punishment upon her, according to the sentence of the law, he resolved upon a separation ^a with the utmost privacy: but before he came to put it in execution, an angel from heaven ^b appeared to him in a vision, in-

¹ Deut. xxii. 23.

left to his opinion,) either before two or three witnesses, or before a proper magistrate, and that without specifying any crime against her: or, 3dly, he might, according to the law, have brought her upon her trial, whether in the matter of her pregnancy she had suffered a rape, or was herself consenting, (Deut. xxii. 23, 24.) Had therefore Joseph done the first of these, he must have acted counter to his own honour, and have incurred the common reproach, that he who retaineth an adulteress is a fool. Had he done the last of these, he was not sure of convicting her, because, upon examination, it might appear that she had been forced; and, in that case, the man that did it was to die, (Deut. xxii. 25;) or she might have been with child before her betrothing, and, in that case, she was only obliged to marry the person that had abused her, (ver. 28, 29.) Upon the whole, therefore, Joseph thought it the best and justest way to proceed upon the foot of a divorce. Mary's being visibly with child was reason sufficient to authorize his parting with her; but he did not know for certain that she was guilty of adultery, or that consequently she deserved to die; and therefore he did not think it right, by bringing her upon her trial, to expose her. —*Poole's Annotations*; and *Calmel's Commentary*; and *Spanheim's Dub. Evang.* part i. dub. 31. [Considerable diversity of opinion exists as to the interpretation of the text here quoted. Instead of 'a just man,' as in our version, Dr Campbell renders 'a worthy man,' and others, such as Grotius, Hammond, Rosenmüller, Kuinoel, 'a kind or humane man.' Dr Boothroyd's version is 'a righteous man,' which certainly expresses the usual sense of the original term *δικαιος*, and includes, as he remarks, "all that is essential in a truly good and pious character." Dr Bloomfield observes, that the term *δικαιος* in its usual acceptation denotes 'lover of justice,' and 'a man of uprightness and integrity.' Joseph being such, determined to put away his betrothed wife by law; and yet with that mercy which ever accompanies true justice, he waited not to make her a public example, but to put her away *privately*; that is, with only two witnesses required to attest the delivery of the bill of divorce; which did not necessarily state the reason, for the divorcement.] — *Bloomfield's Greek New Testament* — Ed.

^a The common way of separation among the Jews was, by the man's giving the woman a letter of divorce. This, in their language, is called *Gheth*, and the substance of it is to this effect: — "On such a day, month, and year, and at such a place, I A divorce you voluntarily, put you away, and restore you to your liberty, even you B, who was heretofore my wife; and I permit you to marry whom you please." When the day of divorce comes, the rabbi that attends, having strictly examined both parties, and finding that they are resolved to part, bids the woman open her hands, and, when she has received the deed, to close them both together, lest it should chance to fall to the ground. The man, when he gives her the parchment, (for on parchment the bill of divorce was to be written, in the presence of two rabbins, and with many other trifling circumstances,) tells her, "Here is thy divorce, I put thee away from me, and leave thee at liberty to marry whom thou pleasest;" and, when the woman has taken it, and the rabbi read it over once more, she is entirely free. There is in this ceremony, however, to be remarked, that they always endeavour to have ten or twelve persons at it, besides the two witnesses who sign the deed. When therefore Joseph intended to dismiss Mary privately, it could not be, by having no witnesses at all, but as few as the nature of the thing would bear, and by giving her the letter of divorce into her own hand, which she might suppress, if she thought fit, or by inserting no accusation against her in it, in case it came to be read before the company. — *Calmel's Dictionary* under the word *Divorce*; *Whitby* and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

^b This vision was in a dream, and while he was asleep; and dreams, we know, were one way whereby God revealed his mind to the people formerly, (Job vii. 14,) whereby he made himself known to his prophets, (Num. xii. 6,) and not to prophets only,

forming him, "that his wife's conception was the immediate work of the Holy Ghost, that she should bear a son, the same person ² whom the prophet had foretold under the name *Emanuel*, or *God with us*:" whereupon Joseph was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but taking the holy virgin home to him, he lived with her, to all outward appearance, in conjugal love, though he certainly had no carnal knowledge of her, ^c till she was delivered of her first-born son, who, by a lineal descent, was true heir to the kingdom of Israel, as sprung from the house of David.

Some time before this, Augustus Cæsar had issued out a general edict, that all persons in the Roman empire, with their estates and conditions, should be registered at certain appointed places, according to their respective provinces, cities, and families. By virtue of this edict, Joseph and his wife Mary being both of the tribe of Judah, and family of David, were obliged to go

² Is. ix. 6.

but to pagan princes sometimes, as appears by the instances, both of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, (Gen. xli. 1; Dan. ii. 1.) But how to distinguish divine from natural dreams, it is difficult to say, unless it be by the clear and distinct series of their representation, and the forcible impression which they leave upon men's spirits; whereas natural dreams, for the most part, are rambling and inconsistent, and 'whose regardeth them,' says the wise son of Sirach, 'is like him who catcheth at a shadow, or followeth after the wind,' (Ecclus. xxxiv. 2.) — *Poole's Annotations*. Why God reveals himself by dreams, and in the nighttime; see *Spanheim's Dub. Evang.* part ii. dub. 59.

^c The word *first-born* in scripture admits of various significations. Sometimes, and most commonly indeed, it denotes the eldest of two or more children, as Eliab is called the first-born of Jesse, 1 Sam. xvii. 13; at others, the first that is born, without regard to any else, as when God says to Moses, 'sanctify me all the first-born,' Exod. xiii. 2. In some places it imports figuratively what is most dearly beloved by us; in which sense God frequently calls the Israelites his first-born; and in others, what is most remarkable for greatness or excellency, as God promises David, who was but a younger brother of the family, to 'make him the first-born of the kings of the earth,' Ps. lxxxix. 27. In any of these three last senses our Saviour might very properly be called his mother's first-born son, forasmuch as he was really her first child; her most and only beloved; and the most illustrious of his race: but then Joseph's not knowing his wife until she was delivered of her first-born son, seems to imply, that he knew her afterwards. Those who maintain the perpetual virginity of the blessed mother, tell us, that *ως εἰς*, which we render *until* in several places of scripture, has relation only to the time which precedes, and not to that which follows any event; so that 'he knew her not until,' may be taken in the same sense as Samuel 'came not to see Saul till the day of his death,' 1 Sam. xv. 35, that is, he never came to see him: but, besides that most of the passages which are produced to this purpose, are far from coming up to the case in hand, since the angel commanded 'Joseph to take Mary as his wife,' without any intimation that he should not perform the duty of a husband to her, it is not easy to conceive why he should live twelve years with her, and all that while deny that duty which both the law and the canons of the Jews command the husband to pay his wife, Exod. xxi. 10. If we imagine, that our Saviour would have been dishonoured in any other's lying in the same bed after him, we seem to forget how much he humbled and debased himself in lying in that bed first, and then in a stable and a manger. But, leaving this question to those who affect to be curious beyond what is written, we may safely conclude with St Basil, "That though it was necessary for the completion of the prophecy, that the mother of our Lord should continue a virgin, until she had brought forth her first-born; yet what she was afterwards it is idle to discuss, because it is of no manner of concern to the mystery." — *Howell's History in the notes; Poole's and Whitby's Annotations*; and *Spanheim's Dub. Evang.* part i. dub. 28..

A. M. 2999. A. C. 5; ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5106. A. C. 5. FROM BEGIN. OF GOSP. TO MAT. ix. 8. MARK ii. 23. LUKE vi. 1.

as far as Bethlehem, ^a which was the mother city of their tribe, there to have their names and estates enrolled. ¹ The great conflux of people upon this occasion had already filled all the inns, ^b and houses of reception, so

¹ Respecting this enrolment, see next chapter.

^a Bethlehem, now called Beit-Lahm, was a celebrated city about six miles south-west from Jerusalem: it was formerly called Ephrath or Ephrata. (Gen. xxxv. 19.; xlviii. 7.; Mic. v. 2.) It was a city in the time of Boaz (Ruth iii. 11.; iv. 1.), and was fortified by Rehoboam. (2 Chron. xi. 6.) In Mat. ii. 1, 5, it is called Bethlehem of Judæa, to distinguish it from another town of the same name situated in Lower Galilee, and mentioned in Josh. xix. 15. In Luke ii. 4, it is called the 'city of David,' because David was born and educated there. (Compare John vii. 42.; and 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 18.) This city, though not considerable for its extent or riches, is of great dignity as the appointed birth-place of the Messiah (Mat. ii. 6.; Luke ii. 6—15.): it is pleasantly situated on the brow of an eminence, in a very fertile soil, which only wants cultivation to render it what the name Bethlehem imports—a house of bread. Between the clefts of the rock, when the soil is cultivated, vines, figs, and olives, appear to grow in great luxuriance. Bethlehem is said to be nearly as large as Nazareth, and to contain from a thousand to fifteen hundred inhabitants, who are almost wholly Christians. On the north-eastern side of it is a deep valley, where tradition says that the angels appeared to the shepherds of Judæa, with the glad tidings of our Saviour's nativity (Luke ii. 8—14.); and in this valley Dr Clarke halted at the identical fountain for whose delicious water David longed. (2 Sam. xxiii. 15—18.) Of the various pretended holy places which are here shown to Christians, the cave of the nativity is the only spot verified by tradition from the earliest ages of Christianity. Between one and two miles from this place, on the road to Jerusalem, stood the site of Rachel's tomb, (Gen. xxxv. 19, 20.; 1 Sam. x. 2.) which is now covered by a small square Mohammedan building, surmounted by a dome, and resembling in its exterior the tombs of saints and sheiks in Arabia and Egypt." In the vicinity of Bethlehem are the pools of Solomon, which seem to have been connected with a scheme for supplying Jerusalem with water.—*Horne's Introduction*.—ED.

^b There appear to be three descriptions of these buildings. Some are simply places of rest, by the side of a fountain, if possible, which being at proper distances on the road, are thus named, though they are mere naked walls; others have an attendant, who subsists either by some charitable donation, or the benevolence of passengers; and others are more considerable establishments, where families reside and take care of them, and furnish many necessary provisions. Conformably to these ideas, the scripture uses at least two words to express a caravanserai, though our translators have rendered both by the same term *inn*. Thus, Luke ii. 7. 'There was no room for them in the inn.' (καταλύματα,) "the place of untying," of beasts, &c., for rest. (Luke x. 34.) The good Samaritan 'brought him to the (πανδοχείου) inn,' (whose keeper is called in the next verse Πανδοχεύς,) a receptacle open to all comers. It may reasonably be supposed, that a caravanserai in a town should be better furnished than one in the country, in a retired place, and where few travellers pass; and Mr Taylor therefore inclines against Harmer, (*Obs.* vol. iii. p. 248,) to think that the inn, to which the good Samaritan is represented as conducting the wounded traveller, was intentionally described of an inferior kind. If so, we may reasonably take the other word, "the untying place," as denoting a larger edifice; and this accounts for the evangelist Luke's mention of there being no room (τοπος) in it: as if he had said, "though it was large enough for such occasions as usually occurred in the town of Bethlehem, yet now every apartment in this receptacle was occupied; so that no privacy fit for a woman in the situation of Mary could be had;" especially, as Colonel Campbell has informed us, "they are continually attended by numbers of the very lowest of the people"—very unfit associates for Mary at any time, and certainly in her present condition! "Caravanserais were originally intended for, and are now pretty generally applied to, the accommodation of strangers and travellers; though, like every other good institution, sometimes perverted to the purposes of private emolument, or public job. They are built at proper distances through the roads of the Turkish dominions, and afford to the indigent and weary traveller, an asylum from

that no better place could be found for their lodging than a stable, where they had not been long before the blessed virgin was delivered of a son, whom (herself performing the office of a midwife) ^c she bound in swaddling clothes, and laid down to rest in a manger. But, notwithstanding this obscurity of our Saviour's birth, God was pleased, that very night, by the message of an angel, with a radiant light surrounding him, to make a pompous revelation of it to certain poor shepherds who were attending their flocks on the plains of Bethlehém; and, after one angel had delivered the joyful tidings, an innumerable company of the same celestial choir broke out all together into this triumphant doxology, 'Glory be to God on high, peace on earth, and good will towards men.'

the inclemency of the weather. They have commonly one story above the ground-floor, the lower of which is arched, and serves for warehouses to store goods, for lodgings, and for stables, while the upper is used merely for lodgings; besides which they are always accommodated with a fountain, and have cooks' shops and other conveniences to supply the wants of lodgers."—*Campbell's Travels*, part ii. p. 8. This description applies, of course, to the better sort of caravanserais. The nearest construction amongst us to a caravanserai, appears in some of our old inns, where galleries, with lodging rooms in them, run round a court, or yard; but then, as travellers in the east always carry with them their own bedding, &c., it is evident that our inns are better provided than the best Eastern caravanserais. It is necessary to keep this in mind; because we must not suppose that Joseph and Mary travelled without taking the necessary utensils with them; or that they could have procured, in this inn, any thing beyond provisions and lodging. Perhaps even they could not have procured provisions. But of the poverty of their eastern inns, we shall obtain a pretty distinct idea from the following extract: "There are no inns any where; but the cities, and commonly the villages, have a large building called a Kan, or Kervanseraï, which serves as an asylum for all travellers. These houses of reception are always built 'without the precincts of towns, and consist of four wings round a square court, which serves by way of enclosure for the beasts of burden. The lodgings are cells, where you find nothing but bare walls, dust, and sometimes scorpions. The keeper of this khan gives the traveller the key and a mat; and he provides himself with the rest. He must, therefore, carry with him his bed, his kitchen utensils, and even his provisions; for frequently not even bread is to be found in the villages. On this account the orientals contrive their equipage in the most simple and portable form. The baggage of a man who wishes to be completely provided, consists in a carpet, a mattress, a blanket, two saucepans with lids, contained within each other, two dishes, two plates, and a coffee-pot, all of copper well tinned; a small wooden box, for salt and pepper; a round leathern table, which he suspends from the saddle of his horse; small leathern bottles or bags for oil, melted butter, water, and brandy, if the traveller be a Christian; a pipe, a tinder-box, a cup of cocoa-nut, some rice, dried raisins, dates, Cyprus cheese, and above all, coffee-berries, with a roaster, and wooden mortar to pound them. I am thus particular, to prove that the Orientals are more advanced than we, in the art of dispensing with many things, an art which is not without its use. Our European merchants are not contented with such simple accommodations."—(*Folney's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 419, Eng. edit.) The reader will bear this account in mind; for we shall find that he is not a poor man in the east, who possesses this quantity of utensils. One would hope that at Bethlehém, "the house of bread," it was not difficult to procure that necessary of life."—*Calmet's Dictionary*.—ED.

^c Which she could not have done, to be sure, had she been delivered in the common manner of other women: but it was always the opinion of the church, from the days of Gregory Nazianzen until now, though before his days there were some opinions to the contrary, that, as there was no sin in the conception, so neither had the virgin any pains in the production; for to her alone the punishment of Eve, that 'in sorrow she should bring forth children,' did not extend; because, where nothing of sin was the ingredient, there nothing of misery could cohabit.—*Taylor's Life of Christ*.

A. M. 4001. A. C. 3; ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5407. A. C. 4. FROM BEGIN. OF GOSP. TO MAT. ix. s. MARK xi. 23. LUKE vi. 1.

No sooner was this heavenly concert ended, but the overjoyed shepherds, remembering the signs which the angel, before he disappeared, had given them, immediately hastened to Bethlehem, where they found the virgin-mother, and Joseph the supposed father, attending the Godlike babe, whom, in humble reverence they adored, and then returned, praising and extolling the mercies of God, and, to the great amazement of all that heard them, publishing in all places what they knew concerning this child.

As soon as the child was eight days old, his parents had him circumcised ^a according to the law; when, pursuant to the order which the angel had given before his conception, they called his name Jesus; and, as soon as he was forty days old, two other ceremonies were performed, namely, the purification ^b of his mother, and the presentation of her first-born. Though therefore her son's immaculate conception needed not that ceremony; yet the holy virgin went up with Joseph to Jeru-

^a Our blessed Lord, as he was the supreme lawgiver of the world, was not in strictness bound to the observation of his own law, nor did he stand in any need of circumcision, considered as a remedy against original sin; because, in his incarnation, he contracted no pollution; but, as he was 'made of a woman, made under the law,' and 'came (as himself testifies, Mat. iii. 15.) 'to fulfil all righteousness,' it became him to receive the character which distinguished the Jews from all other nations. Among the Jews, indeed, it was thought a reproach to keep company with persons that were not circumcised: 'thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them,' is the accusation which they brought against St Peter, Acts xi. 3; and therefore, as our Lord was sent chiefly to the lost sheep of Israel, he could not have been qualified for their acceptance and free conversation had he not submitted to this ordinance. Of him was that most glorious of all the promises made to Abraham intended, 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,' Gal. iii. 16. And therefore fit it was that he should have the seal or testimony of circumcision, in order to show that he was truly and rightly descended of that ancestor: and, as he was come to be the Mediator of a new and better covenant, it was but decent that the former should recede with honour, and, that it might do so, himself should approve of a sacrament which was both of divine institution, and a means of admission into that former covenant.—*Poole's Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. i.

^b The law concerning the purification of women, we have in the twelfth chapter of Leviticus, wherein it is ordained that a woman, after bearing of children, should continue, for a certain number of days, in a state which the law termed unclean. For the first seven days, all conversation or contact polluted them that approached her, and for three and thirty days more, which in all amounted to forty, she was still, though in an inferior degree, reputed unclean: but, at the expiration of this term, if her child was a son, (for the time was double for a daughter,) she was commanded to bring a burnt-offering, and a sin-offering, which wiped out the stain which the law laid upon her, and restored her to all the purity and privileges she had before. Now, though the miraculous conception of the blessed virgin set her quite above any obligation to the law of impurity, yet, since her being a mother was sufficiently notorious, though the manner of her being so was a secret, it was fit that she should submit, as the known mother of a son, to the ceremonies expected from her. Her sin-offering was not indeed due in any sense; but she lay under the same legal incapacity in the eye of the world as other women did, and was to be restored to the temple by it. Her burnt-offering was not due as that of other parents is, to commemorate a deliverance from pangs and danger; but never sure were thanks so justly due for any son as this; never from any mother as from her, who had the honour to bring forth her own, and the world's Saviour, the blessing and expectation of all the earth. As therefore he was circumcised in his own person, though the mystical and moral part of circumcision had nothing to do with him; so his mother submitted to all the purifications

in Jerusalem, there to offer the sacrifice ^c prescribed by the law for her own purification, and there to present her son to the Lord, by delivering him into the priest's hands, and redeeming him again for five shekels. ^d But, while she was in the temple performing this, old Simeon ^e who had long waited for the redemption of Israel, and had been promised, by the mouth of heaven, that he should not leave this world, before he had seen the illustrious person who was to affect it, came in, and taking the blessed infant in his arms, in an heavenly ecstasy praised God for the completion of his promises, in letting him live to see the Saviour of the world, before he quitted it. ^f And no sooner had he ended his divine rapture, but an ancient widow of the tribe of Aser, whose name was Anna, and whose piety and devotion, severity of life, and constant frequentation of the public worship, were very remarkable, coming into the temple, and being herself likewise excited by a prophetic spirit, gave God thanks for his infinite mercies; testifying that this child was the true Messiah, and declaring the same to all such devout persons in Jerusalem as waited for his coming.

After these legal performances and solemn testimonies in favour of the child, Joseph and Mary returned to

of any other Israelitish woman, though she partook not in any degree of the infirmities and pollutions common to other births.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

^c What the blessed virgin offered, we read, was a pair of turtles, which being the oblation appointed only for the meaner sort of people, Lev. xii. 6, 8, discovers the poverty of Joseph and Mary, that they could not reach to a lamb of the first year, the offering which they who had ability were obliged to make.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^d The rite of redemption was instituted to perpetuate the memory of the divine mercy, which spared the first-born of Israel, when those of Egypt, men and beasts, were destroyed. Accordingly, by this title God claimed the whole first-born of Israel, in all succeeding generations, as his property; ordering the firstlings of clean beasts to be offered to him in sacrifice, and the first-born of men to be presented before him in the temple, as an acknowledgment of his right to them; but at the same time permitting their parents to redeem them, by paying to the priests five shekels in value about twelve shillings and sixpence of our money; a sum that was exacted for the redemption of every first-born son whatever, without regard to the condition of the family. Num. xviii. 15, 16.—*Macknight's Harmony*.—Ed.

^e Some are of opinion, that this Simeon was the son and successor of Hillel, a very famous doctor in the Jewish church before our Saviour's time, and that he was either the father or master of Gamaliel, at whose feet St Paul was educated. But, besides that, we can hardly suppose, how a person of this note could make so public a declaration in favour of our Lord, and yet no more notice be taken of it, if we look into the several revelations which God at this time was pleased to give of his Son, we shall find that none of them were directed to any of the Pharisees, or principal doctors of the law, but that to Joseph a carpenter, to Zacharias an ordinary priest, and to a company of poor shepherds, such discoveries were made: and therefore it is much more reasonable to presume that this Simeon, to whom God had revealed the time of Christ's coming, was some honest plain man, more remarkable for his piety and devotion than any other quality or accomplishment.—*Poole's Annotations*; *Cabnet's Commentary and Dictionary*, under the word *Simeon*.

^f The words of the text are, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,' Lu. ii. 29, 30. The sense of the passage is 'now Lord thou dost, by this sight, dismiss me to the grave as thou promisedst, in peace and tranquillity, because mine eyes have seen thy salvation; that is, the author of it. The aged saint, by a beautiful figure, takes this sight of his Redeemer as a dismissal from the burden of life, a sort of *go in peace*.—*Bloomfield's Greek Test.*—Ed.

A. M. 4001. A. C. 3; ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5467. A. C. 4. FROM BEGIN. OF GOSP. TO MAT. ix. 8. MARK ii. 23. LUKE vi. 9.

Bethlehem, ^a where, in a very short time, they were visited by certain strangers, coming from afar, of a rank and character somewhat extraordinary. For God, to notify the birth of his Son to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, caused an uncommon star to arise in the east, which some wise men, or astronomers, in those parts observing, and understanding withal that this was to signify the birth of the Messiah promised to the Jews, travelled to the metropolis of Judea, there inquiring after this new-born prince, that they might testify their homage and adoration of him. Their public character and appearance, and their openly calling him the 'king of the Jews,' put Herod ^b into a great consternation, and the whole city indeed into no small commotion, as both fearing and hoping something extraordinary.

Herod however, being resolved to destroy this supposed rival in his kingdom, immediately assembled the whole body of the sanhedrim, and demanded of them the very place where the Messiah should be born. Bethlehem, in the land assigned to the tribe of Judah, they told him, was the very spot which the Holy Spirit, by the prophet Micah, had marked out for this great event; which when he understood, he dismissed the assembly; and sending for the above-mentioned astronomers, with the utmost secrecy he inquired of them the exact time of the star's first appearance, and then dismissed them to Bethlehem, with orders to make diligent search for the young prince, and, when they had discovered where he was, to bring him word to Jerusalem, that he, in like manner, might go and pay him his homage: but this pretence of worshipping was no more than a cloak to his intention of killing the child.

These persons, however, having received the king's instructions, ^c departed towards Bethlehem, and in their

^a The words in St Luke are, 'When they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth,' chap. ii. 39, which must be interpreted of some time at least after they had performed these things; for, upon supposition that the magians came to Bethlehem, after that Joseph and Mary had been at Jerusalem with the child, upon the child's return from thence, his parents must have taken Bethlehem in their way, and there made some small stay, in which time we suppose that the wise men came, before they departed to the place of their settled abode: because the other two suppositions, namely, that the wise men came to Bethlehem before the presentation of the child at Jerusalem, or that they came not till he was in the second year of his age, when his parents, upon some business or other, happened to be at Bethlehem, are attended with more difficulties than can be easily surmounted.—See *Spanheim's Dub. Evang.* part ii. dub. 25, 26.

^b Herod, who was naturally of a jealous and suspicious temper, knew very well that himself was hated by the Jews, and that the Jews were then in full expectation of the Messiah, a prince that was to subdue all other nations, to come and reign over them, and had therefore great reason to fear that this rumour of a king's being born among them, confirmed by such extraordinary means, as persons coming from a far country, and conducted to Jerusalem by the guidance of a wonderful star, might be a means to excite sedition among the people, and occasion perhaps a revolution in the government.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^c Some upon this occasion are apt to wonder why none of the Jews should have the curiosity to attend the wise men in their journey to Bethlehem; and the reason that is commonly assigned for their omission in this respect, is the dread they might have of offending the tyrant under whom they lived: but, as it is highly probable that when the wise men came to Jerusalem, they made their immediate application to court as the most likely place where to gain intelligence of him that was born

way were very agreeably surprised with a new sight of the same miraculous star they had seen in their own country, which went before them, and like the fiery pillar in the wilderness, directed them to the very house where Jesus and his mother abode. As soon as they entered in they fell prostrate on the ground, according to the eastern custom, and having in this manner adored the child ^d presented him with the richest products of their country, gold, and precious odours, more particularly frankincense and myrrh.

Having thus performed their homage and congratulations, these eastern strangers were thinking of nothing more than to return to Jerusalem, and acquaint Herod with the happy discovery they had made; but God, who knew the heart of that tyrant, prevented them by a vision that very night, which directed them into their own country another way; and, not long after, sent an angel to Joseph to acquaint him with Herod's intended cruelty against the child, and to order him to retire into Egypt with him and his mother, and there to continue till farther notice; which Joseph instantly obeyed, and, for fear of discovery, taking the advantage of the night, with all possible speed set forward for Egypt.

In the mean time Herod waited impatiently for the return of the eastern sages; but at length, finding himself deluded, and his most secret and subtle designs

king of the Jews; and as it is much to be questioned whether Herod, when he convened the doctors of the law, made any mention of the wise men's coming, but nakedly propounded the question to them, 'Where Christ was to be born?' So there is great reason to presume that he sent them away so privately, that if any of the Jews had been courageous enough to have gone along with them, they possibly might not have had an opportunity. The greater wonder of the two therefore is, that Herod, should send none in whom he could confide to be present at the discovery of this rival prince, and to bring him word thereof, if not dispatch him; but in this the protection and providence of God was visible.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^d Some of the ancients are of opinion, that in the presents which these eastern sages made, they had a mystical meaning, and designed to signify their acknowledgment both of the divinity, royalty, and humanity of our blessed Saviour: for the incense, say they, was proper to be given to him as a God, the gold as a king, and the myrrh as a mortal man, whose body was to be embalmed therewith. But all this is no more than the sport of a luxuriant fancy. It is certain that the eastern people never came into the presence of their princes without some presents, and that their presents were usually of the most choice things that their country did afford. All that they meant, therefore, was to do homage to a new born prince of a neighbouring nation, in the best manner they could; and if what naturalists tell us be true, namely, that myrrh was only to be found in Arabia, and frankincense in Sabæa, which is part of Arabia, and that this country was not destitute of gold (2 Chron. ix. 14), and at the same time was famous for men conversant in astronomy, this makes a very probable argument, that the wise men came from thence. But of this we shall see more hereafter.—*Poole's Annotations.*—[The gold and frankincense which the wise men presented was most seasonable and providential assistance to furnish Joseph and Mary for so long and expensive a journey as that into Egypt, a country where they were entirely strangers, and yet were able to abide there for some considerable time. I take it for granted that the magi had some divine or human instruction, which Joseph and Mary might indeed give them, that Jesus was to save his people from their sins, and was Emmanuel, God with us. Surely God would not have guided them in this extraordinary manner merely to pay a transient compliment to Jesus. Their prostration probably expressed religious adoration as well as civil respect; and it is not unlikely that their report might in due time make way for the reception of the gospel in the country from whence they came.—*Doddridge's Expositor.*—Ed.]

A. M. 4001, A. C. 3; ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5407. A. C. 4. FROM BEGIN. OF GOSP. TO MAT. ix. 8. MARK ii. 23. LUKE vi. 1.

blasted, he fell into a most violent rage and fury; and, having resolved to effect by cruelty what he had been disappointed of doing by policy, he sent out his soldiers, and ^a made a bloody massacre of all the children in the city of Bethlehem, and the neighbouring towns, that were ^b two years of age and under, including herein the whole time, and more, that the wise men had told him, and not doubting, but that, in this general slaughter, he should dispatch the young prince whom he so much dreaded: but God had provided him with a safe retreat. The shrieks, however, of tender mothers for their innocent babes, and the groans of expiring infants, which on this occasion filled the skies, were inexpressible, and were one reason, doubtless, why the divine vengeance, not long after, overtook this tyrant, and ^c smote him with a

^a It is thought strange by some that Josephus, who writes the life of Herod in most of its circumstances, should make no manner of mention of the murder of these innocents: but, when it is considered that Josephus was only born in the first year of Caligula, and the thirty-seventh year of Christ, that he wrote his history of the Jewish wars, which he extracted from public records, in the fifty-sixth year of his age; and that it can scarce be supposed an action so inglorious to the memory of Herod as this massacre was, should be preserved in the Jewish records; it is not so very wonderful that he, who wrote above ninety-three years after the fact was committed, should make no mention of it; nor is it very material that he did not, since we find Macrobius, an heathen author, about the latter end of the fourth age, not forgetting to acquaint us, that, "Herod the king ordered to be slain in Syria, which, in Roman authors, is frequently set for Judea, some children, that were under two years old;" though he is mistaken in the circumstances of the story, when he makes Herod's own son to be one of them.—*Saturn.* b. ii. c. 4.—The massacre of the infants is likewise noticed in a rabbinical work called *Toldoth Jeshu*, in the following passage:—"And the king gave orders for putting to death every infant to be found in Bethlehem, and the king's messengers killed every infant according to the royal order."—*Dr. G. Sharpe's first Defence of Christianity*.—Ed.

^b Some will needs infer from hence, that this dreadful massacre was not committed until our Lord was almost two years old, because they were children of that age, and under, whom Herod ordered to be slain: but, besides that the word *disans*, may signify one who has lived one year only, and so the words *ἀπὸ δυοῦς καὶ πατωτέρω*, may be translated, *from a year old, and under*; Herod might possibly think, that the star did not appear till some considerable time after the young king's birth, and so, to make sure work, might be induced to slay all born at Bethlehem a year before, and more even to the time of the star's appearing. For he who had the heart to slay three of his own sons would hardly be sparing of the blood of other people's children.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^c The disease of which he died, and the misery which he suffered under it, plainly showed, that the hand of God was then, in a signal manner, upon him. For, not long after the murder of the infants at Bethlehem, his distemper, as Josephus informs us, daily increased, after an unheard of manner, and he himself laboured under the most loathsome and tormenting accidents that can be imagined. "He had a lingering and wasting fever, and grievous ulcers in his entrails and bowels; a violent cholick, an insatiable appetite, venomous swelling in his feet, convulsions in his nerves, a perpetual asthma, and stinking breath, rottenness in his joints and privy members, accompanied with prodigious itchings, crawling worms, and intolerable smells, so that he was a perfect hospital of incurable diseases." And thus he died in horrid pain and torment, being smitten by God for his many enormous iniquities. For, setting aside some appearances of generosity and greatness, there was never a more complete tyrant than he. He suppressed and changed the high priest's office as he thought fit, and even profaned the temple itself. He slew the legal king of the Jews, extirpated all the race of the Maccabees, destroyed the whole sanhedrim, and substituted others in their room: nor was his rage confined to the Jews, but descended to his own family and nearest relations, even to the executing

strange and terrible distemper, which put an end to his wicked and brutal life.

¹ Before his death, he had, by will, which, in some measure, Augustus confirmed, settled his dominions upon his sons, and his sister. Archelaus he had made his successor in that part of his kingdom which included Judea, Idumæa, and Samaria; to Philip he had given Auranitis, Trachonitis, Panea, and Batanea: to Herod Antipas, Galilee and Peræa; and to his sister Salome, some particular cities, with a considerable sum of money. After his death, therefore, which was notified to Joseph by a vision, God ordered him to return, with the child and his mother, into the land of Israel, which Joseph readily obeyed; but, when he arrived in Judea, hearing that Archelaus succeeded Herod in that part of the country, and being apprehensive that the cruelty and ambition of the father might be entailed upon the son, he feared to settle there; and, therefore, being directed by God in another vision, he retired into the dominions ^d

¹ Joseph. *Antiq.* b. xvii. c. 8.

his beloved wife Mariamne, and his own sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, upon slight and trivial occasions. So wicked a prince, as he was conscious he had been, could not, he knew, occasion any true lamentation at his death, but rather a great deal of gladness and rejoicing all the kingdom over; and therefore, to prevent this, he framed a project, which was one of the most horrid that ever entered into the mind of man. All the nobility, and most considerable men in every city, town, and village in Judea, upon pain of death, he summoned to come together to Jericho, where he was then lying sick, and when they were come, commanded his soldiers to shut them all up in a spacious place, called the Hippodrome: when having called his sister Salome and her husband Alexas, with some choice friends, he told them with tears, "that he was sensible of the Jews' hatred to his government and person, and that his death would be a high satisfaction to them: that his friends therefore ought to procure him some solace in the midst of his bitter anguish, which if they performed according to his order, the mournings and lamentations at his death would be as great and magnificent as ever any prince had; and this order was, that, on the same hour when he expired, the soldiers should surround the Hippodrome, and put all the enclosed persons to the sword, and then publish his death, which, as he said, would cause his exit to be doubly triumphant, first, for the posthumous execution of his commands; and secondly, for the quality and number of his mourners." But Salome and Alexas, not being wicked enough to do what they had been made solemnly to promise, chose rather to break their obligation, than make themselves the executioners of so bloody a design; and, therefore, as soon as Herod was dead, they opened the Hippodrome, and permitted all that were shut up in it to return to their respective homes.—*Josephus on the Jewish War*, b. i. c. 18. *Prideaux's Connection*, part ii; and *Eachard's Ecclesiastical History*, b. i.

^d This Antipas, his father Herod had once appointed to be his successor in his kingdom, but afterwards expunged him out of his will, and only made him tetrarch; but, not long after his brother's accession to the throne, he went to Rome, with a purpose to dispute the kingdom with him, on pretence that his father's former will, by which he was constituted king, ought to take place before the latter, which was made when his understanding was not so perfect. Both the brothers procured able orators to set forth their pretensions before the emperor, but the emperor nevertheless refused to decide any thing concerning their affair, nor did he at length give Archelaus the title of a king, but only of an ethnarch, with one moiety of the territories which his father enjoyed: but these, in a few years after, he, by his ill conduct, forfeited. Of all the sons of Herod, indeed, this Archelaus is said to have been of the most fierce and bloody temper. At his first accession to the government, under the pretence of a mutiny, he had killed near three thousand of his subjects; and therefore Joseph, hearing of this, might well dread to go and settle in any part of his dominions; but, as Antipas was a man of a more mild disposition, and the birth of Jesus not made so

A. M. 4001, A. C. 3; ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5410. A. C. 1. FROM BEGIN. OF GOSP. TO MAT. ix. 8. MARK ii. 23. LUKE vi. 1.

of his brother Herod Antipas, in Galilee, to his former habitation in Nazareth, where the strange occurrences of our Lord's birth were not so well known. ^a After this, we have no certain account either of him, or his parents, only that they annually repaired with him to Jerusalem at the passover; and that, as his body increased in stature, so, ^b more especially the faculties of his soul were enlarged, being highly replenished with wisdom, and the grace of God.

In the mean time, ¹ Archelaus, following the steps of his father, made himself so odious to the Jews, that the principal men among them, joining with those of Samaria, made a public complaint of him to Augustus, who, upon a full hearing both of his crimes and vindication, deprived him of his government, confiscated all his goods, banished him to Vienna, a city in Gaul, and reduced his dominions to the form of a Roman province, which, for ever after, was ruled by a governor sent from Rome, who was called by the name of procurator, but, in some cases, was subject to the president or governor of Syria.

When Palestine was reduced to this state, and our blessed Saviour now advanced to the twelfth year of his age, ^c he went up with his parents, according as their

custom was, to Jerusalem at the time of the passover. His parents, after a stay of the whole seven days, having performed the usual ceremonies of the feast, were now returning, with great numbers of their neighbours and acquaintance, towards Galilee, and, never doubting but that Jesus had joined himself with some of the company, they travelled on patiently for a whole day's journey: but, when night came on, and, among their relations and particular friends they could hear no tidings of him, it is not easy to imagine the greatness of their fears and ^d apprehensions, which made them return to Jerusalem with the utmost speed, to make all possible inquiry for him.

^e At the end of three days, they found him in one of the rooms of the temple, probably in that of the grand sanhedrim, sitting among the learned doctors and masters of Israel, hearing them discourse, and propounding such questions to them as raised the admiration of all that heard him, and made them astonished at the ripeness of his understanding. Nor were his parents less surprised to find him in that place; but, when his mother told him, with what impatience they had sought him, and, in some measure, blamed him for putting them in such a fright, the excuse which he made for himself was, 'know ye not, that I must be employed in my Father's house?' ^f

¹ Jewish Antiq. b. xvii. c. 12. and Jewish Wars, b. ii. c. 2.

public in Galilee, and at Nazareth, as it was at Bethlehem, and even at Jerusalem, by the coming of the wise men, and what happened at the purification of the blessed virgin, it was thought more advisable to retreat into this village, than to set up his abode in any populous city.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^a N. B. That the vulgar Christian era, according to Dionysius Exiguus, which commences four years after the true time of Christ's birth, may begin to be computed much about this time, namely, from the beginning of the fourth year of Archelaus's, and the thirty-first of Augustus's reign, computing from his victory over Anthony and Cleopatra.

^b The words in the text are, 'Jesus increased in wisdom, and in stature, and in favour with God and man,' (Lu. ii. 52.) But if it be asked, how he, who was the eternal wisdom of the father, could be improved in any quality of his mind? the answer is, that all things in scripture, which are spoken of Christ, are not spoken with respect to his entire person, but only with respect to one or other of the natures that are united in that person. His divine nature was infinite, and, consequently, capable of no improvements, but his human was: and, therefore, though the divine *λογος* was united to the human soul by its conception, yet might the divine nature communicate its powers to the human by distinct and gradual illuminations; and accordingly, we may observe, that all public manifestation of it to the world seems to have been industriously declined, till ripeness of years and judgment had carried him up to the perfections of a man. So little reason have we to suppose, that he, who condescended to be like us in body, should think it below him to be so too in that other no less essential, but much more noble part of us, our soul, without which, it was impossible for him to be man; so little reason to imagine, that the divine essence in him supplied the place and offices of intellectual faculties.—*Whitby's Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. ii.

^c It is commonly observed by those that are learned in the customs and institutions of the Jewish church, that, till a child was twelve years old, he was not obliged to go to Jerusalem at the time of the passover, and that though their youth were usually thirteen before they were brought before the masters of the synagogue to give an account of their proficiency in religion, which answers in a great measure to the Christian rite of confirmation, yet, since the season then appointed was accommodated to the capacities and attainments of children in general, without forbidding those of qualifications extraordinary, and whose genius, in the Jewish phrase, did run before the commandment, to appear sooner, our Saviour might offer himself to his examination a year before the common time; and this is the best reason that can be assigned for his staying behind his parents, when he could not but know, that they were departed from Jerusalem without

him, and for his being found in one of the rooms adjoining to the temple, where the doctors of the law used to meet, not only to resolve the questions that were brought before them, but to examine likewise and confirm such of the youth as they found to be qualified for that ceremony, which, according to the same authors, was actually performed by devout prayers and solemn benedictions.—*Grotius* on Lu. ii. 45; *Beausobre* and *Poole's Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. ii.

^d It may seem a little strange, perhaps, that Mary and Joseph, who had been sufficiently instructed, one would think, in the great article of Christ's divinity, and therefore must certainly know, that, as he was the power and wisdom of God, he could neither fall into any danger, nor come to any harm, should so mightily afflict themselves, when they came to miss him. The reason which Origen (*Hom. i. 9. in Luc.*) seems to assign is, not that his parents supposed that he was lost or come to any mischance, but were apprehensive that he had withdrawn himself to some other place, and was possibly gone up to heaven, there to continue, till his eternal Father should think proper to send him down again: but the most easy and natural solution is, that without ever considering what they had sufficient reason to believe concerning his divinity and omnipotence, they suffered themselves to be carried away by their natural tenderness; and could not, without great concern, see themselves deprived of his company, uncertain of what had befallen him, or for what possible reason he should absent himself from theirs. It must not be denied, however, that though something may be allowed to a parent's fondness, yet it does not appear from their whole conduct, and especially from Mary's complaint, and our Saviour's reply, ver. 48, 49, that they had, as yet, a clear and perfect knowledge of his divine nature in union with the human: and therefore the evangelist has remarked upon them, 'that they understood not the saying which he spake unto them,' ver. 50.—*Calmel's Commentary*; and *Poole's Annotations.*

^e The words in the text are, 'after three days they found him'; but we need not from thence infer, that they were three days seeking him, but rather, that it was three days from the time they set out from Jerusalem; going on their journey the first day; returning to Jerusalem the second; and finding him in the temple on the third: for, since they found him in the temple, which, in all probability, was the first place they sought for him in, we can hardly imagine, that they should be three days in Jerusalem before they found him.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^f The words of the text (Lu. ii. 49.) 'wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business,' contain an ambiguity; that is, according to the original, our Saviour may either refer to the work which his Father had given him to do, or to the temple

A. M. 4901. A. C. 3; ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5410. A. C. 1. FROM BEGIN. OF GOSP. TO MAT. ix. 8. MARK ii. 23. LUKE vi. 1.

words which, though she at that time did not rightly understand, she took care nevertheless for ever after to register in her mind!

Being thus happily found by his parents, he returned with them to Nazareth, and there living in all dutiful subjection to them, wrought, very probably, with his reputed father in the trade of a carpenter; and, after his father's death, which is supposed to have happened about a year before the preaching of John the Baptist,¹ still continued in the same occupation: as indeed we can scarce help inferring, from the rude treatment of the Nazarenes his townsmen; as also from the total silence of the evangelists as to the intermediate actions of his life,^a that, though he 'grew in favour with God and man,' yet considering his excellences, he lived in a very obscure manner, and, till the time of his manifestation to Israel, showed no miraculous marks to distinguish him from the rest of mankind.

In the eighteenth year of our Saviour's life, died Augustus Cæsar at Nola, in Campania, after a reign of near forty years, to the inexpressible grief of all his subjects, and was succeeded by Tiberius, the son of his wife

Livia, by a former husband, but a prince of a quite contrary disposition to his predecessor. In the second year of his succession to the empire, he recalled Rufus from the government of Judea, and sent Valerius Gratus, who was the fourth governor in these parts since the banishment of Archelaus, to succeed him.³ Gratus having continued in Judea about eleven years, was at length recalled, and Pontius Pilate, a person too like his master Tiberius, of a fierce and irreconcilable spirit, and of a^b cruel and covetous disposition, was sent governor in his place. In the first year of his coming, which was the fifteenth year of Tiberius, from the time that he was admitted to reign in copartnership with Augustus,^c John the Baptist began to open his commission for the preparation of our Saviour's way before him,^d by preaching 'the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.'

³ Joseph. Antiq. b. xviii. c. 3. and Dion.

^b Josephus has given several instances of Pilate's great cruelty in the course of his government, namely, that he caused the Roman soldiers to fall upon a great number of Galileans, very likely the followers of Judas Gaulonites, and to slaughter them like so many sheep in the temple, and on the very day appointed for the killing of the passover, and so 'mingled their blood with their sacrifices,' Luke xiii. 1. That when the people clamoured against his taking some of the sacred money out of the temple, he ordered the soldiers, upon a signal given, to fall upon them with large batons, so that many died of the blows which they received, and many were trodden to death in the throng; and that the Samaritans, as well as the Jews, felt the severity of his administration, when he destroyed great numbers of them near Tirathaba; and of those whom he took, that were of any interest or quality among them, struck off their heads.—*Josephus's Jewish War*, b. ii. c. 8; and *Antiq.* b. xviii. c. 5.

^c [How John passed the former part of his life the scripture is silent; but there is surely no reason to suppose, with many fathers and interpreters, that he was in the desert from his infancy. It has been well observed by Basnage, that he retired thither at an age when he was sufficiently furnished with strength of body to provide food, and of mind to bear solitude. His retirement originated in two reasons: 1st. That by using no teachers, and frequenting no schools, his mind might not be corrupted by rabbinical errors, but be enlightened only by the Holy Spirit, so that he might appear to the Jews a teacher sent from God; 2dly, that, remote from all communication with Christ, he might avoid all suspicion of collusion with him, in announcing a new religion, and thereby add greater weight to the opinions he should offer, and the testimony he should bear, respecting Christ. Lightfoot supposes the desert in which John lived to have been some spot in the hill-country near Ziph and Maone (as in 1 Sam. xxiii. 14, 25.), not far from Hebron, where he was born. But it has not been satisfactorily determined where John was born. The period of his retirement is with probability supposed to have been at the age of puberty.]—*Bloomfield's Crit. Digest of Annotations on the New Testament*. When he began his preaching it is also not well agreed. Lightfoot, and some others who believe that our Saviour was born in September, and that John was now beginning to be thirty years of age, are of opinion that he began his ministry about the passover; but Usher, and his followers, do, with more probability, suppose that his preaching began upon the tenth day of the seventh month, which answers to our nineteenth day of October, five days before the feast of tabernacles, upon the great day of expiation, when the high priest entered the holy of holies, and when so solemn a fast was enjoined, that whosoever did not afflict his soul at that time was to be cut off from the people.—Ed.

^d The meaning of this phrase is, that John preached repentance, (Mat. iii. 2.) and baptized those that were penitent, in token of the remission of their sins, even as they, on their parts, received baptism in testimony of the sincerity of their repentance. Now, baptism, we know, was no new or strange thing among the Jews. It was acknowledged, and practised as an emblem of purification from past guilt, and a rite of entering solemnly into covenant with God. The expositors of their law agree, that this ceremony passed upon the whole congregation of

¹ Mark vi. 3. ² Joseph. Antiq. b. xviii. c. 3. and Dion.

where Joseph and Mary found him sitting with the doctors. Campbell, Boothroyd, Bloomfield, Doddridge, and many other eminent critics, both ancient and modern, follow the latter sense, and contend that the passage ought to be translated, 'wist, or knew ye not, that I must be in my Father's house.' Doddridge well observes that "though a general apprehension of our Saviour's being well employed might be a reason against the excessive anxiety of his parents, yet it could not, (as the words taken in connexion seem to imply) have directed them where to find him. It is to be remembered that this was the first visit Christ had ever made to the temple since he was a child in arms; and it is no wonder therefore that the delight he found there inclined him to prolong his visit."—*Dodd. Fam. Expos.*—Ed.

^a It may possibly be made a question, why the evangelists have given us no account of our Saviour's life from the twelfth year of his age, till he began his ministry, which, according to the vulgar era, was about the thirtieth; because if, in this intermediate space, he did any thing worthy of remembrance, it ought in all reason to have been recorded. But when it is considered that the end of the sacred penmen was, not so much to gratify our curiosity, as to consult our profit, we cannot but admire the great wisdom of God, by whose inspiration they wrote, in passing by the less active parts of our Lord's life, which would certainly have swelled their gospels to immensurable volumes, fit for the perusal of none but the studious and such as had plenty of time at their command: whereas now, taking the four gospels together, they make but a small book, and separately, no more than little manuals that may be carried about with us wherever we go; may be soon read over, and easily remembered even by men of mean capacities and no great leisure: and yet they contain all the transactions of our Saviour's life which chiefly concern us to know; I mean such as relate to his mediatorial office, as that he came into the world to teach us; to die, and to rise again for us; to instruct us by his heavenly doctrine, as our prophet; to offer himself as a sacrifice upon the cross as our priest; and to loose the bands of death, and ascend triumphant into heaven, as our king. Therefore those periods, says the learned Spanheim, are notified, 'which are of chief concern to us, which were spent for our benefit, which seem to add to the security of our faith, which exhibit Christ either in the temple, or on the cross, or on the throne; for thus it has been demonstrated, that those things are only to be inquired after, and investigated in the character of the Messiah, which relate to the acts of his offices, both as prophet, priest, and king, for the sake of which alone he came to earth.' 'For there are also many other things,' says the evangelist, 'that Jesus did, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name, John xxi. 25; and xx. 31.—*Spanheim's Dub. Evang.* part ii. dub. 96.

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He had been ^a bred up in the wilderness, and lived an austere life. ^b Locusts and wild honey, such as nature

Israel, just before the law was given at mount Sinai; and their custom, in all succeeding ages, has been to receive their heathen proselytes by baptism, as well as by sacrifice and circumcision. In conformity to this, therefore, John both administered and exhorted his followers to this ordinance of baptism, as an evidence of their penitence for past sins, and profession of better obedience for the future. But then as faith is a qualification for baptism as well as repentance, he propounded our Lord for the object of faith to all who received this ordinance at his hands. 'For John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe in him who should come after him,' that is, on Christ Jesus, (Acts xix. 4.) It is a great mistake therefore in some, to suppose that the baptism of John was, in substance, the same with what Christ did afterwards institute: for John neither did, nor could baptize his disciples in the 'name of the Holy Ghost,' as the apostle did, because the 'Holy Ghost was not yet given,' (John vii. 39): he did not baptize them in the name of Christ; for had he done so, there had been no occasion for the question, 'whether he himself were the Christ,' or not? (Luke iii. 15.) Herein therefore lay the imperfection of John's baptism, that though it prepared men to be Christians, yet it did not make them so; and therefore we find St Paul baptizing again some disciples at Ephesus, (who had before received the baptism of John,) in order to fit them for the reception of the Holy Ghost (Acts xix. 5, 6).—*Whitby's Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

^a A wilderness among the Jews did not signify a place wholly void of inhabitants, but a place that was more mountainous, less fruitful, less peopled, and where the inhabitants were more dispersed, than in other parts of the country. For, as it is incongruous to suppose that the Baptist should preach the doctrine of repentance to stocks and stones, and wild beasts: the wilderness here must be understood in a comparative sense, and consequently the wilderness of Judea, where he preached and baptized must be that tract of land which lay on each side of the river Jordan on the confines of Enon and Salim.—*Whitby's Annotations*; *Wells' Geography of the New Testament*; and *Spanheim's Dub. Evang.* part ii. dub. 97.

^b The Jews were allowed to eat locusts; (Lev. xi. 22.) and when sprinkled with salt, and fried, they are not unlike our fresh water cray fish. The Acridophagi must have preferred them to almost every other species of food, since they derive their name from their eating locusts. We learn from the valuable work of Dr Russel, that the Arabs salt and eat them as a delicacy. Locusts were accordingly the common food of John, the precursor of Christ, while he remained in the wilderness. In feeding on that insect, the Baptist submitted to no uncommon privation, and practised no savage rigour, like many of the hermits who inhabited the deserts; but merely followed the abstemious mode of living, to which the people were accustomed, in the less frequented parts of the country. The food upon which he subsisted in the wilderness appears to be particularly mentioned, merely to show that he fared as the poorest of men, and that his manner of living corresponded with the meanness of his dress. Much unnecessary pains have been taken by some squeamish writers, to prove that the locusts which John used for food, were the fruit of a certain tree, and not the carcass of the insects distinguished by that name; but a little inquiry will fully clear up this matter, and show that, however disgusting the idea of that kind of meat may appear to us, the orientals entertain a different opinion. Many nations in the east, as the Indians of the Bashee islands, the Tonquinese, and the inhabitants of Madagascar, make no scruple to eat these insects, of which they have innumerable swarms, and prefer them to the finest fish. The ancients affirm that in Africa, Syria, Persia, and almost throughout Asia, the people commonly eat these creatures. Clenard, in a letter from Fez, in 1541, assures us, that he saw wagon loads of locusts brought into that city for food. Kirstenius, in his notes on Matthew, says, he was informed by his Arabic master, that he had often seen them on the river Jordan; that they were of the same form with ours, but larger; that the inhabitants pluck off their wings and feet, and hang the rest at their necks till they grow warm, and ferment; and then they eat them, and think them very good food. A monk, who had travelled into Egypt, asserts, that he had eaten of these locusts, and, that in the country they subsisted on them four months in the year. In Bushire,

produced in these desert places, was the chief diet he lived upon, and a loose coat made of camel's hair ^c and fastened with a leathern girdle, the only garb he wore; and therefore no person was so proper to inculcate the doctrines of repentance and reformation, as he who, by his free and resolute preaching, joined with this great severity of life, soon procured a vast auditory, and

they are used by the lowest peasantry as food. The Arabs feed on them to this day, and prepare them for use in the following manner: They grind them to flour in their hand mills, or powder them in stone mortars. This flour they mix with water to the consistency of dough, and make thin cakes of it, which they bake like other bread on a heated girdle; and this, observes Hasselquist, serves instead of bread to support life for want of something better. At other times they boil them in water, and afterwards stew them with butter, and make a sort of fricassee, which has no bad taste. There is no reason for men to puzzle themselves about what this *μίλι ἄγριον*, or 'wild honey,' means, since every one knows that Judea was famed for plenty of honey, that, in several places of scripture, it is said to flow with honey; and from the instances of Samson, Judg. xiv. 8, and Jonathan, 1 Sam. xiv. 25, it must be concluded, that wild honey, such as either distilled from the boughs like dew, or was found in the cliffs of rocks, or hollow trunks of trees, was no uncommon thing in that country. But though these locusts and wild honey may very properly be taken in their natural and most obvious sense, yet it must not therefore be thought, that John never eat any thing else, but that, for the generality, he made use of such slender diet, and contented himself with what the desert place, which he chose for his habitation, could afford him.—*Spanheim's Dub. Evang.* part ii. dub. 99.

^c The raiment of John was not made of the fine hair of the camel, whereof an elegant kind of cloth is made, which is thence called camel, in imitation of which, though made of wool, is the English camel, but of the long and shaggy hair of camels, which is in the east manufactured into a coarse stuff anciently worn by monks and anchorites. It is only when understood in this way, that the words suit the description here given of John's manner of life.—*Campbell's Translation of the Gospels*, note. It is, indeed, sufficiently apparent, that the inhabitants of the wilderness, where John spent his days before he entered upon his ministry, and other thinly settled districts, manufactured a stuff, in colour and texture somewhat resembling our coarse hair-cloths, of the hair which fell from their camels, for their own immediate use, of which the raiment of that venerable prophet consisted. In the same manner, the Tartars of modern times, work up their camel's hair into a kind of felt, which serves as a covering to their tents, although their way of life is the very reverse of easy and pompous. Like the austere herald of the Saviour, the modern dervishes wear garments of the same texture, which they too gird about their loins with great leathern girdles. Elijah, the Tishbite, seems to have worn a habit of camel's hair, equally mean and coarse; for he is represented in our translation as a 'hairy man,' which perhaps ought to be referred to his dress, and not to his person. A garment of haircloth was, in those times, the costume of a prophet; and was assumed occasionally by impostors, to enable them with greater ease and success to deceive their credulous neighbours. 'And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough,' or hairy, 'garment to deceive.' The prophet Isaiah was clothed in the same stuff; for God required him to 'loose the sackcloth from off' his 'loins.' Sackcloth of hair was deemed a badge of humiliation and self-denial; and was probably, for this reason, selected as the most proper material for the official habiliments of an ancient prophet. Joel accordingly commands the priests and Levites; 'come, lie all night,' or constantly, 'in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God.' In allusion to the same mode of thinking, it is said, 'the sun became black as sackcloth of hair.' And Isaiah declares in the name of the Lord, 'I clothe the heavens with blackness, I make sackcloth their covering.' These statements throw light on that expression: 'my two witnesses shall prophesy, clothed in sackcloth:'—arrayed in the official dress of ancient prophets, and like them humble and self-denied, but very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, and fearless in the discharge of their duty.—*Parton's Illustrations*.—Ed.

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numerous proselytes of all ranks and qualities, from Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region about Jordan, confessing their sins before God, and entering into this new institution by baptism.

Among the great multitudes that came to his preaching and baptism, there were Pharisees, ^a and Sadducees not a few, whose confidence and immorality he sharply re-proved; while, at the same time, he exhorted the common people to works of extensive charity; the publicans, ^b to avoid oppression and injustice; the soldiers, to abstain from plunder and violence; and every one, in short, to beware of those crimes to which their employments and manner of life did most expose them.

These solemn admonitions, pronounced with so much weight and authority, procured him a mighty veneration among the people, insomuch, that several began to look upon him as the promised and now expected Messiah; but, to remove all thoughts of this kind, he freely declared, "that he only baptized them with water to repentance, and a new life, but that there was one coming, and ready to appear among them, who would baptize them with the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and who so far exceeded him in power and excellency, that he was not worthy to do for him the meanest or most servile office." ^c

^a We have already, in a separate dissertation, given a particular account of the rise and principles of the several sects among the Jews, and need only take notice here, that the Pharisees are thought to take their name from the word *parash*, which signifies *separation*, because they were separated from all others in their extraordinary pretences to sanctity, and some particular observances; and that the Sadducees, who were directly opposite to the Pharisees both in temper and principles, derived their name, either from *Sadoc*, who lived near 300 years before our Saviour's birth, and is supposed to be the founder of the sect, or, as some think, from *sedeck*, which signifies *justice*, because they pretended to be the only exact distributors of justice, and were rigid indeed in the execution of it.—*Eachard's Ecclesiastical History*, in the introduction.

^b The publicans were persons of no particular sect, nor of any religious function among the Jews, but certain public officers whom the Romans employed to collect their tributes, tolls, and imposts. This office was once of great account among the Romans, and conferred upon none less than the equestrian order; but, when it came to fall into the hands of the Jews, who farmed it of the Romans, it soon became base and infamous, and more especially odious to the Jews upon these two accounts: 1st, because these tributes were looked upon as a standing instance of their slavery, which they, who made such boasts of their being a free-born people, and invested in that privilege by God himself, could least of all endure. And, 2dly, because these publicans, having farmed the customs of the Romans at high rates, did generally make use of all methods of extortion and oppression, to enable them both to pay their rents, and to raise some advantage to themselves. Upon these accounts, the publicans, as conspiring with the Romans both to impoverish and enslave their countrymen, became so universally abhorred by the Jewish nation, that they held it unlawful to do them any act of common courtesy, nay, even to eat or to drink with them, for which we find them so frequently blaming our Saviour.—*Eachard's Ecclesiastical History*, in the introduction, page 27.

^c 'Whose shoes,' says John, 'I am not worthy to bear.' The custom of loosing the sandals from off the feet of an eastern worshipper was ancient and indispensable. It is also commonly observed in visits to great men. The sandals or slippers are pulled off at the door, and either left there, or given to a servant to bear. The person to bear them means an inferior domestic, or attendant upon a man of high rank, to take care of, and return them to him again.—See *Asiatic Researches*, vol. i. p. 289; *Plutarch, Sympos.* b. vii. qu. 8. 712. This was the work of servants among the Jews; and it was reckoned so servile, that it was thought too mean for a scholar or a disciple to do. The Jews say, 'all services which a servant does for his master, a

These were the doctrines which John preached, and this the testimony which he gave of Jesus, even before he had the happiness to know him.

After John had continued in his ministry for several months, our Lord thought fit to remove from his private retirement at Nazareth, and, taking leave of his mother and his trade, passed over into Judea, to Bethabara, ^d on the banks of the river Jordan, where John was then baptizing.

He who was innocence and purity itself, had certainly no need of the baptism of repentance, but being minded to honour and sanctify the institution, ^e he offered himself to John, and when John, inspired with a prophetic spirit, ^f knew him, and thereupon endeavoured to decline

disciple does for his master, except unloosing his shoes.' John thought it was too great an honour for him to do that for Christ, which was thought too mean for a disciple to do for a wise man. See *Kypkins*, in loc.; *Braunius de Vest. Sac. Heb.* p. 59; *Pignorius de Servis*, p. 206; *Dentlingi. Obs.* s. iii. 26. 8; *Bynæus de Calceis. Heb.* c. 6; *Elsner. Comment. Crit. Phil.* in Mat. t. i. p. 84.—Ed.

^d Bethabara does, in the Hebrew language, signify as much as a *place of passage*, and therefore, whereas we read, Jos. ii. 7, 23, that there was a fording place over Jordan not far from Jericho; and again, Jos. iii. 16, that the people passed over right against Jericho, it is probably conjectured, that hereabouts stood Bethabara, and was the place of reception and entertainment for passengers out of Judea into Petræ, or the country beyond Jordan; nay, it is imagined by some that, in the very same place of the river where the ark stood, while the Israelites passed over, our blessed Saviour, the ark of the covenant of grace, was baptized by John the Baptist.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*. Almost all the ancient manuscripts and versions instead of Bethabara here have Bethany, and this is doubtless the true reading. There was a Bethany about two miles east of Jerusalem, but there was also another in the tribe of Reuben, on the east side of the river Jordan, and in this place probably John was baptizing. It is about twelve miles above Jericho.—*Barnes on the Gospels*.

^e There are some other reasons which might induce our Lord to come to John's baptism, besides what himself alleges, namely, 'the performance of all righteousness,' or whatever had a tendency to the people's edification; as, that he might authorize this baptism of John by his public approbation; that by this rite he might be initiated to his prophetic office, and consecrated to the service of God; that hereby he might abolish the ceremony of the Jewish baptism, and more effectually recommend that of his own institution, to which this of the Baptist was an introduction; and more especially, that, in the presence of the Baptist, and all the company that had resorted to him, he might obtain the testimony of the Holy Ghost, and of his heavenly Father, to confirm John in the belief of his being the promised Messiah, and to induce the people, as soon as he began his ministry, to follow and attend to him.—*Cabnet's Commentary*.

^f The words in the text are these, 'Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him, but John forbade him,' (Mat. iii. 13, 14); but how could John forbid him, when he says of himself 'I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost,' (John i. 33). Now to this it may be answered, that since one part of John's ministry was 'to bear witness of that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,' it was highly necessary that our Saviour should be unknown to him in person before he came to his baptism, that the world might have no suspicion of any collusion, or that the Baptist testified of him by compact. Though, therefore, he had never seen the face of our Saviour, because they were bred up in different countries, yet, by a particular revelation, he knew that he was already come into the world, and was shortly to baptize with the Holy Ghost; and therefore, when our Saviour came, and presented himself to be baptized, he had immediately another revelation, that this was the great person of whom he had been told before; even as Samuei having been told

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the office, he gave him such reasons for the expediency of the thing, as made him no longer hesitate, but immediately baptized him. Jesus ^a was no sooner got out of the water, but, as he was making his addresses to heaven, the sky on a sudden was divided by a great radiancy, ^b and the Holy Ghost, in the manner of a ^c dove, de-

scended upon his sacred head, with an audible voice from heaven, wherein God declared him 'his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased.'

Our blessed Lord, being thus by baptism, and the union of the Holy Ghost, prepared for his prophetic office, was, by the impulse of the divine Spirit, carried further into the wilderness of Judea, where, after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, ^d as Moses did on Mount Sinai, and was now very hungry, the devil ^e assumed a bodily shape, and set upon him with a threefold temptation. 1st, From his hunger he took occasion to tempt him to despair, and distrust of his Father's care of him, who had abandoned him in that condition, and therefore, persuading him that he was not the Son of God, he put him upon the experiment of his being such, by making the stones become bread; but our Saviour soon answered him by a ^f passage out of the scripture, intimating, that "God, when he pleased, could employ means extraordinary for the support and nourishment of men." 2dly, His next essay was, to try how far pride and presumption would affect him; and, therefore, carrying him through the air, and setting him upon the ^g highest part

by God, that, 'on the morrow a man should come to him to be the captain over his people Israel,' (1 Sam. ix. 16.) Upon Saul's appearing, had another inspiration resembling the Baptist's here, 'Behold the man of whom I spake to thee, (ver. 17.)—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^a The observation of the Greek church, in relation to this matter, is this, that he who ascended out of the water must first descend down into it; and consequently that baptism is to be performed, not by sprinkling but by washing the body. And indeed he must be strangely ignorant of the Jewish rites of baptism, who seems to doubt of this, since to the due performance of it, they required the immersion of the whole body to such a degree of nicety, that if any dirt was upon it that hindered the water from coming to that part, they thought the ceremony not rightly done. The Christians, no doubt, took this rite from the Jews, and followed them in their manner of performing it. Accordingly, several authors have shown, that we read no where in scripture of any one's being baptized, but by immersion, and, from the acts of councils and ancient rituals, have proved that this manner of immersion continued, as much as possible, to be used for thirteen hundred years after Christ. But it is much to be questioned, whether the prevalence of custom, and the overfondness of parents, will, in these cold climates especially, ever suffer it to be restored.—*Whitby's Annotations.*—There seems indeed to be no necessity for doing so. When Paul and Silas, in the middle of the night, baptized the jailor and his household in the common prison, (Acts xv. 33.) there is no reason to suppose that they had water sufficient for the purpose of baptizing the converts by immersion. It is as little likely that three thousand people could, in the midst of Jerusalem, be in one day baptized by immersion (Acts ii. 41.); for though this might have been done in the brook Kedron, is it supposable that the chief priests and rulers of the Jews would have permitted so great a multitude to go quietly out of the city for such a purpose?—*Gleig.*—Ed.

^b The words of St Matthew are:—'Lo, the heavens were opened;' in St Mark 'cloven or rent.' The common people of the Jews indeed were of opinion, that the heavens were firm and solid, and that the fire which fell from thence upon the face of the earth burst through this firmament, and made an opening in this vast concave that surrounds us; and therefore it is, that the evangelists express themselves in this manner, in accommodation to the prejudices and capacities of the vulgar. But by the phrase we need understand no more, than that a sudden beam of radiant light came darting from the skies, like a flash of lightning from the clouds, and made it seem as though the heavens had been opened or rent to let it out; because to the naked eye, the air at that time seems to divide, to make a clearer and fuller way for the light.—*Calmet's Commentary, and Poole's Annotations.*—There is no doubt that the light spoken of was preternatural, and that it accompanied the divine Spirit—such a light as accompanied Jesus on being visibly revealed to St Paul at his conversion.—*Bloomfield.*—Ed.

^c The ancients were generally of opinion, that the Holy Ghost, in his descent upon our Saviour, assumed the real shape of a dove, which, at that time more especially, was a very proper representation of his dove-like nature (Isa. xlii. 2.) and of all such as were to receive the same Spirit, and are required to be as harmless as doves; but most of the moderns (though they allow that the blessed Spirit did, at this time, assume a visible shape, to render his descent manifest) do maintain that the *δωρί περιστερά* relates not to the body or shape of a dove, but to the manner of a dove's descending and lighting on any thing; and thence they infer, that it was this body of light which issued from the skies that came down upon Christ, and, while he was praying, hung hovering over his head, just after the manner and motion of a dove, before it settles upon any thing. Whether of these opinions should prevail, it is idle to dispute, since neither of them is destitute of some countenance from scripture, neither of them injurious to the dignity of the Holy Ghost.—*Calmet's Commentary; and Hammond's Annotations.*—The dove, among the Jews, was

¹ Deut. viii. 3.

the symbol of purity or harmlessness (Mat. x. 16), and of softness (Ps. lv. 7.) The form chosen here was doubtless an emblem of the innocence, meekness, and tenderness of the Saviour. The gift of the Holy Spirit, in this manner, was the public approbation of Jesus (John i. 33), and a sign of his being set apart to the office of the Messiah. We are not to suppose that there was any change wrought in the moral character of Jesus, but only that he was publicly set apart to his work, and solemnly approved by God in the office to which he was appointed. The baptism of Jesus has usually been considered a striking manifestation of the doctrine of the Trinity, or the doctrine that there are three persons in the divine nature. 1. There is the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, baptized in the Jordan, elsewhere declared to be equal with God. (John x. 30.) 2. The Holy Spirit, descended in a bodily form upon the Saviour. The Holy Spirit is also equal with the Father, or is also God. (Acts v. 3, 4.) 3. The Father addressing the Son, and declaring that he was well pleased with him. It is impossible to explain this transaction consistently in any other way than by supposing that there are three equal persons in the divine nature, or essence, and that each of these sustains important parts in the work of redeeming men.—*Barnes on the Gospels.*—Ed.

^d Whoever considers the frailty of human nature, cannot but allow, that so great and so long an abstinence, without any sense of hunger, (for the evangelists tell us, that our Saviour was only hungry afterwards,) must be altogether miraculous, and so no duty to us; and, if he reflects withal, that the end of his fast was not to chastise, or subdue that body, which was never irregular, as the design of all our fasting is, he must allow, that our Saviour, in this particular, set no precedent to us; and therefore it is cruelty, or a superstitious folly at least, in a matter so supernatural, to enjoin men to follow his steps.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^e This word, which answers exactly with the Hebrew *Satan*, signifies a *calumniator* or *accuser*; and, as it occurs in scripture always in the singular number, is supposed to denote that evil spirit who tempted our first parents, the chief of the rebel angels, and the avowed enemy of the saints, (1 Thess. iii. 5, and 1 Pet. v. 8, &c.)—*Beausobre's Annotations.*

^f According to the description that Josephus gives us of the temple which Herod built, we hear of no pinnacles or lofty turrets above the rest of the building; and therefore have reason to think, that the *πτερόγιον* which is rendered pinnacle, should rather signify the battlement, or that parapet-wall which was carried round the top of the temple, as well as private houses, (Deut. xxii. 8.) to keep men from falling from the roof; and, if we may be allowed to conjecture on what part of the battlement it was that the devil placed our Saviour, it seems very likely, that it was on the top of that gallery, whose building, according to the same author, was so prodigiously high, and the valley underneath it so prodigi-

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of the temple, he put him upon the proof of his being the Son of God, by throwing himself off from thence, and flying in the air, alleging a text out of the Psalmist¹ to encourage him; but Jesus as soon answered him by another text, commanding men² not to tempt God or depend upon his providence for their conservation in dangers of their own seeking. 3dly, His last experiment was, to tempt him with the charms of ambition; and, therefore, transporting him again through the air, to the top^a of an exceeding high mountain, he there made a lively representation to him of all the kingdoms of the world, with all their dazzling glories, at one view, and then told him that "these, with all their pomp and splendour, were delivered to his disposal, and should be given to him, if he would but acknowledge his benefactor, and worship him;" but this was a boldness and blasphemy, such as provoked our Lord to exert his divine power, and to command him peremptorily to be gone, but with this memento out of the scripture likewise,³ "Thou shalt

worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;" whereupon the devil left him for that time, and angels, sent from heaven, came with refreshments for him, after his triumphant combat.

During our Saviour's fasting and temptation in the wilderness, his faithful forerunner John the Baptist, being thus assured both by the descent of the Spirit, and the voice from heaven, that Jesus was the true and long expected Messiah, made full and open declarations of it to all the multitude that came to hear him; and when the sanhedrim at Jerusalem had sent a deputation of their priests and Levites, who were of the sect of the^b Pharisees, to demand of him, who he was? He very readily acknowledged that he was not the Messiah, whom they expected, nor Elias, who, as they imagined, would personally appear among them, nor any other prophet^c risen from the dead, but then he gave them to understand, that, though he was not Elias himself, yet he was the prophet whom Isaiah intended, when he called him 'the voice of one^d crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord,' that his baptism was only of water, but the efficacy of it depended upon one among them, whom they knew not; one, who succeeded him indeed in time, but so far surpassed him in dignity, that he was not worth so much as to be his servant.

The very next day, after the departure of the Pharisees, as our Saviour was returning from the wilderness to Bethabara, John pointed him out to the multitude 'as the immaculate Lamb^e of God, which taketh away the

¹ Ps. xci. 11. ² Deut. vi. 16. ³ Deut. vi. 13.
ously deep, that it turned one's eyes and head to look from the top to the bottom of it, and was indeed one of the most confounding spectacles under the sun.—*Hammond's Annotations*; and *Jewish Antiquities*, b. xv. c. 14.—Scripture is silent as to the precise manner in which the tempter conveyed our Saviour to the top of the temple, but surely this might have been effected in an ordinary way. The phrase to take up in the original signifies to conduct one, to lead one; to attend or accompany one; or to induce one to go. It is used in many parts of scripture in such a sense. Here no more is meant by the evangelist than that Satan conducted Jesus, or accompanied him, and that this was not done contrary to the will of Jesus.—*Barnes on the Gospels*.—Ed.

^a The best account that we have, both of the wilderness and high mountain where our Lord was tempted, is in the travels of Mr Maundrell, (for the ancients tell us very little of them,) who informs us, that in his journey from Jerusalem to Jordan, after he had passed over Mount Olivet, he proceeded in an intricate way, among hills and valleys interchangeably; and, after some hours' travel in this sort of road, arrived at the mountainous desert, into which our blessed Saviour was led by the Spirit, to be tempted by the devil: "A miserable dry place," says he, "it is, consisting of high rocky mountains so torn and disordered, as if the earth had here suffered some great convulsion, in which its very bowels had been turned outward. From the tops of these hills of desolation, we had, however, a delightful prospect of the mountains of Arabia, the Dead Sea, and the plains of Jericho, into which last we descended after about five hours' march from Jerusalem. As soon as we entered the plain, we turned upon the left hand, and going about one hour that way, came to the foot of the Quarantania, so called from our Lord's forty days' fast, which, they say, is the mountain where the devil tempted him with the visionary scene of all the kingdoms and glories of the world. It is very high, and steep, and its ascent not only difficult but dangerous." This is the account which our countryman gives us of the place where our Saviour was probably tempted; but, it is not supposable, that, even from the highest mountain of the world, the devil could show all the kingdoms of it; and therefore the most rational account of this matter is, that, "as he was the prince of the power of the air, he formed an airy horizon," as Dr Lightfoot expresses it, "before the eyes of Christ, which might carry such a pompous and glorious appearance of kingdoms, states, and royalties in the face of it, as if he had seen those very kingdoms and states in reality." God, we are told, caused Moses to see the whole land of promise from the top of Nebo, as it is generally thought, by representing it to him in a large plan or map of it, in all the valleys round about him; and, in like manner, by divine permission, in all the valleys round about the high mountain on which our Lord stood, the devil might make a large draught of the stately edifices, the guards, and attendants of kings and princes, appearing in their splendour, visible to his eye, which he could not have seen so advantageously had he stood on a plain.—*Wells' Geography of the New Testament*; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Poole's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^b The sanhedrim, whose business it was to take cognisance of the pretensions of all prophets when they began to appear in the world, and to inquire into their authority and mission, thought proper, out of their body, to depute such as were of this sect, because, as they were persons who believed the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body, they were better qualified than the Sadducees, who believed neither, to inquire of John, Whether he was Elias? Being in this particular mere Pythagoreans, and fancying, that the soul of one great or good man might frequently pass into another's body.—See *Joseph. Antig.* b. xviii. c. 2; and *Jewish War*, b. ii. c. 8. And as they were the patrons of tradition, and exact in all the ordinary rules and customs that were to be observed, they were the properest persons to examine into this new rite of baptism, by way of preparation for the Messiah, of which their traditions were wholly silent; and therefore they ask him, Why baptizest thou? that is, "Why usurpest thou an authority which belongs to none but either to the Messiah, Elias, or some other prophet, by initiating us, who are already under the covenant into a new doctrine by baptism, which is usually administered to none but heathen proselytes?" And from hence it appears, that the Pharisees were the properest men to send to the Baptist upon this message.—*Calmet's Commentary*; and *Whitby's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

^c It was a received tradition among the Jews, that at the coming of the Messiah, several of the ancient prophets should arise from the dead.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^d It is the opinion of some, that John chose rather to preach and to fulfil his ministry in the wilderness than in the temple, in order to make a more illustrious difference between himself, who was but a messenger whose office it was to prepare his Lord's way, and his Lord himself, of whom it was prophesied that he should frequently appear and teach in the temple, Mal. iii. 1.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^e Under the Jewish law, when any sacrifice was offered for sin, he that brought it, laid his hand upon it, according to the commandment of God, Lev. i. 4; iii. 2; iv. 4, and by that rite, transferred his sins upon the victim, which, after such act, is said to take and to carry them away. Accordingly, in the daily sacrifice of the lamb, the stationary men, who were the representatives of the people, laid their hands upon the lambs that were to be offered, and when they were thus offered, they are

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sins of mankind; and then freely declared that he was the very person, of whose superiority, both in dignity and existence, he had spoken, and of whom, by certain tokens, he both knew and could bear record, that he was the Son of God.

To two of his own disciples, the next day, he gave the same testimony, inasmuch that they left their old master and followed Jesus; and when Andrew, ^a who was one of them, went and discovered the same thing to his elder brother Simon, he, in like manner, became one of his disciples, to whom, the day following, were adjoined Philip, an inhabitant of the city Bethsaida, ^b and an intimate friend of his ¹ named Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, and supposed to be the same with the apostle Bartholomew.

This Nathaniel, at his very first coming, upon our Saviour's expressing some tokens of his omniscience, made a liberal confession of his being the Messiah, the Son of God; whereupon our Saviour assured him, that, in a short time he should have a fuller conviction of his divinity, when he should see the angels of heaven ^c ascending and descending, as they did once in a vision to Jacob, to attend the person, and execute the orders of the Son of Man. ^d

¹ John xxi. 2.

said to make an atonement for their souls, Exod. xxx. 15, 16; and, in analogy thereunto, Christ is here called, by way of eminence, 'the Lamb of God,' because God intended to 'lay upon him, who was manifested to take away sin,' ¹ John iii. 5, and came to suffer in our stead, the punishments due to the iniquities of us all.—*Whitby's and Beausobre's Annotations.*

^a The other, in all probability, was John, the beloved apostle and evangelist, because he describes the circumstances of the time and conversation that passed so very punctually, John i. 40; but in this, and several other places of his gospel, according to his wonted modesty, he chooses to conceal his name.—*Hammond's Annotations.*

^b There is no mention of this place in the Old Testament, and the reason is, because, as Josephus tells us, it was but a very small village, till Philip the tetrarch built it up to the bulk and appearance of a very magnificent city, and gave it the name of Julius, out of respect to Julia, the daughter of Augustus Caesar. Its original name, in the Hebrew tongue, imports a place of fishing or else hunting, and for both these exercises it was very commodiously situated. As it belonged to the tribe of Naphtali, a country remarkable for its plenty of deer, Gen. xlix. 21, it was excellently fitted for the latter of these pastimes; and as it lay on the north end of the lake of Gennezareth, just where the river Jordan runs into it, it was so commodious for the former, that two of the persons just now mentioned, namely, Peter and Andrew, were fishermen by trade.—*Wells' Geography of the New Testament.*

^c To ascend and descend, to come and go, according to the Hebrew manner of expression, denotes a free and familiar commerce: and such, no doubt, was the ministry of angels at our Saviour's temptation and agony, at his resurrection and ascension. The words however must be owned to be a plain allusion to Jacob's ladder, Gen. xxviii. 12, 13. on the top of which was the divine majesty, and the angels ascending to receive his commands, and descending to execute them: and therefore others have thought that Christ by these words intended to inform his apostles, "that the miracles which they should soon see him perform, would declare the divine majesty present with him, and giving him such commands as he was to execute in his prophetic office, as clearly and manifestly as if they had seen the angels of God ascending and descending upon him."—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^d It is observed by several, that only Ezekiel in the Old Testament, and our Saviour in the New, are called by this name; that our Saviour is never called so but by himself: and that that is the common appellation that he gives himself. Ezekiel was doubtless so called, to distinguish him from those spiritual beings,

With these five disciples, Jesus, ^e and his mother, were invited next day to a marriage-feast in Cana, ^f a small place in Galilee, not far from Nazareth. At this solemnity there happened to be a scarcity of wine, which when his mother understood, she made her application to him, in hopes that, by some means or other, he would not fail to supply the defect. In other instances, no doubt, she had been made sensible of his supernatural power; and therefore, though his answer to her seems to carry in it the appearance of a denial, she still expected something extraordinary from him; and therefore ordered the waiters to obey his commands with the utmost exactness. ^g

with whom he so frequently conversed: and our Saviour took upon him that title not only to distinguish his human from his divine nature, but to express his humility likewise, and want of reputation, while he continued in the form of a servant. Chemnitzius, however, puts another construction upon this title. He thinks that, as the term *Messiah*, which is commonly called *Christ*, is taken out of Daniel, so that other of the *Son of Man*, is taken from thence likewise; for behold one, 'like the Son of Man,' says the prophet, 'came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days,' c. vii. 13, and that therefore our Saviour did usually call himself so, in compliance to the prophecy, as well as to assert his humanity, and declare himself his Father's servant, according to the character given of him by Isaiah xlii. 1.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^e In all probability it was at some relation's house that this marriage was kept, because Mary was so solicitous for the supply of wine; and the opinion of the ancients is, that it was at the house of Alphaeus, otherwise named Cleophas, whose wife was Mary, the sister or cousin-german of the blessed virgin, and who, at this time, married his son Simon the Canaanite, Mat. x. 4: though others will have it, that the bridegroom was Nathaniel.—*Calmet's Commentary and Whitby's Annotations.*

^f This is called Cana of Galilee, to distinguish it from another town of the same name, mentioned, Jos. xiv. 28, belonging to the tribe of Asher, not far from the city of Sidon, and so situated much more north than this Cana was.—*Wells' Geography of the New Testament.*—The village now bearing the name, and supposed to occupy the site of the ancient town, is pleasantly situated on the descent of a hill, about sixteen miles north-west of Tiberias, and six north-east of Nazareth. It is worthy of note, says Dr Clarke, that walking among the ruins of a church, he saw large massy stone pots, answering the description given of the vessels of the country: not preserved nor exhibited as relics, but lying about disregarded by the present inhabitants, as antiquities with whose original use they were unacquainted. From their appearance, and the number of them, it was quite evident, that a practice of keeping water in large stone pots, each holding from eighteen to twenty-seven gallons was once common in the country. Cana, or as it is now called Kessen, Kenna, or Cane Galit, contains about 300 inhabitants; who are chiefly Catholic Christians.—*Ed.*

^g John ii. 1.—11. Marriage is here sanctioned by our Lord as a holy and honourable institution. It is an ordinance of God, and, therefore, the duties of those who enter into its sacred engagements are particularly specified in the scriptures. 2. That convivial meetings, when conducted with decorum and temperance, may be attended by Christians. It is difficult to lay down any general rule on this subject: for whilst, on the other hand, the disciples of Christ are charged not to be present at meetings which ever approximate to the tenets of intemperance, it is evident, on the other hand, that they may, on certain occasions, cheerfully enjoy with their friends the bounties of providence. But in all cases our festivities should be conducted as if Jesus himself were present. 3. Our relations must not interfere with us in the discharge of the great duties we owe to God and religion. We are to receive their directions only in so far as they coincide with the revealed will of God. The language of the apostles on this subject after their conversion was; henceforth know we no man after the flesh. 4. Let us deserve and imitate the example of kindness and condescension which the Saviour has here set before us. If he wrought a miracle to supply the wants of his people, let us also minister to the necessities of our

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The custom of the Jews, in all their entertainments, was to use frequent washings; and for this purpose there were, in a certain private room, six water-cisterns, containing each about twenty gallons of our measure. These our Saviour commanded the servants to fill up to the brim, and when they had so done, to carry the liquor to the governor of the feast, for him to distribute to the rest of the company, as the manner then was. But when the governor had tasted it, he was not a little surprised; and calling to the bridegroom, told him, with a pleasant air, that, at most entertainments like this, it was an usual thing for people to bring out their best wine at first, and worse, when the guests had drunk plentifully; but that he, contrary to the common custom, had reserved his best to the latter end of the feast.

This was the first miracle our Saviour did in any public manner, which proved both a manifestation of his own divinity, and a confirmation of his disciples' faith. From Cana he went down to ^a Capernaum, the place where he usually afterwards resided; but his stay at this time was not long there, because his purpose was to go to Jerusalem, at the approaching feast of the passover. ^b

brethren. 5. Without being fanciful in our use of scripture, it may be here worthy of our notice, that Jesus began his ministry by changing water into wine,—teaching us that he came not to destroy men's lives but to save them, and he confers on his people the blessings of joy and salvation. Moses, on the other hand, began his ministry by changing water into blood,—a fit emblem of that ministry of death which was entrusted to him,—but to Jesus and his apostles was committed the ministry of reconciliation, that God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto them the word of reconciliation. 6. The manner in which this marriage-feast was conducted is a fit emblem of the way in which God deals with his people. They are, whilst on earth, but enjoying the foretastes of those blessings which God has reserved for them. They will be put in possession of his greatest and his best gifts when they sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.—Ed.

^a This city is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament, either under this, or any name like it; and therefore it is not improbable, that it was one of those towns which the Jews built after their return from the Babylonish captivity. It stood on the sea-coast, that is, 'on the coast of the sea of Galilee, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali,' Mat. iv. 15, 16, and consequently towards the upper part thereof. It took its name, no doubt, from an adjacent spring of great repute for its clear and limpid waters, and which, according to Josephus, is by the natives called Capernaum. As this spring might be some inducement for the building of the town in the place where it stood, so its being a convenient waiting place from Galilee to any parts on the other side of the sea, might be some motive to our Lord for his moving from Nazareth, and making this the place of his most constant residence. Upon this account Capernaum was highly honoured, and is said by our Lord himself to be exalted unto heaven; but because it made no right use of this signal favour, it drew from him the severe denunciation, that it should be brought down to hell.—*Wells' Geography of the New Testament*.—Buckingham, Burckhardt, and some other writers, believe it to have been the place now called Talhewin, or Tel Hoom, which is upon the edge of the sea, from nine to twelve miles N. N. E. of Tiberias, and where there are ruins indicative of a considerable place at some former period. Dr Richardson, however, in passing through the plain of Gennesareth, inquired of the natives whether they knew such a place as Capernaum? to which they replied, "Cavernahum wa Chonasi, they are quite near, but in ruins." This should, perhaps, induce us to fix the site of Capernaum further south; but our Saviour's denunciation against it seems to have been literally accomplished; and it has been cast down into the grave, for hitherto no satisfactory evidence has been found of the place on which it stood, Mat. xi. 23.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, art. Capernaum.—Ed.

^b This feast is so well known, and has been so fully explained at the time of its first institution, Exod. xii. that we need only remind our reader, that, from the word *pasach*, which signifies

As soon as our Saviour came to Jerusalem, the first thing he did was to reform the public abuse and profanation of the temple, occasioned by the shops which money-changers had set up, and the beasts which the dealers therein used to bring into the courts of the Gentiles. ^c This our Lord's zeal for his Father's honour could not well brook; and therefore, with a scourge made of cords, he drove all the sellers ^d and barterers from the sacred ground, overturned the tables ^e of the money-changers, and commanded those who dealt in doves or pigeons, to take away their goods, and make his Father's house no longer a house of merchandise.

to leap or skip over, the Jews gave the name of *pascha*, or *Passover* to that great festival, which was annually appointed, in commemoration of their coming forth out of Egypt; because the night before their departure the destroying angel, who slew the first-born of the Egyptians, passed over the houses of the Israelites, which were marked with the blood of the lamb, killed the evening before, and for this reason called the *paschal lamb*. The feast itself began on the fourteenth day of Nisan, which is, the first month in their sacred, but the seventh in the civil years, and answers in part to our March and April; but as the Jews began their days at six in the evening, this feast was to continue seven days complete, and so ended on the one and twentieth day in the evening.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

^c There were three courts belonging to the temple. The court of the priests, where the altar of incense stood: the court of the Israelites, where the Jews that were clean, and the proselytes of justice, that is, those who had embraced circumcision, and the whole law of Moses, met at their devotions; and the court of the Gentiles, where the unclean Jew, and the Gentile, who owned the true God, without professing Judaism, were permitted to come and worship. Now, under the same pretext of having the sacrifices near at hand, as well as out of a contempt of that court, where the Gentile worshippers were permitted to enter, the priests, for their sordid gain, had permitted beasts and poultry to be brought within this court, and graziers and hucksters, whose business properly was in the markets of Jerusalem, to mix with people at their devotions, which was an abuse notoriously scandalous.—*Whitby's Annotations*; and *Eachard's Ecclesiastical History*, c. iii.

^d It may possibly be asked, how our blessed Lord, with nothing but a whip in his hand, should be able to execute this heroic act upon a multitude of people, who might suffer damage in their wares, and consequently be in a disposition to resist him? Now, whoever considers that our Saviour had done enough already to prove himself a prophet sent from God, and that the general concession was, that the prophet thus sent had sufficient authority to rectify disorders; if he remembers, at the same time, the great reverence that was constantly paid to the temple, and what titles of honour and respect were given it by God himself, cannot but allow that the present abuse of it was abominable, our Saviour's zeal in redressing it commendable, and that, from all thinking and disinterested persons, it would consequently meet with countenance and approbation. Nor is it to be doubted but that a consciousness of guilt in the profaners themselves might, in some measure, contribute to their submission and acquiescence, even in the same manner as his enemies were struck backwards with a sense of their own guilt, as well as the majesty of his appearance, and fell down to the ground, when they came to apprehend him in the garden, John xviii. 6.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Bishop Smallbrook's Vindication*, p. 146.

^e It was an appointment of the law that every man, from twenty years old and upwards, should annually pay into the treasury of the temple, in order to defray the expense of the daily sacrifices, the sum of half a shekel, Exod. xxx. 12. 15. This, and the voluntary oblations of people of all ranks occasioned a necessity of changing greater coin into less, and very often of foreign coin into that which was current in the nation. Under the pretence, therefore, of having things near at hand, the priests took this opportunity to gratify their covetousness, by letting out places to money-changers, who, to make up their rent, which very likely was exorbitant, might extort from those that came to them, or, as Origen imagines, give them ἀργύριον ἀδόκιμον base money, instead of good, and so made the temple a den of thieves.—*Whitby's Annotations* on Mat. xxi. 13.

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This extraordinary procedure incensed the Jews to such a degree, that they came and demanded of him by what ^a authority he did these things, and to give them some evidence of his having a commission so to do : but to this he made no other reply, than by foretelling his own resurrection, expressed in the metaphor of the temple, which they understood of the temple at Jerusalem, that had been ^b six and forty years a-building, but he, of the temple ^c of his own body, which in three days after they had slain it, he promised to revive. Though therefore at this time he refused to work any miracle at the instigation of the Jews, yet, shortly after, we find him working many, which surprised the whole city, and excited the curiosity of one person in particular, whose name was Nicodemus, a considerable man in the sanhedrim, and of the sect of the Pharisees, to repair to him, but privately, and in the night-time, for fear of being known, and to declare freely to him, “that he verily believed he was come immediately from heaven, because the miracles ^d which he wrought were a demonstration of it.”

^e Hereupon our blessed Saviour took occasion to let

^a Whether it were the priests, the magistrates, or the common people, that put this question to our Saviour, it is certain, that they do not in the least pretend to justify the profanation which he had thus reformed; and therefore their principle seems to have been, “that, let the corruptions and abuses in a church be never so great, yet they were not to be reformed, but either by the ordinary authority of the magistrate, or by an extraordinary authority from God. Such an authority they were ready to acknowledge in prophets; but then they expected that those who pretended to this, and to have their mission from God, should be able to prove that mission by some miraculous operations.” But how they came to put this question to our Lord, after they had seen his miracles, and knew that he claimed a divine commission, and had told them, ‘that the works he had done in his Father’s name bore witness of him,’ (John v. 36.) can be imputed to nothing but their perverseness, and obstinate infidelity.—*Poole’s Annotations.*

^b From Herod’s beginning to rebuild the temple, to this first passover after our Saviour’s baptism, it is agreed, that the time was exactly six and forty years; but then Josephus (*Antiq.* b. xv. c. 14.) tells us, that the whole was finished in nine years and a half. But this is to be understood of the general building only, since, according to the same author, (b. xx. c. 8.) several new works and decorations were still carrying on, and near eighteen thousand men employed therein, even to the time that young Agrippa was made king of Judea, which was about the sixtieth year of the Christian era.—*Calmet’s Commentary; and Beausobre’s Annotations.*

^c The Jews had a maxim, or proverbial speech among them, that ‘the sanctuary of sanctuaries was the Messiah,’ and therefore there could be no impropriety in our Saviour’s calling his body a temple; for if the apostle calls our bodies, ‘the temple of God,’ as he does, 1 Cor. iii. 16, and 2 Cor. vi. 16, how much more does that title belong to the body of Christ, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwelt always, and inseparably.—*Poole’s and Beausobre’s Annotations.*

^d But are miracles alone a demonstration of a person’s being sent by God? Nicodemus was not ignorant of the caution which Moses had given the Jews against false prophets, Deut. xii. 1, &c.; nor does he here speak of miracles in general, but of those particular ones which Jesus had done in the time of the passover, and these were so great in their nature, so solid in their proof, so beneficial in their effects, and in their end so well designed to confirm a doctrine every way suitable to the divine attributes, and to fulfil the prophecies concerning the Messiah, the Son of Righteousness, who was to rise with healing in his wings, (Mal. iv. 2.) that there was the greatest assurance that none, without an omnipotent hand, could do them. Not to say that Nicodemus might have both examined the doctrine, and inquired into the life of Jesus, before he made that inference from his miracles.—*Poole’s Annotations; and Calmet’s Commentary.*

^e Some have imagined, from the seeming abruptness of the

him know, that this belief was not the only qualification requisite to become his disciple, and then proceeded to instruct him in the great mystery of regeneration, telling him, “That, as no production could transcend the nature and condition of its parent, flesh, for instance, though never so much diversified, could still produce no more than flesh; so this formation of a new creature was to be effected by different principles, namely, by the water of baptism washing away sins, and by the Holy Spirit, giving a power and efficacy to men’s endeavours to do well; which Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and is, as the wind, certain and notorious in its effects, but secret in the principle and manner of its production.”

This doctrine of regeneration, which to Nicodemus ^f

answer which our Lord gives Nicodemus, that Nicodemus might have put some previous question to him, not recorded by the evangelist, concerning the means of attaining the kingdom of God, that is, eternal happiness, or of qualifying himself to be a disciple of the Messiah; for in that sense the kingdom of God is likewise taken. But, besides that the term *answered* does not always, in the New Testament, signify a reply to a question already propounded, but very frequently no more than the beginning of a new speech, the connexion between the compliment which Nicodemus makes our Lord, and our Lord’s reply to it, will not be amiss, if we can but suppose in the words this implication:—“Thy acknowledgment of my divine mission and authority, free and generous though it be, will not be sufficient to render thee a member of that kingdom which I am going to set up; for, except a man be born again, that is, renewed in his mind, will, and affections, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and so become a new creature, he cannot see the kingdom of God, that is, he cannot be a Christian here, or a saint hereafter.”

—*Poole’s, Whitby’s, and Hammond’s Annotations.*

^f Those who make the water and the Spirit, here mentioned by our Saviour, one and the same thing, (which to every common reader, must, at first sight, appear to be distinct,) would do well to consider, that the question between Christ and Nicodemus was about what was requisite to prepare a man for the kingdom, that is, God’s church, and make him partaker of the gospel blessing. Certain it is, that baptism by water was not only the common method of receiving proselytes into the Jewish church, but it is declared likewise by our Lord himself to be the ordinary way of entering into his kingdom; ‘for he that believeth, and is baptized,’ says he, ‘shall be saved,’ (Mark xvi. 16); and therefore he gave commission to his apostles to make disciples in all nations by baptizing them. (Mat. xxviii. 19.) Nay, so far are the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit from superseding the necessity of this ordinance, that, in the apostolic age, we find them rather esteemed a proper predisposition for it: for, when the Holy Ghost fell upon Cornelius and his company, in the same manner that it fell upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, (Acts ii. 1.) what is St Peter’s inference from these miraculous gifts? Is it that the persons on whom they rested had no need of baptism? No; but rather that these extraordinary gifts were a full evidence, that they were the proper objects of it; for, ‘can any one,’ says he, ‘forbid water, that these should not be baptized?’ So far is the baptism of the Spirit, even where it is undeniable, from excluding the baptism of water, and so strong a proof is the instance before us, that the graces of the Spirit may be the foundation of a just claim to baptism, but never, where the sacrament can be had, a lawful dispensation to any man for the refusal or neglect of it.—*Whitby’s Annotations; and Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. iii.*

^g Our blessed Saviour might well wonder at Nicodemus’s ignorance in the point of regeneration, when this was the common notion of proselytism among the Jews, that he who was washed and circumcised, was looked upon as an infant new-born: and where there were so many passages in the law and the prophets, relating to this very doctrine; for what else can the meaning be of the circumcision of the heart, commanded by Moses, (Deut. x. 16.) of the renewal of a clean and right spirit, prayed for by David, (Ps. li. 10.) of the putting God’s law in the inward parts, mentioned by Jeremiah, chap. xxxi. 33, and the giving his people a new heart, and a new spirit, promised by God, (Ezek. xxxvi. 26)? These, and many more, were intimations of

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seemed so very abstruse, "our Saviour proceeds to tell him was no more, in respect of other mysteries of the gospel, than the earth is in comparison of the heavens; and so goes on to acquaint him with matters of a more sublime nature; with his descent from heaven, his death, his ascension, and the blessing of that redemption which he came into the world to accomplish. He instructs them in the love of the Father, the mission of the Son, the rewards of faith, and the glories of eternity. He upbraids the unbelieving and impenitent, and declares the difference between a pure and corrupt conscience, the shame and fears of the one, and the confidence and serenity of the other."

This is the substance of our Saviour's discourse to Nicodemus, who afterwards became a convert; and no sooner was the passover ended, but our Lord, in company with many of his disciples, who, by his miraculous works, were convinced of his divinity, went about the province of Judea, ^a making proselytes wherever he came, and causing them to be baptized by the hands of his disciples, because himself was employed in greater affairs, namely, in teaching the people, and relieving their necessities.

John the Baptist had, at this time, removed his station from Bethabara to Enon, a place remarkable, as its name imports, for springs and waters, and therefore of great conveniency for baptizing. While he was there, a dispute happened to arise between his disciples and certain Jews, who were present, which of the baptisms, that of John, or that of Jesus, was preferable? And when his disciples, by way of appeal to John, came and acquainted him that the person of whom he had given such honourable testimony, received proselytes, and that in vast numbers, by the same ceremony of baptism as he did, John repeated the same testimony again, and reminded his disciples how frequently he had told them, "That the person of whom they spake, was the Messiah whom God had sent into the world for the salvation of mankind, and himself no more than his herald; and that his ministry therefore was now going to decline, even as, upon the approach of the sun, the glory of the morning star decreases." And having said many things of the like nature, to prove Jesus to be the Son of God, and co-equal with the Father, he closed up his commission with these important words, 'He that believes on the Son, hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.'

John was at this time in the territories of Herod Antipas, ^b and, as he was a man of great freedom of speech

upon all occasions, he was not afraid, when he came to Herod's court, to reprove him for his many enormities, and particularly for his cohabiting with Herodias, ^c the wife of his brother Philip, who was still living. This exasperated the woman against him to such a degree, that, though Herod at first had some esteem and reverence for him, yet, by her malicious instigations, ^d she prevailed with him to cast him into prison, with a purpose to have him destroyed whenever he could find out a proper opportunity.

About the time of John's imprisonment, our Lord, who, by the hands of his apostles, ^e had been baptizing for near seven or eight months in Judea, understanding

named Cleopatra, a native of Jerusalem. In his first will, his father, as was said before, named him successor to his kingdom; but afterwards he changed his mind, made his son Archelaus king of Judea, and gave to Antipas the title only of tetrarch of Galilee and Petrea, which made him appeal to Augustus at Rome, in order to have his father's former will confirmed, and the latter reversed; but he did not obtain his end.—*Joseph. Antig.*

^c This woman was the daughter of Aristobulus and Bernice, sister to king Agrippa, and grand-daughter to Herod the Great. She was at first married to her uncle Philip, son of the same Herod by Mariamne, by whom she had a daughter named Salome, the same who pleased Herod so well in her dancing; and how she came to run from one brother to live with another, Josephus has thus related the story:—"Antipas, in his passage to Rome, made some stay with his brother Philip, where he fell so passionately in love with his wife Herodias, that he could not forbear expressing it to her, and promised her withal, that, at his return from Rome he would put away his own wife, and marry her. Upon these conditions Herodias accepted of the offer, and, as soon as Antipas was returned, and his wife gone, (for she, having notice of the engagement between her husband and Herodias, made her escape to her father Areta, king of Petrea,) she, with her daughter Salome, left her husband Philip, and coming directly to Antipas, for ever after lived with him in a state of incest, Lev. xviii. 15. Nor was her ambition much less criminal than her lust: for, growing uneasy to see her brother Agrippa promoted to the title of a king while her new husband Antipas had no more than that of a tetrarch, she pressed him so much that he determined to make a journey to Rome, with an intention to ask the like dignity of Caligula the emperor; but the emperor, being prejudiced by several letters, which Agrippa had written against Antipas, instead of advancing him, deprived him of his tetrarchy, and condemned him to perpetual banishment." The emperor, however, understanding that Herodias was Agrippa's sister, showed an inclination to pardon her; but she chose rather to follow her husband in the calamity she had brought upon him, than to owe any thing to her brother's fortune, so that they were both confiscated, and banished together, first into France, and afterwards into Spain, where they died.—*Jewish Antig.* b. 8. c. 9.

^d The evangelists have assigned the true reason for the Baptist's imprisonment. But since the Pharisees, very probably, represented him as the author of a new sect, a promoter of seditions and rebellions, and a person dangerous to the government, by reason of the multitude of his followers, Antipas craftily made that his pretence, as appears from Josephus, (b. xviii. c. 7.) for confining him; and the better to remove him from the people, sent him bound out of Galilee, into Petrea, to a strong castle, called Machærus, near the Dead sea, and towards the borders of Arabia, where he continued above a year in prison.—*Eachard's Ecclesiastical History*, c. 3.

^e Several reasons may be assigned why our Saviour delegated the office of baptizing to his apostles. 1. Because it was nowise proper for him to baptize in his own name. 2. Because the baptism that was peculiarly his was the baptism of the Holy Ghost, Acts xi. 16. 3. Because it was an office of more importance, to preach the gospel than to baptize, 1 Cor. i. 17. And, 4. Because Christ's baptizing of any might possibly have occasioned disgusts and jealousies among the disciples, in the same manner as, in the early ages of the church, we find people valuing themselves and despising others, upon their being baptized by such or such an eminent apostle, 1 Cor. i. 12.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

the doctrine of regeneration; but the Pharisees were so taken up with their rites and traditions, that they gave small attention to the spiritual things of nearer and much greater concernment to their souls.—*Poole's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

^a The evangelist no where mentions the particular place where our Saviour began his baptism; but there is reason to presume, that it was somewhere about Jericho, because there it was that John the Baptist first entered upon his ministry: because it seems expedient, that he should open the first scene of his office where his faithful forerunner had given such glorious and advantageous testimonies of him, and, in one and the same place, complete John's baptism of repentance for sins, which was preparatory to his coming, by the baptism of remission of sins, which he alone had proper power to give.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b This Antipas, or Antipater, for they are names of the same signification, was the son of Herod the Great, by one of his wives,

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that the Pharisees began to be envious at him for the great multitudes of people that resorted to him, resolved to leave that province, and pass into ^a Galilee, in order to enter upon the more solemn part of his ministerial function. In this journey it was necessary for him to pass through Samaria; ^b and, as he travelled on foot, and the weather was hot, when he came within a little of ^c Sychar, he sent his disciples in to the city to buy pro-

visions, and sat himself down by the side of a famous well, called Jacob's well. ^d

While he was sitting there, a woman of a loose life and conversation came out of the city to draw water, and when he requested some of her to drink, she, perceiving that he was a Jew, took the freedom to ask him, how he could offer any such request to a Samaritan, since there were so great feuds, and so little dealings ^e between

^a It is a province of Palestine, which extends itself chiefly into the northern parts thereof. The tribes which it contains, are Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, and Asher, with part, as some say, of Dan, and Perca, beyond the Jordan. On the north, it is bounded by Lebanon and Syria; on the west, by Phœnicia; on the south, by Samaria; and on the east mostly by the river Jordan, and the sea of Galilee. It is generally divided into two parts, the Upper and the Lower Galilee, whereof the former is called 'Galilee of the Gentiles,' (Mat. iv. 15.) either because it was chiefly possessed by the Gentiles, with Jews interspersed among them, or rather because it bordered upon Gentile nations, such as the Phœnicians, Syrians, and Arabians. The whole country, according to Josephus, was fruitful, and well cultivated, and the people laborious and industrious. The number of its towns and villages was prodigiously great, and so well inhabited, that the least of them did not contain less than fifteen thousand souls. The natives were a bold intrepid race of men, who defended themselves bravely against the foreign nations that surrounded them; but then their wealth and prowess made them seditious, and very apt to rebel against the Romans, for which they sometimes suffered very much.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table*.—"Galilee," says Chateaubriand, "would be a paradise were it inhabited by an industrious people under an enlightened government. Vine stocks are to be seen here a foot and a half in diameter, forming, by their twining branches, vast arches and extensive ceilings of verdure. A cluster of grapes, two or three feet in length, will give an abundant supper to a whole family. The plains of Esdraelon are occupied by Arab tribes, around whose brown tents the sheep and lambs gambol to the sound of the reed, which at night-fall calls them home. For some years this fine country has groaned and bled under the malignant genius of Turkish despotism; the fields are left without cultivation, and the towns and villages are reduced to beggary; late events encourage us to hope that a milder administration will soon change the aspect of affairs, and bestow on the Syrian provinces at large some of the benefits which the more liberal policy of Mohammed Ali has conferred upon the pashalic of Egypt."—*Ed.*

^b It is a province of Palestine, so called from its city of the same name, that was once the capital of the kingdom of Israel, which lies exactly between Judea to the south, and Galilee to the north, and extends itself from the Mediterranean sea westward, to the river Jordan eastward, taking up the most considerable part of what formerly belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, and the half tribe of Manasseh, on the west side of Jordan.—*Wells' Geography of the New Testament*.

^c Sychar is only a corrupt pronunciation of Sychem, or Shechem, which is the capital of the country that was once called Samaria. At present it is called Naplosa, and stands in a narrow valley, between Mount Gerizim on the south, at the foot of which it is situate, and Ebal on the north. On Mount Gerizim they had once a temple, which seemed to rival that of Jerusalem; but in the time of the Maccabees, it was destroyed by Hyrcanus, and what they have now is only a little place of worship, to which, at certain seasons, they nevertheless repair for the performance of the rites of their religion; but what those rites are, it is not easy to say.—*Wells' Geography of the New Testament*.—The ancient Shechem is one of the most prosperous towns in the holy land, being still the metropolis of a rich and extensive country, and abounding in agricultural wealth. Nor is there any thing finer than its appearance when viewed from the heights by which it is surrounded. It strikes the eye of the traveller who advances from the north, as being embosomed in the most delightful and fragrant bowers, half concealed by rich gardens and stately trees, collected into groves all round the beautiful valley in which it stands. There is a considerable trade, as well as a flourishing manufacture of soap; and the population has been reckoned as high as ten thousand,—an estimate, however, which Mr Buckingham thinks somewhat overrated. Within the

town are six mosques, five baths, one Christian church, an excellent covered bazar for fine goods, and an open one for provisions, besides numerous cotton-cloth manufactories, and shops of every description. The inhabitants are chiefly Mohammedans. The Jews, inheriting their ancient enmity towards the Samaritans, avoid the country which the latter formerly possessed; while the Christians, alienated by the suspicion of heresy among their brethren at Nabious, prefer the more orthodox assemblies at Jerusalem and Nazareth. The Samaritans themselves do not exceed forty in number. They have a synagogue in the town where they perform divine service every Saturday. Four times a year they go in solemn procession to the old temple on Mount Gerizim; on which occasion they meet before sunrise, and continue reading the law till noon. On one of these days they kill six or seven rams. They have but one school in Nabious where their language is taught, though they take much pride in preserving ancient manuscripts of their Pentateuch in the original character. Mr Connor saw a copy which is reported to be three thousand five hundred years old, but was not allowed to examine nor even to touch it. If any thing connected with the memory of past ages be calculated to awaken local enthusiasm, the land around this city is eminently entitled to that distinction. The sacred record of events transacted in the fields of Shechem is from our earliest years remembered with delight. "Along the valley," observes a late traveller, "we beheld a company of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, as in the days of Reuben and Judah, with their camels, bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh; who would gladly have purchased another Joseph of his brethren, and conveyed him as a slave to some Potiphar in Egypt. Upon the hills around flocks and herds were feeding as of old; nor in the simple garb of the shepherds of Samaria was there any thing to contradict the notions we may entertain of the appearance formerly exhibited by the sons of Jacob."—*Ed. Cab. Lib.*—*Ed.*

^d It is much to be questioned, whether the well that is at present shown to travellers as Jacob's well, be that where our Saviour discoursed with the Samaritan woman, because it seems to be too remote from the town for women to come thither to draw water; unless we may suppose that the city did formerly extend itself farther than that way than it does now. However this be, the well is at present covered with a small vault, into which you get down by a very strait hole, and then removing a broad flat stone, you discover the mouth of the well itself. It is dug in a firm rock, about three yards in diameter, and thirty-five in depth; and to confute the story, which is commonly told to travellers, namely, that it is all the year dry, except on the anniversary when our Saviour sat upon it, but that then it bubbles up with abundance of water, Mr Maundrell tells us, that when they came to sound it, they found no less than five yards of water in it.—*Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem; and Wells' Geography of the New Testament*.

^e The chief reasons of the Jewish hatred against the Samaritans were these three: 1. the foreign extraction of the Samaritans, they being most of them descendants from the Cutheans, whom Salmanazar sent to Samaria, when he carried away the ten tribes into captivity, (2 Kings xviii. 9.) 2. the difference of their religion and worship, forasmuch as that of the Samaritans was a kind of mixture of Jewish and Pagan rites together; and, 3. the rival temple, which the Samaritans had built on Mount Gerizim, and consecrated to Jupiter Olympius, in order to avoid the persecution of Antiochus.—*Joseph. Antig. b. xii. c. 2*. These were the chief causes of the animosities between them. The Jews, however, did not carry their resentment so high, but that, in some cases, they would traffic or buy any thing of them; but then the Pharisees came in with a tradition, that they were not to borrow any thing of them, or receive any kindness from them, nor drink of their water, nor eat of their morsels. This, however, our Lord despised, as having no foundation either in the law of God or equity, and as tending to impair the law of

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them and the Jews? Little did the woman know the excellency of the person who asked her so small a favour; but in some measure to convince her, our Lord took occasion from hence, under the metaphor of water, to discourse to her of spiritual blessings; and to make her sensible of his omniscience, he reminded her of some passages of her life, particularly of the ^a five times she had been divorced for her adulteries, and of the state of fornication wherein she then lived.

Convinced by this discovery that he was a prophet, she propounded to him the great question so much controverted between the Jews and Samaritans, namely, Which was the proper place of public worship, Gerizim or Jerusalem? To which our Saviour, in his answer, gives manifestly the preference to the Jewish form and place of worship; but makes it a question of no great moment, since the time was approaching when all sacrifices and ceremonial rites should cease, and when God, who is a spirit, expected to be worshipped in a more ^b rational and spiritual manner than hitherto he had been.

common friendship and humanity; and therefore we find him asking to drink with the Samaritan woman, and afterwards going into the city and eating with the Sechemites.—*Beausobre and Whitby's Annotations.*

^a The words of the text are, 'thou hast had five husbands;' but whether five successively, and after the death of one another or five from whom she had been divorced for adultery, is not agreed. The most modern interpreters, however, judge that she had been married to five several men, but so behaved herself towards them, that for her adultery, or some other forward behaviour, they had given her a bill of divorce. This seems more likely to be the true sense, than that, after the death of five legal husbands, she should live in whoredom with a sixth person.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^b The Jews gave out that the Samaritans worshipped God in the image of a dove; but this seems to be a mere forgery on them. 1. Because among all the idols which they worshipped when they came from Assyria, there is not the least hint of the image of a dove. 2. Because Josephus, who, in several places of his history, inveighs against them bitterly, does no where charge them with this crime. And, 3. Because it is a thing utterly inconsistent with the law of Moses, which they embraced; for, as it forbids all images, so it requires men to sacrifice the dove to God; and surely nothing can be more absurd, than to worship that which we are bound to sacrifice. It is very likely, therefore, that the Samaritans had no false objects of worship among them, and yet they, as well as the Jews, might not be furnished with right apprehensions of the true one. They both were to blame, no doubt, in confining the worship of God to any particular place, and thinking that he could not be rightly adored, but either at Gerizim, according to the one, or at Jerusalem, according to the other, when his presence is certainly every where, and in every nation, 'he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him,' Acts x. 35. They, as well as the Jews, might think that God was pleased with outward ordinances, with sacrifices and expiations, which sanctified only to the purifying of the flesh; but perhaps they never supposed that these things were but types and figures of what was to succeed, and therefore to be of no longer continuance, than until the substance of the things themselves were come. They doubtless both had some expectations of a Messiah: but perhaps it never entered into their heads that he should be the angel of the covenant, who, with the incense of his blood, 'should offer up the prayers of all the saints upon the altar that is before the throne,' Rev. vii. 3. So that our Saviour, by this part of his discourse with the woman, plainly intimates, that, after his resurrection, and the promulgation of his gospel, not only the Jews and Samaritans, but the people of all nations whatever, should have right notions of God, the only object of religious worship, of the extent and universality of his church, of the qualifications requisite in true worshippers, and of the Mediator appointed by God to introduce and enforce their prayers.—*Whitby's Annotations and Calmel's Commentary.*

Our Saviour, before he had done talking with the woman, and just as his disciples were returned from the city, had informed her, that himself was the ¹ Messiah whom she spoke of; whereupon, leaving her water-pots, she ran into the city, proclaiming aloud that she had met with a person who had told her all the secrets of her life, and who could be no other than that great prophet who was to come into the world; so that the inhabitants waited on him at the well, invited him into their city, received him with great civility; and though some believed on him from the testimony of the woman, many more did so, from their own conviction, on hearing his sermons and divine discourses.

After two days' stay in the city, our Lord proceeded to Cana, where he had changed the water into wine, and where the Galileans, who at the passover had seen the miracles which he did at Jerusalem, received him with great kindness and respect. Hither it was that an officer belonging to the court came, and addressed himself to him with great humility and reverence, desiring him that he would come and cure his son, who was just at the point of death; and when, with more importunity, he renewed his request, and our Lord, to show the excellency of his power, that could cure in absence as well as presence, dismissed him with this assurance, that his son was restored to health, the believing father joyfully returning home, was by the way congratulated with the welcome news of his son's recovery; and inquiring of his servants the hour when the child began to amend, by the account which they gave him he perceived that it was at the very instant that Jesus declared to him, 'thy son is well:' whereupon both he and his whole family, being convinced of our Saviour's divinity, were converted to the Christian faith.

The imprisonment of John had put an end to his ministry; and therefore, to supply that loss, our Saviour himself began to preach the sum and substance of the gospel, faith, hope, and repentance, in the province of Galilee; and this he did in such an extraordinary manner, that he was admired by all, and his fame spread through the whole country. Coming however to Nazareth, the place of his education, he went into the synagogue ^c on the sabbath-day, and when he stood up,

¹ Her words are, 'I know that the Messiah cometh, who is called Christ,' John iv. 25.

^c That the synagogue worship was, at this time, loaded with rites and ceremonies of human invention, that the priests were very defective in the discharge of their functions, and the manners of those who met there very much corrupted, no one can doubt, who is at all acquainted with the scriptures and the Jewish history; and yet we find that our Saviour and his disciples, as members of the church of Nazareth, went constantly every sabbath-day to these synagogues, preserving thereby 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,' and not upon slight pretences 'forsaking the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is,' Heb. x. 25.—*Whitby's Annotations.* The scribes ordinarily taught in the synagogues, but it was not confined to them, as it appears that Christ did the same. It has been questioned by what right Christ and his apostles, who had no public character among the Jews, taught in their synagogues. In answer to this Dr Lightfoot observes, "That though this liberty was not allowed to any illiterate person or mechanic, but to the learned only, they granted it to prophets and workers of miracles; and such as set up for heads and leaders of new sects, in order that they might inform themselves of their dogmata, and not condemn them unheard and unknown. Under this character Christ and his apostles were admitted to this privilege."

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and read,^a as the custom for laymen was at that time, a passage in the prophet Isaiah, beginning with these words, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor,' &c. which he applied to himself, but in general terms, and spake thereupon with so much gracefulness, that the eyes of the whole congregation were turned upon him, admiring his discourse; many who had known him in the disadvantages of his education, began to have abject thoughts of him upon the meanness of his extract, as if he had been no more than a carpenter's son; so that his taking an occasion to upbraid them with their ingratitude and insensibility, so far provoked the whole assembly, that they hurried him out of the city, and brought him to the brow of the hill on which it was built, with a design to have^b cast him down from thence, and destroyed him, had not he, by a miraculous power,^c withdrawn himself from the fury of these wretched people, and left their city.

This barbarous treatment of the Nazarenes made our Saviour remove from them, and settle his habitation in Capernaum, which was the metropolis of Galilee, and by

¹ Isaiah lxi. 1.

^a What the nature and design of synagogues were, and at what time, and upon what occasion they were at first erected by the Jews, we have, in a particular dissertation, already discussed, and need only take notice that, though every synagogue had a settled reader, to whom was allowed an annual stipend, yet, when any grave and learned person came in, especially if he was a stranger, it was customary to make him the compliment of reading the portion of scripture appointed for the day, (Acts xiii. 15.) which he always did in a standing posture. For, as the law was given with reverence, say the Jews, so it is to be handled with reverence; and, when he had read what he thought fit, he might, if he was so disposed and qualified, expound and comment upon it. The character which John the Baptist had given of our Saviour, and the miracles which he had lately done in Cana and Capernaum, might possibly excite the curiosity of the master of the synagogue to hear him read and expound; read in Hebrew, and expound in Chaldee, as Ezra had introduced the custom. In reading the law, people were confined to the lesson of the day; but the rabbins have observed, that, in reading the prophets, there was a greater license allowed; and therefore, though our Saviour might read just where the book opened, yet there seems to be a good deal of the hand of God in directing him to a place which related to himself, and gave him so fair an opportunity of declaring the purpose of his coming into the world, namely, to publish redemption and liberty, pardon and reconciliation with God.

^b Such kinds of popular executions were sometimes tolerated, and, under pretence of zeal for the law, several were put to death, especially in times of public calamity, and when the Jews were in their greatest distress, (*Josephus on the Jewish War*, b. 5.) without the formality of justice. But what made the Nazarenes so exceedingly outrageous against our Saviour was, his declaring them unworthy of the miracles he had done at Capernaum, his equalizing himself to some of the greatest of the ancient prophets, and by the instances of the Sidonian woman, and Naaman the Syrian, plainly intimating that his gospel should chiefly be received by the Gentiles.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^c How he got out of their hands, when they had laid hold of him, the scripture does not tell us; nor is it our concern to be curious to inquire. We know very well that it was an easy thing for him, who was God as well as man, to quit himself of any mortal enemies; but how he did it, whether it was by blinding them for the present, or making himself invisible, or merely by allaying their rage and changing their wills, it is impossible to determine. Which way soever he did it, it was certainly something miraculous, and therefore deprived the Nazarenes of the liberty of complaining that he had done no miracles among them.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

reason of the lake² which was near it, a place highly convenient for his designs. He had not long been here before great multitudes flocked to him; and as he was walking one day by the side of the lake, with a crowd of people pressing upon him, he saw two fishing vessels,^d one belonging to Peter and Andrew, and the other to James and John, who were all partners and companions in that business, and stepping into Peter's ship, he desired him to put a little from the shore, that from thence he might preach to the people.

Peter and his companions had been hard at work all night, but without any manner of success; and, therefore, when sermon was ended, and our Saviour ordered Peter to launch out further, and to let down his nets for a draught, he modestly told him of their unsuccessful toiling all night, but, nevertheless, in obedience to him, he was willing: nor had he cause to repent; for, upon letting down the nets, they inclosed such a multitude of fishes, that their tackle began to break, so that they were forced to call to their partners in the other ships, to come to their assistance, because the draught was such that it loaded both the vessels so very deep, that they were in some danger of sinking before they got to shore.

Amazed at this marvellous sight, and dreading the visible appearance of so great and so divine a power just by him, Peter threw himself down at our Saviour's feet, desiring him to^e depart from him, because he was a person no ways worthy of his presence. But our Saviour

² For an account of this lake, see page 352.—Ed.

^d St Matthew and St Mark, in their relations of this transaction, are pretty uniform: but St Luke differs from them so widely, that interpreters have been at some pains to reconcile them. For, whereas the two former tell us, that these fishermen were casting a net into the sea. St Luke informs us, that they were gone out of their ships, and had washed their nets, besides some other variation in the manner of the call of the four apostles. But not to enter into a minute examination of particulars, we ought to consider, that some allowances are reasonable, and necessary to be made for the variation of circumstances in one historian, who makes it his business to recount matters distinctly, and at large, and in another, whose intention it is, only to declare facts in general, without entering into the series and order of each action. Now, this is the case of the two former evangelists, they designed no more than a summary account of these four apostles' call, and their compliance with it; and therefore they contented themselves with setting down a part, so much first, as relates to Andrew and Peter, and afterwards what related to James and John. But St Luke, who proposes to show the manner and whole process of the call, records the miracle at large, and interweaves several remarkable passages, which were not needful to be mentioned in the brief account of St Matthew and St Mark, but highly conducive to St Luke's purpose of undertaking to describe the miraculous draught of fishes, (Luke v. 10.) which, upon our Lord's command to make a fresh experiment, was taken.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.

^e We have several instances, both in the Old and New Testament, of persons struck with dreadful apprehensions at the presence of the divine majesty, or even of some angel or a prophet delivering a message from him. And therefore Grotius supposes that Peter's case was much the same with that of the widow of Sarepta, when she complained to Elijah, 'What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God, art thou come unto me to call my sins to remembrance?' (1 Kings xvii. 18.) But others more justly think that Peter's words are expressive, rather of his high sentiments of our Lord, and the consciousness of his own unworthiness to be found in such a person's company, and that therefore they do not a little resemble that glorious declaration of the centurion in the gospel, 'Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed,' (Mat. viii. 8.)—*Calmet's Commentary*; and *Poole's Annotations*.

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bid him be of good comfort, and from the present incident, took occasion to inform him that he had a nobler work and employment for him, even the ^a gaining of men's souls to salvation, if he would adjoin himself to him; and having given the like invitation to the other three, Andrew, James, and John, they all obeyed his call, and leaving their vessels, nets, relations, and employments, ^b became ever after his constant and inseparable disciples.

After the choice of these four disciples, our Saviour returned with them into the city; and, on the next sabbath day went into the chief synagogue, and there preached to the people, with so much force and authority, and in a manner so widely different from their usual teachers the scribes, ^c that all were astonished at him; and to in-

crease their admiration, one in the congregation, whose body was possessed with an unclean spirit, ^d cried out in a hideous manner, 'Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us?' ^e I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.' But Jesus, who wanted the testimony of no such confessors, commanded his silence, and departure out of the poor man's body; which immediately was done, to the great surprise and amazement of all the spectators.

From the synagogue our Lord retired to Peter's house, where his wife's mother lay sick of a fever; but, upon his approaching the bedside, and taking her by the hand, he commanded the fever ^f to depart, and that mo-

^a The words in our translation are, 'From henceforth thou shalt catch men,' but in the Greek ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀνθρώπους ἴσῃ ζωῶν, there is something very remarkable. For it does not say that Peter should catch men, as people generally do wild beasts or fishes, in order to kill them, and eat them; but that he should take them alive, as such fish and wild creatures are taken that are designed to be put in stews and parks; and therefore the sense of the word is, 'Thou shalt be a fisher of men,' but such a fisher, as shall preserve them alive; as shall retrieve them, in short, from error and ignorance, and death; and conduct them to truth and knowledge, and eternal life.—*Hammond's Paraphrase; and Calmet's Commentary.*

^b Towards the conclusion of the first chapter of St John's gospel, we meet with a call of some five of our Lord's disciples about a year prior to this; but, by the account of the other evangelists, it appears that they did not, at this time, become our Saviour's constant attendants, because it is presumable, that though he took this opportunity to make himself known to them, yet he had not as yet any immediate occasion for them, and therefore remitted them to their respective trades. Only Philip is supposed to have retained to him from the very first, because he seems to have called him in a formal manner, as he did not, at that time, the rest, (John i. 43.); and because we find no further interview between him and Philip upon this score, as there was between him and three, at least, of the rest, (Luke v. 10, 11.) These three disciples, therefore, namely, Andrew, Peter, and John, were twice called; but the former calling was rather a warning to hold themselves in readiness for it, than an actual engaging them in his service; but now in Philip we meet with no other call than what he had at first; and, therefore, though the fathers, and some ancient writers, have given the honour to St Andrew, of being the first disciple; yet that prerogative is evidently St Philip's. For, though Andrew and Peter were the first that came and conversed with our Lord, yet we find them returning to their trades again, and not ordained to their discipleship, till after the time that the Baptist was cast into prison.—*Beausobre's Annotations, and Calmet's Commentary; and Howell's History*, b. ii. in the notes.

^c There are several opinions wherein the excellency of Christ's preaching, above that of the Jewish doctors, did consist. Some think that his teaching was not so much in the manner of an instructor, as a legislator, and one who, in his own name, had power to propound the terms of life and death. But though this, in relation to Christ's divinity, be certainly true, yet it is not so agreeable, either to his prophetic office, or his frequent declarations, 'that the doctrine which he taught was not his own, but his who sent him; and that he spake not of himself, but as his Father had commanded him,' (John vii. 16. and xi. 51.) Others imagine, that the excellency of Christ's preaching consisted in the miracles wherewith he confirmed his doctrine: for so the evangelist represents the matter: 'They all marvelled, saying, What new doctrine is this? For with authority he commanded the unclean spirits, and they obey him,' (Mark i. 27.) But because another evangelist tells us, that it was his doctrine, without his miracles, that astonished the people, (Mat. vii. 29.) Others are of opinion, that his excellency lay in the graceful and lively manner of his delivery, not like the teachers of the Jews, who read their lectures of the law so coldly, so perfunctorily, as never to affect the hearts of their hearers; and that, in short, he spake as a prophet, who had a full commission from God to deliver his message to them; not as the scribes, who pretended only

to deliver the traditions of their forefathers.—*Whitby's and Poole's Annotations.*

^d Those who are minded to depreciate our Saviour's miracles will needs persuade us that the Jews, having a notion that the diseases whose symptoms they could not account for were inflicted by devils, whom God might employ to chastise mankind, did therefore give the name of evil spirits to several distempers which proceeded merely from natural causes; that, of these distempers, such as had any thing loathsome or nauseous attending them, they generally called by the name of 'an unclean spirit;' and that, because sepulchres, of all other places, were reputed the most polluted; therefore whenever any crazy or melancholic people took it in their heads to frequent such places, they were always said to be possessed with such spirits; see *Beausobre's Annotations* on Mat. iv. 24. and x. 1. But how groundless this whole hypothesis is, we shall take occasion to show at large, in our answer to the objections belonging to this chapter.

^e It may justly be made a question, whether the devil, who possessed this man, did actually know our Saviour to be the Son of God, as he pretended? There are two evangelists who relate this miracle, and, in the conclusion of it, both tell us that our Saviour 'suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him to be Christ,' (Mark i. 34; Luke iv. 41.) But, notwithstanding this, some interpreters do not scruple to affirm the contrary, namely, that the devil had no perfect perception of our Lord's divinity, until his resurrection from the dead. The state of humiliation which he chose, the obscurity in which he lived, and the persecutions which he suffered, without ever employing his power to redress them; the care which he took to conceal his most renowned actions, and to refer the glory of them all to God alone, deceived the devil, and kept him in suspense. For, had he known Jesus, say they, he would never have put it into the heart of Judas to betray, or of the Jews to crucify him, since this was the proper way to accomplish man's redemption. But the answer to this is obvious. That though the devil did know Jesus to be the Messiah, yet he did not know the mystery of man's redemption. When he first essayed our Lord in his temptations, he spake indeed in a different manner, 'If thou be the Son of God;' but by his defeat he soon perceived that his antagonist was more than man. Though, therefore, he perfectly knew him to be the Son of God, yet seeing him invested with our nature, he might, very likely, be so far infatuated as to think that, by destroying his humanity, he might possibly defeat God's great design. For how sublime soever we may suppose his intellectual faculties to be, yet the wonderful work of man's salvation by the death of Christ, the apostle plainly tells us, is what no finite understanding could comprehend, until 'God was pleased to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, to the intent that now, unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord,' Eph. iii. 9, &c.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^f Fevers are common distempers, and very often cured by ordinary means, so that the nature of this miracle did not lie in the cure of an incurable disease, but in the manner of the cure, which was with a touch; the suddenness of it; her fever immediately left her; and the perfectness of it, in that she was able to rise and wait on the company. This is said to be Peter's wife's mother; and from hence it may be presumed, that Peter, who was himself of Bethsaida, had married a woman of Capernaum,

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ment restored her to such perfect health, that immediately she arose, and, as if she had never been sick, waited on the company. This, and the other miracle in the synagogue, as soon as the sun was set, and the sabbath ended, gathered all the city together about Peter's house, bringing demoniacs, ^a and diseased people of all kinds, and begging the relief of this heavenly physician, who very readily cured them all, by a touch only, or the imposition of his hand.

The next morning he retired very early into a private place, that, being free from the noise and importunities of the multitude, he might have an opportunity to pray; but even in his solitude he was found out; and therefore, to disengage himself from such a crowd of attendants, he told his disciples that the purport of his mission was to preach the gospel in other neighbouring cities; and, therefore, leaving Capernaum, he made a progress into Galilee, preaching in their public synagogues, curing all kinds of distempers, and dispossessing all demoniacs that were brought to him.

In his progress through Galilee, he met with a man overspread with a foul leprosy, ^b whom, upon his humble

and there lived with his mother-in-law.—*Poole and Beausobre's Annotations.*

^a This plainly shows, that the curing of diseases, and the casting out of devils, were two distinct things, and consequently the error of those who, in their annotations upon the very texts where they are mentioned separately, endeavour to persuade us that the devils cast out were only diseases.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^b No disease with which the human family has been afflicted, has been more dreadful than that which is often mentioned in the Bible as the leprosy. It first exhibits itself on the surface of the skin. The appearance is not always the same, but it commonly resembles the spot made by the puncture of a pin, or the pustules of a ring worm. The spots generally make their appearance very suddenly. Perhaps its appearance might be hastened by any sudden passion, as fear or anger. (See Num. xii. 10; 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.) The spots commonly exhibit themselves, at first, on the face, about the nose and eyes, and increase in size a number of years, till they become as large as a pea or a bean. There are three kinds of leprosy, distinguished by the appearance of the spots: the white, the black, and the red leprosy. These spots, though few at first, gradually spread till they cover the whole body. But though the appearance of the disease is at first in the skin, yet it is deeply seated in the bones, and marrow, and joints of the body. We have reason to suppose that it is concealed in the system for a number of years, in children, till they arrive at the age of puberty; and in adults, for three or four years, till at last it gives fearful indications on the skin of its having gained a well rooted and permanent existence. A leprous person may live twenty, or thirty, or even fifty years, if he received the disease at his birth, but they will be years of indescribable misery. The bones and marrow are pervaded with the disease. The malady advances from one stage to another with slow and certain ruin. 'Life still lingers amidst the desolation' the joints, and hands, and feet, lose their power; and the body collapses, or falls together, in a form hideous and awful. There is a form of the disease in which it commences at the extremities: the joints separate; the fingers, toes, and other members one by one fall off; and the malady thus gradually approaches the seat of life. The wretched victim is thus doomed to see himself dying piecemeal, assured that no human power can arrest for a moment the silent and steady march of this foe to the seat of life. This disease is contagious and hereditary. It is easily communicated from one to another, and is transmitted to the third and fourth generation. The last generation that is afflicted with it commonly exhibits the symptoms by decayed teeth, and fetid breath, and diseased complexion. Moses gave particular directions by which the real leprosy was to be distinguished from other diseases. (See Lev. xiii.) The leprous person was, in order to avoid contagion, very properly separated from the congregation. The inspection of the disease was committed to the priest; and a declaration on his part that the person was healed, was sufficient evidence to re-

petition, with one touch ^c he immediately healed, but at the same time ^d gave him direct charge not to discover it to any one, until he ^e had presented himself before the

store the afflicted man to the congregation. It was required also that the leprous person should bring an offering to the priest of two birds, commonly doves, one of which was slain, and the other dismissed, (see Lev. xiv.) In compliance with the laws of the land, Jesus directed the man that he had healed to make the customary offering, and to obtain the testimony of the priest that he was healed.—*Barnes on the Gospels.*—Ed.

^c But how came our Saviour to run the hazard of making himself unclean, (Lev. v. 3,) by touching one that was manifestly so? No, whatever the law concerning the leper's uncleanness might be, it seems as if the priest that officiated about him was not affected by it, because we find him directed to make so near an examination and inspection into his distemper, (Lev. xiii. 14, &c.) Aaron, we may observe, though he officiated about his sister Miriam in her leprosy, is not said to have contracted any pollution by it; and therefore well might a much greater high priest than Aaron, in virtue of his office, claim the same immunity. But then, in virtue of his divinity, it was impossible for him to incur any legal uncleanness. As therefore the effect wrought upon this leper was a plain demonstration, that the finger of God was in it, and he consequently approved of the action; so the Jews make it a received rule, that a prophet might vary from, and even change, the ritual law; and from hence we may infer, that as Elijah and Elisha both might touch the dead children whom they raised to life again, without imputation of uncleanness, (1 Kings xvii. 19, and 2 Kings iv. 34,) so might our Saviour touch this leper: though the opinion of some is, that he did not properly touch him as a leper, because the moment that he stretched out his hand, the leprosy was cured: but if it were not, the observation of Theophylact, on Luke vi. 13, still stands good, namely, "That our Lord might touch the leper, in order to show that it was not necessary to observe those lesser matters of the law; that touching an unclean person did not defile one that was pure himself; and that the only thing indeed that did defile was the leprosy of the soul." *Calmet's Commentary, and Whitby's Annotations.*

^d If it be asked, why our Saviour should so often command the concealing his miracles? we may assign for reasons, not only his modesty and great humility, that there might be no appearance of ostentation in him, and that the Jews might have no pretence to accuse him of seeking his own glory, (Mat. xii. 16,) but because at this time it was not proper to irritate the scribes and Pharisees, who had already made him quit Judea, too much. He knew that in such a determinate space, they would bring about what God in his counsel had decreed. In the mean time, he was to 'work the works of him that sent him, while it was day,' (John ix. 4,) and to propagate his gospel, as much as possibly he could, both among the Jews and the Gentiles, which could not have been so conveniently done, if the greatness of his miracles had once provoked the malice and envy of his enemies to make their utmost opposition against him. He knew likewise the mad and capricious humour of the multitude, and had reason to apprehend that they might 'come and take him away by force, and make him a king,' (John vi. 15,) if all his miracles had been blazed abroad, before he had sufficiently instructed them in the spiritual nature of his kingdom. As therefore he was far from being a friend to popularity or sedition, he desired that several of his miracles might be suppressed, lest any bad consequences should attend the publication of them, until his own resurrection from the dead should be an undeniable proof and confirmation of all the rest. And this I take to be the reason of his referring the Pharisees, when they came to demand a sign of him, to that of the prophet Jonah, (Mat. xii. 39,) whereby he implied that he would use no more means for their conviction, until, by the miracle of his resurrection, his divine power, and the completion of the ancient types and prophecies should be so dilucdly manifested, as to leave them without any excuse.—*Calmet's Commentary; Beausobre and Hammond's Annotations.*

^e The priesthood, at this time, was much degenerated from its primitive institution, and many human rites and ordinances were added to God's law concerning the priest's examination of the leper who pretended to be clean; and yet our Lord sent this leper to submit to all these newly invented ceremonies, as know-

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priest, and offered the sacrifice that was appointed for a testimony ^a of his cure : but the poor man, out of the abundance of his joy, could not refrain from publishing it abroad wherever he came, which still increased our Saviour's fame, so that he avoided returning openly to Capernaum, lest the multitude of his followers should give some umbrage to the state ; and therefore, having finished his progress through Galilee, which lasted for almost three months, he retired into a desert place, and there employed some part of his time in prayer.

Upon leaving his retirement, he went privately into Capernaum, but it was not long before he was discovered ; and as soon as he was, such vast crouds were gathered together to hear his sermons, and to bring their diseased for cure, that the house where he was, and all the court-yard about it, were not sufficient to contain them. In the house were many great persons, Pharisees and doctors of the law from Jerusalem and Judea, as well as Galilee, who, led thither by their curiosity, sat hearing his discourses, and observing his miracles, when four men came bearing a paralytic ^b on

his bed; but finding it impossible to pass through the throng, they adventured to uncover the house, ^c and to let down the sick man, bed and all, into the very room where he was sitting.

Our Blessed Saviour, being not a little pleased with such an instance ^d of their faith, and reliance on his mercy, was resolved to cure the man ; and accordingly, in the first place, he gave him an absolution ^e from his

17.) Other instances of this malady occur in Mat. xii. 10, and John v. 3. 5.—(5.) The Cramp. This, in oriental countries, is a fearful malady, and by no means unfrequent. It originates from the chills of the night: the limbs, when seized with it, remain immovable, sometimes turned in, and sometimes out, in the very same position as when they were first seized. The person afflicted resembles a man undergoing the torture, *βαρυν-ζουμεν*, and experiences nearly the same sufferings. Death follows this disease in a few days. Alcimus was struck with it (1 Mac. ix. 55.—58.) as also was the centurion's servant. (Mat. viii. 6.)—*Horne's Introduction*, vol. iii. pp. 516, 517.—Ed.

^c But how could they possibly uncover the house, when they could not so much as get to it, much less get upon it, by reason of the throng that was before the door? Now, to have a right notion of this matter, we must observe, that the houses in Judea were, for the most part, even as they are to this day, (*Sandys's Travels*, p. 36,) low built, and flat roofed, and surrounded with a battlement about a breast high, according to God's own injunction, Deut. xxii. 8 ; so that, to go up to the top of their houses, the Jews had two ways ; one by a pair of stairs within the house, leading up to the trap-door, which lay even with the roof ; and the other on the outside of the house, by a ladder, or pair of stairs rather, either fixed or movable, by which they could ascend to the roof when they pleased, without ever going into the house itself. Since this then was the general fashion of Jewish houses, we need not doubt but that this at Capernaum was of the same figure and make ; and therefore the bearers of the paralytic, finding that they could not come at the door by reason of the crowd, be-thought themselves of another expedient. They went round about a private way, and coming to the stairs which stood on the outside of the house, up these they carry him, and presently gain the top. But finding the trap-door, or way of the roof, as the Jews call it, shut against them, immediately they go to work, and forcing it open, which St Mark calls ' uncovering or breaking up the roof,' (chap. ii. 4.) because the door, which lay even with the roof, when let down and shut, was reputed a part of it, they conveyed him down that way, which St Luke calls letting him down through the tiling, that is, through the roof, which, except where the door was, was all paved with large tiles, and by this means they found it no difficult matter to place him in the midst before Jesus.—*Calmet's Commentary* ; and *Pearce's Vindication of our Saviour's Miracles* ; see on this subject *Calmet's Dictionary*, art. House ; *Horne's Introduction*, vol. iii. pp. 385, 386 ; *Paxton's Illustrations*, vol. ii. pp. 537—540.—Ed.

^d Some have supposed that, because the history makes no mention of any faith, but that of the friends and bearers of this impotent man, therefore the patient himself had no part in that virtuous disposition which inclined our Saviour to compassionate him ; and thence they infer how far a man may be benefited by the faith and intercessions of others in his behalf. But it is a mistake to think that the words ' their faith ' exclude that of the sick person : for had he not been persuaded that Christ was able to cure him, he would never have suffered himself to be presented to him, in a method so troublesome to his weak condition. We read indeed of no petition he made to our Lord, but the violence of his distemper might possibly have deprived him of the use of speech ; or, if it had not, the very spectacle of a body so debilitated, the manner of the action, and the fatigue which he must have undergone in it, all spake for him, and carried a more moving eloquence than it was possible for any tongue to utter.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.

^e The Jews were of this persuasion.—That every disease of the body, those especially which were of a grievous nature, were sent upon men for the punishment of their sins ; and though they might carry this maxim too far (John ix. 3.), yet sure it is, that the scriptures represent most of the calamities of life as the natural effect of men's iniquities. And therefore some have

ing that though they did indeed corrupt, yet they did not extinguish the divine institution. The divine institution was no more than this,—That when a leper was cured he was to appear at the city gate, and the priest was to examine whether he was truly healed or no ; that if he was, the priest received him into the city, and by degrees into the temple, whither he should bring two clean birds of any kind, the marginal note says sparrows, and, having made a bunch of cedar and hyssop mixed together, should tie them with a scarlet riband made of wool ; that to this bunch of cedar and hyssop one of these birds should be fastened alive, and the other killed by the leper that was cured, and its blood received in a vessel, filled with water ; that when this was done, the priest should take the bunch with the live bird, and having dipped both in the water, tinged with the blood of the other bird, should seven times sprinkle the leper with it ; and that, after this, the live bird should be let loose to fly where it would, and the person, thus healed and purified, should again be admitted to the society of the healthy, and a communion in religious offices. (Lev. xiv. 1, &c.)—*Whitby's and Hammond's Annotations*.

^a Various are the senses of the words, ' a testimony to them ; ' for they may signify, that the gift or oblation which the leper was to carry, would be a means to evince the perfection of his cure, when the priests had examined and admitted it as such ; that this would likewise be an evidence to the people, who stood by at that time and saw him cured, when they should hear that the priests had pronounced him clean ; a proof to the priests, that himself was an observer of the law, by requiring his patient to comply with the ceremonies of it ; and a full demonstration that he was a prophet come from God, since they themselves owned, that a leprosy could only be cured by the finger of God.—*Beausobre's*, *Hammond's*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^b The palsy of the New Testament is a disease of very wide import, and the Greek word, which is so translated, comprehended not fewer than five different maladies, namely, (1.) Apoplexy, a paralytic shock, which affected the whole body ;—(2.) Hemiplegy, which affects and paralyzes only one side of the body ; the case mentioned in Mat. ix. 2, appears to have been of this sort ;—(3.) Paraplegy, which paralyzes all the part of the system below the neck ;—(4.) Catalepsy, which is caused by a contraction of the muscles in the whole or part of the body ; the hands, for instance. This is a very dangerous disease ; and the effects upon the parts seized are very violent and deadly. Thus, when a person is struck with it, if his hand happens to be extended, he is unable to draw it back : if the hand be not extended, when he is so struck, he is unable to extend it. It seems to be diminished in size, and dried up in appearance ; whence the Hebrews were accustomed to call it a ' withered hand.' The impious Jeroboam was struck with catalepsy (1 Kings xiii. 4—6.) ; the prophet Zechariah, among the judgments he was commissioned to denounce against the ' idol shepherd that leaveth the flock,' threatens that ' his arm shall be dried up.' (Zech. xi.

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sins. This provoked the indignation of the scribes and Pharisees, as deeming him guilty of blasphemy^a because none, as they imagined, could forgive sins, but God alone. But he, knowing their secret thoughts, first re-proved their censoriousness; and then, by curing the patient before them, plainly demonstrated what authority he had to forgive sins. For though the power of healing be much inferior to that of forgiving sins; yet, because it is not so easy to impose a cure upon the world, where men's senses are witnesses, as remission of sins, which is a secret and invisible operation; therefore all the people, who were convinced by their eyes of the efficacy of Christ's last words, 'Rise and walk,' were satisfied of the truth of the former, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' And accordingly they glorified the Almighty, who had manifested such power on earth, and being filled with reverential fear declared that 'they had seen strange and wonderful things that day.'

While our Lord continued at Capernaum, he went out one day, as frequently he did, to the lake-side, and finding one Matthew,^b otherwise named Levi, the

observed, that as the word *sins* is frequently put for the punishment of sins, our Saviour's forgiving the man's sins was no more than a declaration of his intention to cure his distemper. Instead of 'thy sins be forgiven thee' (Mat. ix. 5), it is better to render 'thy sins are forgiven thee,' affirmatively; for, had it been a prayer, the Jews would not have objected to it. If nothing more was meant by our Saviour's words, than the removal of the temporal punishment of sin, the scribes could not have charged Christ with blasphemy. There would be no blasphemy in a miraculous cure. It is plain therefore that they understood our Lord as remitting the eternal punishment of the paralytic's sins, and that he does assume this power appears from ver. 5, 'Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk,' which shows that Christ makes a distinction between the forgiveness of sins and the cure of diseases; and in the next verse he lays claim to the former, and performs the miraculous cure as a proof that he 'had power on earth to forgive sins'—a proof of Christ's Deity, as God only can forgive sins.—*Holden's Christian Expositor*.—Ed.

^a This word, in heathen writers, signifies no more than slander, calumny, or opprobrious language of any kind, such as tends to impair a man's good name; but in the sacred style it means unworthy and injurious talk concerning God's nature or attributes; as when we ascribe unto him such qualities as belong not to him, or rob him of those that do: to him, the infirmities of man; or to man, the perfections of God. This is the nature of the sin; and the punishment of it, under the law, was 'stoning without the gates of the city,' Lev. xxiv. 15, 16.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b Grotius, and those that follow him, are of opinion, that the Levi mentioned, Luke v. 27, is not the same with Matthew, in Mat. ix. 9, because Matthew never calls himself Levi, nor does Mark or Luke ever call Levi Matthew. But the answer to this has long since been given by St Jerome, in Mat. ix. 9, namely, that the other two evangelists, as their charity and good nature became them, endeavour to cover the infamy of their brother's former way of life, and therefore never call him the *publican*, lest they should seem to reproach him with the remembrance of his former conversation, but speak of him under his other name; though he, out of his great humility, in the gospel written by himself, does not only take the more commonly known name of *Matthew*, but adds that odious title likewise of *Matthew the publican*. Since then the custom of having more names than one, is known to have prevailed among the Jews; and as St Mark calls him Levi, the son of Alphaeus; so Matthew, in all church history, is said to be the son of one of the same name; and since the history of the person called Levi in Mark and Luke, agrees so exactly with what is said of him, who, in the other evangelist, is called Matthew, that there is not one circumstantial difference to be perceived, we cannot but conclude that this Matthew and Levi were one and the same person.—*Whitby's Annotations, and Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

son of Alphaeus, a rich publican, sitting in his office,^c he asked him to be one of his disciples, who immediately^d forsook his gainful employment, and afterwards became both an apostle and evangelist. Within a few days after his conversion, Matthew invited our Saviour and his disciples, and, among others, some of the profession which he had forsook, to a feast. The scribes and Pharisees, who accounted all in a manner sinners, besides themselves, but more especially these^e publicans, began to expostulate with these disciples, how it came to pass that their Master, who set himself up for a preacher of righteousness, and a reformer of others, came to be so intimate with these lewd and lost wretches, as to sit and eat with them at the same table: but, when our Saviour undertook the argument, he gavé so fair an account of the reasons for his conversing with these people, as made the very objection^f become his apo-

^c 'Sitting at the receipt of custom.' The publicans had houses or booths built for them at the foot of bridges, at the mouth of rivers, and by the sea shore, where they took toll of passengers that went to and fro. Hence we read of the tickets of seals of the publicans, which when a man had paid toll on one side of a river, were given him by the publican to show to him that sat on the other side, that it might appear he had paid. On these were written two great letters, larger than those in common use.—Ed.

^d The old enemies of our religion, Julian and Porphyry, accused Matthew of folly and inconsiderateness, in following a man whom he knew nothing of. But St Jerome's reply is,—That he could not want a sufficient knowledge both of our Saviour's doctrines and miracles before his call. The publicans, we find, were great frequenters of the synagogues and other places where our Saviour taught, and, of all others, expressed the greatest eagerness to be instructed by him; and therefore, if Matthew was of the same disposition, he could not want opportunities of being acquainted with our Saviour's preaching, and of the wonderful works which he did every where, but more especially at Capernaum. It is very probable, therefore, that Matthew, upon such conviction, was inclinable to become one of our Saviour's disciples, even before he asked him: but if he was not, the lustre and majesty of the divinity hid under the manhood, but shining conspicuously in the face of Jesus Christ, was enough to attract every one that he cast his eyes upon; at least, that powerful impulse which he, to whom all hearts are open, knew how to inject into Matthew's breast, could not fail to do it: and from this supernatural movement doubtless it chiefly was, that so readily, and without the least hesitation, he left all, and followed Christ.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^e Nor was it only among the Jews, but among the heathens likewise, that the name of a *publican* was infamous. For, according to their writers, they were accounted no better than thieves and cheats: free violence, and unpunished rapine, and shameless covetousness, were their public profession. Πάντες τιλῶναι πάντας εἰς ἐξουσίαν, was the saying of the poet; and it is said of Theocritus, that being asked, which was the most cruel among the beasts? his reply was, "That, of those in the mountains, the bear and the lion; but of those in the city, the publicans and sycophants."—*Whitby's and Hammond's Annotations*.

^f The arguments which our Saviour uses to the Pharisees for his keeping company with publicans and sinners, are these three:—1st. 'They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick,' Mat. ix. 12; by which he intimates to them, that, in conversing with such sort of persons, he was about the discharge of his proper business; and that as a physician's profession did sometimes call him among patients that had the most virulent distempers; so he, whose office it was to heal souls, ought not to refuse his assistance to those whose circumstances most of all wanted his help and advice. 2d. God's saying, in the prophet Hosea, (chap. vi. 6.) 'that he would have mercy,' meaning thereby all the kind offices whereby we promote our neighbour's advantage, 'rather than sacrifice,' that is, the rites and ordinances of the ceremonial law; whereby he taught them, that though these latter might, in their due place

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logy. But all this would not content the Pharisees; and therefore, joining with some of John's disciples, that were then present, they came and demanded of him, why it was that his disciples observed no fasts, when ^a they, and John's disciples, were known to keep many, to which he replied, 'that it was not the proper season for the ^b friends of the bridegroom to fast and afflict themselves, ^c while they had the bridegroom's company,

and season, be acceptable to God, yet charity to the souls of men (which was the highest act of mercy, and that wherein he was then employing himself) was much more esteemed by him. 3d. That 'he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;' or that the great design of his appearance in the world was, to change the corrupt manners and dispositions of men; a change, which the righteous standing less in need of, should no more grudge the opportunities of it to sinners, than the healthful ought to think themselves disparaged, when the physician forbears the visits to them which he makes to the sick. Some commentators however have observed in this last argument a severe irony, and thus they expound it; "I am not come to cure those that think themselves well, nor to save those that account themselves righteous, as you Pharisees seem to do; but I am come to cure those who find themselves sick, and are sensible of the burden of their manifold iniquities, as these publicans seem to be."—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^a Besides the public fasts appointed by the church, the Pharisees in general did fast two days every week, and those of more strictness than ordinary, four. The disciples of John too, who was himself a man of such abstinence, that our Saviour says of him, 'he came' comparatively, 'neither eating nor drinking,' (Mat. xi. 18.) did, no doubt, in a great measure follow the example of their Master; and now that he was confined in prison, might, very probably, double their fasts and their prayers to God for his deliverance. And if they and the Pharisees were able to do this, why should the disciples of Christ be deemed insufficient? Now, to this it may be answered, that among the Jews there were not only the sects of the Essenes and Pharisees, who led an austere life, but also schools of the prophets, many of whom were Nazarites, and consecrated to the service of God; and that, besides these, the Jews had likewise academical and private schools, from whence might come disciples to John, and the Pharisees, already trained up to fasting and penance, and other severe duties of religion. But now it is certain, that the disciples of our Lord were chosen from their fishing trade, and so came to him wholly unacquainted with, and unfitted for these austerities, which to impose upon them now was not necessary, because his continuance among them was not to be long, and after his departure they would have occasion more than enough, to exercise these, and many more painful duties, in the propagation of the gospel, and the persecutions which should attend it.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^b The Baptist, in his discourse to his disciples, had compared our Saviour to a bridegroom, and himself to his friend, or chief guest, John iii. 29; and therefore, as our Saviour designedly makes use of the same allusion, his argument runs thus,—"I am the bridegroom, and my church is my bride; as long as I am here, lasts the marriage-feast, and my disciples are the children or friends of the bridegroom, and so are not to mourn, but to rejoice with me while this time lasts: but, at my death and departure, this bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then it will be time for them to fast and mourn."—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^c 'Children of the bride chamber.' Great mirth and cheerfulness accompanied the celebration of nuptials among the Jews. The children of the bride-chamber were the friends and acquaintances of the parties, and assisted in those rejoicings. But to set some bounds to their exultations, a singular ceremony was introduced, according to the rabbins:—a glass vessel was brought in amongst the company, and broke to pieces, that they might by this action restrain their joy, and not run to excess. The Gemara produces some instances of this sort. Mar, the son of Rabbena, made wedding feasts for his son, and invited the rabbins; and when he saw that their mirth exceeded its bounds, he brought forth a glass cup, worth four hundred zuzes, and broke it before them, whereupon they became sad. The reason which they assign for this action is, because it is forbidden a man to fill

but when they were deprived of it; and that it would be as imprudent and preposterous a thing, to impose rigorous austerities upon his disciples, who were but novices in religion, and inured to another way of life, as it would be to sew a piece of new cloth upon a rotten garment, which, upon any stress, would make the rent worse; or to put new wine ^d into old leathern bottles; which, upon the least fermentation, would both burst the bottles and destroy the liquor; for see the prevalence of custom, and how difficult it is to change an inveterate habit, forasmuch as ¹ 'none having drank old wine desireth new; for he saith the old is better.'

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties obviated and Objections answered.*

THAT the evangelists were persons of too much probity to deal in lies, and cunningly devised fables, is evident from their writings; wherein we find, not only the strictest prohibitions against guile and dissimulation, both in words and deeds, but such evident tokens of their simplicity and godly sincerity, as show that they would not be prevailed upon to conceal truth, even though it might tend to their lasting dishonour. For let any one tell me, how they can be supposed capable of forging any thing for the advancement of their cause, ² who have not been wanting to record the obscurity of their Master's birth and life, the poverty and reproaches he endured in his ministry, the ignominy of his passion and death, and the terrors and agonies of his mind upon the approach of them; nay, who have not dissembled their own faults and failings, their mean extraction and employments, their ignorance and mistakes, their cowardly desertion of their Lord, and many unsuccessful attempts to convert others by their preaching? Men that were thus frank and open in their proceedings, could never designedly palm any falsehoods upon the world; and if they were mistaken in some passages, it must be esteemed their misfortune, not their crime.

They were indeed illiterate men all, except St Luke, and brought up in mean employments; so very mean, that we cannot suppose them capable of writing a regular history of any kind, had they not been directed in it by the Spirit of Truth; but then to frame such an excellent system of morality as is contained in the gospels; to give such an extraordinary account of the satisfaction for sin, and of the nature and office of a mediator; to feign the life and actions of a Messiah, which should

¹ Luke v. 39.

Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

his mouth with laughter in this world.—*Lightfoot's Works*, vol. ii. p. 172.—ED.

^d The bottles which were in use in the east, and at this time are very common in other countries, were not made of glass, as ours are, but were certain bags made of goats' skins, being well pitched and sewed together. They are very good vessels to preserve wine, oil, or any other liquor in; and in this respect, more especially, very convenient to carry from place to place, because, fall they ever so often, they will not break, unless they be very old or decayed. In which sense our Saviour compares his disciples, before the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them, to old bottles, because they were not capable either of comprehending or practising all that perfection which he came into the world to teach mankind.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

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agree so exactly with the predictions of the prophets, and the types and prefigurations of the Mosaic law; this they were no more able to do, without the assistance of the same Divine Spirit, than they were to create a world: and yet, notwithstanding the great variety and difficulty of this province, it is wonderful to observe how all the four evangelists, who wrote at different times, and in distant places, agree, not only in the main topics, but sometimes in the most minute circumstances, ¹ inso-much that whenever they seem to disagree, which chiefly arises from them not confining themselves to the same words, or the same order of time, it looks as if the Spirit of God designed on purpose that it should be so, not only that they might be distinct witnesses of the same things, but that all succeeding ages of the Christian world might see with their eyes, that they had neither transcribed from one another, nor combined together like crafty knaves.

² The truth is, though the evangelists nowhere contradict themselves, or one another, yet they were not so solicitous to prevent their being suspected of doing so by injudicious and rash men, as they would have been had they recorded any thing but truth; because it is suitable to the simplicity of truth, not to be over nice and curious about any punctilio, and smaller circumstance, as the manner of falsehood is, but to speak fully and intelligibly, and then leave it to men whether they will believe or not. Instead of criticising, therefore, upon some difficult parts of the evangelical writers, we ought to consider their whole design, method, and contrivance; and if in these we find them rational and uniform, the common candour of mankind will hinder us from thinking them capable of any gross mistakes or inconsistencies, and where we perceive the appearance of any such, put us upon the charitable office of adjusting and reconciling them.

There is, indeed, a great and uncommon difference between St Matthew and St Luke, in their genealogies of our Saviour; but to accommodate this, we may observe, 1st. That these two evangelists were men of different nations, and in that respect had different designs. For ³ St Matthew was by birth a Jew, wrote his gospel for the benefit of the Jewish converts; and wrote it, very probably, in their language: and as he adhered to the received custom of the Jews in this matter of genealogy, he began his deduction no higher than Abraham, the father of the Hebrews; but St Luke was a Gentile, and may truly be called the evangelist, as St Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles; and, therefore, when he comes to relate the pedigree of Jesus, he takes a different method, and carries it up as far as Adam, the father of all mankind.

2d, We may observe, likewise, that St Matthew ⁴ intends only to set down our Lord's *a* political or royal

pedigree, by which he had a right to the crown of the Jews, but St Luke shows his natural descent through the several successions of those from whom he took flesh and blood: and, to this purpose, we find St Matthew, as we said just now, beginning his reckoning only from Abraham, ⁵ to whom the first promise of the kingdom was made; whereas St Luke runs his line up to Adam, the first head and fountain of human nature; which plainly shows, that the one deduced only his title to the crown, and the other the natural descent of his humanity.

3d. We may observe farther, that as David had several sons by former wives, so by Bathsheba likewise he had three besides Solomon, whereof the eldest, next to him, was Nathan, and that Christ descended naturally from David, not by Solomon, but by Nathan: for, though it be frequently said in scripture, that the Messiah should spring from David, it is never said that he should descend from Solomon; for which reason St Luke only deduces Nathan's line, which came into the possession of the throne, upon Jeconiah's captivity, and want of issue, in the person of Salathiel.

4th. We may observe again, that the crown of Judah, being now come into the line of Nathan in the person of Salathiel, and after him, in the great and renowned Zorobabel, forasmuch as the two evangelists agree from Jeconiah to Zorobabel, and after him divide, each ascribing to him a different successor, namely, the former Abiud, and the latter Rhesa, we may rationally suppose that these two were the sons of Zorobabel, and that from Abiud, the elder brother, lineally descended Joseph, according to the computation of St Matthew, and from Rhesa, the younger brother, descended Mary, of whom Jesus was born, according to the description of St Luke.

5th. Once more we may observe, that it was a custom of the Jews, not to reckon the woman by name in her pedigree, but to reckon the husband in right of his wife, for which reason, we are not to think it strange, that we find Joseph twice reckoned, first in his own right by St Matthew, and then in his wife Mary's right by St Luke; for it is certain, that Mary was properly the daughter of Eli, and that Joseph, who, in the account succeeds him, is so reckoned, not as his natural son, but as his son-in-law, instead of his wife Mary, as the manner of the Jews was: and accordingly it is remarked by some learned men, that St Luke ⁶ does not say of Joseph, that he was the son of Eli, but only *τῷ* *ἑλὶ*, he was *of* *Eli*, namely, related to him, and belonging to his family, as his son-in-law. Fit however it was, that the genealogy of Jesus should be deduced from Joseph, because it was so generally received by the Jews, that Jesus ⁷ was the son of the carpenter, ⁸ the son of Joseph; so that if Joseph had not been acknowledged to have been of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David, ⁹ since, according

¹ Grew's *Cosmologia Sacra*, p. 304.

² Jenkin's *Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, vol. ii. c. 8.

³ Bishop Kidder's *Demonstration of the Messiah*, part ii, c. 14.

⁴ South's *Sermons*, vol. iii.

⁵ Gen. xviii. 8.

⁶ Chap. iii. 24.

⁷ Mat. xviii. 55. ⁸ John vi. 42. ⁹ Whitby's *Annotations*.

a That St Matthew used the word *begat* only in a political sense, is clear from hence,—That he applies it to him who had no child, even to Jeconiah, of whom is expressly said, (Jer. xxiii. 30.) that God wrote him childless; whereupon, being deposed by the king of Babylon, Zedekiah his uncle was made king, and afterwards upon the removal of him likewise,

there remaining no more of the line of Solomon, Salathiel, being next of kin, was declared king of the Jews; which Salathiel, upon that account, is said by Matthew (chap. i. 12,) to have been begotten by Jeconiah, not because he was naturally his son, but only legally or politically so, as succeeding in the kingdom during Jeconiah's captivity.—*South's Sermons*, vol. iii.

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to the received rule of the Jews, "the family of the mother is not called a family," they would not have failed to have objected this as a just prejudice against all our Lord's pretences of being the Messiah.

The sum of these observations, in short, is this—That the royal line of David by Solomon being extinct in Jechoniah, the crown and kingdom passed into the next younger line of Nathan, another son of David, in Salathiel and Zorobabel, which Zorobabel having two sons, Abiud and Rhesa, the royal dignity descended of right upon the line of Abiud, of which Joseph was the last; and he marrying the Virgin Mary, who sprung from the line of Rhesa, the younger son of Zorobabel, and, as some imagine, having no issue himself, his right passed into the line of Mary, being next of kin, and, by that means, upon Jesus her son; so that he was both naturally the son of David, and also legally the king of the Jews, the latter of which is accounted to us by St Matthew, as the former is by St Luke.

This seems to be a pretty clear deduction of our Saviour's pedigree, and is capable of giving a fair solution to a great many of those objections, which arise from the different names, or the unequal numbers in the names, or the unequal distances from each other, which are discernible in the two genealogies. But perhaps interpreters might save themselves the trouble of giving a reason for several difficulties occurring therein, by saying that St Matthew, ² concerning whom the main dispute is, recites his account as he found it in the authentic copies of the Jews, who doubtless in every family had preserved some known and approved genealogy of their descent from Abraham, the father of their nation, in whom they so much gloried, and from whose loins they expected the promised Messiah. ^a

That even in our Saviour's time, the Jews ³ had genealogical tables, wherein they kept an account of their families and tribes, is evident from what Josephus says, namely, ⁴ That he gave the succession of his family, as he found it written in the public books; nor need we question but that the like, or greater, care was employed

to preserve the stems of the royal family of David. Since then the Jews, who lived in the time when the gospels were published, though exactly curious in things of this nature, and withal maliciously bent against Christ and Christianity, never once endeavoured to invalidate the account which these evangelists give us; this seems to be a sufficient proof, that these genealogies, when first they came abroad, were neither thought erroneous, nor inconsistent, but agreeable to the public records then in use; and if any difficulties now arise in them, they are not to be attributed to any real and intrinsic cause, but accidentally to the ignorance of interpreters, for want of proper helps, at this distance of time, whereby to explain them.

It may seem a little incongruous, perhaps, that the Baptist should deny what our Saviour confirms concerning him, namely, that he was the Elias who was to be sent before, to make preparations for his coming; but in this there will be no manner of contradiction, if it does but appear that the affirmation of the one, and the negation of the other, proceed upon different considerations. Now the state of the matter is this,—The Jews at this time were in full expectation of the Messiah; but then it was an universal belief among them, that Elias should appear before him, and that his appearance should be a certain token of his coming: this belief they founded on the prophecy of Malachi, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord;' but then they imagined, either that the body of Elijah was preserved in paradise, and should again appear upon earth at this season appointed for it, or that his body being dissolved, God would infuse the spirit of Elijah into a new one, created for that purpose. When therefore the great council of Jerusalem sent to inquire of the Baptist, whether he was either the Christ or Elias, now returned from heaven, as they imagined he was to do upon Christ's appearance, to this their sense of the question he replies, in express terms, that he was neither the one nor the other. But this does not at all interfere with our Lord's affirming, that he was the person foretold under the name and character of Elias, in the true signification of Malachi's prophecy. He was not indeed the very Elias, who had lived in king Ahab's time, of whose second coming into the world the sanhedrim now inquired, according to their misconception of that prophecy; but, according to the true construction thereof, he was the person who came in the spirit and power of Elias, of

¹ South's Sermons.

² Bishop Kidder's Demonstration, part ii, c. 14.

³ Whitby's Annotations on Mat. i. 2.

⁴ Chap. iv. 5.

^a Dr Hales has the following observations on the genealogies of Christ, which appear very satisfactory, and remove at once every difficulty, in so natural and consistent a manner, that his interpretation can hardly be rejected. "There are," says he, "two distinct genealogies given in the introductions of St Matthew's and St Luke's gospels: the former, principally designed for the Jews, traces Christ's pedigree as the promised seed, down from Abraham to David, and from him through Solomon's line, to Jacob the father of Joseph, who was the reputed or legal father of Christ, (St Mat. i. 1—16.) The latter, designed for the Gentiles, also traces it upwards from Heli the father of Mary, to David, through his son Nathan's line, and from David to Abraham, concurring with the former, and from Abraham up to Adam, who was the immediate 'son of God.' (St Luke iii. 23—38.) That Luke gives the pedigree of Mary, the real mother of Christ, may be collected from the following reasons:—1. The angel Gabriel, at the annunciation, told the Virgin, that 'God would give her divine Son the throne of his father David' (St Luke i. 32); and this was necessary to be proved by her genealogy afterwards. 2. Mary is called by the Jews *בת עלי*, 'the daughter of Eli' (Lightfoot on Luke iii. 23); and by the early Christian writers, the daughter of Joakim and Anna. But Joakim and Eliakim (as being derived from the names of God *יהוה* and *יהוה* *Jahoh* and *Eli*) are sometimes interchanged, as in

(2 Chron. xxxvi. 4.) Eli therefore, or Heli, is the abridgment of Eliakim; nor is it of any consequence that the rabbins call him *עלי*, instead of *יהוה*, the aspirates aleph and ain being frequently interchanged. 3. A similar case in point occurs elsewhere in the genealogy. After the Babylonish captivity, the two lines of Solomon and Nathan—the sons of David—unite in the generations of Salathiel and Zorobabel, and thence diverge again in the sons of the latter, Abiud and Rhesa. Hence, as Salathiel in St Matthew was the son of Jechoniah or Jehoiachin, who was carried away into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, so, in St Luke, Salathiel must have been the grandson of Neri, by his mother's side. 4. The evangelist has himself critically distinguished the real from the legal genealogy, by a parenthetical remark: *Ἰησοῦς—ὃν (ὡς ἱστορεῖτο) υἱὸς Ἰωσήφ [ἀλλ'] ὄντως υἱὸς τοῦ Ἠλίου*. 'Jesus being, as was reputed, the son of Joseph, [but in reality] the son or grandson of Heli,' by the mother's side; for so should the ellipsis involved in the parenthesis be supplied.—Hales' *Analysis*, vol. iii. pp. 42, 43, second edition.—Ed.

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whom Elias was a type, and whose temper and manner of life Elias much resembled.

How usual a thing it is for persons, who resemble others in qualities, offices, or actions, to be described by the names ^a of those whom they resemble, no one can be ignorant, who is the least acquainted either with the phrase of scripture, or with the common forms of speech. Thus the Messiah is promised by the name of David, because he was to be a king; ¹ Zadock the high priest, and his sons, are recorded by the name of Aaron, and his sons, by reason of their office; and, among us, it is no uncommon thing to call the rich man, a Cæsar; the wise man, a Solomon; the warrior, a Cæsar, an Alexander, or the like; and where then, I pray, can be the misapplication, in our Saviour's calling the Baptist by the name of Elias, when, in the severity of his life, his zeal for God's glory, his suffering persecution, his bold rebuking of vice, his reproofs of Herod, and the hatred of his incestuous queen, answerable to the prophet's chidings of Ahab, and the malice of Jezebel, he so nearly resembled the Tishbite? ² He was not indeed the real Tishbite; but, by the answer which he returns to these delegates from the sanhedrim, ³ 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord,' &c., he plainly intimates that he was the very messenger promised in Malachi, and came to discharge the office assigned to him in that prophet. So far is John's answer from contradicting what our Lord asserts of him, that it is indeed a confirmation of it.

The better to understand the nature of that taxation which St Luke ⁴ refers us to, we must observe, that every fifth year, it was a customary thing to take an account of the citizens of Rome, for which purpose there were proper officers appointed, who were called censors; ⁵ that their business was to make a registration of all the Roman citizens, their wives and children, with the age, qualities, trades, offices, and estates, both real and personal of them all; that Augustus Cæsar was the first that extended this to the provinces, and three times in his reign, first in the twenty-eighth year before the Christian era; secondly, in the eighth before it; and thirdly, in the fourteenth year after it, caused the like description to be made of all the provinces belonging to the Roman empire, and that this second enrolment, which was in the eighth year of the vulgar Christian era, that is, three years before that in which Christ was born, was the description to which Luke refers us.

Now, supposing the execution of Cæsar's decree, in every province of the Roman empire, to be committed to the governor of it; the carrying this work through all the countries that made up the province of Syria, namely, through Syria, Cælo-Syria, Phœnicia, and Judea, could not well take up less than the space of three years; for

if Joab ⁶ was nine months and twenty days in taking an account only ⁷ of the ten tribes of Israel, and in them only of such persons as were able to bear arms, we cannot think it unreasonable that the execution of the survey, which extended to all manner of persons, their possessions, qualities, circumstances, should in so large a province take up less than three years.

It is to be observed farther, that though the registration was made at this time, yet the taxes thereupon were not paid till Judea was made a Roman province, and Publius Sulpicius Quirinus, who in Greek is called *Cyrenius*, was made governor of Syria; for, before Archelaus was deposed, the Jews paid their taxes to their princes, and their princes paid their tributes to the Roman emperors; but, when Archelaus was deposed, and Judea made a Roman province, the tax was levied according to the valuation that was made eleven years before.

Upon the whole therefore it appears, that in this affair there were two distinct particular actions, done at two distinct particular times, namely, first, the making of the survey, and then the levying the tax thereupon; so that, if what is said in Luke ii. 1, be understood of the former of these, and what he said in verse 2, only of the latter, this will remove all difficulties, and reconcile that evangelist with Josephus; and that it is to be thus understood we have the opinion of many learned interpreters.

The truth is, ⁸ this levy of the tax, which was settled eleven years before, in the time when Cyrenius was procurator of Syria, ^a was attended with so many commotions and seditious tumults, that the evangelist thought he could not make mention of its being decreed, without giving some hint of the manner of its being executed: and therefore he puts it in, by way of parenthesis, that ⁹ 'this taxing was first made,' that is, first put in execution, 'when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.' ^b

There is a passage indeed in the prophet Isaiah, which

⁶ 2 Sam. xxiv. 8.

⁷ 1 Chron. xxi. 6.

⁸ Beausobre's Annotations.

⁹ Luke ii. 2.

^a The account which Josephus gives us of this matter is this:—"Cyrenius, at this time," says he, "was sent governor by Cæsar into Syria. He was a man of eminent fame, a Roman senator, and one that had passed through all the degrees and offices of honour up to the dignity of a consul. Coponius, who commanded the horse, went along with him as governor of Judea; but Judea being already annexed to Syria, it was Cyrenius's province to tax and cess the Jews, and to make seizure of the monies and movables of Archelaus. The Jews grumbled at this way of assessing at first, but through the persuasion and authority of the high priest Joazar, the son of Boethus, they were persuaded to submit and comply without any further trouble, until one Judas, a Gaulonite, of the city of Gamala, together with one Sadducus a Pharisee, inveigled the people into a revolt. Taxes, they said, were only marks of slavery, and therefore the whole nation should do well to stand up for an universal liberty; and one lucky hit would make them free and easy for ever, and advance them in their reputation, as well as secure them in their possessions. This was enough to put the multitude in tune for any sort of mischief; nor is it to be expressed the havoc these turbulent incendiaries made in the nation, and what murders, robberies, and depredations, without distinction of friend or foe, they committed, under the pretence of advancing the common good of liberty and property, when nothing but passion and private interest was at the bottom."—*Antiq.* b. xviii. c. 4.

^b If the solution be not satisfactory, the reader may consult Dr Hales' Analysis, vol. iii. page 48, et seq.; the disquisition is too long to be inserted here.—*En.*

¹ Exek. xxxiv. 23, 24.

² Kidder's Demonstration, part ii. c. 16; and Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. i.

³ Mark i. 3. ⁴ Chap. ii. 1. ⁵ Prideaux's Connect., part ii. b. 9.

^a Thus the poet calls Turnus another Achilles:

—In Latium there has appeared another Achilles, and he is also born of a goddess—

And elsewhere he uses the same liberty of speech:

—There shall be another Typhis, and another Argo, which will carry the bravest of heroes; there shall be also other wars, and once again the mighty Achilles shall be sent to Troy.

Virg. Æn. 6, and *Ecol.* 4.

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St Matthew applies to the birth of Jesus, yet, according to the context, it seems at first sight to have a more immediate reference to another event; but let us examine the history from whence it is taken. In the days of Ahaz, king of Judah, and probably in the second or third year of his reign, Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, united their forces to come against Jerusalem, which put the king and his people in such consternation,¹ 'that their hearts were moved,' according to the scripture expression, 'as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind.' Hereupon Isaiah is commanded to take his little son Shear-jashub with him, and to go and meet Ahaz, in order to assure him, that the design formed against him by the two confederate kings should not prosper: but finding no credence with the king, the prophet undertakes to perform whatever miracle he should ask, in confirmation of the truth of what he had promised him. Ahaz however still refusing, out of a specious pretence of not being willing to tempt God, the prophet turns from him, and addressing himself to the nobles of the royal blood,² 'Hear ye now, O house of David,' says he, 'the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.'

Now, not to insist upon the original word *Alma*,^a which, as³ learned men have observed, signifies almost always a virgin untainted by man, and which the Greek translators before Christ, who were not interested in the controversy, and yet knew the signification of Hebrew words much better than any moderns can pretend to, have so rendered this place; and, not to insist upon the tradition which prevailed among the Jews, not long before our Saviour's appearing, namely, that the Messiah should come into the world in such an extraordinary manner, that 'no man should know whence he was,' and, as the Talmud expresses it, 'that his birth should be like the dew of the Lord, as drops from the grass, expecting

not the labour,' or action of men; not to insist on these things, I say, though they make very much for Christ's title to the prophecy,⁴ how can we imagine, that, after so pompous an introduction, and so important a name, the prophet should mean no more at last, by a virgin's conceiving, than that a young woman should be with child? What, does Isaiah offer Ahaz a miracle, either in the depth or in the height above? and when he seems to tell the house of David, that God, of his own accord, would perform a greater work than they could ask, does he sink to a sign that nature produces every day? Is that to be called a wonder, which word implies an uncommon, surprising, and supernatural event, which happens constantly by the ordinary laws of generation? How little does such a birth answer the solemn apparatus which the prophet uses, to raise their expectation of some great matter? 'Hear ye, O house of David,—Behold, the Lord himself will give you a sign,' worthy of himself, and what is it? why, a young married woman shall be with child. How ridiculous must such a discovery make the prophet, and how highly must it enrage the audience to hear a man, at such a juncture as this, begin an idle and impertinent tale, which seems to banter and insult their misery, rather than administer any consolation under it.

⁵ But of what use or consolation could the future birth of the Messiah be to the house of David at that time? Of very great use, without all doubt; for it assured them of the truth of God's promise, in that he would not suffer them to be destroyed, nor,⁶ 'the sceptre to depart from Judah,' until the Messiah came. It assured them of his almighty power, in that he could create a new thing in the earth, by making a virgin conceive, and thereby show himself able to deliver them from their most potent enemies; and it assured them likewise of his peculiar favour, in that he had decreed the Messiah should descend from their family; so that the people to whom he had vouchsafed so high a dignity, might depend upon his protection, and, under the shadow of his wings, think themselves secure.⁷ In short, God had promised the Messiah should spring from the tribe of Judah, and from the family of David, even while that tribe, and that family, continued a polity undestroyed; and therefore, since that promise was not yet absolved, nor the Messiah as yet come, there was no fear of the extinction of Judah, and the house of David, at that time, whatever their present distress might be; but as God's promises were immutable, they had all manner of reason to believe, that the enemies now combined against them would, by some turn of Providence or other, be disappointed in their design.

Thus one great prophecy at least in the Old, as well as sundry promises in the New Testament, made it a thing necessary that when the Son of God came to be incarnate, he should be born of a pure and immaculate virgin; and it is impious to dispute the possibility of the thing, when God Almighty was the agent of it: but why this virgin should be⁸ married, rather than a single woman, is the other question we are to resolve. And in order to do this, we must observe, that by this means Mary's genealogy, not only by her father's side, which

¹ Is. vii. 2.

² Is. vii. 13, 14. ³ Kidder's Demonstration, part ii. c. 5.

^a *Alma* comes from the Hebrew word, which signifies to *hide*, and very fitly agrees with the customs of the eastern countries, who were wont to keep their daughters, while they were in their virginity, from all company and public conversation, and interviews. Thus, it is said, upon a public and extraordinary consternation, 'the virgins, who were kept in, ran, some to the gates, and some to the walls, and others looked out of the windows,' 2. Mac. iii. 19. But there is another, and more proper signification, which, from the same word, that signifies to *hide* or *cover*, this *Alma* will bear, namely, as it denotes one who has not known man, or, according to the scripture phrase, one whose nakedness has not been uncovered. The knowledge of a woman is expressed in the law of Moses by 'uncovering her nakedness,' and, agreeably hereunto, *Alma* is a most proper word for a virgin, who is covered, and whose nakedness was never uncovered, or revealed by the knowledge of man. This account is perfectly agreeable to the Hebrew manner of speech, and to the style of the law of Moses. But this is not all; as several learned men have shown, that there is a great affinity between the Hebrew and Punic language, this makes the words of St Jerome more remarkable: "In the Punic language, which is said to be derived from the Hebrew, she who is properly a virgin is called *Alma*," in Isaiah c. vii. especially considering that St Matthew renders it by the word *παρθένης*, which signifies a virgin, properly so called, the very same word that the Seventy interpreters made use of, about three hundred years before St Matthew wrote his gospel, and consequently long enough before this controversy arose between Jews and Christians.—Bishop Kidder's Messiah, part ii. c. 5.

⁴ Bishop Chandler's Demonstration of Christianity.

⁵ Collins's Grounds and Reasons, p. 43. ⁶ Gen. xlix. 10.

⁷ Spanheim's Dub. Evang. part i. dub. 27.

⁸ Kidder's Demonstration, part ii. b. 5.

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St Luke has recorded, but by her husband's likewise, which St Matthew has done, came to be deduced; and so we have a double testimony, that she sprang from the seed of David, and, according to the promises of old, was the true mother of the Messiah; and by this means we have the testimony of her husband Joseph concerning her virginity, who was not a little uneasy in his mind, before he had satisfaction given him by the angel, and might possibly have been the first that would have blasted her reputation, had he not been fully convinced of her innocence and modesty; that by this means our Lord's birth was secured against all imputation of spuriousness, and his mother's character protected from the persecution of opprobrious tongues, which she must have endured, if not the censure of the law, and brought withal a perpetual scandal upon her family, had not her pregnancy, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, been concealed under the umbrage of a common husband; and that by this means our Lord was provided with a guardian in his childhood and minority, and his mother with a companion in her journey she was shortly to take, from Nazareth to Bethany, and from thence into Egypt, and both of them with a supporter, who, by honest labour in his proper occupation, might provide them with the necessities of life.

These, and several other reasons, might be assigned for our Lord's choosing to be born of a virgin that went under the notion of being married; but how came he to be a man of poverty and affliction, to live meanly, and die ignominiously, when, had he been the true Messiah, he must, according to the representations made of him in the prophets, have appeared as one of the greatest monarchs in the world. This is the grand objection of the Jews; and therefore, to give it a proper solution, it ought to be considered that the ¹ Messiah, in order to accomplish the prophecies concerning him, was to sustain three different characters; for he was to be a prophet and a priest, as well as a king. The predictions indeed which refer to his kingly office, are more in number, and enlarged upon more copiously, than either of the other; yet both the other are so essential to the character of the Messiah, that had any one of these been wanting in him, the scheme of man's redemption had been broken and imperfect: and yet it is certain, that these three offices require operations, not only distinct and peculiar to each, but such as could not equally be exercised at one and the same time, by one and the same person.

As a prophet, the Messiah was not only to teach and instruct his people, but to undergo the common fate of prophets, in being despised, contradicted, persecuted, and in bearing testimony of the truth of his doctrine, by the example of his sufferings for it. As a priest, he was to make sacrifice for the sins of his people, which in this case could not be otherwise done than by offering his own blood, and consequently dying in their stead. Now, both these, in the course of things appointed by God, were to go before the entrance upon his kingly office, because the prophecies mentioned this last as a recompence for the faithful discharge of the other two. This is a matter that both the ² royal and ³ evangelical

prophet express so very plainly, that St Paul in effect does but expound these passages, when he tells the Hebrews, ⁴ that Jesus, 'for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour:' and the Philippians, ⁵ that 'for his taking upon him the form of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, God had highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name,' &c. Since, therefore, his regal office was not to commence till after he had accomplished his other two, to complain, that his kingly power was not exercised at his first coming, is to misunderstand the prophecies, and confound the order of events: it is to expect a full accomplishment of predictions within a very narrow space, that strictly belong to an office still in exercise, and to which, the scripture says, ⁶ 'there shall be no end.'

2. It is to be observed farther, that the style and manner of the prophets, especially when they treat of subjects uncommon, sublime, and spiritual, abound with figurative schemes of speech, and such pompous and bold metaphors and descriptions, taken from sensible objects, as awaken in our minds the most lofty imaginations we are capable of. This the Jews themselves make no difficulty to allow, and ⁷ some of their greatest doctors have laid it down for a rule, in the interpretation of the prophets, that in many places they are not literally to be understood, by reason of those metaphorical expressions, whose true intent is to represent things, according to our capacity, by images familiar to our senses. If, therefore, most of these great and pompous things that are said in the prophets concerning the glorious reign of the Messiah, may be understood of the spiritual benefits which we have received by his coming; such as, the grace of our regeneration and sanctification, the wisdom of his laws, the comforts of his ordinances, the holy and peaceable temper which his gospel inspires, the large extent of its propagation, and the blessed effects which in all places where it is sincerely believed and practised it produces: if things be reduced to this sense, I say, I cannot see but that the character of a powerful prince has been fulfilled in our Saviour already; for what king was ever so prosperous as he, who by the propagation of his gospel has enlarged his dominions so wonderfully over the most distant regions of the habitable world? Or what conquest was ever so glorious as that which he hath gained over errors and prejudices, the lusts and passions of wicked and mistaken men, nay, even over all the powers of darkness, and sin, and death, and hell?

But be it granted, as it seems indeed very probable, that several passages in the prophets relate to the temporal greatness, prosperity, and peace, that shall attend the government of the Messiah: yet we are to consider,

3. That, before the consummation of all things, there will be an enlargement of Christ's kingdom, even here upon earth. For, though he have all power both in heaven and earth, already vested in the human nature, united with his own divine person, yet is not that power so visibly and fully executed, as it shall one day be; nor are all these glorious effects as yet accomplished,

⁴ Chap. ii. 9.

⁵ Chap. ii. 8, 9.

⁶ Is. ix. 7.

⁷ Maim. More Nevoch., part ii. c. 39, 47; Menas Ben. Israel, Qu. in Gen. xxx.

¹ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. iii. and his seventh sermon at Boyle's Lectures.

§ Ps. xxii.

³ Is. liii.

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which the prophets foretold, when describing the victorious and peaceable, the unlimited and everlasting, dominion of the Messiah. The enlightening of the Jews and Gentiles, by bringing such multitudes of the one and so many nations of the other sort, to the acknowledgment of the truth, is already a partial completion of the prophecies; but there is still a nobler in reserve, when the fulness of both shall come in. He reigns now actually in the hearts of men, and subdues the most formidable of our enemies, by the holiness of his laws, and the mighty operations of his grace; but that dominion and conquest will be much more absolute, when the time comes for every enemy to be utterly destroyed. Though therefore the whole be not, yet abundantly enough has already been fulfilled, to make us acquiesce in a steadfast assurance, that what is still behind will most certainly come to pass. For sure, how meanly soever they that consider things imperfectly, may think of a despised and crucified man; yet there is nothing so gloriously great that may not most reasonably be expected from that very man when ¹ declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

It is made a strong objection by the Socinians, against our Saviour's being the Son of God, that, at the time of his baptism, the Holy Ghost descended upon him, for which there had been no manner of occasion, say they, had the Divinity, which was certainly no less powerful than the Holy Ghost, been personally united to him. While our blessed Saviour was discoursing concerning his approaching death, and a voice from heaven was heard speaking unto him, he told the people, who seemed to be divided in their opinions of it, ² 'This voice came not because of me,' that is, to satisfy me of the divine favour, or to comfort me against the agonies of death, 'but for your sake,' that ye might believe in me: and, in like manner, it might be a sufficient answer to this objection, that this visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon our Saviour was not for his sake, or to convey any virtue or power, that he was not equally possessed of by the divine nature that resided in him, but for the sake of the Baptist, and those that were then present with him, even to inform them of the excellency of his person, and divine mission: for though the voice, which immediately follows the prodigy, ³ 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: ⁴ Hear him ye him,' plainly shows that this whole transaction was designed for the instruction of all the company. Our Saviour indeed was now entering upon his prophetic office, and fit it was that the world should have some previous notice of it, before he came to open his commission. When he came to offer himself to John for baptism, John indeed, by some sudden inspiration, knew him; but he had not, as yet, made any public declaration of that knowledge; and therefore God took care to give the company this glorious manifestation of his being his Son, and a person sanctified by this descent of the Holy Ghost upon him to declare his will to the world, according to the prophecy ⁵ concerning him, and whose words and doctrine it therefore concerned all men to hear and obey. Our blessed Saviour indeed, as he was God, had no need of

this unction of the Holy Spirit, but as he was to execute the prophetic office, it was expedient for him to have it: for, as a prophet is not to speak in his own name, but in the name of God, and what he has suggested to him by the Spirit of God; so this prophetic office was to be performed, not by the divine nature of our Lord, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. "We must therefore," with a great divine ⁶ of our church, "distinguish between the excellencies and perfections of Christ, which flowed from the hypostatical union of the two natures, and those which flowed from the donation and anointing of the Holy Spirit. From the hypostatical union of the natures flowed the infinite dignity of his person, his impeccability, his self-sufficiency to fulfil the law, and satisfy the divine justice; as from the anointing of the Spirit flowed his knowledge of all evangelical mysteries, the doctrines and precepts which he delivered in his Father's name, and the miraculous works which he did in confirmation of his mission and doctrine." For this is plain to every one that looks into the gospels, that almost in every page our Saviour ⁷ owns his mission from God; that the doctrines which he taught were not his own, but God's; that they were all dictated by the Spirit of God; and that the miracles which he exhibited, in testimony of these, proceeded from the same Spirit of God. Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that Jesus Christ being now in a state of humiliation, and emptied of the form of God, acted, in things relating immediately to his prophetic office, not as God, but only as a prophet sent from God; not by the power of his divine nature, but of that Spirit by which he was anointed, and sanctified to that office; though, notwithstanding this quiescence in the Deity, being still God, of the same essence derived from the Father, he might do many other things by virtue of his divinity, such as discerning the hearts of all men, walking upon the sea, and stilling the stormy winds with a word, &c. And as this divinity was part of the doctrine he was to publish, he might, without any contradiction to himself, assert, that God was properly his Father, and he properly his Son; that he and his Father were one; and that 'all men were to worship the Son, even as they worshipped the Father.'

Something of the like nature is to be said in relation to our Saviour's being tempted by the devil, ^a namely,

⁶ Dr Lightfoot, on Mark xiii. 32.

⁷ See Whitby's Preface to the Gospel of St John.

^a It has been said that the circumstances which occur in the narrative of the evangelists regarding the temptation of our Lord, may be viewed, either as events which happened in the most literal meaning which the words convey; or, they may be regarded as the representation of scenes that were exhibited only in vision to the mind of Jesus; or, they may be considered as a picturesque and lively description of the seductive conceptions that were actually suggested to his mind by Satan—a description in which the tempter and his arts are brought forth before our imagination as a specimen of what takes place in every temptation that assails us. The first of these suppositions is that which has been generally adopted, and it is that to which I feel myself bound to adhere. For, does not the scripture assert in point of fact, that the devil has occasionally been permitted to appear in a bodily form? And if, as has been remarked, in the form of a serpent, he seduced the first Adam from his duty, there is nothing incongruous in the supposition that he assumed the form of a man to assail the second. He had just left the state of privacy in which his youth was spent; his approach as the Messiah pro-

¹ Rom. i. 4. ² John xii. 30. ³ Mat. iii. 17.

⁴ Mat. xvii. 5.

⁵ Is. xlii. 1.

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that though his divinity did set him far above the utmost opposition of any created being, yet did not that divinity

misled to the fathers had just been publicly announced to his countrymen by the messenger appointed to prepare the way before him; the Spirit of God had visibly descended on him in baptism; and a voice from heaven had declared, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' The time therefore was come for his appearing on a new scene—as the Teacher and Redeemer of mankind. To fulfil all righteousness, and to prove him worthy of his office, it remained that he should be tried by temptation. For this purpose he was led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness. The plan of redemption rendered it necessary that he should assume the character of the Son of man; and as a man he was liable to the same temptations which encompass his followers; for it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, and in all points tempted like as we are, though without sin. But if there be no improbability in the supposition that Jesus should be subjected to trials, it surely cannot appear incredible that the agent should have been the same malicious spirit who in the beginning deceived our first parents, and gave rise to all the wickedness and misery which we observe among their descendants, and from which it was the great object of Christ's incarnation to redeem the human race. Satan, indeed, could not but know that Jesus was the Holy One of God, who had come into the world to destroy the works of the devil; but, notwithstanding he may have had some presumptuous expectations of success in assailing him. As he had already put it into the heart of Herod to murder Jesus in his infancy, he now attempted to draw him into sin, with the view of frustrating the plan of redemption. It is probable that Satan renewed his temptations, from time to time, during the whole forty days, continually interrupting Christ's holy meditations with his hateful suggestions. Those who allege that Satan did not appear in a bodily form on this occasion, but merely assailed our Lord by his usual artifices of deceit, argue, that the method in which Satan is commonly represented in scripture as seducing mankind, is by working on their imagination and passions. He does not appear to them himself, but he places before them occasions of sin, influences the train of their thoughts, and employs against them all the deceptableness of unrighteousness, by suggesting to their minds such views as are most favourable to his purpose, by inflaming their desires, and through this medium hurrying them forward to the commission of iniquity. The power which he exerts over them operates through the force of motives and persuasion, and in a manner similar to that by which one man corrupts the principles and undermines the virtue of another. And what reason have we to believe that he acted differently in the present instance? Why may we not suppose that he employed against the human nature of Christ the same artifices that he employs against ourselves? Is it incredible that he should suggest to Jesus, pinched with hunger, that he ought no longer to wait, confiding in providence, for the usual appointed means of nourishment, but to exert his miraculous power for creating bread to himself? Is it incredible that he should suggest to Jesus, deliberating on the obligations involved in his arduous commission, some difficulties concerning the expediency of the gradual humiliating plan committed to him by his Father; and that he should inspire the thought of producing more immediate conviction on his countrymen, by descending from the pinnacle of the temple, or from the clouds of heaven; or of extending the benefits of his religion at once to the whole race, by appearing in his native dignity as the King and Sovereign of the nations? That there is nothing either incredible or improbable in supposing that Satan might labour to insinuate such thoughts into the mind of Jesus, is demonstrated by the fact that these are the very suggestions which he has committed to all his emissaries since that time, as sources of agreement against the wisdom of the plan pursued by Christ for instructing and saving mankind. Now, there can be no doubt that Satan often acted as an invisible tempter in regard to Christ, suggesting thoughts to his mind, as he does to the minds of his followers: but the form of the narration leads to the conclusion, that in the progress of the temptation, Satan assumed a bodily appearance. It has been thought that in the character in which he presented himself, he professed to be a friend, and proposed to him, that, if he were indeed the Son of God, he should command the stones before him to be made bread. Some think, that the temptation was chiefly intended to make him question, whether he were indeed the Son of God; but this seems rather

exert itself upon all occasions, but sometimes suspended its operations, and was quiescent, as we said before.

¹ That the divinity was thus quiescent in Christ, until he entered upon the public exercise of his prophetic office, is generally thought by most orthodox divines; that, in all the actions relating to the execution of that, his office, it ceased in the like manner to act, we have just now endeavoured to prove; and it is generally thought that this was the case of his temptation by the devil, in which his divine perfections lying by, as it were, and forbearing to engage, he is to be considered abstractly as a man, though much more perfect than any other man. For fit it was that he, who, for this very reason, perhaps, is called the second Adam, should overcome the great enemy of mankind, in that very nature alone, and unassisted, wherein the first Adam was so miserably foiled.

Whether the devil might know that our Saviour was in reality the Son of God, or only some peculiar favourite of his, divines are at a stand to determine. It is the observation of Origen, that ² all the while that our Saviour was under the temptation, he never confessed himself to be the Son of God: and therefore, ³ since the dispensation of the gospel was not fully and perfectly understood by good angels, but gradually manifested to them, it is no wonder that the devil should be ignorant of the mysteries of the gospel, particularly that 'great mystery of godliness, God's manifestation in the flesh.' The devil therefore, seeing our Saviour, after he had been ⁴ declared the Son of God, so long in the wilderness with wild beasts, and hungry, without any food to sustain him, might be induced to question whether he was indeed the Son of God, in the most proper and highest sense of the words, and thereupon incited to assail him: but if even he knew him ever so well, such is his inveterate malice, that it hath often prevailed with him to attempt things very foolish and impossible. For what could be more so, than for a creature to attempt to be like God, or to annul the truth of the prophecies concerning Christ? What could be more pernicious to him than the death of the Lord of life for the redemption of mankind; and yet this he attempted with the utmost eagerness, and by setting all his instruments to work to accomplish it, though ⁵ 'it was impossible for our Lord to be held under the power of death:' whatever Satan, therefore, might conceive of Christ, as Petavius retorts the argument upon the head of Crellius, he could not but certainly know from the scriptures, that he was to be the Redeemer of mankind, and the Author of their salvation; that he was 'the seed of the woman, who was to bruise his head, to sit on the throne of his father David, and there rule for ever:' and therefore, knowing all this, he could not hope to prevail in his temptations of our Lord, unless he could believe that he was able to reverse both the decrees and oath of God. Whether therefore the devil knew, or knew not, our Saviour, it may well

¹ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. ii.

² Hom. 6. in Lucam. ³ Eph. i. 10. and 1 Pet. i. 12.

⁴ Mat. iii. 17.

⁵ Acts ii. 24, 25.

to have been assumed as a kind of principle, about which queries were to be proposed; in something of the same manner, as when Eve was tempted by the serpent. But the great enemy was baffled, and angels came to honour the Redeemer, and to minister to him.—*Finlayson's Sermons*,—7 & 8th; *Scott's Commentary*.

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be deemed an infatuation in him, to think of being able to pervert him, as he had done our first parents in their obedience to God; but then, it was far from being a foolish or unnecessary thing for our Lord thus to suffer himself to be tempted,¹ since thereby he hath instructed us, that not any, the best, and most exalted degree of virtue sets men above temptations; and since thereby he has encouraged us to hope for his assistance and support under the like circumstances; both because² 'himself hath suffered, being tempted,' and because³ 'he was in all points tempted like as we are, he cannot but be touched by the feeling of our infirmities.' These were the true ends and reasons, why our Saviour suffered temptation, and the proper and natural inference from hence is that which the same author to the Hebrews makes,⁴ 'Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need.'

There are few things wherein mankind seem to be more agreed, than in the acknowledgment and acceptance of miracles, as an authentic and indisputable testimony, that the persons intrusted with such power were employed by God; because the constant apprehensions, which both reason and revelation have given us of God, are, that he will not employ his power, as no true miracles can be done without the concurrence of his power, to deceive his creatures; and therefore, the reasoning of Nicodemus, when he came to visit our Saviour, was right,⁵ 'we know that thou art a teacher come from God, because no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.' Since miracles then are the avowed effects of a divine power, we must certainly be mistaken in our judgment of them, when, with regard to their author, we esteem one greater than another. In effects, indeed, that are produced by human power, we are apt to say, that some of them are greater than others, that is, that they require more and greater degrees of power for the production of them; but this distinction vanishes in our consideration of the Supreme Being, to whose omnipotence the greatest effect we can imagine, gives no limitation, but is equal with the smallest, under the compass of his acting. To us, perhaps, it may seem a greater cure to dispossess a demon, than to drive away a fever; but in the hand of the Son of God, while he dwelt among us, they were operations equally easy; and yet a misconception in this matter has certainly led some into an opinion, that the several demoniacs mentioned in the gospels, were only so many persons afflicted with some strange and uncommon diseases.

But that these demons, or evil spirits, which our Saviour, his apostles, and the primitive Christians, expelled out of the bodies of men, could not be diseases, is plain both from the scriptures, and ecclesiastical writers, who make a constant and manifest distinction between the curing diseases and casting out of devils; for, when the evangelist tells us, that⁶ 'they brought unto Christ all sick people, that were taken with divers diseases, and those which were possessed with devils, and those that were lunatic, and had the palsy, and he healed them;' when⁷ 'he gave to the apostles power against evil

spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sicknesses and diseases;' and accordingly,⁸ 'they healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many devils;' when Irenæus⁹ informs us that the Christians, in his days, 'did truly cast out devils, and heal the sick by imposition of hands;' and¹⁰ Origen, that 'they cast out devils, and healed many diseases;' can any one of tolerable understanding think, that the diseases healed and the devils cast out, were one and the same thing?

That there were evil spirits of this kind, the holy scriptures have taken such abundant care to acquaint us with their origin and fall, their names and numbers, their government and orders, their malicious designs, and employments, &c., that no one can doubt of their existence, who believes these holy oracles to be true. That both among the Jews and Gentiles, before our Saviour's advent, men were possessed with these evil spirits, is evident from the testimony of¹¹ Josephus, who tells us of a very powerful form of exorcism, which descended from Solomon, who learned it of God; and from the testimony of¹² Plutarch, who acquaints us, that the exorcists of most nations advised those that were possessed, to repeat the Ephesian letters. And, that these evil spirits, in our Saviour's time, were distinct substances, and not the diseases of mankind, is evident from the circumstances of their ejection, from their expostulating with him, 'what have we to do with thee? Art thou come to destroy us? Art thou come to torment us before the time?' And from his commanding them sometimes to be silent, and sometimes to come out of the man, and enter into him no more, &c.

The truth is, these apostate spirits had gotten so far possession of the world, that they began to rival God in his worship; and therefore one end of his Son's incarnation is said to be this,¹³ 'that he might destroy the works of the devil,' and¹⁴ 'overcome the strong one, and divide his spoils.' And this, by the way, may suggest a reason, why at or about the time of our Saviour's advent, and perhaps more especially in the places which he frequented, God might permit the devil to exert himself in an unusual manner, in order to be the more signally triumphed over by the Saviour of the world, and those that were delegated by him to convert mankind to his religion. Nay, had I leisure to proceed to ecclesiastical writers, I might easily show how victorious the name of Christ was over these principalities and powers of darkness, even after his departure out of this world; for 'that our Lord was sent for the destruction of these evil spirits, you may now learn,' says Justin Martyr,¹⁵ 'from what is done before your eyes; for many Christians, throughout all the world, and in every city of your empire, have healed many that were possessed of the devil, and still do they eject them, by the invocation of the name of Jesus, whom none of your enchanters, conjurers, or sorcerers, were able to expel:' 'and give me a man,' says Tertullian,¹⁶ in that noble challenge of his to the heathen powers, 'give me a man here before your tribunals, that is visibly possessed by the devil;

¹ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. ii. ² Heb. ii. 18.

³ Heb. iv. 15. ⁴ Ibid. iv. 16. ⁵ John iii. 2.

⁶ Mat. iv. 24.

⁷ Ibid. x. 1.

⁸ Mark i. 34.

⁹ B. ii. c. 16.

¹⁰ Contra Celsum, b. i.

¹¹ Antiq. b. viii. c. 2.

¹² Sympos. b. i. q. 5.

¹³ 1 John iii. 8.

¹⁴ Luke xi. 22, 23.

¹⁵ Apol. i. p. 45. ¹⁶ Apol. c. 28.

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and if, when he is commanded by any Christian to declare what he is, he don't immediately confess himself to be a devil, not daring to lie to a Christian, then let the blood of that Christian be shed before you, in that very place." ^a But I forbear, and so proceed to the next objection, which relates to our Saviour's behaviour at the marriage feast.

^a Lardner, and some other writers, have supposed, that the demoniacs, or persons who were possessed by evil spirits, were only lunatics or diseased persons. They argue against the existence of real possessions on various grounds, more especially, of their being inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of the divine government. All the persons, they say, spoken of in the New Testament as possessed with devils, were either mad or epileptic, and precisely in the same condition with the madmen and epileptics of modern times. Some of the Jews, offended with Christ's discourses, said, he hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? The expressions, 'he hath a devil, and is mad,' were used, as they suppose, on this occasion, as synonymous. Those who thought more favourably of Christ, replied to the calumny of his enemies, 'These are not the words of him that hath a devil;' meaning, that they did not discover in his discourse the incoherence of a madman, or of one disordered in his understanding. Every thing, they allege, related in the New Testament concerning demoniacs, shows that they were persons affected with such natural diseases as are not uncommon among mankind in the present age. When the symptoms of the disorders which were cured by our Lord and his apostles, as cases of demoniacal possession, correspond so exactly with those of diseases well known as natural at the present time, why should we impute them to a supernatural cause? Is it not more consistent with common sense and sound philosophy, to suppose that our Saviour and his apostles adopted the vulgar phraseology in speaking of those unfortunate persons, who, without any foundation, were imagined to be possessed with demons? Now, I agree with Bishop Gleig in regarding all these objections to the literal interpretation of this part of scripture, as proceeding either from a desire to represent Christianity as nothing more than a republication of natural religion, or from a groundless apprehension of giving countenance to the lying wonders of the Church of Rome. That Christianity is something very different from any system of religion which can be called natural, it has been a main design of this work to establish. The triumphs of our Lord over the powers of darkness were an essential part of the great scheme of redemption, 'for the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.' Though some of the Jewish prophets had performed many and great miracles, and even restored the dead to life, it was yet reserved for the Son of God—the Saviour of the world—to compel the spiritual powers that were opposed to his kingdom to proclaim their own ruin:—'What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God; art thou come hither to torment us before the time?' 'When I find,' says Dr Campbell, (*Preliminary Dissertations to the Gospels*, Diss. vi.) "mention made of the number of demons in particular possessions, their actions so expressly distinguished from those of the man possessed, conversations held by the former in regard to the disposal of them after their expulsion, and accounts given how they were actually disposed of; when I find desires and passions ascribed peculiarly to them, and similitudes taken from the conduct which they usually observe; it is impossible for me to deny their existence, without admitting that the sacred historians were either deceived themselves in regard to them, or intended to deceive their readers. The language in which the demoniacs are mentioned, and the actions and sentiments ascribed to them in the New Testament, show that our Saviour and his apostles did not consider the idea of demoniacal possession merely as a vulgar error concerning the origin of a disease or diseases produced by natural causes. If any person, in compliance with popular opinions, should talk seriously of the existence, dispositions, declarations, and actions, of a race of beings whom he knew to be entirely fabulous, we certainly could not praise him for his integrity. Our Lord and his apostles talked and acted as if they believed that evil spirits had actually entered into those who were brought to them as possessed with devils, and as if those spirits had been actually expelled by their authority from the unhappy persons possessed. They also demanded that their authority and declarations should be believed, in consequence of their performing such mighty works, and thus

Our blessed Saviour indeed was a person of so grave and serious a deportment, that, whatever instances we find of his pity and compassion to mankind, of his grieving and being troubled, and even weeping upon some

triumphing over the powers of hell." The reality of demoniacal possession rests on the same evidence as the gospel system in general. There is nothing unreasonable in this doctrine. We often fancy ourselves able to comprehend things to which our understanding is wholly inadequate; we frequently persuade ourselves that the whole extent of the works of the Deity must be well known to us, and that his designs must always be such as we can understand. We are then ready, whenever any difficulty arises in considering the conduct of providence, to model things according to our own ideas, to deny that the Deity can be the author of things for which we are not able to account, and to assert that he must act on every occasion in a manner consistent with our narrow views. This is the pride of reason, which seems to have suggested the strongest objections against the reality of demoniacal possessions. But the Supreme Being may surely employ whatever agents he may think proper, in the execution of his purposes. All that divine revelation makes known, all that human reason can conjecture, concerning the existence of various orders of spiritual beings, good or bad, is perfectly consistent with, and favourable to, the doctrine of demoniacal possession. It is mentioned in the New Testament in such language, and such narratives are related concerning it, that the gospel can be regarded only as parts of an imposture, if this doctrine be only a vulgar error. In confirmation of these views, it may further be remarked, that the demons mentioned in the New Testament as possessing persons were conceived to be malignant spirits. They are exhibited as the causes of the most direful calamities to the unhappy persons whom they possess—dumbness, deafness, madness, palsy, epilepsy, and the like. The descriptive titles given them, always denote some ill quality or other. Most frequently they are called unclean spirits, sometimes malign spirits. They are represented as conscious that they are doomed to misery and torments, though their punishments be for a while suspended. It is evident that the devil and his angels, according to all that we can learn of them in the sacred books, are real beings, that the demons of the New Testament are malignant spirits, and that they act upon the same principles, and even under the authority of Satan himself, who is otherwise called Beelzebub, and the prince of the devils. Nay, in these very cases of possession, the chief of the apostate angels is clearly set forth as acting either in his own person or by means of his infernal agents. And it is on this supposition alone that we can explain the language of Christ in that remarkable declaration which he makes to the Pharisees and rulers of the Jews, and which we find recorded in the twelfth chapter of the gospel by Matthew: 'the Pharisees heard it, and they said, this fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself, shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself, how shall then his kingdom stand?' It should also be observed, that the inspired writers uniformly make a distinction between diseases occurring in the ordinary course of nature, and diseases occasioned by the agency of evil spirits. "There is every where," says Bishop Porteus, "a plain distinction made between common diseases and demoniacal possessions, which shows that they are totally different things. In the fourth chapter of the gospel by Matthew, where the very first mention is made of these possessions, it is said that our Lord's 'fame went throughout all Syria, and that they brought unto him all sick people, that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and he healed them.' Here, those that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those possessed with devils, are mentioned as distinct and separate persons: a plain proof that the demoniacal possessions were not natural diseases; and the very same distinction is made in several other passages of holy writ. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the demoniacs were persons really possessed with evil spirits; and although it may seem strange to us, yet we find from Josephus and other historians, that it was in those times no uncommon case."—*Porteus's Lectures on St. Mat.*, vol. i. p. 264; *Farmer's Essay on the Demoniacs of the New Testament*; *Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist.* vol. i.; *Lardner's Works*, vol. i.—Ed.

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occasions, we can meet with none of his laughing, nor any token of a mirth or joy extraordinary, in the whole history of his life : but we must not from hence infer, that he was of a stiff and precise temper, or in any degree an enemy to such forms of civility, or social usages, as were then in practice. If therefore we may be allowed to suppose, what seems indeed highly probable, that this marriage at Cana was between persons of his own kindred and acquaintance, and that by the very rules of celebrating such festivals among the Jews, all excess and intemperance was excluded, then will it follow, that it could be no disparagement to our Saviour's character to accept of the invitation that was made him, and to be present at such a meeting.

Among us indeed, especially among the vulgar sort, there are sometimes, on these occasions, liberties taken that are not so justifiable ; but, among the Jews, there was always the greatest decency and sobriety imaginable observed in the celebration of their marriages. ¹ To this purpose a governor of the feast, as some say of the sacerdotal race, was always chosen, whose office it was to have the superintendency of the dishes and wine, and to oblige the guests to observe all the decorums that religion required ; and not only so, but other persons, at this time, were likewise appointed to break glass vessels, as a common signal, to give the company notice, that they had already drank enough, and were not permitted to run to excess. Under this regulation, it is scarcely imaginable that the guests, at a Jewish marriage, could be guilty of any intemperance, and least of all at this in Galilee, where our Saviour's presence and observation, the gravity of his behaviour, and the seasonableness of his discourse, might well be presumed to heighten the decorum, and to keep all the company under a proper restraint.

What therefore the governor of the feast says to the bridegroom, ² in relation to the water that was turned into wine, is to be understood only as a general representation of a custom, usual at other festivals, which was, to bring the best wine at first, and towards the conclusion, that which was worse ; which custom, as the governor tells him, was not observed here ; for the difference between this entertainment and others is, that ' thou hast kept the good wine until now.' ³ So that ' when men have well drunk,' is only a circumstance thrown in to illustrate the comparison, or describe the latter end of a feast, and has no manner of reference to the condition of the company then present. But allowing the words *ὅταν μεθύσῃσι*, to be a description of the condition that the company were then in, yet it will by no means follow, that they had proceeded to any intemperance, because the words are equally capable of an innocent, as well as vicious meaning. ⁴ *Μεθύειν* indeed, in its primitive signification, means no more than ' drinking after the sacrifice ;' and as there is nothing in the etymology that determines this to be done to excess, or beyond the proper bounds of joy in a festival, so there are several instances in scripture, wherein it was certainly done according to the rules of sobriety and moderation. Thus, to mention one out of many, in the Seventy's version of Genesis, where it is said, that ⁵ ' Joseph's brethren drank, and were merry with him,' the words are *ἐμεθύ-*

ῆσαν μετ' αὐτοῦ, and yet no one can imagine, but that, in their present circumstances, thinking no other than that he was the governor of Egypt, and being apprehensive that he had no good design against them, they were too much upon their guard, and solicitous about their own safety, to give any way to intemperance in his presence : and, if the expression here, and in ⁶ several other passages, may be taken in a virtuous sense, we cannot but conclude, unless we can suppose that St John designed to expose his Master's behaviour upon this occasion, that he intended we should understand him in the most favourable acceptance. ^a

We, indeed, in our translation, say, that the water-pots, wherein the wine was created, ⁷ contained two or three firkins apiece ; but some, who have looked more nicely into *μετρητής*, or measure, here spoken of, ⁸ have brought it so low, as to make the whole six pots hold no more than about fourteen or fifteen gallons of our English measure. But not to descend so low, we will suppose, at present, that the quantity of wine made by our Saviour at this feast, was as large as our translation represents it ; yet whoever considers the nature of Jewish marriages, how they were celebrated with feasting and rejoicings, not only on the day of solemnity, as it is with us, but for six or seven days after, and that at these feasts not only all their relations, and neighbours, and acquaintance, were invited, but that it was well taken likewise, if any others, though not invited, would come to partake of the entertainment, and bear a share in the joy : whoever considers this, I say, cannot but imagine, that a very large quantity of wine must needs be requisite at such a time, since it was to be a supply, not for that day only, but for all the succeeding days, until the time of the feasting was expired.

Nay, even supposing farther, that our Lord, upon this occasion, did not confine himself to a precise quantity, proportionate to the company, or period of the festival, and, what is more, ⁹ that some of the company might abuse his liberality by their intemperance, which is a concession not to be gathered from the text, yet he cannot therefore be charged with the administering to their excess, by making such an ample provision, any more than we can charge the providence of God with being instrumental to all the gluttony and drunkenness which is committed in the world, merely because he affords that

⁶ See Whitby's Annot. ad locum.

⁷ John ii. 6.

⁸ See Cumberland, of Weights and Measures.

⁹ Whitby's Annot. in locum.

^a The probability is, that the expression under consideration relates not at all to excess, nor indeed to drinking at any other feast than that which was kept at a marriage. The Abbi *Mariti*, speaking of the age of the wines of Cyprus, says,—' It is certain, that at the birth of a son or daughter, the father causes a jar filled with wine to be buried in the earth, having first taken the precaution to seal it hermetically ; and in this manner it is kept till the child's marriage. It is then placed on the table before the bride and bridegroom, and is distributed among their relations, and the other guests invited to the wedding.' If such a custom prevailed formerly, and prevailed among the Jews, it is evident that the wine first drunk at a marriage feast must have been the best, as nothing but wine of a very superior quality could have been preserved from the birth of a child to his or her marriage, even at the early age at which marriages were made in Judea. The probability therefore is, that the governor of the feast meant nothing more than to express his surprise at the bridegroom's having deviated, as he supposed, from the common practice of presenting, the jar of old and superior wine at first.—See *Bar-der's Oriental Customs*.

¹ Lewis's Antiq. of the Heb. Repub. vol. iii. ² John ii. 10.

Dr Pearce's Vindication of our Saviour's Miracles, part iii.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Chap. xliii. 34.

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meat and drink, which men of inordinate appetites abuse to excess. The truth is, as it is a high commendation of providence, that it crowns us with plenty, whatever use we make of it, and bestows upon us all things richly to enjoy; so was it not unbecoming a person, invested with a divine commission, to give, on this occasion, an eminent instance of his flowing liberality, and, by his generous provision for the family, to leave a grateful memorial of his benevolent regard to two persons that very likely were his relations, and had just entered into the honourable state of matrimony.

Since therefore our Lord answered, in so free and plentiful a manner, his mother's request at last, there seems to be something in their supposition, who, from the propriety¹ of the Greek expression, think that his mother spake to him, before the wine was out, but when it grew so low that she plainly perceived there would not be enough for the company; and therefore our Saviour's reply to her will very justly bear this sense, *τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ*; 'what is it to you or me?' that is, the care of providing wine upon this occasion does not properly belong to you or me; but admitting it did, 'my hour is not yet come.' It is too soon as yet to set about it; because it is highly fitting that the necessity of that supernatural supply, which I intend them, should be a little more felt, in order to recommend the benefit itself, and to give the manner of attaining it a power of making a deeper impression on their minds.

This seems to be no unnatural construction of the words, and removes all the seeming harshness of our Saviour's answer, 'woman, what have I to do with thee?' We mistake the matter, however, very much, if we think that the word *γυνή*, which we render *woman*, was any title of disrespect or indifference, as it seems to be in our translation, since it is frequently used by the best authors, when the highest marks of esteem are intended. The polite Xenophon himself puts it in the mouth of one of his Persian chiefs, when he was addressing himself to a captive lady, and comforting her under her unfortunate circumstances; and certainly a time there was, that our Lord called his mother by this appellation, when he was far from being harsh or undutiful to her, even when he was hanging on the cross, and tenderly recommending both his mother to the care of his beloved apostle, and that apostle to his mother's love and affection,² 'woman, behold thy son.' So little does our Saviour's conduct, in this whole transaction, deserve these horrid and impious censures which of late have been thrown upon it!

Whatever some modern Jews and infidels may allege against the abuse, as they pretend, which the writers of the New Testament have put upon the prophecies of the Old, by applying them to a wrong sense;³ no man need be told, that an attempt of this nature had been as impertinent, the affront to man's reason as insolent, and the event as fruitless, nay as fatal to their cause, had they imposed a false, or even controverted, sense upon the predictions confessedly relating to the Messiah, as it would have been had they urged such predictions as were not acknowledged to belong to him at all. The truth is, if the Jews understood the prophecies relating to the Messiah in one sense, and the apostles, in their

address to them, applied them in another, we cannot see how they could ever have made one proselyte, being in the same condition with what St Paul describes, when he tells us, that, 'he who speaketh in an unknown tongue,' and why not he that speaketh in an unknown meaning, speaketh to the air, and becometh a barbarian to him that heareth, but understandeth him not. So that every Jew converted to the Christian faith is an implicit proof of the apostle's applying the ancient prophecies in a sense that was then current and familiar to them.

That the famous prophecy in Isaiah⁵ is thus applied by St Matthew,⁶ to prove that Christ was born of an immaculate virgin, we took occasion to show. The remaining allegation is, that the name of the person of whom the prophet speaks was to be Immanuel; whereas the name of that son of Mary, of whom St Matthew speaks by God's express command, was Jesus; and therefore the words of the prophet are misapplied by the evangelist.

Now, nothing is more common in scripture than by the calling or naming of a person or thing, not to mean that the person or thing would be commonly distinguished by that name, but only that it should have such properties and qualities in it as that name did denote; or, in other words, that it should really be what the full sense of that name imported. Thus, of the city of Jerusalem it is foretold by the prophet,⁷ that it should be called 'the city of righteousness,' when it really was to be such a city; for in the foregoing words it is promised, 'that God would restore her judges as at the first, and her counsellors as at the beginning.' And in like manner, though it be declared by this prophet,⁸ that the wonderful child which God promised to the house of David should be called Immanuel; yet if he was but what that name properly imports, *God with us*, in a most eminent and peculiar manner, it is not to be doubted but that the prophecy received its full completion in the person of our Saviour Christ.

For, besides God's universal presence, there is a presence of favour and distinction, whereby he is said to be, in a more peculiar manner, with those whom he loves and blesses above others. And in this regard the child here spoken of is justly called Immanuel, because, as St Paul speaks,⁹ 'God was in him reconciling the world to himself,' for his sake and sufferings, 'not imputing their trespasses unto them;' so that by him¹⁰ they who were some time afar off are made nigh, have access to the Father, are accepted in the Beloved,¹¹ 'and become, of enemies and strangers, friends and children, insomuch that God vouchsafes to dwell in them and to be one of them. And as God unites us to himself by grace, so did he, in this child, condescend, by an ineffable generation, to unite our substance and nature to himself, "to be perfect God and perfect man,"¹² that so he might be the first-born among many brethren, and redeem the children from death, who are partakers of flesh and blood, by himself taking part of the same." Let it not then be any more objected, that the child in the prophecy could not be called Immanuel, whom we confess to have been called Jesus; for he is therefore our Immanuel, because our Jesus; therefore, most eminently, most literally, 'God with us,' because, by

⁴ 1 Cor. xiv. 2.

⁵ Chap. i. 23.

⁶ 2 Cor. v. 19.

⁷ Ibid. i. 6.

⁸ Chap. vii. 14.

⁹ Ibid. chap. vii. 14.

¹⁰ Eph. ii. 13. 18

¹¹ Ibid. i. 6.

¹² Rom. viii. 29; Heb. ii. 14.

¹ ἡ γαστήρ αὐτοῦ οἶνον, ver. 3.

² John xix. 25. 27.

³ Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures, sermon viii.

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so miraculous an union, 'a Saviour of his people from their sins.'

It may seem perhaps surprising to some, that St Matthew should so frequently introduce his citations with a 'This was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:' but whoever considers the idiom of the Hebrew tongue, cannot but know that the phrase, answering to the expressions, 'that it might be fulfilled,' means no more, than that hereby was verified, or that this event answered to the prediction, or the like. Nay, the Jews were accustomed to say, that a passage of scripture was then fulfilled, when any thing happened that was applicable to it; and therefore it is no wonder, that St Matthew, who himself was a Jew, and very probably wrote his gospel in the Hebrew tongue for the benefit of his countrymen, should naturally fall into their style and manner of expression.*

* Though it should be admitted, that the word *πληρωθῆναι* in Mat. i. 22, is used in the strictest sense, to express the fulfilment of a prophecy, which pointed to this single event; it cannot be denied that the general import of the verb *πληρωθῆναι*, in the gospel, is more properly expressed by the English verb *verify*, than by *fulfil*. Those things are said *πληρωθῆναι*, which are no predictions of the future, but mere affirmations concerning the present, or the past. Thus, chap. ii. 15, a declaration from the prophet Hosea, (xi. 1.) which God made in relation to the people of Israel, whom he had long before recalled from Egypt, is applied by the historian allusively to Jesus Christ, where all that is meant is, that, with equal truth, or rather with much greater energy of signification, God might now say, "I have recalled my Son out of Egypt." Indeed the import of the Greek phrase, as commonly used by the sacred writers, is no more, as Le Clerc has justly observed, than that such words of any of the prophets may be applied with truth to such an event. For it is even used, where that which is said to be fulfilled is not a prophecy, but a command; and where the event spoken of is not the obedience of the command (though the term is sometimes used in this sense also,) but an event similar to the thing required; and which, if I may so express myself, tallies with the words. Thus, in the directions given about the manner of preparing the paschal lamb, it is said, (Exod. xii. 46.) 'none of his bones shall be broken.' This saying the evangelist John (xix. 36.) finds *verified* in what happened to our Lord, when the legs of the criminals who were crucified with him, were broken, and his were spared. 'But were not the recall of Israel from Egypt, and the ceremonies of the passover, typical of what happened to our Lord? I admit they were. But it is not the correspondence of the antitype to the type, that we call properly *fulfilling*: this English word, if I mistake not, is, in strictness, applied only, either to an event to which a prophecy directly points, or to the performance of a promise. Whereas the Greek word is sometimes employed in scripture to denote little more than a coincidence in sound. In this sense I think it is used, chap. ii. 23. We have an instance of its being employed by the Seventy, to denote *verifying* or *confirming* the testimony of one, by the testimony of another, 1 Kings i. 14. The word *fulfilling*, in our language, has a much more limited signification: and to employ it for all those purposes, is to give a handle to cavillers, where the original gives none. It makes the sacred penman appear to call those things predictions, which plainly were not, and which they never meant to denominate predictions. The most apposite word that I could find in English is *verify*; for, though it will not answer in every case, it answers in more cases than any other of our verbs. Thus, a prophecy is *verified* (for the word is strictly applicable here also), when it is accomplished; a promise, when it is performed; a testimony, when it is confirmed by additional testimony, or other satisfactory evidence; a maxim or proverb, when it is exemplified; a declaration of any kind may be said to be *verified* by any incident to which the words can be applied. I acknowledge that this word does not, in every case, correspond to *πληρωθῆναι*. A law is *fulfilled*, not *verified*; and if the import of the passage be to denote that additional strength is given to it, it is better to say *confirmed*, or *ratified*. In some places it means to *fill-up*, in others to *perfect*, in others to *make known*. — Campbell on the Gospels, vol. ii.—ED.

Now, whoever considers the state of the Jews in Egypt, their bondage, and danger of utter extinction, by reason of the decree which passed for the destruction of all their male children, (had not the providence of God prevented the execution of it) will soon perceive the cause, why Egypt is made in scripture the common figure and emblem of extreme danger, and imminent death; and why a deliverance out of Egypt should be applied to every great act of preservation, where there seemed to be no visible means of escape; insomuch, that whenever any instance of such a watchful and protecting providence happened, it was an usual and proverbial speech among the Jews (who were wont then, as they are still, to apply sentences out of holy writ to the common occurrences of life) to say, in scripture phrase, 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son,' or 'He hath called him out of Egypt,' that is, he hath rescued him from the jaws of death, or from the like danger that the Israelites were in when he brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm. Since Joseph then was ordered to flee to Egypt, and tarry there until Herod was dead, for this reason, because Herod sought the young child's life; this distinguishing preservation of Jesus, by means of his retreat, till the danger was over, will justify the evangelist (even though it had been any other country, as well as Egypt, whereunto he retired) in applying to him the proverbial saying upon that occasion, ¹ "Out of Egypt (that is, out of manifest danger) have I called my son."

The deportation of the ten tribes from their native country into a foreign land, there to die or live in slavery, was so grievous a calamity, that the prophet Jeremiah ² by way of prosopopœia, introduces Rachel, the favourite wife of Jacob, that great progenitor of the Israelites, making bitter lamentation for their loss, and refusing all consolation, because there were no hopes of their recovery. And the murder of so many innocent babes at Bethlehem, by the bloody decree of Herod, was an event so dolorous to their tender parents, that the evangelist, when he came to relate it, thought he might justly, by way of accommodation, apply the words of the prophet, and, in the name of all the miserable mothers that had lost their children, make Rachel upon this occasion, and as a farther accomplishment of the prophecy, return to her weeping again. The rather because Rachel, having been long dead before the captivity, may, with equal propriety, by the evangelist, as she is by the prophet, be introduced weeping; the rather, because she was ³ so fond a lover of children, that she is fitly enough brought in here in the room of the tender mothers who wept for the loss of theirs; and the rather, because the slaughter of the Bethlehemites might be called that of her children, because among them ⁴ was the place of her sepulchre, after that she had lost her life in the bitter pangs of childbirth.

There is no prophet, we own, wherein it is expressly said, that the Messiah should be called a Nazarene; ⁵ but the observation of St Jerome, in his comment upon this place, is not amiss, namely, that when St Matthew ⁶

¹ Mat. ii. 15.

² Chap. xxxi. 15.

³ Gen. xxx. 1.

⁴ Ibid. xxxv. 19.

⁵ Bishop Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part ii. c. 3.

⁶ Chap. ii. 23.

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mentions the word *prophets* in the plural number, whereas, in other places, he had always cited some particular prophet, he thereby shows that he did not take the words from the prophets, but only the sense. Since then the title of *Nazarene* both Jews and other enemies of Christianity have always, by way of contempt, given to our blessed Saviour, because he was supposed to come out of that very city, from whence it was thought impossible, that ¹ any good thing should come; and since most of the prophets speak of Christ, as a person that was to be reputed vile and abject, ² a stranger to his brethren, and even an alien to his mother's sons, ³ despised and rejected of men, despised and esteemed not, here is the plain sense of the words, 'he shall be a Nazarene,' ⁴ and the angel, by God's appointment, no doubt, sent him to this contemptible place, that he might thence have a name of infamy and contempt put upon him, according to the frequent intimation by the prophets.

⁵ The word we render *wise men*, in its original, signifies *magicians*; which, however now it bespeaks not so good a character, was, nevertheless, heretofore a name of very innocent and honourable signification. The studious and inquisitive, whose business and profession led them to search into nature, its most abstruse causes and effects, and more particularly into the motions and dispositions of heavenly bodies, were distinguished by this title: and in what profound veneration and respect they were held, appears from the most important matters, both sacred and civil, being committed to their administration. They were the counsellors, the judges, the priests, the princes, in a word, the oracles of the eastern countries. But, as the best arts are sometimes perverted to ill purposes; so it happened to these, that, falling into the hands of bad men, who met with people ignorant and credulous, and not only easy, but even glad, to be deluded, they degenerated into the cheats of judiciary astrology; and these abuses grew so general, as, at last, to fix an ill sense upon the word, and a scandal on the science itself.

It were a wrong and great indignity to the persons now before us, not to believe them of the nobler and better sort; but we can hardly be persuaded, though some would endeavour to do it, that they were persons of royal dignity, ⁶ because we cannot reasonably suppose that the evangelist would have omitted a circumstance of so great moment, both for their honour and our Lord's. We can hardly think but that some account would have been given of their royal train and equipage, and that all Jerusalem would have been moved as much to see their entry, as they were to hear their questions; nor can we imagine that it would have been decent in Herod to have received them with no more respect; to have dismissed them to Bethlehem without attendants; much less to have laid his commands upon them to return back, and bring him an account of the child, as soon as they had found him, had they been persons of equal rank and dignity with himself. Upon these considerations we may justly deny them the title of *kings*, though we cannot but allow them to be persons of great wisdom,

learning, and integrity; of which ours, and some other translations of the Bible, have been so sensible, as very prudently to decline the odious name of *magicians*, and to call them 'the wise men of the east;' but what part of the east it was that they came from, few interpreters have agreed.

⁷ Some have imagined that these travellers came out of Persia; others from Chaldaea, others from Arabia, and others again from Mesopotamia. All these countries lay eastward from Jerusalem and the Holy Land; and in each of these, some antecedent notions of the Messiah may be accounted for. In Chaldaea and Persia, by the captivity of the Jews, and the books of Daniel; in Arabia, by the nearness of their neighbourhood, and frequent commerce; and in Mesopotamia, besides these common helps, they had the prophecy of their countryman Balaam, concerning a star ⁸ that should come out of Jacob to direct them. ⁹ But as we know of no record, wherein this prophecy was preserved, but the book of Moses, which the people of Mesopotamia neither read nor believed, so it seems evident, that Balaam's words do not refer to a star that should arise at any prince's birth, but to a certain king, who should be as glorious and splendid in his dominions, as the stars are in the firmament. Upon the whole, therefore, it seems most likely that these wise men came out of Arabia, ¹⁰ which, according to Tacitus, was the bound of Judea eastward, not only because the gifts which they presented were the natural products of that country, which was famous likewise for its magi, insomuch that Pythagoras, as Porphyry informs us, went into Arabia to acquire wisdom; but because its neighbourhood to Judea might give these wise men the advantage of discerning the star better than any more distant nation had.

For, that this star was no celestial one, and such as might be seen at a vast distance, its motion, contrary to the ordinary course of stars, its performing the part of a guide to the travellers, and that by day, very probably, as well as night, its accommodating itself to their necessities, and disappearing and returning, as they could best, or least, be without it; and, what is a circumstance as remarkable as any, its pointing out, and standing over the very place where the child was, which the height and distance of common stars makes it impossible for them to do, are a sufficient demonstration. It seems not improbable, therefore, that what the evangelist calls a star, was only that glorious light ¹¹ that shone upon the Bethlehem shepherds, when the angel came to impart unto them the tidings of our Saviour's birth; for that this light was exceeding great, is clear from that expression, which styles it the ¹² 'glory of the Lord,' and that it was a light from heaven hanging over their heads, the words in the ¹³ Greek, as well as ¹⁴ Latin version, sufficiently inform us.

Now, every one knows, that such a light, at a great distance, appears like a star; or at least, after it had thus shone about the shepherds, it might be lifted up on high, and then formed into the likeness of a star, where standing vertically over Judea for some time, it might direct the Arabian astrologers, whom so strange a phenomenon could hardly escape, to the capital city, as the

¹ John i. 46.

² Ps. lxi. 8.

³ Is. liii. 3.

⁴ Whitby's Annotations in locum.

⁵ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. i.

⁶ Whitby's Annotations on Mat. ii. 1, &c.

⁷ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. i.

⁸ Num. xxiv. 17.

⁹ Whitby's Annotations.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Luke ii. 9.

¹³ Περὶ λαμπρῆς αὐτοῦ.

¹⁴ Emericus ex alto.

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likeliest place to gain intelligence of the new-born king, whose 'star they had seen in the east,' that is, from the place of their abode, which was in the east: for, should we suppose that this light was placed in any part of the eastern hemisphere, it would have denoted something extraordinary among the Indians, or eastern nations, rather than among the people of the Jews.

¹ But how came these eastern sages to know that this star, or luminous appearance in the heavens, place it where we will, denoted the birth of a king? Now, for the resolution of this question, it must be observed, what ² some heathen historians tell us, namely, 'that through the whole east it was expected, that about this time a king was to arise out of Judea, who should rule over all the world.' Nor could it well be otherwise, since, from the time of the Babylonish captivity, we find the Jews dispersed ³ through all the provinces of the Persian monarchy, and that ⁴ in great numbers, and ⁵ many people of the land becoming Jews; and, after their return home, increasing so mightily, that they were dispersed through Africa, Asia, and many cities and islands of Europe, and, as Josephus ⁶ tells us, wherever they dwelt, making many proselytes to their religion. ^a Now these wise men, living so near to Judea, the seat of this prophecy, and conversing with Jews, that is, with those who every where expected the completion of it at that time, as soon as they came to see this extraordinary star, or body of light, hovering over Judea, they might rationally conjecture that it signified the completion of that celebrated prophecy concerning the king of Jewry, over the centre of which land, they, being then in the east, might see this meteor hang.

Not long after the departure of these eastern sages from Bethlehem, we find a prodigious multitude of innocent babes inhumanly put to death, upon the account of him whom these wise men came to adore. But, to vindicate the justice and goodness of providence in this proceeding, we need not appeal to God's universal dominion over all his creatures, and the right he has to take away, in what manner he pleases, the being which he gives us; we need only consider the present life, not as our last and final state, but as one whose principal

¹ Whitby's Annotations.

² Tacit. Hist. and b. 5; Suet. de Vita Vesp. c. 4.

³ Est. iii. 8.

⁴ Ibid. ix. 2.

⁵ Ibid. iii. 13.

⁶ Antiq. b. xiv. c. 12.

⁷ Whitby's Annotations.

^a This visit which the magi, under the divine direction, made to the Son of God at his entrance into the world, answered several valuable purposes. 1. The principal thing was to show succeeding generations what expectations of him were entertained at this very time among the Gentiles, and thereby to confirm in latest ages, the existence of those prophecies which had raised such a general hope in the breasts of mankind. 2. It is far from being absurd to suppose, that these philosophers, by the tidings which they carried home concerning the king of the Jews, might prepare their countrymen for becoming his subjects in due time, For if their report was remembered by the succeeding generation, it must have contributed not a little to their cheerful reception of the gospel when it was preached to them. 3. The coming of the magi occasioned the answer of the sanhedrim, wherein it was declared to be the unanimous opinion of the most learned Jewish doctors then living, that, by the designation of heaven, Bethlehem was to be the place of their Messiah's nativity. 4. The reasonable beneficence of those learned strangers, put Joseph in a condition to subsist his family in Egypt, whither he was soon to be sent from the wrath of the king.—*Macnight's Harmony*, vol. i.—Ed.

tendency is to another; and then it will appear, that there is no certain measure to be taken of the divine justice or goodness, towards us, without taking in the distributions of that other life, which, indeed, is the main end of our living at all. What Solomon, therefore, in his wisdom, says of the righteous in general, is much more verified in the case of these harmless babes: ⁸ 'In the sight of the unwise, they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery; but they are in peace: for, though they were punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality.' ⁹ For a frail, a short, a troublesome, a dangerous life, God gives them the recompense of an immortal, a securely happy, a completely glorious one; which not only vindicates, but magnifies his goodness and liberality to them. He considers their infancy, and the noble fruit which might have sprung from these tender plants, had they been allowed to grow to full maturity, and accordingly rewards them: for, though they wanted the will of martyrdom, which ripener years may have, yet it must be allowed, that they were clear of that voluntary and actual sin which those ripener years would have contracted: and therefore, as in the most literal sense, ¹⁰ they were not defiled with sensual pleasures, but left the world in virgin-innocence, as they were truly redeemed from among men, whose early translation to a state of bliss, prevented the hazards and temptations of a wicked world; and, as they were, strictly speaking, the first fruits unto God and the Lamb, who began to shed their blood in the cause of a new born Saviour, so God hath been pleased to vouchsafe them a peculiar honour, ¹¹ to sing, as it were, a new song before the throne, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, because in their mouth was found no guile; for they were without fault before the throne of God.'

We have but one objection more to answer, and that is a seeming inconsistency in our Saviour, in discovering to the Samaritan woman his divine character, which he had so often desired his disciples to conceal. Our Saviour, it is true, was so far from making any unnecessary declarations of himself, that, both upon ¹² St Peter's confessing him to be the Christ, and ¹³ after his transfiguration, wherein he was declared to be the Son of God, we find him charging his disciples to say nothing of this, until his resurrection; ¹⁴ because their testimony, in these points, might not only be like a matter concerted between him and them, but because indeed they were not qualified to be his witnesses in these things, until they had received power from on high, by the coming down of the Holy Ghost. It is to be observed, however, that, when our Lord is himself fairly called upon, and especially by persons invested with authority, he never once conceals his divine nature and commission.

When ¹⁵ the Jews came round in Solomon's porch, and said unto him, 'How long dost thou make us doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly;' his answer is express; 'I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me; for I and my Father are one.' When he stood before the judgment-seat, and the high priest demanded of him, ¹⁶ 'I adjure

⁸ Wisdom iii. 2, &c.

⁹ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. i.

¹⁰ Rev. xiv. 4.

¹¹ Ibid. ver. 3—5.

¹² Mark viii. 29.

¹³ Mat. xvii. 9.

¹⁴ Whitby's Annotations on Mat. ix. 30.

¹⁵ John x. 25, &c.

¹⁶ Mat. xxvi. 63, 64.

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thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God; his answer is, 'thou hast said;' or, as St Mark¹ expresses it, 'I am; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' Nay, there are some instances, wherein, of his own accord, and without any provocation of this kind, he freely discovers who he was; for, having cured the man that was born blind, and afterwards meeting him accidentally,² 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?' says he. Whereupon the man asking, 'Who is the Son of God, that I may believe on him?' Our Saviour replies, 'Thou hast both seen him, and it is he who talketh with thee;' and therefore we need less wonder that, when this Samaritan woman had first of all confessed him to be a prophet, and, as her words seem to imply,³ was a little dubious whether he was not the Messiah, our Saviour should prevent her inquiry, and tell her voluntarily that he was. Especially considering, that⁴ such a declaration might be a means to prepare her, and the rest of the Samaritans, whenever his apostles should come and preach the gospel unto them, to receive their testimony, as we find, by the history of the apostolic acts, that they did it with great gladness.

Thus have we endeavoured to satisfy all the exceptions of any weight, that the lovers of infidelity have hitherto made to this part of the evangelical history; and, if Christianity stood in need either of the support or testimony of heathen authors, we might say, that the incarnation of Christ the Son of God, is no more than⁵ what the Greeks, as Julian avers, affirm both of Æsculapius and Pythagoras, namely, that they were both the sons of Jupiter, though they appeared in human nature, which doctrine, in the evangelist St John, Amelius,^a the master of Porphyry, allows to be true: That the birth of our blessed Jesus of a virgin immaculate is no more than⁶ what the ancient Jewish doctors expected in their Messiah; and therefore Simon Magus, who greatly affected that character, pretended that his mother Rachel bore him without the loss of her virginity: That the new star, or body of light, which, upon our Saviour's birth, conducted the wise men to him,^{7b} is acknowledged by Julian, though he would gladly ascribe it to natural causes, is set off with great eloquence by Chalcidius, in his comment upon Plato's Timæus, and perhaps might be that very phenomenon, c

¹ Mark xiv. 62.

² John ix. 35, &c.

³ Ibid. iv. 25.

⁴ Whitty, in locum.

⁵ Huetii Quæst. Alnet. b. ii. c. 13.

⁶ Ibid. c. 15.

⁷ Ibid. Demons. prop. 3.

a This Platonist, upon reading the beginning of St John's gospel, swore by Jupiter, "That the Barbarian" as he called him, "had hit upon the right notion, when he affirmed that the Word, which made all things, was in the beginning, in place of prime dignity and authority with God, and was that God who created all things, and in whom every thing that was made, had, according to his nature, its life and being; that he was incarnate, and clothed with a body, wherein he manifested the glory and magnificence of his nature: and that, after his death, he returned to the re-possession of his divinity, and became the same God which he was before his assuming a body, and taking the human nature and flesh upon him."—*Euseb. Præp. ix. Evang. b. xi.*

b In his relation of some portentous significations of stars, he adds: "There is another tale told of a more sacred and holy nature; it says that, at the appearance of a certain unusual star, diseases, and pestilences were not, as is commonly the case, foretold, but the descent of a holy God, for the benefit of the human race, and its affairs; the star is said to have been seen by Chaldeans, who worshipped the young God by the offering of gifts."—*Hammond's Annotations on Mat. ii. 2.*

c The words of Huetius concerning this matter are these:—

which Pliny⁸ describes under the name of a comet: that our Lord's forerunner, John the Baptist, was such a person as the gospel represents him, namely, an exhorter of the Jews, to the love and practice of virtue, and to regeneration by baptism and newness of life, we have an ample testimony in Josephus: that our Lord himself was certainly a prophet, Phlegon,^{9d} who was the emperor Adrian's freedman, acknowledges, and in his history has related several events which he foretold; that he was¹⁰ a great worker of miracles, the authors of the Talmud own; nor can Celsus and Julian, his bitterest enemies, deny it, only they would gladly impute them to a wrong cause, his great skill in magical incantations: that human bodies were frequently possessed with devils, who afflicted them with grievous and tormenting diseases, is the joint concession both of¹¹ Jamblicus and Minutius Felix; e and that our blessed Lord had the power of curing these,¹² and of destroying the dominion of evil spirits, wherever he came, is the great complaint of Porphyry, who makes it no wonder that their cities should be wasted with plagues, since Æsculapius, and the rest of the gods, ever since the admission of the Christian religion, were either become useless or fled. So prevalent is the force of truth, that it seldom fails to draw confessions from those who least of all intend them.

CHAP. IV.—*An account of the marriage ceremonies of the east.*

SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.

MARRIAGE is evidently meant by scripture and reason, to be the union of one man with one woman. When God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; he promised him the help only of a single mate: 'I will make him an help meet for him.'¹³ This gracious promise he soon performed in the formation of one woman who should be joined in wedlock. This design Adam recognized and acknowledged in express terms; and his declaration was certainly meant as a rule for his descendants in every succeeding age. 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his

⁸ B. ii. c. 25.

⁹ Antiq. b. xviii. c. 7.

¹⁰ Huetii Demons. prop. iii.

¹¹ De Myst. sect. ii. c. 6.

¹² Huetii Demons. prop. iii.

¹³ Gen. ii. 18.

"Pliny writes that at a certain time there had appeared a brilliant comet, the silvery hair of which shone so clearly that it could not be beheld by the human eye, and that it contained in it the appearance of a God in the shape of a man."—*Quæst. Alnet. b. ii. c. 16.*

d He composed a history, digested by Olympiads, as far as the year of Christ 140. In his history he takes notice, that, in Olympiad, which determines about the middle of the 33d year of the common era, there happened the greatest eclipse of the sun that ever had been seen, insomuch, that the stars were visible at noonday, and that afterwards there was a great earthquake in Bithynia. Several critics believe that this was the darkness which happened at the death of Jesus Christ, which is a matter we shall have occasion to inquire into, when we come to that part of his history.

e The words of Minutius are worth observing,—"Evil spirits harass life, disturb our sleep, and even like thin air creep into our bodies; they create distempers, terrify the mind, rack the limbs, and compel men to worship them."

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wife, and they shall be one flesh.' These quotations, which are all couched in terms of the singular number, are inconsistent with the doctrine of polygamy. The original appointment was confirmed by our Lord in these words: ¹ 'Have ye not read, that he which made you at the beginning, made them male and female; and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh.' The apostle is not less decisive in his direction to the churches: ² 'nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife; and let every woman have her own husband.' But though the law is so decisive, it cannot be doubted that polygamy was introduced soon after the creation; Lamech, one of the descendants of Cain, and only the sixth person from Adam, married two wives; he was probably the first who ventured, in this manner, to transgress the law of his Maker. This unwarrantable practice, derived from the antediluvian world, seems to have become very common after the flood; for it is mentioned as nothing remarkable that Sarah, when she despaired of having children, took her handmaid Hagar, and gave her to Abraham her husband, by whom she had a son. Both Esau and Jacob had a number of wives; and that is undoubtedly one of the practices which Moses suffered to remain among his people, because of the hardness of their hearts, prohibiting only the high priest to have more than one wife.

Every transgression of the divine law is attended by its corresponding punishment. Polygamy has proved in all ages, and in all countries where it has been suffered, a teeming source of evil. The jealousy and bitter contentions in the family of Abraham, and of his grandson Jacob, which proceeded from that cause, are well known, and still more deplorable were the dissensions that convulsed the house, and shook the throne of David. Such mischiefs are the natural and necessary effects of the practice; for polygamy divides the affections of the husband, and, by consequence, generates incurable jealousies and contentions among the unhappy victims of his licentious desires. To prevent his abode from becoming the scene of unceasing confusion and uproar, he is compelled to govern it, as the oriental polygamist still does, with despotic authority, which at once extinguishes all the rational and most endearing comforts of the conjugal state. The husband is a stern and unfeeling despot; his harem, a group of trembling slaves. The children espouse with ardour, unknown to those who are placed in other circumstances, the cause of their own mother, and look upon the children of other wives as strangers and enemies. They regard their common father with indifference or terror; while they cling to their own mother with the fondest affections, as the only parent in whom they feel any interest, or from whom they expect any suitable return of attention and kindness. This state of feeling and attachment is attested by every writer on the manners of the east: and accounts for a way of speaking so common in the scriptures, ³ 'It is my brother; the son of my mother,' 'they were my brethren,' said Gideon, 'the sons of my mother; as the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you.' It greatly aggravated the affliction

of David, that he had become an alien to his mother's children; 'the enmity of his brethren, the relations of his father's other wives, or his more distant relatives, gave him less concern; 'I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien to my mother's children.' The same allusion occurs in the complaint of the spouse: 'Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me: they made me the keeper of the vineyards.'⁴ The children of one wife scarcely looked upon the children of the other wives as their brothers and sisters at all; and they scarcely felt more regard for their father. An oriental, in consequence of this unnatural practice, takes little notice of an insult offered to his father, but expresses the utmost indignation when a word is spoken to the disadvantage of his mother. To defame or to curse her, is the last insult which his enemy can offer; and one which he seldom or never forgives. 'Strike,' cried an incensed African to his antagonist, 'but do not curse my mother.'⁵

Marriage contracts seem to have been made in the primitive ages with little ceremony. The suitor himself, or his father, sent a messenger to the father of the woman, to ask her in marriage. Abraham sent the principal servant of his household, with a considerable retinue and costly presents, to the city of Nahor, to take a wife unto his son Isaac, from among his relations. The father of the suitor sometimes solicited the person whom he had chosen for his wife; for Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out unto Jacob, to treat with him about the marriage of Dinah to his son, the heir of his house, and the hope of his family. If the woman resides under her father's roof, the parents were consulted, and their consent obtained; and the damsel was asked if she agreed to the proposal. The servant of Abraham stated the design of his journey to Bethuel and Laban, the father and brother of Rebekah, and solicited their consent; and when they had agreed to his request, they said, 'We will call the damsel and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.'

The kings and nobles of Israel were not more ceremonious on these occasions. When David heard that Nabal was dead, he sent messengers to Abigail to solicit her hand in marriage. ⁷ 'And they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. And she arose and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord.' After the death of Urijah, the same prince sent and fetched Bathsheba to his house, and she became his wife. This entirely corresponds with the manner in which the oriental princes generally form their matrimonial alliances. The king of Abyssinia 'sends an officer to the house where the lady lives, who announces to her, that it is the king's pleasure she should remove instantly to the palace. She then dresses herself in the best manner, and immediately obeys. Thenceforward he assigns her an apartment in the palace, and gives her an house elsewhere, in any part she chooses. The nearest resemblance to marriage

⁴ Ps. lxxix. 6.

Song of Solomon, i. 6; see also chap. viii. 1, 2.

Park's Travels, vol. i.

⁷ 1 Sam. xxv. 40, 41.

¹ Mat. xix. 4. ² 1 Cor. vii. 2. ³ Judges viii. 19.

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is when he makes her *iteghe* or *queen*; for whether in the court or in the camp, he orders one of the judges to pronounce in his presence, that he, the king, has chosen his handmaid, naming her, for his queen; upon which the crown is put upon her head, but she is not anointed.¹

In the primitive ages, women received no portions from their relations, when they were married; but were purchased by their husbands, whose presents to the woman's relations were called her dowry. Thus, we find Shechem bargaining with Jacob and his sons for Dinah.² 'Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me, I will give: ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me; but give me the damsel to wife.' The practice still continues in the country of Shechem; for when a young Arab wishes to marry he must purchase his wife; and for this reason, fathers, among the Arabs, are never more happy than when they have many daughters. They are reckoned the principal riches of a house. An Arabian suitor will offer fifty sheep, six camels, or a dozen of cows; if he be not rich enough to make such offers, he proposes to give a mare or a colt; considering in the offer, the merit of the young woman, the rank of her family, and his own circumstances. When they are agreed on both sides, the contract is drawn up by him that acts as *cadi* or judge among these Arabs. In some parts of the east, a measure of corn is formally mentioned in contracts for their concubines, or temporary wives, besides the sum of money which is stipulated by way of dowry. This custom is probably as ancient as concubinage, with which it is connected; and if so, it will perhaps account for the prophet Hosea's purchasing a wife of this kind, for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley.³ When the intended husband was not able to give a dowry, he offered an equivalent. The patriarch Jacob who came to Laban with only his staff, offered to serve him seven years for Rachel; a proposal which Laban accepted. Saul, instead of a dowry, required David to bring him an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, under the pretence of avenging himself of his enemies. 'This custom has prevailed in later times; for in some countries they give their daughters in marriage to the most valiant men, or those who should bring them so many heads of the people with whom they happen to be at war. It is recorded of a nation in Carmania, that no man among them was permitted to marry till he had first brought the head of an enemy to the king. Aristotle admits, that the ancient Greeks were accustomed to buy their wives; but they no sooner began to lay aside their barbarous meanness, than this disgusting practice ceased, and the custom of giving portions to their sons-in-law, was substituted in its place. In like manner, the Romans, in the first ages of their history, purchased their wives; but afterwards, they required the wife to bring a portion to the husband, that he might be able to bear the charges of the matrimonial state more easily.

The contract of marriage was made in the house of the woman's father, before the elders and governors of the city or district. The manner of contracting or es-

pousing was various. Sometimes the man put a piece of money into the woman's hand before witnesses, and said, 'Be thou espoused to me according to the law of Moses and Israel;' or it was done by writing, which was no more than writing the same words with the woman's name, and delivering it to her before witnesses; or lastly, by cohabitation, when the law obliged the man to marry her whom he had dishonoured, if her father gave his consent. They had also several forms of betrothing in Greece; of which one is quoted by Clemens of Alexandria, out of Meander: 'I give you this my daughter, to make you father of children lawfully begotten.' According to Xenophon, the dowry was sometimes mentioned; for when Cyaxares betrothed his daughter to Cyrus, he addressed him in these words: 'I give you, Cyrus, this woman, who is my daughter, with all Media for her dowry.'

The espousals by money, or a written instrument, were performed by the man and woman under a tent or canopy erected for that purpose. Into this chamber the bridegroom was accustomed to go with his bride, that he might talk with her more familiarly; which was considered as a ceremony of confirmation to the wedlock. While he was there, no person was allowed to enter; his friends and attendants waited for him at the door, with torches and lamps in their hands; and when he came out, he was received by all that were present with great joy and acclamation. To this ancient custom, the psalmist alludes in his magnificent description of the heavens: 'In them he set a tabernacle for the sun; which as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, rejoices as a strong man to run a race.'⁴

A Jewish virgin legally betrothed, was considered as a lawful wife; and by consequence could not be put away without a bill of divorce. And if she proved unfaithful to her betrothed husband, she was punished as an adulteress; and her seducer incurred the same punishment as if he had polluted the wife of his neighbour. This is the reason that the angel addressed Joseph, the betrothed husband of Mary, in these terms: 'Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the holy Ghost.' The evangelist Luke gives her the same title: 'and Joseph also went up from Galilee unto Bethlehem, to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife.'⁵

Ten or twelve months commonly intervened between the ceremony of espousals and the marriage; during this interval, the espoused wife continued with her parents, that she might provide herself with nuptial ornaments suitable to her station. This custom serves to explain a circumstance in Samson's marriage, which is involved in some obscurity: 'He went down,' says the historian, 'and talked with the woman (whom he had seen at Timnath,) and she pleased him well.' These words seem to refer to the ceremony of espousals; the following to the subsequent marriage, 'And after a time he returned to take her.'⁶ Hence a considerable time intervened between the espousals, and their actual union.

From the time of the espousals, the bridegroom was at liberty to visit his espoused wife in the house of her

¹ Bruce's Travels, vol. i.

² Gen. xxiv. 2.

³ Chardin's Travels.

⁴ Ps. xix. 4.

⁵ Luke ii. 4, 5.

⁶ Judg. xiv. 7, &c.

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father; yet neither of the parties left their own abode during eight days before the marriage; but persons of the same age visited the bridegroom, and made merry with him. These circumstances are distinctly marked in the account which the sacred historian has given us of Samson's marriage: 'so his father went down unto the woman, and made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. And it came to pass when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.'¹ These companions were the children of the bride-chamber, of whom our Lord speaks; 'can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?'²

An eastern bride submitted to various purifications, before the celebration of her nuptials. The virgins of Persia were prepared for the bed of Ahasuerus, 'six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things, for the purifying of the women.'³ It was a custom among the ancient Jews, to adorn the married couple with bridal crowns, which were generally of gold, made in the form of a tower. We discover this usage in the invitation of the spouse to her companions; 'go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.'⁴ And in the compliment of the bridegroom; 'thine head upon thee is like Carmel;' rising with the tower-shaped crown, 'like that mountain in shape; and rough with jewels as that mountain is with protuberances.'⁴

The prophet Isaiah makes an allusion to the same custom, where he celebrates, in strains of rapturous pleasure, the future prosperity of Zion: 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with garments;'⁵ literally, decketh himself with a crown.

The Greeks were decked with garlands of various herbs and flowers on their marriage day; whence Clytemnestra, in Euripides, speaks thus to Achilles about her daughter Iphigenia. 'But oh, in vain, though I had crowned her to be wedded to thee.'⁶ The hair of a Roman bride was, in like manner, crowned with flowers, after being divided into six locks with the point of a spear. This very ancient practice of crowning the bridegroom and the bride, has been continued among the members of the Greek church in Egypt, to our own times.

The marriage ceremony was commonly performed in a garden, or in the open air; the bride was placed under a canopy, supported by four youths; and adorned with jewels according to the rank of the married persons; all the company crying out with joyful acclamations, Blessed be he that cometh. It was anciently the custom, at the conclusion of the ceremony, for the father and mother, and kindred of the woman, to pray for a blessing upon the parties. Bethuel and Laban, and the other members of their family, pronounced a solemn benediction upon Rebekah before her departure: 'and they

blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.'⁷ And in times long posterior to the age of Isaac, when Ruth the Moabitess was espoused to Boaz, 'all the people that were in the gate, and the elders said, We are witnesses: the Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem.'⁸ After the benedictions, the bride is conducted, with great pomp, to the house of her husband; this is usually done in the evening; and as the procession moved along, money, sweetmeats, flowers and other articles were thrown among the populace, which they caught in cloths made for such occasions, stretched in a particular manner upon frames. The use of perfumes at eastern marriages is common, and upon great occasions very profuse. Not only are the garments scented, till, in the psalmist's language, they smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; it is also customary for virgins to meet, and lead the procession, with silver-gilt pots of perfumes; and sometimes aromatics are burned in the windows of all the houses in the streets through which the procession is to pass, till the air becomes loaded with fragrant odours. In allusion to this practice it is demanded, 'Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense.'⁹ So liberally were these rich perfumes burned on this occasion, that a pillar of smoke ascended from the censers, so high, that it could be seen at a considerable distance; and the perfume was so rich, as to equal in value and fragrance all the powders of the merchants. The custom of burning perfumes on these occasions, still continues in the east; for Lady Mary Wortley Montague, describing the reception of a young Turkish bride at the bagnio, says, 'Two virgins met her at the door; two others filled silver-gilt pots with perfumes, and began the procession, the rest following in pairs to the number of thirty.'

It was the custom among the ancient Greeks, and the nations around them, to conduct the new-married couple with torches and lamps to their dwelling, as appears from the messenger in Euripides, who says, he called to mind the time when he bore torches before Menelaus and Helena. These torches were usually carried by servants; and the procession was sometimes attended by singers and dancers. The Roman ladies were, in like manner, led home to their husbands in the evening, by the light of torches. A Jewish marriage seems to have been conducted in much the same way; for in that beautiful psalm, where David describes the majesty of Christ's kingdom, we meet with this passage: 'and the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour. The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work; the virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.'¹⁰ In the parable of the ten virgins, the same circumstances are introduced: 'they that were foolish

¹ Judg. xiv. 10. ² Mat. ix. 15. ³ Song of Solomon iii. 11.

⁴ Ibid. vii. 5; See Calmet, vol. iii. ⁵ Is. lxi. 11.

⁶ Potter's Gr. Antiq. p. 623, Boyd's edition, 1837.

⁷ Gen. xxiv. 60.

⁸ Song of Solomon iii. 6.

⁹ Ruth iv. 11.

¹⁰ Psalm xlv. 12—16.

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took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried,¹ leading the procession through the city, the women and domestics that were appointed to wait his arrival at home, 'all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.'¹

But among the Jews, the bridegroom was not always permitted to accompany his bride from her father's house; an intimate friend was often sent to conduct her, while he remained at home to receive her in his apartment. Her female attendants had the honour to introduce her; and whenever they changed the bride's dress, which is often done, they presented her to the bridegroom. It is the custom, and belongs to their ideas of magnificence, frequently to dress and undress the bride; and to cause her to wear on that same day all the clothes made up for her nuptials. For the same reason, the bridegroom's dress is less frequently changed. These circumstances discover the propriety and force of John's language, in his magnificent description of the Jewish church in her millennial state: 'and I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.'²

Those that were invited to the marriage, were expected to appear in their best and gayest attire. If the bridegroom was in circumstances to afford it, wedding garments were prepared for all the guests, which were hung up in the antechamber for them to put on over the rest of their clothes, as they entered the apartments where the marriage feast was prepared. To refuse, or even to neglect putting on the wedding garment, was reckoned an insult to the bridegroom, aggravated by the circumstance that it was provided by himself for the very purpose of being worn on that occasion, and was hung up in the way to the inner apartment, that the guests must have seen it, and recollected the design of its suspension. This accounts for the severity of the sentence pronounced by the king, who came in to see the guests, and found among them one who had neglected to put it on: 'and he saith unto him, friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless,' because it was provided at the expense of the entertainer, and placed full in his view. 'Then said the king to the servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'³ The arrival of the bride at the house of her husband, was followed by the marriage feast, at which they indulged in great mirth and hilarity. It was made entirely at the expense of the bridegroom; thus Homer sings; 'a shot-free banquet, or a marriage feast, not such as is by contribution made.'⁴

From the parable of the marriage feast, we have a right to conclude that such entertainments among the Jews were equally free. 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding.'⁵

The marriage feast was of old frequently protracted to the length of seven days: for so long Samson entertained his friends at Timnath.⁶ To this festival Laban is thought by many divines to refer, in his answer to Jacob's complaint, that he had imposed Leah upon him instead of Rachel; 'fulfil the week of the marriage, and we will give thee this also.' This feast was called the nuptial joy, with which no other was to be intermixed; all labour ceased while it continued, and no sign of mourning or sorrow was permitted to appear. It may be only further observed, that even in modern times none but very poor people give a daughter in marriage without a female slave for a handmaid, as hired servants are unknown in the oriental regions.⁷ Hence Laban, who was a man of considerable property in Mesopotamia, 'gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid, for an handmaid;' and 'to Rachel his daughter, Bilhah his handmaid, to be her maid.'⁸ In Greece also the marriage solemnity lasted several days. On the third day the bride presented her bridegroom with a robe; gifts were likewise made to the bride and bridegroom, by the bride's father and friends; these consisted of golden vessels, beds, couches, plates, and all sorts of necessaries for housekeeping, which were carried in great state to the house by women, preceded by a person carrying a basket, in the manner usual at processions, before whom went a boy in white vestments, with a torch in his hand. It was also customary for the bridegroom and his friends to give presents to the bride, after which, the bridegroom had leave to converse freely with her, and she was permitted to appear in public without her veil.⁹ To these circumstances the holy psalmist certainly refers, in his magnificent description of Messiah's kingdom; 'and the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour'¹⁰ with gifts and offerings suited to their wealth and thy dignity.

The apartments of the women are counted sacred and inviolable, over all the east; it is even a crime to inquire what passes within the walls of the harem, or house of the women. Hence, it is extremely difficult to be informed of the transactions in those sequestered habitations; and a man, says Chardin, may walk an hundred days, one after another, by the house where the women are, and yet know no more what is done there than at the farther end of Tartary. This sufficiently explains the reason of Mordecai's conduct, who 'walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.'¹¹

The Arabs are not so scrupulous as the Turks about their women; and though they have their harem, or women's apartment in the tent, they readily introduce their acquaintances into it, or those strangers whom they take under their special protection. Pococke's conductor, in his journey to Jerusalem, led him two or three miles to his tent, where he sat with his wife and others round a fire. The faithful Arab kept him there for greater security, the wife being always with him; no stranger ever daring to come into the women's apartment unless introduced. We discover in this custom, the reason of Jael's invitation to Sisera, when he was defeated by Barak: 'turn in, my lord, turn in to me, fear not.'¹²

⁶ Judg. xiv. 1. ⁷ Chardin's Travels. ⁸ Gen. xxix. 24, 29.

⁹ Potter's Gr. Antiq. p. 628, Boyd's Edition, 1837.

¹⁰ Ps. xlv. 12.

¹¹ Est. ii. 11.

¹² Judg. iv. 18.

¹ Mat. xxv. 6.

² Rev. xxi. 2.

³ Mat. xxii. 11.

⁴ Potter, p. 624, Boyd's Edition, 1837.

⁵ Mat. xxii. 2.

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She invited him to take refuge in her own division of the tent, into which no stranger might presume to enter; and where he naturally supposed himself in perfect safety.¹

CHAP. V.—Of the four evangelists and their writings.

BEFORE we proceed any farther in the history of our blessed Saviour's life, it may not be amiss to give some short account of the four evangelists that have recorded it. I call them four, because, whatever spurious pieces gained credit in the world afterwards, the tradition of the church from the beginning of the second century makes it evident, that the gospels then received were only the four gospels which we now own.

St Matthew, who stands in the front of these evangelists, and is generally allowed to be the first who committed the gospel to writing, was the son of Alpheus, a Galilean by birth, a Jew by religion, and a publican by profession. Among the Jews, as well as other nations, the custom at this time prevailed of having more names than one; and therefore we find his brother evangelist St Mark² and Luke,³ giving him the name of Levi, with a civil intent to avoid all mention of his former not so reputable profession, before he was called to the apostleship; but, what is no less an instance of his own modesty, in the gospel written by himself, he not only takes the name by which he was most commonly known, but generally adds the odious epithet to it of 'Matthew the publican,' intending thereby no doubt to magnify the grace of God, and the condescension of our blessed Saviour, who did not disdain to take into the highest dignity of the Christian church those whom the world rejected, and accounted vile.

⁴ Whether he was born in Nazareth or no, it is certain that his ordinary abode was at Capernaum,⁵ because his proper business was to gather the customs on goods that came by the sea of Galilee, and the tribute which passengers were to pay that went by water; for which purpose there was a custom-house by the sea-side, where Matthew had his office, or toll-booth, 'there sitting at the receipt of custom.' Our Lord having lately cured a famous paralytic, retired out of the town, to walk by the sea-side, where he taught the people that flocked after him; and having espied Matthew in his office, he asked him to become one of his disciples; whereupon, without any manner of hesitation, without staying so much as to settle his accounts, and put his affairs in order, he left all and followed him.^a

We cannot but suppose that, as he lived in Capernaum, the place of our Lord's usual residence, and where his sermons and miracles were so frequent, he must have been acquainted with his person and doctrine before this time; and consequently in a good preparation to receive the call with gladness. And that he did so, a good evidence it seems to be, his entertaining our Lord and his disciples at dinner next day in his house; whither he invited several of his own profession, in hopes, no doubt, that our Saviour's company and converse might make the like impression upon them.

From his election to the apostolate he continued constantly with our Lord, during his abode upon earth; and after his ascension for the space of eight years preached the gospel in several parts of Judea: but being now to betake himself to the conversion of the Gentiles, he was entreated by the Jews, who had been converted to the Christian faith, to commit to writing the history of our Lord's life and actions, and to leave it among them as a standing record of what he had preached to them; which accordingly he did, and so composed the gospel which we have now under his name.

⁶ The countries in which he preached were chiefly Parthia and Ethiopia, in the latter of which he converted multitudes, settled churches, and ordained ministers to confirm and build them up; and having signalized his zeal in the ministry of the gospel, and his contempt of the world in a life⁶ of most exemplary abstinence, he is most probably thought to have suffered martyrdom at Nadabar,⁷ a city in Ethiopia; but of the time and manner of his death no certain account is transmitted to us.

At the request of the Jewish converts, as we said, and, as some add, at the command of the rest of the apostles, St Matthew wrote his gospel, about eight or nine years after our Lord's resurrection: for that it was extant before the dispersion of the apostles, is plain from Bartholomew carrying it with him into India, where, as Eusebius⁷ informs us, it was found by Panatus, when he went

⁶ Cave's Lives of the Apostles. ⁷ Hist. Eccl. b. v. c. 10.

passed his business into other hands. And an attentive consideration of the context, and the mode of the gospel narratives, will show that this is no way inconsistent with the mention of the feast immediately after his call.—ED.

^b Clemens Alexandrinus tells us, that he abstained from the eating of flesh: and that the chief of his diet was herbs, roots, seeds, and berries.—*Pædag.* b. ii. c. 1.

^c This is contradicted by the account of Heraclion, a learned Valentinian of the second century, who, as cited by Clement of Alexandria, reckons Matthew among the apostles that did not die by martyrdom; and as his statement is not contradicted by Clement, it is more likely to be true than the relation of Socrates, who did not flourish until three hundred years after Heraclion.—*Horne's Introduction.* vol. iv.—ED.

^d Matthew is generally allowed to have written his gospel before the other evangelists; though the precise time when it was composed cannot be determined. Dr Mill, Michaelis, and Bishop Percy, after Irenæus, assign it to A. D. 61; Dr Hales to 63; Dr Lardner and Mr Hewlett to 64; Baronius, Grotius, Wetstein, J. Jones and others after Eusebius, to 41; Dr Owen and Bishop Tomline, to 38. It is proper to remark that Calvin, Beza, Gomarus, the antagonist of Arminius, Lardner, Michaelis, Dr Macknight, and others, seem all to have been decidedly of opinion that Luke wrote before Matthew. But the question, really, is of no importance. For the evidence of the inspiration of Luke, which has lately been controverted by divines both in England and in Germany, does in no degree depend upon it.—ED.

¹ Paxton, Harmer. ² Chap. ii. 14. ³ Chap. v. 27.

⁴ Kirslin, on the life of the four Evang. says he was, part 22.

⁵ Cave's Lives of the Apostles.

^a This is a rash conjecture. Although it is said in the text (Luke v. 27.) that Levi, or Matthew left all, rose up, and followed Christ, it is not necessary to infer from this, that in obeying the divine call he committed an act of injustice to his employers, and made no settlement of his accounts. He might have left his office to the care of some of his friends, or he might have returned soon afterwards to arrange his affairs. Surely he who said, 'render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's,' would not encourage one whom he had chosen to be his follower to act the part of an unfaithful steward even in temporal concerns. "The feast," says Doddridge, "was made the day following his calling, or perhaps some months after it, when he had made up his accounts, and

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to propagate the faith in those parts, and by such as retained the knowledge of Christ, was reputed a valuable treasure.

^a As it was primarily designed for the benefit of the Jewish converts, whatever some moderns may say to the contrary, the voice of all antiquity must carry it against them, that it was originally wrote in Hebrew, not in the ancient pure Hebrew, for that, in a great measure, was lost among the vulgar, but in a language commonly used at that time by the Jews of Palestine, and therefore still called the Hebrew tongue, because wrote in Hebrew characters, which was the Syriac, with a mixture of Hebrew and Chaldee.

This gospel of St Matthew was, for a long time, in use among the Jews, who had been converted to Christianity, and when, some time before the Romans laid siege to Jerusalem, they retired to Pella, they carried it thither along with them; from whence it was diffused into Decapolis,

^a There is a diversity of opinion respecting the language in which it was written: many learned men have contended, that it was written in the Hebrew, or Syro-Chaldaic dialect then spoken by the Jews; and others have as strenuously vindicated the Greek original. A third opinion has been offered by Dr Townson, to whose opinion great deference is due, and some other modern divines, that there were two originals, one in Hebrew, and the other in Greek. He thinks that there seems to be more reason for allowing two originals than for contesting either; the consent of antiquity pleading strongly for the Hebrew, and evident marks of originality, for the Greek. Dr Campbell argues strongly in favour of a Hebrew original. After adducing the external testimonies in support of this view of the matter, he says, have we not reason to conclude, from the express order, as well as from the example of our Lord, and from the uniform practice of his disciples, that it was suitable to the will of Providence, in this dispensation of grace, that every advantage should be first offered to the Jews, especially the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and that the gospel which had been first delivered to them by word, both by our Lord himself, and by his apostles, should be also first presented to them in writing, in that very dialect in which many of the readers, at the time of the publication, might remember to have heard the same sacred truths, as they came from the mouth of him who spake as never man spake, the great oracle of the Father, the interpreter of God. This loss of this gospel proved the prelude to the extinction of that church. But we have reason to be thankful that what was most valuable in the work, is not lost to the Christian community. The version we have in Greek is written with much evangelical simplicity, entirely in the idiom and manner of the apostles. It only remains that we notice the third opinion above mentioned, namely, that there were two originals one in Hebrew, the other in Greek, but both written by Matthew. This opinion, we believe, was first intimated by Sixtus Senensis, from whom it was adopted by Drs Whitby, Benson, Hey, and Townson, and some other modern divines. It has been conjectured, that Matthew on his departure to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, left with the church at Jerusalem, the Hebrew or Syriac narrative of our Lord's doctrines and miracles, and that the Greek gospel was written long after the apostles had quitted Jerusalem, and dispersed themselves in the discharge of the duties of their office. This conjecture receives some countenance from the terms in which Eusebius, when giving his own opinion, mentions Matthew's gospel. Matthew, says that historian, having first preached to the Hebrews, delivered to them, when he was preparing to depart to other countries, his gospel composed in their native language: that to those, from whom he was sent away, he might by his writings supply the loss of his presence. This opinion is further corroborated by the fact, that there are instances on record, of authors who have themselves published the same work in two languages. Thus Josephus wrote the History of the Jewish war in Hebrew and Greek. Upon the whole, the evidence preponderates in favour of the opinion that Matthew wrote first a Hebrew gospel for the use of the first Hebrew converts; and that afterwards, within a few years after our Lord's ascension, the same evangelist wrote his gospel in Greek.—Ed.

and all the countries beyond Jordan, where the Judaizing Christians still made use of it in the time of Epiphanius ¹ and Eusebius ² of Cæsarea. But these Christians ³ did not preserve this sacred *depositum*, with all the fidelity they should have done. They added to it several things, which perhaps they might have heard from the mouths of the apostles, or from their immediate disciples, and this in time brought it under the suspicion of other believers. The Ebionites, at length, got it into their hands, and by their additions and defalcations, in favour of some errors they had fallen into concerning the divinity of our Saviour and the virginity of the blessed mother, so corrupted it, that at length it was given up by other churches which adhered to the form of sound doctrine. It continued, however, a long time in its primitive purity in the hands of the Nazarenes, or first believers in Palestine, who, though they were zealous in the observation of the law, embraced no such opinions as the Ebionites did, nor made any alterations in the gospel. But after the extinction of this sect, we hear no more of the genuine gospel of St Matthew, because the ancient Greek version, which, in the apostolic times, was made from it, having always preserved its primitive integrity, did, long before this, universally prevail, and was looked upon as authentic as the original; for, though its author be uncertain, yet every one who mentions it, always ascribes it to some one apostle or other. ^b

When St Matthew began to write, the great question among the Jews was, Whether our blessed Saviour was

¹ Epiphanius. Hæres. xxix. c. 7.

² Hist. Eccl. b. iii. c. 25.

³ Calmet's Dictionary, and Preface to St Matthew's Gospel.

^b Those who maintain that St Matthew wrote in Greek, produce these arguments for their opinion. 1st, That some of the fathers, such as Origen, Epiphanius, and St Jerome, quote indeed the Hebrew of St Matthew, but quote it as a book of no great authority, which they would not have done, had it been the true original. 2^d, That had St Matthew wrote in Hebrew, the Hebrew names in his gospel would not have been interpreted into Greek, nor would he have quoted the Old Testament, according to the Septuagint translation. 3^d, That the Greek language was then very common in Palestine, and all the east. And, 4th, since all the other authors of the New Testament wrote in Greek, why should St Matthew alone write his gospel in Hebrew? But to these arguments it may be replied, 1st, That the uniform testimony of all the ancients, who tell us that St Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew, is certainly of very great weight; but then we must know that there were two of these copies of St Matthew, the one pure and uncorrupted, of which they have spoken with great esteem, the other depraved by heretics, which they have contemned, and looked upon as apocryphal. 2^d, The Hebrew names, interpreted into Greek, prove the very contrary to what would be inferred from it; for this demonstrates that the translation was Greek, and the original Hebrew. 3^d, Of the ten passages in the Old Testament that St Matthew cites in his gospel, there are seven of them which resemble the Hebrew more than the Septuagint; in the other three, the Septuagint and the Hebrew themselves agree; but the plain truth is, that St Matthew quotes by memory, and relates, not so much the words, as the sense, of the passages. 4th, However common the Greek tongue might be in Palestine among the better sort of people, yet it is certain that the generality of the Jews spoke commonly what they called Hebrew, which was Syriac and Chaldee mixed with Hebrew. And, 5th, Though all the rest of the New Testament were written in Greek, yet that is no argument why this part of it should; though, if convenience were considered, it should rather, one would think, be adapted to the general use and capacity of those for whom it was wrote. The dispute, however, is about matter of fact, and this is a fact attested by all the ancients, many of whom had seen the original, and were capable of making a judgment of it.—Whitby's Prefatory Discourse to the four Evangelists; and Calmet's Dictionary, under the word Matthew.

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the true Messiah or no? and the main tendency of his gospel seems to prove this. For he shows by his mighty deeds, that he was the Christ, the Son of God; that his mother Mary was a virgin; that he was not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; and that his miracles were not magical operations, nor the effects of any human art, but incontestable proofs of the power of God, and of his divine mission.¹ St Ambrose observes, that none of the apostles has entered so far into the particulars of our Saviour's actions^a as has St Matthew; that none of them has related the history of the wise men coming from the east, or the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, and some others, but he; that, in short, he has given us more rules for the conduct of life, and more lessons of morality, suitable to our necessities, than any; and all this² in a natural and easy style, (though sometimes mixed with Hebraisms,) such as becomes an historian, and especially a sacred historian, whose narration should be free from affectation, and all such trifling ornaments as do not agree with the gravity and dignity of his subject.

Though the name of Mark seems to be of Roman extraction, yet the evangelist now before us was born of Jewish parents, and originally descended from the tribe of Levi. What his proper name was, or upon what change or accident of life he might assume this, we have no manner of intelligence; but as it was no unusual thing for the Jews, when they went into the European provinces of the Roman empire, to conform to the customs of the country, and while they continued there, to be called by some name of common use; so some have conjectured, that when Mark attended upon St Peter to Rome, he might at that time take upon him this name, which, as he never returned to Judea to reassume his own, he for ever after retained. In the writings of the apostles we read of several called by this name. There is John,³ whose surname was Mark; ⁴ Mark, the sister's son of Barnabas; Mark, ⁵ who was employed in the ministry; Mark, whom St Paul calls his fellow labourer; ⁶ and Mark, whom St Peter ⁷ styles his son: but which of these was the evangelist, or whether the evangelist might not be a person distinct from each of these, has been a matter of some doubt among the learned.

That he was one of the seventy disciples, and among them one of those who took offence at our Lord's discourse of ⁸ eating his flesh and drinking his blood, some of the ancients have affirmed; but Eusebius, ⁹ from Papias who was bishop of Hierapolis, and lived near those times, tells us positively that he was no hearer or follower of our Saviour. He was converted by some of the

apostles, and most likely by St Peter, to whom he was a constant retainer, and served him in the capacity of an amanuensis, and an interpreter.¹⁰ For, though the apostles were divinely inspired, and, among other miraculous powers, had the gift of languages conferred on them; yet the interpretation of tongues seems to be a gift more peculiar to some than others; and it might be St Mark's talent, either by word or writing, to expound St Peter's discourses to those who understood not the language wherein they were delivered.^b

¹⁰ Cave's Lives of the Apostles.

^b With regard to the evangelist Mark, all that we learn from the New Testament concerning him is, that he was sister's son to Barnabas, (Col. iv. 10.) and the son of Mary, a pious woman of Jerusalem, at whose house the apostles and first Christians often assembled. His Hebrew name was John, and Michaelis thinks that he adopted the surname of Mark when he left Judea to preach the gospel to foreign countries—a practice not unusual among the Jews of that age, who frequently assumed a name more familiar to the nations which they visited than that by which they had been distinguished in their own country. But Dr Campbell, and others, were not convinced that the nephew of Barnabas is the person who wrote the gospel which bears the name of Mark. Of John, surnamed Mark, says Dr Campbell, one of the first things we learn is, that he attended Paul and Barnabas in their apostolical journeys, when these two travelled together, Acts xii. 25. xiii. 5. And when afterwards there arose a dispute between them concerning him, insomuch that they separated, Mark accompanied his uncle Barnabas, and Silas attended Paul. When Paul was reconciled to Mark, which was probably soon after, we find Paul again employing Mark's assistance, recommending him, and giving him a very honourable testimony, Col. iv. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 11. Phil. 24. But we hear not a syllable of his attending Peter, as his minister, or assisting him in any capacity. This is so different from the accounts which the most ancient writers give of the evangelist Mark, that though they cannot be said to contradict each other, they can hardly be understood as spoken of the same individual. The evangelist is not said to have derived any part of his information from our Lord himself, or even from any of his apostles, except the apostle Peter, whose disciple he is always represented as having been; and who doubtless speaks of him when he says, 1 Pet. v. 13, 'Marcus my son saluteth you;' a denomination commonly given in those times by the minister, to every one who by his means had been converted to the Christian faith. In brief, the accounts given of Paul's attendant, and those of Peter's interpreter, concur in nothing but the name, Mark, or Marcus; too slight a circumstance to conclude the sameness of the person from, especially when we consider how common the name was at Rome, and how customary it was for the Jews, in that age, to assume some Roman name when they went thither.—(Dr Campbell's Preface to Mark, vol. ii. p. 116.) But this is a question of no great importance. That Mark was the author of the gospel which bears his name, is proved by the unanimous testimony of the Christian writers of the four first centuries. From the earliest ages of the church this gospel was received not only as genuine and authentic, but as divinely inspired.—It has always been fully admitted, that the apostle Peter during his residence in Rome saw the gospel of Mark, and approved of it; so that the work comes to us with the highest apostolical authority. The deep humility of Peter has been justly inferred from the fact, that in this gospel, which was written under his superintendence, his denial of his Master is described with circumstances of higher aggravation, and with fainter views of his repentance, than are to be found in the other gospels. In regard to the time when this gospel was written there are different opinions. But as it is evident from the evangelist's own narrative, (Mark xvi. 20.) that he did not write until after the apostles had dispersed themselves among the Gentiles, and had preached the gospel every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following; and as it does not appear that *all* the apostles quitted Judea earlier than the year 50, perhaps we shall approximate nearest to the real date, if we place it between the years 60 and 63. That Mark is not to be considered as an abridger of Matthew's gospel, as he has been represented by some modern divines, may be proved by the following

¹ Ambros. Pref. in Luc. ² Beausobre's Pref. on St Matthew.

³ Acts xii. 12.

⁴ Col. iv. 10.

⁵ 2 Tim. iv. 11.

⁶ Phil. ver. 24.

⁷ 1 Pet. v. 13.

⁸ John. vi. 60.

⁹ Hist. Eccl. b. iii. c. 39

^a If we compare St Matthew with the three other evangelists, we may perceive a remarkable difference in the order and succession of our Saviour's actions, and from chap. iv. 22 to chap. xiv. 13, which has much perplexed chronologers and interpreters. Some pretend, that St Matthew should be followed, but others think it more reasonable to submit to the authority of the other three, especially since St Mark, who follows him close enough in every other thing, forsakes him in this particular. However this be, it can prove no prejudice to the truth of facts, which are the essential part of the gospel: and as to the order of time, the sacred authors are not always solicitous to follow it exactly.—Calmet's Dictionary under the word *Matthew*.

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He accompanied St Peter in all his travels, preached Christianity in Italy, and at Rome, and at the request of the Christians in those parts, composed his gospel, which St Peter afterwards revised and approved. From Italy he went into Egypt, and having fixed his chief residence in Alexandria, he there, and in the country round about, propagated the Christian faith with such success, that multitudes of both men and women, not only became converts, but engaged themselves likewise in a more strict profession ^a of the religion that he taught them than ordinary.

From Alexandria he removed westward; and passing through the countries of Marmorica, Pentapolis, and some others in his way to Libya, though the people were barbarous in their manners, as well as idolatrous in their worship, by his preaching and miracles, he not only converted, but, before he departed, confirmed them in the profession of the gospel. Upon his return to Alexandria, he preached with all boldness, ordered and disposed of the affairs of the church, and wisely provided for the continuance thereof, by constituting governors and pastors in it. ¹ The great number of miracles which he wrought, and the reproaches which some of the converts made upon

¹ Cave's Lives of the Apostles.

circumstances: first, he omits altogether several things related by Matthew—our Lord's pedigree, his birth, the visit of the magians, Joseph's flight into Egypt, and the cruelty of Herod. As his intention appears to have been to give in brief the history of our Lord's ministry, he begins very properly with the preaching of the Baptist. Secondly, it is clear, that whereas Matthew had designed his gospel chiefly for the Jewish Christians, that of Mark was principally intended for Gentile believers. Thus, the first time the Jordan is mentioned, the appellation *river* is added to the name, Mark i. 5. As the Romans could not understand the Jewish phrase of *defiled* or *common* hands, this evangelist adds the parenthetical explanation of it, that is, *unwashed*, Mark vii. 2. When he uses the word *corban*, he subjoins the interpretation, 'that is a gift' (vii. 11.): and instead of the word *mammon*, he uses the common term *riches*.—*Dr Townson's Works*, vol. i. p. 151. The manner in which Mark relates the life of our Saviour is an additional evidence that he wrote for Gentile Christians. His narrative is clear and concise, and while the other evangelists style our Saviour the Son of Man, he announces him as 'the Son of God.' Thirdly, there are some things in Matthew, of which, though they fall within the time to which Mark had confined himself, he has taken no notice; and some things are mentioned by Mark which had been overlooked by Matthew. Fourthly, he has not always followed the same arrangement with his predecessor; and his relation of some facts, so far from being an abridgment of Matthew's, is the more circumstantial of the two. His style in general, instead of being more concise, is more diffuse.—*Campbell; Michaelis; Koppe; Jones*.—Ed.

^a Philo, in his 'Treatise of a contemplative Life,' gives us a long account, and high commendation, of a set of people, whom he calls *εὐαριστοί*, who, in a pleasant place near Maraotic lake in Egypt, formed themselves into religious societies, and lived a strict philosophic life, and these Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* b. ii. c. 16.) affirms to have been Christians, converted and brought under these admirable rules by St Mark, at his coming into Egypt: but whoever seriously considers Philo's account, will plainly find that he intends it of Jews, and professors of the Mosaic religion, and not of Christians; partly because it is improbable that Philo, being a Jew, should give so great a character and commendation of Christians, who were so hateful to the Jews at that time in all places of the world; partly because Philo speaks of them as an institution of a considerable standing, whereas Christians had but lately appeared in the world, and were later come into Egypt; and partly because many things in Philo's account do no way suit with the state and manners of Christians at that time.—*Cave's Life of St Mark*.

the senseless idols of the Egyptians, so exasperated their rage, that they were resolved to destroy this introducer of a new religion among them. It was at the time of Easter when the great solemnities of their god Serapis happened to be celebrated; at which festival the minds of the people being excited to a passionate vindication of the honour of their idol, they broke in upon St Mark, then engaged in the solemn celebration of divine worship and binding his feet, they dragged him through the streets, and other rugged places, to a precipice near the sea; but for that night they thrust him into a dark prison, where his soul, by a divine vision, was strengthened and encouraged under the ruins of a shattered body. Early next morning the tragedy began again. For, in the same manner as they had done the day before, they dragged him about, till, his flesh being raked off, and his veins emptied of blood, his spirits failed, and he expired: but their malice died not with him; for taking the poor remains of his body, they threw them into a fire, and so burned them; but his bones and ashes the Christians gathered up, and decently entombed near the place where he usually preached. ^b

² After the defeat of Simon Magus, whereof we shall have occasion to say more hereafter, the reputation of the Christian religion grew so great, and converts at Rome became so many, that they were desirous to have in writing those doctrines which had hitherto been imparted to them by word of mouth only. St Mark, to whom this request was made, accordingly set himself to recollect what he, by long conversation, had learned from St Peter, who, when the other had finished the work, perused, approved, and recommended it to the use of the churches: and for this reason it is, by some of the ancients, styled St Peter's gospel; not that St Peter dictated it to St Mark, but because St Mark did chiefly compose it out of that account which St Peter usually delivered in his discourses to the people: and accordingly St Chrysostom ³ observes that the evangelist, in his nervous style and manner of expression, takes a great delight to imitate St Peter.

^c This gospel indeed was principally designed for the

² Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. iv.

³ Hom. iii. in Mat.

^b The martyrdom of St Mark is not mentioned by Eusebius, or any other ancient writer, and is contradicted by Jerome, whose expressions seem to imply that he died a natural death.—*Horne's Introduction*.—Ed.

^c The original Greek copy, under St Mark's own hand, is said to be extant at Venice at this day, written, as they tell us, by him at Aquileia, and thence, after many hundred years, translated to Venice, where it is still preserved, though the letters are so worn out with length of time, that they are not capable of being read. There are likewise some Greek manuscripts, wherein the last twelve verses of this gospel are omitted; but they are extant in the greatest number of the most ancient and authentic copies, as well as in the works of Irenæus, an author of prior date to any of the manuscripts that want them. It is not to be questioned, therefore, but that they originally belonged to St Mark's gospel, and were suppressed by some ignorant or conceited transcriber, upon the account of some seeming contradictions between St Matthew and this other evangelist, which, with a small skill in critical learning, may be easily reconciled.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles*; and *Beausobre's Preface on St Mark*.—The story of the autograph of St Mark's gospel, said to be preserved at Venice, is now proved to be a mere fable, for the Venetian MSS. formerly made part of the Latin MSS. preserved at Friuli, most of which was printed by Blanchini in his *Evangeliorum Quadruplex*. The

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use of the Christians at Rome, and from hence some may be apt to think it highly congruous that it should at first be written in the Latin tongue: but it must be considered, ¹ that as the Jewish converts, in that city, understood but little Latin, so there were very few Romans that did not understand Greek, which, as appears from the writers of that age, was the genteel and fashionable language of those times; nor can any good reason be assigned, why it should be more inconvenient for St Mark to write his gospel in Greek for the use of the Romans, than that St Paul should in the same language, write his epistle to that church.

We cannot compare St Matthew and St Mark together but must perceive, that the latter had seen the writings of the former, because he often uses the same terms, relates the same facts, and takes notice of the same circumstances; but we must not therefore infer, that all he intended in his work was simply to abridge him; because he begins his gospel in a different manner; he omits several things, particularly our Lord's genealogy; he varies from him in the order of his narration; he relates some facts that the other has omitted; he enlarges upon others in many particulars, and, what is no mean argument of his truth and impartiality in all the rest, the shameful lapse and denial of his beloved master St Peter he sets down, with more and more aggravating circumstances than any of the other evangelists have recorded.

St Luke, who by some ancient authors, is called Lucius and Lucanus, was a Syrian by birth, a native of Antioch, and by profession a physician.² ^a Antioch ³

¹ Cave's Lives of the Apostles.

² Beausobre's Preface on St Mark.

³ Cave's Lives of the Apostles.

Venice MSS. contained the first forty pages, or five quaternions of Mark's gospel; the two last quaternions or sixteen pages are preserved at Prague, where they were printed by M. Dobrowsky, under the title of *Fragmentum Pragense Evangelii S. Marci vulgo Autographi*, 1778, 4to.—*Horne's Introduction*.—Ed.

^a As to whether Luke was originally a Jew or a pagan, different opinions have been entertained. Some have inferred the latter opinion from an expression of the apostle Paul to the Collosians, (chap. iv, 10—14,) where, after naming some with this addition, 'who are of the circumcision,' he mentions others, and among them Luke, without any addition. These, are therefore, supposed to have been Gentiles. But this, though a plausible inference, as Dr Campbell observes, is not a necessary consequence from the apostle's words. He might have added the clause, 'who are of the circumcision,' not to distinguish the persons from those after-mentioned as *not of the circumcision*, but to give the Colossians particular information concerning those with whom perhaps they had not previously been acquainted. If they knew what Luke, and Epaphras, and Demas, whether Jews or Gentiles, originally were, the information was quite unnecessary with regard to them. It will perhaps add a little to the weight of this consideration to observe, that in those days, in introducing to any church such Christian brethren as were unknown to them before, it was a point of some importance to inform them, whether they were of the circumcision or not, inasmuch as there were certain ceremonies and observances, in which the Jewish converts were indulged, which, if found in one converted from Gentilism, might render it suspected, that his conversion was rather to Judaism than to Christianity.—But that Luke was, with all the other writers of the New Testament, a convert to Christianity from Judaism, not from Gentilism, is, upon the whole, sufficiently evident from his style, in which, notwithstanding its greater copiousness and variety, there are as many Hebraisms, as are found in the other evangelists, and such as, I imagine, could not be exemplified in any writer, originally Gentile, unless his conversion to Judaism had been very early in life.—*Dr Campbell's Preface to Luke*, vol. ii. p. 129.—Ed.

the metropolis of Syria, was, at this time, a city celebrated for the pleasantness of its situation, the fertility of its soil, the riches of its traffic, the wisdom of its senate, the learning of its professors, and the civility and politeness of its inhabitants, by the pens of some of the greatest orators of their times; and yet, above all these, it was renowned for this one peculiar honour, that in this place it was, where the disciples were first named Christians.

In Antioch there was a famous university, well replenished with learned professors of all arts and sciences, where St Luke could not miss of a liberal education; however, he did not only study in Antioch, but in all the schools of Greece and Egypt, whereby he became accomplished in every part of human literature, and, as the Greek academies were then more especially famous for the study of physic, our evangelist, for some time, applied himself solely to the practice of that; and, after his conversion, continued, very likely, in the same profession, which was far from being inconsistent, but rather subservient to the ministry of the gospel, or the cure of souls.

As to his other accomplishment, the art of painting, the ancients knew nothing of it. Nicephorus ⁴ is the first author that mentions it; and though a great deal of pains has been taken to prove, that some pieces, still extant, were drawn by his own hand, yet the ancient inscription found in a vault near St Mary's church, in the Via lata at Rome, the place where St Paul's house is said to have stood, where mention is made of a picture of the blessed virgin, as one of the seven painted by St Luke, is an argument of better authority for his skill in that art, than any that the Jesuit Gretser, in his laborious treatise, ⁵ ^b has produced. But, whether our evangelist ever painted the blessed virgin or not, it is certain that he has left us so many particulars, omitted by others, relating to the conception, birth, and infancy of her son, ⁶ that he seems to have been acquainted with her, and to have had some share in her confidence.

That he was one of the seventy disciples, is a notion inconsistent with his own declaration, in the preface to his gospel, wherein he informs us, that the facts therein contained were communicated to him by others, who had been ⁷ eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word from the beginning; and therefore the most probable opinion is, that, as the Jews lived in great numbers, and had their synagogues, and schools of education at Antioch, St Luke was at first a Jewish proselyte, but afterwards, by St Paul, while he abode in this city, converted to the Christian faith. A companion of his travels and sufferings he plainly appears to have been, if not from his first conversion, at least from the time of St Paul's first going into Macedonia; for there, in his account of the apostle's actions, he changes his style, and, ⁸ includes himself ever after as a party concerned in the narrative.

The truth is, he followed him in all his dangers, was

⁴ B. ii. c. 43.

⁵ De Imagine non manuf. et a St. Luca pict. c. 18, 19.

⁶ Grotius on Luke ii. 51.

⁷ Luke i. 2.

⁸ Acts xvi. 10.

^b The tradition that St Luke was a painter is utterly unworthy of credit; it rests on no solid foundation, and is countenanced by no authorities.—Ed.

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with him at several arraignments at Jerusalem, and accompanied him in his desperate voyage to Rome, where he still attended on him, to serve his necessities, and supply those ministerial offices which the apostle's confinement would not suffer him to undergo. Nay, it appears from a passage of St Paul ¹ to Timothy, that he returned with him to Rome the second time, waiting on him in the same capacity, and especially in carrying messages to those churches where they had planted Christianity: nor can we well forbear thinking, that he continued his attendance on him until the apostle had finished his course, and crowned his ministry with his martyrdom; by which kind offices he infinitely endeared himself to St Paul, who owned him for his fellow-labourer, and called him 'the beloved physician,' ² and 'the brother, whose praise is in the gospel, throughout all the churches.'

After the death of St Paul, how he disposed of himself is not so certain. Some are of opinion that he returned into the east, and in Egypt and Lydia preached the gospel, wrought miracles, converted multitudes, and constituted guides and ministers of religion; but others rather think, that he travelled into Dalmatia, Gallia, Italy, and Macedonia, where he spared no pains, nor declined any dangers, that he might faithfully discharge the trust committed to him. ³ Upon his coming into Greece, those who make him die a violent death, for some are of a contrary opinion, tell us, that he preached with great success, and baptized many converts into the Christian faith, till a party of infidels, making head against him, drew him to execution, and, for want of a cross whereon to dispatch him, hanged him upon an olive-tree, in the eightieth year of his age. ^a

We have two pieces of his, namely, his gospel, and the history of the apostolic acts, wrote for the use of the churches, and both dedicated to Theophilus: but who this Theophilus was, it is not so easy a matter to determine, since many of the ancients themselves have taken this name in a general appellative sense, for a *lover of God*, a title common to every good Christian; but others, with better reason, have thought, that it is the proper name of some person of distinction, since the title of 'most excellent' is annexed to it, which is the usual form of address to princes and great men. But who this person of distinction was, it is impossible to tell, only we may suppose, that he was some considerable magistrate, whom St Luke had converted, and to whom he now dedicated his books, not only as a testimony of honourable respect, but as a means of giving him a farther information of those things wherein he had instructed him.

⁴ The occasion of his writing his gospel was, as himself intimates, the rash and wrong accounts given to the world by some, who, either out of ignorance or design, had misrepresented the actions and doctrines of Christ, and sowed the seeds of error in the church. ^b It is certain,

that this evangelist is more circumstantial in relating the facts, and more exact in the method and order of them, than either of the two who wrote before him. ⁵ The history of Zacharias, the generation of John the Baptist, the angel's coming to the blessed virgin, Elizabeth's salutation of her at the first interview, the occasion of Joseph and Mary's going to Bethlehem, the circumstances of our Saviour's birth there, the publication of it to the shepherds, and the testimony which Simeon and Anna gave to him in the temple; these, and several other pieces of history, as well as the parables of the lost sheep, lost piece of money, and returning prodigal son, &c., are not related by any other evangelist. His history therefore is an excellent supplement of what they have omitted; nor does it in the least detract from the authority of his relations, that he himself was not present at the doing of them: for, if we consider who were the persons from whom he derived his account of things, he had a stock of intelligence sufficiently authentic to proceed upon; and, when he had finished it, had the sanction and approbation of an apostle, divinely inspired, as himself likewise was, even of the great apostle of the Gentiles, to confirm it.

Whoever looks into the beginning of St Luke's history of the apostolic acts, may easily perceive that it is a continuation of what he had related in his gospel; for it takes up the story at our Saviour's ascension, and continues it to St Paul's arrival at Rome after his appeal to

5 Poole's Argument on St Luke.

in writing this gospel was to supersede the defective narratives of the life of Christ which were then in circulation, and to furnish the church with a genuine account of the life, doctrines, miracles, death, and resurrection of our Saviour. Dr Campbell truly observes, that the very circumstance of the number of such narratives at so early a period is itself an evidence that there was something in the first publication of the Christian doctrine, which, notwithstanding the many unfavourable circumstances wherewith it was attended, excited the curiosity, and awakened the attention of persons of all ranks and denominations; insomuch that every narrative which pretended to furnish men with any additional information concerning so extraordinary a person as Jesus, seems to have been read with avidity. Who they were to whom the evangelist alludes, who had published narratives not entirely to be depended on, it is impossible for us now to discover: but we are certain they were not the evangelists Matthew and Mark, because they could not be called 'many'; and the former of them at least wrote from his own personal knowledge, as well as under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, while the persons to whom Luke refers had written merely from report. Some writers have supposed that Luke derived his information chiefly from the apostle Paul, whom he had faithfully attended. But though Paul, who was divinely enlightened in all that concerned the life and doctrine of his Master, must have been of great use to this evangelist, it appears from Luke's own words, that the chief source of his intelligence, as to the facts related in his gospel, was from those who had been eye and ear witnesses of what our Lord both did and taught. Now of this number Paul evidently was not. At the same time, the sanction of the apostle, and the early and unanimous reception of the writings of Luke, as divinely inspired, and a part of the canon of Scripture, are sufficient to satisfy us of the divine authority both of the gospel which bears the name of this evangelist, and of the acts of the apostles. As to the time when this gospel was written, the majority of biblical critics are of opinion that it was in the year 63, or 64. As to the place of publication, though nothing certain can be affirmed, it has been conjectured with much probability that it was written by Luke while he attended on Paul during his two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea; and that before he set sail with the apostle for Rome, he sent it to Theophilus, wherever that person was residing.—Ed.

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 11.

² 2 Cor. viii. 18.

³ Cave's Life of St Luke.

Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. iv.

^a In regard to the latter part of the life, and to the death of this evangelist, antiquity has not furnished us with any accounts which can be relied on.—Campbell.—Ed.

^b St Luke does not charge those who had written before him, either with misrepresenting the actions and doctrines of Christ, or with sowing the seeds of error in the church.—His design

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Cæsar, and so, properly speaking, is but one history divided into two parts. The main difference between the gospel and the Acts is, that in the former he writes from the information he had from others, but such as were true and authentic witnesses; in the latter, from his own knowledge, and personal concern in the things he relates.

His chief design, in the composition of this work, was, to write a true history of the apostles, and of the foundation of the Christian church, in opposition to the false Acts, and false histories, which began then to be dispersed about the world. This history, however, does not comprise the acts of all the apostles, but confines itself chiefly to the most remarkable passages of two, St Peter and St Paul, and even of these two, it gives us but a short and summary account. St Peter's story carries it down no lower than his deliverance from Herod's imprisoning him, and the death of his persecutor, which happened in the year of our Lord 44; and yet, the apostle lived four and twenty years after this. And in like manner, the history of St Paul is far from being complete, for, as from the time of his conversion, there is very little said of him, to his coming to Iconium, which was twelve years after; so his story proceeds no farther than to his first coming to Rome, in the year of our Lord 58; and yet, after this, he lived ten years, and having preached the gospel in Spain, and other parts of the west, at last returned to Rome, and there suffered martyrdom.

¹ It must be owned, however, that the evangelist is more particular in his account of St Paul, than of any other of the apostles, and that not only because he was more finally active in the cause of Christianity, but because St Luke was his constant attendant, an eye-witness of the whole carriage of his life, and privy to his most intimate transactions, and therefore capable of giving a more full and satisfactory relation of them.

² The evangelist's design, in short, was not to compose a large volume, but only to single out some few things which he thought necessary for the instruction of the faithful; and in this respect his work may be called 'An historical Demonstration of the Truth of the Christian religion;' since therein we perceive our Lord's promises fulfilled in his mission of the Holy Ghost, in his resurrection, and ascension into heaven, in the sovereign power he exercises there, in the miracles he enabled his followers to work, in the rise and wonderful progress of his religion, and, in one word, in the Christian church becoming the church universal by the call to the Gentiles.

We have only one thing more to remark concerning this history, namely, That as St Luke wrote it at Rome and at the end of St Paul's two years' imprisonment there, with which he concludes his story; so his way and manner of writing is exact and accurate; his style polite and elegant, sublime and noble, and yet easy and perspicuous, flowing with a natural grace and sweetness, admirably adapted to an historical design, and all along expressed in a vein of purer and more refined language than is to be found in the other writers of the sacred story.

St John, though the last in order, yet first in quality, among the evangelists, was by birth a Galilean, the son

of Zebedee and Salome, one of those devout women who constantly attended our Lord in his ministry, and brother of James, who, to distinguish him from another apostle of the same name, is generally called 'James the great.' Before his adjoining himself to Christ, he seems to have been a disciple to John the Baptist, and is thought to have been that other disciple who, in the first chapter³ of his gospel, is said to have been present with Andrew when John declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God, and thereupon to have followed him to the place of his abode.

He was by much the youngest of the apostles; yet was he admitted into as great a share of his Master's confidence as any. He was one of those to whom he communicated the most private passages of his life; one of those whom he took with him when he went and restored Jairus's daughter to life; one of those to whom he exhibited a specimen of his divinity, in his transfiguration on the mount; one of those who were present at his conference with Moses and Elias, and heard that voice which declared him the beloved Son of God; and one of those who were companions of his solitude, and most retired devotions, and bitter agonies in the garden. Thus, of the three who were made the witnesses of their Master's actions, which he saw convenient to conceal, St John had constantly the privilege to make one. Nay, even of these three he seems, in some respects, to have the preference; to be known by the most desirable of all titles, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved;' to have the honour of 'a leaning upon his Lord's bosom at meat; to have the intimacy with him to ask him a question, namely, who in the company was the traitor; which even St Peter himself had not courage to do; and, what is the highest instance of his affection, to have his mother, his sorrowful and disconsolate mother, with his last dying breath, committed to his care and comfort; ⁴ which peculiar tokens of his Master's favour and esteem, some have ascribed to the apostle's eminent modesty, others to his unspotted chastity, others think it an indulgence due to his youth; but they seem to have the brightest notion who impute it to a nearness of relation, and a peculiar sweetness of disposition conspiring to recommend him.

⁵ Upon the division of the provinces, which the apostles made among themselves, Asia fell to St John's share, though he did not immediately enter upon his charge, but staid at Jerusalem, at least till the death of the blessed virgin, which was about fifteen years after our Lord's ascension. After he was thus released from his trust, he took his journey into Asia, and industriously applied himself to propagate Christianity, preaching where the gospel had not yet taken place, and confirming it where it had been already planted. Many churches of note and eminence were of his foundation; but the chief place of his residence was at Ephesus, where, though St Paul had many years before settled a church, and constituted Timothy bishop of it, yet considering that it was a city of exceeding great resort, both upon the account

³ Ver. 35—40. ⁴ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. i.

⁵ Cave's Life of St John.

^a Among the eastern people the custom was, not to sit on chairs, as it is with us, but to lie along at meals upon couches; so that the second lay with his head in the bosom of him that was before him.

¹ Cave's Life of St Luke.

² Beausobre's Preface on the Acts of the Apostles.

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of its traffic, and the convenience of its port, the apostle thought he could not be seated more commodiously than here for dispersing the knowledge of his doctrines to natives of several nations and quarters at once.

After several years, some say twenty-seven, spent here, he was accused to Domitian, who had then begun a severe persecution, as a great asserter of atheism and impiety, and a public subverter of the religion of the empire; so that, by his command, the proconsul of Asia sent him bound to Rome, where, as Tertullian relates, in a manner importing the fact abundantly notorious, he was plunged into a caldron of oil set on fire; but God, who had reserved him for farther services to the truth, restrained the heat of it, as he did in the fiery furnace of old, and so preserved him from this seemingly unavoidable destruction. The emperor, however, unmoved with his miraculous deliverance, ordered him to be banished to Patmos, a small disconsolate island in the Archipelago, where he remained several years, instructing the inhabitants in the faith of Christ; and where he was vouchsafed those visions and prophetic representations which he then recorded in his book of Revelation, reaping this great advantage from his exile, that though he was cut off from the society of men, he was the more entertained with immediate converses of heaven.

Upon the death of Domitian, and the succession of Nerva, who rescinded all the odious acts of his predecessor, and, by public edict, recalled those whom the other's fury had banished, St John took the opportunity to return into Asia, and fixed his seat again at Ephesus; the rather, because the people of that place had lately martyred their bishop, Timothy. Here, with the assistance of seven other bishops, he took upon him the government of the large diocese of Asia Minor, erected oratories, and disposed of the clergy in the best manner that the circumstances of those times would permit; and having spent his time in an indefatigable execution of his charge, travelling from east to west to instruct the world in the principles of the holy religion which he was sent to propagate; and shunning no difficulties or dangers, to redeem men's minds from vice, error, or idolatry, he finished his course, in the beginning of Trajan's reign, in a good old age, and, in the ninety-ninth year of his life, died a natural death, and was buried near Ephesus; a wonderful pattern of holiness and charity, and a writer so profound, as to deserve, by way of eminence, the character of St John the divine.

The first in time, though placed last, is his Apocalypse, or book of Revelation, which he wrote in his confinement at Patmos. After the preface, and admonition given to the bishops of the seven churches in Asia, it contains the persecutions which the faithful have suffered from the Jews, heretics, and Roman emperors, down as far as Julian the apostate. After this we have a view of that vengeance which God has exercised against the persons of persecutors, against the Roman empire, and the city of Rome, which is described under the name of Babylon, the great prostitute, seated upon seven hills; then we have a description of the peaceable and flourishing state of the church for a thousand years, and, after some molestation from the Turks, as is supposed, the happiness of the church triumphant, set off with all the imaginable

beauties of rhetoric; and, at last, we come to a formal conclusion of the whole matter, and a severe commination to all those who shall presume either to add or diminish any thing from this prophecy.

¹ That St John the evangelist was the author of the book of revelation, all the most ancient ecclesiastical writers were agreed, until Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, in his answer to one Nepos, another Egyptian bishop, who had revived the gross notion of Cerinthus, concerning the millennium, in order to evade the use which this Nepos had made of the Apocalypse, called in question its authority, by asserting that several of the ancients had disowned this book to have been wrote by any apostolic man; that Cerinthus had prefixed John's name to it, to give the better countenance to his dream of Christ's reign upon earth; and that, though it might be the work of some inspired person, it could not possibly be St John's, because its style, matter, and method, did by no means agree with his other writings. Now, whoever looks into the ancient writers of the church, will find that Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who, according to ² Irenæus, had seen St John; Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who, according to St ³ Chrysostom, was conversant with the apostles; Justin Martyr, ⁴ Irenæus, ⁵ Clemens ⁶ of Alexandria, and Tertullian, ⁷ authors all of the second century, are unanimous in their ascribing this work to the same hand from whence the gospel and epistles did proceed; and that therefore the opinion of one private doctor should not prevail against the authority of so many writers, who were either cotemporary, or nearly subsequent to the apostles. For, be it allowed that there is a diversity of style, yet does not every able writer vary that according to the nature of the subject he is upon? In history, the style should be simple; in epistles, familiar; and in prophecies, majestic and sublime; and therefore what wonder is it, if, in arguments so vastly different, the same person did not always observe the same tenor and way of writing? Nothing can be more different in their method and diction, than the book of Proverbs and the book of Canticles, and yet few have doubted but that Solomon was the writer of both: but now, that Cerinthus should be the author of a book which contains doctrines directly opposite to the errors which he broached, is a thing incredible. For, whereas Cerinthus did not believe that God made the world, or that Christ died, and rose again; the author of the Revelation ⁸ ascribes to God the work of the creation, and calls our blessed Saviour ⁹ the 'first begotten of the dead;' and whereas Cerinthus made Jesus merely the Son of Joseph, and a being different from that of Christ; the author of the Revelation calls him expressly ¹⁰ 'the Son of God,' and makes him ¹¹ one and the same person with Christ. Though therefore there may be some similitude between St John's expressions, and the notions of Cerinthus, in regard to Christ's reign of a thousand years, yet it had been much more prudent in Dionysius, to have given a spiritual sense and interpretation of these expressions, than to ascribe to a wicked and sensual man, as Cerinthus was, a book, which breathes nothing but piety and

¹ Beausobre's Preface on the Apocalypse. ² Iren. b. iii. c. 3.

³ Hom. in Ignatium. ⁴ Dial. cum. Tryph. ⁵ B. iv. c. 37.

⁶ Strom. l. ⁷ De Resurrect. c. 58. ⁸ Chap. x. 6.

⁹ Rev. i. 5. ¹⁰ Chap. ii. 18. ¹¹ Chap. i. 5.

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holiness, an awful dread of God, and a devotion such as the angels perform in heaven.

The truth is, all circumstances concur to entitle our apostle to be the author of this book. His name frequently expressed in it; his writing it in the island of Patmos, whither none but he was banished; his directing particular epistles to the seven churches of Asia, which had either been planted or cultivated by him, and his styling himself 'their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ:' these, and many more circumstances that might be mentioned, added to the doctrine contained in it, which is highly suitable to the apostolic spirit and temper, evidently bear witness, that this book was the work of St John, and consequently, of divine and canonical authority.

¹ Next to the Apocalypse, in order of time, are the three epistles, which St John wrote. The first of these is catholic, calculated for all times and places, and contains most excellent rules for the conduct of the Christian life, and for preservation against the crafty insinuations of seducers. The other two are but short, and directed to particular persons: the one to a lady of honourable quality; and the other to the charitable and hospitable Gaius, so kind a friend, and so courteous an entertainer, of all indigent Christians.

² Eusebius, and after him St Jerome, informs us, that St John, having perused the other three gospels, approved and confirmed them by his authority; but observing withal, that these evangelists had omitted several of our Saviour's actions, such especially as were done before the Baptist's imprisonment, he wrote his gospel in order to supply what was wanting in them: ^a and because at this time there were several heretics, such as Cerinthus, Ebion, and their followers, sprung up in the church, who denied the divine nature of Jesus Christ, another end of his writing was, to antidote the world against the poison of these heresies, by making it appear that our blessed Saviour was God from all eternity, and before his incarnation; ³ and that as other evangelists had written the series of his generation according to the flesh, he might write a spiritual gospel, beginning from the divinity of Christ: which was a subject reserved for him, as the most excellent person by the Holy Ghost.

When therefore the bishops of Asia, and several ambassadors from other churches, had been for some

time soliciting him, he caused them to proclaim a general fast, to seek the blessing of heaven on so great and momentous an undertaking; and when this was done, he set about the work, and ^b completed it in so excellent and sublime a manner, that the ancients generally resembled him to an eagle soaring aloft within the clouds, whither the weak eye of man was not able to follow him: for, 'as the evangelical writings,' says ⁴ St Basil, 'transcend all the other parts of the holy scriptures, because in other parts God speaks to us by his servants the prophets; but in the gospels our Lord, who is God blessed for evermore, speaks to us himself: so among all the evangelical preachers none is like St John, the son of thunder, for the sublimity of his discourses, beyond any man's capacity duly to reach and comprehend.'

CHAP. V.—On Philo and Josephus.

(SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.)

It is proper that the reader should have some acquaintance with the general character and principles of the two highly respectable Jewish writers whose names are at the head of this chapter.

Philo, who is called Judeus, to distinguish him from Philo the Carpathian, lived when Christ appeared on earth. He is generally regarded as a Jew of Alexandria: from his own account, however, we learn that he was born at Jerusalem; and he doubtless repaired to that city occasionally to attend at the festivals. He was a man of distinguished family, and of great authority at Alexandria, being brother to Alexander Lysimachus, who was alibarch, or chief of the fiscal scribes, in that city; exercising an office which is supposed to have had the direction of the territorial revenue, and which was probably a situation of considerable rank, as his son married Bernice, the daughter of Agrippa.

Philo appears to have been brought up a Pharisee,

⁴ Hom. 16. t. i.

^b His gospel was originally written in Greek, but in a Greek that abounds with Hebraisms, as do the other evangelists. His words are peculiar to himself, and his phrases used in an uncommon sense, which may possibly make his way of writing not so grateful to some nice masters of eloquence. In citing places from the Old Testament, though he sometimes makes use of the Septuagint, yet he usually translates from the Hebrew original, and generally renders them word for word: for being an Hebrew of the Hebrews, and admirably skilled in the language of his country, this probably made him less exact in his Greek composes, wherein he had no advantage besides what was immediately communicated from above. But what he wanted in the politeness of his style, was abundantly made up in the excellence and sublimity of his matter.—*Cave's Life of St John.*—One thing very remarkable in John's style, is an attempt to impress important truths more strongly on the minds of the readers, by employing, in the expression of them, both an affirmative proposition, and a negative. Thus: 'All things were made by it, (the word,) and without it not a single creature was made. He acknowledged and denied not, but acknowledged.' Pleonasm is very frequent in this gospel: 'This man came as a witness to testify concerning the light:' tautologies also, and repetitions. Thus it follows: 'He was not the light, but came to testify concerning the light.' Again: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God.'—*Campbell's Preface to John's Gospel.*—ED.

¹ Cave's Life of St John. ² Hist. Eccl. b. iii. c. 24.

³ Whitby's Preface to St John's Gospel.

^a It is manifestly not without design that he commonly passes over those passages of our Lord's history and teaching, which had been treated at large by the other evangelists, or, if he touches them at all, he touches them but slightly, whilst he records many miracles which had been overlooked by the rest, and expatiates on the sublime doctrines of the pre-existence, the divinity, and the incarnation of the Word, the great ends of his mission, and the blessings of his purchase. This gospel may be truly said to interfere less with the rest than these do with one another: in consequence of which, if its testimony cannot often be pleaded in confirmation of theirs, neither is it liable to be urged in contradiction. It is remarkable also, that though this evangelist appears, more than any of them, to excel in that artless simplicity, which is scarcely compatible with the subtlety of disputation, we have, in his work, a fuller display of the evidences of our religion, on the footing on which it then stood, than in all the rest put together.—*Campbell's Preface to John's Gospel.*—ED.

A. M. 4052, A. D. 48, ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5457, A. D. 46.

and to have attained extensive and various information, and great knowledge of the scriptures of the Old Testament, which he read probably in the Septuagint version, not having, it is supposed, been acquainted with the Hebrew, being an Hellenist, and writing himself in the Greek language. He was a man of very eminent qualities, and highly revered; and a remark of his wife which is recorded, bears testimony to his worth, since, on being inquired of wherefore she did not wear ornaments, she answered, 'that the virtue of an husband was a sufficient ornament for a wife.'

He was deputed by the Jews of Alexandria upon an embassy to Rome, in the fourth year of Caligula, A. D. 40, or 41. The object was to counteract the calumnies of Apion, and to make a complaint to Caligula on the subject of a persecution excited against these Jews, for having refused divine honours to the statues of the emperors, while the rest of the world was submitting, with servile flattery, to adore a weak and depraved mortal as a god. Philo describes his reception by the emperor at a villa, which had belonged to Mæcenas, near Rome. He was treated with a contemptuous levity, equally unbecoming the imperial dignity, and the venerable character of Philo. He, however, manifested his firmness, and upon the failure of his petition, turned to the Jews who accompanied him, and encouraged them by saying, 'Now Caius is against us, God will be with us.'

Eusebius and Jerome state, that during Philo's stay at Rome, he conversed with St Peter; and some have affirmed that he was converted to Christianity either by that apostle, or by reading the gospel of St Mark at Alexandria, and that he afterwards renounced the Christian faith.¹ These accounts have been disputed by the learned editor of the works of Philo, and it has been maintained that it is not probable that St Peter was at Rome so early as Philo's time, if at all, and that St Mark's gospel was not published till A. D. 45. Bryant, however, contends, that Philo's age is placed too far back when it is assigned to the time of Julius Cæsar, that he was a contemporary of the apostles, and lived so late as the reign of Nero; and that as St Mark came to Alexandria in 48 or 49, Philo had an opportunity of conversing with the apostle, and of seeing his gospel, which some suppose to have been published in 45.

In the works of Philo, we discover a great devotion to the Old Testament, but he sometimes follows a vague strain of allegory, particularly in interpreting the history of the temptation in paradise; he expected that all nations should be converted to the law of Moses; and conceived that the promises relating to Christ referred only to a temporal Messiah, describing him as a man, who, as the oracle foretold, should 'go forth warring and conquering, and who should subdue great and numerous nations.' Though he appears to have conceived that the divine could not be united to the human nature, he had nevertheless been led to form very just apprehensions, in some respects, of the eternal nature and attributes of the Logos, and to describe him as a real and acting being, 'the first begotten Son,' 'the express image of God, esteemed the same as God, the great Cause of all things, by whom all things were produced and disposed,'

"the person who visibly appeared to Abraham, to Jacob, and to Moses in the bush, the appointed mediator and intercessor for the sins of the world; the Word of the Supreme God, by whom a ransom and price of redemption of the soul may be paid."

Philo speaks also remarkably of the Holy Ghost, and styles him 'the all-wise Spirit, the divine power which breathed the breath of life into man, being sent from God for abode here, to the advantage of the human race, that if man be mortal as to the visible, he might at least be rendered immortal as to the invisible part.' He represents a prophet also as 'not manifesting any thing of his own, but as being an interpreter,—the divine Spirit coming upon and dwelling in him, impelling and directing the organism of his voice to a distinct manifestation of what the Spirit predicts.' Philo then, though he does not state an association and equality in the mysterious union of the Godhead, still must be allowed to have caught, either from the scriptures or from Plato, some outline of the doctrine of the Trinity; and he appears in one instance, if the present reading of the passage be adhered to, to represent the Logos as 'bearing the similitude of man, and as the shepherd of the holy flock.'

The observations, however, expressed by Philo upon these and other points of faith, and particularly upon regeneration and the divine grace, so much resemble what is communicated by St Luke and St James, and by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, that we may suppose them to have been borrowed from the inspired writings, if we admit that these scriptures were produced sufficiently early for that purpose. We have seen indeed that Philo might possibly have conversed with St Mark, and seen his gospel; and if he had not any intercourse with the early disciples, he might at least have caught the distant reports of those preachers, whose sound went forth with rapid communication into all lands. On the other hand, it is attended with difficulties to suppose, that the testimonies to the word of Christ should have been presented to Philo, and not have been noticed by him. Many who like him imagined that the divine perfections could not be united to the flesh, maintained, as did the Nicolaitans, and afterwards the Gnostics, that the body of Christ was a heavenly substance, which assumed merely the appearance of the human form; it is probable, therefore, that Philo either did not hear, or was withholden by his belief in the perpetuity of the Mosaic dispensation, from receiving the witness of the evangelists, if brought before him. He was employed, however, by providence, indirectly to support the cause of religion, and to bear his suffrage to many doctrines communicated in the gospel: thus, for instance, he gives a remarkable account of Pilate, the Roman governor, being apprehensive that the Jews should send an embassy to Rome, to represent the crimes of his government, and the murder of eminent persons who had been condemned by him.

The attempts which are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles to have been made upon the life of Paul will be more readily accounted for, and the danger from which he was delivered be more fully understood, if we consider that the Jews were so blinded by bigotry and a persecuting spirit, that even Philo states it to be proper that all who had a zeal for virtue should have a

¹ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. b. ii. c. 17. vol. i. p. 65.

A.M. 4067. A. D. 63; ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5472. A. D. 61.

right to punish, without delay, and with their own hands, those who forsook the worship of the true God, not carrying them before a court of judicature, or the council, or any magistrate whatsoever, but indulging the abhorrence of evil and the love of God, in the immediate punishment of those impious wretches; and from such principles might originate the custom among the Jews of making a vow not to eat and drink until they had killed the object of their religious abhorrence.

The writings of Philo, which abound with just sentiments eloquently expressed, furnish much that has a general claim to regard. He speaks of God, and of the worship and purity becoming his creatures, and describes the duties of life, and the rewards and punishments of sin, with great solemnity and effect. The elevation of his thoughts sometimes swells out his representations beyond a strict and literal accuracy. He bears, however, the testimony of an enlarged mind to the truth of revelation, and to the harmony and importance of its communications; and his works illustrate the providence of God, who at no time left himself without a witness, and employed in different ages and countries distinguished men to diffuse a light around them, which, however defective when compared with the brightness of gospel knowledge, served at least to open the minds of men for the reception of some preliminary convictions. Philo, by his wisdom and eloquence, attracted much attention at Alexandria to his writings, which were widely spread, excited doubtless a reverence for the Hebrew scriptures among many who were not acquainted with them.

With respect to JOSEPHUS, his character as an historian is entitled to very particular consideration, and the testimonies which he affords in support of Christianity have an especial claim to regard.

This eminent man appears to have been raised up by providence for purposes equally remarkable and important. He stands on a distinct ground between sacred and heathen writers, and his works afford most valuable illustrations of the divine authority of the scriptures, and of the truth of many facts on which the claims of religion rest. The attestation which he gives to the fidelity of the sacred accounts of the Old Testament, is so full, that he transcribes almost every part, with such variation as might naturally be expected from an historian who composes a work in his own style, but with an evident deference to the sacred writers, demonstrating the deep veneration for, and entire confidence in them. It has been alleged that he suppressed some miraculous circumstances, in accommodation to the opinions and manners of a people who differed in all respects so much from his countrymen; and that he was not himself sufficiently aware of the spiritual import of the Jewish dispensation, and of the figurative application of its prophecies. It does not however appear that he intended to withhold the proofs of the miraculous economy under which the Jews were governed in subjection to a theocracy. The detail of circumstances which he records, every where demonstrates the direction and support of providence, manifesting its interference, and exhibiting the signs of peculiar protection.

He mentions the frequent disclosures of the divine presence; the descent and ministry of angels convers-

ing with the patriarchs and others; the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and their support in the wilderness, with many subsequent indications of God's special direction; the descent of celestial fire on the altar, consuming the sacrifices; the permanent abode of a divine oracle, or source of illumination from which revelations were obtained by the high priest, by means of the Urim and Thummim, the operation of which was expected to be restored when the temple was rebuilt in the time of Nehemiah,¹ and which Josephus represents to have ceased two hundred years before he composed his antiquities.²

In treating of the declarations of God, which were prophetic, as relating to the Messiah, he sometimes generalizes what is particular, from not apprehending the import of the words now distinctly seen by those who have the veil of prejudice taken from their hearts. He qualifies, therefore, or omits that spiritual meaning which is included in the inspired promises: thus, in speaking of the first intimation of the Messiah, delivered by God at the fall in paradise, he interprets the divine threat, with respect to the bruising of Satan by the triumph of Christ, to imply only that men should direct their strokes against the serpent's head.

The works of Josephus consist of the Jewish Antiquities, the Wars of the Jews, his own Life, his books against Apion, and a few other smaller pieces. He was the son of Matthias, of sacerdotal extraction, and of royal descent, on the mother's side, she being of the Asmonean race. He was born at Jerusalem, A. D. 37, and died in 93. He appears to have been educated in strict adherence to the Mosaic law. He appears to have entertained some apprehension of the approaching termination of the Jewish dispensation, as he combated the opinions of his countrymen with respect to the necessity of circumcision, maintaining that every man should be left to serve God in his own way, and he seems to have expected the fall of Jerusalem. But whatever his religious persuasions were, he certainly established a high character by his judgment and attainments, so as to have been consulted at a very early age by those who had the direction of public affairs. He obtained stations of considerable authority, and was employed in many undertakings of great moment and enterprise, in which he displayed much activity and courage. His distinguished talents enabled him to record his own actions, and to transmit the memorial of them, with that of the history of his country, to after ages.

He went to Rome in the twenty-sixth year of his age, A. D. 63, and having been introduced by an Hebrew comedian to Pappæa the empress, he experienced much favour from her. On his return to his country, he obtained the command of some forces, and distinguished himself in the defence of Jolapata against Vespasian and Titus. When the place was reduced, he was not only pardoned at the intercession of Titus, but received into much consideration and favour with Vespasian, who took him to the siege of Jerusalem. Josephus, after beholding the accomplishment of the divine predictions, in the siege and destruction of that place, accompanied Titus to Rome, and obtained the freedom of the city, and an allowance from Vespasian, which he enjoyed for

¹ Neh. vii. 6.² Antiq. b. iii. c. 8.

A. M. 4097, A. D. 93; ACCORDING TO HALES, A. M. 5502, A. D. 91, &c.

many years, employing his time in the study of the Greek language, and in composing his works. He wrote his history of the Jewish war at the command of Vespasian. Some think that it was first written in Hebrew; and Hebrew manuscripts, either of this original or of a subsequent version, are occasionally mentioned, one particularly that was in the Vatican. The work, however, was presented to Vespasian in the Greek language, and the emperor with his own hand wrote an order for it to be published; and it afterwards obtained the approbation of king Agrippa, Archelaus, and Herod. It was deposited in the public library at Rome, and a statue was erected in honour of the author.¹ It is indeed greatly to be admired for the striking and animated manner in which it describes the affecting scenes which the author beheld.

The Jewish Antiquities, which extend to twenty books, bring down the history from the beginning of the world to the twelfth year of the reign of Nero, when the Jews rebelled against the Romans. This work was finished in the thirteenth year of Domitian, A. D. 93. It is almost a transcript of the sacred history, written with the latitude of a paraphrase. The author introduces dates with more attention to chronology than is usual in ancient writers, but still with less accuracy than might be wished, as they do not correspond with the chronology of the Hebrew text or of the Septuagint version. It is possible, however, that the copies may have been mutilated, since they differ from each other in many points, as well as in chronology, and vary also from the accounts of other writers. The history of his own life, which seems originally to have been annexed to the Antiquities, is continued down to the reign of Domitian, who distinguished him for some time by his favour.

His two books against Apion were written after his Antiquities. Apion was a grammarian of Alexandria, who entertained great prejudices against the Jews, and made many misrepresentations concerning them, which were refuted by Josephus, who has preserved in his work some interesting fragments of ancient historians, which repeat or confirm many accounts in scripture. How many years Josephus lived after completing this work is not exactly known. It has been conjectured that he did not long survive his patron Epaphroditus, who was put to death by Domitian, A. D. 95, after which, it has been suspected, that the historian fell a victim to the malice of his enemies.²

Another work also, entitled the History of the Macabees, has been ascribed to him, but some writers attribute it to another Josephus.

Josephus, as an historian, is justly celebrated for his fidelity and correctness. If he admitted some relations of questionable character into his earlier accounts, and even intermixed them with particulars of sacred history, and also disagreed with other writers, yet upon an impartial judgment, he is entitled to the highest regard and respect; and Scaliger justly observes that it is more safe to believe him, not only as to the affairs of the Jews, but as to those of foreign nations, than any of the Latin writers, and that his fidelity and compass of learning are every where conspicuous. A great mass of information might be collected from the works of

Josephus, in confirmation of the evidence of Christianity; it is intended, however, here to adduce only such particulars as occur on a general view of his writings.

These will be found to relate to the establishment of facts, as well those which illustrate the completion of prophecy, as those which tend to verify circumstances on which the credibility of the gospel depends. We shall not, however, insist much upon the many proofs which might be adduced from the works of Josephus, in confirmation of the prophecies of the Old Testament, relating to events completed before the time of Christ, since, as being a Jew, he may be supposed to have had a bias in favour of such prophets: he acknowledged as sacred all the canonical books of the Old Testament as now received by the protestant church; as, for instance, when he relates that Antiochus Epiphanes spoiled the temple, and put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice or expiation during three years and six months. The general picture of the corruption of manners among the Jews which Josephus has furnished, is full of interest, from the relation which it bears to the argument for the necessity of the divine mission of Christ, and of his interposition as a mediator.

The first particular which may be mentioned as demonstrating strongly the advantage to be derived from attention to the writings of Josephus is, that the historian appears to relate with minute and unusual accuracy and detail of dates, that Nehemiah, by unwearied perseverance, finished the rebuilding of Jerusalem, after three years and four months' exertion, in the twenty-eighth year of Xerxes, and in the ninth month. Again, although he seldom adverts to astronomical circumstances, he mentions an eclipse of the moon, which took place a little before the death of Herod the Great. By these chronological notices some most important points relating to the history of Christianity have been ascertained, as the explication of the seventy weeks of Daniel, the duration of our Lord's ministry, and the time of his death, in conformity to the prediction of the prophet. The historian, in describing Daniel's interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, when he comes to the part which relates to the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which was to break in pieces the iron, the brass, and the clay, the silver and the gold, and which is generally supposed to relate to the kingdom of the Messiah, speaks thus: "Daniel did also declare the meaning of the stone to the king, but I do not think proper to relate it, since I have only undertaken to describe things past, or things present, but not things future; yet, if any one be so very desirous of knowing truth as not to waive such points of curiosity, and cannot curb his inclination for understanding the uncertainty of futurity, and whether they will happen or not, let him be diligent in reading the book of Daniel, which he will find among the sacred writings."

Upon this intimation of the belief of Josephus in a prophecy relating to Christ, Havercamp observes, that it is not to be wondered at, that the historian would not meddle with things future, for he had no mind to provoke the Romans by speaking of the destruction of that city which they called the eternal city. Josephus admits that Daniel predicted that the Jews should be destroyed by the Romans. He was induced by some

¹ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. b. iii. c. 9.² Dodwell's Dissert. vi.

A. M. 4097. A. D. 93. ACCORDING TO HALES, 5502. A. D. 91, &c.

interested view to apply the prophecies relating to Christ to Vespasian, since he himself afterwards intimated that the Messiah was yet to come; and he endeavours to introduce a latitude of opinion upon the subject, by saying that interpretations go by fancy, some one way, some another, and that the Jews in the end came to suffer for their mistakes with the irreparable destruction of their country. The account which he gives of the twenty-two books of the canon, and of the conviction which the Jews entertained of the divine authority of those books, not in any case adding to or altering any part of them, is highly important. The circumstantial detail likewise which he recites of the translation of the Mosaic law, under Ptolemy Philadelphus, exhibits a proof of the care with which providence substantiated to heathen nations the authority of the Pentateuch, securing its distribution in a language generally understood long before the promulgation of the gospel.

The passages in which Josephus confirms the accounts of the evangelists are numerous; thus, for instance, the description which he gives of the Jewish sects, particularly of the Scribes and Pharisees, corresponds with what is stated of them in the gospel. He observes that the Pharisees asserted that God had decreed to put an end to Herod's government; which confirms the account given by the evangelist Matthew, that the chief priests and scribes, many of whom were Pharisees, declared that it was written in the prophets, that out of Bethlehem should come a governor, who should rule over the people Israel.

The dissensions, the incestuous marriages in violation of the laws of Moses, and the other abominable crimes of the family of Herod, especially their conduct with respect to Christ and the Baptist, and his disciples, drew down the divine vengeance, and effected the destruction of their house. The fate of Herod was distinguished by the most striking miseries; and his death was characterized by a malignity which preserved to the last the same spirit that had led him to murder the children of Bethlehem. Josephus states that not long before he expired, he sent orders through Judea, requiring the presence of all the chief men in Jericho, and he earnestly enjoined his sister Salome, and her husband Alexis, to kill them when he should die. The other accounts with respect to Herod and his successors accord with the circumstances of their reigns and characters, incidentally mentioned, or alluded to, by the evangelists. The historian informs us, that Herod, by his will, appointed Archelaus to succeed him in Judea, with the title of king, and assigned the rest of his dominions to Herod Antipas, as tetrarch of Galilee, and to Philip, with the exception of a small part given to Salome. The will was ratified in part by Augustus, and Archelaus was appointed ruler over Idumea and Judea, with the title of ethnarch, that of king being reserved till he should deserve it. He, however, soon assumed it, and Josephus, who admits the restriction imposed, nevertheless calls him "the king who succeeded Herod." The historian adds, that Herod Antipas continued tetrarch of Galilee till removed by Caligula, thus confirming the account of St Luke, that our Lord was sent to Herod, who himself was at Jerusalem at that time, because he belonged unto his jurisdiction:

and attesting the justice of the punishment inflicted upon the man who had dared to set at nought the Saviour of the world.

The history shows how fully the prophecy was accomplished, which declared that the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh come. This is considered by Prideaux to relate to A. D. 12, at which time Christ made his first appearance in the temple. According to Josephus, it was in the same year that Coponius was sent into Judea, to govern it as a Roman province. Julian seems to have considered the government as passed away from that time, since he states it as an objection to the Christians, that Jesus, whom they proclaimed, was one of Cæsar's subjects. The census was suspended on the reconciliation of Augustus to Herod, and afterwards completed when Archelaus was deposed, on the complaint of the Jews, who requested that Judea might be rendered a province, and, then, if the sceptre departed, the Shiloh was come.

Josephus mentions the government of Felix and that of Porcius Festus, and others, in a manner which concurs with the representations of sacred history, and the circumstances stated by the evangelical writers. He also relates in regard to that same Agrippa before whom Paul defended himself, that he was a man of great activity and experience, who had been appealed to upon disputes concerning the Jews. Josephus speaks of Pontius Pilate, and confirms the account of Caiaphas being high priest during his government. The evangelist Luke mentions that Pilate, when he knew that Jesus belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, sent him to Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, who himself was at Jerusalem at that time; and it is deserving of notice, that Josephus alludes to the practice of Herod to go up to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover.

In the eighteenth book of the Antiquities, the following passage occurs: "Now there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if we ought to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles: he was the Christ; and Pilate, upon the denunciation of the principal men amongst us, having condemned him to the punishment of the cross, they that loved him at the first did not cease (to love him,) for he appeared unto them alive again the third day; the divine prophets having spoken these, and ten thousand other things concerning him: the sect of Christians, so named from him, have continued until this day."¹

There appears to have been a strong disposition in some writers to consider this passage as spurious, though Fabricius represents it to have been in all the Greek and Latin editions and manuscripts which Bosius Bigotius and Lambecius examined; in a very ancient Hebrew version in the Vatican, but afterwards erased, as it was said, by the Jews; and in two manuscripts of an Hebrew version, spoken of by Robert Canute in the twelfth century. It has been objected against the passage, that it is not cited by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Origen, or Photius, even when some of these writers argue against the Jews; but the testimony

¹ B. xviii. c. 4. s. 3.

A. M. 4035. A. D. 31; OR, A. M. 5439, A. D. 28. FROM MAT. xii. 1—xvii. 14. MARK ii. 23—ix. 14. LUKE vi. 1—ix. 37. JOHN v. 1—vii. 1.

was of less importance in early times than it may now be deemed; and it seems to be cited in a discourse, which some consider as genuine, addressed to Dioclesian by Macarius, who held an office of distinction in that emperor's court: it is referred to likewise by Jerome, by Eusebius in the most express manner, by Ambrose, Hegesippus and others.

It has however been urged, that the passage speaks in such clear terms of Christ, and with such apparent acknowledgment of some of his claims, that if it were genuine, the author must have been a believer in the divine authority of the gospel, since it admits that Jesus was Christ or Messiah, and attests his resurrection on the third day from the grave, in agreement with the predictions of the prophets. But in answer to this it may be observed, that Josephus could not omit all mention of Christ, without convicting himself of a manifest suppression of facts; and that, considering the passage as genuine, the historian may perhaps be understood to relate the account only as it was currently received, without intending to substantiate it, or allowing our Saviour to be the Messiah in the Christian construction of the word, but only to be the person known under that designation. Jerome cites the passage as speaking of him who was believed to be the Christ. Origen mentions a passage in Josephus, in which the historian spoke of Christ's discourse with the doctors in the temple, but the passage is not to be found in the works which are extant. The Jews accused the Christians of interpolating, and the Christians reproached the Jews for erasing testimonies to their cause.

The representation which Josephus gives of the destruction of Jerusalem verifies in the fullest and most circumstantial manner the completion of our Saviour's denunciations with respect to that ever memorable event: some particulars, in illustration of this fact, might be here produced, but the whole relation of Josephus is an exact and striking comment upon the prophecies of Christ; and nothing can be more interesting than to pursue the subject by comparing the specific declarations of our Lord with the history of their accomplishment. A spectator and an historian of the events, he verifies the completion of the divine revelation in every part, and while he thought, possibly, that he was describing only the fulfilment of the Jewish prophecies, he unintentionally substantiated the exact accomplishment of the denunciations of our Lord. He, and the writers who consent with him, inscribe a title in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, which, with whatever view it was written, is written, and declares that "Jesus is the King of the Jews."¹

SECT. II.

CHAP. I.—*From the beginning of the second passover to our Lord's transfiguration; in all, one year and about four months.*

THE HISTORY.

OUR Blessed Saviour was now in the second year of his public ministry, when the near approach of the passover,

¹ Whiston's Josephus; Gray's Connection; &c.; Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History; Cave's Hist. Literar.; Huet. Demonstr. Evang. prop. 3. s. 13.

α which was the second after his baptism, called him to Jerusalem. On the south-east side of the city there was a famous pool, and an hospital called Bethesda, ^β which consisted of five porticos, in which lay a great multitude of poor impotent people, with distempers of all kinds, waiting for the moving of the water; for at certain times an angel came from heaven, and putting the pool in a fermentation, conveyed such a medicinal virtue into it, that the first person who entered it, after such commotion, was cured of whatsoever distemper he had. On

a From the time that our Lord first began his ministry, to the conclusion of it, there had been four passovers held at Jerusalem; all, except the last, are not mentioned by the three first evangelists; but St John has been mindful to set every one down; the first, chap. ii. 13.; the second, chap. v. i.; the third, chap. vi. 4.; and the fourth, chap. xiii. 1.—*Poole's Annotations.*

β The words of the text (John v. 2.) are 'Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep-market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda having five porches.' The word *market* is supplied by the translators, there being an ellipsis in the original, but the most eminent modern critics, among whom are Bloomfield, Campbell, and Boothroyd, instead of *sheep-market*, render *sheep-gate*, and observe that this rendering is confirmed beyond a doubt by Nehem. iii. 1, 32, and xii. 39, where mention is made of the sheep-gate, and also that there is no evidence of there having been any such place there as the sheep-market. The word *καλυμμένη* signifies a *bath* or *bathing pool*, as is evident from its etymology, but it would seem to denote here not only the pool, but the buildings connected with it. Bethesda, which is a Syro-Chaldaic word, signifies the *house of mercy*, or *charity-hospital*. "Some have supposed that the pool received its name because the sheep used for sacrifice in the temple were washed in it; and others, because it served as a kind of reservoir for the blood of the sacrifices. But it is well known that the sheep were washed as soon as they were bought in the adjoining market, from which they were driven to this pool; and the supposition that the blood of the sacrifices ran into it, which was Dr Pococke's opinion, is erroneous, when we know that there was a drain or ditch between this pool and the temple, over which a bridge was thrown for access to the latter. Besides, Dr Lightfoot has sufficiently proved, that from the situation of the sheep-gate, near which the pool of Bethesda stood, which was on the south-east wall of Jerusalem, a part of the city lay between it and the temple. The interpretation, therefore, the *house of mercy*, is more in unison with the design for which this pool or bath was constructed, and the purposes to which it was applied." "Tradition now points out this pool on the east side of the mount on which the temple stood, where there is an empty tank one hundred and twenty feet long, forty broad, and about eight feet deep, walled round with stones, but without water. This agrees with Maundrell's measurement, who surveyed it in 1696, and found at the west end three old arches built or choked up, which are said to be the remains of the five original porches in which sat the lame, blind, and withered of Jerusalem. Sandys was in Jerusalem on Good Friday, A. D. 1611, and says he saw the spring running, but in small quantities. The erection of the pool of Bethesda is ascribed to King Hezekiah. The following observations on it are given by the author of 'Letters from Palestine,' an anonymous work published in 1819:—'Towards the eastern extremity of the town, not far from the gate of St Stephen, is the *Piscina d' Israel*. This is the pool of Bethesda, which an angel was commissioned periodically to trouble. It appears to have been of considerable size, and finished with much care and architectural skill; but I was unable to ascertain either the depth or the dimensions for its contiguity to the enclosure which contains the Mosque of Omar made it rather hazardous to approach even the outer borders, and our dragoman entreated us to be satisfied with a cursory view. Near to this place is the church of St Anna, so named from being erected on the ground where the house of the virgin's mother formerly stood, and where the virgin herself was born. Between that structure and Pilate's palace is the tower Antonia, which has a more striking air of antiquity than any in the city.'—*Scripture Gazetteer*, part 4. art. Bethesda. p. 320. *Edinb.* 1836.—See more on this subject in Answers to Objections, next chapter. Ep.

A. M. 4035. A. D. 31; OR, A. M. 5439. A. D. 28. FROM MAT. xii. 1.—xvii. 14. MARK ii. 23.—ix. 14. LUKE vi. 1.—ix. 37. JOHN v. 1.—vii. 1.

the sabbath-day our Saviour came to this place; and seeing a poor paralytic,^a who had been in that condition for the space of eight and thirty years, and lain there a long while in expectation of a cure, but all in vain, because, whenever the water was moved, some one or other always stepped in before, and prevented him;^b he immediately healed him with a word's speaking, and at the same time^c ordered him to take up his bed, and walk home; but while he was doing this, the Jews exclaimed against him for bearing a burden on the Sabbath-day,^d

^a The word *ἀσθενία*, which we render *infirmity*, or *weakness*, is indeed a general name for almost all distempers; but here it is so limited in its signification, by the circumstances occurring in the man's history, that it can properly denote no other disease than what we call a *confirmed palsy*. For, besides that the symptoms of no other distemper do so exactly agree with the description given of this infirmity, both in point of its long continuance, and extreme weakness; the very word *weakness*, in its most obvious sense, answers exactly to such a relaxation of the nervous system, as the palsy is known to be; and, what is no mean circumstance, our Saviour makes use of the same form, and method of cure, to this very man, that he applies to another paralytic, 'Rise, take up thy bed and walk,' Mat. ix. 6.

^b If it be asked, how it came to pass, that of the multitude of infirm people, who lay at this pool, our Saviour should think fit to cure but one? the answer is obvious, because he was an object most to be compassionate of any in the place, not only because he was too feeble to step into the water himself, and too poor to have any to assist him, but, more especially, because he had been now a long while in this condition, and yet still depended upon the good providence of God for an opportunity to be cured at one time or other. To cure at once whole multitudes, indeed, sounds more popular, and carries the face of a more extensive goodness; but, besides that our Saviour might, in this case, very probably conform to the rule of cure established providentially at Bethesda, which was, to heal but one person at one time, his great design, in every action of this kind, was to prove his character and commission from God, to which end one single and incontestible miracle was as sufficient an evidence as a thousand. The short is, since our Lord was at liberty to do what he would with his own, or to bestow his favours where he pleased, his goodness was conspicuous in choosing the most helpless object, and his wisdom no less manifest, in leaving the rest to the standing miracle of the pool.—*Bishop Smallbrooke's Vindication of our Saviour's Miracles*, p. 525.

^c It is very observable, that whenever our Lord did any miracle, he generally adjoined some circumstance or other, to denote the truth and reality of it. Thus, after his multiplication of the loaves and fishes, he ordered his disciples to gather up the fragments, which amounted to twelve baskets full. Upon his changing the water into wine at Cana, he commanded the servants to carry it to the ruler of the feast, for him to taste it. When he had healed the leper near Capernaum, he sent him to present his oblation in testimony of his cure. And here, for the same reason, namely, the demonstration of the completeness of his cure, he bids the paralytic take up his bed and go home. But why did he this on the sabbath-day? Even to make his divine power and mission more universally known, especially in Jerusalem, the capital of the nation, and centre of the Jewish church, by first working this miracle on the sabbath-day, when there were more people at liberty to view and consider it; and then sending his patient along the streets in a very uncommon manner, and, to make the people more inquisitive, with his bed upon his back.—*Calmel's Commentary*.

^d The sabbath was originally instituted as a day of sacred rest, and was to be employed in the service of God. Of this latter circumstance the Jews had so far lost sight, that they substituted their own superstitious rites in the place of divine ordinances, and thus exchanged a spiritual for a merely ceremonial observance of the day. Concerning some of the superstitions which prevailed among the people, M. Basnage thus speaks: "In the places where they had liberty, in Maimonides's time, they sounded the trumpet six times, to give notice that the sabbath was beginning. At the first sound the countryman left his plough, at the second they shut up their shops, at the third

which was^e directly¹ contrary to their law. The man excused himself, by declaring that the person who had miraculously cured him, commanded him to do so, which he thought a sufficient warrant; but, when they understood that it was Jesus, they,^f brought him before the sanhedrim, with a design to take away his life, as an open profaner of the sabbath. Here, in defence of himself, he alleged,—That, "since God," from whose rest they took the observation of the sabbath, "did, on that day, and all others, exercise the works of providence, preservation, and mercy, there could be no reason why he, who was his Son, and invested with full authority from him, (as² he proves immediately in a set speech before the council,) might not employ himself on the sabbath, as well as any other day, in actions of the like nature;" which provoked the Jews still more and more against him, for they looked upon him now, not only as a sabbath-breaker, but a blasphemous likewise, who by

¹ Jer. xvii. 21.

² John v. 19. to the end.

they covered the pits. They lighted candles, and drew the bread out of the oven; but this last article deserves to be insisted upon because of the different cases of conscience, about which the masters are divided. When the sound of the sixth trumpet surprised those that had not as yet drawn their bread, what was to be done? To fast the next day was disturbing the feast; to draw their bread at the beginning of the sabbath was to violate it. The perplexity is great: some have not ventured to decide it, others have given leave to draw out what was necessary for the three meals of the sabbath. But this permission has caused abuses; for a multitude of people meet, who under pretence of drawing out the quantity of bread they have need of for their three meals, take out all that might be spoiled. The difficulty is increased if any one suffers his bread to bake after the sabbath is begun. If he has sinned knowingly, he must leave his bread there, and fast to expiate his fault. Nothing but ignorance is ground sufficient to permit them taking wherewith to subsist their family for twenty-four hours. But how is this bread to be taken out? They must not make use of a peal, but a knife, and do it so nicely as not to touch the stones of the oven, for that is a crime. Such are the questions that arise upon the entrance of the sabbath."—*History of the Jews*, p. 443. Similar superstitions are related by this author concerning other particulars which affect the Jews. See *Stehelin's Traditions of the Jews*, vol. ii. p. 263.—Ed.

^e The prohibition runs in these words:—"Thus saith the Lord, Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath-day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem, neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath-day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath-day as I commanded your fathers," Jer. xvii. 21, 22; and according to the Jewish canons, those who did this, were punishable, either by death or scourging. It must be acknowledged, therefore, that our Saviour's injunction to the late impotent man, was contrary to the letter of the law; but then it may be justly said, that it was not contrary to the sense and intention of it. The law only prohibited civil labour, and restrained men from carrying such burdens as they were wont to do in the way of their trade; but it did not forbid the doing of any thing that might be a testimony of God's mercy or goodness to mankind. As therefore the sabbath was made for the honour of God, and this action was a public monument of his mercy and power, the man, properly speaking, did not break the sabbath, neither did our Lord deserve any censure from the Jews, especially considering, that as he was a prophet, even by their own rules, he had power to require what was contrary to the ceremonial rest of the sabbath.—*Poole's and Whitby's Annotations*; and *Calmel's Commentary*.

^f John v. 16. It certainly doth not appear from this verse, nor from any part of the chapter, that a meeting of the sanhedrim, or great council, was called for the purpose of trying Jesus for a breach of the law. They were probably members of that council who challenged him for what he had done, and with whom he condescended to reason; but it seems evident that he was not brought to trial for his offence.—*Geig*

A. M. 4033. A. D. 31; OR, A. M. 5439. A. D. 28. FROM MAT. xii. 1—xvii. 14. MARK ii. 23—ix. 14. LUKE vi. 1—ix. 37. JOHN v. 1—vii. 1.

making himself the Son of God,^a had claimed a co-equality with him.

What the result of our Saviour's defence before the sanhedrim was, we cannot tell, because none of the evangelists have acquainted us; but the sequel of the history informs us, that it no ways abated the malice of the Pharisees, because, on the very next sabbath-day, upon his disciples pulling some ears of corn,^b as they passed through the fields, rubbing them in their hands, and so eating them, because they were really hungry, they began again to clamour against this violation of the sabbath; until our Saviour, in vindication of his disciples, both from the example of David^c and his attendants, who ate the shew-bread;^d which it was un-

lawful for the laity to eat, when they were hungry, and from the example of their own priests, who performed the work of the temple on the sabbath-day, endeavoured to convince them, "that works of necessity were sometimes permitted, even to the breach of a ritual command; that acts of mercy^e were the best and most acceptable method of serving God upon any day whatever; that it was inverting the order of things, to suppose that man was made for the sabbath, and not the sabbath for the benefit of man: but, if even it were not so, that he, a the Son of God,^f and, consequently, Lord of the sabbath, had a power to dispense with the ceremonial laws¹ concerning it.

Not long after this, our Saviour left Jerusalem, and returned into Galilee, where on another sabbath-day, while he was preaching, there stood before him a man, whose right hand was shrunk, and withered; and when

¹ Mark ii. 27.

^a From hence it seems to follow, that though the Jews of our Saviour's time had very high conceptions of the Messiah, and were confident, that when he came, he would be a mighty prince, and subdue all other nations under his feet; yet they never once imagined that he would be God; or, in the strict and sublime sense of the word, 'the Son of God,' though in the very prophecies, which, as they themselves acknowledge, relate to the Messiah, he is called IMMANUEL, Isaiah vii. 14., and elsewhere, 'the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,' Isaiah ix. 6.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^b What our Lord's disciples did in this case, could not be accounted any unjust invasion of another's property, because the law had indulged them thus far:—"When thou goest into thy neighbour's standing corn, thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand, but thou shalt not move a sickle to thy neighbour's standing corn," (Deut. xxiii. 25.) It was not then for plucking the ears of corn, much less, as some say, for breaking their fasts, before they had celebrated the public offices, (which was contrary to the custom of the Jews, Acts ii. 15.) that the Pharisees took exceptions to the disciples, but for plucking them on the sabbath-day, whereof they thought this action, which at other times was lawful enough, to be a violation, and accordingly our Saviour's whole vindication of them turns upon this supposition.—*Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations.*

^c There is something very cogent in our Saviour's argument, taken from David's practice, because, according to the concession of the Jews themselves, his example contains two things tending to excuse the violation of the sabbath; 1. That they suppose, that David and his men fled on the sabbath-day, and yet were not guilty of breaking the rest of the sabbath; for "our masters think it lawful," say they, "in him whom the Gentiles, or thieves, pursue, to profane the sabbath, by the preservation of his life, even as David, when Saul pursued to kill him, fled and escaped." 2. That their own canons allowed the laity to eat of the shew-bread for the preservation of life; for "it is a small thing," say they, "to hold that it is lawful for us to eat of the bread removed from the table; it would be lawful for us, in the extremity of hunger, even to eat of the bread now sanctified upon the table, if there were no other." And indeed this opinion, that it was lawful to violate the sabbath for the preservation of life seems plainly to have obtained before the translation of the Septuagint, who render the words in Exod. xii. 16, to this purpose, 'Ye shall do no servile work on it, but that which shall be done for the safety of life.'—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^d The shew-bread, which in Hebrew is literally the bread of faces, was so called, not because it was set upon the golden table, which was in the sanctuary, but because it was placed 'before the Lord,' that is, not far from the ark of the covenant, which was the symbol of his more immediate presence. These loaves, according to the number of the tribes, were twelve: they were made four square, covered over with leaves of gold, and were of a considerable bigness, having about three quarts of flour in each. They were served up hot every sabbath-day, and, at the same time, the stale ones, which had been exposed the whole preceding week, were taken away, and allowed to be eaten by none but the priests, and that only in the holy place, which was the tabernacle at first, and afterwards the temple, (Lev. xxiv. 5, &c.) And the reason of this institution seems to have been to represent, in a more lively manner, to the people, God's government and presence among them; that, as the tabernacle first, and then the temple, was his palace and place of residence, so these weekly

services of bread, wine, and salt, say the Jews, were to denote his habitation among them, as if he had been an earthly prince, for whom such provisions are made.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word, and *Lamy's Introduction.*

^e On the text here alluded to, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice,' (Mat. xii. 7.) Doddridge has the following important note: "I must here repeat a very obvious remark, because the sense of so many important scriptures depends upon it, namely, that according to the genius of the Hebrew language, one thing seems to be forbidden, and another commanded, when the meaning only is, that the latter is greatly to be preferred to the former. The text before us is a remarkable instance of this; as likewise Joel ii. 13; Mat. vi. 19. 20; John vi. 27; Luke xii. 4, 5, and Col. iii. 2. And it is evident that Gen. xlv. 8, Exod. xvi. 8, John v. 13, and vii. 19; and many more passages are to be expounded in the same comparative sense. A late ingenious writer says, "our Lord does not compare moral and positive duties together here, but only the commandments of men with the commandments of God." But it is plain, the series of our Lord's arguments here is intended to prove that circumstances of necessity dispense with some ceremonial observances which were in the general commanded by God, and manifestly goes upon this foundation, that ceremonial institutes being the means of religion, if circumstances occurred in which they interfered with the end of it, they were suspended of course, and when this is the case, the conscience of particular persons is to judge as in the sight of God.—*Ed.*

^f There are some who pretend to infer, from the passage of St Mark ii. 27, that the words in St Matthew, 'the Son of Man is Lord also of the sabbath,' chap. xii. 8, are of the same import with, 'the sabbath was made for man;' so that the Son of man is here put for all men in general, and, consequently, the sense of the words must be, that every one is lord of the sabbath, to observe or dispense with it, according to the call or exigency of his affairs. But besides that the phrase, 'Son of Man,' which is used no less than eighty-eight times in the New Testament, is, in all other places, set to denote our blessed Lord, and in Dan. vii. 13, from whence it is originally taken, it is thought by all ancient Jews as well as Christians, to signify the Messiah only; it is plain that these two passages are distinct propositions in St Mark, chap. ii. 27, 28, and that they can relate to no other than our Saviour Christ; because he tells the Pharisees, and therein means of himself, that, in that place, 'there was one greater than the temple,' that is, whose prophetic office was of more consequence to the world than the sacerdotal administrations in the temple, and ought therefore, least of all, to be interrupted by a superstitious observation of the sabbath. 'The sabbath was made for man,' must therefore signify, that it was first appointed for the good and benefit of man; and, being so, it cannot reasonably be supposed to oblige him to any thing so contrary to humanity as starving or debilitating his nature; and therefore, as 'the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them,' he must have power, in such cases as concern the good and welfare of mankind, to dispense with the strict rest of the sabbath which the law required.—*Calmet's Commentary; and Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations.*

A. M. 4035. A. D. 31; OR, A. M. 5439. A. D. 28. FROM MAT. xii. 1—xvii. 14. MARK ii. 23—ix. 14. LUKE vi. 1—ix. 37. JOHN v.—vii. 1.

the scribes and Pharisees insidiously watched him whether he would cure him or not, our Lord bade him stand up in the midst of the assembly as an object of public commiseration, and turning to these superstitious observers of the sabbath, put the question ^a to them, whether they 'thought it lawful, on the sabbath-day, to do good or ill, actually to save life, or negligently to destroy it?' And then, from their own practice, in running to the relief of any dumb creature on the sabbath-day, he fairly inferred, that whatever their hypocritical pretences might be, they themselves esteemed it lawful to do good on that day; and so, looking about him with some marks of indignation for their strange perverseness, he commanded the poor man to stretch out his lame hand, and that very moment it became as sound as the other.

The Pharisees, however, though silenced by his arguments, and surprised at his miracles, would not surcease their malice, but joined in consultation with the Herodians, though a sect quite opposite to them in principles, how they might take away his life; which when our Saviour understood, he withdrew with his disciples ^b toward the sea-side; but which way soever he went, his name was now grown so famous, that vast multitudes, not only out of Galilee, but from Jerusalem, from the

provinces of Judea, and Idumea ^c and all the country about Jordan, as far as the Mediterranean sea, to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, hearing the report of his miraculous power to cure all diseases with a word of his mouth, the touch of his hand, or barely the touch of his garment, came, with their sick and possessed, for help, and, as fast as they came, he cured them. Nay, to such a degree was his fame increased, that the very devils and unclean spirits publicly confessed that he was 'the Son of God,' till, upon all occasions, they were restrained and compelled to silence.

Finding some inconvenience in the pressures of the people, he ordered his disciples, for the time to come, to have a small vessel always in readiness for him to step into upon occasion; and so retired to a solitary mountain, ^d where he continued all night in prayer, intending next morning to make an election of some particular persons, both to be witnesses of his actions and discourses, and, after his departure out of the world, his viceregents upon earth, founders of his church, and propagators of his gospel.

The number of these, according to the patriarchs, was twelve; Simon, who is likewise named Peter, and Andrew; James, ^e commonly called the Great, and John;

^a This is not contrary to what St Matthew, (xii. 10) tells us, namely, that they asked him, because both are true. They asked him, 'whether it was lawful to heal?' And he, in reply, says, 'I also will ask you one thing: is it lawful on the sabbath-day to do good, or to do evil?' (Luke vi. 9.) We are not however to suppose, that by doing evil our Saviour propounded to the Pharisees, whether, on the sabbath-day, it was lawful to do that which, on any other day, is utterly unlawful; for then, without doubt, they would have had a ready answer for him; but only, whether, according to the distinction of the sabbath, it was lawful to do good, or not to do it, to save life, or not to save it, when a man had it equally in his power. And the reason why our Saviour instances in saving a life is, because it was a maxim then among the Jews, that, on the sabbath-day, all servile work was prohibited, except where the life of any man or beast was concerned; but the modern Jews are of a contrary opinion, and in hatred to Christians, as Grotius thinks, have loaded the observation of the sabbath with such trifling and superstitious practices, as their forefathers and ancient doctors knew nothing of.—*Whitby's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^b It was a direction which our Saviour gave to his disciples, 'when they persecute you in this city, flee to another,' (Mat. x. 23.) and a rule which himself put in practice: for, when by his doctrine and miracles he could do no good upon men by reason of the hardness of their hearts, (Mark iii. 5.) he usually departed, and retired, that he might give place to their wrath, and secure himself from their malice, (Mat. xii. 15; and John viii. 59.) When the providence of God brings trials upon us, we may reasonably hope, that his mercy will be magnified in our rescue from them: but there is not the same assurance due to those troubles which our own forwardness or indiscretion involves us in. God hath no where promised to work miracles for our deliverance, nor engaged to save those who are not careful to save themselves. He hath commanded us 'to take up our cross,' when he lays it in our way; but he hath not commanded, that we should go out and seek it; nay, or that we should meet it, when we can pass by another way, and honestly, and with a good conscience, escape from it. He hath promised to succour them that are tempted, that is, such as are purely passive in the thing; but, when men break their ranks, and, without orders from their commander, will needs march up, as it were, to the mouth of a loaded cannon, by turning their own tempters, this is not courage, but fool-hardiness; and, whatever expectations these men may cherish of God's assistance in such cases, they are not the effects of a vigorous faith and well-grounded trust, but of a blind and hot-headed presumption.—*Stanhope's Occasional Sermons*.

^c Though this be no more than a Greek name derived from the Hebrew idiom, yet it is not to be understood of the original habitation of the Edomites, mount Seir, but rather of that southern part of the province of Judea, which, during the captivity of the Jews at Babylon, being left destitute, or not sufficiently inhabited by its natives, seems to have been possessed by the neighbouring Idumeans. These Idumeans, when afterwards conquered by the Maccabees, chose rather to embrace the Jewish religion than to quit the habitations they had taken possession of; and, though hereupon they were incorporated into the body of the Jewish nation, yet that tract of Judea which they inhabited did not so soon lose the name of Idumea, derived from them, but retained it, not only in our Saviour's days, but for a considerable time afterwards.—*Well's Geography of the New Testament*.

^d Some have thought that the words ἐν τῇ ἠερουσυχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ, should be rendered 'in an house of prayer of God,' or in a synagogue dedicated to the service of God; but then they will be concerned to find out any house of prayer which at this time stood on a mountain, or any place, except the temple, which was called by that name: nor can we conceive why our Lord should go into a mountain to pray, if it were not for the privacy and retirement of it, which he could not have had in any common place of divine worship. Our Saviour however, being about to send out his twelve apostles, thought that so great a work as this could not be done, without offering up his solemn addresses to God for their success, and accordingly having found out a place of retirement, he thither betook himself, and as the evangelists inform us, continued 'all night in prayer,' leaving the bishops and governors of his church an example what they are to do in the great and momentous affair of appointing persons to the ministry of the gospel.—*Whitby's* and *Poole's Annotations*.

^e These two brothers our Saviour calls *Boanerges*, a word composed of two Hebrew or Syriac words, but which have suffered some alteration in their passing into the Greek language. For whether it be that the Greek transcriber has mistaken them, or that this might be the corrupt way of pronouncing them in Galilee, certain it is, that the originals are *benei rehem*, denoting *sons of thunder*, or *of a tempest*; a name given to them in allusion to the natural heat and zeal of their temper, and that vehemence and efficacy wherewith our Saviour foresaw that they would preach the gospel. Of the former of these they gave an early instance, in their desire to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans, (Luke ix. 54:) and, in the Acts of the Apostles, we find that Peter and John are the chief actors and speakers in the defence and propagation of the gospel, and that the zeal of James and Peter seems to be the reason why the one was slain by Herod, and the other imprisoned, in order to the like execution.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

A. M. 4035. A. D. 31; OR, A. M. 5440. A. D. 29. FROM MAT. xii. 1—xvii. 14. MARK ii. 23—ix. 14. LUKE vi. 1—ix. 37. JOHN v. 1—vii. 1.

Philip and Bartholomew;^a Matthew and Thomas;^b James, commonly called the Less, and Simon^c the Canaanite; Judas, the brother of this James, and^d Judas Iscariot, who so justly deserved the title^e of

^a The name given here to this apostle is not his proper but patronymical name, and imports only the son of Tholomew, or Tolmai; so that we are still at a loss for his personal name, unless we will admit of the conjecture, that he was indeed no other than Nathanael. To this purpose it is remarkable, 1st, That as no other evangelist makes mention of Nathanael but St John, so he never once makes mention of Bartholomew. 2dly, That in the catalogue of the apostles, Philip and Bartholomew are always coupled together, and were, very probably, sent out together to preach the gospel: and fit companions they were, supposing Nathanael to be the man with whom it is plain that Philip had an intimacy, and was the first instrument of bringing him to Jesus. 3dly, That this Nathanael is by St John (chap. xxi. 2.) named in company with several of the apostles upon our Saviour's showing himself at the sea of Tiberias, after his resurrection, which the evangelist tells us was the third time of his doing so, (ver. 14.) and some presumption that he was one of them. 4thly, That, at the two former times, it is expressly said, that he appeared to the eleven. John xx. 19, 26. And here, at the third time of his appearance, those that are named with Nathanael are all of that number. From these considerations, it is more than probable that Nathanael was one of the apostles; which can only be accounted for by supposing that St John calls the same person by his proper name Nathanael, whom the other evangelist calls by his patronymical, Bartholomew.—*Stanhope on the Epist. and Gos.*, vol. iv.

^b Thomas, in Hebrew or Syriac either, signifies *a twin*, and so is the same with Didymus, that other name whereby this apostle is sometimes called.

^c Simon, the cousin of our Lord, and brother of James the Less, is called by Mark 'the Canaanite.' But it is plain that the epithet does not express his descent, otherwise his brothers James and Judas ought to have been termed Canaanites likewise. Luke calls him Simon Zelotes, which seems to be the Greek translation of the Hebrew appellation given him by Mark. For from *ἡ zelotipus fuit*, he was *jealous*, comes the Chaldaic word *זֵלוֹת*, *zelotes*, *a zealot*, (*Buxtorff*, on the word). Put the Greek termination to this Chaldaic word, and it becomes *κατανα-στῆς*. Wherefore, the appellation of Canaanites, given to Simon by Mark, and Zelotes, the epithet which he bears in Luke, are as perfectly the same as Cephas and Petros, Tabitha and Dorcas. The zelots were a particular sect or faction among the Jews, who, in later times, under colour of zeal for God, committed all the disorders imaginable. They pretended to imitate the zeal which Phinehas, Elijah, and the Maccabees expressed in their manner of punishing offenders. But they acted from blind fury, or from worse principles, without regard either to the laws of God or to the dictates of reason. Some are of opinion that Simon the apostle had formerly been one of this pestilent faction. But as there is no mention made of it till a little before the destruction of Jerusalem (*Josephus's Wars*, b. iv. c. 3.), we may rather suppose that the surname of Zelotes was given him, on account of his uncommon zeal in matters of true piety and religion.—*Macknight's Harmony*.—Ed.

^d This man's surname may be taken, either from the place of his birth, which was Carioth, in the tribe of Issachar, whereof we have mention in Josh. xvi. 25, and Amos ii. 2, or from the Syriac word *secariat*, denoting the *purse* or *wallet* which it was the office of this Judas to carry; or from the word *ashara*, or *iscara*, which signifies *to strangle*; and therefore a name which the evangelists might give him after his death: but all these etymologies are no more than mere conjectures.—*Hammond's* and *Beausobre's* Annotations, and *Calmet's* Commentary.

^e The wisdom of Christ saw fit to admit Judas into the number of his disciples, that by him the counsel of God, in giving up his Son to death, and the predictions of the prophets, might be fulfilled (Acts i. 16). This very person, however, is by our Lord sent to preach the gospel, to cure diseases, and to cast out devils, who had himself a devil, (John vi. 70.) thereby to teach us, that the mission of a person may be valid, though he be not sanctified; and that in things belonging to the ministerial office we should hearken even to such persons, and obey them.—*Whitby's* Annotations.

traitor. To these he gave the name of *apostles*,^f and as he perceived the multitude gathering round him, these he called nearer than the rest to him, and began that most excellent discourse, which comprises all the great principles of the Christian religion, and is commonly called the *8* Sermon on the Mount.

Herein he pronounces divers blessings, both spiritual and temporal, to such as the generality of the world esteemed miserable; to the poor in spirit, or humble-minded; to the kind and merciful; to the pious mourners; to the peace-makers; to the meek and patient; to the pure in heart; to such as hunger and thirst after righteousness; and to such as are persecuted upon the account thereof. Herein he instructs the apostles more

^f The word *ἀποστολος* signifies *an envoy*, and was a name given by the Jews to any messenger in general, but more especially to such persons as were sent by the high priest and heads of the people, to collect the tithes and other dues belonging to the temple or synagogue, or to carry their orders and mandates to the cities and provinces, when any affairs relating to religion were transacted; and to this custom St Paul seems to allude, where he styles himself 'an apostle, not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ.' (Gal. i. 1.) Our Saviour indeed, as he was no lover of innovations, took the word from among the Jews; but then he raised it to a much higher and more honourable signification; for himself declares, that he sent out his apostles, even as his Father sent out him, (John xx. 21.) that is, with a full commission to act in his stead, even as he did in God's; and accordingly we may observe, that as the Father gave judgment to the Son, (John v. 22.) so in effect the Son gives judgment to the apostles, (Mat. xix. 28. and Luke xxii. 30.); and that as the Father gave the Son power to forgive sins upon earth, (Mat. ix. 6.) so the Son gives power to the apostles to remit sins on earth likewise (John xx. 23.); that as the Father gave the Son the honour to sit down with him on his throne, so the Son gave the apostles the privilege to sit with him on thrones (Mat. xix. 28. and Luke xxii. 30); and that as the Father gave the Son to be the foundation or corner-stone of the church, (Mat. xxi. 42.) so the Son gave the apostles to be foundations upon a foundation; for so the church is said to be built upon the foundation of the apostles, 'Christ being the chief corner stone.' (Eph. ii. 20.)—*Hammond's* Annotations.

^g The mountain where our Lord delivered his discourse is generally supposed to be Tabor; for by comparing St Mark iii. 13, with the other two evangelists, Matthew xiv. 23, and Luke vi. 12, &c., we may perceive that it was not far distant from some part of the sea of Tiberias, whither our Lord had retired very lately from the Pharisees, and about five or six leagues from Capernaum, whither he returned after his descent from this mount. But then the question is, whether this sermon be the same with what we find recorded by St Luke, vi. 20? Now, in order to resolve this, we may observe, 1st, That the sermon in St Matthew was delivered before the healing of the leper, viii. 2; whereas St Luke, who promises to discourse in order of what Christ did, gives us first the story of the leper, (v. 12.) and then an account of Christ's sermon. (vi. 20.) 2dly, That the sermon in St Matthew, our Lord preached on the mount, and called his disciples up to him; whereas St Luke informs us, that our Lord came down with his disciples from a mount, and stood in the plain, and from thence preached what he recorded ver. 20. And, 3dly, That St Luke omits the much greater part of the sermon, as it is recorded by St Matthew, mentions only four beatitudes; whereas St Matthew speaks of eight, and has added four woes, (ver. 24, &c.) whereof we find no indications in St Luke. Since the sermons then are so very different in their matter, as well as in the circumstances of time and place, it is reasonable to suppose that they were not the same; though, considering that after both the sermons we find our Lord returning to Capernaum, and healing the centurion's servant, (Mat. viii. 5. and Luke vii. 1.) we may probably conjecture, that he spake the sermon in St Matthew, whilst he was sitting on the mount, to his disciples; but that in St Luke he afterwards spake when he came down into the plain (vi. 20.) in the audience of all the people. (vii. 1.)—*Whitby's* Annotations.

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especially in their duty; and in several comparisons setting before them the high station wherein he had so lately placed them, and how much it would redound to their honour if they behaved well, and to their dishonour if otherwise; he recommends to them, above all other things, purity of life and conversation. Herein he expounds the true meaning, and shows the just extent of several moral precepts, namely, the laws against murder, against adultery, against perjury; that concerning retaliation, and that of loving our neighbour; and rescues them from the wretched glosses and interpretations which the Jews had put upon them. Herein he explains and teaches the proper method of performing with acceptance the several duties of charity to the poor, prayer and fasting. Herein he dissuades us from all covetous inclinations, and anxious thoughts concerning the things of this world, from a consciousness of our being under the providential care of God; and having laid down several other precepts and instructions, he concludes the whole with this admonition, 'That whoever heard, believed, and practised the things contained in his discourses, would, in the event, be like a wise builder, who laid the foundation of his house upon a rock, not to be affected by wind or weather; but that he who heard and practised them not, would be like a man who built his house upon the sand, soon to be blown down by the winds, and washed away by the floods.' ^a

This sermon was delivered with such a grace and majesty, as gained the applause of the whole audience, and made them very readily declare their sense of the difference between such divine discourses, and the jejune harangues ^b of their ordinary teachers, the scribes; and,

^a The words of the text, Mat. vii. 24—27, Bishop Jebb has arranged into two stanzas of six parallel lines each; thus,

Whoever, therefore, heareth these my words, and doeth them,
I will liken him to a prudent man,
Who built his house upon the rock:
And the rain descended,
And the floods came,
And the winds blew,
And fell upon that house:
And it fell not; for it was founded upon the rock.

And every one hearing these my words, and doing them not,
Shall be likened to a foolish man,
Who built his house upon the sand:
And the rain descended,
And the floods came,
And the winds blew,
And struck upon that house;
And it fell; and the fall thereof was great.

In these two connected stanzas, he observes, the language may be justly termed picturesque. The marked transition in each of them from a long and measured movement, to short rapid lines, and the resumption, at the close, of a lengthened cadence, are peculiarly expressive. The continual return, too, in the shorter lines, of the copulative particle (a return purely Hebraic, and foreign from classic usage) has a fine effect: it gives an idea of danger, sudden, accumulated, and overwhelming. These are beauties which can only be retained in a literal translation; and which a literal translation may exhibit very competently.—*Jebb's Sacred Literature*, vol. ii. p. 438.—In the above passage there is a manifest allusion to the rains of Palestine, which descend with great violence, and the torrents which they form sweep away often whole villages, the houses being generally constructed of sun-dried bricks.—Ep.

^b The words in the text are, 'he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes,' (Mat. vii. 29.) But they certainly are mistaken who interpret the words in this sense:—"He taught them as the author of the doctrine which he preached; as one who had authority in his own name to propound the terms of life and death;" because it is not only contrary to the nature of his prophetic office, but to his own frequent declarations,

to confirm his doctrine by the testimony of miracles, our blessed Saviour, upon his descent from the mount, healed a leper, and then remitted him to the priest, to make his oblation, in acknowledgment of his cure.

At his return to Capernaum he cured, at a distance, the favourite servant of the Roman centurion, ^c who had made an ample declaration of his divine power, and thereupon received from him as ample commendation of his faith; and, at his arrival at the gates of Nain, ^d he restored to life a widow's only son, as the people were carrying him out to his funeral, ^e to the great joy and comfort of his parent, and the no less wonder and astonishment of the spectators, who, upon this occasion, glorified God, and

that "the doctrine which he taught was not his own, but his who sent him; and that he spake not of himself nor in his own name, but as he had heard from his Father, and as he had commanded him to speak" (John vii. 16, 17, 18; viii. 28; xii. 49; xiv. 10.); and therefore the truer interpretation is, what Lightfoot and others give us, namely, "That he spake as a prophet, having authority from God to deliver his message to them, and not as the scribes, who pretended only to deliver the traditions of their forefathers, and to teach them no more than what they had learned from Hillel, Shammai, Abtalion," &c.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^c He was an officer, commanding an hundred men, much of the same rank and station as one of our captains, and belonged to the iron legion, as it was called, which was usually quartered in Judea.—*Howell's History*, in the notes.

^d Naim or Nain, so called for the pleasantness of its situation, was a town of Galilee, about two leagues from Nazareth, and not so much from mount Tabor, between which and the city ran the river Kison. From our Saviour's meeting the funeral coming out of the gates, we may learn, that it was a custom among the Jews to bury their dead in the day-time, when their nearest friends and relations followed the corpse, which was usually carried in procession through the streets and public places, to the cemeteries, which were generally at a considerable distance from the city, because they looked upon their graves as places full of pollution.—*Whitby's Table of Places*; and *Cubnet's Commentary* on Luke vii. 12. The raising of this young man, was one of the most decisive and instructing of our Lord's miracles. It was decisive. There was no doubt that he was dead. There could be no delusion—no agreement to impose upon the people. He came near to the city with no reference to this young man; he met the funeral procession, as it were by accident; and by a word he restored him to life. All those who had the best opportunity of judging, the mother, and friends, believed him to be dead, and were about to bury him. The evidence that he came to life was decisive. He sat up, he spoke, and all were informed with the full assurance that God had raised him to life. Many witnesses were present, and none doubted that Jesus, by a word, had restored him to his weeping mother. The whole scene was affecting. Here was a widowed mother, who was following her only son, her stay and hope, to the grave. Here was borne along one in the prime of life, and the only comfort of his parent—impressive proof that the young, the useful, the vigorous, and the lovely, may die. Jesus met them—apparently a stranger. He approached the procession, as if he had something important to say—he touched the bier, and the procession stood still. He was full of compassion for the weeping parent; and, by a word, restored the youth, stretched upon the bier, to life. He sat up, and spoke. Jesus therefore had power over the dead. He also has power to raise sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, to life. He can speak the word; and though in their death of sin they are borne along towards ruin, he can open their eyes and raise them up, and teach them to speak his power, and restore them revived to real life, to their friends. Often he raises up children in this manner, and gives them, converted to God, to their friends; imparting as real joy as he gave to the widow of Nain, by raising her son from the dead.—*Barnes on the Gospels*—Ed.

^e The Jews had different ways of carrying their dead to the grave. A child under a month old was carried out in the bosom of a person: if a full month old, in a little coffin which they carried in their arms; one of a twelve month old, was carried in a little coffin on the shoulder: and one of three years old on a bier or bed; in this manner was this corpse carried out. Ac-

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publicly declared, that ¹ 'a mighty prophet was sprung up among them; and that God ^a had visited his people.

Upon the fame of this, and several other miracles, which our Saviour did daily, John the Baptist, who was still in prison, sent two of his disciples to inquire of him, ^b whether he himself was the promised Messiah, or some other person was to appear in that character? As our Lord was at that time working many miracles, ^c curing the deaf, the blind, the lame, &c., and instructing the people that were gathered about him; instead of giving a direct answer to their question, he bade them go and report what they saw to their master. And having thus dismissed them, he began to discourse to the people concerning John, giving a large encomium of the austerity and holiness of his person, ^d the greatness of

his function, and divinity of his commission; and hence taking occasion to blame the perverseness of the age, in rejecting both his and the Baptist's testimony, though the Baptist was a man of a mortified deportment, and he a person of a free and affable behaviour, so that ^e nothing would please them, he proceeded to upbraid the several cities where most of his miracles had been wrought, namely, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and more especially Capernaum, with their obstinacy and impenitence, and having declared that the mysteries of the gospel-revelation were better adapted to the humble and modest, than to the proud and worldly-wise, he concludes his discourse with an exhortation to such as were thus qualified to be his ² disciples, 'come unto me, ^f all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' &c.

No sooner had he finished this discourse, but a rich Pharisee, whose name was Simon, ^g invited him to din-

¹ Luke vii. 16.

cording to the age of persons was the company that attended them to the grave. If it were an infant not a month old, it was buried by one woman and two men; but not by one man and two women. If a month old, by men and women: and whoever was carried out on a bier or bed, many mourned for him. Persons well known were accompanied by great numbers of people. It was looked upon as an act of kindness and mercy to follow a corpse to the grave, and, what must have tended to increase the number of persons who attended at such a time, it was forbidden to do any work at the time a dead man was buried, even one of the common people.—En.

^a The people of Nain, in these words, acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, or that great prophet whom Moses had promised to the Jews: 'the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken,' Deut. xviii. 15; for they describe this prophet in the very same terms that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, makes use of to denote the Messiah: 'the Lord hath visited his people,' Luke i. 68.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b The words in the text are, 'art thou he that should come,' or rather, 'he that is coming?' For the prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament were so plain, and yet his person or name so unknown to the Jews, that they were wont to express it by some circumlocution, and more especially, by this of *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, *he that cometh*; for so he is termed, Mat. iii. 11. xxi. 9. Luke vii. 20. xix. 38. John xii. 13. and Heb. x. 37, &c.; and this name they gathered from Habakkuk, where he is called, 'he that shall come,' chap. ii. 3; and from Daniel, where he is styled, 'he that cometh with the clouds of heaven,' chap. vii. 13.—*Hammond's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^c If it be asked, how the seeing of these things done by our Saviour could be a sufficient argument to John's disciples, that he was in truth the Messiah? The reply is, that the performance of these things was exactly answering the character which the prophet had given of the Messiah, namely, that, 'at the coming of God to save them, the eyes of the blind should be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;' that 'the lame should leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb should sing,' Is. xxxv. 4, &c. And therefore, instead of giving them a direct answer, which might be liable to the old objection of his bearing record of himself, (John viii. 13.) our Saviour refers them to the miracles they saw him do; miracles of the same kind that were predicted of the Messiah, and then leaves it to their own master to draw the conclusions from thence; which was a method of conviction more short and strong, and withal more agreeable to our Saviour's modesty and great humility, than any long detail of arguments would have proved.—*Poole's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^d Maimonides observes, that though the Jews generally reckon eleven degrees of prophecy; yet two of these were something more sublime and excellent than ordinary prophecy. The one of these was what they call *gradus Mosaiscus*, when the prophet had a familiar converse with God upon all occasions, and the other, when he had his revelations, not from a dream or ecstasy, but an immediate dictate of the Holy Ghost. Of this sort was John the Baptist, who was plainly told by the Father, (Mat. iii. 17. John xiii. 3.); and as plainly proclaimed it to others,

² Mat. xi. 28.

that Jesus 'was the Lamb of God.' Other prophets spoke of the coming of Christ, but then they did it in a dark and obscure manner. They saw him only at a distance in a dream, or in a vision of the night, and couched their predictions under a veil of enigmatical phrases, but the Baptist spoke of him openly and distinctly. He knew him; he was conversant with him; he pointed him out to the people; had, in short, the honour of baptizing him, and hearing the voice from heaven testifying of him, 'this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And, upon these accounts, we find him called a great and illustrious person, (Luke i. 15,) one 'filled with the Holy Ghost,' and, by way of excellence, the 'Prophet of the Highest,' verse 76.—*Hammond's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^e The words of our Saviour, to illustrate this, are these.—'We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented,' (Mat. xi. 17.) which seem to be a proverb, founded upon a custom among the Jewish children, to imitate what they saw done by others upon greater occasions, and particularly the custom in festivities, or funerals; when, in the former, as soon as the musician struck up a tune, the company began to dance to his pipe; and in the latter, as soon as some old women had begun the mournful song, the rest followed, lamenting and beating their breasts. These the children were used to act and personate in the streets at play; and when one had begun the musician's part, and another the old woman's part, and the rest did not follow them in theirs, this gave occasion to the proverbial saying which our Saviour applies to the present purpose, in this sense. "I and John have both of us invited you to enter into the kingdom of heaven, or to turn to God by repentance. John, by the austerity of his life, and I by my affability and courtesies, have endeavoured to recommend ourselves; but all to no purpose. You will neither mourn with him, nor laugh with me; but, for that very reason, censure and revile our different behaviour, accounting him, for his reserved temper, no better than a 'melancholic kind of madman;' and me, for my free and open conversation, a mere glutton and wine-bibber."—*Hammond's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^f 'To come unto Christ,' in the phrase of the New Testament, is to believe in him, and to become one of his disciples; and this invitation our Saviour gives to all mankind in general, and to the Jews in particular. To all mankind, forasmuch as all, without the knowledge of Christ, are heavy laden with the burden of their sins, and the calamities incident to life; are surrounded with a cloud of ignorance, and held in bondage through the fear of death: and to the Jews in particular, as they, under their dispensation, were oppressed with a load of ceremonies, 'a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear,' (Acts xv. 10.) besides the additional weight which the Pharisees laid upon them, by their traditions, 'heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne,' Mat. xxiii. 4.—*Whitby's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^g Is it not a little strange, that any interpreters should ever imagine, that this is the same story with what we find related in Mat. xxvi. Mark xiv. and John xii; since the histories agree scarce in any thing, unless it be in bringing the alabaster box of

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ner; but while he was at table there happened an incident somewhat remarkable: for a certain woman, who not long before ^a had been noted for a lewd liver, came into the house, and ^b throwing herself at the feet of

ointment, and anointing our Saviour's feet, which in these countries, especially at great entertainments, was no uncommon thing. But now the anointing, in the other evangelists, was done at Bethany, within two miles of Jerusalem; this in St Luke, in Galilee; that in the house of one Simon the leper; this in the house of one Simon a Pharisee; that but a little before our Saviour's passion: this a considerable time before it: at that, Judas was offended for the waste of the ointment; at this Simon for the woman's touching our Saviour: upon that occasion our Lord vindicates the woman from one head of argument, and upon this from another. So that all circumstances make it plain, that these were different actions, done by different persons, and at different times.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^a Who this woman was, the gospel no where tells us. We read indeed of three persons, who by several evangelists are said to have anointed our Lord's head and feet, namely, Mary Magdalene, Mary the sister of Lazarus, and this other woman, whom St Luke calls a sinner: and some commentators make these three to be one and the same person. It is to be observed, however, that the sister of Lazarus is all along represented as a person of great sobriety and virtue, who always lived at Bethany, was none of our Lord's attendants, nor ever came into Galilee; and consequently was a woman distinct from Mary Magdalene, who was of his retinue, (Luke vii. 2,) and from this other woman who anointed his feet in Simon's house: but whether this Mary Magdalene, and this woman, here called a sinner, might not be the same person, is not so easy to determine. The characteristic of Magdalene is, that she was the person out of whom our Lord had cast seven devils; but then, if the ejection of these devils be understood, as some will have it, in an allegorical sense, the words will well enough suit with the sinner in St Luke; or suppose they were real devils, the ejection of them might be some time before her coming into Simon's house, and, as our Saviour's vindication of her seems to imply, her reformation consequent thereupon, though Simon knew nothing of it. For these reasons some have imagined, that the sinner in St Luke and Mary Magdalene were both the same person; and that she was called Magdalene from the town and castle of Magdal, where her husband, who had been a man of great distinction, but then dead, had lately had his habitation. It must not be dissembled, however, that the most general and prevailing opinion is that these were two different and distinct women.—*Calmel's Dissertation on the three Marys; and Hammond's Annotations.*

^b On the passage here alluded to Dr Campbell thus observes:—To show that errors in translation, however trivial they may appear, are sometimes highly injurious to the sense, and render a plain story not only incredible but absurd, I must entreat the reader's attention to the following passage, as it runs in the common version: (Luke vii. 36. 38.) 'One of the Pharisees desired Jesus that he would eat with him; and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And behold a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.' Now a reader of any judgment will need to reflect but a moment to discover, that what is here told is impossible. If Jesus and others were in our manner sitting together at table, the woman could not be behind them, when doing what is here recorded. She must in that case, on the contrary, have been under the table. The chairs, on which the guests were seated, would have effectually precluded access from behind. It is said also that she stood, while she bathed his feet with tears, wiped them with the hairs of her head, anointed and kissed them. Another manifest absurdity. On the supposition of their sitting, she must have been at least kneeling, if not lying on the floor. These inconsistencies instantly disappear, when the evangelist is allowed to speak for himself, who, instead of saying that Jesus *sat down*, says expressly that he *lay down*, *ἀνέκλιθον*. And to prevent, if possible, a circumstance being mistaken or overlooked, on which the practicability of the thing depended, he repeats it by a synonymous term in the very next verse. 'When she knew that Jesus

Jesus, washed them with the tears which flowed from her eyes, and then, having wiped them with her hair she kissed them and anointed them with very precious ointment.'^c

Simon, who still retained something of the censorious spirit of his sect, seeing this woman thus busy in expressing her love and veneration for Jesus, began to think within himself, that ^d he could not possibly be a prophet, otherwise he would have known the woman to be infamous, and consequently not suffered her to touch him; but our Saviour, who well understood Simon's thoughts, proposed to him a parable of a certain cred-

lay at table,' *ἀνακείμενος*. The knowledge of their manner at meals makes every thing in this story level to an ordinary capacity. At their feasts, matters were commonly ordered thus: Three couches were set in the form of the Greek letter Π, the table was placed in the middle, the lower end whereof was left open, to give access to the servants, for setting and removing the dishes, and serving the guests. The other three sides were inclosed by the couches, whence it got the name of *triclinium*. The middle couch, which lay along the upper end of the table, and was therefore accounted the most honourable, and that which the Pharisees are said particularly to have affected, was distinguished by the name *προτοκλισία*. (Mat. xxiii. 6.) The person intrusted with the direction of the entertainment was called *ἀρχιτροκλίνης*. (John. ii. 8.) The guests lay with their feet backwards, obliquely, across the couches, which were covered, for their better accommodation, with such sort of cloth, or tapestry, as suited the quality of the entertainer. As it was necessary, for the convenience of eating, that the couches should be somewhat higher than the table, the guests have probably been raised by them three feet, and upwards, from the floor. When these particulars are taken into consideration, every circumstance of the story becomes perfectly consistent and intelligible.—*Campbell on the Gospels.*—Ed.

^c That it was a customary thing among the ancients, especially at great entertainments, to use ointments and costly perfumes, appears from several authorities. The psalmist plainly informs us, that this was the custom of the Jews, when in acknowledgment of God's great bounty to him, he declares, 'Thou hast prepared a table for me; thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full;' (Ps. xxiii. 5.) The scholiast upon Aristophanes acquaints us with the same custom among the Greeks, when he makes it a rule that they who invite to an entertainment should bring forth to their guests crowns and ointments. And that among the Romans the like usage prevailed, is evident from that sharp, jocular epigram in Martial b. iii. 'I confess Master, that thou hast given the guests plenty of ointment, but no victuals have they tasted, it is an inconsistent thing for a man to have scented locks and a hungry belly—yes, Fabullus, he who is *supperless* and *perfumed* seems to me something like a corpse.'—The general custom indeed, upon these occasions, was, to anoint the head, and very seldom the feet: but, besides that the latter was a token of more humility, and no less esteem in this woman, she could not perhaps have an opportunity of coming at our Saviour's head, without giving some disturbance to the company.—*Hammond's Annotations.*

^d Though the Jewish religion permitted harlots of their own nation to enjoy all the privileges of other women, except that their oblations were rejected as impure, yet the Pharisees, who pretended to a greater degree of sanctity than others, would not admit them to civil usage, or the common benefits of society, and thought religion itself, and the honour of every prophet concerned in this preciseness. This was the reason of Simon's making this objection within himself. But therein he draws three false conclusions: 1st, That had Jesus been a prophet, he must have known what the woman was; as if prophets knew every thing, and were able to look into the secrets of the heart. 2dly, That as this woman was a sinner, our Saviour should not have suffered her to touch him; as if the external touch of a person engaged in any vicious course could communicate pollution to one that was innocent. And, 3dly, That this woman, whom he knew to be a sinner some time before, was still in the same condition; as if it were not in the power of God at any time to touch the heart, and in a moment to inspire sincere repentance.—*Calmel's Commentary.*

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itor who had two debtors, one of whom owed him ten times as much as the other, but because both of them were insolvent, he frankly forgave them both; and then, gaining from him a confession, that the debtor to whom the larger sum was forgiven, would, in gratitude, be bound to love the creditor most, he turned to the woman, and; by way of application, not only apologized both for her behaviour and his own, but reproached his host likewise, for having omitted some instances of respect and civility which this contemptible woman, as he esteemed her, had abundantly supplied. And therefore, in return for such uncommon kindness, he gave her a full pardon and absolution of her sins, which some in the company seemed to resent, as an invasion of the divine prerogative; but that gave him no manner of uneasiness.

Upon his leaving Nain, he made a progress, for some months, round other parts of Galilee, accompanied with his apostles, and several devout women, whom he cured of sundry diseases, and who, in gratitude, attended his person, and, out of their own substance, administered *a* to his necessities: till returning at length to his own city Capernaum, such multitudes of people, upon the rumour of his being come again, resorted to him, that neither he nor his disciples could find time to eat. But 'his meat was to do the will of God,' by healing the sick and relieving the oppressed; and therefore, as soon as a poor demoniac, both blind and dumb, was brought before him, he immediately restored him both to his speech and eyesight, insomuch that all who saw it were greatly astonished, and, with a general voice, declared that the person who did such wonderful works could be no other than the promised Messiah.

The Pharisees, however, and doctors of the law, who came from Jerusalem, gave another turn to this miracle. They ascribed it to the power of the devil, *b* even to Beelzebub, *c* the chief of the devils; and therefore our

a It was customary, says St Jerome on Mat. xxvii. 55, among the Jews, for women, and especially for widows, to minister necessities to their teachers; and this without any scandal or imputation upon their honour. Our Saviour lays it down as a general rule, that 'the labourer is worthy of his hire,' (Luke x. 7); and the apostle accounts it no more than justice, that they who sow to others spiritual things, should be allowed to reap their carnal things. (1 Cor. ix. 11.) Of what condition or quality these women were that attended our Lord, we are not told. They might be virgins, widows, or wives, who had an allowance for themselves from their husbands: however, it could be no injustice done their families, to give unto him, who was Lord of all that they and their husbands possessed; and who, 'though he was rich, yet, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich.' (2 Cor. viii. 9.)—*Whitby's* and *Poole's* Annotations.

b That which made the Pharisees thus calumniate our Saviour's miracles, was their finding the people induced by them to believe that he was the Son of David, (Mat. xii. 23.) which was but another word for the Messiah, the king of the Jews. For, though they might have some apprehensions, that if this belief obtained, it might possibly bring the power of the Romans upon them (John xi. 48.); yet their chief fear was, that the greatness of his miracles and excellence of his doctrine would put an end to their credit and authority among the people, since they were conscious to themselves, that they could not vie with him in either.—*Whitby's* Annotations.

c By several passages in the gospel it seems evident, that the Jews at this time had a notion of a kind of empire, and subordination among the infernal powers, and that the prince of this empire was called Beelzebub. *Beelzebub* signifies properly the *god of flies*; but why a name of so mean an import should denote the head of the apostate angels, is not so easy a matter

"blessed *d* Saviour, by the comparison of a kingdom, or house, divided against itself, which is the readiest way to bring it to desolation, shows the absurdity of their allegations, since, by that means, the devil would take the most effectual course to destroy his own empire. Nay, he argues from their own pretensions of having certain allowed exorcists, *e* among them, that evil spirits might be cast out by the finger of God; that, when they were apparently so, it was very manifest, that the kingdom of God, or the Messiah, was come among them, that obstinately to resist the evidence of such miracles, or to ascribe them to a diabolical power, was that sin against the Holy Ghost, which is of a nature unpardonable; and that, since they had been so impious, as to blaspheme the Holy Spirit by which he wrought them, nothing less could be expected, than that the devils ejected by him, finding no where among the heathens such desirable habitations of rest and contentment, as among them, would endeavour to return, with several others worse than themselves, and, by their prodigious wickedness and obstinate infidelity, finding them more prepared than ever to receive them, would there take up their settled abode; and having made them more incred-

to determine, unless we will admit of this conjecture, namely, that as the people of Ekron had an idol which they styled *Beel-samen*, that is, the *God of heaven*, by other nations called Jupiter Olympius, the Jews, who used to give nicknames, or names of contempt, to all false gods, called it sometimes Beelzebub, or the *god-fly*, because these heathens worshipped it under the figure of that insect, and sometimes *Beelzebub*, or the *god of ordure*, because some sort of flies delight to feed on excrements. However this be, it is certain that the apostles, in several places of their writings, seem to insinuate, that among the apostate spirits there was one superior to the rest, whom therefore they call 'the prince of darkness,' (Luke xxii. 53.) 'the prince of this world,' (John xii. 31.) and 'the prince of the power of the air,' (Eph. ii. 2.) who, in the days of Tobit, went under the name of *Asmodeus*, (c. iii. 8.) and is now by the Jews generally called *Sammael*, and by the Christians *Lucifer*.—*Beausobre's* Annotations, and *Calmel's* Commentary.

d The argument which our Saviour employs against the Jews upon this occasion is what we call *ad hominem*. He supposes, as they did, that among evil spirits there was a form of government, which was to last unto the end of the world, and in it a certain subordination, which made it subsist; and from this principle he argues, "that it was impossible that an empire divided against itself should last long; incongruous to think, that a prince, who knew his own interest, would send part of his forces to engage his own generals, and compel them to surrender to the enemy what they had lately taken from them; and therefore a thing utterly incredible, that the prince of the devils should give orders to other inferior devils to quit the bodies which they had taken possession of, and consequently that he should expel any in the name or by the authority of Beelzebub."—*Calmel's* Commentary.

e That it was customary among the Jews to cast out devils by the invocation of the name of the Most High, we may learn from Justin Martyr, who, in his dialogue with Trypho, tells him, "that if any Jew exorcised a devil in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, perhaps he would obey him;" from what Irenæus tells us, namely, "that by the invocation of the name of God, even before the advent of our Lord, men were saved from evil spirits, and all kinds of demons;" and from what Origen (*contra Cels.*) affirms, namely, "that the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob being used by the Jews, in the incantation of devils, did great miracles;" and if this was a common practice among the Jews, then will the force of our Saviour's argument be this: "You make no doubt, but that your exorcists, who use the name of God, do eject devils by virtue of that name; and how partial is it then in you, to pass an unjust censure upon me, in whom you see far greater evidences of the finger of God, in my casting out all manner of evil spirits, and healing all kinds of diseases?"—*Whitby's* Annotations.

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ulous and obdurate, more impure and wicked, more hypocritical and blasphemous than they were before, would bring upon them too a more lamentable destruction."

All this, however, hindered not the Scribes and Pharisees from demanding of our Saviour some new sign or miracle in evidence of his mission; but as he had given them a sufficient number of these already, he only referred them to one, that would not come to pass till after his death, namely, that of Jonas, whose deliverance from the whale's ^a belly, after three days' confinement was an eminent type of his resurrection, after as long a continuance ^b of his body in the bowels of the earth: and thence he took occasion to remind them, "that the inhabitants of Nineveh, ^c a pagan city, and also the queen of Sheba ^d should rise up in judgment ^e against that generation, and condemn it, because the former repented at the preaching of Jonas, and the latter took a vast journey to partake of the benefits of Solomon's wisdom; whereas they refused to hearken to one who was incontestibly ^f greater than either Jonas or Solomon."

^a The word in the original signifies not a whale, but any large fish; and some naturalists are of opinion, that it was not a whale, whose gullet is too narrow for that purpose, but rather what the Greeks call the *lamia*, or *dog-fish*, as we showed elsewhere, whose throat is more capacious, that swallowed up Jonah; however, this fish may either have been the *lamia*, as was supposed, or the shark, both of which are found in the Mediterranean. Whales do not inhabit that sea.—ED.

^b But how can our Saviour be said to have continued as long in the grave, as Jonah did in the whale's belly, when there were no more than two nights, and one whole day, between his death and his resurrection? Now for a resolution of this, we must observe, 1st, That the Hebrews began their computation of a natural day from the evening or night preceding; so that, from one sunset to another sunset, they reckoned a complete day, even as Moses does, when he says, 'the evening and the morning were the first day.' Gen. i. 5. 2dly, That it is a common thing with them, as well as other nations, to put part of a day for the whole; so that, whatever is done in any part of the day, is properly enough said to be done on that day: and, 3dly, That they usually reckon that to be done in so many days, or so many days and nights, which begins in any part of the first, and ends in any part of the last day. Now, allowing this manner of computation, and reckoning that the first day began on Thursday at sunset, and ended upon Friday at sunset; since our Saviour died on Friday about three in the afternoon, by putting a part for the whole, here we have one day. Saturday is allowed on all hands to be another; and, since the third day began on Saturday at sunset, and our Saviour rose on the morning following, that part of the day being likewise put for the whole, is fairly computed for the third. The Hebrew child, according to law, was to be circumcised the eighth day, but then the day of its birth and of its circumcision, were both counted; and, in like manner, if we reckon the day on which Christ died for one, and that on which he rose for another, including withal the night belonging to the former, we may properly enough say, that, in imitation of the prophet Jonah, 'he was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'—*Whitby's* and *Hammond's* Annotations, and *Bishop Kidder's Demonstration*. b. i. c. 8.

^c This city is generally supposed to have been built by Nimrod, was situate upon the river Tigris, and famous once for being the metropolis of the first, that is, the Assyrian empire.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^d Sheba, or Saba, is a province of Arabia Felix, lying to the south of Judea, and on the extreme part of the continent, and, being bounded by the ocean, is therefore said to be 'the utmost part of the earth.'—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^e This is spoken in allusion to a custom among the Jews and Romans, which was, for the witnesses to rise from their seats, when they accused criminals, or gave any evidence against them.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^f Since God had promised Solomon, that as there was none

While he was continuing his discourse in this manner, word was brought that his mother ^g and some other kinsfolk were at the door, desiring to speak with him; (for fearing either that he might be too much transported by his ministry, or grow faint for want of eating, or be endangered by the throng, they came to get him away,) but being dissatisfied with their unseasonable interruption, he took occasion to inform the audience, "that all worldly relations were of less consideration than the ties of duty and religion; that the names ^h of mother and brother, which are sanctified by the laws of God and nature, were made much more sacred, when a spiritual kindred does supervene;" and so turning to his disciples, he declared, "that they were his truest relations who heard the word of God, and practised it."

The same day he went out of the house where he commonly abode, and, for the greater conveniency of teaching the people, repaired to the sea-shore, where, being followed by the same multitudes, to avoid the throng, he went on board a vessel, and from thence taught them in

like him before him, so after him none should arise like him for wisdom, (1 Kings iii. 12.) our Saviour's declaring that in this respect he was greater than Solomon, must be plainly avowing himself to be more than man.—*Whitby's Annotations*.—Our Lord chooses on this occasion rather to insinuate, than to affirm the dignity of his character; and to afford matter of reflection to the attentive among his disciples, without furnishing his declared enemies with a handle for contradiction.—*Dr Campbell*.—ED.

^g The words in the text are, 'his mother and his brethren,' Mat. xii. 46; but as the word *brethren*, according to the language of the Jews, (Gen. xxix. 12; Lev. x. 4.) is of great latitude, these brothers are supposed to be either Joseph's sons by a former wife, and so our Saviour's brothers-in-law, or the children of Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and so his cousins-german. There is, indeed, a tradition in the church, that before his espousing the virgin Mary, Joseph had another wife, whose name was Ischa, by whom he had six children, four sons, James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude, and two daughters, whose names, some say, were Esther and Thamar, others Mary and Salome. But whoever compares Mat. xiii. 55—xxvii. 56. Mark xv. 40, and John xix 25, together, will find, that the four persons there said to be our Saviour's brothers, were the sons of Mary, the wife of Cleophas, (or Alpheus, for the name is all one,) and sister to the blessed Virgin; and so these brothers of his, as we said, were no more than his cousins-german. Others, however, strenuously maintain the former opinion, namely, that Mary the mother of Jesus was their mother, that is, their stepmother, and they consequently his brothers-in-law; and that, 1st, because this opinion retains the proper signification of the word *brothers*, in which the Jews always seem to use it, when they speak of our Lord's brothers and sisters: and 2dly, because it agrees with the sense of antiquity, which, ever before St Jerome's time, (says the learned Pearson,) looked upon them as the brothers of our Lord, who lived with his mother, and are therefore so frequently found together, Mat. xii. 46. John ii. 12.—*Calmel's Commentary*, and *Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^h We have another speech of our Saviour's, much of the same import with this. For when a certain woman in the company, upon hearing his excellent doctrine, broke out into this exclamation, 'blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked!' his reply is, 'yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it,' (Luke xi. 27. 28.) for 'who-soever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother, (Mat. xii. 50.) which texts do not derogate any thing from the honour truly due to the blessed virgin, as the mother of the Messiah; but only show the folly of some who exalt her above Christ, whom, considered only as his mother, Christ himself seems here to set beneath every true believer; though, considered as a believer likewise, she has a just title to pre-eminence; and it is by that she is infinitely more happy than if she had only been his mother according to the flesh.—*Chrysostom*, hom. 45; *Calmel's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

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parables, an usual way of instruction among the Jews, but what he had not practised before, thereby to engage the attention, and accommodate himself to the capacity of those that heard him. By the parable of the sower, he represented the different successes of the gospel, according to the different dispositions of its hearers; by the tares growing among the good seed, the mixture of the wicked and godly under the same profession of Christianity; by the grain of mustard seed, and the little piece of leaven, the wonderful increase and propagation of the gospel from small beginnings; by the treasure in the field, and the pearl of great price, the inestimable benefits that would accrue to the true professors of religion; but that the profession of it would include a mixed multitude, and be therefore like a net cast into the sea, which incloses fishes of all kinds, some good and some bad, the good to be preserved, but the bad cast away. This is the explanation which our Lord gave his disciples of these several parables; and when, by their answer, he perceived that they understood them all, he concluded his discourse with one similitude more, namely, that "every gospel-teacher ought to resemble a well furnished house-keeper,^a who brings all things out of his repository, both old and new, according to the occasions of his guests."

He had not continued long in Capernaum, before he resolved to cross the lake or sea of Galilee, and to that purpose had ordered his disciples to prepare a vessel for him: but just as he was going on board, a certain scribe^b came, and offered to attend him wherever he

went; but when he understood, that no temporal emolument was to be obtained by such attendance, he very probably retracted. A disciple of his own at the same time desired leave^c to bury his father before he went along with him; but he commanded him to follow him, and to leave such offices to the children^d of this world; and when another was for taking leave of his family, and disposing of his effects before he went, our Saviour let him know, "that whoever laid his hand to the plough,^e and looked back, was not fit for the kingdom of God."

² Luke ix. 62.

modation or prospect of preferment for his followers.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^c It is generally supposed that Luke has given this branch of the history, chap. ix. 57, but it appears to be a very different passage. For here Jesus was beside the sea of Galilee; there he was passing through Samaria. Here a scribe being present, when he ordered the disciples to carry him to the other side, offers to accompany him; there one comes running to him, as he travelled on the road, and of his own accord said that he would follow him. It is true, the answer given to both was the same; but it might easily be so, on supposition that the men had the same sentiments and dispositions. Sir Isaac Newton, however, supposing with most harmony writers, that the two evangelists are speaking of the same transaction, thinks that Jesus was now crossing the lake in his way to the feast of tabernacles, mentioned John vii. 2. But the circumstances both of time and place, distinctly marked by the two historians, overturn his hypothesis entirely.—*Macknight's Harmony*, vol. i. 180.—Ed.

^d The words in the text are,—'Let the dead bury the dead,' (Mat. viii. 22.) which is a form of speech common in all sorts of authors, when in the same place they use the same words twice, though very frequently in different senses. Thus the psalmist, speaking of God, says, 'with the froward thou shalt show thyself froward,' (Ps. xlviii. 26.) even as Moses introduces God speaking of himself, 'if ye walk contrary to me, I will also walk contrary to you,' (Lev. xxvi. 23, 24.) where the words *froward* and *contrary*, as they relate to God, denote the punishments which he intended to bring upon the obstinate, and are the rather used, because the same words went before. And, in like manner, 'let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me,' may signify, 'let others bury the dead; thou hast work of more consequence to do.' It must not be dissembled, however, that by the dead, both sacred and profane authors do frequently mean, not only those who, in a natural sense, are dead, but those likewise who in a spiritual sense are so, by being 'alienated from the life of God, and dead in trespasses and sins.' Thus Clemens of Alexandria tells us, that the philosophy of the barbarians called those dead, who deserted their doctrines, and subjected their minds to sensual pleasures, which Philo calls the death of the soul, entombed in passions and all manner of wickedness. And therefore the full import of our Saviour's words must be, "Let those who are unconcerned for the things of God, and unfit to engage in promoting them, perform such offices, which they can do as well as others; but thou who hast begun to follow me, and to attend upon the kingdom of God, go on with resolution, and without allowing thyself any avocation from that work," hereby teaching us, that they who are called to the preaching of the gospel, and the salvation of souls, should not suffer any earthly business, which may be done as well by others, who are unfit to be employed in spirituals, to give them the least impediment or molestation.—*Hammond's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^e 'To put the hand to the plough,' is a proverbial saying not only among the Greeks and Hebrews, but many other nations, and denotes in general the beginning of any enterprise. This our Saviour applies to spiritual husbandry; and thereby gives us to understand, that as he who undertakes to plough, should not look behind him, for fear of making his furrows crooked or unequal; so he that engages in the ministry of the gospel should not suffer himself to be encumbered with much serving about other matters, but, in the language of the apostle, 'forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ,' (Phil. iii. 13, 14.)—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

¹ Mat. xiii. 52.

^a And what this house-keeper was in his own family, that should every minister of the gospel be in the church of Christ. He should be thoroughly instructed in the word of God, and capable of amassing a plentiful provision of all knowledge, both sacred and profane. 'To bring out of his treasure,' or store-house, 'things new and old,' was a kind of proverbial saying among the Hebrews, and denoted a man's giving a plentiful or liberal entertainment to his friends, and such as came about him. And therefore, as the householder, if a man of substance and sufficiency, of a large stock, and as large a mind, will entertain his friends and guests with plenty, and variety of provisions, answerable to the difference of men's palates, as well as to the difference of the seasons; so our gospel-scribe, or teacher, in the entertainment of his spiritual guests, is not always to set before them only the main substantial of religion, whether for belief or practice, but, as the matter shall require, to add also illustration to the one, and enforcement to the other, sometimes persuading, sometimes terrifying; and accordingly addressing himself to the afflicted and desponding with gospel lenitives, and to the hard and obstinate, with legal corrosives; and, since the relish of all is not the same, he is to apply to the vulgar, with plain familiar similitudes, and to the learned, with greater choice of language, and coolness of argument, and so suit his discourses to the various circumstances, tempers, and apprehensions of his hearers.—*Calmet's Commentary*; and *South's Sermons*, vol. iv.

^b What might possibly be the motive of this scribe's offering to attend our Saviour, the conjectures of commentators have been different. Some think, that he did it with a sincere desire to become his disciple; others, with a design to turn spy upon him; some, out of a spirit of vanity, to distinguish himself, by being a retainer to a master in so great reputation among the people; others, out of a principle of self-interest, that he might obtain some post of honour and advantage, upon our Lord's advancement to his kingdom. This, indeed, seems to be the most probable ground of his resolution; and accordingly the design of our Saviour's answer is to discourage him from being his disciple upon such secular views, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his own head,' (Mat. viii. 20.) and therefore much less any accom-

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While the ship was under sail, and Jesus asleep in the stern, there arose a most terrible storm, so violent and impetuous that the whole ship was almost swallowed up by the waves. Hereupon his disciples, in great consternation, awoke him; and when he arose, at his rebuking the waves, they obeyed his command, and immediately composed themselves into a profound calm, ^a to the no small astonishment of every one that saw it.

The next morning, as our Lord landed on the east side of the lake, in that part of the province of Trachonitis, ^b which is called 'the country of the Gadarenes,' ^c two demoniacs, ^d most grievously distracted, with some

poor rags about them, came running towards him, and fell at his feet, and worshipped him. Hideous spectacles were they both; but one, much fiercer than the other, made dismal outcries both day and night, and cut his flesh with sharp stones; and though he had been often bound with fetters and chains, yet he as often broke them to pieces, ranging, with his companion, among the rocks ^e and tombs, and so very furious and outrageous, that no traveller durst pass that way. Upon their approach to Jesus, the devils who spake by their mouths, declared him to be the Son of God, and expressed their fear of his being come to ^f torment them before their time. They acknowledged their number to be vastly great, and, if he cast them out of the possessed persons, implored him to suffer them to enter ^g into

^a The stilling of the raging of the sea was so peculiar a prerogative of God (Ps. lxxxix. 9. and cvii. 25, 29.) that it is not at all to be wondered that our Saviour's disciples should be convinced of a divine power residing in him who was able to do this with the breath of his command.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^b This country, which is so called by the Greeks from its rough and craggy mountains, together with Ituræa, made in our Saviour's time one tetrarchy, that is, one fourth part or rather division (for they were not equal parts) of the kingdom of Herod the Great when he died. It was anciently called Argob, (Deut. iii. 13.) and, according to the best account, is bounded to the east by Arabia Deserta; to the west, by Batanæa; to the south, by Ituræa; and to the north by the country of Damascus; and as it was a province full of rocky hills, which served for an harbour to a great number of thieves and robbers, it often found employment for Herod the Great, as we may see in the history of Josephus, to expel them.—*Wells' Geog. of the New Test.*, and *Whitby's Table.*—The singularly rocky country described by Burckhardt, on the south of Damascus, called El Ledja, corresponds in a remarkable manner with Trachonitis, as described by Josephus and Strabo.—*Ed.*

^c This, in St Matthew, is called the country of the Gergesenes, because it lay in the neighbourhood of the two cities, Gadara and Gergesa, which were both situated within the district of Decapolis. Gadara, which took its name from the tribe of Gad, to whom it fell by lot in the division of the land, was a famous city beyond Jordan, the capital of Paræa, as Josephus (*Jewish War*, b. v. c. 3.) tells us, and stood eastward of the sea of Tiberias, about sixty furlongs from the shore. Gergesa was a place of some importance likewise, according to the same historian; and the adjacency of these two towns made the evangelists call the country that lay between them sometimes by one name and sometimes by another.—*Wells' Geog. of the New Test.*—Gadara was one of the ten cities of the Decapolis; and, according to an article in the twenty-sixth volume of the Quarterly Review, which uses the authority of Mr Banks, is at present found under the name of Oomkais: where are extensive ruins, and numerous caverns on the east side of the hill, which are the ancient tombs; in many of which Burckhardt found sarcophagi. This traveller expresses himself doubtful as to what city these ruins belong: his editor, however, considers Oomkais to be Gamala; and that Gadara was situated at the hot springs at the foot of the hill. Mr Buckingham has given a very good description of this place; mistaking it, however, as appears, for Gamala.—*Mansford's Gazetteer*, p. 178.—*Ed.*

^d There is some difference between the evangelists in their account of this cure: for whereas St Mark (v. 2.) and St Luke (viii. 27.) take notice only of one demoniac, St Matthew (viii. 28.) makes mention of two. Now, to reconcile this seeming difference, Dr Lightfoot ingeniously conjectures that one of these two was a Gergesian, and a Jew, and so in casting the devil out of him, our Lord did no more than what he had frequently done in Judea; but the other a Gadaren, that is, one of an heathen city, as Josephus testifies; for which reason St Mark and St Luke take chiefly notice of him, as a more remarkable instance, because he and the Syrophenician woman were the only two heathens we read of that our Saviour cured. But there is a farther reason for the evangelist's taking notice of one rather than the other, and that is, that the one, in his behaviour, was more remarkable than the other; was possessed of an unclean spirit, called himself legion, and could not be bound with fetters or chains; went about naked, and cutting himself with

stones; and when he was cured, distinguished himself, by desiring to follow Christ: circumstances all which St Matthew omits, but St Mark and St Luke have particularly related, and, upon these accounts, might very likely think that he fell more properly under their consideration than the other.—*Whitby's* and *Beausobre's Annotations.*

^e The tombs which the evangelists here mention are said to be in the mountains, and in the wilderness. For the custom of the Jews was, to have their tombs, like so many little cells, cut out in the sides of caverns, and hollow parts of rocks and mountains, at some distance from their towns, and usually in very lonely and desert places; "hence they often served as places of shelter to the houseless wanderer, or such poor wretches as lepers or demoniacs, who were driven from human habitations; places indeed which might seem not unsuitable to the latter, since the ancients supposed that evil demons hovered about sepulchres."—*Dr Bloomfield.*—Mr Buckingham tells us that the account given in the gospel of the habitation of the demoniac out of whom the legion of devils was cast, struck him very forcibly while wandering among savage mountains and surrounded by tombs, still used as houses by individuals and even by whole families. A finer occasion for expressing the passions of madness in all their violence, contrasted with the serene virtue and benevolence of him who went about continually doing good, could hardly be chosen for the pencil of an artist; and a faithful delineation of the rugged and wild majesty of the mountain scenery on the one hand, with the still calm of the lake on the other, would give an additional charm to the picture.—*Buckingham's Travels.*—*Ed.*

^f St Jerome, upon the passage now before us, is apt to imagine, that as slaves, who have a long while run from their master, no sooner see his face, but they bethink themselves of the punishment which they have deserved; so the devils, finding our Saviour upon earth, thought at first sight that he was come to judge and condemn them; and therefore they ask, 'Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?' that is, before the time of the last judgment, when they expect no other than to be eternally punished, or, as the scripture expresses it, 'to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone for ever.'—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^g In Luke viii. 31, it is said, that 'the devils besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.' The word *ἀβυσσος*, rendered *deep*, signifies, in this passage, the place where wicked spirits are punished; as it does likewise, Rev. xx. 3, where it is translated the *bottomless pit*. Properly it denotes a place without a bottom, or so deep that it cannot be fathomed. The Greeks described their Tartarus in this manner; and the Jews, when they wrote Greek, did not scruple to adopt their expressions, because they were universally understood. Besides, the Hebrew language did not furnish proper words for these ideas, which was the reason that the first Christians also, when they had occasion to speak of the state of evil spirits, made use of terms purely Greek, such as *ἄδης*, *ταρταρος*, &c. (See 2 Pet. ii. 4.) Mark says the devils begged that Jesus would not send them out of the country. To explain this circumstance, some pretend that particular genii preside over particular regions, founding their opinion on Dan. x. 13, 20. And because the prophet speaks there of angels contending with one another, and of Michael's assisting one of the parties,

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a herd of swine that were feeding on the mountains not far off. Accordingly he permitted them: whereupon the whole herd, to the number of two thousand, ran violently upon the rocks, and casting themselves headlong into the lake, were all drowned and utterly lost.

The keepers of the swine fled in the utmost fright, and reported this strange accident in the city of Gadara and the neighbouring villages, which brought great multitudes to the place, where they found the man, who had been the more furious of the two, sitting at our Saviour's feet, clothed, and in his perfect senses. But, whether it was that they took amiss the destruction of the swine, or thought themselves unworthy of his divine presence, so it was that they intreated our Lord to depart out of their country; which accordingly he did; ^a but, instead of permitting the man, out of whom he had cast the most devils, to go along with him, as he desired, he ordered him ¹ 'to return to his house, and his friends, and there to declare what wonderful things the Lord had done for him.'

As soon as our Lord had repassed the lake, and was returned to Capernaum, the people came flocking about him as usual; and, while he was teaching them, one Jairus, ^b a chief ruler of the synagogue, falling prostrate

1 Mark v. 19.

(ver. 13.) they think the war was waged between good and bad genii. For as kingdoms and provinces are supposed to be committed to the care of benign tutelar powers, so the evil genii have their provinces assigned to them by their chieftain, in which they are to do all the mischief they can to mankind. Pursuant to this hypothesis, its abettors fancy that the band of evil spirits which tormented these miserable men were stationed in this part of the country to oppose Christ, and so begged that they might not be expelled, thinking they could do more mischief here than elsewhere. But whatever be in this, certain it is, that by making such a request, the devils acknowledged that it was not in the power even of a legion of them, to do any mischief to so contemptible a creature as a swine without Christ's permission, far less could they destroy the man in whom they lodged. The whole of this history teaches us to rely on the providence of God, and not to live in fear of evil spirits. They are under the strictest restraint, and cannot hurt us without the divine permission.—*Macknight's Harmony*, vol. i. 188—Ed.

^a One reason, as some imagine, why this man desired to be with Christ, was his fear lest the devil, at his departure, might seize upon him again; and it was partly to avoid the suspicion of vain glory, whereof our Lord might have given some umbrage, had he carried about with him all those upon whom his greatest miracles were wrought, and partly to show, that in his absence he was able to protect such as believe and trust in him, from the malice of evil spirits, that he would not accept of his company.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^b Some learned men are of opinion, that this ruler of the synagogue was the president of the consistory of the twenty-three judges, who were appointed in every city to punish such offences as were not capital; but it is more generally thought, that he was not a civil magistrate, but a leading man in the synagogue of Capernaum, who had, in a great measure, under his direction such things as related to the service of God. We are to observe, however, that the word *ἀρχισυνάγωγος* is sometimes taken, in a strict sense, for the person who was the president, the head and master of the synagogue, who, according to this acceptance, was but one; and, at other times, in a larger sense, so as to comprehend the presbyters, and elders likewise, in which sense the rulers of the synagogue were more than one. How many they were, is no where defined because that depended upon the largeness of the city, and the number of those who frequented the place of divine worship; only we may observe, that Jairus was not the chief president, because he is called 'one of the rulers of the synagogue,' (Mark v. 22).—*Vitringa de Regim. Synag.* b. ii. c. 11; *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Hammond's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

at his feet, humbly besought him to come and cure his daughter, who was at the point of death; not doubting but that, if he laid his hands upon her, she would instantly recover. The forwardness of the ruler's faith claimed our Saviour's compassion and assistance; and therefore he immediately rose, and followed him: but, as he was on the way, and pressed with great throngs of people, a certain woman, ^c who had been diseased with an unnatural flux of blood for twelve years, and, in hopes of a cure, had in vain spent all her estate upon physicians, being now confident, that if she could but come to touch the hem ^d of his garment, she should be healed, pressed forward; and having got a touch of it privately, as she thought, found herself perfectly sound. But she was not unknown to Jesus; and, therefore, when he, perceiving that ^e 'virtue was gone out of him,' turned about in the throng, and demanded who it was that ^f had touched

^c The case of this woman was a very afflictive one: 1. Because of the nature of her malady; it was such as could not be made public, without exposing her to shame and contempt. 2. It was an inveterate disorder; it had lasted twelve years. 3. It was continual; she appears to have had no interval of health. 4. Her disorder was aggravated by the medicines she used—she suffered much, &c. 5. Her malady was ruinous both to her health and circumstances—she spent all that she had. 6. She was now brought to the last point of wretchedness, want, and despair; she was growing worse, and had neither money nor goods to make another experiment to procure her health. 7. She was brought so low by her disorder as to be incapable of earning any thing to support her wretched life a little longer. It has been said, and the saying is a good one, "man's extremity is God's opportunity." Never could the power and goodness of God be shown in a more difficult and distressful case. And now Jesus comes and she is healed.—*A. Clarke on Mark* v. 23.

^d Mark ix. 20. This woman having probably been a constant witness of the many wonderful miracles wrought by Christ, was convinced that he was a divine person, and that every thing belonging to him was sacred: and therefore, as, according to the custom of the eastern nations, to kiss the fringe of any consecrated robe, (*Arabian Nights*, vol. iv. p. 236.) was an act of the most profound reverence, so by touching the hem of our Saviour's garment she was persuaded that she should not only pay him the greatest respect, but dispose him to pity her, and heal her disease; which was instantly done. The garment of Christ, in consequence of the humble appearance which he made upon earth, was not ornamented with that striking appendage which usually adorned the borders of the eastern garments, a beautiful fringe. Had his garment been in the prevailing fashion of the east, the woman probably would have been represented as touching the fringe of his garment, instead of its hem.—Ed.

^e Hence it is evident, that the virtue, whereby our Saviour did these miraculous cures, was not communicated to him, but resided in him, and consequently proves that he was God. For the virtue whereby the prophets and apostles did their cures is ascribed to God: as when it is said, that 'God did special miracles by the hand of Paul, (Acts xix. 11.) but the miracles done by Christ are imputed to 'the virtue which went out of him, and healed all that sought to touch him,' (Luke vi. 19.) 'The virtue's going out of him,' however, is a popular expression, which must not be taken in its literal sense, as if it were a quality distinct from the person of Christ, and what might pass from him to another; because the divine power residing in him was incapable of any alienation or diminution, be the cures he performed ever so many, ever so miraculous; and therefore the only meaning of the expression must be, that it went out, with regard to us, or according to our conceptions and apprehensions of things, when it discovered and manifested itself in the cure of some disease, or any other outward effects.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^f Our Saviour's disciples, we find, admired at his asking this question, (Mark v. 31.) but the reason for his doing so, we may suppose, was to discover to the people the greatness of the miracle, which, without this examination, might have gone off without

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him? The poor woman came trembling, and falling down at his feet, declared to all the company, both the cause and miraculous effects of her touching him, which he was so far from blaming, that he commended her faith, and imputed her cure to the wonderful strength of it.

During this transaction, the delay proved fatal, as one might imagine, to Jairus; for a message was brought him, that his daughter was actually dead, and therefore there was no occasion to give Jesus any farther trouble; but our Saviour, who overheard what the messenger said, bid the father not fear, but only believe, and then he should find the blessed effects of his faith in the recovery of his daughter: but he had scarce spoke these words, when approaching the house, he found the musicians ^a and mourners already come, who were deploring her death with melancholy tones and loud lamentations, according to the custom of those times. He desired them however, as he went in, to cease their funeral ceremonies, because at that time, ^b there was no occasion for them; and so, with the young woman's parents, and Peter, and James, and John, going into the chamber, he approached the bed where she lay, and taking her by the hand, commanded her to arise; at which powerful word she immediately revived, and walked round the room, to the no small amazement of her parents. At his departure, he ordered them to give her something to eat, and left a strict charge with them that they should make the miracle a secret; but their joy was too great to conceal what,

being known; to show them the strength and virtue of the woman's faith and confidence in his power; and thence to convince Jairus, who began a little to stagger in his faith, that he was able to revive his daughter, even though she was dead, if he did but believe.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

^a In all the books of the Old Testament, there is not the least hint given us of any musical instruments employed in funerals. We read indeed of a good deal of mourning for the dead, of mourners hired on purpose, and of the dismal ditties which these people sung, to excite sorrow in others: but the use of music was reckoned an incongruous thing, and nowise comporting with the solemnity of this sad season. Among heathen authors there is frequent mention made of it, as a thing long in use, both with the Greeks and Romans; and therefore we may presume, that from these nations it was that the Jews borrowed, and adopted it into their funeral ceremonies. That among them it was in use in our Saviour's time, at least among persons of the better rank, is plain from the passage now before us: that it was an established custom in the time of Josephus, is evident from his own testimony; and that it grew into a kind of superstitious use, in the times following, is evident from what the rabbins enjoin, namely, that none, even of the meaner sort, should, at the funeral of a wife, have fewer than two flutes, besides the voices of old women, who, by their sad modulation, were to extort lamentation from others.—*Selden's Uxor. Hebr.* b. iii. c. 8.; *Hammond's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^b The reason which our Saviour gives for this, is,—That 'the maid was not dead, but asleep,' (Mat. ix. 24.) Now, in several places of the New Testament especially, death is called a sleep, (John xi. 11. Acts vii. 60. 1 Cor. xv. 6. &c.) and therefore our Saviour only makes use of this word of a softer signification, not so much with a design to impose upon those to whom he directed his speech, as to testify his humility, and great modesty, in his desire to conceal his divine power. The persons he spoke to were certainly those who were preparing for her interment, and performing the funeral rites belonging to it; and therefore he only intimates, that she was not so dead as they accounted her, that is, not to come to life again before the resurrection; but that her death was no more than what he could remove with the same facility as another might be awakened out of sleep.—*Whitby's*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

in gratitude for so great a mercy, they thought they were obliged to divulge.

In his return from Jairus, our Lord was followed in the streets by two blind men, imploring his aid, who, as soon as he had entered the house, came after him, and when he had cured them, were dismissed with a strict charge to conceal the miracle, which, out of the abundance of their joy, they could not do. And no sooner were the blind men gone, but the people brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil, which when he had cast out, the person immediately recovered his speech, to the great astonishment of the multitude, who unanimously acknowledged that the like had never been in Israel; only the Pharisees persisted in their old malice, and insinuated to the people, as formerly, that he ejected devils by the help of some supreme devil, who had the rest under his control, and with whom he was confederate.

After a short stay at Capernaum, our Lord departed, with his disciples, into some other parts of Galilee. About a year before, he had been barbarously treated by the inhabitants of Nazareth, the place of his education; and yet, notwithstanding this, he was resolved once more to make them a fresh tender of mercy. To this purpose he went into their synagogue on the sabbath-day, and taught the people; but, instead of being converted to the faith, though they were astonished at his abilities, they were scandalized at his person, and began to upbraid him with the meanness ^c of his parentage and employment, as they had done before; insomuch, that being sensible that ^d 'a prophet never wanted honour but in his own country,' he did not abide with them long: nor did he work any miracles there, except the cure of a few sick persons; by reason of their infidelity. ^e

Upon his departure from Nazareth, he visited most of the cities and villages of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel, and curing all kinds of diseases among the people; and as he observed, one day, the numerous throngs and multitudes that resorted to him, he looked upon them with an eye of pity and compassion, as so many sheep dispersed and destitute of shepherds; and from thence formed a resolution to

^c The word *τίς* is of general signification, and denotes any worker, either in wood, metal, or stone; but the tradition of the church has all along been, that our blessed Saviour was, what our translation has specified, a *carpenter*; and Justin Martyr assures us, that he made ploughs and yokes, which at that time were the carpenter's business. However this be, it is certain that by the Jewish canons, all parents were bound to teach their children some trade: that their most celebrated rabbins thought it a great reproach not to be of some profession; and that there was a peculiar reason, why our Saviour should be of one, and that no very liberal one neither, even to take off all suspicion of his being bred up in curious arts, which his enemies at all times were forward enough to say, notwithstanding the disadvantages of his education.—*Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^d This was a common proverb among other nations, as well as the Jews; and therefore Aristides was wont to say, that 'a philosopher was never worse than at home.'—*Grotius on Mat.* xiii. 57.

^e Our Saviour could not work miracles among his countrymen the Nazarenes, says Theophylact, not because he wanted power, but because the subjects of the miracles were unbelieving, and therefore, as Whitby says, wanted the condition on which alone it was fit he should heal them; Christ could not, consistently with the rule on which he invariably acted in performing miracles, namely, to require faith in his divine mission, perform these miracles among the Nazarenes.—*Bloomfield*.—Ed.

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send out his twelve apostles, by two and two together, into the more distant parts of Judea, whilst himself continued preaching in Galilee, and the places adjacent.

To this purpose ^a he invested them with a full power to cure all diseases, eject devils, and even raise the dead. ^b He gave them instructions in what manner they were to behave in the places whither they went; but forbade them, at the same time, to address themselves to any of the Gentiles, or Samaritans, but only to the lost ^c sheep of the house of Israel. He told them the consequences of their ministry, which, after his death more especially, instead of entitling them to temporal advantages, would expose them to sundry kinds of persecutions; but for their encouragement, he acquainted them, that those who rejected their message should be treated with severity, at least at the righteous judgment of God; whereas those that received them kindly, and gave, were it but a cup of cold water, to the least of his disciples, for their Master's sake, should in no wise miss of their reward. With this commission the apostles went into all the parts of Palestine, where the Jews inhabited, preaching the gospel, and the doctrine of repentance as part of it, working miracles for its confirmation, and ^d anointing

the sick, for a token of their recovery, whilst our Lord continued the course of his ministry in Galilee.

It was now about a year since Herod Antipas had committed John the Baptist close prisoner to the castle Machærus,^e and upon the return of his birthday,^f having made a splendid entertainment for the lords and chief officers of his dominions, he was infinitely pleased with the dancing of a young lady, daughter to his unlawful wife Herodias,^g inasmuch that, in the height of his mirth and jollity, he promised, with the addition of an oath, to grant her whatever she demanded,^h though it amounted to half of his dominions. Unwilling to lose so fair an opportunity, she immediately consulted with her mother what favour to ask, who, being prompted by the height of her malice and revenge, named the head of John the Baptist ⁱ to be given her; which the daughter accordingly

countrymen: but whether they did it symbolically, in hopes of obtaining to the patient the oil of gladness, or only medicinally, it is certain, that the virtue which attended it, when used by the apostles, could not be natural and inherent in the oil, but must be supernatural, and derived from him who sent them, because this unction always produced a certain and constant cure in those that were anointed.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^e Both the city and fort that were called by this name, were situated beyond Jordan, about two leagues from that river, on the north-east side of the lake Asphaltites, or Dead Sea, and not far distant from the place where the river discharges itself into it. It was in the hands of Aretas, king of Arabia, when he married his daughter to Herod Antipas; but how it afterwards came into Herod's possession, as it certainly was when he beheaded John the Baptist, we have no account from history.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^f That it was an usual custom with kings to celebrate the day of their birth, and that of their accession to the throne, for the word may be applied to either, with great solemnity, we have an example as old as Pharaoh, (Gen. xl. 20.) nor need we doubt but that, on such joyful occasions, there were music and dancing, and all manner of diversions to entertain the company; but that persons of the first rank and distinction should act any part in these diversions, was a rare and unwonted thing; and therefore St Chrysostom, (in Mat. hom. xlix.) is of opinion, that Herodias, foreseeing what would happen, forced this young lady upon a thing which would have better become an actress upon the stage.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^g This Herodias, as Josephus relates the matter, in contempt of the laws of her country, was married again to Herod, the natural brother of her husband, separating herself from him whilst living, although he had a child by her; so that being guilty both of incest and adultery, she might well be called his unlawful wife.—*Antiq. b. xviii. c. 17.*

^h An offer like this we find Ahasuerus, a great Persian monarch, making Queen Esther, chap. v. 3.

ⁱ It may not be improper here to take notice of the remarkable providence of God, in avenging the death of this righteous man upon Herod, Herodias, and her daughter. 1st, As the war between Herod and Aretas, king of Arabia, was occasioned by Herod's wicked contract with Herodias to eject his daughter, who was his lawful wife, and to marry her who was his brother Philip's; so Josephus declares, that the Jews looked upon his putting John to death as the cause of the miscarriage of his army, God being angry with him for the death of John the Baptist. 2d, Envyng the glory of her brother Agrippa, upon whom Caligula had conferred the title of a king, Herodias prevailed with her husband to repair to Rome, in order to request the like favour of the emperor; but the emperor, having received a bad impression against him, instead of granting what he desired, deprived him of his government, and banished both her and him to Lyons in France, where they lived ingloriously, and died miserably; and this, according to Josephus, (*Antiq. b. xviii. c. 9.*) was done in punishment of her envy, and of his readiness to hearken to her solicitations. And, 3d, Of her daughter, it is related, that as she was going over the ice in winter, the ice broke, and let her in up to the head, which, upon the meeting of the ice again, was severed from her body. And this story, if it be true, as it is confidently told us by Nicephorus, *Hist. Eccl. b. i. c. 20.* is a

^a Among all the accounts which the heathens have given us of their famous magicians, and workers of wonders, there are none to be found who ever pretended to a power to delegate their virtue to others, or to impart their power to them, upon the invocation of their names, or belief of their doctrine. Hence Arnobius, (*advers. Gentiles, b. i.*) having summed up the miracles which our Saviour did, adds, that he not only did them by his power, but permitted many others to do them by invocation of his name, nor did he any peculiar and astonishing miracles himself, that he did not enable his little ones, and even rustics, to perform. Whereupon he asks those he writes to, Did ever that Jupiter, whom the Romans worship in their capitol, give the like power to any mortal? And then concludes this to be a demonstration of a truly divine power: for, to transfer your miraculous power to a man, and to give authority and strength to a creature to do that which you alone can do, is an infallible evidence of one who hath power over all, and the causes of all things at his beck.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^b The clause 'raise the dead' (Mat. x. 8.) is rejected by the generality of critics, as it is wanting in many ancient copies of authority, and also as it does not appear that the disciples raised any dead persons previous to our Lord's resurrection. Other critics, however, defend the clause, and it would appear that the evidences for and against it are pretty nearly balanced. If it be retained, it may be considered as having a reference to events which were not to take place till after our Lord's resurrection, when his apostles received a more extensive commission.—*Ed.*

^c He calls all Israel sheep, though they were not obedient to the voice of the shepherds as being all chosen people. He calls them lost sheep, because they were in great danger of being lost and ruined by the ignorance and wickedness of their guides; and to them the apostles were sent, because they were the children of the kingdom, (Mat. viii. 12,) to whom the promise of the Messiah was made, (Gen. xvii. 1.) and of whom as concerning the flesh he came, (Rom. ix. 5;) and therefore it was the divine will, that they should be first honoured with the preaching of the gospel, and alone enjoy the ministry of Jesus Christ, and his disciples, while he continued upon earth. But, upon their rejecting of so great salvation, the apostle's commission was enlarged. For 'it was necessary,' says St Paul to the Jews, 'that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.' (Acts xiii. 46.)—*Whitby's and Beausobre's Annotations.*

^d That it was usual with the Jews to prescribe oil as a proper thing to anoint the sick, in order to their recovery, Dr Lightfoot, upon Mark vi. 13, has fully proved; nor can we think that the apostles, having no command from Christ to do so, would have used this ceremony, had it not been customary among their

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demand of the king, in the presence of the whole assembly.

This strange request at first caused an exceeding damp upon the king's spirits; ^a but having recovered himself, out of a pretended reverence to his oath, and respect to his nobility then present, he sent an executioner, ^b who beheaded ^c John, and brought his head in a charger to the young lady, which she presented to her mother; but, as for his body, his disciples, when they came to hear of his death, took care ^d to bury it, and to bring Jesus the news of the tragical fate that had befallen their Master.

wonderful instance of God's avenging providence.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^a Herod was no more than a tetrarch, or one of those four among whom his father's kingdom was divided; but St Mark, (vi. 14,) gives him the title of a king, as himself no doubt was fond enough of it, and perhaps, in the provinces under his dominions, was generally called by it. Why he came to be concerned at the young lady's desiring so strange a boon as that of the Baptist's head, is no wonder. The very mention of such a thing from such a person, and in such an assembly, was enough to shock any man of less than uncommon barbarity; but then the evangelists inform us, that Herod had conceived a good opinion of the Baptist, as a just and holy man, and when he heard him, as he did it very gladly, in many things he followed his advice, (Mark vi. 20;) and not only so, but feared the resentment of the people likewise, with whom he was in high esteem, when they should come to be informed of the cause and circumstances of his death, (Mat. xiv. 5.) There might, however, be another reason, less observed, for Herod's concern upon this occasion. It was now his birth-day; and it was usual, even among heathen princes, at such a time to be gay and merry, to think of no ill omens, to surcease all contentions, and not so much as to deprive of life even condemned criminals, on that day when the sovereign of the country received his, lest they should offend or sadden the genius that presided over their nativity; and therefore it is more than probable that Herod, who was more than half a pagan, might have the same notion of the thing. But if he had not, it can hardly be thought but that such an execution would damp the joy of the meeting, and procure him more enemies among the thinking part of the company, than the non-performance of a wicked and illegal oath could have done.—*Hammond's Annotations and Calmet's Commentary.*

^b The word *σκιευόμενος*, which we render *executioner*, in the history of the Roman emperors, signifies a *soldier of the guard*; and among the Jews, Romans, Chaldeans, and Egyptians, it was customary for one of the king's guard to be the executioner of those whom he had condemned to death.—*Hammond's Annotations.*

^c Thus died the great forerunner of our blessed Saviour, about two years and three months after his entrance upon his public ministry, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, and was the first who suffered upon the account of the gospel, though seldom called the first martyr. "He was indeed a man," according to the character which Josephus gives of him, "endued with all virtue, who exhorted the Jews to the practice of justice towards men, and piety towards God, and also to baptism, which would become acceptable to God, if they renounced their sins, and to the cleanness of their bodies added the purity of their souls."—*Antiq. b. xviii. c. 7.*

^d When Herodias had got the Baptist's head in her possession, it is said, that she thrust his tongue through with her bodkin, and for fear that the head, if buried with the body, should be reunited, and rise again to disturb her unlawful lust, and disquiet Herod's conscience, she buried it in her own palace; but where his disciples buried his body, the evangelists have not informed us; only we are so told, that in the time of Julian the apostate, his tomb was shown at Samaria, where the inhabitants of the country opened it, and burnt part of his bones; but the rest were saved by some Christians, that carried them to one Philip, an abbot at Jerusalem, who presented them to St Athanasius; but some time after, when Theodosius built a church in honour of the Baptist, in the place where the temple of Serapis stood, A. D. 396, these holy relics were reposit in it. Though what became of his head we nowhere read; only the Abbot

About the same time that Jesus was informed of John's death by his disciples, his own apostles returned from their several journeys, and gave him an account of all their transactions. The fame of the miracles which our Saviour, both by himself and his apostles, had wrought, gave Herod some ground to think, that the person who did them was John, whom he had unjustly murdered, and who now very probably ^e was risen from the dead to revenge his blood upon him; and therefore, knowing the subtlety and cruelty of that prince, our Saviour ordered his apostles to prepare a vessel, wherein he, and they only, might cross the sea of Galilee, and retire for a little while from the multitude to a desert near Bethsaida. But in vain was it for him to think of concealing himself: the people, seeing where he took shipping, ran after him on foot by the lake side, and, though they had a great circuit of land to take, were got into the desert almost as soon as he; which singular instance of their zeal so affected his compassion, that though he came to that place for the sake of retirement, he could no longer withhold his presence from them; but, ascending a mountain, and taking his disciples with him, he there first instructed them in several things concerning the kingdom of God, and having afterwards cured their sick and diseased, he, at last, fed them all, to the number of five thousand men, besides women and children, with five barley-loaves, and two small fishes, having at first invoked a blessing ^f

Villeloin tells us in his Memoirs, that he saw one at Amiens, but that this was the fifth or sixth head of the Baptist that, in the course of his travels, he had the honour to kiss.—*Theodoret. Hist. Eccl. b. iii. c. 3. Ruffin. Hist. c. 27. and Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

^e Erasmus indeed thinks, that as Herod was of the sect of the Sadducees, who denied the immortality of the soul, (comp. Mat. xvi. 6. Mark viii. 15.) he might say by way of irony to his servants, (Mat. xiv. 2.) 'This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead;' ridiculing the notions of the vulgar, and those who joined in that opinion. And the solution might have passed, had not Herod been perplexed on this occasion, Luke ver. 7. The image of the Baptist, whom he wrongfully put to death, presented itself often to his thoughts, and tormented him. Therefore, when it was reported that he was risen from the dead, and was working miracles, Herod feared some punishment would be inflicted on him for his crime, and in the confusion of his thoughts, said, that John was risen from the dead, notwithstanding he was a Sadducee. Nay, he might say this, although he had heard of Jesus and his miracles before, there being nothing more common, than for persons in vehement perturbation to talk inconsistently. Besides, it is no easy matter to arrive at a steady belief of so great an absurdity as the annihilation of the human mind. The being of a God, the immortality of the soul, the rewards and punishments of a future state, with the other great principles of natural religion, often obtrude themselves upon unbelievers, in spite of all their efforts to banish them, and leave a sting behind them in the conscience, whose pain, however it may be concealed, cannot easily be allayed. Of this, Herod is a remarkable example. For, notwithstanding he was a king, his conscience made itself heard and felt amidst all the noise, the hurry, the flatteries, and the debaucheries of a court.—*Macknight's Harmony.*—Ed.

^f The evangelists make use of two words upon this occasion, 'blessing,' and 'giving thanks;' and by the former of these some interpreters understand the multiplying virtue, which he then commanded down upon the sustenance that he was going to give to the people, and its marvellous increase in the hands of the distributors, whereby it became a repast sufficient for so large a multitude: though others think that he did no more than what we call 'saying grace,' that is, thanked God for his bountiful provision of all things, and begged his blessing upon what he was going to dispense among the people, that it might tend to the wholesome nourishment of their bodies. However this

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upon them, and that with a plenty so exuberant, that the very fragments ^a which remained filled twelve baskets.

This miraculous multiplication made such an impression upon the multitude, that they no longer doubted of his being the Messiah, and were therefore resolved to set him up for their king by main force; but he, knowing the mischief of such a design, constrained his disciples, who were forward enough perhaps to join in the thing, immediately to take shipping, and to pass by Bethsaida ^b to Capernaum, whilst himself dismissed the multitude; and, when he had so done, continued, till after midnight, in meditation and prayer.

In the mean time, the ship where the apostles were on board was tossed with a great storm in the middle of the lake. The waves ran so high, and the wind was so contrary, that as soon as morning appeared, they had not got much above a league on their voyage, when our Saviour came walking ^c upon the surface of the sea, and drew near towards the ship. This strange appearance, ^d which they took for a spirit, increased their fear not a little. Our Lord indeed, to dispel it, told them who he

he, it is enough to warrant the indifferent use of these two words, that the forms of address to Almighty God, upon the use of his gifts for our refreshment, have usually been of a mixed nature, as consisting partly of praises, and partly of petitions; because the end of such devotions is manifestly twofold, namely, to render our acknowledgments to God for his liberality, and then to beg of him that the good creatures which he hath given us may be sanctified to our use.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*. vol. ii.

^a It was a sufficient reason for our Saviour's ordering the fragments to be gathered up and put into baskets, that from them might appear both the reality of the miracle and the exceeding greatness of the increase; but because our Lord assigns another, by saying, 'Gather up the fragments, that nothing may be lost,' he hath herein showed us that all reserving for the future is not unlawful; that charity is very consistent with frugality; indeed, not only that they may, but that they should go together; for God will be sure to make a mighty difference between the virtue and the specious extreme beyond it; between the liberal and the lavish man.—*Ibid*.

^b St Mark tells us, that our Saviour ordered his apostles to cross the sea, and wait for him on the other side at Bethsaida. (vi. 45.) St John writes, that accordingly they entered into the ship, but instead of going where they were directed, they steered their course towards Capernaum, (chap. vi. 17.) and yet after all, if we will believe St Matthew, they landed at last, neither at Bethsaida, nor Capernaum, but in the country of Genesareth, (chap. xiv. 34.) Now, to reconcile this, we need only remember what all the evangelists tell us, namely, that while the apostles were on board, there arose a strong gale of wind, which, blowing them from the north, proved, in a manner, quite contrary to them, so that, instead of making the port of Bethsaida, which is on the north coast of the sea of Galilee, the next morning they found themselves on the opposite side, not far from Tiberias, and to the south of Capernaum. Though therefore our Saviour ordered them to go to Bethsaida, yet they could not do it, because the wind was against them. Their next attempt therefore was to get to Capernaum; but even that they could not do; but being forced to yield to the storm, were carried a good way below to the south of it, from whence they just touched at Nazareth, and thence proceeded to Capernaum.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^c Among several other instances of God's omnipotence, Job mentions this as one, that 'he treadeth upon the waves of the sea,' Job ix. 8.

^d It was a common opinion among the Jews, that spirits did sometimes appear clothed in a human form; but what put the apostles at this time in the greater fright, was their imagining, that those who appeared at night, were usually evil spirits, and that this, which they now saw, might possibly be the demon who had raised the storm.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

was; but Peter, still doubtful, wanted a demonstration, which when he permitted him to try, and the apostle, upon the experiment, was ready to sink, he graciously reached out his hand, and, with a gentle rebuke for the weakness of his faith, setting him again upon the top of the waves, walked along with him to the vessel; which they had no sooner entered, but the winds, knowing their duty to their sovereign, ceased. This the rest of the disciples observing, came and adored Jesus, acknowledging his omnipotence, and admiring the divinity of his power and person; and as it was not long before the ship gained the port, great numbers out of the country, as soon as they understood that he was arrived, brought their sick and diseased on beds, and laid them before him in the streets, beseeching him to permit them only to touch the border of his garment, and as many as touched him were made whole.

The multitudes whom our Lord had miraculously fed in the desert near Bethsaida, were in expectation of finding him the next morning on the mountain; for they had seen the disciples take shipping without their Master, and no other vessel left for him: but perceiving that he was gone, as well as his disciples, and having an opportunity of other vessels from Tiberias, they passed over with all expedition to Capernaum, where they found him teaching in the synagogues; and being in no small surprise, desired to know of him how he got thither? But instead of gratifying their curiosity ^e with a direct answer, he, who knew their corrupt expectations, and that they came after him, not so much for his miraculous gifts as the gratification of their own appetites, took occasion from thence to discourse ^f to them of a certain food, different from what he had given them in the desert of Bethsaida, infinitely more deserving of their inquisition, and whereof the manna in the wilderness was no more than a figure, or a type. What this food was, he signified to them, namely, the merits of his future death and passion, which alone could be available for the obtain-

^e We may observe from several parts of the gospel, particularly from Luke xiii. 23, 24; John xii. 34, 35, that it was usual with our blessed Saviour to answer nothing to such curious questions as had no tendency to edification, but to divert the people from them, by proposing some more profitable subject.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^f Our blessed Saviour, through the greatest part of the sixth chapter of St John's gospel, takes an occasion, from the multitude's coming after him out of a greedy desire to be fed, to discourse to them of spiritual blessings, under the metaphors of meat and drink; and for his apology in so doing, we may observe, that among the oriental and Jewish writers, no metaphor was more common than this; that to this purpose Solomon, in his book of Proverbs, introduces Wisdom crying in the streets, 'Come, eat of my bread, and drink of my wine, which I have mingled,' (Prov. ix. 5.) 'For they that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty,' says the wise son of Sirach, "for the soul," as Plato expresses it, "is nourished by receiving and practising good things; and wisdom, temperance, and piety, are the food of a soul that can suck them in;" that as our Saviour calls himself the bread which came down from heaven, Philo upon the words of Moses descants, "what food can God rain down from heaven, but that heavenly wisdom which he sends down upon the soul that desires it?" That as he exhorts the people to labour for the meat that perishes not, Philo declares, that the wisdom of God is the "nurse and nourisher of those that desire incorruptible diet." And from hence we may perceive why our Saviour insists so much upon this metaphor, even because it was familiar to the Jews, and used by their most celebrated writers.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

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ing of eternal life to such as believed in his divine mission, and descent from heaven.

But these sublime truths, which for the present he thought proper to couch in terms obscure and figurative enough, so grieved the intellects of his auditory, that even his disciples began to murmur, and many of his followers, mistaking the words in a literal, which he intended in a spiritual, sense, and thence inferring that he was not such a Messiah as they imagined, wholly deserted him, inasmuch that he began to suspect the fidelity of his very apostles, until Peter, in behalf of all the rest, declared their fixed purpose of adhering to him, upon full conviction that he was the Messiah, the Son of the living God. But notwithstanding this liberal and frank confession, our Lord gave them to understand, that they were not equally sound; for among the twelve whom he had selected, one of them was to prove a traitor, meaning this of Judas Iscariot, who justly deserved that name, because he afterwards betrayed him.

Whether our blessed Saviour was at Jerusalem on the third passover after his baptism, the evangelists have not informed us; but it is very probable, that he who came to fulfil all righteousness, would not neglect so great an ordinance. Upon this presumption, it is most generally believed that he was there, though very likely he might not stay long, but as soon as the festival was over, return into Galilee,¹ because the rulers, at Jerusalem, lay in wait for an opportunity to put him to death.

Upon his return into Galilee, a certain number of Scribes and Pharisees^a were sent from Jerusalem to be spies upon his actions, and to criticise upon his doctrine. These men observing, that, when he and his disciples were to eat, they frequently sat down without washing their hands, contrary to the common custom of the Jews, which, as they pretended, was founded upon a tradition,^b

¹ John vii. 1.

^a The sanhedrim, which sat at Jerusalem, and was the supreme court in all religious affairs, sent messengers to John the Baptist, when he began his preaching, inquiring who he was, and by what authority he baptized, John i. 19. And as the Pharisees had charged our Saviour's disciples with a violation of the sabbath, in plucking and rubbing the ears of the corn, and himself with the same crime, in curing the sick on the sabbath day, it is not improbable that these accusations had reached Jerusalem, and that the Scribes and Pharisees, here mentioned, were emissaries sent from the sanhedrim to watch and observe our Saviour. And this seems the rather to be so, because they were so very ready, when they could find him guilty of no violation of the laws of God, to pick a quarrel with him about some rites and ceremonies of the church, which he and his disciples thought not so very necessary to be observed.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^b The traditions, in the Jewish church, came to gain credit, upon this presumption, that Moses, when he received the law from God on mount Sinai, which he recorded in his five books, was instructed at the same time in several things, which God enjoined him not to commit to writing, for fear that the heathens should transcribe them: that, in these things, Moses instructed his successor Joshua, and, from Joshua, they were transmitted, through the elders of the people, by oral conveyance only, until Ezra, after the return from the Babylonish captivity, collected them all together, and made the Cabbala, in seventy-two books, which was kept by Gamaliel, and others that succeeded, as heads of the sanhedrim, until the destruction of Jerusalem: that, about an hundred and twenty years after this, R. Judas, the son of Simon, composed a book of them, called the *Mishna*, that is, the *second law*, which is indeed the most ancient collection of traditions that the Jews have: that three hundred years after this, R. Jonathan, meeting with more, compiled

expostulated with him the reason for so doing: but, instead of answering them directly he put another question to them, by way of recrimination, namely, why they, by their pretended traditions,^c vacated the laws of God, particularly, that so solemn one of honouring their parents, and relieving them in their wants? And thereupon, looking upon them as so many hypocrites,^d with whom he disdained to hold any farther converse, he turned to the multitude, and informed them, “that true

them into a larger volume: and an hundred years after this, another rabbi made a collection of such as were found among the Jews who remained in Babylon: that these two, which are a kind of supplement and explication of the Mishna, are called, the one the Talmud of Jerusalem, and the other, of Babylon; and that by these, the Jews, at this day, are governed in matters ecclesiastical all the world over. In relation to the particular custom of washing before meat, their canon is, that “whosoever despiseth the washing of hands, is worthy to be excommunicated: he comes to poverty, and will be extirpated out of the world:” for, according to the sense of one of their doctors, namely, R. Aquiba, “he that takes meat with unwashed hands is worthy of death;” and therefore when the same doctor was in prison, and had not water enough both to drink and wash his hands, he chose to do the latter; because “it is better,” says he, “to die with thirst, than to transgress the tradition of the elders.” It is no wonder then that persons inured to those notions, should so readily take exception at our Saviour's omitting what were indeed, though they thought not so, matters of an indifferent nature.—*Poole's, Whitby's, Hammond's, and Beausobre's Annotations; and Lightfoot on Mat. xv. 2.*

^c The way whereby the Jews made the law of honouring and subsisting their father and mother of no effect, was by pretending, that whatever their parents requested of them, was a *Corban*, that is, that they had devoted it as a gift or offering to God, or to his temple; and whatever was thus devoted, was not to be touched, be the necessity ever so urgent. For their canon about vows was,—“That they reach even to things commanded, and take place as well in things required by the law, as things indifferent; that a man may be so bound by them, that he cannot, without great sin, do what God had commanded to be done; and that, in this case, if he makes a vow, which cannot be performed without breaking a commandment, his vow must be ratified, and the commandment violated.” This was a superstition which the Pharisees, and other doctors of the law, who had a property in the gifts and oblations that were made to the temple, thought themselves concerned to indulge; and therefore, when any pretended that their parents stood in need of their help, they told them, that if they did but acquaint them that it was a gift, or that they had vowed such a portion of their estate to sacred uses, that would, before God, excuse them from relieving them: nay, they affirmed farther, that if a man but did in a passion say, that the thing which another asked of him was a *corban*, though it were not actually consecrated to religious uses, this was vow enough to prevent his relieving that other person, even, putting the case, that it were his own father; unless they should absolve him from it, which they would undertake to do for so many shekels of silver, Lev. xxvii. Such abundant reason had our blessed Saviour to charge the Jewish doctors with making one of the greatest commands in the second table of the law void by their traditions concerning vows.—*Poole's and Whitby's Annotations, and Pocock's Miscel.* p. 415.

^d In several places of the gospel, our Lord calls the Pharisees hypocrites not only because they placed the worship of God, and a great deal of sanctity and religion, in ceremonies of human institution, and though they pretended to extraordinary purity, did all their good works to be seen of men, Mat. xxiii. 5. but more especially in this place, because, being superstitiously careful to avoid the outward pollution of the body, by abstaining from the touch of any thing which they reputed unclean, and washing their hands whenever they thought they had done so; they left that which was within, namely, their hearts and affections, full of iniquity, uncleanness, extortion, and excess, Mat. xxiii. 25. and Luke xi. 39. But from Christ's example in this particular we must not be forward to pronounce men hypocrites, because we have neither that authority, nor that knowledge of their hearts, which he had.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

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piety did not consist in outward ceremonies, but in a sincere observance of the laws of God; that no pollution could be in what entered into a man's mouth, but only in what proceeded from it; for," as he afterwards explains the thing to his disciples, whatever we eat does not affect the mind, the only seat of defilements; for it passes into the stomach, and is soon thrown out of the body, so that, be it never so gross or unclean, it cannot pollute the eater: but all pollution is from within, from the corruption of the heart, such as impure thoughts, unchaste desires, unholy purposes, immodest and indecent speeches, &c. These are the things that leave a lasting stain upon the soul, which a thing so merely external, as omitting to wash before meat, cannot do."

This was a doctrine not well pleasing to the Pharisees, as his disciples told him; but they were a set of people whose censure he justly despised, 'blind leaders of the blind,' as he properly enough calls them, whose vain traditions, as having nothing of divine institution in them, his purpose was to abolish. And from thence, in departing to the coasts of Tyre^a and Sidon, he entered into a house, with a design to conceal himself; but a certain Syro-phenician woman, having got intelligence where he was, came, and earnestly requested of him to cure her daughter, who was sadly tormented with a devil. Our Lord, for the trial of her faith, seemed at first to take no notice of her, until his disciples, to get rid of her importunity, desired him to grant her request, and dismiss her. His ministry, he told them, was confined to Judea, nor was he properly sent to any, but the lost sheep of the house of Israel. All this the poor woman heard, but so far was she from being discouraged by such coldness, that, advancing nearer, she threw herself prostrate at his feet, imploring his help for her child; and when, in an harsh metaphor, he told her, that it was not proper to work those miracles for an heathen, which were originally designed for God's people, the Jews; the afflicted mother owned indeed the truth of what he had alleged, but then, continuing the same figure, she humbly hoped, that a poor distressed heathen might, in some small measure, partake of the mercies which were more peculiarly promised to the Jews. Which answer was so highly expressive of the woman's humility, faith, and reliance, that he granted her petition; so that, when she returned home, she found her daughter laid upon the bed, and perfectly well.

From the coasts of Sidon, our Lord passed eastward to Decapolis,^b and from thence, towards the sea of Galilee, where, in his way, he cured a deaf and dumb^c

^a For an account of the ancient and present state of Tyre and Sidon see supplement on the land of Canaan, ante pp. 341—343.—Ed.

^b It is a country in Palestine, which was so called, because it contained ten cities, some situated on the east, and others on the west side of the river Jordan; the first and principal city is Scythopolis; and the rest, according to Pliny, are, 2d, Philadelphia; 3d, Raphanæ; 4th, Gadara; 5th, Hippos; 6th, Dion; 7th, Pella; 8th, Gerasa; 9th, Canatha; and 10th, Damascus; though others reckon them after another manner, as Pliny himself observes, b. v. c. 18.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

^c This is a mistake. Mark (vii. 32.) does not say that the man was dumb absolutely, but that he had an impediment in his speech; for so the word *μωλιαλον*, is rightly translated, and besides it is said, v. 35, that 'the string of his tongue was loosed and he spake plain,' evidently implying that he spoke before, although in an inarticulate or stammering manner, and that his

man, by putting his fingers^d in his ears, and some of his spittle upon his tongue; and thence repairing to a mountain, he not only cured every person that was brought unto him, whatever his malady or distemper was, but, in the conclusion, fed all the multitude, which amounted to four thousand men, besides women and children, and who, for three days successively, had been attending him, with seven loaves, and a few small fishes.

Having thus dismissed the company, he embarked with his disciples for the coast of Dalmanutha;^e but no sooner was he arrived there, than the Pharisees, joining with their enemies the Sadducees, came, and demanded of him a sign from heaven, in order to convince them that he was the true Messiah: but having first upbraided them with their acuteness in discerning the face of the sky, and from thence the prognostics of fair or foul weather, and their blindness in not perceiving the manifest signs of the Messiah's coming, he remitted them, as he had done before, to the miracle of his own resurrection, and so sailed back with his disciples.

His disciples, in the hurry of their departure, had forgot to take bread with them; and therefore, when our Saviour, in their passage, gave them caution to take care of the leaven^f of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and they were ignorant enough to take his words in a literal sense, he first gently reproved the blindness of their

impediment arose from the state of his tongue; so that he appears to have been, as we say, tongue-tied.—Ed.

^d Christ often made use of visible signs to represent that divine invisible virtue which was inherent in him, and which, upon that occasion, he intended to exert; and therefore, because deaf persons seem to have their ears closed, he put his fingers into the man's ears, to intimate, that, by his power, he would open them; and, because the tongue of the dumb man seems to be tied, or to cleave to the palate, therefore he moistened it with spittle, to signify that he would loose and give free motion to it. These, it is true, were not capable to effect the cure, but they had this use in them, that they excited the observation and attention of the people before whom these cures were wrought.—*Whitby's* and *Beausobre's* Annotations. Since this, and the other action mentioned, could contribute nothing to the cure (though we find such used on other occasions as Mark viii. 23, and John ix. 6.) it has been asked why our Lord used them. Such inquiries are often rash, and we are not bound in all cases to give a reason (since our Saviour's adoption of an action shows its fitness); yet here we can be at no loss. The reason was, no doubt, that assigned by Grotius and Whitby, and adopted by most recent commentators, as Kuinoel and Fritz; namely, that Christ was pleased, in condescension to human weakness, to use external actions significant of the cure to be performed; and thereby to strengthen the faith and confirm the hopes of the sick persons, and those who brought them; and, moreover, to show that the power he was about to exert resided in himself. Our Lord adopted these actions, and also the usual one of laying his hands on the sick, in order to show that he was not confined to any one particular mode.—*Bloomfield's Greek Testament*.—Ed.

^e What St Matthew calls Magdala, St Mark names Dalmanutha, and the reason hereof is, because these two places lay very near together, and Dalmanutha very probably within the precincts of Magdala.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*, and *Beausobre's* Annotations.

^f The leaven of the Pharisees was their hypocrisy, and too scrupulous observance of the traditions of their elders; and that of the Sadducees was their denial of the existence of angels and devils, the resurrection of the body, and the immortality of the soul; so that the meaning of our Saviour's caution to his apostles is:—To avoid the principles of those, who place the sum of their religion in outward performances, which avail nothing to the sanctification of the soul; and to reject all such doctrines as tended to subvert religion, by cutting off all hopes of happiness in a future state.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's* Annotations.

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understandings, and the shortness of their memories, who had so soon forgotten his miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes, at two different times, and then gave them to understand, that his words did not concern the leaven of bread, but the corrupt doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

With this discourse they landed at Bethsaida, which, though the birth-place of several of his apostles, had by the perverseness and infidelity of its inhabitants so offended him, that, when a blind man was presented to him for cure, he would not do it in the city in the sight of the inhabitants; but taking him out of the gate, he anointed his eyes with his spittle, and laid his hands on them. The man at first saw objects indistinctly, men like trees walking; but when our Lord had laid his hands upon him the second time, he restored him to his perfect sight; and so sent him home, with a charge ^a not to return into the city, nor to discover the thing to any person belonging to that place.

From that place he departed into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, ^b where, being minded to make some trial of his apostles' faith and proficiency, he demanded of them what opinion mankind had of him, and whom they took him to be? Some, say they, take you to be John the Baptist ^c risen from the dead; some Elias sent down from

^a The reason of our Saviour's giving the man this charge, is founded upon the infidelity of the people of Bethsaida, wherewith he upbraids them, Mat. xi. 21.

^b Cæsarea Philippi, before called Paneas, and now Baniyas, was situated at the foot of mount Paneus, near the springs of the Jordan. It has been supposed, that its ancient name was Dan, or Laish; and that it was called Paneas by the Phenicians only. Eusebius, however, distinguishes Dan and Paneas as different places. Cæsarea was a day's journey from Sidon, and a day and a half from Damascus. Philip the tetrarch built it, or, at least, embellished and enlarged it, and named it Cæsarea, in honour of the emperor Tiberius; but afterwards, in compliment to Nero, it was called Neronias. The woman who had been troubled with an issue of blood, and was healed by our Saviour, (Mat. ix. 20. Luke vii. 43.) is said to have been of Cæsarea Philippi, and to have returned thither after her cure, and erected a statue to her benefactor. The present town contains, according to Burckhardt, about 150 houses, inhabited mostly by Turks. The goddess Astarte was worshipped here, as appears from the medals extant. The Greek language was more used in this city than the Latin; yet it struck medals in each language. It seems to have been made a Roman colony; though not mentioned as such by any writer. It is likely that Cæsarea Libanus was among the most forward cities to compliment Severus, since several authors report that it was his birth-place. Lampridius even says, that he was named Alexander, because his mother was delivered of him in a temple dedicated to Alexander the Great, on a festival in honour of that hero, at which she had assisted with her husband. The editor of the Modern Traveller has industriously collected and judiciously compared the several notices of this place which are found in modern writers. Palestine, pp. 353—363.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.—Ed.

^c Those who held that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead, were of the same opinion with Herod the tetrarch, (Mat. xiv. 2.) and seem to have imbibed the notion of the Pharisees, who, according to Josephus, used to say, 'that a good man might easily return to life again.' Those who took him for Elias, ran into the general opinion of the nation, that Elias was to come before the Messiah, and anoint him when he came; and therefore, notwithstanding his doctrine and miracles, they could not conceive him to be the Messiah, so long as his mean appearance was contrary to their expectations: and those who thought him to be Jeremias, seem to have espoused the sentiment of some of their doctors, who looked upon that prophet as the head of the whole order, not improbably upon the character which God gives him, 'Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I or-

heaven; and others Jeremias, or some other of the ancient prophets, restored to life again: but when he continued asking what their notion of him was, and Simon, ^d in the name of the rest, had made an open confession that he was Christ, the Son of the living God, he not only allowed that confession to be true, and what was confirmed by the attestation ^e of God himself, but, in allusion to the name he had given him, which signifies a rock ^f or

dained thee a prophet unto the nations,' Jer. i. 5.—*Whitby's and Beausobre's Annotations*.

^d That the rest of the apostles knew and believed the great truth which St Peter here declares, no one can doubt, who calls to mind the attestation made of it before by John the Baptist, (John i. 34.) the frequent confessions of it by evil spirits dispossessed before their eyes, (Mark iii. 15.) and that full declaration of it in the name of the whole fraternity, 'We believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God,' John vi. 69. For which reason we find the fathers, upon this occasion, speaking of St Peter as the mouth, the tongue, the voice of the church, and a kind of foreman to the rest of the apostles; for this they might think a matter of decency and good manners, a means to prevent confusion and disorder, and a token of that union and harmony which was among them, that one man should speak for all the rest. And why that one man should be St Peter, rather than any of the rest, may very reasonably be imputed to the seniority of his age, the natural fervour of his temper, and his longer attendance upon our blessed Saviour than several of the rest had been employed in. These are sufficient reasons for his delivering the judgment of the company, and for our accounting his confession the common voice of all, to a question which had evidently been propounded to them all.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

^e The words in the text are, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee, but my Father which is heaven,' Mat. xvi. 17. But how did God reveal this to Peter? Those who pretend that he had a particular revelation, not vouchsafed to any others, without which he could not have owned Christ to have been the Son of God, must not only allow the like revelation to Nathanael, (John i. 49.) to the centurion who was present at our Lord's crucifixion, (Mat. xxvii. 54.) and to all others who made declaration of the same faith; but must likewise excuse all those Jews who did not believe in Christ, because it was not in their power so to do without this peculiar revelation. Without running ourselves into these premunires therefore, we may reasonably conclude, that the sense of our Saviour's words is this,—"What others say of me, namely, that I am Johu, Elias, Jeremias, or the like, this thou hast learnt from men; but the faith which thou hast now confessed concerning me, though it required of thee a due attention to the proofs given of it; yet since those proofs are the doctrine which I teach from God, and the miracles done in confirmation of it, are apparently the finger of God, thy faith must be acknowledged to be the result, not of human wisdom, but of divine revelation. God has given thee a teachable and intelligent mind, to perceive, by my doctrine and miracles, that I am the true Messiah, notwithstanding the obscurity of my appearance, and therefore thou mayest be truly said to be taught of God, because my doctrine is the word, and my miracles are the power of God."—*Whitby's Annotations and Calmet's Commentary*.

^f We are now advanced to a passage on which, as the church of Rome mainly rests its doctrines of the supremacy and infallibility of the Pope, and the power of the church, we are bound to discuss the sense with especial care. Let us, then, examine the words and clauses in order, as they offer themselves. First, from the very form of expression in *Κἀγὼ δὲ σοὶ λέγω*, it is plain, that what is here said by Christ is meant to correspond to what had been just said by Peter. As he had declared to Jesus: *Σὺ εἶ—ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*, 'thou art the Christ the Son of the living God,' so Jesus says to him: *Κἀγὼ δὲ σοὶ λέγω*, the sense of which is: 'Moreover I also say to thee.' In the next clause *ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος*, 'that thou art Peter,' we are to bear in mind that Peter was not the original name of this disciple; but a surname, given to him, (as was customary with the Jewish *rabbis* at the baptism of proselytes,) at his conversion. And as those names were often given with allusion to some peculiar quality or disposition; so, in the case of Simon, it had reference to that zeal and firmness which he displayed; as well in first making this confession of faith in Christ, as in afterwards

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stone, he told Simon, "that he would make him a foundation stone, or a prime minister in building his church,

building up the church and establishing the religion of Christ. For examples of this kind of *Paronomasia* in giving names, see Gen. xvii. 5. xxxii. 27. and compare Gen. xxvii. 36. Eurip. Phœn. 645. Æschyl. Prom. 472. Theb. 401. Agam. 670. So also Christ, in like manner, surnamed James and John *Boanerges*, sons of thunder. Moreover Peter, or rather *Cephas*, (for *Πέτρος* is only the name Grecized,) means, not stone, as some affirm, but rock, as Cephas often does, and *πίτρος* not unfrequently in the classical writers, as Herodot. ix. 55. Soph. Œd. T. 334. Callim. Hymn in Apoll. 22. So Juvencus (*Hist. Ev. iii. 275.*) must have understood it, who well expresses the sense thus: "Tu nomen Petri digna virtute tueris. Hac in mole mihi, Saxique in robore ponam Semper mansuras æternis mœnibus ædes." "With worthy faith dost thou maintain the name of Rock, on this structure and on the strength of this Rock will I plant my church to remain with eternal walls for ever." Moreover, *ὃν εἶ* may be rendered "thy name denotes." So Mark iii. 17. *Βοανεργὶς ὁ ἱσταν, υἱὸς βροντῆς*, Boanerges, that is, 'sons of thunder.' But commentators, both ancient and modern, are not agreed as to what is meant by *ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ*, 'on this Rock.' Now that depends upon the reference which some suppose to be the confession of faith just made by Peter, while others, and indeed almost every modern expositor of any note, refer it to *Peter himself*: and with reason; for certainly, as is observed by Bishop Marsh (comp. *Views*, App. p. 27.), "it would be a desperate undertaking to prove that Christ meant any other person than Peter." In fact, they can indicate no other, consistently with the rules of correct exegesis; for, not to mention that the profession had not been Peter's only, but in making it, he spoke not for himself alone, but for all the apostles, and in that quality returned answer to a question which had been addressed to them collectively: "Whom say ye that I am?" &c., the connexion subsisting in the reason given for the surname which had been bestowed on Simon, confines it to that alone; as also does the *parallelism* between Christ's reply to Peter, and the answer which he had given. And when the expositors above alluded to conjecture that, in pronouncing the words, Christ pointed to himself, as the great foundation, they argue upon a wholly gratuitous and very improbable supposition. Moreover, the words following *καὶ σοὶ δώσω* 'besides to thee I will give,' imply that there had been some previous gift or distinction. In short, the sense is: "Thou art by name *Rock*; that is, thy name means Rock, and suitably to that will be thy work and office; for upon thee, that is, upon thy preaching, as upon a rock, shall the foundation of the church be laid." It may, indeed, seem strange, that so natural and well-founded an interpretation should have been passed over by any. But that may be attributed partly, to the causeless fears into which protestants have been betrayed; lest, by admitting it, they should give a countenance to the papal claim of supremacy; and partly, to an idea, that such a sense would be contrary to what is elsewhere said in scripture,—namely, that Christ is the only foundation. (See I Cor. iii. 11.) But as to the first, the fear is groundless: it being, as Bishop Middleton observes, "difficult to see what advantage could be gained; unless we could evade the meaning of *δώσω σοὶ τὰς κλεις*, 'I will give to thee the keys,' which follows. And as to the latter fear, it is equally without foundation; since the two expressions are employed in two very different senses. In St Peter's case, it was very applicable; for as he was the first apostle called to the ministry, so he was the first who preached the gospel to the Jews, and also the first who preached it to the Gentiles. So that, to use the words of Bishop Pearson on the Creed, "the promise made here was punctually fulfilled, by Christ's using Peter's ministry in laying the foundation of the Christian church among both Jews and Gentiles; and in his being the first preacher to them of that faith which he here confesses, and making the first proselytes to it: for St Peter laid the first foundations of a church among the Jews, by the conversion of 3000 souls, (Acts ii. 41.) who, when they gladly had embraced St Peter's doctrine, were all baptized; and then, ver. 47, we first find mention of a Christian church. St Peter also laid the first foundation of a church among the Gentiles, by the conversion of Cornelius and his friends, Acts x. "If," says Bishop Taylor, "St Peter was chief of the apostles, and head of the church, he might fairly enough be the representative of the whole college of apostles, and receive this

which should be so firmly established, that all the power and policy of its enemies should not be able, at any time, to destroy it; and that, for the more orderly gov-

promise in their right, as well as his own;—that promise, I say, which did not pertain to Peter principally and by origination, and to the rest by communication, society, and adherence; but that promise which was made to Peter first; yet not for himself, but for all the college, and for all their successors: and then made a second time to them all, without representation, but in diffusion, and performed to all alike in presence, except St Thomas." In fact, the apostles generally are, in other parts of the New Testament, called the foundation on which the church is built, as in Eph. ii. 20. and Rev. xxi. 14. as being the persons employed in erecting the church by their preaching. And what they all, more or less, did, Peter commenced the doing thereof, and might therefore be said to be the first foundation; though in matters of doctrine, the Christian church rests on the testimony, not of one, but of all.—*Bloomfield's Greek Testament*, Mat. xvi. 18, 19.—Ed.

a "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," (Mat. xvi. 18.) may with more propriety be rendered, 'the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.' It is obvious that the term *hell* which occurs so often in our English bibles does not always denote the same place or thing. Dr Campbell has investigated this subject with great ability and accuracy, and has thereby done much service to the cause of sound scripture criticism. He observes that in the Hebrew scriptures the word *sheol* often occurs, and uniformly denotes the state of the dead in general, without regard to the virtuous or vicious characters of the persons, their happiness or misery. The Seventy have almost invariably rendered the same Hebrew word, by the Greek term *hades*, which means the receptacle of the dead, and ought rarely to have been translated *hell* in the sense in which we now use the word, namely, as the place of torment. To denote this latter place, the New Testament writers employ the Greek word *γέεννα*, *gehenna*, compounded of two Hebrew words *ge hinnom*, that is, 'the valley of Hinnom,' a place near Jerusalem, where children were cruelly sacrificed by fire to Moloch, and which is sometimes called Tophet. (See a subsequent part of this work.)

As in process of time this place came to be considered an emblem of *hell*, or the place of torment, reserved for the wicked in a future state, the name Tophet came gradually to be used in this sense, and at length to be confined to it. In this sense also the word *gehenna*, a synonymous term, is always to be understood in the New Testament, where it occurs about a dozen times. The confusion that has arisen on this subject has been occasioned not only by our English translators having rendered the Hebrew word *Sheol*, and the Greek word *gehenna*, frequently by the term *hell*; but the Greek word *hades* which occurs eleven times in the New Testament, is in every instance except one translated by the same English word *hell*, which it ought never to have been (see *Jones' Biblical Cyclopedia*.) With regard to the meaning of the expression, 'gates of death (hades)' Dr Campbell observes, 'it is by death, and by it only, that the spirit enters into *hades*. The gate of *hades* is therefore a very natural periphrasis for death; inasmuch that, without any positive evidence, we should naturally conclude this to be the meaning of the phrase. But we have sufficient evidence, both sacred and profane, that this is the meaning. The phrase occurs in the Septuagint, in the thanksgiving of Hezekiah, after his miraculous recovery from the mortal disease he had been seized with (Is. xxxviii. 10.) I said, 'I shall go to the gates of the grave,' *πύλαι ᾗδου*. It follows, 'I am deprived of the residue of my years.' Nothing can be plainer than that *πύλαι ᾗδου* here means death, in other words, I shall die and be deprived of the residue of my years. But, though the phrase is the same (for *πύλαι ᾗδου* is a literal version of the Hebrew) with that used by our Lord, our translators have not liked to make Hezekiah, who was a good man, speak as if he thought himself going to hell, and have therefore rendered it *the grave*. Another example we have in the Wisdom of Solomon, which, though not canonical scripture, is, in a question of criticism, a good authority, (*Wisd.* xvi. 13.) 'Thou hast power of life and death, thou leadest to the gates of hades, *εἰς πύλαις ᾗδου*, and bringest up again.' This passage is as little susceptible of doubt as the former. The classical use of this phrase is the same with that of the inspired writers. Homer makes Achilles say, as rendered by our English poet, (*Iliad* i. 312.)

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ernment of it, he would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, so that his sentence, whenever it should regularly exclude or admit any person into the bosom of the church upon earth, should in like manner be ratified and confirmed in heaven." But then, to prevent the ill use that might be made of this discovery, he strictly charged his apostles "not to declare to any man, that he was the Messiah.

Perceiving, by this discourse with Peter, that his disciples had got a right notion of his office and divinity, he began thenceforward to prepare their minds for his sufferings, and to talk more openly of his death and resurrection. One day, therefore, as he was insisting on the sufferings which he was to undergo at Jerusalem,^b and Peter, unable to endure a thought so disagreeable to the dignity of his Master, desired him to desist,^c he

Who can think one thing, and another tell,
My soul detests him as the gates of hell:

ὁμῶς αἰδῶς πυλῆσι.

that is, I hate him as death, or I hate him mortally. To say then that the gates of *hades* shall not prevail against the church, is, in other words, to say, It shall never die, it shall never be extinct. Le Clerc, though meaning the same thing (as appears by his note), has expressed it inaccurately: 'Les portes de la mort ne la surmonteront point;' *the gates of death shall not surmount it.* We see at once how appositely *death* is called the *gates of hades*. But what should we call the gates of death? Not death itself, surely. They must be *diseases*; for by these we are brought to death. But in this sense we cannot apply the promise. For many direful diseases has the church been afflicted with, if the introduction of the grossest errors, the most superstitious practices, and senseless disputes, are to be accounted such; but they have not hitherto proved mortal, and we have reason to believe never shall.—*Dr Campbell's Preliminary Dissertation* vi. part ii. sect. 17.—ED.

a In several parts of the gospel we find our Saviour enjoining the people whom he had cured, not to make any publication of his miracles, (Mat. viii. 4. and ix. 30,) but it is an injunction of a particular nature, not to discover that he was the Christ, though this was an article necessary for every man to know and believe in order to his salvation. Now, though this was a point necessary for all to know, yet the apostles were not the proper persons at this time to declare it, because it might look like a kind of confederacy between them, if they should prove too lavish in the commendations of their Master. It would much better become his infinite wisdom, therefore, to find out himself a proper opportunity for the discovery of this great truth, without drawing the envy of the Pharisees upon him, and obstructing the progress of the gospel, which could hardly be believed, considering the low circumstances wherein he appeared; and which, had it been believed, might have encouraged the attempt of the Jews to come, and make him a king, John vi. 15. What therefore our Saviour says to his three apostles, in relation to his transfiguration, that they should 'tell no man of it, until he was risen from the dead,' (Mat. xvii. 9.) is applicable to this passage likewise. For, after his resurrection, they were by office to be his witnesses, and to declare to others that he was the Christ, because they could then do it, not only without suspicion of confederacy, but with great advantages and success, after that Christ had taken possession of his kingdom, and had testified this, by sitting down at the right hand of power, and, by sending down upon them the Holy Ghost, to enable them to confirm their testimony.—*Poole's, Beausobre's and Whitby's Annotations.*

b Jerusalem was the place where this tragedy was to be acted, because, as our Lord observes, a prophet could not suffer out of that city, (Luke xiii. 33,) for there sat the sanhedrim that was to try him; and there lived the Roman governor who had the power of life and death, and was to condemn him.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

c Peter's words in the Greek are ἰλιῶς σοι, Κύριε, (Mat. xvi. 22,) which we may render *propitius esto tibi, Domine, favour thyself, or be kind to thyself.* "Since the rulers at Jerusalem have such malevolent designs against thee, why shouldst thou think of going any more among them? If they intend to evil

gave him a very sharp rebuke,^d as a person whose advice crossed his gracious purposes of man's redemption, and savoured of nothing but worldly grandeur; and therefore, to extinguish in them all notions of a temporal kingdom, he called his disciples, and told them, that "whoever pretended to possess his religion, should take up his cross,^e or patiently submit to all manner of persecutions, in sure and certain hope of a happy immortality, which he would procure for his followers, when he was in his kingdom, in which some, that were then present among them, ere it was long, but certainly before the day of their death,^f should see him happily instated."

g About eight days after this, our Lord, to revive the

entreat thee, and take away thy life, be thou kind and favourable to thyself; avoid the danger by keeping at a distance from it, and consult thine own preservation by continuing here." This seems to be the proper sense of St Peter's words, and they were doubtless spoken with a good intention, and singular affection for his Master; but still they argued great weakness in him, in pretending to contradict one whom he had just before acknowledged to be the Christ, the Son of God, and denote him ignorant of the redemption of mankind by that death which God in his wise counsel had determined.—*Poole's Annotations; and Young's Sermons*, vol. ii.

d The words of our Saviour upon this occasion are,—'get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence to me,' (Mat. xvi. 23.) Not that we are to think, that our Saviour ever imagined that St Peter, in this advice, had any pernicious designs against him, as the great enemy of mankind has, when he tempts and deludes them into sin; but his only meaning is, that his interposition in this affair was very unreasonable, and highly repugnant to his design of coming into the world, which was to save it. "Thou thinkest perhaps," says he, "Peter, that in this thy advice thou shovest thy kindness to me, as a friend that respects my welfare, and art tender of my preservation; but, instead of that, thou art an adversary to me, (for so the word *Satan* signifies, Num. xxii. 32. 2 Sam. xix. 23. 1 Kings v. 4. &c.), in thy endeavouring to draw me aside from doing what is my Father's will and command, (John x. 18,) I told thee that I must suffer; that such is the determinate counsel of God, and such my fixed purpose and resolution; and therefore all advice to the contrary is so far from pleasing, that it is an offence to me; I cannot away with it; and therefore get thee behind me, Satan; for, though there is no malice in thy intention, yet imprudently hast thou run upon the same advice, that Satan uses the most successfully of all others to undo men by, and that is, the advice of self-indulgence. For favour thyself is the most artificial of all the suggestions of the devil; because that being made specious with the pretences of reason and justice, and sweetened by its agreeableness to that of self-love, with which all men do naturally abound, it seldom fails of being swallowed, though poison and death lurk under it."—*Poole's and Whitby's Annotations; Calnet's Commentary and Young's Sermons*, vol. ii.

e Among several nations, it was a custom for the criminal to bear the cross whereon he was to suffer, to the place of execution; (*Lipsius de Cruce*, b. ii. c. 65.) and, in allusion to this, our Saviour makes use of the phrase, to denote our cheerfully bearing those trials and persecutions which the divine providence brings upon us in the execution of our duty, and our adherence to his most holy religion.—*Poole's and Beausobre's Annotations.*

f Our Saviour's words are these:—'Verily I say unto you, there are some of them, who are standing here, who shall not taste of death, until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom,' Mat. xvi. 28. "Of the various interpretations of this verse, the most easy and natural is, that some of Christ's disciples should live to see him fully enter upon, that is, establish that spiritual and mediatorial reign, at the consummation of which he will come in the glory of his Father, to reward every man according to his works, (Mat. xvi. 27.) And he did thus establish it by his resurrection and ascension, by the diffusion of the Holy Ghost, by the gift of miraculous powers, by the triumphant success of the gospel, and the punishment of the unbelieving Jews, by the destruction of their city and polity; which St John at least lived to witness."—*Holden's Christian Expositor of the New Testament.*

g What St Luke calls ὀκτὴς ἡμέραις ὧρα, 'about eight days,'

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hearts of his disciples, as well as to instruct them more fully in the nature of his kingdom, thought it not improper to give some of them at least a specimen of his future glory; and accordingly, taking with him his three most intimate apostles, Peter, James, and John, he ascended a high mountain, ^a and there, while he was employed in prayer, he was suddenly transformed into another kind of appearance; for a bright lustre darted from his face, more glorious than the sun, and a dazzling splendour, piercing from his body through his garment, made them appear whiter than snow, and more radiant than the light. During this heavenly scene there appeared Moses and Elias, clothed with all the brightness and majesty of a glorified state, familiarly conversing with him, and discoursing of his death and sufferings.

While the intercourse continued between these three, Peter, and his two fellow apostles, were fallen asleep; but waking just before their departure, they were exceedingly surprised and terrified at the sight of so much glory and majesty. Peter indeed begged of his Master, that they might continue in that happy place, and erect three tents, one for him, and the other two for Moses and Elias: but while he was thus talking, scarce knowing what he said in his fright and transport, a bright and shining cloud suddenly came over them, and a voice from thence proclaimed, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.' Upon which the apostles were seized with a greater consternation than ever, and fell prostrate upon the ground; but upon our Lord's touching and encouraging them, they looked up, and saw none but him; for the other two were vanished.

chap. ix. 28, St Matthew and St Mark make 'after six days:' but the reason of this seeming disagreement is, that the two last evangelists compute only the entire days between our Saviour's discourse, and his going up into the mount, and therefore style them six: whereas St Luke, including both the days of his discourse and his ascent, calls them eight days. And this is evident from the word *and* which, when any sum is mentioned, is always added to signify, that it is not exact, but wants something to make it complete, as may be seen in Mat. xiv. 21. Luke i. 56.—iii. 23.—xxiii. 44. John iv. 6.—xix. 14. Acts ii. 41, &c. —*Whitby's Annotations.*

^a An opinion has been entertained among Christians since the days of Jerome, that mount Tabor was the scene of the transfiguration. On the eastern part of the hill are the remains of a strong castle; and within the precincts of it is the grotto, in which are three altars in memory of the three tabernacles, that St Peter proposed to build, and where the Latin friars always perform mass on the anniversary of the transfiguration. It is said there was a magnificent church built here by Helena, which was a cathedral when this town was made a bishop's see. On the side of the hill they show a church in a grot, where they say Christ charged his disciples not to tell what things they had seen till he should be glorified. It is very doubtful, however, whether this tradition be well founded, or whether it has not, as Mr Maundrell and other writers suspect, originated in the misinterpretation of a very common Greek phrase. Our Saviour is said to have taken with him Peter, James, and John, and brought them into a high mountain 'apart;' from which it has been rather hastily inferred that the description must apply to Tabor, the only insulated and solitary hill in the neighbourhood. We may remark with the traveller just named, that the conclusion may possibly be true, but that the argument used to prove it seems incompetent; because the term 'apart' most likely relates to the withdrawing and retirement of the persons here spoken of, and not to the situation of the mountain. In fact, it means nothing more than that our Lord and his three disciples betook themselves to a private place for the purpose of devotion.—*Edinburgh Cabinet Library, Palestine*, pp. 306—309. For a description of Tabor, see note *a*. p. 402.—*Ed.*

As they descended the mount, he strictly commanded them not to tell any man what strange things they had seen until he was risen from the dead. They were ready to obey his commands, but did not rightly understand his last words; ^b and therefore they had some altercations among themselves concerning the meaning of his rising from the dead: and another difficulty they had to solve; for having seen Elias with our Saviour upon the mount, they could not forbear asking him, what reason the Scribes and Pharisees had for asserting that that prophet was to come upon the earth before the Messiah? To which our Saviour replied, that these Jewish doctors were not mistaken in their notion, because Elias was in effect come already, and had received the same bad treatment from his countrymen that himself in a short time was to expect; from whence they perceived, that by the Elias he spoke of, he plainly intended John the Baptist.

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties obviated and objections answered.*

St John, according to the general sense of antiquity, having perused the other evangelists, and observed in what particulars they were defective, at the persuasion of the other bishops of Asia, was prevailed upon to write his gospel as a supplement to their omissions. Whoever will give himself the trouble to compare his history with that of the other evangelists, will find this notion in a great measure verified. For, not to mention other particulars, our Saviour's miracles, antecedent to his resurrection, as they are recorded by St John, are no more than eight. *1st*, His turning water into wine at the marriage of Cana in Galilee. *2d*, His telling the Samaritan woman the secrets of her life. *3d*, His healing the nobleman's son at Capernaum. *4th*, His curing the lame man at the pool of Bethesda. *5th*, His feeding five thousand men with five barley loaves and two fishes. *6th*, His walking upon the surface of the water, and calming the storm at sea. *7th*, His giving sight to a blind man by anointing his eyes with clay. *And 8th*, His raising Lazarus from the dead. Now, all these are omitted by the former evangelists, except the 5th and 6th, which St John seems to have recorded chiefly to introduce a moral discourse which our Saviour took occasion to make to the people, and which the other sacred penmen had omitted; which is a plain argument that the intent of St John's gospel was to supply the defects of

^b The doctrine of the general resurrection they could not but understand; for that the Pharisees believed, (Acts xxiv. 15.) and of that Martha makes acknowledgment, (John xi. 24;) nor could they be ignorant of the meaning of any particular man's rising from the dead; for of that they had instances in the Old Testament, and had lately seen an example of it in the gates of Naim, (Luke vii. 15.) But being taught out of the law, that Christ was to abide for ever, (John xii. 34.) and that of his kingdom there should be no end, (Luke i. 33.) they could not tell how to reconcile his death, which was to be previous to his resurrection to the predictions of the prophets, and their own conceptions of his temporal kingdom; and therefore we may observe, that when Christ was dead, their hopes died with him: 'we trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel,' (Luke xxiv. 21;) but that at his resurrection they revived again, which made them ask, 'wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' (Acts i. 6.)—*Whitby's Annotations.*

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the other three; and that therefore their silence is no manner of argument against St John's account of the pool of Bethesda.

It may seem a little strange, indeed, that Josephus should give us no account of it, especially when the sanative virtue of its waters, occasioned by so extraordinary a means, could not but redound to the honour of his country.¹ But when it is considered that the like omissions have been frequently made by other historians, who in their writings have neglected to insert several considerable matters of antiquity, merely because they were so familiar and well known to them.² When it is considered that Josephus, in particular, wrote his history for the information of the Greeks and learned Romans, who were heathens, and for fear of shocking their belief, is very tender of dwelling too much upon miracles: when it is considered, that he is entirely silent in several other instances that bear some relation to our Saviour Christ; that he does not so much as intimate the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem, mentioned by St Matthew,³ nor give any clear account of the Roman census or taxation, which occasioned our Lord to be born at Bethlehem, as it is recorded by St Luke;⁴ when it is considered, that the miraculous cure of the impotent man by Jesus had so visible a connexion, that he could not, in decency, give an account of the one without making some mention of the other; and therefore chose rather to decline the history of both; and, lastly, when it is considered, that this pool, according to⁵ Tertullian, "ceased to be beneficial to the Jews, upon their final perseverance in blasphemy and infidelity against Christ;" there is no wonder at all that Josephus, who was very defective in other matters, and no great lover of miracles, should omit giving us an account of a pool, whose virtue was extinct and gone when first he wrote his Antiquities, and which he could not well make mention of, without giving an implicit honour to Christ.

That, upon the death of our blessed Saviour, this pool might lose its sanative quality, is no improbable conjecture, because the Jews no longer deserved such a peculiar blessing; but when at first it came to be impregnated with it, is not a matter of so easy solution. The words in the text are, that 'an⁶ angel went down,' κατὰ καιρὸν, 'at a certain season,' which⁷ a learned author chooses rather to render 'at the season,' that is, of the passover, 'and troubled the water;' from whence he infers, that the first time of this supernatural moving of the water, and consequently of the pool's receiving a miraculous healing quality, was at this passover; which was the second after the commencement of our Saviour's public ministry: and the reason he assigns for its being this rather than any other passover, is,—“That our Saviour, having gone through all the cities of Galilee, and most of the other parts of the country of Judea, preaching and healing diseases, came up to Jerusalem at the passover, with an intent to fix his abode there; that, to prepare his way before him, God might give this pool an healing quality,⁸ thereby to show the Jews, in a typical manner, that the messenger of the covenant

was coming among them, to 'open a fountain⁹ to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness;' but that, instead of giving him a kind reception, they took counsel together how they might take away his life, which made him withdraw himself from them, and, upon his departure, the miraculous virtue of the water ceased." The only objection against this hypothesis is, that it makes the miracle of no more than a week or ten days' continuance, which is too short a space for so great a company as is here represented, to be gathered together; to have taken up their abode, as it were, in the apartments of this hospital; and to be acquainted so perfectly, as the paralytic, in his discourse with our Saviour, seems to be, with the nature of the pool, and the manner of its preternatural perturbation. And therefore, to follow the generality of commentators, though we should suppose, that its medicinal virtue began at the time of this second passover, yet we may still adhere to the opinion of Tertullian, and say, that, at certain times at least, it continued with the Jews, and a singular blessing it was, until they had filled the measure of their iniquity,¹⁰ by denying the Holy One, and the Just, and by killing the Prince of Life.

How the waters of this pool came by their sanative quality, opinions, in some measure, have been divided. Our¹¹ learned Hammond, who sometimes affects a singularity of interpretation, supposes, that the waters became medicinal by being impregnated with a healing warmth from the blood and entrails of the sacrificed beasts that were washed there, and that the angel in the text is not to be understood of any of those celestial beings that are usually distinguished by that name, but only of a common messenger, namely, an officer or servant of the priests, who, at a proper season, was sent by him to stir the pool. The great¹² Bartholine supposes, that these waters were naturally medicinal, and that their commotion was occasioned by an extraordinary fermentation of some mineral in them; and therefore he makes the angel no more than a divine power, which originally gave this efficacy, though it was exerted in a natural way. But besides that the word ἀγγέλος seldom occurs in the former, and never in this sense, in any historical narrative in scripture, there are these plain objections against both hypotheses, namely,¹³ That, be the waters impregnated with what ingredient we please, had their operation been mechanical, they must necessarily have cured more than one person, at every commotion or fermentation; and yet they never can be supposed of efficacy enough to cure all manner of diseases in an instant, and at one single immersion, as the waters of Bethesda are represented to do: and therefore, waving all such groundless suppositions, we may be allowed to set the authority of an ancient father of the church against these modern names, and say, "That the angel, which descended at a certain season, gave the water its medicinal virtue; for the nature of the water was not sanative in itself, if it had, cures would have always happened, but the whole depended on the virtue communicated to it by the angel."

¹ Bishop Smallbrook's Vindication, p. 498.

² Dr Pearce's Vindication, part 4. p. 19. ³ Chap. ii. 16.

⁴ Chap. ii. 1, 2. ⁵ Adv. Jud. c. 13. ⁶ John v. 4.

⁷ Dr Pearce's Vindication, part 4.

⁸ Whitty's Annotations on John v. 4.

⁹ Zech. xiii. 1.

¹⁰ Acts iii. 14, 15.

¹¹ Annotations on the 5th chapter of St John.

¹² On the Paralytics of the New Testament.

¹³ Whitty's Annot. and Bp. Smallbrook's Vindication, p. 507.

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Now the true reason why the virtue thus communicated to the water by the operation of an angel, was effectual only to the curing of one person at one time, was to evince the miraculousness of the cure. Had many been cured at once, the sceptic might have imputed their cures to the natural virtue of the water, and, upon this supposition, been emboldened to ask, “Where is the wonder of this? Do not many medicinal baths cure various kinds of diseases, and multitudes of such as labour under each disease, provided their case be curable? Had one only indeed been cured, the first that could get in after the troubling of the water, there would have been then a great and real miracle: but now the numbers make the fact suspicious. To make it appear a miracle indeed, its effects should have been confined and limited to particular times and persons, and otherwise so circumstantiated, as that the power of God, and not of blind nature, might have been apparent in it.” But all this language is effectually silenced by the method which the wise providence of God took in this case, and the miracle established upon such evident conviction, as the mouth of infidelity itself cannot gainsay.^a

^a The nature and manner of the cures performed here, and the times of their performance, as a subject of great interest, has exercised the speculations of most commentators. As to the nature of the cures, or the sensible means, if any, employed in effecting them, as the whole is represented as a special miracle, second causes are out of the question: all that was required on the part of the patient, let his case be what it might, being the mere act of immersion; the water having at other times no power to convey any specific benefit. We are consequently released from all such unscriptural and unphilosophical opinions as that entertained by Dr Hammond; who ascribes the medicinal properties of the pool to the stirring up of the blood and entrails of the slaughtered animals, and other filth contained in it: which, as observed by Dr Jennings, must make the bath so foul and fetid, that it would be more likely to poison than to cure. But this part of the inquiry involves another question, which although not essential either to the truth or to the right understanding of the history, has acquired an accidental importance, namely, the mode by which the miraculous but transient virtue was conveyed to the water. An angel is said to have gone down on these occasions into the pool, and to have troubled or agitated the water: the visible and supernatural effect being probably, as conjectured by Grotius, Lightfoot, and Doddridge, caused by an invisible and celestial agent: this mode of expression, in fact, implying a conviction, common with the Jews, that such things were effected by the ministration of angels. From the omission, however, in some ancient manuscripts, of the fourth verse of this chapter, and its being found in another in the shape of a marginal note, it has been contended by some, that this part of the narrative has been inserted without authority, in support of a popular superstition. The case of this disputed text is thus stated by Bishop Marsh, in his notes on Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament: “The Codex Ephrem (a very ancient Greek MS. of the New Testament in the Royal Library at Paris) has many marginal notes written in uncial letters, without accents. This proves what has been sometimes doubted, that marginal notes were made in the most ancient MSS., and that this practice prevailed in the early ages of Christianity. But these marginal scholia seem to have been confined to such MSS. as were in the hands of private persons; while those which have been used for church service, such as the Codex Bezae, are without them. It is likewise remarkable, that in this MS., the disputed, or rather spurious text of John v. 4, is written, not in the text, but in a marginal scholion. Now, as this verse is totally omitted in the Codex Bezae and the Codex Vaticanus, which are the two most ancient MSS. now extant; as it is likewise omitted in the Codex Ephrem (which is inferior in age to the Codex Bezae), but written in the margin as a scholion; is written in more modern MSS. in the text, but marked with an asterisk, or obelus, as suspicious; and in MSS. still more modern is written without

That the widow of Nain's son, and the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, were both of them really dead,

any mark; we see the various gradations by which it has acquired its place in our present text; and have proof positive, that the verse was originally nothing more than a marginal scholion, and of course spurious. Other passages likewise in the Greek Testament owe their present existence in the printed editions to the same cause.” But the rejection of the fourth verse as spurious, so long as the seventh remains an undisputed portion of the sacred text, is of very little importance; for here the two principal facts which the fourth verse relates, namely, the miraculous agitation of the water, and the single cure, which of course must also have been miraculous, are both implied. It matters not, indeed, in this view of the case, whether an angel was known, or only inferred, to have been present. It was the belief of the Jews, a belief warranted by numerous instances of the kind recorded in their scriptures, that every supernatural occurrence was effected by the agency of a heavenly messenger, or angel, specially appointed for that purpose; and it is as easy to conceive, that, in the present instance, the water was moved, and the healing virtue imparted to it, by an angel, as that these miraculous effects were caused in any other way. Admitting then the spuriousness of the disputed text as proved, neither the character nor the credibility of the miracle are thereby affected: the seventh verse implies as much of the statement of the fourth as it is necessary for us to know. And with respect to the means by which the miracle was accomplished, the revealed mode in which it has pleased the Almighty that supernatural events should frequently be brought about, and the belief of the Jewish church on this subject, leave it highly probable that the same mode was adopted in the present instance, although the evangelist has been silent on the subject. With respect to the times at which the miracle was performed, some confine it to a particular season; as, for instance, to that of the festival mentioned in the first verse. But the original implies no fixed and particular season; much less one of so rare occurrence as an annual feast. The words *κατα καιρον*, which are rendered in our translation ‘at a certain season,’ imply as well, according to time, or from time to time, or at times; on occasion, or occasionally: *καθ’ ημεραν*, ‘with the day,’ or ‘daily’ (Acts ii. 46, 47); *κατ’ εναυτον*, ‘from year to year,’ or ‘year by year’ (Heb. ix. 25; x. 1); *κατ’ οικον*, ‘from house to house’ (Acts ii. 46); *κατ’ εικοσα ημετεραν και καθ’ ομοιωσιν* (Sept.), ‘in,’ or ‘according to, our image and our likeness.’ The precise time of the angel's visit was thus perhaps uncertain. At whatever time, however, and under whatever circumstances, this visit was made, we have reason to believe, from the terms employed, and from the benevolent object of the visit itself, that it was more frequently repeated than once in a year. Thus one happy individual at least, on each occasion, was relieved perhaps from agonising pain, and restored to health and his friends. But then, how many must have returned to their homes, bearing their diseases back with them, with the addition of fatigue and disappointment! True: but let it be remembered, that every one of these disappointed sufferers of Jerusalem possessed an advantage over the sick of all other places, and one which even we, at the present day, with all the means which the improved state of medical science can furnish, do not possess, namely, the knowledge, that let his case be ever so desperate, there existed a certain cure; which, although he had not been so fortunate as to find on this occasion, the ensuing one would renew the opportunity of obtaining. Thus hope was kept alive, pain mitigated, and faith exercised; and it is probable, that none who visited the pool duly impressed with their own helplessness, the greatness of the gift, and the power and goodness of the Giver, failed, sooner or later, of receiving the reward of their faith and perseverance. It is further to be observed, that, from the simple style of living of the ancient Jews, diseases were comparatively few; the number furnished by the population of Jerusalem bearing, in all probability, no proportion to that found in a similar population in civilized society at the present day. So that, supposing all the cases which had failed of obtaining relief elsewhere to have resorted to this last resource, and that in the aggregate they were justly entitled ‘a great multitude,’ the number might not have been so great as to preclude the chance of each being healed in course of time. Neither Philo nor Josephus notice this miracle; but that, as observed by Dr Macknight, in no way affects its credi-

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is evident from the sense of all that were about them, who were actually carrying the one to his burial, and making preparation for the funeral of the other; so that had not our blessed Saviour been confident of the divine virtue residing in him, whereby he was able to recover them to life again, it would have been madness in him to have attempted to do it.

“He might suppose, perhaps, that there was a mistake in the people that were about them, and that these two young persons might possibly be in a lethargic state.” But, besides the folly of presuming upon a thing, which scarce happens once in a century, how could he tell, that, upon his touching the bier of the one, or the hand of the other, and calling upon them, they would instantly awake? And if they did not awake at his call, his whole pretensions of being a prophet sent from God, with a power to restore life to the dead, must as effectually have been ruined, as if the persons here supposed in a lethargy only, had actually been dead. But now, if we examine a little into our Lord’s conduct in both these cases, we shall find that he acted not upon any supposition of mistake in the people, but out of the fulness of the Godhead that dwelt in him bodily. He, coming to the city of Nain, attended with his disciples, meets at the gate the funeral of a certain young man, the only son of a woman that was a widow. The consideration of her destitute condition moved his compassion indeed; but, for all that, he might have let the funeral pass. None of the company either asked or challenged him to raise the dead youth: it was entirely his own offer; and an offer that no wise man, who set up for a prophet, would have ever made, had he not been conscious, as we find he was, that he was able to perform it.

While he was at Capernaum, a person of some note requests of him to go and heal his daughter, who was at the point of death. Before he could get to the house, a messenger comes, and acquaints the father that she was actually dead.¹ Here our Lord had a fair opportunity to excuse himself; for, though he might pretend to cure diseases, which was all that Jairus requested of him, yet it did not therefore follow that he was to raise the dead. But, instead of retracting, he offers, of his own accord, to go forward, and tells the father, as he afterwards did, that he would raise her to life again:² be not afraid; only believe, says he, and she shall be made whole, which he could never have said from any other principle than a consciousness of that³ almighty power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.

But, though our Lord was conscious of his divine power, yet, upon his coming to the ruler’s house, instead of making any ostentatious boast of it, we find him, by the modesty of his expression, the maid is not dead, but sleepeth, endeavouring to conceal it. It is, in a great measure, indeed, owing to his modesty, and great humility, that, instead of proclaiming, he requires the

people so frequently to suppress the fame of his marvellous works: but in the present case he might have some regard to the character of Jairus, as ruler of the synagogue, and, by this advice of silence, dispense with his speaking publicly of a miracle, which might possibly draw the malice of the Scribes and Pharisees upon him, as well as upon himself. In the case of his raising Lazarus, we find, that,⁴ ‘because, by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus, the chief priests consulted,’ not only how to destroy Jesus, but ‘to put Lazarus likewise to death:’ and much of the same design might have been suspected, which our Saviour, by this kind caution, endeavoured to prevent, if it once came to their knowledge, that so great a man as a governor of a synagogue, by the miraculous recovery of his daughter, had forsaken the religion of his ancestors, and was become a convert to the Christian faith.

Gadara was one of the cities beyond Jordan, belonging to the country called Decapolis, which was sometimes in the hands of the Jews, and sometimes of the Syrians, but, at this time, was inhabited by both. The Syrians were heathens, and, consequently, made use of swine, not only for food, but for sacrifices likewise: and it is not improbable, that the Jews of the country might be tempted to feed swine, by the advantage they made in selling them to their heathen neighbours.⁵ This was against a prohibition of their law, it is true; but laws, we know, are not always observed, and perhaps least of all at Gadara, which, being in the extremities of the Jewish territories, and under the jurisdiction of heathens, left the Jews without any restraint upon them, but that of conscience, which is too frequently violated for the sake of gain.

To bring the matter then to a narrow compass. The swine which were destroyed, in consequence of the permission which our Saviour gave the evil spirits to enter into them, belonged either to the Jews, or Gentiles of Gadara: if they belonged to the Jews, it cannot be denied, but they were justly punished for breaking their own laws and constitutions, which forbade them to keep any; nor can our Saviour’s right of inflicting the punishment be called in question, because it was a received maxim among the Jews, that any person invested with the character of a prophet, and acting by the Spirit of God, might, without the assistance of a magistrate, put the laws in execution against offenders: and therefore, we, who acknowledge our Jesus to have been more than a prophet, can never be at a loss to account for his exercising an authority among the Jews, which, according to their own confession, was allowable in the lowest of that order. But, if the heathens of Gadara were the owners of these swine, our Saviour might be induced to permit the devils to enter into them, not only to teach them the sacredness of the Jewish laws, which they, on account of the prohibition of swine’s flesh, may be supposed to have ridiculed; but to cure them likewise of their idolatrous worship of demons, and to engage them to embrace the Christian faith. For when they saw our Lord’s power over such a multitude of devils, exhibited in their possession of such a number of swine, had they made a right application of the miracle, they could not but perceive the truth and divinity of his doctrine, and

¹ Defence of the Scripture History, p. 17. ² Luke vii. 50.

³ Phil. iii. 21.

bility; as these writers have omitted other and greater transactions, which they had an opportunity of knowing. Dr Doddridge supposes the waters of this pool to have been endued with their miraculous properties not long before the ministry of Christ, and that these properties ceased at his death; which is, in fact, what is related of them by Tertullian.—*Manford’s Scripture Gazetteer*.—Ed.

⁴ John xii. 10. 11.

⁵ Dr Pearce’s Vindication, part 2.

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the madness of their worshipping such impure spirits, as were both cast out of the men at his command, and could not enter into the swine without his permission.

They could not but perceive, I say, that our Saviour was a prophet sent from heaven; that what he did was by a commission from God; and, consequently, that he could not be guilty of any injustice in the destruction of the swine, which, upon this supposition, was not his act, but the act of providence. He indeed, as a man, had no right to destroy the people's swine; but God, who is the supreme proprietor of the whole earth, most certainly had; and shall we then complain of him for such a punishment as this, when every day we see more surprising instances before our eyes? When we see him laying whole nations waste with pestilence, with famine, and with earthquakes, shall we confess his sovereign authority in these cases, and yet, upon the loss of two thousand swine, cry out, and say, why hast thou done this? The heathens themselves, upon the supposition of a providence, will acknowledge this to be unreasonable; nor can our Saviour, as acting by a divine commission, ever be justly blamed, because he once or twice did the same thing which God does every day.

But, after all, whether the proprietors were Jews or Gentiles, ¹ the words in the text do not imply, that our Saviour was either principal or accessory to the destruction of the swine. St Mark, indeed, tells us, that 'he gave the devils leave;' and St Luke, that 'he suffered them' to enter into the swine; but by this is meant no more, than that he did not prevent them; that he did not interpose his divine power, in order to hinder them from entering; but, if this made our Saviour a sharer in the destruction of the swine, by parity of reason, it will make God, because he permits it, answerable for all the evil that is done under the sun. Thus, whether we suppose the Jews or heathens owners of the herd of swine, our Saviour's permitting the devils to enter into them made him not accessory to their destruction; or, if it be said, that he did it with a punitive intent, it was either to make the Jews suffer for the breach of their law, or the heathens for their obstinate idolatry; which his character of a prophet, and the testimony of his being the Son of the most High, without all controversy, authorized him to do.

To know the true end and design of our Saviour's transfiguration, it may not be improper to look back a little into the context, where we find, that after Peter's confessing him to be ² 'the Christ, the Son of the living God, from that time he began to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.' Nor was this all; for he foretold them, that they likewise were to suffer many grievous persecutions for his name's sake; and therefore he recommended to them the unpleasant doctrines of ³ 'self-denial, and taking up the cross, and following him,' with this great, though distant, encouragement, that ⁴ 'when the Son of Man should come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, he should reward every one according to his works.'

These predictions, doctrines, and promises, were so contrary to the expectations of his disciples, who hoped

in him to have a temporal prince and deliverer, a restorer of the decayed state of Israel, and promoter of themselves to great honours and employments, that our Saviour thought proper, not many days after, in order to revive their faith and trust in him, and ⁵ to fortify their minds against what was likely to ensue, to take as many with him into the mount, as made up a legal evidence, and there to give them ocular conviction of what he had promised, in recompense of what they were to suffer, by assuming, for a while, the lustre ^a and appearance of a glorified body; which so raised their drooping hearts, that we find St Peter immediately declaring, ⁶ 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; and, if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.' For the design of these words is, not only to secure his Master, by staying in that retreat, from the sufferings and death, which would be the consequence of his going up to Jerusalem, as St Chrysostom and others understand it, but to express likewise the pleasure and satisfaction he took in this transfiguration, and glorified company; and how he resumed fresh spirits and comforts from a miracle, which was emblematical of the glorious state, not of Christ only, but of all good Christians, after their resurrection.

The only instance we have in scripture of any transfiguration like unto this, is in the case of Moses, ⁷ after he had been forty days and forty nights with God on mount Sinai; for, upon his descent, we are told, 'that the skin of his face so shone, that the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him; and therefore he put a veil on his face, while he talked with them.' That our blessed Lord, in the act of his transfiguration, might probably have respect to this preceding one of Moses, and, both in the nature of the change, and the place where it was wrought, design some conformity thereunto, is what we are at liberty to suppose; and consequently can account why the scene of this transaction was in a mountain, rather than a valley: and why the three apostles, Peter, James, and John, and not the whole multitude, were allowed to be spectators of it, we have several reasons to allege.

For besides that this was a vouchsafement, fit only to be communicated to such as were of his more immediate confidence, and stood in the highest degree of his esteem; to such as, for their zeal and affection to him, were honoured and distinguished ⁸ with a peculiar title, and, after his resurrection, appointed by providence to be the great pillars of his church; and besides, that it would have looked like vanity and ostentation in him to have taken the multitude into the mount, and there made a public sight of his miracles, which was the thing he always carefully declined: besides this, I say, there seems to be

⁵ Young's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 360.

⁶ Luke ix. 33.

⁷ Exod. xxxiv. 28, &c.

⁸ Luke vi. 13.

^a This is the proper meaning of the word μεταμορφώθην. For μορφή, both in the Old and New Testaments, doth not signify the essence or constituent properties of a man, but only his external shape or appearance: as when it is said of Belshazzar, (Dan. v. 10.) and of Daniel, (chap. viii. 28.) that ἡ μορφή ἠλλάσθη, *their forms were changed*; of Nebuchadnezzar, that ἡ μορφή αὐτοῦ ἐπιστάλασεν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ, 'my form returned to me,' (Dan. iv. 36.) and of Christ that he appeared to two of his disciples ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ, 'in another form,' (Mark xvi. 12.) and therefore the word which is derived from it, can extend no further than to a change of the outward form or appearance only.—*Whitby* on Phil. ii. 6.

¹ Dr Pearce's Vindication, part l. p. 28. ² Mat. xvi. 21, &c.

³ Ibid. ver. 24.

⁴ Ibid. ver. 27.

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something in the transfiguration itself, which might have been of dangerous consequence for the multitude to have been admitted to.

St Peter, who himself was one of those who were with him on the holy mount, gives us this account of it. ¹ 'We have not followed cunningly devised fables,' says he, 'when we made known unto you the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Now, ² by his *majesty* in this place, most properly is to be understood that lustre and radiancy wherein he appeared, when his 'face shone as the sun, and his garments,' pierced through with the beams that were darted from his body, 'became white as light.' ³ For to *shine as the sun*, is a phrase expressing something belonging to celestial majesty; and white and splendid garments are proper for kings, and ⁴ royal ministers of the heavenly court. And, in like manner, by the 'excellent glory', from whence the voice proceeded, can be meant nothing but the bright and shining cloud that then appeared, which the Jews call the *shechinah*, and is made up, as most imagine, of an host of angels, the constant symbol of the divine presence; and how great and magnificent this symbol is, we may, in some measure, learn from the vision of the prophet Daniel: ⁵ 'the ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flames, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream had issue from before him; thousands of thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.'

Supposing then that this was the manner of our Saviour's transfiguration; that not only, in his own person, he was arrayed with all his glory and lustre, but had likewise an angelic host surrounding him, two of the greatest prophets of ancient ages attending him, and a voice from heaven, declaring him to be the well-beloved Son of God: while the multitude stood by, and saw and heard all this, it would have been almost unavoidable, but that, upon such conviction of his being the Messiah, ⁶ 'they would have taken him by force, and made him a king.' But since, as our Saviour tells us, his ⁷ 'kingdom was not of this world,' nor to come with the pomp and observation which the Jews expected; and since one of his great concerns was, that no disturbance of the civil government should be occasioned by him, or laid to his charge, he wisely made choice of three only, but these the principal of his apostles, to whom he exhibited a specimen of his future glory; which had he done to the multitude, it might probably have occasioned a general insurrection; and, as he came down from the mount, he charged them, 'that they should tell the vision to no man, till after his resurrection.'

From the word, *ὁραμα* which we render *vision*, some have supposed that Moses and Elias were not there in their proper persons, but that the apostles, in their fancy and imagination, had only a strong idea or impression of them; or, at most, that their spectres, or some sha-

dowy resemblance of them, only were there. Since the evangelists, however, speak of them in a personal character and capacity; since they represent them as talking with Christ, and speaking of his decease, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem; since they tell us, that when they were come out of the ecstasy into which this vision had cast them, they saw two men standing with him; it is much more probable to think, that Moses and Elias were really there, and that God had, somewhere or other, from the time of their departure out of this world, preserved both their bodies to this end. The scriptures, indeed, are express as to Elias, that he was translated into heaven by the ministry of angels resembling ⁸ a chariot of fire, and horses of fire; and it is a pretty general opinion, ⁹ both among Jewish and Christian authors taken, as is supposed, from some apocryphal book, that Moses did not die, but was translated into heaven, or some terrestrial paradise, in the same manner as were Enoch and Elias. There is a passage in St Jude, where ¹⁰ Michael the archangel is said to contend with the devil, and dispute about the body of Moses which, if taken in a literal sense, will greatly favour this opinion; for if we can but suppose that ¹¹ the contest between this good and evil angel concerning Moses's body, related not to its burial, as some will have it, but its assumption into heaven, or some other place of happiness, which the devil might oppose, and urge the obligation of his dying the common death of all men, for this reason more especially, because he had once taken away the life of an Egyptian: if we can but suppose, I say, that the contest arose upon this subject, then we may easily conceive both how Moses might subsist in a separate state from the time of his assumption, and how he, together with Elias, might be dispatched from thence upon this occasion, to set off the lustre of our Lord's transfiguration, by their appearing at the same time in their resplendent robes of glory.

And indeed, if this was the purpose of their errand, what subject can we suppose so proper, and so well becoming the conversation of three such illustrious persons, as the redemption of mankind by the death and passion of the Son of God? What these two ancient prophets had in their times imperfectly revealed, nay what the angels of heaven desire at all times to look into, namely, the harmony of the divine attributes in this stupendous work, ¹² the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, and ¹³ 'the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; ¹⁴ mysteries which have been hid from ages, and from generations, but are now made manifest to the saints: ¹⁵ these were the sublime subjects, for these are implied in ¹⁶ their speaking of Christ's decease, of their conversation at this interview; and, in comparison of these, how jejune and worthless are all the wise sayings of philosophers, or compositions of human wit? With good reason, therefore, might the great apostle of the Gentiles, who himself was no mean proficient in what the world falsely calls knowledge, instead of the ¹⁶ ex-

⁸ 2 Kings ii. 11.

⁹ See Calmet's Dissert. on the Death and Burial of Moses, vol. iii.

¹⁰ Jude 9.

¹¹ See Whitty in locum.

¹² Rom. xi. 33.

¹³ Eph. iii. 18, 19.

¹⁴ Col. ii. 26.

¹⁵ Luke ix. 31.

¹⁶ 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2.

¹ 2 Pet. i. 16, &c.

² See Whitty on 2 Pet. i. 16.

³ Mat. xiii. 43.

⁴ Rev. iii. 4.

⁵ Dan. vii. 9, 10.

⁶ John vi. 15.

⁷ Ib. xviii. 36.

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cellence of speech and wisdom, determine to know nothing among his Corinthians, 'but Jesus Christ, and him crucified:' for ¹ 'we preach Christ crucified,' says he, 'unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God; for ² of God he is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'

The scriptures, upon all occasions, acquaint us, that the Baptist, through the whole course of his ministry, had borne constant and ample testimony to our Saviour's divine mission; that he exhorted those who came to him to rest their faith, not on himself, but on him that should come after him; and that as soon as he was acquainted who he was, by a visible descent of the Holy Ghost, and a voice from heaven, he made it his business to dispose the Jews in general, and his own disciples in particular, to receive and reverence him, by testifying every where, that he was the Son of God, the Lamb of God, who came from above, and spake the words of God, and to whom God had not given the Spirit by measure. And yet after all this, ³ some are of opinion, that the Baptist might have the same conception of Christ's temporal kingdom that the rest of the Jewish nation had; and that his long and irksome imprisonment might by this time have tempted him to doubt, whether he, who by birth was his relation, and from whose assistance, very probably, he expected a deliverance, was in reality the Messiah. ⁴ It seems, however, not a little injurious to the character of the Baptist, to suppose either his constancy so shaken, or his behaviour so inconsistent with itself, as, after such open and solemn declaration, to admit of any doubt, whether our Lord were he that should come, that is, the long promised and universally expected Messiah. And therefore ^a the safest way is, to conclude, that he did

not send this message with a design to satisfy any scruples of his own, but purely for the sake and conviction of his disciples who brought it; to set them right in their notions, and confirm them in the belief of Jesus, and so turn them over to their proper and better master, now that himself was upon the point of leaving the world. And this was the rather necessary, because their immoderate zeal, and partial respect for the Baptist, had hitherto made them averse to Jesus, and envious at his honour and miracles. What John had discoursed to them formerly upon this subject had made but little impression upon them; and therefore, in compassion to their infirmities, he condescended to have their scruples propounded in his own name; and our Saviour's method of resolving them, which was by showing them that the miracles which he wrought were the same kind that the Messiah was to do, gave so great satisfaction, that when their former master was gone, they repaired to him with the melancholy news of his death, and, according to the received tradition, for ever after became his constant disciples.

⁵ The frequent use of parables and emblems in the discourses and writings of the oriental sages, and especially of the Jewish doctors, ^b is so very well known,

⁶ Whithy's Annotations on Mat. xiii.

supernatural endowments as should completely answer to the predicted character of the Messiah; and then sent them to their master for the application. With respect to the reply itself, both the manner and the matter of it are highly deserving of attention. As to the former, it is, as Bp. Atterbury observes, not direct and positive, but so ordered only, as to give them an occasion of answering the question themselves, which they had proposed to Christ. As to the latter, the learned prelate, with his usual taste, ably points out the gradation to be observed in the particulars, and the appositeness of it in relation to the inquiries. So that the words, 'Go show John,' &c., may mean, 'You come to learn of me whether I am the Messiah. Your master has often told you I am he, but you will not believe him. To him you should have gone as my forerunner: to me it belongs not so properly to proclaim my own titles, which might excite your suspicion. Behold therefore the testimony of God! for the works which I am doing before your eyes bear witness that the Father hath sent me.' The description of the works in question is so framed as to be taken from a prophecy of Isaiah lxi. 1. and xxxv. 5, 6. of the Messiah. Thus it is as if our Lord had said, 'Ye believe not the Baptist's testimony; that I am he who should come. Yet surely Isaiah, whom ye so reverence, and upon whose authority ye have received the Baptist himself, will obtain credence with you; and he has thus prophesied of me.'—*Bloomfield's Greek Testament* on Mat. xi. 3.

^b The Jews, above all nations, delighted in this way of reasoning. Their books, at this day, are full of such parables as our Saviour used; and are generally introduced in a form of speech not unlike his. 'Whereunto shall I liken such or such a thing? Nay, in the talmudical treatises, such as the treatise Killaim, there is a dispute of sowing upon the rocks and stones, and of mixing wheat and tares together; and in Peah, a tract in the Jerusalem Talmud, there is mention made of a tree of mustard-seed, which one might climb up into, like other trees. So that our Saviour was by no means to blame, but rather highly to be commended, for pursuing this parabolical way of teaching morality, which was the most celebrated method among the Jews. For his farther vindication, however, some have observed, that what our Saviour delivered in this manner did not contain the fundamental precepts and doctrines of the gospel, for these were taught with sufficient clearness in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of St Matthew, but only the mysteries relating to the progress of the gospel, and the event of it among the Jews and Gentiles; and the Jews themselves acknowledge, that the predictions of this nature were usually taught in allegorical and emblematical expressions, being not so necessary to be known,

¹ 1 Cor. i. 23.

² Ibid. ver. 30.

³ Lightfoot and Beausobre in locum.

⁴ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. i.

^a Few questions have been more debated than the purpose of John's sending this message to Jesus. Some ancients and many moderns think that he sent in order to satisfy certain doubts which had occurred to his mind during his confinement. But surely his view of the descent of the holy Ghost at Christ's baptism, the testimony he then heard from heaven, the divine impulse by which he recognised Jesus as 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,' and his own reiterated testimonies forbid such a supposition: and to imagine that John's confinement should have affected the strength of his resolves, or drawn from him the language of fretful remonstrance, or peevish complaint, would do great injustice to so noble a character. In short, the opinion has been shown to be utterly untenable by Chrys., Euthem., Theophyl., and Greg., of the ancients; and of the moderns, Hamm., Whithy, Dodd., Bp. Atterbury, and Mr Benson (*Hulsean Lectures*, 1820, pp. 60—67.); who maintain, that John sent for the satisfaction of his disciples, who, mortified at seeing their master imprisoned for preaching the coming of the Messiah; and disappointed that he whom he testified to be such, should make no such claim; nor make any attempt to deliver his forerunner: stumbling, too, at the humbleness of Jesus's birth, and the lowliness of his station; and offended at his difference in character from their own ascetic master, had entertained doubts as to his Messiahship. Against them, therefore, and not against John, the rebuke is levelled. It should seem that for their satisfaction John had sent; and as they would not heed his repeated endeavours to remove their doubts, he resolved to refer them to Christ himself, for the removal of their scruples; and that our Lord, well aware of his intention, took the surest means of fixing the wavering minds of his disciples, by displaying such

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that a man must discover his ignorance, who pretends to assert that our blessed Saviour attempted any innovation, when he first began to instruct the people in a parabolical way; since several of his discourses of this kind, particularly that ¹ of the rich glutton, and ² of the foolish virgins, ³ are acknowledged to be borrowed from the writings of their rabbins.

The truth is, ⁴ the eastern way of reasoning was so different from that of the west, that the soundest philosophy of Greece or Rome would have been mere jargon and cant at Jerusalem. The only method of reasoning, which was agreeable to the Jewish taste, was to usher in a handsome simile, or story, apposite to the matter in hand; to apply a smart saying of some ancient worthy; or to bring good proof from their law, or ancient tradition; but to go to prove morality to them, as Plato or Tully do, from the eternal rules of justice, from the rectitude and honourableness of virtue, and the depravity and turpitude of vice, would have been such a way of talking, as the wisest men of their way of education would have greatly despised; and therefore our blessed Saviour, who was well acquainted with the temper and customs of the people with whom he conversed, took care that his way of instructing them should be such as was most agreeable to their education, and consequently such as would tend more to their edification, than if he had introduced the philosophic method of morality, which was only in use in such nations as were destitute of the benefits of a divine revelation.

The heathens indeed couched their religious mysteries under fables and allegories, out of a principle both of fear and policy, to conceal them from the contempt of the vulgar, and to excite the study and curiosity of the learned. But in this latter design they seem to be mistaken, because the learned could no sooner look into the matters hid under these fables, but they must have discovered their shame, absurdity, and ridiculousness. The design of our Lord's speaking to the people in parables was quite contrary to this, as himself declares, namely, ⁵ 'because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand,' which words, ^a both in sacred and profane authors, are a proverbial expression, concerning men so wicked and so slothful, that either they attend not to, or will not follow, the clearest intimations and convictions of their duty; and therefore, to awaken their attention, and make the stronger impression upon them, our Saviour was forced to have recourse to parables.

This passage, indeed, in the other evangelists that mention it, seems to bear a different sense, ⁶ 'unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables, that seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not understand;' or, as it is in St Luke, ⁷ 'that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand;' as if our Lord had spoken to the multitudes in parables, that is, in a plain and familiar way, on purpose that they might not understand him, which, besides the contradiction, seems to include a spice of malevolence, where there never was any. ⁸ But all this is occasioned by the mistake of our translators, who, both in St Mark and St Luke have rendered the word *ὅτι*, by *that*, which should have been *because*; for this gives the words a quite different turn: in St Mark, 'because seeing they do see, and not perceive,' and in St Luke, 'because seeing they see not, and hearing they understand not.' The natural import of which is this,—
"That the Jews, by reason of their prejudices, not being able to understand the great mysteries of the gospel, our Saviour, out of love to their souls, accommodated himself to their capacities, by speaking to them in parables, that is, in metaphors and similitudes, borrowed from things temporal and corporeal, in order to bring them to a more competent understanding, of his doctrine." ^b

⁶ Mark iv. 11. 12.

⁷ Chap. viii. 10.

⁸ Howell's History, in the Notes.

^b The passage which the author here attempts to explain is thus paraphrased by Doddridge.—"And he replying said unto them, I thus express myself in parables, because, though it is granted, through the divine goodness, to you, whose hearts are open to receive the truth in the love of it, to know and understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which have been long concealed; yet it is not granted to others, who are prejudiced against them, but they are justly suffered to continue unacquainted with them: and therefore to them that are without, and who are strangers, through their own neglect and folly, to what they might before have learned, all these things are now involved in parables and figures: which, though they affect the mind of the attentive hearer, and promote his edification, are disregarded by the rest, and only looked upon as an empty amusement. For to every one who hath any talent committed to him, and shows that he hath it by his diligent improvement of it, yet more shall be given, and he shall have a still greater abundance of means for his further improvement; but even that which he already hath shall be taken away from the slothful creature, and be withdrawn from him who acts like one who hath not any thing to improve. (compare Luke viii. 18.) Thus wise men deal with their servants; and thus God will generally act in dispensing opportunities of a religious nature. And therefore, on this very principle do I now speak to them in parables, whereas I have formerly used the plainest manner of discourse: because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand; inasmuch as they do not honestly use the faculties that God has given them, but are like persons that have their eyes and ears, and yet will neither see nor hear. So that it is in just displeasure that I preach to them in this obscure language, that what has been their crime may be their punishment; that seeing my miracles, they may see the outward act, but not perceive the evidence arising from them: and hearing my discourses, they may indeed hear the sound of them, but not understand their true intent and meaning; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins shall be forgiven them, which to many of these people they never shall. And thus in them is the prophecy of Isaiel most exactly fulfilled, (Isa. vi. 9, 10.) which indeed was originally intended to include them, and saith, 'By hearing, you shall hear,' (or you may still go on to hear with eagerness,) but you shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, or you may still go on to see, but you shall not perceive. For, like a wretch who has besotted and stupified himself with riot, the heart or intellectual faculty of this people is, as it were, grown stiff with fatness, and they hear with heavy ears, and draw up their eyes

¹ Luke xvi. 19. ² Mat. xxv. 1. ³ Sheringham, Præf. ⁴ Nichols's Conference, part 3, page 413. ⁵ Mat. xiii. 13. as were the fundamental rules of faith and manners.—*Lightfoot's Harmony of the New Testament*, page 30; *Nichols's Conference*, part 3, page 413; and *Whitby's Annotations on Mat. xiii. 10.*
^a To this purpose the prophet Jeremiah, to a revolting and rebellious people, which had cast off the fear of God, speaks in this wise: 'hear now this, ye foolish people, and without understanding, which have eyes, and see not, which have ears, and hear not,' chap. v. 21. And in like manner God speaks to Ezekiel: 'Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; that have ears to hear, and hear not, for they are a rebellious house,' chap. xii. 2. Philo uses the phrase in the same signification; for, speaking of those that were addicted to wine, and sensual pleasures, he says, *ὁρῶντες, οὐκ ὁρῶσι, καὶ ἀκούοντες, οὐκ ἀκούουσιν*, 'they seeing, see not, and hearing, do not hear;' and Demosthenes mentions it as a common proverb, *ὁρῶντας, μὴ ὁρῶν, καὶ ἀκούοντας, μὴ ἀκούον*.—*Whitby's Annotations on Mat. xiii.*

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¹ 'To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but not to them,' does not therefore imply, that our Saviour's parables were dark and obscure, and that by speaking to the people in this manner, he had a design to conceal any truth that was requisite for them to know; but only, that he made a fuller discovery of his doctrine to his disciples, than it was necessary at that time to make to the multitude; that he instructed them in private, and enlarged upon the sense of his parables, and let them into the knowledge of several things, that were not yet proper to be communicated to all, because they were his peculiar friends, and his constant

¹ Mat. xiii. 11.

as if they were more than half asleep; so that one would imagine they were afraid lest at any time they should happen to be roused, so as to see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal and save them. I therefore justly leave them to their own obstinacy, and direct thee, O Isaiah, to methods which I know will increase it."—*Doddridge's Family Expositor*, end of sect. 65. On the same subject Doddridge has the following notes:—A late learned writer has endeavoured to prove that Christ's use of parables was not in displeasure, but in tender condescension to their aversion to truths delivered in a less pleasing manner: but this is in effect supposing both Mark, (chap. iv. 12.) and Luke (chap. viii. 10.) to have reported what our Lord says in a sense directly contrary to what he intended; for they say in so many words, it was that the multitude might not perceive, nor understand; and it also makes Mat. xiii. 12. both foreign and opposite to the purpose for which it was spoken. We must therefore submit to the difficulties which attend this natural interpretation; which are much lessened by considering that this happened after Christ had upbraided and threatened the neighbouring places, (from whence doubtless the greatest part of the multitude came,) which was some time before this sermon; (see Mat. xi. 20—24. s. 58.) And it is not improbable, that the scribes and Pharisees, who had so vilely blasphemed him this very morning, (Mat. xii. 24.) might with an ill purpose have gathered a company of their associates and creatures about Christ to insnare him; which, if it were the case, will fully account for such a reserve.—It signifies little to plead on the other side, that these parables are plain. Their being so to us, is no proof they were so to these hearers: and since the apostles themselves did not understand even that of the sower, it is no wonder if the rest were unintelligible to the careless and captious hearer.—Consistent with all this is what was said of the advantages attending this method, to those who were honest and attentive; in the paraphrase on Mark iv. 2. Seeing you shall see, but you shall not perceive. This is a just translation of the original, both here and in Isaiah; and is another considerable argument for the interpretation here given of the whole context.—A pious and learned friend, by whose kind animadversions I have been led to insert some additional notes in this work, has urged several arguments to prove that this clause should be rendered, 'seeing, &c., you WILL not perceive.' But on the maturest review of this passage both in Isaiah and the several places where it occurs in the New Testament, I cannot apprehend that it was spoken merely by way of complaint, but think it plain that it was intended also as a prediction; (compare Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 40; Acts xxviii. 26, 27; Rom. xi. 8.) Now in predictions, we generally render the future form, 'Such or such a thing SHALL happen,' though we only mean to express the certainty of the event, without denying the freedom of the moral agents concerned in it, or detracting from it in any degree. (Ibid. notes (k) and (l).) The correction of the received translation which the author proposes in Mark iv. 12. and Luke viii. 10. does not rest upon sufficient ground, and is evidently introduced to get rid of an apparent difficulty, which is removed by the above extract from Doddridge. Dr Boothroyd follows the received translation of the passage, and Dr Bloomfield contends that the *ina* does not signify *because*, but *with the design that, eo consilio ut*, and observes that the sense of Mark iv. 1, 2. is; 'To the multitude, all things are propounded by the intervention of parables; with the intent that, as the prophet says, since they have eyes and years perfect, and yet see not, nor understand, they may not repent and obtain forgiveness of their sins.'—Ed.

companions; were more disposed to receive his doctrine; were afterwards to be the preachers of it; and at length to seal the truth of it with their blood.

They were honest and well-designing men; but it would be doing too great a compliment to their understanding, to say, that there was any thing extraordinary, until they were endued from above, in their sagacity and penetration: and therefore we are not to impute it to the obscurity of our Saviour's parables, that we find his disciples so frequently at a loss for the meaning of them, since some of them were quoted from Jewish authors, and many of them taken from the most obvious and common things, but we should rather impute it to their natural dulness and want of apprehension, as we find our Saviour himself does, when, upon their requesting him to expound the plain parable of the sower, he could not forbear saying, with admiration, ² 'Know ye not this parable, and how then shall ye know all parables?'

It was not then to cloud and obscure, but rather illustrate and enforce his meaning, that our Lord delivered himself so frequently in parables; and the reason why he refused to gratify the Pharisees in their desire of a sign from heaven, was, because he had already done miracles enough to satisfy them, had not their obstinacy been proof against all conviction. In that very chapter ³ wherein they make this insolent demand, they had seen, before their faces, ⁴ a withered hand made whole, and, ⁵ upon the ejection of a devil, a blind and dumb man restored to his sight and speech; but observe the turn which their resolute infidelity gives to the miracles: ⁶ 'this fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils:' and yet these very men have the modesty, in a few verses after, to come to the person they had just before reviled and blasphemed at this rate, with this arrogant demand; ⁷ 'Master, we would see a sign from thee.' After such an affront, would it have become the meekest man upon earth to gratify these men in any request whatever? But much more, would it have become the majesty of the Son of God to prostitute his divine power, merely to satisfy the curiosity, for that was all they wanted to have satisfied, of such abandoned miscreants?

The sign, which they wanted to see, may be supposed to be, either such ⁸ a shower of manna, as Moses; or such ⁹ a clap of thunder, as Samuel; or ¹⁰ such a fall of fire, as Elijah; or ¹¹ such an arrest of the sun, as Joshua once called for. Now, supposing that our Saviour had been flexible enough to humour them in their unreasonable request, ¹² what grounds have we to think, that these aerial or celestial prodigies would have wrought in them any more conviction than those miracles, which were incontestable, done in their presence, within their feeling, and compass of examination? These, we see, they imputed to a diabolical power, and much more might they do it to those that were at so vast a distance, since they could not be ignorant of what is said of the prince of the power of the air in the book of Job, namely, that the fire, which fell from heaven, and consumed that holy man's substance, as well as the wind which overturned the house,

² Mark iv. 13.

³ Mat. xii. 38.

⁴ Mat. xii. 13.

⁵ Mat. xii. 22.

⁶ Mat. xii. 24.

⁷ Mat. xii. 38.

⁸ Exod. xvi. 14.

⁹ 1 Sam. vii. 10.

¹⁰ 1 Kings xviii. 38.

¹¹ Josh. x. 12.

¹² Calmet's Commentary on Mat. xii. 38.

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where his children were met together, were the effects of Satan's procuring.

What notions the ancient Jews had of the power of magic, we cannot positively say; but it is certain, that the heathen magicians made it their boast, ^a that they could stop the course of the sun, moon, and stars, turn them into darkness, as they pleased, and make them obey their voice: and, if the Pharisees had the like notions of these things, their demanding a sign from heaven was to no manner of purpose; because, upon their own supposition, that our Lord acted by a magical power, what they desired him to do, was not above the sphere of his ability, and, if they thought it so, it could never have wrought in them any good conviction; because the same hardness of heart, and hatred of him, would have kept them under the same persuasion still, that all his wonders, whether above or below, whether in heaven or on earth, whether on human or celestial bodies, were done by the assistance of the devil.

Since then no sign that the Pharisees could ask, even had our Saviour condescended to work it, would have been effectual to their conviction, our Saviour was not unkind in remitting them to one, that would not fail of convincing them, that what he did was not by a diabolical but divine power. For, since it was agreed on all hands, that a person, when dead, whatever he had in his lifetime, could not then have the devil at his command; if, after they had crucified him, they should find him restored to life again, this would be a sign wherein there could be no fallacy; that as his restoration was from the hand of God, so his commission had all along been from the same; and ¹ that, as Jonas's miraculous escape from the whale's belly, wherewith the Ninevites were doubtless acquainted, was a powerful means to confirm to them the truth of his prophetic office; so now, though all Christ's miracles, while living, prevailed but little, yet, after his death and resurrection from the grave, he would then be credited, in the same manner as Jonas was; ² 'he would then draw all men after him,' and the very Pharisees themselves would be prevailed upon to acknowledge his divine mission. This is the sense of his comparing himself so often with the prophet Jonas: and that the chief priests and Pharisees understood the comparison in this sense, is manifest from what they said to Pilate: ³ 'Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again;' for I no where remember, that he made any declaration to the chief priests and Pharisees, though he did it frequently to his apostles, of his intended resurrection after three days, but only in this comparison of himself to Jonas.

Had human wisdom indeed been consulted in the election of Christ's apostles, it would have made choice of the profoundest rabbins, the acutest philosophers, and the most powerful orators, who, by the strength of reason, and arts of eloquence, might have triumphed over the minds of men, grappled with the stubbornness of the Jews, and baffled the fine notions and speculations of the Greeks and Romans; but then it must be allowed, that one argument for the proof of the divinity of the

Christian religion had been lost. Nay, it might have been objected, "that no wonder, indeed, that this religion should thrive so well in the world, when it had all human advantages to assist it, and was supported and carried on by the united force of the reason and eloquence of such renowned scholars." But now, by making choice of weak and illiterate persons to be his apostles, and first publishers of the gospel, our Lord has taken an effectual means, that ⁴ 'our faith should not stand,' as St Paul expresses it, 'in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God,' because 'their speech and their preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.'

And, indeed, what less than a divine power could have enabled a few illiterate mechanics, who had no art, no address of their own, to propagate a new and unheard-of religion, contrary to the laws every where established, and contrary to man's natural passions and appetites, with such a wonderful success, as, in the space of twenty or thirty years, to extend it over all the principal parts of the Roman empire, and, in the next age, to fill all places, cities, and islands, castles and boroughs, palaces and senates, courts and camps, with multitudes of converts, as the great apologist, Tertullian, justly glories? Doubtless, if ever there was an intervention of divine power in human affairs, it was here, 'when ⁵ God chose the foolish and weak things of the world to confound the wise and mighty,' and when simplicity and ignorance not only had the advantage, but absolutely triumphed over all the wit, and learning, and power, and policy of the world.

That therefore the mighty force of Christianity, to make its way through the greatest obstacles, might more evidently appear, the instruments which our Saviour employed in the propagation of it, so far as their own abilities, either natural or acquired, were concerned, were the meanest that can be imagined, but, by an extraordinary communication of his blessed Spirit to them, he inspired them with the gift of languages, that they might be able to address themselves to people of all nations; with the power of working miracles, that they might be able to confirm the truth of the doctrine which they taught; and, upon all emergencies, ⁶ 'with such a mouth and wisdom, as all their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist.'

These, and several other gifts extraordinary, did more than supply the natural defects which the apostles laboured under in the execution of so great a work; but now that these gifts are withdrawn, our religion established, and the canon of the holy scriptures completed, their successors have a different province to manage. Instead of travelling all the world over, and compassing sea and land to gain proselytes to the Christian faith, their duty is, to keep in order the things that are settled, and ⁷ 'to feed the flock of God that is among them, taking the oversight thereof, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; not as lords over God's inheritance, but as ensamples to their flocks;' and, instead of delivering to their respective churches such writings as might, in all ages, be the pillar and foundation of truth, their business is to study the scriptures, which they have received, to

^a The witch who with her voice draws down the enchanted stars and moon from heaven—Hor. in Canidiam.

¹ Whitty's Annotations on Mat. xii. 39.

² John xii. 32.

Mat. xxvii. 63.

⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.

⁵ Luke xxi. 15.

⁶ Ibid. i. 27.

⁷ 1 Pet. v. 2.

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defend their authority, and expound their sense; ¹ 'to preach the word,' as the apostle to Timothy specifies their office; 'to be instant in season, and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine;' and what compass of learning and share of influence among the people are requisite to a due discharge of all this, 'as ² a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God,' wants no detail of arguments to prove, since we find the great apostle St Paul, amidst all the gifts that were then dispensed to the church, and the particular revelations which were vouchsafed him, upon the consideration of the weightiness of his office, crying out, and saying, ³ 'who is sufficient for these things?' Upon the whole, therefore, we may observe, that it was highly requisite, that the apostles and first publishers of the gospel, and the present ministers and preachers of it, should be men of different characters and abilities; that the former of these, for the more effectual discharge of their office, should have several kinds of gifts supernatural, the latter no more than was the product of their own labour and acquisition; or, to speak in the phrase of the scripture, that as, at first, our Saviour ⁴ 'gave some apostles; some prophets; and some evangelists;' so now he should appoint some 'rulers, some pastors, and some teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

⁵ That anger, considered in itself, and upon all occasions whatever, is unlawful, neither the most rigid philosophers, nor the most severe Christians, have ever been able to prove. It is one of those passions that are implanted in us by the God of nature. The first motions of it seem to be mechanical, and the hastiness or slowness of it depends, in a great measure, upon the temper of the body, and the animal spirits: so far then as it is natural, we dare not account it criminal, for fear of making God, who hath implanted it in us, the author of sin. Those who define it 'a desire of revenge,' or of doing evil to another, purely because he has done so to us, make it indeed a sinful passion, and a plain violation of that command which requires us ⁶ 'not to avenge ourselves, but rather give place unto wrath;' but if it be considered ⁷ as proceeding upon a desire of obtaining satisfaction for some injury done to us, or to those for whom we are concerned, the honour of God, the reverence due to the laws, the love of virtue, and the protection of good men, may make this not only innocent, but highly necessary and commendable. There is a tameness of spirit that justly deserves censure; and in some cases we even do not well unless we are angry: and for this reason, I make no doubt it was, ⁸ that our blessed Saviour, on some occasions, suffered himself to be seen in some degrees of this passion, namely to evince the lawfulness of it, and, by his example, to confute the doctrine of those heathen stoics, who condemned the use of all

passions, and were for making those natural tendencies which God has given us altogether superfluous.

For religion admits of no such paradoxical notions; when it requires us to be ⁹ slow to wrath, it allows of the passion upon a just provocation, and only blames him ¹⁰ who is angry with his brother without a cause; and when it gives us this caution, ¹¹ 'be angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath,' it supposes the thing itself warrantable, and only prohibits the excess or long duration of it. It is the rash, causeless, and continued anger, that our holy religion condemns: but who shall say, that our Saviour's resentment to the Pharisees was not upon good grounds, when they, by their traditions, had made void the moral law, excused men from doing what God had commanded, and laid upon them other unnecessary burdens, which he had no where enjoined? When the pride and arrogance of their sect, and their contempt and hatred of all that contradicted them, made it necessary for him to use some smartness in his reprehensions, thereby to excite them to sensibility of their errors, they ¹² had consulted with the Herodians how they might destroy him; the works which he did by the finger of God, they had ascribed to a diabolical power; and therefore no wonder that he should look upon them with indignation, because of the hardness of their hearts. But when there was no such cause for any degree of anger, and where the glory of God was not immediately concerned, his whole life was the most perfect pattern of meekness and patience, according to that prediction concerning him, ¹³ 'he shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets, a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.'

But how comes it then, that St Mark, in his gospel, represents our Saviour a person that was supposed ¹⁴ to be beside himself? Various are the significations which are given to the word ἐξίστην in this place; but there are three that bid fairest for the solution of that difficulty. ¹⁵ In the preceding verse it is said, that the multitude came so fast upon him, that he had not time to take any food to recruit his spirits; and thereupon some interpreters would have the word signify his fainting through hunger, or being in danger of falling into a deliquium by spending his spirits, and taking no manner of refreshment to revive them. ¹⁶ Others had rather mean by the word such an ecstasy, or transport of mind, as those who are moved with a vehement zeal, or prophetic spirit, are wont to be affected with; and consequently that his friends' apprehensions were, that, in the execution of his prophetic office, that is, in his preaching and instructing the people, he expended his strength too much, forgetful of that care and preservation which he ought to have had of himself. But for my part I cannot see why the word may not here be taken in its common and ordinary sense, for what is called madness and distraction. We acknowledge, indeed, that our Lord, neither in his actions nor gestures, showed ever any symptoms of a disordered mind: nor could his relations, from any behaviour of his, conceive any such thing of him: but then the words in the text, ἐλεγον γὰρ, 'for they said,' may

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 2. ² Ibid. ii. 15. ³ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

⁴ Eph. iv. 11, &c.

⁵ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. iii.

⁶ Rom. xii. 19.

⁷ Whitty's Annotations on Mat. v. 22.

⁸ Nichols's Conference, part 3. p. 410.

⁹ James i. 19.

¹⁰ Mat. v. 22.

¹¹ Eph. iv. 26.

¹² Mark iii. 6.

¹³ Is. xlii. 2, 3.

¹⁴ Mark iii. 21.

¹⁵ Whitty in locum.

¹⁶ Hammond's Annotations.

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not relate to his friends, but to other people who had raised this report of him. The Pharisees had given out that he had a devil, and did all these miracles by a confederacy with him: and others who did not run to this length of blasphemy, said nevertheless that he was mad, and his head turned; and when this came to his friends' ears, they, out of a charitable design perhaps, went to apprehend him, supposing that he might possibly be under some such disorder; and not rightly understanding the end of his mission, as the evangelist¹ informs us, that some of his kindred did not believe in him. And indeed,² if we consider with ourselves how common a thing it is to look upon those who think or speak, or act in a manner different from other people, as fools and madmen; how this was the fate³ of the young prophet before Jehu's companions, and of St Paul⁴ before Festus; we shall not think it strange that our Lord should fall under the same opprobrious imputation, or that his relations, who had no true conception of him or his office, hearing of this rumour, should endeavour to get him into their custody, and so prevent his exposing himself to the scorn and derision of those that hated him. For though some of the people were of opinion, that 'he spake as never man spake,'⁵ yet many of them said, he has a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?

The name of Peter or Cephas, as it is in the Syriac, our blessed Lord gave to Simon, when his brother Andrew first brought them together; and in allusion to this name it is, that he calls him the *rock*, or *stone*, upon which he intended to build his church. Some indeed by this rock think, that our Saviour intends himself,⁶ and that, in uttering these words, he pointed at his own person, as he seems to have done upon another like occasion, when he speaks to the Jews,⁷ destroy this temple, meaning his own body, and in three days I will raise it up: but the sense seems abstruse, and the transition abrupt, that our⁸ Saviour, speaking to Peter, and calling him a rock, should, with the same breath, pass to himself, and yet not say, upon myself but upon this rock, and St Peter was the only rock he mentioned, will I build my church.⁹ Others therefore would rather have St Peter's faith and confession to be the rock here spoken of, as it must be acknowledged indeed, that, in this confession of his, the sum and substance of the Christian doctrine is comprised; but then it should be considered, that as our Lord, without all doubt, meant to say something singular to St Peter, as a reward of his frank confession of him, if this confession was all the rock he intended, here was nothing particular said to the apostle, and yet, at the same time, the whole grace of the allusion to his name was entirely lost. It is reasonable therefore to think,⁹ that as our Saviour here directs his speech, not to the whole college of the

apostles, but to St Peter only, and seems to promise him something peculiar as the reward of his liberal confession, the sense of the expression should be, that he would, in a more eminent manner, make use of his ministry, in laying the first foundation of the Christian church, both among the Jews and Gentiles, as we find he did the former,¹⁰ in his most efficacious sermon at the day of pentecost, and the latter,¹¹ in the conversion of Cornelius and his company.

There is a passage in Isaiah, which, as some imagine, helps us to the knowledge of what our Saviour means 'by the keys of the kingdom of heaven;'^b it is where God foretells Eliakim,¹² that he 'will call him and clothe him with the robe of Shebna, (who¹³ was over the household,) and strengthen him with his girdle, and commit his government into his hand and lay the key of the house of David^c upon his shoulder,' &c. Now, because the

¹⁰ Acts ii. ¹¹ Ibid. x. ¹² Is. xxii. 20. ¹³ Ibid. ver. 15. and the voice of the archangel shall thunder through the deep.—*Horsley's Sermons.*—Ed.

^b On this subject Bishop Horsley has the following excellent remarks. St Peter's custody of the keys was a temporary, not a perpetual authority: its object was not individuals, but the whole human race. The kingdom of heaven upon earth is the true church of God. It is now, therefore, the Christian church;—formerly the Jewish church was that kingdom. The true church is represented in this text, as in many passages of holy writ, under the image of a walled city, to be entered only at the gates. Under the Mosaic economy these gates were shut, and particular persons only could obtain admittance,—Israelites by birth, or by legal incorporation. The locks of these gates were the rites of the Mosaic law, which obstructed the entrance of aliens. But, after our Lord's ascension, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, the keys of the city were given to St Peter, by that vision which taught him, and authorised him to teach others, that all distinctions of one nation from another were at an end. By virtue of this special commission, the great apostle applied the key, pushed back the bolt of the lock, and threw the gates of the city open for the admission of the whole gentile world, in the instance of Cornelius and his family. To this, and to this only, our Lord prophetically alludes, when he promises to St Peter the custody of the keys. With this, the second article of the promise, the authority to loose and bind, is closely connected. This again being, by virtue of our rule of interpretation, peculiar to St Peter, must be a distinct thing from the perpetual standing power of discipline, conveyed upon a later occasion to the church in general, in the same figurative terms. St Peter was the first instrument of providence in dissolving the obligation of the Mosaic law in the ceremonial, and of binding it in the moral part. The rescript, indeed, for that purpose, was drawn by St James, and confirmed by the authority of the apostles, in general, under the direction of the Holy Ghost; but the Holy Ghost moved the apostles to this great business by the suggestion and the persuasion of St Peter, as we read in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. And this was his particular and personal commission to bind and loose. I must not quit this part of my subject without observing, that no authority over the rest of the apostles was given to St Peter, by the promise made to him, in either or in both its branches; nor was any right conveyed to him, which could descend from him to his successors in any see. The promise was indeed simply a prediction that he would be selected to be the first instrument in a great work of providence, which was of such a nature as to be done once for all; and, being done, it cannot be repeated. The great apostle fulfilled his commission in his lifetime. He applied his key,—he turned back the lock,—he loosed and he bound. The gates of the kingdom of heaven are thrown open,—the ceremonial law is abrogated—the moral is confirmed; and the successors of St Peter, in the see of Rome, can give neither furtherance nor obstruction to the business.—*Horsley's Sermons.*—Ed.

^c This custom of carrying keys upon men's shoulders may seem very strange to us: but the ancients had their keys made very large, and in the form of a sickle, and the weight and shape of them was such, that they could no otherwise be carried con-

¹ John vii. 5. ² Calmet's Commentary in locum.

³ 2 Kings ix. 11. ⁴ Acts xxvi. 24. ⁵ John x. 20.

⁶ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. iv. ⁷ John ii. 19.

⁸ Poole's Annotations on Mat. xvi. 18.

⁹ Whitby's Annotations in locum.

^a Promising that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church, our Lord promises not only perpetuity to the church, to the last moment of the world's existence, notwithstanding the successive mortality of all its members in all ages, but what is much more, a final triumph over the power of the grave. Firmly as the gates of hades may be barred, they shall have no power to confine his departed saints, when the last trump shall sound,

A. M. 4035, A. D. 31; OR, A. M. 5410, A. D. 29. FROM MAT. xii. 1—xvii. 14. MARK ii. 23—ix. 14. LUKE vi. 1—ix. 37. JOHN v. 1—vii. 1.

key was an ensign of great honour and power, and what the chief stewards in princes' palaces usually wore, as an indication of their office, our Saviour makes use of this expression, to denote that authority and jurisdiction wherewith he invested the apostles and their successors in the administration of the affairs of his church. But, besides the key of government, there is¹ the key of knowledge, which the scribes and Pharisees are blamed for having taken away; and therefore as the use of a key is to open a door or gate, we should rather think the import of Christ's promise here to Peter is,² that he should be the person who should first open the mysteries of the gospel-dispensation, both to Jew and Gentile; by the power of his preaching, make the first converts among both; and, by the rite of baptism, receive such converts into the pale of the Christian church: and by the binding and loosing which follow, though some are willing to extend them to the power of excommunication and absolution, I should rather be inclined to think, that, according to the language then in use among the Jews, our Saviour means the forbidding or permitting such and such things; that³ he is here declaring his will, that his apostles should settle the affairs of his church by virtue of their infallible Spirit; should determine what was lawful or unlawful for Christians to do, and that such their determinations should be ratified in heaven; "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, that is, declare, to be forbidden, shall expose the man that commits it to punishment; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, or declare to be lawful now, though formerly forbidden, shall be allowed to be done, without any one's incurring my displeasure." So that in this sense the words are a foundation of our faith and obedience to the doctrines and commands of the apostles, and of the cessation of the ritual precepts of the law of Moses.

According to this exposition, the sense of our Lord's promise to Peter, supposing it personal, and directed to him only, will be this—⁴ "Thy name signifies a rock, and, suitable to that name shall be thy work and office; for upon thee, that is, upon the strength of thy preaching, shall the foundation of my church be laid. Thee I will appoint to make the first converts, both of Jews and Gentiles, to my holy religion, and, by the ordinance of baptism to admit them into the communion of saints; and to thee I will give power to enact laws, for the good government of my church; to determine what is proper or improper to be done, and to release my people from the observation of legal ceremonies."

This is the full force of our Saviour's speech to Peter; and yet it neither denotes nor implies any oecumenical, pastoral power in him, much less in his successors, above the rest of the apostles. For, if he be here called the rock, or foundation-stone, the same honour is attributed to the rest, where it is said, that⁵ 'we are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.' If he had the power of the keys intrusted with him, and thereby admitted the first converts, both Jews

and Gentiles, into the Christian church; both James and John exercised the same office, in converting those of the circumcision; and St Paul opened the kingdom of heaven to many more Gentiles than ever he did. If he had authority to discharge the converts he made from the observation of the ceremonial law, St Paul, without doubt, had the same with regard to this, and perhaps a clearer notion of the Christian liberty, than St Peter seems to have had, when he gave occasion to the other to⁶ withstand him to the face, and so frequently to declare, 'that we are not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ:' and, whatever the sense of binding and loosing may be, it is certain, that the same power and authority was given, in as ample a manner to all the apostles in general, where it is said,⁷ 'whatsoever YE shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever YE shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven:' and again⁸ 'whosoever sins YE remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins YE retain, they are retained.' So wisely did our blessed Saviour settle an equality among his apostles, that⁹ 'there might be no schism in his church,' but that¹⁰ 'in him all the building fitly framed together,' as the apostle continues the metaphor, 'might grow unto an holy temple in the Lord!'

Nothing certainly can be plainer in scripture, than that the sin against the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour mentions as a sin unpardonable, is to be understood of the Pharisees imputing the miracles, which he wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, to the power of the devil; and yet, I know not how, a great many learned men have made shift to mistake it.¹¹ A denial of Christ's divinity, a denial of his religion for fear of suffering, a wilful opposition to the truth, a malicious envying other men's graces, gross relapses into sin, or final impenitence, and perseverance therein, have, some by one, and some by others, been made the characteristics of this sin; and yet the very occasion of our Saviour's discourse concerning it cannot but give us quite different conceptions.

¹² He had just now healed one possessed of a devil, blind and dumb, whereat the people were much amazed, and began to say among themselves, 'is not this the son of David?' that is, the promised Messiah: which when the Pharisees understood, they gave this vile and malicious turn to the miracle, 'this fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.' This calumny our Saviour undertook to confute, by showing how unlikely a thing it was, that the devil should lend him his power to use it against himself; and then proceeds to discourse of this sin,¹³ 'wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy,' which is of another nature, 'shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto them.' The Pharisees therefore are the persons charged with the sin, and the sin is, their attributing what was done by the finger of God to a diabolical power.

¹⁴ A learned annotator of our own is of opinion, that,

¹ Luke xi. 52. ² Whitby's Annotations on Mat. xvi. 19.

³ Poole's Annotations on Mat. xvi. 18.

⁴ Whitby's Annotations.

⁵ Eph. ii. 20.

veniently, but as we see our reapers carry their sickles.—*Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Key*.

⁶ Gal. ii. 11. 16.

⁷ Mat. xviii. 18.

⁸ John xx. 23.

⁹ 1 Cor. xii. 25.

¹⁰ Eph. ii. 21.

¹¹ Tillotson's Sermons, vol. i.

¹² Mat. xii. 22.

¹³ Ibid. ver. 31.

¹⁴ Whitby, in his Appendix to the xiith chapter of St Matthew.

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though our Saviour entered upon this discourse, because the Pharisees imputed his miracles to a confederacy with Satan, yet his chief design was to deter his hearers from blaspheming the ensuing dispensation of the Holy Ghost, which, upon his resurrection and ascension, he had promised to send down from heaven: so that this sin against the Holy Ghost neither was, nor could be committed, when our Saviour spake these words, not until the time that its miraculous gifts were communicated to the apostles, which was on the day of Pentecost. But, besides that our blessed Saviour had not as yet made mention either of his own ascension, or of the mission of the Holy Ghost, since the power, whereby both he and his apostles wrought their miracles, proceeded from the same divine Spirit, a reviling this power, when our Saviour did the miracle, must be blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, as much as it was when his apostles did it; and so the difference amounts to nothing.

¹ Our blessed Lord indeed, to show that he was sent from God, wrought miracles, such as did plainly evince a divine power and presence accompanying him. These miracles, to which he frequently appeals, the Pharisees were eye-witnesses of, and therefore could not deny them; yet such was their hatred and opposition to him and his doctrine, that, rather than allow his divine mission, they were resolved to ascribe all he did to the power of the devil. Their design in this was to destroy the whole credit of Christianity, and, by making him a confederate with Satan, to represent his religion as the work and contrivance of hell, and such only as would tend to the mischief and destruction of mankind. To slander and calumniate the Son of Man, was a great sin, no doubt, but such as might more easily be forgiven them, because of his state of humiliation, and poor appearance, which might occasion their disesteem: but to represent the Spirit of God as an apostate angel, and whatever he did for the good and salvation of mankind, as the work and intrigue of the devil, is a sin of such a horrid nature, as may well deserve a particular exemption from the general promise and covenant of pardon.

² God, no doubt, can, if he will, work so powerfully upon the minds of men by his grace and Spirit, as to convince the most obstinate; and, supposing them to be convinced, and repent, it cannot be denied, but that they would be forgiven: and therefore, when our Saviour says, that such 'as blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven,' it is reasonable to suppose, that he means, that when men are come to such a degree of inveterate malice, God, as he justly may, will withdraw his grace from them, and leave them to the bent of their perverse minds, which will insensibly engage them in a further opposition to the truth, and sink them finally into perdition; so that being deserted of God, and, for want of the necessary aid of his grace, continuing finally impenitent, they become incapable of forgiveness 'both in this world, and in that which is to come.' The short then of all is this, that the sin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, not because there is not a sufficiency of merit in Christ to atone for it, or of mercy in God the Father to forgive it, but because those who commit it are of such a refractory and incorrigible spirit, that they

resist the last and utmost means of their conviction, and, consequently, neither will nor can repent; especially, if God in judgment, as it sometimes happens, and 'because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, should send upon them a strong delusion, that they might believe a lie.'

That which has made some passages in the 6th chapter of St John's gospel, and especially the command of 'eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of Man,' a matter of so much perplexity, is the want of attending to the occasion of his discourse, and the figurative forms of expression that were then in use in the eastern nations. Our Lord, it seems, but the day before, ⁵ had fed a great number of people with a very small matter of provisions. The day following they resort to him, in hopes of the same bounteous supply. Our Lord, who knew their design, rebuked their greedy appetite. They, in return, reminded him of Moses's liberality, much superior to his, in providing them manna for the space of forty years. Hereupon our Lord took occasion to acquaint them, ⁶ 'that he was the bread of God, which came down from heaven,' ^a highly preferable to manna; forasmuch as that gave only their forefathers a transitory, but this an everlasting life to the whole world: for ⁷ 'he that cometh to me,' continues he, 'shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst;' and again, ⁸ 'I am the living (or rather life-giving) bread, which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' ⁹ For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed: he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.'

Now, whosoever considers the genius of the eastern languages, abounding in lofty, and sometimes abstruse, figures, and how common a thing it was, among the Jews especially, to use the metaphors of eating and drinking in a spiritual sense, namely, to denote the exercise or

³ 2 Thess. ii. 10. 11.

⁴ John vi. 52.

⁵ Ibid. ver. 9, 10.

⁶ Ibid. ver. 33.

⁷ Ibid. ver. 35.

⁸ Ibid. ver. 51.

⁹ Ibid. ver. 54, 55.

^a There is a beautiful gradation observable in our Lord's discourse. The first time that he called himself the bread of life, (John vi. 35.) he assigned the reason of the name somewhat obscurely. 'He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.' The second time that he called himself 'the bread of life,' verse 47, he spake to the same purpose as before, but more plainly; 'he that believeth on me, hath everlasting life;' therefore 'I am the bread of life.' And by connecting this with his affirmation, verse 46, that he was the only teacher of mankind that had ever personally seen and been taught of the Father, he insinuated that he gave life to men by his doctrine, being on that account also the bread of life. The third time he called himself bread, he added to the name the epithet of living, not only because he gives life to men by raising them from the dead, and making them eternally happy, but because he giveth them this life by means of his human nature, which was not an inanimate thing like the manna, but a living substance. For he told them plainly that the bread or meat which he would give them was his flesh, which he would give for the life of the world, and spake of men's eating it, in order to its having that effect. But the meaning of this expression he had directed them to before, when in calling himself the bread of life, he always joined believing on him, as necessary to men's living by him. Wherefore, to eat, in the remaining part of this discourse, is to believe.

—Macknight's Harmony.—Ed.

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improvement of any of the intellectual faculties of the soul, will not be much surprised at our Saviour's expressing himself in this manner. ¹ 'Ho, every one that thirsteth,' says the prophet, exhorting the people to hear his instructions, 'come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price; and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.' To the same purpose we frequently find Philo calling wisdom and virtue the food of the soul, which nourishes it to eternal life; and ² the Talmudists telling us, "that all the eating and drinking which is mentioned in the book of Ecclesiastes, relates to the observation of the law, and good works;" nay, manna, in particular, according to the sense of some Jewish authors, was an eminent type of Christ; and therefore, "the good man," ³ says Philo, "lifts up his eyes to heaven, looking to the manna, the divine and heavenly λόγος, the incorruptible food of the soul, that loves God;" and if this was the Jews' sense of things, our Saviour was guilty of no presumption in styling himself the 'true bread which came down from heaven,' nor of any absurdity in insisting upon a metaphor which so frequently occurred in the best of their authors. The only question is, whether our Saviour's words in this place are to be taken in a literal or metaphorical sense? that is, whether they relate to a corporeal or spiritual eating his flesh?

There is something so shocking in the very notion of one man's eating the flesh of another, that when the Jews heard our Saviour, as they imagined, discourse at this rate, they might well say, ⁴ "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ⁵ Will he cut it to pieces, and distribute to every one of us a share? It is no agreeable thought to eat human flesh; but, supposing we could bring ourselves to that, how could he multiply himself into so many parts, as that each of us might have one? Or how could himself subsist, if he should, in this barbarous and inhuman manner, cut and mangle his own body?" This seems to be the reasoning of the Jews upon the case: ⁶ but, on all hands, it is agreed, that they mistook the sense of our Saviour's words, and fancied such a meaning in them as he never intended; whereas, had the literal sense been the proper and intended meaning, it is certain, that they imposed no false construction upon what he said; since, upon this supposition, he intended that his human flesh should properly be eaten, and they, in their questioning the truth of what he said, meant no more.

We may observe farther, that when our Saviour knew within himself that the abstruseness of his discourse upon this subject had given some disgust to his disciples, ⁷ 'he said unto them, Does this offend you? What, and if you should see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?' The only sense of which words can be, ⁸ "Are you offended that I thus speak of giving you my flesh to eat? Do you look on this expression now as a thing so very absurd and unintelligible? What then will you think of it, when this body is removed hence into heaven? that is, How will you then be scared, and think it still more difficult, and more impossible to apprehend, how ye shall

then eat my flesh, and drink my blood, provided ye go on to understand my words in a gross and carnal manner?" For St Athanasius has well observed, that our Saviour here mentions his ascent into heaven, that he might divert his disciples from entertaining a carnal sense of his words: and therefore his argument is,—“Since it will be then impossible for you to eat my flesh corporeally, when it is so far removed from you; by this you may perceive, that my purpose is, that you should understand my words in a spiritual sense.”

We may observe again, that when several disciples revolted upon the account of this hard saying, as ⁹ it is called, and our Saviour was apprehensive that his apostles might do the like, St Peter, in the name of the rest, answers him, ¹⁰ 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life:' whereas had he understood our Saviour as speaking here of oral manducation, his answer very probably would have been to this effect: "Whatsoever appearance there may be of inhumanity, absurdness, and impossibility, in eating thy natural flesh, and drinking thy blood, yet we believe it because thou hast said it, who art truth itself, and able to make good thy words." But since we hear nothing from him of this tendency, we may reasonably conclude, that he had no such notion of our Saviour's words. And indeed our Saviour, one would think, had done enough to explain his own meaning, when he tells us, that the eating which he intends is ¹¹ believing on him, and that it was such an eating as would make a man ¹² live for ever; that ¹³ flesh, if we could eat it, profiteth nothing, since the soul can only be nourished by spiritual food; and that therefore the words which he spake unto them were spirit, that is, were to be understood in a spiritual sense, otherwise they would not be conducive to eternal life: and therefore ¹⁴ Eusebius introduces our Saviour as thus addressing his disciples, "Do not think that I speak of that flesh where-with I am compassed, as if you must eat of that; neither imagine that I command you to drink my bodily blood, but understand well, that the words which I have spoken unto you, they are spirit and life." For, as St Austin ¹⁵ lays down the rule for the exposition of scripture-phrases, "if the saying be preceptive, either forbidding a wicked action, or enjoining a good one, it is no figurative speech; but if it seems to command any wickedness, or to forbid what is profitable and good, it is figurative." Accordingly this saying, "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, seems to command a wicked thing, and is therefore a figure, enjoining us to communicate in the passion of our love, and sweetly and profitably remember, that his flesh was wounded and crucified for us." ¹⁶ In this sense, his flesh and blood are ἀληθῆς, truly meat and drink; because the eating of this flesh by faith in his salutary passion doth nourish the soul to life eternal; and the drinking of his blood by faith, as that which was shed for the remission of sins does refresh the person thirsting after righteousness, and convey into him a principle of living well, and of living for ever. ^a

¹ Is. lv. 1, 2.

² Maimon. More. Nev. b. i. c. 10.

³ L. De eo quod deterius, page 137.

⁴ John vi. 52.

⁵ Calmet's Comment. in locum.

⁶ Whitby's Annotations in locum.

⁷ John vi. 61, 62.

⁸ Whitby's Annotations.

⁹ John vi. 60.

¹⁰ Ibid. ver. 68.

¹¹ Ibid. ver. 47.

¹² Ibid. ver. 51.

¹³ Ibid. ver. 63.

¹⁴ De Eccles. Theolog. b. iii. c. 12.

¹⁵ De Doctrin. Christian. b. iii. c. 16.

¹⁶ Whitby's Annotations on John vi. 55.

^a It is a disputed point whether in what is said at ver. 50, about

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Thus we have gone through the several objections that are usually made to the facts contained in the evangelical history of this period; and, if it would be of any farther satisfaction to those that delight to make them, we might show, that whatever is recorded of our blessed Saviour, the like, in one instance or other, the heathens themselves have acknowledged in their deified heroes and great men: ¹ that the same power of curing all kinds of diseases the Greeks ascribe to their Æsculapius, and the Egyptians to their Serapis and Isis. That Hadrian, according ² to Spartianus, was cured of fever, by the touch of a certain blind man: that Sesostrius, king of Egypt, upon offering a sacrifice to the god Mnevis, was restored to his eyesight: that Vespasian, if we may believe Tacitus, cured a man of his lameness, and another of his blindness, by anointing his eyes with spittle, in the manner that our Saviour did: and that Apollonius Tyanæus, whom ³ Philostratus sets up as a powerful rival of our Lord's miracles, cured a young man that was possessed with a devil; and when he had restored him to his right senses, received him into the number of his disciples. Simplicius, in his dissertations upon Epictetus, seems to promise to all pious and wise men the power of calming the waves of the sea; and how Neptune rebuked and allayed the winds, which, without his permission, had raised a tempestuous storm, is a story well known, and well set off in ⁴ Virgil. Every poet almost mentions this same Neptune's riding in his chariot on the surface of the sea; and the tradition is, that to his son Euphemus, and his nephew Orion, he gave the faculty of walking upon it without fear of sinking. Nothing can be more common among the fictions of these writers, than the transfiguration of their gods upon one occasion or other; and that our Saviour's method of electing his disciples might not want a precedent in profane history, ⁵ we are told that the famous eastern philosopher Confucius, out of the three thousand followers that he had, made choice of seventy-two of principal note, and, out of these, of twelve only to be his more immediate companions, and to whom he committed the hidden mysteries of his

philosophy: but our happiness is, that the credibility of the scripture history wants no such weak supports as these.

CHAP. III. *Of the Prophecies relating to the Messiah, and their accomplishment in our blessed Saviour.*

ONE great evidence of our Saviour's divine mission, and, consequently, of the truth of his religion, is the completion of the ancient prophecies, relating to the Messiah, in his person, doctrine, and miracles. He indeed makes more frequent appeal to his miracles: ⁶ 'The works which the Father hath given me to finish,' says he, 'the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.' But since, at the same time, he lays claim to the character of being the person spoken of by Moses and the prophets, when he bids the people ⁷ 'search the Scriptures, because they testified of him;' it is certain, that his title to the Messiahship must be tried by the testimony of the prophets; and all the miraculous works which he did, will not prove him to be the Messenger of the covenant, whom God was to send, unless the several predictions, which his servants the prophets gave of that renowned person, are found to unite and agree in him. It can hardly be thought, but that God almighty, who designed such an inestimable benefit for mankind, as the sending his own Son into the world for the redemption of it, should give some previous notice of his coming, and draw his picture, as it were, so much to the life and likeness, that, when the original should be brought to view, it might be known and distinguished by it. It is acknowledged, I think, on all hands, that the prophets, at sundry times, and in divers manners, have done this; ⁸ that each of them, in his turn, has drawn out a feature, if I may so say, and left some masterly stroke behind him of this great personage that was to come from heaven; that one has described his parentage, another the time, another the place, and another the uncommon manner of his birth; that some have taken notice of the most remarkable actions and events of his life, and several of the most minute and altogether singular circumstances of his death; that by some his resurrection is foretold, by others his ascent to the throne of God, and by others, the perpetual duration of his kingdom. And, if the prophets are allowed to have done this, our only inquiry is, Whether the lineaments, which they, in their several capacities, have drawn of the promised Messiah, when all brought together, be answerable to the account, which the evangelists have given us in their history of the blessed Jesus?

We readily own indeed, that there is a great obscurity in the ancient prophecies.^a They are generally penned in

¹ Huetii Quæst. 18. Alnet. b. ii.

² Ælius Spartian. Hadrian. c. 25.

³ Philost. Vit. Apoll. b. iv. c. 6. ⁴ Æneid 1.

⁵ Martin, Hist. Sinica. b. iv.

eating, &c., there is a reference to the eucharist, or not. The affirmative was maintained by most ancients, and is by most moderns, especially the Romanist interpreters: while the negative has been adopted by many of the most eminent expositors, of the ancient ones by Tertull., Clem., Alex., Origen, Cyrill., Chrys., and Augustine; and of the moderns, by Grot., Whitby, Wolf, Lampe, Tittm., and Kuin., who show that the context will not permit us to take the words of the eucharist. (See *Recess. Synop.* and *Tittm.*) But though they successfully prove that by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, must here be meant securing to ourselves the benefits of the sacrifices of Christ by a true and lively faith, yet that will not prove that there is no reference by allusion to the eucharist. Hence I would, with Dr Hey and Mr Holden, steer a middle course, and take the passage primarily of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and the benefits thence derived by faith; and secondarily, as a prophetic intimation of the advantages to be derived from a worthy participation of the sacrament of the Lord's supper; since the two have so close a relation one to the other, that the mention of the one must suggest the other. Thus in speaking of the offering of his body, our Lord may be supposed to have had reference, by anticipation, to that sacrament, soon to be instituted, in which, to the end of time, that sacrifice would be typified and its benefit, applied.—*Bloomfield's Greek Testament.*—Ed.

⁶ John v. 36.

⁷ Ibid. v. 39.

⁸ Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's lecture.

^a There has been much complaint about the obscurity of prophecy. But the absurdity of the complaint has been so often exposed, and is so palpable to the reflecting mind, that it cannot be necessary to say much respecting it. The language of prophecy might be so clear and ambiguous as altogether to defeat its own object. Were it as explicit as seems to be demanded, an individual, placed in favourable circumstances for the purpose,

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a very exalted style, and abound with so many bold metaphors, and hyperbolical expressions, so many allegories and parables, and other abstruse forms of speech, as make it very difficult for the interpreters of scripture to discover their true scope or meaning. The prophecies relating to the Messiah are still more obscure; because, as they consider him in the different capacities of his humiliation and exaltation, unless this distinction is taken along with us, when we apply them to one and the same person, they will seem to load his character with contradictions. But still, since it is acknowledged, that the great design of prophecy was to acquaint the world with the Messiah, and that upon whatever particular occasions God sent his messengers, he always made this one part of their errand, we can hardly believe, that he would multiply these messages to no purpose; or, when he pretended to reveal this matter to them, mock them with unintelligible words, and leave them as much in the dark as he found them. He might indeed, for wise purposes, ¹ multiply visions, and use similitudes, ² dark speeches, by the ministry of the prophets; but in this grand discovery of all, he certainly left such indications as enabled those, who looked for the redemption of Israel, and accordingly made it their business to search the scriptures, and inquire into the marks of the Messiah, to attain to a competent knowledge of them. Nor can it be well doubted, but that the Jews had some fixed and well known rules, though they have not descended to us, whereby they distinguished the passages in the prophetic writings which related to this important subject, from any others, ^a because we find, that

¹ Hos. xii. 19. ² Num. xii. 8.

would have it in his power so to conform his own pretensions, as well as his own appearance and manner of life, to what had been foretold, as to impose himself on the world for the person actually designed in the language of the prophet;—Or, if no such deceitful attempt were made, still the person designed would, in a great measure, lose the advantage which the fulfilment of prophecy was intended to afford him; for it would be urged with too much seeming reason, that the prophetic language had put it in his power to bring about its fulfilment in the way best calculated to accomplish his object. It was therefore wisely ordered that the prophecies concerning the Messiah should be involved in as much obscurity as to leave no ground for this objection. Yet we shall find, on the other hand, that the circumstances connected with their fulfilment reflect such light on the prophetic language, as may now satisfy every candid mind respecting its original import. It is, besides, to be considered that, if the language of the prophets respecting the advent and character of the Messiah had been so explicit as to make it impossible for any one to misconstrue or misapply it, we can scarcely suppose that the Jews would have put him to death, without their minds being so overruled of God as to deprive them of their free agency. The operation and effect, therefore, of such prophecies might, for aught we know, be incompatible with the condition of men as accountable creatures. It is only from such a degree of obscurity in the prophetic language as its fulfilment effectually removes, that we have assurance of its being a fit instrument in the hands of an all-wise Being for the accomplishment of his gracious purposes.—*Dr Inglis' Vindication of the Christian Faith.*—Ed.

^a This is by no means probable. If we look into the first epistle of St Peter, we shall find that the ancient prophecies, in the text, and which he styles the 'more sure word of prophecy,' were not apprehended or clearly understood by those inspired persons who delivered them; for there he represents them 'searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.' i. 11. To the same purpose our Saviour speaks,

³ 'when Herod summoned the sanhedrim together, and demanded where 'Christ was to be born,' they readily replied 'at Bethlehem in Judea,' having the prophecy of Micah ⁴ to that purpose ready to produce.'

We acknowledge again, that the prophecies concerning the Messiah were delivered, not only in an obscure manner, but in different proportions, and at very distant times. Thus to Adam and Eve he was promised in general, ⁵ as a man; ⁶ to Abraham, ⁶ as his posterity; to

³ Mat. ii. 3, etc.

⁴ Chap. v. 2.

⁵ Gen. iii. 15.

⁶ Ibid. xxii. 18.

Matt. xiii. 17. 'Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' St Paul gives the like account of the gift of prophecy under the gospel dispensation: 'we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.' 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 12. Now if the prophets and righteous men of old, to whom the word of God came, did not clearly understand the things which they foretold, but employed themselves in searching and examining the prophetic testimonies of the Spirit which was in them; if the prophets of the New Testament knew only in part, and prophesied only in part, seeing but darkly as through a glass; it is most evident that others, in all appearance less qualified than they to understand the determinate sense of the prophecies, could have but a confused and indistinct notion of the things foretold. The prophet Daniel, after a very extraordinary vision, which he reports in his last chapter, immediately adds, 'I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.' The answer here given to Daniel is very like the answer which our Saviour gave the apostles, on an inquiry made by them: they ask, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, it is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.' Acts i. 6, 7. It did belong to them undoubtedly and to every believing Jew, 'to give heed to the word of prophecy' according to St Peter's exhortation in the text; and since it did not belong to them to know the times and seasons, it is evident the word of prophecy was not intended to give a clear and distinct light in this case.—*Sherlock on Prophecy*, Discourse 2.—Ed.

^b This prophecy was to our first parents but very obscure: it was, in the phrase of St Peter, but a light shining in a dark place: all that they could certainly conclude from it was, that their case was not desperate; that some remedy, that some deliverance from the evil they were under, would in time appear; but when, or where, or by what means, they could not understand; their own sentence, which returned them back again to the dust of the earth, made it difficult to apprehend what this victory over the serpent should signify, or how they who were shortly to be dust and ashes, should be the better for it. But after all that can be urged on this head to set out the obscurity of this promise, I would ask one question: was not this promise or prophecy, though surrounded with all this obscurity, a foundation for religion, and trust and confidence towards God after the fall, in hopes of deliverance from the evils introduced by disobedience? If it was, it fully answered the necessity of their case to whom it was given, and manifested to them all that God intended to make manifest. They could have had towards God no religion without some hopes of mercy: it was necessary therefore to convey such hopes; out to tell them how these hopes should be accomplished, at what time and manner precisely, was not necessary to their religion. And what now is to be objected against this prophecy? It is very obscure you say; so it is; but it is obscure in the points which God did not intend to explain at that time, and which were not necessary to be known. You see a plain reason for giving this prophecy, and as far as the reason for giving the prophecy extends, so far the prophecy is very plain: it is obscure only where there is no reason why it should be plain; which surely is a fault easily to be forgiven, and very far from being a proper subject for complaint.—*Sherlock on Prophecy*, Discourse 3.—Ed.

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Jacob, ¹ as descending from the tribe of Judah in particular; to David, that he should be of his family, and ² the fruit of his body; to Micah, that he should be born at Bethlehem; ³ to Isaiah, that his birth should be miraculous, and his mother a virgin; ⁴ to the same prophet, that his death should be for ⁵ the redemption of mankind; to Daniel, ⁶ when the precise time of his suffering should be; to Haggai, lastly, and Zechariah and Malachi, that ⁷ all these events should be accomplished before the destruction of the second temple. ⁸ Now, not to mention any more, if we compute the seasons of these few, the general prediction of a Saviour in human nature, will be found to bear date before that of his being Abraham's seed, about two thousand and fourscore years; from this, to the declaration of his particular tribe, were two hundred and fourscore years; thence to the prophecy of his particular family, above six hundred years; after that, to the signification of his miraculous nativity, more than three hundred years; and from thence to the time of his public appearance in the world, three hundred and fifty years, ^a or thereabouts. Now, since these prophecies were thus delivered by degrees, and at such distant and different times, it may easily so happen, that considering them singly and apart, we may find some other person and event, to which they may be adapted, without any great violence to the text; but then the right way, in this case, to make a judgment, is, not by separate and particular passages, but by connexion of the whole, by the exact coincidence, and entire agreement of all the prophecies, which, at several times, denoted the Messiah, brought into one point of light, and laid together. ^b This is the only method we have to determine the matter: and accordingly, let us now look into some of the principal passages of our Saviour's life, as it is recorded by the

evangelists, and so see whether they do not exactly agree with the several characters which the prophets have given us of the Messiah.

Our Lord Jesus, we are told, ⁹ was conceived and born of a pure virgin, without the concurrence of any man: for so the prophecy had foretold, that, ¹⁰ 'the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head,' and that ¹¹ 'a virgin should conceive, and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel.' He was descended ¹² of the family of David, and born ¹³ at the town of Bethlehem; because, in favour to that king, God had promised that ¹⁴ 'he would establish his seed for ever,' and that ¹⁵ 'out of Bethlehem a ruler of Israel should come, whose goings forth had been from everlasting:' and he was born ¹⁶ in the reign of king Herod, that is, before the total dissolution of the Jewish government, and during the standing of the second temple; because one prophecy says, that ¹⁷ 'the sceptre should not depart from Judah until Shiloh come,' and another, that ¹⁸ 'the desire of all nations should come,' and, by his presence, 'make the glory of God's latter house greater than that of the former.'

Well: but before his appearance in the world, ¹⁹ John the Baptist was appointed his forerunner, and came to bear witness of him, because the Lord, by the mouth of his prophets, had said, ²⁰ 'Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: ²¹ he shall cry in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight an highway for our God.' When he made his appearance in the world he took up his chief residence ²² in the province of Galilee; because the prophet, speaking of the inhabitants of that country, tells us, that 'upon them ²³ who dwelt before in the land of the shadow of death, did a great light shine,' when they had it to say, 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder,' &c. When he came to converse in it, such was his quiet and inoffensive temper and behaviour, that the prophet did not misrepresent him, when he styled him ²⁴ 'the Prince of Peace,' and one ²⁵ 'who would not cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets.' When he entered upon his public ministry, the very actions which the evangelical prophet had foretold of the Messiah, he performed to a tittle; 'for ²⁶ he preached good tidings to the meek, and proclaimed liberty to the captives; he ²⁷ opened the eyes of the blind, and unstopped the ears of the deaf; he made the lame man to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing.'

But, during the course of his ministry, our Saviour, we read, lived in a very mean, obscure condition, and suffered at last a violent death; and why so? Because of the Messiah it was foretold, that ²⁸ 'he should be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; who should be cut off from the land of the living, and pour out his soul unto death.' But, for whom should he suffer all this? ²⁹ For us men, and our salvation: for so it was appointed, that the Messiah should ³⁰ 'bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows; that

¹ Gen. xlix. 10. ² Ps. cxxxii. 11. ³ Chap. v. 2 ⁴ Is. vii. 14.
⁵ Ibid. liii. ⁶ Chap. ix. ⁷ Hag. ii. Zech. xv. Mal. iii.
⁸ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. i.

^a These dates are all different from those given by Hales. The rectified dates of that author will be found in the previous part of this work.—Ed.

^b Of any single text of prophecy, it is true that it cannot be its own interpreter; for this reason,—because the scripture prophecies are not detached predictions of separate nor independent events, but are united in a regular and entire system, all terminating in one great object—the promulgation of the gospel, and the complete establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. Of this system, every particular prophecy makes a part, and bears a more immediate or a more remote relation to that which is the object of the whole. It is therefore very unlikely that the true signification of any particular text of prophecy should be discovered from the bare attention to the terms of the single prediction, taken by itself, without considering it as a part of that system to which it unquestionably belongs, and without observing how it may stand connected with earlier and later prophecies, especially with those which might more immediately precede or more immediately follow it. Again, of the whole of the scripture prophecies, it is true that it cannot be its own interpreter. Its meaning never can be discovered, without a general knowledge of the principal events to which it alludes; for prophecy was not given to enable curious men to pry into futurity, but to enable the serious and considerate to discern in past events the hand of providence. Every particular prophecy is to be referred to the system, and to be understood in that sense which may most aptly connect it with the whole; and the sense of prophecy in general is to be sought in the events which have actually taken place,—the history of mankind, especially in the article of their religious improvement, being the public infallible interpreter of the oracles of God.—*Horsley's Sermons*.—Ed.

⁹ Mat. i. 18. and Luke i. 26, &c.

¹⁰ Gen. iii. 15.

¹¹ Is. vii. 14.

¹² Mat. i. 1. and Luke i. 27.

¹³ Mat. ii. 5. 6.

¹⁴ Ps. lxxxix. 4.

¹⁵ Mic. v. 2.

¹⁶ Mat. ii. 1. and Luke vii. 27.

¹⁷ Gen. xlix. 10.

¹⁸ Hag. ii. 7.

¹⁹ Mat. iii. 1.

²⁰ Mal. iii. 1.

²¹ Is. xl. 3.

²² Mat. ii. 22, 23.

²³ Is. ix. 2, 6.

²⁴ Ibid. ver. 6. ²⁵ Ibid. xlii. 2. ²⁶ xli. 1.

²⁷ Ibid. xxxv. 5, 6.

²⁸ Ibid. liii. 3.

²⁹ Col. i. 14

³⁰ Is. liii. 4, 5, 6.

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he should be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;’ because ‘the Lord would lay upon him the iniquities of us all.’ And in what manner was he to suffer? With a patience and meekness answerable to the prophecy, ¹ ‘he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.’

It might seem a little strange, that our Lord, who all his lifetime affected no popularity, should a little before his death, ² make his public entry into Jerusalem, and in a manner so very singular, had not the prophet called upon ‘the daughter of Zion’ ³ to rejoice greatly, because her King was coming unto her, bringing salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.’ Strange, that ⁴ he should be betrayed by his own disciple, to whom he had been so very kind, had not the psalmist foretold it in these words: ⁵ ‘mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me:’ and strange, that of all other deaths, he should be sentenced to crucifixion, which was neither a Jewish punishment, nor proper to be inflicted ⁶ for the crime of blasphemy, ⁷ that was alleged against him, had not the same royal prophet determined the matter in these words: ⁸ ‘they pierced my hands, and my feet;’ ‘they stand staring, and looking upon me.’

Such then was the will of God, that the Saviour of the world should be crucified; but in what company did he suffer? The gospel tells us, ⁹ ‘between two thieves,’ because the prophecy had declared, that he should ¹⁰ ‘be numbered with the transgressors.’ But how did the spectators behave while he was thus hanging on the cross? Just in the manner that the psalmist described: ¹¹ ‘All they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, and shake the head, saying, he trusted in the Lord, that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, if he would have him,’ what did they give him to drink in the mean time? ¹² A narcotic potion was generally allowed, in such cases, to stupify the sense of pain; but in his, nothing but vinegar was allowed; because the prophecy before had specified the liquor: ¹³ ‘They gave me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink:’ and what became of his clothes? All disposed of according to the prophecy: ¹⁴ ‘They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.’

But under all these provocations and indignities, what did he do? Why he prayed to God for the forgiveness of his crucifiers; because the prophet had foretold, that ¹⁵

‘while he poured out his soul unto death, he should also make intercession for the transgressors.’ In his greater agonies, what were his ejaculations to God? The same that the royal psalmist, personating the Messiah in his extremity, has left upon record: ¹⁶ ‘My God, my God, look upon me: why hast thou forsaken me, and art so far from my help, and from the words of my complaint?’ What the words wherein he gave up the ghost? The very same that the psalmist, in another place, had prescribed: ¹⁷ ‘Father; into thy hands I commend my spirit.’ But after our Saviour’s death, in what manner was his body disposed of? Contrary to the custom of the Romans, who left those that suffered in this manner hanging upon the cross until they were consumed; and, contrary to the intention of his enemies, who wished him no better than a malefactor’s funeral, he was honourably and nobly interred; because it was pre-ordained, that ¹⁸ ‘he should make his grave with the rich in his death.’ After his burial, what became of his body? It was raised again, and restored from the state of the dead; because, in confidence of this, he laid down his life, that ¹⁹ ‘God would not leave his soul in hell, nor suffer his Holy One to see corruption.’ After his resurrection, and continuance for some time upon earth, what did he do next? In the sight of his disciples, and several other spectators, ascend triumphantly into heaven; for so the divine order was, ²⁰ ‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in.’ After his ascension into heaven, what did he finally do? Sent down the Holy Ghost upon his apostles, to enable them to propagate his religion all the world over; for such is the purport of the prophecy: ²¹ ‘Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, that ²² the mountain of the Lord’s house might be established on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and that all nations should flow unto it.’

Upon the whole, then, we may perceive, that the several things which the prophets had foretold of the promised Messiah, were fulfilled in the person and actions of our blessed Saviour; but then there is something farther to be considered in this matter, and that is, the visible interposition of an overruling providence, in the completion of these predictions. ²³ For that our Lord should be born of a virgin, contrary to the known laws of nature, at the city of Bethlehem, when he was conceived at Nazareth, and under the declension of the Jewish polity, as it was predicted: that upon the cruelty of Herod he should be carried into Egypt, upon the succession of Archelaus, return into Judea, and settle his abode in the obscure country of Galilee, whence no good thing, much less so eminent a prophet, could ever have been expected to come: that the judge who pronounced him innocent should deliver him to death, and to the death of the cross, who, had he been guilty, must, by the law of the land, have been stoned: that he who had so many enemies should be betrayed by one of his disciples; and by a disciple who carried the bag, and

¹ Is. liii. 7. ² Mat. xxi. 2, &c. ³ Zech. ix. 9.

⁴ Mat. x. 4. ⁵ Ps. xli. 9. ⁶ Lev. xxiv. 16.

⁷ Mat. xxvi. 65. ⁸ Ps. xxii. 16, 17. ⁹ Mat. xxvii. 38.

¹⁰ Is. liii. 12. ¹¹ Mat. xxvii. 39. &c.; Ps. xxii. 7, 8.

¹² John xix. 28, 29; Ps. lxix. 21.

¹³ Mat. xxvii. 35; Ps. xxii. 18. ¹⁴ Luke xxiii. 34; Is. liii. 12.

¹⁵ For this the Jews ground themselves upon the words of Solomon: ‘give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that are of an heavy heart: let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more,’ Prov. xxxi. 7. The usual portion of this kind was frankincense in a glass of wine; and there is a tradition among them, that the ladies of the city of Jerusalem were at this charge, out of their own good will, for the ease of the poor sufferers: but notwithstanding this custom, what God foretold was fulfilled.—*Kidder’s Demonstration of the Messiah*, p. 80.

¹⁶ Mat. xxvii. 46; Ps. xxii. 1. ¹⁷ Luke xxiii. 46; Ps. xxxi. 5.

¹⁸ Mat. xxvii. 57; Is. liii. 9. ¹⁹ Mat. xxviii. 6; Ps. xvi. 10.

²⁰ Luke xxiv. 51; Ps. xxiv. 7, 9.

²¹ Acts ii. 1. &c.; Ps. lxviii. 18. ²² Is. ii. 2.

²³ Kidder’s Demonstration of the Messiah, p. 331.

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consequently all his master's riches, for a vile sum of money: and that this money, the price of blood, should be employed in a work of charity, to buy a field to bury strangers in: that he who spent all his time in doing good, should be doomed to suffer among thieves and malefactors; and the multitude, who were wont to pity dying criminals, should insult and deride him in his greatest misery: that in the division of his clothes, they should cast lots for his coat, and, contrary to the usage of the country, in the midst of his agonies, give him vinegar to drink: that, contrary to the practice of the Romans, he that was crucified should be permitted to be buried, and, although he died among malefactors, have persons of the first rank and character joining together in his honourable interment: these, and several other particulars that might be produced, are so very strange and surprising, that they must needs strike every pious and devout soul with a profound sense of the unspeakable wisdom, as well as goodness of God, in accomplishing in Jesus what he had promised and foretold of the Messiah, by ways and means to human wisdom very unlikely, and very disproportionate. And, if the predictions relating to the Messiah have, in this wonderful manner, and by the particular direction and appointment of providence, thus met in the blessed Jesus, like lines in one common centre, the natural result of this contemplation, is, 'that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

¹ For can it be imagined, with any worthy conception of God, that a work of love and wonder, so great as the sending his Son to redeem the world, should be in agitation for full four thousand years: that each succeeding age, in this long space, should have some notices of it; that the several characters he was to sustain, should be described by different prophets, living at times and places so remote, that no confederacy could be suspected; that each of these prophets should draw, some one line of him, and some another, and point him out, some in one capacity, and some in another; and above all, that every one of these strokes or lineaments should be directed by the unerring hand of God, to make at least one finished picture, on purpose that the original, when it appeared, might be found out, and distinguished by it; can it be imagined, I say, that a God of infinite truth, wisdom, and goodness, would have ever permitted, much less appointed, that our blessed Lord should, in every part and line, be so exactly like that piece, unless he intended that we should receive him as the true original? Unless we can entertain a thought so unworthy of God, I say, as that he designed to impose upon us in this whole dispensation, we cannot but conclude, that he would never have permitted all the marks belonging to the Messiah, to have concurred in the life of our blessed Saviour, and by these marks, have suffered so many millions of souls to have been mistaken in the object of their faith and worship, and thereupon, without any fault of theirs, deluded into the heinous sin of idolatry, had he not appointed the man Christ Jesus to be the great Saviour of the world, and the Lord of life and glory.

'But, you are frequently mistaken,' says the Jew, to

avoid the force of this, 'in your application of these prophetic passages to your Jesus, which properly belonged to another person, and in him received their utmost accomplishment. The 22d psalm, for instance, which complains of the sufferings and indignities which its author endured, you refer to the Messiah, and thence apply to your Jesus; whereas it relates entirely to David, and the troubles he underwent under the persecution of Saul. ² The prophecy of Micah, which makes mention of a ruler, whose goings forth had been from everlasting, whatever use you may make of it, was only intended of Zerubbabel, who was sprung from the ancient house of David; and that famous 53d chapter of Isaiah, which is so frequently cited by the apostles, when rightly inquired into, is nothing else but a lively description of the sufferings of the Jews, under the Babylonish, or some other captivity. Thus, by misapplying, and misinterpreting several texts, in such a sense, as the Jewish church never received, and the Spirit of God never intended, you bedeck your Jesus with feathers that are none of his own, and then cry out, how well he becomes them, and how exactly they befit him!

The completion of prophecies, in the person of our Saviour Christ, is one of the most general arguments that the first Christians made use of, ^a in order to con-

² Collins's Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons, p. 44.

^a They who are educated in the belief of Christianity, and taught to receive the books of both Testaments with equal reverence, are not apt to distinguish between the evidence for their faith, arising from the one and the other. But if we look back to the earliest times of preaching the gospel, and consider how the case stood as to the Jewish converts on one side, who were convinced of the divine authority of the Old Testament, and as to the Gentile converts on the other, who had no such persuasion, the distinction will appear very manifestly. The ancient prophecies, though they are evidence both to the Jew and to the Gentile, yet are they not so to both in the same way of reasoning and deduction, nor to the same end and purpose. For consider; the Jew was possessed of the oracles of God, and firmly persuaded of the truth of them; the very first thing therefore which he had to do on the appearance of the Messiah was to examine his title by the character given of him in the prophets; he could not, consistently with his belief in God and faith in the ancient prophecies, attend to other arguments, till fully satisfied and convinced in this. All the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the office and character of the Messiah were immovable bars to all pretensions, till fulfilled and accomplished in the person pretending to be the promised and long-expected Redeemer. For this reason the preachers of the gospel, in applying to the Jews, begin with the argument from prophecy. Thus St Paul, in his discourse with the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, begins with the call of Abraham, and after a short historical deduction of matters from thence to the times of David, he adds, 'of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour Jesus:' (Acts xiii. 23.) where you see plainly that the whole argument rests on the authority of prophecy; and all the parts of this apostolical sermon are answerable to this beginning, proceeding from one end to the other on the authority of the old prophets. But the very same apostle St Paul, preaching to the people of Athens, Acts xvii. argues from other topics; he says nothing of the prophets, to whose mission and authority the Athenians were perfect strangers, but begins with declaring to them, 'God that made the world and all things therein:' he goes on condemning all idolatrous practices, and assuring them that 'God is not worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing.' He accounts to them for the past times of ignorance at which God winked, and tells them that now he calls all men to repentance, having appointed Christ Jesus to be the judge of all men; for the truth of which he appeals to the evidence of Christ's resurrection, 'whereof,' says the apostle, 'he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the

¹ Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

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vert such as were persuaded of their divine authority. St Peter,¹ in his first public sermon that he made, out of the 16th and 110th psalms, cites two passages, which he plainly shows, could not be intended of the patriarch David, to prove our Lord's resurrection, and exaltation to glory.² St Paul, who by being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, understood the force of his argument, uses more proofs of this kind than any other writer of the New Testament, as the least cast of an eye into his epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, will show:³ and St Matthew, who wrote his gospel for the use of the Jews more particularly, and for that reason, as some imagine, in the Hebrew tongue, is more express and copious in his application of the prophecies to our blessed Saviour than any of the other evangelists.

Now, to mention no more than these, how absurd would it have been for these apostles, who were no strangers to the Jewish way of arguing, to allege any passage in the prophets as relating to the Messiah, which properly belonged to another person, in whom it had its accomplishment? Such a method of proceeding could not fail of discovering their confidence and folly, of exposing them to the scorn and ridicule of their adversaries, and, instead of gaining proselytes, of ruining the cause, which by such unfair practices they endeavoured to maintain. It is but supposing then, that these apostles were men of common sense, and desirous to promote the cause that they had taken in hand, and then we can hardly think, that they argued from any prophecies concerning the Messiah, but such as really belonged to him, and such as the whole Jewish church acknowledged so to do.

St Peter, by virtue of the sermon which he preached on the day of Pentecost, made about three thousand converts to the Christian faith; and yet, it is obvious that the whole hinge of his discourse turns upon the testimony of the prophets: had he therefore applied this testimony, either to persons, to whom it did not belong, or in a sense contrary to its true intendment, his doctrine must have been exploded at once, and could never have met with such uncommon success. And, in like manner, as to the subsequent conversions which the apostles made,⁴ how can we imagine, that such a num-

ber of Jews of all degrees, rulers, priests, and scribes of all sects, men of learning, and who by their station and profession, were obliged to know the scriptures, should forsake the religion they were accustomed to, upon the authority of passages, which, in their proper meaning and intendment, were so far from countenancing, that they openly confronted the new religion they were to embrace; and all this without any view of worldly interest, with the certain hazard of their lives here, and the loss of God's favour hereafter, in case of insincerity.⁵

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that every Jew converted to the Christian faith, is an implicit proof, that the apostle's allegations of the ancient prophecies, both as to the ground and sense of them, were agreeable to their received notions of them; inasmuch that, were we at leisure to enter into particulars, we might show, that it is hardly possible to name one single prediction of the many applied to the blessed Jesus, which one or other of their most celebrated writers do not acknowledge to belong to the Messiah.

The modern Jews, it must be owned, have fallen off from the notions of their more ingenuous ancestors, and do deny the prophecies quoted in the New Testament those views that we would ascribe to them:⁶ but whoever considers the destruction of their city and polity, which confounded all the expectations of a glorious Messiah, and put them upon new measures in the application of such predictions as they saw must needs have been fulfilled while their state and temple stood. Whoever considers the darkness and ignorance that would necessarily ensue upon their long dispersion, and many sad calamities, when they fell into the hands of persecuting powers, who hated them and their religion most implacably: whoever considers their neglect of applying themselves to the study of the written law, and attending wholly to their oral, and affecting to be curious in ceremonies, while they continued careless of their doctrines: whoever considers their violent prejudice against Jesus and his disciples, which, as it stuck at nothing, though ever so false or wicked, to oppose them, might easily put them upon tampering with the scriptures, and, by interpolations or defalcations, labouring to make them look another way: and, lastly, whoever considers that judicial blindness and hardness of heart, so often and expressly threatened, and so visibly and lamentably inflicted upon this once elect people of God: may he, in his infinite mercy, so open their eyes, that they may see the wondrous things of the law, and its agreement with the blessed gospel! Whoever considers these things, I say, will not be at a loss for reasons why the present synagogue have departed from the sentiments of the ancient, and are so earnest to apply to David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Zerubbabel, or any other person of note, what their ancestors never thought of attributing to any other than the promised Messiah.

⁷ One of their famous interpreters, in his comment upon the 22d psalm, after some feeble efforts to wrest that evidence out of our hands, makes at length this ample confession: ⁸ "Our great masters," says he, "have interpreted this psalm of Messiah the King; but I shall

¹ Acts ii. 14, &c.

² Ibid. xxii. 3.

³ Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

⁴ Bishop Chandler's Defence of Christianity.

dead: ver. 31. Whence comes this difference? How comes St Paul's argument, on one and the same subject, in Acts xiii. and xvii. to be so unlike to each other? Can this be accounted for any other way than by considering the different circumstances of the persons to whom he delivered himself. In Acts xiii. he argues professedly with Jews, to whom were committed the oracles of God, and who, from these oracles, were well instructed in the great marks and characters of the expected Messiah. It had been highly absurd therefore to reason with them on other arguments, till he had first convinced them by their prophets; and having so convinced them, it would have been impertinent. To them therefore he urges and applies the authority of prophecy only; but to the Athenians, who knew not the prophets, or if they knew them, yet had no reverence or esteem for them, it had been quite ridiculous to offer proofs from prophecies: the appeal therefore before them is made to the sound and clear principles of natural religion, and to the miracles of the gospel, the fame of which probably had, long before, reached to Athens; and the truth of which, they being mere matters of fact, was capable of undeniable evidence and demonstration.—*Sherlock on Prophecy*, Discourse 6.—Ed.

⁵ Jones's Biblical Cyclopedia.

⁶ Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

⁸ R. Sol. Jarchi.

⁷ Ibid.

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interpret it of David himself, that we may have wherewith to answer the heretics." But, with all his art and subtilty he can never make it out, how David, with any propriety, can say of himself, ¹ 'As for me, I am a worm, and no man, the very scorn of men, and the out-cast of the people.' The greatest affliction that ever befell that prince, was his expulsion from the capital city, upon the rebellion of his son Absalom: and ² Shimei's cursing and upbraiding him may seem perhaps to countenance this complaint, ³ 'All they that see me, laugh me to scorn, they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads;' but we no where read in his history, that his enemies ever ⁴ 'pierced his hands or his feet,' much less that, after they had made an end of him, 'they parted his garments among them, and cast lots upon his vesture.' It was our blessed Saviour alone in whom this prediction was verified; of him alone, that his enemies took up the taunting proverb, and said, ⁵ 'He trusted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, if he would have him;' to him alone, that these words can, with any tolerable construction, belong, ⁶ 'Many oxen are come about me, fat bulls of Bashan close me in on every side; they gape upon me with their mouths, as if it were a ramping and roaring lion;' as he indeed appropriates the whole psalm to himself, when, in his dying minutes, he uttered this citation, ⁷ 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

David, indeed, in all his troubles, had no occasion to make this lamentation; for though the malice and persecutions of Saul were upon him, yet he had always abundant reason to say of God, ⁸ 'Thou art my stony rock, and my defence, my Saviour, my God, and my might: my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge: therefore will I follow upon mine enemies, and overtake them; neither will I turn again till I have destroyed them.' His splendour and greatness, his victories and conquests, the reduction of his foes, and the enlargement of his kingdom, made him a proper emblem of our Saviour's exaltation, and triumph over our spiritual enemies; but there are few passages in his life resembling of his sufferings, and none at all that will justify this complaint, ⁹ 'I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my gums.' So true is that observation of Grotius, ¹⁰ 'That partiality was the cause of these new explications, among the Jews, and that those which they formerly received, agreed very well with the sense of Christians.'

Upon the decree of Cyrus, for the restoration of the Jews, we find Zerubbabel, among other princes of the people, superintending matters, and taking upon him the government of the tribe to which he belonged; but that he should be the person intended by Micah's prophecy, is a thing impossible; because he was not born in Bethlehem, which is the place assigned for the birth of a ruler that the prophet mentions, but in Babylon, as his name imports. That it was essentially necessary for the Messiah to be born in ¹¹ Bethlehem, and no where else, is plain from the answer which the scribes and Pharisees

make Herod, upon his consulting them, and their quotation of Micah for the proof of it; is plain from the general notion which, not only the learned, but the vulgar, at this time, had imbibed, namely, ¹² 'That Christ was to come of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was born;' and is plain from the petition in their liturgy, wherein they still pray for the advent of the Messiah, in these terms: ¹³ 'Shake thyself from the dust, arise, put on thy beautiful garments, O my people; by the hand of Benjesse, the Bethlehemite, bring redemption near to my soul:' so that the prophecy, in all reason, must be applied to the person that was born there, and not to one whose place of nativity was in a distant country. It is to be observed farther, that Zerubbabel was never any ruler of Israel; for though he might be at the head of the capacity for some years, yet it was without the title or authority of a governor, and when he had executed his commission, he returned to Babylon, and there died. But even supposing he were never so much a governor, it is certainly carrying the matter too far, to say of him, that he ¹⁴ 'should stand and rule in the strength of the Lord, and in the majesty of the Lord his God;' much more it is so, to say, that the going forth or birth of this ruler was of old, and from the days of eternity, as the marginal note has it, which is only applicable to the Messiah, and, in a proper sense, only verified in our blessed Saviour, ¹⁵ 'who in the beginning was with God.'

And, in like manner, if we consider the words of the prophet Isaiah, in the 53d chapter, and compare them with our Lord's history, as the evangelists have recorded it, we shall soon perceive that they are applicable to none but our blessed Saviour only; for, to waive other arguments that might be drawn from them, with what propriety of construction can any of these passages, ¹⁶ 'he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed,' be applied to the Jewish nation? When did we ever hear that the Jews bore the griefs, and carried the sorrows of others; that they were wounded for other men's transgressions, and bruised for iniquities not their own? The public calamities which God, at any time, sent upon them, are by all the prophets imputed to their own sins; but the person here afflicted is said to have done 'no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth;' and does this character suit them under any captivity, or other sort of calamity, that the prophet might have in view? If we will believe him, it is plain, that he had another opinion of them, when, in the very beginning of his prophecy, we find him lamenting them and their captivity, in these words: ¹⁷ 'Ah, sinful nation! A people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they are gone backwards; wherefore your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire, your land strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.'

The sum of our answer is this: if our Saviour and his

¹ Ps. xxii. 6. ² 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8. ³ Ps. xxii. 7.

⁴ Ibid. ver. 17, 18. ⁵ Ibid. ver. 8. ⁶ Ibid. ver. 12, 13.

⁷ Ibid. ver. 1. ⁸ Ps. xviii. 2, 37. ⁹ Ps. xxii. 14, 15.

¹⁰ Grotius de Verit. b. v. s. 18. ¹¹ Mat. ii. 1, etc.

¹² John vii. 42.

¹³ See Bishop Chandler's Defence of Christianity.

¹⁴ Micah v. 4.

¹⁵ John i. 2.

¹⁶ Is. liii. 4, 5.

¹⁷ Ibid. i. 4, etc.

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apostles cannot be supposed, with any justness of reasoning, or prospect of success, to allege prophecies concerning the Messiah, which the Jewish church, at that time, did not acknowledge to be intended of him; if all the prophecies thus alleged do even yet appear, by several of their most renowned doctors to be interpreted of the Messiah; if the 22d psalm cannot, with any propriety of construction, be applied to David, nor the 4th chap. of Micah to Zerubbabel, nor the 53d of Isaiah to the Jewish nation in general; and if good reasons may be assigned, why the present and ancient doctors of the Jewish church do differ in the manner of applying the predictions of the prophets; then is the Christian interpretation of them, which appears to be plain and natural, and has antiquity on its side, not to be less esteemed, because some, out of partiality and prejudice, have forced their wits to invent another.

Nay, even supposing that there were more grounds than what hitherto have appeared, to dispute the justness of the allegation of any prophecy; yet still we Christians must aver, that the application of Christ and his apostles is to be preferred before that of any other, because it was attended with such irresistible proof of its truth and fidelity, as must overbear all objections to the contrary. ¹ For, upon a dispute of the application of some passage, or a competition of two different senses of the same passage, can any thing in nature be more decisive than the testimony of God? And can the testimony of God appear by any stronger evidence than by the power of miracles supporting the allegation? God certainly knew the intention of every prophecy delivered by his Spirit; and therefore, if Christ and his apostles, when they applied any prophecy to the Messiah, gave the best proof that could be given of their being sent by God, and of their speaking and acting by his commission, God himself must be understood as confirming their application. The authority of the application, or of the exposition, must, in such a case, be equal to that of the prophecy; for there cannot be a better proof that the prophet was sent from God, than the expositor gives of his mission: and the reason for his assenting to the one as well as the other, is on both sides the same.

The result of this whole inquiry is this,—That, since our blessed Saviour appeals to the writings of the prophets for the proof of his being the Messiah or messenger sent from God to deliver his will to mankind; and since the marks and characters which the prophets give of the Messiah, are found all to agree and unite in him, according to the account which the evangelists give us of his life, we have all the reason in the world to believe, that he was really the person he pretended to be; that his doctrine, consequently, is the word of God, and his religion ² ‘the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, and hath appeared unto all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour JESUS CHRIST.’

SECT. III.

CHAP. I.—*Containing an account of things, from our Lord's transfiguration to his last entry into Jerusalem.*

THE HISTORY.

THE day following our Lord's transfiguration, (for that transaction was very probably in the night-time),^a as he came down from the mount, he perceived the scribes in deep debate^b with the apostles he had left behind him, and while he was inquiring into the subject of their dispute, a certain man, breaking through the crowd, came and fell prostrate at his feet, and besought him to have pity upon his only son, a deplorable object, a lunatic,^c and possessed, deaf and dumb, often thrown upon the ground, and into the fire and water, racked with violent convulsions, accompanied with dismal outcries, foamings, bruises, and torments, and every way in so desperate a condition, that his disciples, in his absence, were not able to cure him. Our Lord, upon hearing of this, was^d not a little grieved at the want of faith in his disciples, but ordered the child to be brought

^a The evangelist acquaints us, that while our Saviour was at prayer on the mount, St Peter, ‘and they that were with him, were heavy with sleep,’ (Luke ix. 32.) which, in some measure, confirms the conjecture, that the transfiguration was in the night; a time much more proper for the display of the lustre of such an appearance, than if it had happened in the broad daylight.—*Calnet's Commentary.*

^b What the subject matter of this debate was, the evangelists have not informed us; but it seems not unlikely, that the scribes were disputing with the apostles about their master's method of ejecting devils, and the power which, in that matter, he had conferred upon them; because, in the case before them, they saw them nonplused, and not able to cast a devil out of one, who, in his absence, was brought to them. This is the rather probable, not only because our Saviour's dispossessing devils was what gruelled and vexed the scribes and Pharisees more than all his other miracles, and forced them to the sorry refuge of, ‘he casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils;’ but because, upon his coming to the timely relief of his apostles, and demanding of the scribes, what they were questioning and disputing about, it immediately follows, one of the multitude answered and said, ‘Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit:—And I spake to thy disciples, that they should cast him out, and they could not,’ (Mark ix. 17. 18.)—*Poole's Annotations.*

^c The word *σεληνιαῖος*, comes from *σελήνη*, the moon, and signifies literally, ‘he is moon-struck.’ From the symptoms mentioned here and at Mark ix. 18. this disorder is supposed to have been epilepsy; under whose paroxysms those afflicted with it are deprived of all sense, bodily and mental, and nearly all articulation. And as we find, in the ancient medical writers, epileptic patients said to be moonstruck, agreeably to the common notion, of the influence of the moon in producing the disorder, it is very possible that the disorder in question was epilepsy. Be that, however, as it may, the symptoms are all reconcilable with demoniacal influence.—*Bloomfield's Greek Testament.*—ED.

^d The rebuke which our Saviour utters upon this occasion, ‘O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you,’ &c. (Mat. xvii. 17.) seems to be intended for the whole company, and every one to have a share in it, in proportion to their deserts. The disciples are not exempted; for they are charged with infidelity, ver. 20. The father of the patient is pointed at, for his faith was wavering, Mark ix. 21, &c. And the whole nation of the Jews is included in it; for this was expressly their character of old, ‘a very froward and perverse generation, and children in whom is no faith,’ (Deut. xxxii. 5. 20.)—*Beausobre's Annotations.*

¹ Rogers's Necessity of Revelation.

² Tit. ii. 11, &c.

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to him. As he was drawing near, the devil began to rack him with convulsions, which put the father in a terrible fright; and when our Lord commanded the evil spirit to depart out of the young man, and never to molest him more; after some hideous outcries, he tore and distorted him to such a degree, that he left him breathless on the ground, so that many concluded he was quite dead: but Jesus, taking him by the hand, lifted him up, and delivered him to his father, perfectly cured, to the great astonishment of all the spectators. And when his disciples in private desired to know the reason why they could not cast out this spirit, he imputed it, partly to their want of faith, and partly to this spirit's being of a kind^a which was not to be ejected without fasting and prayer.

From the mount of transfiguration, our Lord proceeded in his journey through the other parts of Galilee towards Capernaum, and, as they were in the way, he acquainted his disciples, the second time, with his approaching death and resurrection, desiring them to take good notice of what he told them; but the hopes of a temporal kingdom had so intoxicated their minds, that they found it very difficult to believe,^b or conceive

what he said, and yet they were afraid to ask him to explain it.

In the same journey there arose a dispute^c among the apostles, which of them should have the chief place of dignity^d in their Master's kingdom, still dreaming of a temporal sovereignty. This our Saviour by his divine Spirit knew; and therefore, to give an effectual check to their ambitious thoughts, he first informed them, that

then they could not comprehend how their master, whom they knew to be the Messiah, and Son of God, and whom consequently they believed to be immortal and eternal, could possibly be put to death, or suffer the affronts and outrages of men. These notions to them seemed incompatible, and therein they conceived a mystery, which they could not understand. But the modern Jews have endeavoured to reconcile these two notions, by inventing the distinction of Messiah Ben Joseph, who was to die, and Messiah Ben David, who was to triumph and live for ever.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^c There is some small difference in the several ways wherein the evangelists have related this matter. St Matthew tells us, that 'the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' (c. xviii. 1.) St Mark, that Christ put this question to them, 'and they held their peace,' (ix. 34.) and St Luke, that they had been disputing this point among themselves, and Jesus, 'perceiving the thoughts of their hearts, took a child,' &c. (ix. 46, 47.) Now, to reconcile this seeming repugnancy, we must observe, that as our Saviour was going to Capernaum, his disciples followed him, 'discoursing among themselves,' as St Mark has it, 'who of them was to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven:' that when they came to him in the house, having still the same ambitious notion in their minds, he asked them, 'What was it that you discoursed of in the way?' But they, being ashamed to tell him, 'held their peace;' and that then our Saviour, who well understood what the subject of their discourse had been, endeavoured, by the example of a child, to cure their distemper, and to inform them what disposition of mind was proper to qualify them both for his kingdom of grace here, and his kingdom of glory hereafter. St Matthew indeed, according to our translation, represents the thing as if the disciples had put the question to their master, 'Who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' But that the particle *λέγουσιν* relates not to Jesus, but to the disciples, and means not the external speech, but the inward reasoning of their minds, is obvious from their silence, which St Mark takes notice of, and our Saviour's perceiving the thought of their hearts, which St Luke remarks. For, had themselves propounded the question to our Saviour, as the version in St Matthew seems to imply, we cannot see why they should not answer his demand, which tended to the same purpose; nor can we imagine why he should be represented as 'perceiving the thoughts of their hearts,' had they already declared these thoughts in plain words.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^d The apostles, as well as the other Jews, had imbibed the notion, which they never got quit of, until the descent of the Holy Ghost instructed them better, that the Messiah, when he came upon earth, should erect a temporal kingdom; and, as the Jews in general expect, that they should then be constituted lords over all other nations; so the apostles, who believed their master to be the Messiah, were naturally led to think that they should have the preference before all other Jews; and that, since the king Messiah, according to the custom of other sovereigns, was to have some officers of the highest rank, they made no question but that some of them would be made choice of, though they were not so well agreed who were the fittest or most deserving of these high posts of honour. Some of them were our Lord's relations, and others had parts and endowments extraordinary; of some he had given high commendations, and others he had admitted to a participation of his most secret retirements. These things might possibly raise some emulation among them: and therefore, as our Saviour's dominion was not of this world, he plainly tells them, that all such worldly desires and expectations were inconsistent with that spiritual kingdom which he was to erect, and wherein he 'who desired to be first, was to be last of all, and servant of all.' (Mark ix. 35.)—*Whitby's* and *Poole's Annotations*.

^a The words in the text are, 'they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them.' (Luke ix. 45.) They understood our Saviour's words, no doubt, and what the import was of his being 'delivered into the hands of men and put to death;' but

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the only way for any man to become great in his kingdom, was to be lowly in his own esteem; and then, calling a little child,^a and setting him in the midst of them, he proposed him as a pattern of meekness and humility; recommended such children, and, in them, all humble Christians, to the favour of mankind; cautioned them against doing any injury,^b or giving any offence to such, because of their guardian angels; ^a and, to remove the occasion of all such offences, exhorted them to mortify their inordinate affections, though they were as dear to them as an eye, a hand, or a foot, because his heavenly Father, like a diligent shepherd that delights in the recovery of a stray sheep, was unwilling that any believer should perish. Together with these reasons against scandal and offences, he prescribed some excellent rules in relation to brotherly reproof, church censures, and forgiveness of injuries; and for the enforcement of this last duty, he propounded the parable of a certain king, who, calling his servants to account, found that one of them owed him an immense sum, no less than ten thousand talents, which, upon his insolvency, and humble petition, he freely forgave; and yet, this very wretch was no sooner out of the king's presence, than he seized upon his fellow servant for a trifle of a debt, a debt of an hundred pence only, and cast him into prison, even

^a Some of the ancients are of opinion that this child was St Ignatius, who was afterwards bishop of Antioch, and famous in the Christian church for his writing and dying in defence of the truth. However this be, it is certain that a child, who has no concern for dominion or empire over others, who is free from all covetous desires of wealth, and knows nothing of what a post of honour means, was, in this case, a very proper emblem of that simplicity, innocence, and humility, that our Lord requires in all his disciples.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^b The words in the caution are, 'whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea' (Mat. xviii. 6.) To offend or scandalize is to discourage men in the profession and practice of religion, and by indignities and persecutions, as well as by bad examples, to occasion their apostatizing from the faith: for we can hardly imagine, that so severe a punishment as is here threatened, should be inflicted for a crime of less aggravation than what this amounts to. Grotius, upon the place, is of opinion, that the millstone about the neck alludes to a custom of drowning among the Syrians. But St Jerome thinks that this manner of execution was in use among the Jews; for, according to Dr Alix, it was customary for them to cast execrable men into the Dead Sea, with a stone tied to them. It is certain from Diodorus Siculus, and others, that among the Greeks this was the ancient punishment for sacrilegious persons; and from Suetonius we may learn, that for the pride and covetousness wherewith some in public offices had infested the province where they lived, Augustus had them cast into the river, with great weights about their necks.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^c The fathers looked on this as an argument that each good man had his particular guardian angel: (see *Suicer. Thesaur.* vol. i. p. 43.) And Grotius seems to allow the force of it. I apprehend this passage rather intimates, that the angels, who sometimes attend the little ones spoken of, at other times stand in God's immediate presence; and consequently that different angels are at different times employed in this kind office, if it be incessantly performed. The general sense is plain, that the highest angels do not disdain, on proper occasions, to perform services of protection and friendship for the meanest Christian; but as St Paul says, they are 'all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation;' (Heb. i. 14.) I say the highest; because 'to behold the face of God' may signify 'waiting near his throne,' and be an allusion to the office of chief ministers in earthly courts, who daily converse with their princes. See Grotius: and compare 2 Sam. vi. 19. 1 Kings xii. 6; Esth. i. 14; and Luke i. 19.—*Doddridge's Expositor*.—Ed.

though he had used the same pathetic entreaties to him that himself had done to the king his master: which when the king came to understand, he sent for the ungrateful villain, upbraided him with his baseness and cruelty, and then, in great rage, ordered him to prison until he should discharge the whole debt: "and so likewise shall my heavenly Father," says our Lord in the application, "deal with all such as will not forgive their brother's trespasses from their hearts."

While he was giving these instructions to his disciples, he was interrupted by John, the son of Zebedee, informing him of a certain stranger,^d who cast out devils in his name, but because he was not of their fraternity, that he had forbidden him; which conduct Jesus by no means could approve of, because he looked upon it as a sure argument, that whoever did miracles in his name, could be no enemy to his person.

With this discourse they arrived at Capernaum, where the collectors^e of a certain tribute for the use of the temple, came to Peter, and asked him if his master was accustomed to pay it? And, when Peter went in to acquaint him with the officer's demands, 'Of whom,' says our Lord, preventing him, 'do the kings of the Gentiles take tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers?' Peter answered, 'Of strangers: if so,' rejoined our Saviour, 'then are the children free:' meaning, that since Gentile kings did not exact tribute of their own household, this tribute, which was paid to God for his temple, was not due from him, who was his Son, nor from them, who were his domestics; however, to avoid all occasions of offence, he ordered him to go, and cast an hook into the sea, because in the mouth of the first fish that he caught he would find a piece of money,^f just of proper value to give to the collectors for them both; which accordingly came to pass.

^d That this man did truly cast out devils, our Lord's answer supposes, and his disciples saw with their eyes: but then the question is,—How a person, who did not follow Christ could cast out devils in his name: to which it may be answered, 1st, That this person might believe in Jesus, without being one of his retinue, and follow his doctrine, though he did not his person. 2dly, He might do miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, without being one of his true disciples, even as Judas is supposed to have done, and those others to whom our Lord will profess, 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity,' Mat. vii. 23. Or, 3dly, He might be a disciple of John the Baptist, and so do his miracles in the name of Christ, shortly to come. But by what means soever it was that he did them, it is no small confirmation of the truth of Christianity, that our Saviour's name was thus powerful, even among those that did not follow him, and therefore were incapable of doing any thing by way of compact with him.—*Whitby's and Poole's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^e Every Jew that was twenty years old, was obliged to pay annually two Attic drams, or half a shekel, about fifteen pence of our money, for the use of the sanctuary, (Exod. xxx. 13, 16.) or to buy sacrifices, and other things necessary for the service of the temple: and that this was the tribute which the collectors here demanded, and not any tax, payable to the Roman emperors, as some imagine, is evident, not only from our Saviour's argument, namely, that he was the son of that heavenly King to whom it was paid, and, consequently, had a right to plead his exemption; but from the word *διδραχμα*, which, according to Josephus, [*Antiq.* b. 18. c. 12.] was the proper word for this capitation-tax that was paid to the temple at Jerusalem; whereas the Cæsarean tribute money was the denarius, a Roman coin, and would have been gathered by the usual officers, the publicans, and not by the persons who are here styled, as by a known title, 'they that received the *διδραχμα*.—*Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations*.

^f This piece of money is called *στατήρ*, which amounted to

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About this time the ^a feast of tabernacles drew near; and some of our Lord's relations, out of vanity more than good-will, were very earnest with him to go up to Jerusalem at this great concourse of people, in order to show his miracles in the capital, which hitherto, as they said, had been concealed in an obscure part of the world: but our Lord, for the present, ^b would not yield to their importunity, though, in a short time, he set forward to Jerusalem, but in a very private manner, for fear of awakening the jealousy of his enemies. As he was to pass through the province of Samaria, ^c he sent

four drachmas, or one shekel, in our money about half a crown; and the reason why our Saviour paid for none of the apostles but St Peter only, was, because these receivers demanded it only of those that dwelt at Capernaum, as our Saviour and St Peter did, leaving the other apostles to pay it in the several places of their abode.—*Hammond's Annotations*.—Here is a proof that Jesus was possessed of divine attributes. He knew that in the first fish that came up, there would be such a coin; which proved his omniscience. It is by no means strange that a fish should have swallowed a silver coin; such cases have often occurred.—*Barnes*.—ED.

^a The feast of tabernacles, kept in commemoration of the Israelites' sojourning in the wilderness, and living in tents for the space of forty years, was one of the three great annual festivals, wherein all the males were obliged to appear at Jerusalem. It began to be celebrated on the fifteenth day of the month Tisri, which answers in part to our October and September, and is the first month of their civil, and the seventh in their sacred year.—*Calmel's Commentary*.

^b Our Lord well knew the rancorous prejudice of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and therefore did not think proper to reside among them any longer than was absolutely necessary. They had more than once attempted his life, and therefore very little hopes remained that they would believe his miracles, or embrace his doctrine; but, on the contrary, there was great reason to think they would destroy him, if possible, before he had finished the work for which he assumed the veil of human nature, and resided among the sons of men. 'My time,' said the blessed Jesus to these unbelieving relations, 'is not yet come; but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast; I go not yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come,' John vii. 6, 7, 8. As if he had said, It is not proper for me to go before the feast begins; but you may repair to the capital whenever you please; the Jews are your friends, you have done nothing to displease them: but the purity of the doctrine I have preached to them, and the freedom with which I have reproved their hypocrisy and other enormous crimes, have provoked their malice to the utmost height, and therefore, as the time of my sufferings is not yet come, it is not prudent for me to go soon to Jerusalem. There was also another reason why our blessed Saviour refused to accompany these relations to the feast of tabernacles: the roads were crowded with people, and these gathering round him, and accompanying him to Jerusalem, would doubtless have given fresh offence to his enemies, and have in a great measure prevented his miracles and doctrines from having the desired effect. He therefore chose to continue in Galilee, till the crowd were all gone up to Jerusalem, when he followed, 'as it were in secret,' neither preaching, nor working miracles by the way; so that no crowd attended him to the feast.—ED.

^c Samaria was a province that lay between Galilee and Judea, and our Saviour's nearest way to Jerusalem was through it. But then it may be questioned, why the Samaritans, who lived at a less distance from Jerusalem than the Galileans, came to be more corrupted in their religion? To which the most probable answer is,—'That when the king of Assyria had taken Samaria, and carried away the people captive,' 2 Kings xvii., in their room he planted colonies of his own subjects, who were gross idolaters, and more especially in the country of Samaria, properly so called, because it was a province which lay in the heart of his new conquest, and might therefore keep the others, that depended on it, in subjection. Now, these idolaters, mixing with the Jews that were left behind, made up a strange medley of reli-

some of his apostles to provide him lodgings ^d in one of the villages; but the inhabitants, perceiving that he was going to Jerusalem to the feast, ^e were so uncivil as to refuse him entertainment.

This indignity put upon their master, so exasperated James and his brother John, that they desired leave of him, in imitation of ^f Elias, to command fire down from heaven to consume such inhospitable wretches; but instead of giving any such permission, ^g our Saviour took

gion, which was not quite reformed, even in our Saviour's time; and therefore he tells the Samaritan woman, at Jacob's well, 'ye worship ye know not what,' (John iv. 22,) whereas the people of Galilee, having few of the Assyrians planted among them, kept their religion more pure and unmixed, and, after the destruction of the temple of Gerizzim by John Hyrcanus, held constant communion with the temple of Jerusalem, even though Gabinius, when he was governor of Syria, had built the Samaritans another; and in relation to this communion it is, that our Saviour tells the same woman, speaking of himself among other Galileans, 'we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews.'

^d The great multitude that accompanied our Saviour, and the little or no provision that he usually carried with him, made it necessary for some to go before to make preparation for his reception; and his two apostles, James and John, are supposed to be the persons employed in this capacity; because we find them, in particular, resenting the indignity put upon their master.—*Calmel's Dictionary*.

^e Josephus tells us,—'That, as it was an usual thing for the Galileans to travel by the way of Samaria to Jerusalem, upon the celebration of their festivals, one time, as they passed by a village, called Nais, under the jurisdiction of Samaria, and situated in the great Plain, there happened a quarrel between the passengers and villagers, wherein several of the Galileans were slain, and which afterwards occasioned a civil war between these two provinces.' And as it was a common thing for the Samaritans to be angry with the Galileans in general for passing by their temple to go to Jerusalem; so they might much more resent it in our Saviour, because as he was accounted a prophet sent from God, by this action he plainly decided the controversy between them and the Jews, touching the place which God had appointed for his religious worship.—*Joseph. Antiq. b. 20, c. 5; Jewish Wars, b. 2, c. 11, and Whilby's Annotations*.

^f The history of Elias, to which the apostles refer us, is doubtless that, where, by the direction of God, that prophet called for fire from heaven to destroy those captains and their companies whom king Ahaziah sent out to apprehend him, 2 Kings i. 10, &c. And when these two apostles desired the like judgment upon the village of Samaria, for refusing to receive their master, they verified their name of being *sons of thunder*, which, upon account of their fiery zeal, their master had before given them, (Mark iii. 17.)

^g What the two apostles had to allege in behalf of their intended severity against these Samaritans, was,—'That they were schismatics, and had set up another temple in opposition to that at Jerusalem; that they were heretics, and, together with the worship of the God of Israel, had mixed that of pagan idols; that the person whom they had affronted, had a character much superior to that of Elias; and that, by an exemplary punishment inflicted upon this village, they might convince the rest of the Samaritans of God's displeasure against their way of worship, and of the divine mission of their master, who was the true Messiah. But, notwithstanding these plausible allegations, our Saviour rebuked them, and in his rebuke gave them to understand, that a spirit of severity towards erroneous persons, in whomsoever it is found, is highly opposite to the calm temper of Christianity, which is 'pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good works,' (James iii. 17,) and that it was repugnant to the end for which he came into the world, which was to discountenance all fierceness and rage, and furious zeal, that occasion so many mischiefs among mankind, and to beget in all his followers such a disposition as exerts itself in 'love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and meekness,' (Gal. v. 22, 23,) even to those of the most contrary tempers and persuasion.—

Whilby's Annotations.

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care to inform them, that the marks of a Christian were meekness and love, not fury and revenge; that the true end and design of his coming into the world 'was, not to destroy, but to save men's lives;' and, that he might prove his doctrine by his practice, when ten leprous persons, who came out of the neighbourhood, where he had been so rudely treated, presented themselves with loud cries to him for help, his compassion was as ready to relieve, as their necessity to ask; for while they were going to ^a show themselves to the priest, as he directed them, they all found themselves cured. But see the great ingratitude of human nature! Of the ten who received this miraculous blessing, but one returned to give our Saviour thanks, and he was a Samaritan.

Having thus returned good for evil, and the greatest kindness for the most palpable affront, our Lord proceeded on his journey, and came to another village where he lodged that night; but before he arrived at Jerusalem, he sent out seventy ^b of his disciples, by two and two together, in the same manner as he had sent his twelve apostles, into those places which he himself, in a short time, intended to visit, and gave them instructions much of the same import with what, upon the like occasion, he had given his apostles.

The feast of tabernacles always continued eight days; but, for some time after his arrival, our Saviour did not appear publicly, which occasioned no small inquiry, and various discourses concerning him; some saying that he was a good man, and others an impostor, who deluded the people. At length, when every one began to despair of seeing him, about the middle of the feast, he showed himself openly, and went and taught in the temple, to the great admiration of the Jews, who were not a little surprised to find him, whose education had been

^a By the priests, to whom our Saviour remits these lepers, we are to understand the priests at Jerusalem; for we can hardly suppose that he would send them to those of mount Gerizzim, when himself, both in his words and practice, had sufficiently declared the illegality of their institution: 'and therefore, by sending them to Jerusalem, where they were to make their offerings for their cleansing,' (Lev. xiv. 2, etc.) he not only decided the controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans, but gave them likewise to understand, that, before they reached Jerusalem, he would undoubtedly heal them.—*Whitby's Annotations and Hammond's Paraphrase.*

^b In place of the common version, Luke xvi., we should rather read *seventy others*, not *other seventy*, as our translation has it, which seems to intimate that he had appointed seventy before this time, though, probably, the word *other* has a reference to the twelve chosen first: he not only chose twelve disciples to be constantly with him; but he chose seventy others to go before him. Our blessed Lord formed every thing in his church, on the model of the Jewish church; and why? Because it was the pattern shown by God himself, the divine form, which pointed out the heavenly substance which now began to be established in its place. As he before had chosen twelve apostles, in reference to the twelve patriarchs who were the chiefs of the twelve tribes and the heads of the Jewish church, he now publicly appointed (for so the word *ἀποστόλων* means) seventy others, as Moses did the seventy elders whom he associated with himself to assist him in the government of the people. (Exod. xviii. 19, xxiv. 1—9.) These Christ sent by two and two: 1. To teach them the necessity of concords among the ministers of righteousness. 2. That in the mouth of two witnesses every thing might be established. And 3. That they might comfort and support each other in their difficult labour. See on Mark vi. 7. Several MSS. and Versions have seventy-two. Sometimes the Jews chose six out of each tribe: this was the number of the great sanhedrim. The names of these seventy disciples are found in the margin of some ancient MSS., but this authority is questionable.—Ed.

destitute of all learning, so perfect in the Scriptures. But, to obviate this exception, he gave them to understand, that the doctrine wherein he instructed them, was not of human acquisition, but divine inspiration; and that it was a very base and ungenerous thing in them, to endeavour to take away the life of one, who taught them nothing but what was agreeable to the law of Moses, whereof they made so loud a profession. In this manner he preached to the people for the remaining part of the feast; and, ^c on the last and greatest day thereof, took occasion, from the custom of fetching water from the fountain of Siloah in great pomp, and pouring it upon the altar of burnt-offerings in great abundance, to acquaint them with the future effusion of the Holy Ghost, which he intended to send down upon all those that believed in him.^d

Those who knew the great hatred which the ruling part of the nation had conceived against him, admired to hear him speak with so much freedom and intrepidity; and those who had seen the number and greatness of his miracles, were by them convinced that he was the true Messiah; but the prejudice of his being a Galilean, and not acknowledged by any of their rulers and learned rabbis, led others into a contrary persuasion. In the confusion, officers were sent from the sanhedrim to apprehend him; but they were so taken with his person and preaching, that they became his disciples; for,

^c From the twenty-ninth chapter of the book of Numbers we learn, that on the first day of this feast, thirteen bullocks were to be offered: on the second, twelve; on the third, eleven; on the fourth, ten; on the fifth, nine; on the sixth, eight; on the seventh, seven; and on the eighth, or last, only one; so that, in regard to the sacrifices, the last day was the least of all, and yet the Jews accounted it the greatest, because on that day the King of Israel, as the Talmudists love to speak, was entertained by his own people only, and not by those of any other nation. For their tradition is, that on the first day of the feast their ancestors when the temple was standing, sacrificed seventy bullocks for the seventy nations (for they supposed just so many) that are upon the face of the earth; but on the last day no more than one, but that in the name of the people of Israel only. And, as they imagine that an earthly prince may sometimes instead of a vast entertainment, desire but a small collation with his first favourite, that they may have an opportunity of some familiar converse together; so upon the account of the intimate friendship with God, which the Jews on that day thought themselves admitted to, and the excessive joy which, from the sense of that friendship, they expressed in all the outward significations of music, singing, and dancing, the last day of the feast of tabernacles was always accounted the greatest.—*Surenkusii Conciliaiones, in loca V. T. apud Johan.*

^d The last day grew into high esteem with the nation because on the preceding seven days, they held that sacrifices were offered not so much for themselves, as for the whole world. They offered, in the course of them, seventy bullocks for the seventy nations of the world; but the eighth was wholly on their own behalf. They had then this solemn offering of water, the reason of which is this;—at the passover the Jews offered an omer to obtain from God his blessing on their harvest; at Pentecost, their first fruits, to request his blessing on the fruits of the trees; and in the feast of tabernacles they offered water to God, partly referring to the water from the rock in the wilderness, (1 Cor. x. 4,) but chiefly to solicit the blessing of rain on the approaching seed-time. These waters they drew out of Siloah, and brought them into the temple with the sound of the trumpet and great rejoicing. "He who hath not seen the rejoicing on the drawing of this water, hath seen no rejoicing at all, (*Succah*. fol. li. 1.—*Lightfoot*.) Christ, alluding to these customs, proclaims, 'if any man thirst let him come unto me.' He takes, as very usual with him, the present occasion of the water brought from Siloah, to summon them to him as the true fountain.—Ed.

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upon their return, they told the council that they could not execute their office, because ^a ‘never man spake like him;’ so that the Pharisees, who were part of the assembly, being more enraged at their reason which they gave than by the neglect of their duty, upbraided them for being so easily seduced, and for following the error of an ignorant mob; until Nicodemus, who had formerly conversed with our Lord, and was indeed a secret disciple of his, seeing with what violence his enemies were bent against him, could not forbear interposing in his behalf, by urging the unlawfulness of condemning a person without hearing; so that, after some reflections thrown upon him, as a favourer of this Galilean, ^b who could have no pretensions, as they said, to the title of a prophet, the assembly ^c broke up, without proceeding any farther against him; because, indeed, as yet his time was not fully come.

In the evening, Jesus repaired to the mount of Olives, about a mile from the city, and where he sometimes used to pass the night with his apostles. Early next morning he returned to the temple, and as he was teaching the people that were gathered about him, the Scribes and Pharisees brought in a woman, taken in the act of adultery, and desired him to give his judgment in the case. Their purpose was to find an occasion of accusing him, either of assuming a judicial power, if he condemned her, or of nulling the law, if he acquitted her. But he, as if he had not much minded them, stooped down, and wrote ^d something with his finger upon the dust of the

pavement; till, upon their importuning him for an answer, he raised himself up, and said, ^e ‘He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone;’ and so stooping down, wrote as before. This unexpected answer baffled these insidious accusers, who, thoroughly convinced of their own crimes, retired, one by one, and ^f left the woman alone; so that, when our Lord lift up himself again, and found none but the woman standing by him, he asked her, what was become of her accusers, and whether any one had condemned her? And when he understood, by her answer, that no one had, ^g ‘neither do I condemn thee,’ said he, ‘go, and sin no more.’

and others again, that it might rather be that passage in the psalmist: ‘Unto the ungodly said God, Why dost thou preach my laws, and takest my covenant in thy mouth? Whereas thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst unto him, and hast been partaker with the adulterers.’ (Ps. l. 16, &c.) But all this is mere guess-work: and it seems more prudent to say nothing of the actions of our Saviour, when we are not admitted to the reasons of them.—*Calnet's Commentary*, and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

^e The rabbinical writers tell us, that when a man or woman was convicted of adultery they were led out to the brow of a hill, with their hands tied behind their backs, where their accusers pushed them down headlong; that, if with the fall they were killed, there was no more done to them; but if they were still alive, the same accusers were to roll great stones upon them, and if these did not despatch them, the company then all took up stones, and quite overwhelmed them with them. But we have nothing of all this in the law of Moses. In all the places where he makes mention of this punishment, we only find, that the criminal was to be led out of the city, ‘and stoned with stones till he died,’ and that ‘the hands of the witnesses should be first upon him, to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people,’ Deut. xvii. 7. It is in allusion to this passage, that our Saviour says, ‘Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone;’ because it badly becomes those who are guilty either of the same or greater crimes, to be so very zealous for the punishment of others. This however hinders not, but that magistrates, who are intrusted with the execution of the laws, should put them in force against malefactors, even though themselves are not entirely exempt from sin; but still it reminds them that they should execute judgment with compassion and tenderness, and as much moderation as the law will allow them; considering that they themselves are not free from guilt, but as obnoxious to punishment for other sins, as those poor creatures are, who have fallen into crimes that are punishable by human judicatures.—*Calnet's Commentary*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

^f In the very next words it is said, that the woman ‘stood in the midst of the people,’ and our Lord’s apostles, who were his constant attendants, were doubtless not far from him; the meaning therefore of the expression must be, that she was left without any of her accusers, who, out of shame, sneaked away; being convicted in their consciences, that, whatever the woman was, they were no proper evidences against her; for, ‘not only the accuser, but not even the rebuker is to be endured,’ (says Tully, in *Verron. Orat.* 5.)—the man who is himself found guilty in that which he blames in others.’ Nor is it to be wondered, that upon this occasion, all the woman’s accusers departed from her, since the Jews themselves own, that adulteries did multiply under the second temple, when their rabbins came to permit every one, ‘to have four or five wives, and said, that they sinned not, if, after the example of the patriarchs, when they saw a beautiful woman, they desired to have her.’—*Just. Mart. Dial.* p. 363; *Calnet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^g Both Selden and Fagius are of opinion, that this woman might come under the number of them whose case is thus represented in the words of Deuteronomy: ‘If a damsel that is a virgin, be betrothed to a husband, and a man find her in the city, and he lie with her, then shall ye bring them both out unto the gate of the city, and ye shall stone them with stones, that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and

^a In these words there are two things remarkable: 1st, The power of Christ’s preaching to change the frame and temper of men’s spirits; for these men came with hearts alienated from Christ, and with intention to apprehend and carry him before the chief priests, but returned with great admiration of his excellency and worth. 2dly, The honesty and integrity of these men is very remarkable; for they do not return with a pretence that they feared the multitude, and therefore thought it dangerous to apprehend him, but ingenuously confess that they could not prevail with themselves to lay violent hands upon a person whose discourses were so excellent and divine.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^b Our blessed Saviour was neither by birth nor by descent a Galilean; but, admitting he had been so, it is a false assertion to say, that no prophet ever arose out of Galilee since Nahum, though originally of the tribe of Simeon, according to the testimony of St Jerome, who himself was a Galilean, was born in that province, and in Elcisi, the same town which that father came from; since Jonas was undoubtedly of Gath-hepher, in the tribe of Zebulun, which lay in the land of Galilee (2 Kings xiv. 25.), and in the opinion of several, Malachi was of the same tribe, and born in the city of Sapha. For, as there can be no reason in nature, so is there no declaration of the divine will why a Galilean should not be inspired with the gift of prophecy as well as any other Jew.—*Poole's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*, and *Calnet's Commentary*.

^c Some are of opinion that the party of Sadducees in the council, who held the rites and traditions of the Pharisees in great contempt, joined with Nicodemus, in not having Christ condemned without a fair hearing, which was no more than what the law required. (Deut. i. 16, 17.)—*Poole's Annotations*.

^d It is generally agreed, that upon this occasion our Lord wrote some memorable sentence or other, but what that sentence was, the conjectures of learned men have been various. Some have imagined that it was the reproof against a rigid and uncharitable temper, which occurs in his sermon on the mount: ‘Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?’ (Mat. vii. 3.) others, that it was the very words which, upon raising himself up, he pronounced to the woman’s accuser: ‘He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,’ (John viii. 7.)

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After this interruption, Jesus returned to the business of instructing the people, and, in a sublime discourse, opened several great mysteries of Christianity, namely, his divine mission, his co-equality with the Father, his ability to give eternal life to his followers, and the necessity of believing in him, which would be more evident after his crucifixion; and thence taking occasion to expose the wickedness and degeneracy of those, who sought to take away his life, and how unlike to the behaviour of the sons of God and Abraham whom they boasted themselves to be, such causeless and inveterate malice was, he so provoked them with his severe reflections, and especially with the superiority which he claimed above Abraham that they took up stones to cast at him, had he not miraculously conveyed himself out of their hands.^a

Before our Lord left Jerusalem, the seventy disciples, whom he had sent to preach the gospel, returned from their journey and ministry, greatly rejoicing, because the very devils, by virtue of his name,^b were subjected to them; whereupon our Lord promised them still greater success; invested them with power to tread upon the most venomous beasts,^c and all the malignant instruments

the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife,' Deut. xxii. 23, 24. The punishment of stoning, which this law mentions, and the accusers of this woman here insist on, seem to favour this notion; and the indulgence which our Saviour showed her, looks as if she had suffered some kind of violence, though she was not entirely innocent. Our Saviour, however, could not act in the capacity of a judge, because that was no part of his present ministry: though therefore he was so far from approving her conduct, that he sufficiently blamed her, in bidding her 'sin no more,' yet was he restrained from pronouncing any sentence of condemnation upon her; because the end of his coming at this time into the world was, 'not to judge the world, but to save it,' John xii. 47.—*Selden, Uxor. Heb. b. iii. c. 11; Fugius in Deut. xxii. 22. and Calmet's Commentary.*

^a After describing various punishments which were inflicted by the Jews upon offenders and criminals, Lewis, (in his *Origines Hebraeae*, vol. i. p. 85) says, "there was another punishment, called the rebels' beating, which was often fatal, and inflicted by the mob with their fists, or staves, or stones, without mercy, or the sentence of the judges. Whoever transgressed against a prohibition of the wise men, or of the scribes, that had its foundation in the law, was delivered over to the people to be used in this manner, and was called a son of rebellion. The frequent taking up of stones by the people to stone our Saviour, and the incursion upon him, St Stephen for blasphemy, as they would have it, and upon St Paul for defiling the temple as they supposed were of this nature."—*En.*

^b The power which our Saviour gave to the Seventy, when he sent them out to preach the gospel, was only that of healing the sick wherever they went, (Luke x. 9.) but finding that, upon naming their Master's name, they were able likewise to cure those that were possessed of devils, this they made the greater matter of their joy, and, at their return, told it with more pleasure, because it was no part of their commission. It is to be observed, however, that our Lord himself cast out devils by a divine power residing in himself; his disciples only, in virtue of his name, or by a power derived from him. Seeing then that this power accompanied them, in all parts of the world, it was necessary that Christ's presence should be with them every where, and such a presence was a certain proof of his being God.—*Whitby's Annotations, and Hammond's Paraphrase.*

^c These words seem to have a plain allusion to those of the psalmist, where, under the metaphor of 'treading on the scorpion and basilisk,' (Ps. xci. 13.) God promises the good man a more than common protection from all sorts of dangers and enemies. But there is no reason, however, I think, why our Saviour's words may not here be taken in a literal sense, since they agree so well with what he promises all true believers in another place, 'they shall take up serpents,' as we find one fastened upon

of Satan, without the least harm: and, at the same time, gave them assurance of a blessing more peculiarly theirs, namely, that their ^d names were recorded in heaven; and so broke out into a rapture of joy, glorifying God for concealing the mysteries of the gospel from the great and wise, and revealing them to the simple and ignorant, and to his disciples more especially, who, in virtue of that revelation, enjoyed a happiness which many kings and prophets had in vain desired.

Our Lord had scarce ended his discourse, when a doctor of the law stood up, and inquired of him, what was necessary to be done for the attainment of that eternal life,^e which he was so very liberal in promising to his followers. Whereupon our Lord remitted him to the law, which, according to the doctor's own account, consisted chiefly in the love of God and the love of our neighbour. But when he demanded farther what the notion of a neighbour^f implied? our Saviour thought proper to answer this question, by telling him, "that, once upon a time, a certain Jew, as he was travelling in the road between^g Jerusalem and Jericho, was robbed,

St Paul's hand without doing him any harm, (Acts xxviii. 3.) 'and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them,' Mark xvi. 18.—*Whitby's Annotations; and Calmet's Commentary.*

^d The words allude to a known custom in well-governed cities, where registers are kept of the names of their inhabitants, and do plainly denote the title which believers have to eternal happiness; but by no means an absolute election to it. For, as a citizen, when he misbehaves egregiously, and thereupon becomes infamous, has his name razed out of the city-register, and is himself disenfranchised of all his privileges; so we read of some, of whom Christ threatens 'to blot out their names out of the book of life,' (Rev. xxii. 19.) For, "as men are written in this book," says St Basil (in Is. iv. 3.) when they are converted from vice to virtue, so are they blotted out of it, when they backslide from virtue to vice." Of the twelve we read that one was certainly a reprobate; and though it becomes us to hope better of the Seventy; yet our Saviour's words give us no room to think that they were all predestinated to eternal life, since his meaning only is, that his disciples, instead of estimating their happiness from the power of working miracles, should rather make it consist in this, that he had called, chosen and separated them from great numbers that would perish; that he had given them the grace of faith and admission to the Christian covenant, but that on themselves it was incumbent, by the preservation of their faith, and the practice of good works comporting therewith, to make their calling and election sure.—*Hammond and Whitby's Annotations, and Calmet's Commentary.*

^e The law of Moses does no where expressly promise eternal life to those that observed its precepts. It is wholly taken up with temporal blessings and prosperities; and yet the generality of the Jews were not destitute of the hopes of another life, because their writers, a little before, and after the captivity, are very full of it, so that it became the prevailing opinion of the whole nation, and was received by their two principal sects, the Pharisees and Essenes: for, as for the Sadducees, who had other notions of the matter, their religion was very little, and their principles purely Epicurean.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^f In our Saviour's time, the Pharisees had restrained the word neighbour, to signify those of their own nation, their own religion, and their own friends only: and all who differ from them in any of these respects, they indulged the people the liberty to hate; nor would they permit them to extend the least office of common civility to any such. But our Saviour overthrew these false maxims of the Jewish doctors, and reduced the precept of universal charity to its first intention, when, in this parable of the Jew and the Samaritan, he plainly demonstrated, that no difference of nation or religion, no quarrel or resentment, no enmity or alienation of affections, can exempt us from owing any person to be our neighbour.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^g Between Jerusalem and Jericho, which were about seven leagues distant, the road was very infamous for murders and

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stripped, barbarously used, and left almost dead with his wounds; that by chance a priest^a came that way, and saw the poor wretch weltering in his blood; but the horror of the sight did not affect him; he passed along unconcerned; that next came a Levite; but he too was as void of tenderness and compassion as was the priest, though both of them were of the same country with the sufferer; that at last a Samaritan, a stranger, and one abhorred by the Jews, seeing this distressed person, with great compassion came to him, raised his head, recalled his fainting spirits, and closed his gaping wounds with the best medicines^b he had then, mounting him on his own horse, he gently conveyed him to the first inn, where, at his own cost, he entertained him, while he staid with him, and, at his departure, ^c promised the host to be at whatever expenses more should accrue." From which plain narration, the Doctor himself^d could not but conclude, that the Samaritan was the neighbour to the person in distress, and consequently that the

notion of a neighbour comprehended men of all nations and all religions whatever.

As soon as the feast of tabernacles was ended, our Lord departed from Jerusalem, and, in the beginning of his journey, went to a small village called Bethany, about two miles east of Jerusalem, where he was joyfully received by a woman named Martha, who, with her sister Mary, and her brother Lazarus, was highly in favour with him. While Martha was busy in making preparation for his entertainment, her sister Mary sat with the company listening to his instructions; and when Martha complained to him that her sister had left the whole burden of the business upon her, and thereupon desired him to send her to her assistance, our Lord commended Mary's choice, and though he did not slight Martha's civility, yet her sister's devoutness and attention to his doctrine,^e which was one thing chiefly necessary, he preferred before it.

Upon his return to Galilee, as he was one day praying with his disciples in a private place,^f they, taking it into consideration how necessary it was for them to be directed in the right performance of that duty, desired of him to compose a form of prayer for their use, as the Baptist had done for his disciples. Whereupon he not only gave them the same excellent form, called the Lord's prayer, which he had given them about eighteen months before, in his sermon on the mount, but encouraged them likewise, from the consideration of God's goodness and fatherly affection (far more indulgent to his children than any earthly parent's were to theirs) to be constant in their petitions to him, with fervour,^g importunity, and an indefatigable perseverance as the likeliest way to obtain a gracious answer to them.

Not long after this, upon our Lord's curing a demoniac that was dumb, the Pharisees renewed their old senseless cavil, of his ejecting devils by Beelzebub, which he confuted by the same arguments he had formerly used upon that account; and when they again demanded of him a sign from heaven, he again made them the same reply. Nay not only so, but when he was invited to dinner one day by a certain person of that sect, who was not a little offended at his sitting down to meat without washing his hands, he took occasion from thence to inveigh very severely against their ridi-

robberies; for in it was a place called 'the valley of Adommim,' or 'of bloody men,' because of the great quantity of blood that was there spilt; and for this reason it is that our Lord lays the scene of his parable in this place.—*Calmet's Commentary*.—This road is described by Buckingham as being of the most wild and gloomy character, passing through a series of rocky defiles, and on the edges of cliffs and precipices. It is considered the most dangerous in Palestine, and Mr Wilson remarks, that a country more favourable for the attacks of banditti, and dens better adapted for concealment, can hardly be imagined. It is remarkable, that both Chateaubriand, and Sir Frederick Henniker met with serious adventures with the robbers of this region.—*Ed*.

^a To make the description more lively, our Saviour instances in two men, a priest and a Levite, who took no pity of this Jew in distress, though they were of the same religion and country; nay, though they were the ministers and teachers of the religion which he professed, and might therefore be presumed, even in virtue of their office and education, to have more extensive notions, and hearts more capable of tender impressions, than the ruder vulgar: and, for the same reason, he introduces a Samaritan acting a different part, and taking all imaginable care of this wounded Jew, though between Jews and Samaritans there was a most inveterate hatred.

^b The words in the text are, pouring in wine and oil; oil, to ease and assuage the pain; and wine, to cleanse and heal the wound: and these things the good Samaritan had about him, because the inns in the eastern countries, even as it is still, afforded nothing, but barely house-room; and therefore the custom was, for the traveller to carry all kinds of necessaries, both for his bed and board, along with him.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^c The words in the text are, 'when he departed he took out twopence,' (Luke x. 35.) The *δυναρίον*, which we render a penny, was a kind of Roman coin, much about sevenpence halfpenny of our money. In the New Testament, for it never occurs in the Old, it is usually put for a piece of money in general, that is for a shekel, which was the most common coin among the Jews before they became subject to the Greeks and Romans; so that, in this sense, what the Samaritan gave the host amounted to five shillings, or thereabout, which is more consistent with the rest of his character than that he should leave so small a matter behind him.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d Had our Saviour propounded the parable in this manner, that a certain Samaritan fell among thieves, and that a priest and a Levite passed by without offering him any help, this doctor of the law might have replied, that he did nothing but right, because the Samaritan was no neighbour of theirs: but, now, as he makes a Jew the subject of the parable, and the object of the Samaritan's compassion, he draws him in to acknowledge the voice of nature, which declares that every man is neighbour to his fellow-creature, and that the law of Moses has not annulled, but perfected the law of nature, by commanding us to 'love our neighbour as ourselves,' (Lev. xix. 18.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^e Interpreters have given themselves some trouble in determining what that one thing is which our Saviour accounts needful. Some of the ancients are of opinion that our Lord, in this expression, told Martha that one dish was enough. But besides the lowness of the sense, the great company that attended our Lord, seventy disciples and twelve apostles, to be sure, if no more, shows the incongruousness of it. Others will have this one thing needful to be a life of meditation and contemplation, which Mary had all along addicted herself to; but her choosing to take advantage of our Saviour's company, to hear him for an hour or two rather, than prepare a supper for him, is not foundation enough for this conjecture; and therefore we cannot but think that the most general interpretation concerning the care of the soul with reference to eternity is the best.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^f These disciples must have been some of the seventy who were not present when our Lord delivered his sermon on the mount, wherein he first of all prescribed to his apostles this form of prayer.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^g The word *ἀνδρεία* properly signifies *impudence*, and might here be used in conformity to the saying of the Jews, "The impudent man overcomes the modest and the bashful, how much more God, who is goodness itself."—*W'hitby's Annotations*.

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culous superstition, in affecting outward neatness in their manner of living, while they neglected to cleanse their souls from internal pollutions. And so proceeding to reproach both them and the scribes, the teachers of the law, with their pride and prevarication, their hypocrisy and spirit of persecution, he so exasperated them, that they used all possible methods to ensnare him in his speech, and to find some accusation against him, whereby they might destroy him.

One of the company, however, seeing with what authority he reprov'd and determin'd among the people, desired of him ^a to arbitrate between him and his brother concerning an estate which had lately fallen to them. But this office he chose to decline, and thence took occasion to preach against covetousness, or placing our felicity in worldly possessions; and to enforce this, he propounded the parable of a certain rich man, who, when he had acquired estate enough, proposed to indulge himself in voluptuousness, but was sadly disappointed by the intervention of a sudden death. He therefore exhorted his disciples not to be too anxious about the things of this life, but to cast their care upon God's providence, who, having promised them a kingdom in heaven, would not fail of supplying them with what was necessary here. He exhorted them to charity, to watchfulness, to preparation against the day of judgment, or the arrest of death, and, under the emblem of stewards or governors in great men's houses, recommended gentleness and temperance, and cautioned them against indulging themselves in any kind of excess upon the confidence of their Lord's absence or delay.

While he was thus discoursing to his disciples, news was brought him of ^b the massacre which Pilate had

caused to be made of some Galileans, while they were offering their sacrifices at the altar; and the consequence which he drew from thence, as well as from another sad accident that had lately happened in Jerusalem, where the fall of the tower of Siloam ^c had destroyed no less than eighteen persons, was, not that these sufferers were greater sinners than their neighbours, but that their sufferings were intended to lead others to repentance, which, if they did not, in all probability they would meet with the like or worse judgments. ^d And then, to engage them all to a speedy repentance, he set forth the patience of the Almighty towards them, in the parable of a fig-tree, which the master of the vineyard ordered to be cut down, because for three years, ^e it had borne no fruit; but, upon the gardener's

there acquired such a multitude of followers and abettors as made Josephus call him Galilæus, as well as Gaulonites. (*Antiq.* b. xviii. c. 2.) Nay all his followers in general, though they were of different provinces by birth, obtained the same name. But when they came to Jerusalem at one of the great festivals, and began to spread these seditious notions against Cæsar, Pilate, who was then the Roman governor, having had intelligence of it, caused a considerable number of them to be slain in the temple while they were sacrificing.—*Whitby's* and *Beausobre's* Annotations.

^c The fountain of Siloam rose at the foot of the wall of the east part of the city of Jerusalem. The tower called after its name was doubtless built upon the wall not far from it; and being now become ancient, might fall upon such a number of people, either passing by or standing under it. But how this accident came to pass we have no manner of certainty, because this passage in St Luke is the only place where we find any mention made of this piece of history.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^d To verify this prediction of our Saviour's upon the impatient Jews, we may remember what Josephus has told us of them, namely, that under the government of Cumanus, twenty thousand of them were destroyed about the temple. (*Antiq.* b. xx. c. 4.) That, upon the admission of the Idumæans into the city, eight thousand and five hundred of the high priest's party were slain, inasmuch that there was a flood of blood quite round the temple. (*Jewish War*, b. iv. c. 7.) That, upon the three-fold faction that happened in Jerusalem, before the siege of the Romans, 'the temple was everywhere polluted with slaughter; the priests were slain in the exercise of their function; many who came to worship fell before their sacrifices; and the dead bodies of strangers and natives were promiscuously blended together, and sprinkled the altar with their blood;' (*Jewish War*, b. vi. c. 1.) and that, upon the Romans taking the city and temple, "mountains of dead bodies were piled up about the altar; streams of blood ran down the steps of the temple; several were destroyed by the fall of towers, and others choked in the sultry ruins of the galleries over the porches." (*Jewish War*, b. vii. c. 10.)

^a The practice among the Jews of referring civil matters to ecclesiastical persons as judges, began in the captivity of Babylon, when, by this means, the Jews avoided the bringing their differences before heathen judges. Under the dominion of the Romans, they were indulged a greater liberty, and had civil courts made up of persons of their own religion. In cases of private difference between man and man, it was usual to make either the consistory of three, or some persons chosen by the contending parties, arbitrators. Whether both these brothers had agreed to refer their difference to our Lord's determination, or this one of them only desired him to interpose his authority, if not to enjoin, at least to persuade, his brother to come to an accommodation, it is difficult to say, because the scripture is silent. But this we may observe, that the ordinary rule of inheritance among the Jews was, for the eldest son to have a double portion of his father's estate, and the rest to be divided equally among the other children; but in what came by the mother, the eldest had no prerogative above the rest; the division among them was equal. Whatever then the controversy between these brothers was, our Saviour might very justly refuse to intermeddle in it; and that, not only because it was inconsistent with his design of coming into the world, which was to promote men's spiritual, rather than their temporal interests, but because it might probably have drawn upon him the envy and calumny of the Jewish rulers, who might be apt to say that he took upon him an office to which he had no call, in prejudice to them who were legally appointed to it.—*Poole's* and *Whitby's* Annotations, and *Calmet's Commentary.*

^b The general opinion is, that this piece of history relates to the sedition which Judas Gaulonites raised against the Roman government in Judea, when he and one Sadducus, a Pharisee, possessed the people with a notion, "that taxes were a badge of their slavery; that they ought to acknowledge no sovereign but God himself, nor pay any tribute but to his temple." It was in Galilee, very probably, where this Judas first broached these sentiments, and

^c Some of the ancients are of opinion that by these three years we are to understand the three dispensations under which mankind have lived, namely, under the natural law, from the beginning of the world to the time of Moses; under the written law from Moses to Jesus Christ; and under the evangelical law, from Jesus Christ to the end of the world. Others rather mean by them the three kinds of government under which the Jews had lived, namely, the government of judges, from Joshua to Saul; the government of kings, from Saul to the Babylonish captivity; and the government of high priests, from the captivity to the time of Jesus Christ. But these explications are a little too arbitrary; nor will the three years of our Saviour's preaching among the Jews come up to the point, because the Jews were not destroyed the next year, as the barren fig-tree was to be cut down, but forty years after our Lord's ascension. All that is meant by the expression therefore is, that God gave them all the time and all the means that could be desired, to make them inexcusable; and the term of three years seems rather to be mentioned, because the fruit of some fig-trees comes not to maturity till the third year.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations.*

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promising to use a more than ordinary care and diligence about it, he was prevailed on to let it stand one year longer, but with this determination, that if it still continued unfruitful, he would not then fail to cut it down.

Every sabbath-day our Lord's custom was to preach in one of the Jewish synagogues, and, while he was thus employed, he observed a woman, who, for the space of eighteen years, had laboured under a spirit of infirmity, ^a which bowed down her body so, that she was not able to lift herself up. Here was a proper object for his compassion and power to exert themselves; and therefore, calling the woman to him, he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she became straight, and glorified God. At this the ruler of the synagogue ^b became so very envious and displeased, that he told the people there were six days in the week allowed by God for labour, and that on those they might come for cure, but not on the sabbath, which was a day appointed for rest. But our Lord soon made him ashamed of his hypocrisy, ^c by an argument drawn from their own practice of loosing an ox or an ass from the stall on the sabbath-day, and leading them away to watering; and much more then might he be permitted to cure on that day a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan for so many years had afflicted with a sore disease. Whereupon his adversaries were silenced, but the people were all glad, and rejoiced at his glorious actions.

The feast of dedication ^d was now approaching,

^a It is very evident the Jews apprehended that all remarkable disorders of body proceeded from the operation of some malignant demons. Perhaps they might draw an argument from what is said of Satan's agency in the affliction of Job (chap. i. and ii.), and from Ps. xci. 6. (comp. Septuagint) and 1 Sam. xvi. 14. They also considered Satan as having the power of death. (Heb. ii. 14.) And that in some maladies this was indeed the case, is intimated by our Lord's reply here (ver. 16.), and by St Paul's works (1 Cor. v. 5.), where he speaks of delivering an offender to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. The topic is very judiciously handled by that illustrious writer Mr Howey (see his works, vol. ii. pp. 360, 361); and there are some curious and entertaining remarks in Wolfius on this text.—*Doddridge's Expositor*.—Ed.

^b In every synagogue there was a considerable number of doctors of the law, who in the gospel are frequently called rulers or governors, and over these there was usually one chief president. But the person here seems not to have been the chief president, but one of the subordinate rulers, because we find him, not addressing himself particularly to Christ, (which, not improbably, had he been the president, he would have taken courage to do,) but only to the people in general; though by them he obliquely struck at our Saviour.—*Beausobre's Annotations*, and *Cabnet's Commentary*.

^c Our Saviour declared this ruler of the synagogue to be an hypocrite, partly because he placed his holiness in the observation of the ritual precepts of the law, such as bodily rest on the sabbath-day, to the disparagement of the works of mercy, and other great matters of eternal obligation; and partly because he pretended to a great zeal for the performance of God's commands, when, all the while, he was rather actuated by a malevolent envy to the glory of Christ, which he, to whom his heart was open, perfectly knew.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^d When Judas Maccabæus had cleansed the temple, which had been polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes, he again dedicated the altar; (1 Mac. iv. 59. and 2 Mac. x. 8.) and this is supposed to be the dedication, in memory of which the Jews continued to celebrate a feast, which fell out in the winter, in the month Chisleu, between the 13th and 14th of our November; and being the same, in all probability, with what in the gospel is called *τὸ ἑορταζόμενον*, was honoured and approved by our Saviour's presence, though but of human institution.—*Whitby's*

when, after several removals, our Lord repaired again to Jerusalem, and, as he was walking in the streets on the sabbath-day, ^e saw a poor man that was blind from his very birth. Upon his calling the man to him, his disciples asked him, whether it was the *f* man's own or his parents' sin that had brought that calamity upon him? But his blindness, as he told them, was not sent for a punishment of any one's sin, but ^g for the greater manifestation of God's glory; and so, spitting upon the ground, he made some clay, and having anointed his eyes therewith, he ^h sent him to wash them in the pool of Siloam; which accordingly he did, and returned with

Annotations, *Hammond's Paraphrase*, and *Echard's Eccl. Hist.*, b. i. c. 5.

^e It has been observed before, that our Saviour made choice of the sabbath-day as a day wherein he did many of his mighty works. It was on this day that he cured the impotent man who lay at the pool of Bethesda (John v. 10.) on this day that he healed him who had the withered hand, (Mat. xii. 10.) and now on this day likewise that he gave sight to the man who was born blind, (John ix. 14.) and possibly he might choose this, because it was the day whereon he ordinarily preached that heavenly doctrine, which he confirmed by these miraculous works; or perhaps, that he might instruct the Jews, if they would have received instruction, in the right observation of the sabbath, and arm his disciples against that pernicious doctrine of the Pharisees, namely, that it was not lawful to do good, or perform works of mercy and compassion on that day.—*Poole's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^f What the disciples might mean by the sin of the blind man's parents, is no hard matter to solve, considering the strict prohibition in the law, (Lev. xx. 18.) of not coming near a menstruous woman, which was thought to have so ill an influence upon the child, as to make it obnoxious to leprosy, or mutilation, and might consequently be the cause of this person's blindness. But what we are to understand by his own sin, before he was born, is not so easy to be determined. That it cannot relate to the original sin which he brought into the world with him is evident, because all mankind, our Lord only excepted, are equally guilty of this; nor does this entail upon them any corporeal imperfection; and therefore the sin here intended must be something special and personal. Now, whoever considers that the opinion of the Platonists and Pythagoreans concerning the pre-existence of souls, their transmigration from one body to another, and being sent into bodies better or worse, according to their merit or demerit, had obtained among the Jews, and more especially among the Pharisees, need not much wonder to find our Lord's disciples infected with it, or, at least, desirous to know their master's sentiments about it. The author of the book of Wisdom, where speaking of himself, he tells us, 'that, being good, he came into a body undefiled,' that is, free from any notable infirmity, (chap. viii. 20.) gives countenance to this doctrine; and, in the writings of Philo, (on *Giants*, p. 285, and *Dreams*, p. 586.) and of Josephus, (*Jewish War*, b. ii. c. 12.) we have it confirmed to us. And therefore the disciples may well be supposed to inquire here, whether our Lord allowed of the prevailing notion, namely, that the soul of this man might be put into this imperfect body, for the punishment of what he had done, either in or out of the body, in a pre-existent state.—*Whitby's* and *Hammond's Annotations*, and *Cabnet's Commentary*.

^g It must not be thought that God did any ways actively concur to make this man blind, though, in his wisdom, he thought fit to leave this imperfection in the plastic matter whereof he was formed unrectified, that thereby he might show his miraculous power in giving sight to such an one for the confirmation of Christ's doctrine; thereby display his goodness, in illuminating both the soul and body of this man at once; and thereby give all others, who beheld this miraculous cure, a powerful motive to believe.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^h We read of nothing medicinal in this water, only our Lord was pleased to send the blind man to wash his eyes here, as a probation of his faith and obedience, in the same manner as, of old, Naaman the Syrian was sent to wash in the river Jordan. (2 Kings v. 10.)—*Poole's Annotations*.

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such perfect eyesight that his neighbours were amazed, and began to question whether he was the same man that used to sit begging, until he assured them that he was the very person; and, to satisfy them farther, not only told them who his physician was, but in what manner his cure was effected.

Various were the censures and opinions of men upon this occasion. The Pharisees, to diminish the credit of the miracle, said that Jesus could not be a prophet sent from God, ^a because he violated the sabbath; but others again replied, that no impostor could be permitted to work such miracles as had apparently the finger of God in them. Those who were averse to believe the miracle, or in hopes of making the thing look intricate, sent for the parents of the man that was cured, and asked them these three questions: Whether he was their son? Whether he was born blind? and Whether they knew how and by whom he was cured? To the two first questions they answered directly, that he was their son, and was born blind; but, as to the last, they referred them to him, who, as they told them, was of age to answer for himself; not daring to say any more for fear of the sanhedrim, who had made ^b an order to excommunicate

^a And yet they themselves acknowledge that a prophet might do and command things contrary to the rest required by the sabbath, which they also prove by the example of Joshua, who commanded that 'the ark should be carried round Jericho, the armed men going before and after it seven days,' one of which must be the sabbath (John vi.) How then could that which prophets, by the known principles of the Jews, were allowed to do, prove that Jesus was no prophet, especially if we consider that by these actions of mercy and goodness he did not indeed violate the rest of the sabbath, but only their corrupt traditions concerning it.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^b Exclusion from sacred worship, or excommunication, was not only an ecclesiastical punishment, but also a civil one; because in this theocratic republic, there was no distinction between the divine and the civil right. The fancies of the rabbins relative to the origin of excommunication are endless. Some affirm that Adam excommunicated Cain and his whole race; others, that excommunication began with Miriam for having spoken ill of Moses; others, again, find it in the Song of Deborah and Barak, (Judg. v. 23. 'Curse ye Meroz,') interpreting Meroz as a person who had refused to assist Barak. But it is most probable that the earliest positive mention of this punishment occurs after the return from the Babylonish captivity, in Ezra x. 7, 8, or in the anathema of Nehemiah (xiii. 5.) against those who had married strange women. In later times, according to the rabbinical writers, there were three degrees of excommunication among the Jews. The first was called נָדוּן (NDUN), removal or separation from all intercourse with society; this, in the New Testament, is frequently termed casting out of the synagogue. (John ix. 22. xvi. 2. Luke vi. 22, &c.) This was in force for thirty days, and might be shortened by repentance. During its continuance, the excommunicated party was prohibited from bathing, from shaving his head, or approaching his wife or any other person nearer than four cubits: but if he submitted to this prohibition, he was not debarred the privilege of attending the sacred rites. If, however, the party continued in his obstinacy after that time, the excommunication was renewed with additional solemn maledictions. This second degree was called חֶרֶם (CHEREM), which signifies to *anathematise* or devote to death: it involved an exclusion from the sacred assemblies. The third, and last degree of excommunication was termed שֶׁמֶאֱתָה (SHAM-ATHA) or מָרָא־אֲתָה (MARAN-ATHA), that is, the *Lord cometh*, or *may the Lord come*; intimating that those against whom it was fulminated had nothing more to expect but the terrible day of judgment. The condition of those who were excommunicated was the most deplorable that can be imagined. They were perpetually excluded from all the rights and privileges of the Jewish people, were debarred from all social intercourse, and were excluded from the temple and the

any person who should acknowledge Jesus to be Christ. Him therefore they began to examine; and to draw him from the good opinion he had conceived of his physician, bid him ascribe the glory of his cure wholly to God, and not to look upon Jesus with any veneration, who was a sinner and sabbath-breaker, and consequently could not come from God. To which the man boldly replied, "That it was very unaccountable that they should not perceive from whence the man was, whom God had endued with such a miraculous power of opening the eyes of one born blind, ^c a thing that was never heard of before since the world began; and that since it was a certain truth ^d that God heareth not sinners, if

synagogues, on pain of severe corporal punishment. Whoever had incurred this sentence was loaded with imprecations, as appears from Deut. xxvii. where the expression *curse* is *he*, is so often repeated: whence to *curse* and to *excommunicate* were equivalent terms with the Jews. And therefore St Paul says, that 'no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus anathema or accursed' (1 Cor. xii. 3.) that is, curses him as the Jews did, who denied him to be the Messiah, and excommunicated the Christians. In the second degree, they delivered the excommunicated party over to Satan, devoting him by a solemn curse: to this practice St Paul is supposed to allude, 1 Cor. v. 5; and in this sense he expresses his desire even to be 'accursed for his brethren,' (Rom. ix. 3.), that is, to be excommunicated, laden with curses, and to suffer all the miseries consequent on the infliction of this punishment, if it could have been of any service to his brethren the Jews. In order to impress the minds of the people with the greater horror, it is said that when the offence was published in the synagogue, all the candles were lighted, and when the proclamation was finished, they were extinguished, as a sign that the excommunicated person was deprived of the light of heaven; further, his goods were confiscated, his sons were not admitted to circumcision; and if he died without repentance or absolution, by the sentence of the judge a stone was to be cast upon his coffin or bier, in order to show that he deserved to be stoned.—*Horne's Introduction*, vol. iii. pp. 149, 150.

^c They who lose their sight by a disease may be cured; but no man, no not Moses or any of the prophets, ever did or ever could, without the assistance of a divine power, give sight to one born blind: for which reason the Jews reckon this among the signs of the Messiah, that he 'should open the eyes of the blind.'—*Whitby's Annotations.*—Rosenmuller, and Michaelis observe, that restoration of sight to those born blind has been recently effected by the famous surgeon Cheselden. But the former adds that therefore what Christ did in his time was a miracle. This, however, is not applicable to the true nature of a miracle. Restoring sight to the blind is, as it now appears, in certain cases possible, and therefore not miraculous, that is, not involving any thing contrary to the laws of nature. Yet this requires the most exquisite human skill and labour, and it would be equally a miracle to restore sight without these human means.—*Bloomfield's Crit. Dissert.*—Ed.

^d But doth not God hear sinners? Then whom can he hear, since no man liveth and committeth not sin against God? It is true indeed: but then the sinners which the poor man may be supposed here to mean are not those who become such through ignorance, weakness, or human infirmity, but such notorious and presumptive sinners as go on in their impieties with a high hand, and an hardened heart, of whom the Spirit of God declares, 'when they spread forth their hands, I will hide myself from them, and when they make many prayers I will not hear.' (Is. i. 15.) The maxim however is here to be understood not in a general but restrained sense, namely, that God useth not to honour notorious and flagitious sinners, especially when they pretend to come with a message from him, by giving them a power to work miracles, in order to confirm the truth of what they say. For this is the force of the poor man's argument, that Christ could not be such a notorious sinner as he was represented to him, because it was inconsistent with the attributes of God, to honour such persons with his presence and assistance, in doing such works as none could do, without a divine power committed to them.—*Poole's Annotations.*

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he were not sent, and empowered by God, he could never do such wonderful cures as these." This provoked them so highly that they first upbraided him with his former blindness, as a character of some extraordinary ill in him, and then cast him out of the synagogue with disgrace; but Jesus shortly after met him, and received him into his own church. He declared himself to him that he was the Messiah; and the poor man, believing on him, immediately fell down prostrate at his feet, and adored him.

After that our Lord had received the poor man's homage, he continued his discourse, and under the allegory of a shepherd and his sheep, proved the Pharisees to be no better than blind guides, nay than thieves and robbers, who had^b climbed up into the

sheepfold, or made themselves rulers and governors in God's church without any proper commission from him. Upon the same ground he condemned all those false Christs^c who before him had usurped the title of the Messiah, asserted his own right to it by an argument that no other shepherd durst produce, namely, his laying down his life for his sheep,^d which were to consist of Gentiles^e as well as Jews, and all together make up one flock.

Before the conclusion of the feast, as he was walking in Solomon's porch, ^f several of the Jews came, and

doctrine, (Mat. xvi. 12.) because 'they taught for the doctrines of God, the commandments of men, and made void the commandments of God by their traditions,' (Mat. xv. 6. 9.)—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^c In several of the Greek copies, as well as the Syriac, Persian, and Gothic, the words 'before me,' for our Saviour in the text speaks in his own person, are omitted; and some critics are of opinion, that this omission was early, because the Manichees, according to Theophylact, made no scruple to infer from hence, that the prophets of the Old Testament had not their mission from God. Our Saviour, however, in several places where he quotes them, has sufficiently established the authority of the prophets; and by this passage means no more than that all those who before him had taken upon them the title and quality of the Messiah, such as Theudas and Judas Galilæus, whereof we find mention, Acts v. 36. 37; were thieves and robbers, because they usurped a character which they had no right to; and that all before him, who either had not their commission from God, or could not prove it by extraordinary miracles, such as the authors of the rabbinical traditions, and of all the other reigning sects among the Jews, were far from being the true shepherds of God's people.—*Calnet's Commentary*.

^d His sheep are here supposed by some to be his elect peculiar friends; and thence they infer, that Christ laid down his life for them only. Now, if we respect the counsel of God, and the design of Jesus Christ, nothing is more certain than that he gave himself a ransom for all, (1 Tim. ii. 6.) and tasted death for every man, (Heb. ii. 9.) and was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, (1 John ii. 2.) but then because the world can no otherwise lay hold on the benefits of this propitiation, than by believing, and being obedient to the voice of this shepherd, he therefore is said to do this more eminently for his sheep. The apostle, I think, has determined the whole controversy in a few words, 'he died for all, that they who live might not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them,' (2 Cor. v. 15.) so that if any perish, it is not because he died not for them, but because they will not perform the conditions required to make his death efficacious to them; they will not live unto him who died for them.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^e These our Saviour calls 'his other sheep,' (John x. 16.) by way of anticipation, because he foreknew that many of them, when once his gospel came to be tendered to them, would give it a ready reception, be converted and baptized; and because the ceremonial law, which was the partition wall between the Jews and Gentiles, was shortly to be broken down, and the Gentiles admitted to the same privileges with the Jews that believed in his name.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^f The first or outer court, which encompassed the holy house and the other courts, was named the court of the Gentiles; because the latter were allowed to enter into it, but were prohibited from advancing further. It was surrounded by a range of porticoes or cloisters, above which were galleries, or apartments, supported by pillars of white marble, each consisting of a single piece, and twenty-five cubits in height. One of these was called Solomon's Porch, or piazza, because it stood on a vast terrace, which he had originally raised from a valley beneath, 400 cubits high, in order to enlarge the area on the top of the mountain, and make it equal to the plan of his intended building; and as this terrace was the only work of Solomon's that remained in the second temple, the piazza which stood upon it retained the name of that prince. Here it was that our Lord was walking at the feast of Dedication, (John x. 23;) and that the lame man, when healed by Peter and John, glorified God before all the people, (Acts iii. 11.) This superb portico is termed the royal

^a That this allusion was very proper and pertinent with regard to the persons to whom our Saviour addressed his discourse, the condition and custom of that country may convince us. For the greatest part of the wealth and improvement there consisted in sheep; and the examples of Jacob and David in particular, are proofs that the keeping of these was not usually committed to servants and strangers, as it is among us, but to men of the greatest quality and substance. The children of the family, nay, the masters and owners themselves, made it their business, and esteemed the looking to their flocks, a care and employment in no case below them. Hence probably came the frequent metaphor of styling kings, the shepherds of their people. Hence the ancient prophets describe the Messiah in the character of a shepherd; and our blessed Saviour, to show that he was the person intended by the prophets, applies the same character to himself; thereby to represent his government of the church, and tender concern for mankind; 'he shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom; shall seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away; shall bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick, and gently lead those which were with young,' (Is. xl. 11. and Ez. xxxiv. 16.) all lively emblems of our Lord's pastoral care, and of the various methods which he hath employed to accommodate his dispensations to our wants, in order to promote our eternal salvation. And as the character of a shepherd did well become our gracious Saviour, so there is something in the very nature and disposition of sheep, which appears so innocent and inoffensive, so peaceable and gentle, so patient and submissive, so honest and undesigning, as carries a near resemblance to that plainness and probity, that modesty and humility, that quietness and submission, which are indeed the first elements of the Christian religion, as well as the qualifications requisite to the reception of it. It is to be observed, however, that as the shepherd's art in managing his sheep, in the eastern countries, was different from what is among us, to which purpose we read of his going before, leading, and calling his sheep, and of their following, and knowing his voice; whereas our shepherds go after and drive their sheep, so these several expressions do, in the moral, denote our Lord's receiving into the number of Christians all those humble and obedient souls that come to him in the spirit of meekness, not in the clothing, but in the real qualities, of his sheep, and making provision for their growth in grace and improvement in all virtue and godliness of living.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii. and *Hammond's Annotations*.

^b According to the primary institution of God, it was the proper province of the sons of Levi 'to teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord had spoken unto them by the hand of Moses,' (Lev. x. 11.) and therefore it was required that 'the priests' lips should preserve knowledge, and the people seek his law at their mouths,' (Mal. ii. 4. 7.) But, however it came about, no sooner did their traditions grow in esteem, than the Scribes and Pharisees, not only took upon them to be the guides and teachers of the people, but maintained likewise, that others were to receive authority to teach from their commission and ordination to that office; though we no where find that they received any such authority from God; for which reason our Saviour represents them as a plantation which his Father had not planted, (Mat. xv. 13.) and bids his disciples beware of their

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required him to tell them, in positive terms, whether he was the Messiah or not. To which his answer was, that he had already sufficiently informed them of that, but to no effect; that the miracles which he wrought in his Father's name, were a full evidence of his mission; that the reason ^a why they believed him not was, because they were not of a disposition proper for his sheep; that to such as were his sheep, and followed him, he would give eternal life; and that none could pull them out of his, or his Father's hands, because he and his Father were one. ^b Upon this last expression, the Jews concluded

portico by Josephus, who represents it as the noblest work beneath the sun, being elevated to such a prodigious height, that no one could look down from its flat roof to the valley below, without being seized with dizziness; the sight not reaching to such an immeasurable depth. The south-east corner of the roof of this portico, where the height was the greatest, is supposed to have been the *πτερύγιον*, *pinnacle*, or extreme angle, whence Satan tempted our Saviour to precipitate himself. (Mat. iv. 5; Luke iv. 9.) This also was the spot where it was predicted that the abomination of desolation, or the Roman ensigns, should stand. (Dan. ix. 27; Mat. xxiv. 15.) Solomon's portico was situated in the eastern front of the temple, opposite to the mount of Olives, where our Saviour is said to have sat when his disciples came to show him the grandeur of its various buildings, of which, grand as they were, he said, the time was approaching when one stone should not be left upon another.—*Mansford's Scripture Gazetteer*.—Ed.

^a Some are of opinion, that the words in the text *ὅτι γὰρ*, which we render *because*, are not rational, or do not render a reason for these people's infidelity, but only intimate that their infidelity was consequential to their not being his sheep; or in other words, that they could not believe because they were not elected. But to obviate this we must observe, that the reason which our Lord here assigns for this defect of faith, is doubtless such as made it a great crime in them; for sure that must be such for which they were to die in their sins, John viii. 24. It is therefore certain, that this unbelief cannot be resolved into any natural defect of knowledge on their part, nor any act of reprobation on God's part, but purely to the want of a teachable and well disposed mind. For were it the same thing to be one of Christ's sheep and to be predestinated to faith and salvation, the import of our Saviour's words must be this,—‘Ye therefore believe not, because ye are not of the number of the elect, but of those whom God hath from eternity rejected.’ Now, by this account of the matter, our Saviour would not have accused but excused the infidelity of the Jews; and they, with as good reason, might have replied to him,—‘We therefore believe not, because God, by his act of reprobation, hath shut the door of faith against us, and so our infidelity is not to be imputed to us, but God.’—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^b That is, one in essence and nature; one in authority and power; and not barely one in will and consent: and that this is the genuine signification of the words, appears, 1st, From the original text, where it is not said, I and my Father are one, *ἐγώ, ὁ πατήρ*, in the masculine gender, but *ἐν, ἓν, ἓν*, in the neuter. Now, if *thing* be not the Divine Being, they cannot be one; for since the Father is confessed to be God, the Son cannot be one thing with the Father, if he be not God too. 2dly, It appears from the context, where our Saviour, having, in the preceding verses, ascribed the preservation of his sheep to the power of his Father, ‘None is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands,’ (John x. 29.) ascribes the same also to his own power, ‘Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand,’ (ver. 28.) plainly intimating, that his sheep were equally safe in his own hand, as in his Father's; because, says he, ‘I and my Father are one,’ (ver. 30.) And, 3dly, It appears from the verses which immediately follow; for when the Jews took up stones to stone him, as guilty of blasphemy, because he made himself God, he does not evade the charge, by saying, that he only conspired with the will of God, as all true prophets did; but appealed to the works which he performed by the power of the Father residing in him, which plainly carries it to an unity of power, not of will only; and then St Chrysostom's inference is undeniable, that ‘if the power be the same, the essence also is the same.’—*Whitby's Annotations*.

him to be a blasphemer, and were going to stone him; and though he reminded them of the many good actions he had done for them in his Father's name, and endeavoured to apologize ^c for his calling himself the Son of God, even because in scripture we find judges and magistrates frequently so styled, and much more then might he, who was consecrated and sent by God, assume that title, yet all this would not appease their rage, so that he was forced to leave the city, and went thence over Jordan to Bethabara, where John had formerly baptized; where great multitudes resorted to him, both to hear his instructions, and to be healed of their diseases; and where he made many disciples, because the place put the people in mind, that whatever John had reported of him was true.

While he continued in these parts, a certain person put a curious question to him, ^d concerning the number of those that should be saved: whereupon he took occasion to admonish his hearers, ‘That they ought to use their utmost endeavours to enter in at the strait gate ^e of

^c This is an improper expression, the word *apologize*, according to its ordinary acceptation conveys an idea of some degree of blame, and when a person is said to apologize, we generally understand that he admits himself to have been in some respect blamable, but at the same time, advances some circumstances to excuse or palliate his conduct. In the present case our Saviour vindicated his claim to the title of Son of God. His answer to the charge brought against him, ‘Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scriptures cannot be broken,’ that is, if the language of Scripture be unexceptionable, ‘say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?’ These words are quoted, in support of their opinion, by those who hold that our Saviour is called the Son of God purely upon account of the commission which he received. But the force of the argument, and the consistency of the discourse, require us to affix a much higher meaning to that expression. Our Lord is reasoning *a fortiori*. He vindicates himself from the charge of blasphemy in calling himself the Son of God, because even those who hold civil offices upon earth are called in scripture gods. But that he might not appear to put himself upon a level with them, and to retract his former assertion, ‘I and the Father are one,’ he not only calls himself ‘him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world,’ which implies that he had a being, and that God was his Father before he was sent; but he subjoins, ‘If I do not the works of my Father believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him;’ expressions which appear to be equivalent to his former assertion, ‘I and the Father are one,’ and which were certainly understood by the Jews in that sense; for, as soon as he had uttered them, ‘they sought again to take him.’ The full argument of our Lord is, that the union between the Father and him gives him a much better title to the name of the Son of God than any office can give to men the name of gods; and thus at the very time that he shelters himself from the charge of blasphemy under this scripture expression, he intimates repeatedly, in the hearing of those who accused him of blasphemy for what he said, the superior dignity of his person.—*Hill's Lectures on Divinity*, vol. i. p. 457.—Ed.

^d The man, who proposed this question to our Saviour, had doubtless in his thoughts the common opinion of the Jews, that all the Israelites, how much soever they may suffer in this, might have their portion in the world to come; but this was a question of too much needless curiosity for our Saviour to answer, because it is no part of our concern, how many shall be saved? But only how, and by what means, we are to work out our own salvation; and therefore he took occasion from hence to instruct the man, and in him all others, in what might be of much more substantial benefit to him.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^e The Persians send a deputation to meet their guests; this deputation are called openers of the way; and the more distin

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salvation, because the number of those, who should not attain it, would be large; that they ought to do it with all expedition, because, when once the gate was shut, and the means of salvation withdrawn, all pretences of having heard the glad tidings of the gospel, and of having been conversant with him upon earth, would gain them no admittance; that all workers of iniquity should be utterly excluded; and therefore the Jews, in particular, would have cause to lament, when they should see many heathens, from all parts of the earth, possessed of the glories of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the ancient prophets, while themselves, who were the heirs of the kingdom, should be thrust out, and so made the last, who were once the first.”

As he was discoursing in this manner, some of the Pharisees, who could no longer bear with patience the power and authority which he had gained among the people, in hopes of getting rid of him, ^a came and sug-

gested the danger he was in from Herod Antipas, so long as he continued in Galilee, which was part of his dominions: but, far from betraying any fear upon such information, he let the Pharisees know, that, having but a few days longer to live, ^b he was determined to devote them to the relief of the distressed, the curing diseases, and casting out devils; and as to Herod's ^c subtily, and designs against his life, they were altogether superfluous, because he foreknew that he was to suffer death at Jerusalem, ^d which was the place appointed, as it were, for the slaughter of all the prophets; and hereupon he broke out into a most pathetic exclamation against the inhabitants of that unhappy city, reproaching them with their rejecting the kind offers of the gospel, and with their killing the messengers sent from God, and

upon some expedient to get our Saviour, whom possibly he might take for Joha revivified, removed farther from him. However this be, it is certain, that either he or the Pharisees, or both, had a mind to have him gone somewhere else, and that, for this purpose, the message was brought him.—*Poole's Annotations.*

^b Some apply this passage (Luke xiii. 32,) to the years of Christ's ministry, supposing that a day is put for a year. But the explication is improper; because if the three days here mentioned were intended to comprehend the whole years of our Lord's ministry, this conversation must have happened in the first year thereof; contrary to Luke himself, who tells us, (chap. ix. 51,) that the time was come when he should be received up. Besides, according to this interpretation, Christ's being perfected on the third day will imply, that he was to suffer in the third year of his ministry, which is far from being a certain point. Were we to conclude any thing concerning the length of our Lord's ministry from the days mentioned, it would be, that he did not suffer till the third year after this conversation. But the real meaning of the words seems to be as follows:—“I shall not be very long with you on earth; yet while I am here, I will perform the duties of my ministry, without being afraid of any man; because my life cannot be taken from me, but in the place, and at the time, appointed by God.”—*Macknight's Harmony*, vol. ii. s. 91, note *.—Ed.

^c Our Lord, speaking of Herod, who had threatened to kill him, applies to him metaphorically the name or character of the fox or jackal: “Go, tell that fox—that crafty, cruel, insidious, devouring creature—that jackal of a prince—who has indeed expressed his enmity by his threats, as jackals indicate their mischievous dispositions by their barking, and who yelps in concert with other of my enemies, jackal-like—go, tell him that I am safe from his fury to-day and to-morrow; and on the third day I shall be completed,—completely beyond his power:”—alluding, perhaps, to his resurrection on the third day. There have been some doubts as to the propriety of our Redeemer's speaking in such terms of a civil ruler, whose subject he was, and whose character he was therefore bound to respect and to honour. For these scruples, however, there is no ground; the character of Herod as a cruel, insidious, and crafty prince, was too notorious to be disguised among any part of his subjects; and he who knew his heart as well as witnessed his conduct, could speak with certainty as to his dispositions and motives. Besides this, such metaphorical applications as these are much more common in the East than here, and would, therefore, not appear so strong to our Lord's attendants as to us. This is shown by a passage in Busebius: (p. 58.) “They [jackals, or cialals, as the Asiatics call them] go in flocks, and seldom hurt man or beast; but get their food by craft and stealth, more than by open force. Thence it is that the Turks call subtle and crafty persons, especially the Asiatics, by the metaphorical name of Cialals.”—*Calmel's Dictionary*.—Ed.

^d Some are of opinion, that, because the Jews had referred to the sanhedrim, which sat at Jerusalem, the whole cognisance and trial of prophets, therefore a prophet was not to suffer out of that city; but this interpretation seems to enervate our Saviour's sentiment, whose design certainly was, to represent the city of Jerusalem, so accustomed to shed the blood of the prophets, that there was scarce a possibility for any prophets dying out of it.—*Calmel's Commentary.*

Ἀνταρστος δὲ οἱ πλὴθὺς βον ἀγαθὸς Μενίλαος.—II. lib. ii. l. 408. it appears from this statement, that the Jews were much stricter in admitting persons to their tables than the Greeks, although both used the formality of written invitations. Our Lord evidently refers to the custom of his own nation, in his answer to one who idly inquired, ‘Are there few that be saved?’ ‘Strive,’ said he, ‘to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us: and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are.’ (Luke xiii. 24.)—*Paxton's Illustrations of Scripture*, vol. iii. pp. 88, 89.—Ed.

^a But, whether they came upon their own account, or by the instigation of Herod, is the question:—If they came upon their own account, it is certain, that they came not out of any kindness to our Saviour; because the whole history of the gospel informs us, that they were far from having any affection for him; and therefore they must come with a design, either to scare him out of Galilee, where he had been too popular for them, or to drive him into a trap which they had laid for him in Judea. This seems to be a genuine interpretation enough of the sense of the evangelist; and therefore, in our history, we have followed it: but still it seems not improbable, that, considering the present circumstances Herod was under, he might send these messengers to our Saviour. He had but lately gained himself no good reputation among the Jews, by murdering John, whom all the world looked upon as a prophet: and therefore seeing that our Saviour excelled John, especially in the fame and renown of his miracles, he was unwilling to augment the odium which already lay upon him, by any fresh acts of violence to a person, that was reputed a prophet, much superior to the Baptist, whom he had slain: he had got a notion too, that the Baptist, at least the soul of the Baptist in another body, was risen from the dead, and what the effect of his ghost's haunting his dominions might be, he could not tell; and therefore he might think it convenient to put these Pharisees

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then denouncing their sad approaching destruction and calamity.

^a One sabbath day, when Jesus was invited by a Pharisee of some distinction, to dine with him, a man distempered with the dropsy came after him; and, when several of the company narrowly observed how he would behave upon this occasion, ^b he first cured the poor man, and then justified his doing so, by the same argument he made use of to those who reprehended him for curing the crooked woman on the sabbath day. Observing, however, how eager the guests were to take every one the uppermost places at the table, he endeavoured to convince them, how commendable it was for a man to seat himself in a place below, rather than above, his rank and condition, because daily experience showed us, that humility was a virtue, which was so far from debasing, that it raised and exalted the person who practised it. And then, turning his discourse to the master of the house, whom he found too regardless of the poor and needy, he gave him, and in him all others, the good advice ^c of inviting the poor, the blind, and the lame, who could make no requital, rather than his own friends, ^d or rich acquaintance, who were able to return the compliment, to his entertainments, and in so doing, he might depend upon a recompence from God in the kingdom of heaven.

^a The sabbath was to be devoted to cheerful rest, that not only the Israelites, but also strangers living with them, as well as their cattle, might be refreshed. (Exod. xxiii. 12.) Hence, it is not probable, that they celebrated sacrificial or offering feasts, to which, from the commencement of their polity, the poor were invited. In later times, at least, we know from history, that the Jews purchased and prepared the best viands they could procure for the sabbath-day, in order to do it honour; and that they actually had sabbath-feasts, to which they even invited persons with whom they were unacquainted.—*Horne's Introduction*, vol. iii. p. 303—4. We cannot suppose that there was any thing improper in their sabbath-feasts, otherwise our Saviour would not have countenanced them.—*Ed.*

^b The presence of the dropsical man, and its being the sabbath day, would involve our Saviour, as they thought, in this difficulty; that either by forbearing to heal at that time, he would betray his fear, and strengthen their superstitions with regard to such ritual observances; or else, that, by doing it, he must incur the censure and odium of a sabbath-breaker, and a contemner of the law: but he, who was well aware what spies he had upon him, so ordered the matter, as to accomplish what he saw fit, without any opportunity given for his enemies to compass their ends by it.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.

^c Whether this precept is to be understood in a literal sense or no, may in some measure admit of a debate. Our Saviour, when he acted the part of a rich man, in feeding the multitude, had people of the meanest rank, and, among these, the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, who daily resorted to him for cure, for the chief of his guests: but most men think, that these extraordinary actions of his were no proper patterns for us in the dispensation of our charity, but that we answer the intent of the precept as well, if we do what is equivalent to us in respect of charge, and more advantageous to them and their families, by sending them meat, or money, to refresh them at home.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^d The words in the text are, 'when thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen nor thy rich neighbours,' (Luke xiv. 12.) It is to be observed in our expounding of scripture, that, as comparative particles are sometimes used in a sense negative, for so we find the chief priests moving the people, *ὡς ἄλλοι βασιβάν αυτοίς*, 'that he should rather release Barabbas to them,' that is, that he should release Barabbas, and not Jesus,' so negative particles are often used in a sense comparative; as when we read in Prov.

At the hearing of these last words one in the company repeated that common saying among the rabbins, 'blessed is he that shall eat bread ^e in the kingdom of God;' whereupon our Lord took occasion to represent the different success of the gospel, the rejection of the Jews, and the call of the Gentiles, under the emblem of a feast, to which those that were invited, upon sundry pretences, refused to come, ^f so that the master of the

viii. 10, 'receive my instructions, and not silver;' and in Joel ii., 'read your hearts, and not your garments,' the meaning is rather than silver, or your garments; in like manner as here, 'call not thy friends, nor thy brethren,' that is, be not so much concerned to call them, as the poor. For it can hardly be thought, that our Saviour's intent in this precept was absolutely to forbid all invitations of our neighbours or friends to dine or sup with us. This is an act of kindness and civility, and of good tendency sometimes to maintain and promote amity and friendship among neighbours and acquaintance; but his only meaning is, that we should not invite them out of a prospect of a compensation from them again, which is making a kind of traffic with our generosity; but, instead of this, that we should expend our money in the exercise of charity to such as are in no condition to make us a retribution.—*Whitby's and Poole's Annotations*.

^e Dr Campbell translates 'in the reign of God,' and observes the English Testament makes, to appearance, the word *βασιλεια*, *reign*, here refer solely to the future state of the saints in heaven. This version makes it relate to those who should be upon the earth in the reign of the Messiah. My reasons for preferring the latter are these: 1st, This way of speaking of the happiness of the Messiah's administration suits entirely the hopes and wishes which seem to have been long entertained by the nation concerning it. (See chap. x. 23, 24, Mat. xiii. 10, 11.) 2dly, The parable which, in answer to the remark, was spoken by our Lord, is, on all hands, understood to represent the Christian dispensation. 3dly, The obvious intention of that parable is to insinuate that, in consequence of the prejudices which, from notions of secular felicity and grandeur, the nation in general entertained on that subject; what, in prospect, they fancied so blessed a period, would, when present, be exceedingly neglected and despised; and in this view nothing could be more apposite; whereas there appears no appositeness in the parable on the other interpretation.—*Campbell on the Gospels*, vol. ii. pp. 570, 571.

^f If we compare this with another passage elsewhere, (Mat. xxii. 2.) we may be farther satisfied, that by 'the kingdom of heaven' is here represented the 'gospel dispensation;' and this, as it ministers true plenty and pleasure, all that men can want, and all that they can wish, to render them perfectly happy, is compared to a supper. The bounty and infinite love of Almighty God are signified by the greatness of that supper, and the multitudes bidden to it. The first bidding implies all the previous notices of the Messiah, by which the law and the prophets were intended to prepare the Jews for the reception of him and his doctrine. The second bidding, when all things were ready, seems to import all that Jesus did, and taught, and suffered for their conversion and salvation, and all the testimonies and exhortations of his apostles and other preachers of the gospel, to the same purpose. The excuses sent for their absence are the prejudices and passions and worldly interest which did not only hinder those Jews from coming into the faith, but disposed them likewise to treat all attempts to win them over with the utmost obstinacy and contempt. The guests brought in from abroad to supply their places, are the Gentile world, to whom, after that the Jews had thrust it from them, the subsequent tenders of this grace and salvation were made. And the declaring that 'none of those who were bidden should taste of this supper,' denotes the giving those Jews over to a reprobate sense, and leaving them under that infidelity and perverseness in which they continue hardened to this very day.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.

^g The hospitality of the present day in the east exactly resembles that of the remotest antiquity. The parable of the 'great supper,' is in those countries literally realized. (Luke xiv. 16.)—*Forbes's Orient. Mem.* vol. iii. p. 187.—And such was the hospitality of ancient Greece and Rome. When a person provided an entertainment for his friends or neighbours,

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house was obliged to send out into the streets and lanes of the city, and into the highways and hedges to collect a sufficient complement of guests, being determined that none of those who were first invited should taste of his supper.^a

he sent round a number of servants to invite the guests; these were called vocatores by the Romans, and *κληρωγοι* by the Greeks. The day when the entertainment is to be given is fixed some considerable time before; and in the evening of the day appointed, a messenger comes to bid the guests to the feast. The custom is thus introduced in Luke: 'A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper time, to say to them that were hidden, Come, for all things are now ready.' (Luke xiv. 16, 17.)—*Morier's Trav.* vol. i. p. 142.—They were not now asked for the first time; but had already accepted the invitation, when the day was appointed, and were therefore already pledged to attend at the hour when they might be summoned. They were not taken unprepared, and could not in consistency and decency plead any prior engagement. They could not now refuse, without violating their word and insulting the master of the feast, and therefore, justly subjected themselves to punishment. The terms of the parable exactly accord with established custom, and contain nothing of the harshness to which infidels object.—*Paxton's Illustrations*.—Ed.

a The following extracts will serve to explain the customs alluded to in this parable. In the account of the parable by the evangelist Matthew (chap. xxii. 11.) it is said, 'And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a marriage garment.' The Persians, 'in circumstances of grief or joy, visit each other with great attention, which is a tribute of duty always expected from persons of inferior condition, especially if they be dependent. The guests are ushered into a large room, and served with coffee and tobacco. After some time the master of the house enters, and his visitors, rising to receive him, continue standing till he has passed through the whole company, and paid his respects to each; he then takes his seat, and by signs permits them to be also seated.'—*Goldsmith's Geography*, p. 216.—In the parable now referred to, the circumstances of which may reasonably be supposed conformable to existing customs, it is evidently implied that the guests were collected together previous to the appearance of the king, who came in to see the guests. So also in Luke xiv. 10, in a similar parable, it is said, 'when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that had thee cometh, he may say unto thee, go up higher.' This unquestionably confirms the application of the Persian ceremony to the parable first cited. It may first be farther observed, that in the last mentioned passage, it seems as if it had then been the prevailing practice for the master of the house 'to pass through the guests, and pay his respects to each of them,' as was certainly the case in Persia. With respect to the *wedding garment*, it was usual for persons to appear at marriage feasts in a sumptuous dress, generally adorned with florid embroidery, as some writers tell us (see Rev. xix. 8., and Dr Hammond in locum); but as it could not be expected that travellers thus pressed in should themselves be provided with it, we must therefore conclude, not only from the magnificence of the preparations to which we must suppose the wardrobe of the prince corresponded, but likewise from the following circumstance of resentment against this guest, that a robe was offered, but refused by him: and this is a circumstance which, as Calvin observes, is admirably suited to the method of God's dealing with us, who indeed requires holiness in order to our receiving the benefits of the gospel, but is graciously pleased to work it in us by his Holy Spirit, and therefore may justly resent and punish our neglect of so great a favour.—*Doddridge* in locum.—The following extract will show the importance of having a suitable garment for a marriage feast, and the offence taken against those who refuse it, when presented as a gift. 'The next day, Dec. 3, the king sent to invite the ambassadors to dine with him once more. The mehementer told them, it was the custom that they should wear over their own clothes the best of those garments which the king had sent them. The ambassadors at first made some scruple of that compliance: but when they were told that it was a custom observed by all ambassadors, and that no doubt the king would take it very ill at their hands if they presented

As he was going from the Pharisee's house where he dined, being attended with a mighty concourse of people, he began to explain^b to them what they were to trust to, if they intended to become his disciples; that they were to^c renounce even some of their most lawful affections, and prepare themselves to undergo the most unjust persecutions, if they thought of making profession of his religion; and therefore, that they might not fail in the day of trial, he advised them to consider well beforehand what such a profession would cost them: 'for, as he who begins to build, and has not money to accomplish it, leaves his work imperfect, and himself becomes ridiculous; or as he that designs a war, and has not men and money enough to go through with it, had better never have engaged in it; so he that undertakes to be a Christian, must resolve to renounce all that is precious, and to bear all that is afflictive to him in this world, or else he will never be able to hold out.'

Among the great multitudes that daily resorted to our Saviour to hear his discourses, were many publicans and sinners.^d This gave great offence to the Scribes and Pharisees,^e who murmured at his condescending goodness in so freely conversing and eating with such infamous people. But to vindicate himself in this respect, he compared his conduct to that of a man, who, having an hundred sheep, left the ninety and nine^f in quest of

themselves before him without the marks of his liberality, they at last resolved to do it, and, after their example, all the rest of the retinue.'—*Ambassador's Travels*, p. 183; see *Altmann's Meletematmata*, *Phil. Crit.* t. i. p. 118.; and *Dr Clarke's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 352, note.—Ed.

b It was a custom of the Jewish doctors to lay down before their proselytes what inconveniences would attend upon their precepts; and in conformity to this, our Saviour acquaints his disciples with two things that would be a means to deter them from embracing his religion, namely, the difficulty of the duties that would be required of them, and the greatness of the sufferings to which they would be exposed.

c The words in the text are 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' (Luke xiv. 26.) But their meaning in this place is not, that a man should, properly speaking, hate his father and his mother; for certainly our blessed Lord, who enjoins us to love our enemies, would never make it our duty to hate our parents. And therefore the word *μισουν*, which is a Hebraism, must necessarily here be taken in a lower sense, namely, to *love or esteem less*, in the same manner as it is said of Leah, that 'Jacob hated her,' (Gen. xxix. 31.) that is, did not love her so well as he did Rachel. For that this, and no more is here the import of the expression, is plain from a parallel text, 'He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me.' (Mat. x. 37.)—*Whitby's Annotations*.

d They whom the scripture generally, and this portion of it in particular, characterizes by the name of *sinners*, are the habitual and obdurate, the great and eminent offenders.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.

e The Scribes and Pharisees looked upon the publicans as unfit to be conversed with upon any account, even though it was to reclaim them from their evil courses. Our Saviour had told them that he conversed among such people as their physician, and not as their companion, and that therefore his proper business was among such patients. (Mat. ix. 12, 13.) But this apology would not silence their murmurings, because their opinion was, that God had cast off all care of them, and never intended to grant them repentance unto life.—*Burkit and Whitby's Annotations*.

f Here Christ sets ninety and nine just persons in opposition to one sinner, not that it is so in proportion; for there are very few who live according to the rule that is prescribed them; but because, even upon a supposition that it were so, such is the

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one ^a which was gone astray; to that of a woman searching, with all diligence, for a piece of silver ^b that was lost, and rejoicing exceedingly when she found it; and to that of a father, ^c receiving his returning prodigal son with all the indications of joy and tenderness, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his elder brother. For under the name of the elder brother, he reproved the unjust murmurings of the Pharisees, who were displeased at his entertaining sinners, though the salvation of such was the main end of his coming into the world.^d

Having thus exposed the pride and envy of the Pharisees, he proceeded, in the next place, to reprove their covetousness, and, at the same time, to instruct his disciples what the proper use was that they were to make of their riches. To this purpose he introduces an

value of our immortal souls, that great care and pains ought to be taken even for the sake of one.—*Grotius* in locum.

^a A sheep, when once it has strayed away, is a creature remarkably stupid and heedless. It goes wandering on, without either power or inclination to return back, though each moment it is in danger of becoming a sacrifice to every beast of prey that meets it. And such, in truth, is the condition of people addicted to vice, when they have broken out of God's fold, and forsaken the pleasant pastures which he provides for them. They grow careless and inconsiderate, and are exposed to snares and temptations every moment. They are hardened by custom; are depraved in their affections and judgment; are neither disposed to grow wiser, nor of themselves capable of conquering inveterate habits of vice, though they should now and then show some good inclination to attempt it.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.

^b By this comparison of a lost piece of money, we are given to understand, that God esteems the souls of men precious, and reckons them among his wealth and his treasures. And this indeed they are; made and formed by his own hand; impressed with his own image and superscription; and from that stamp, which carries a resemblance to the great King of the whole world, deriving all their currency and value. But when they abandon God's laws, and forsake the divine and rational life, a life of goodness and wisdom, renounced for one of sensuality, and madness, and mischief, then they are lost; lost to themselves; lost to God. Then this coin is debased; the impression obliterated and gone; and that piece of money, as to the worth and use of it, is in a manner as if it were no longer in being.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.

^c This parable is deservedly reckoned a masterpiece in its kind, and what cannot be paralleled by any of the apologues or allegorical writings of heathen authors. It is adorned and beautified with the most glowing colours and lively similitudes. It is carried on and conducted with admirable wisdom and proportion, in the parts as well as in the whole; and there is so exact a relation between the things represented, and the representations of them, that the most elevated understanding will admire, and the lowest capacity discover, the excellent and most useful moral that lies under so thin and fine a veil.

^d Many commentators have considered this parable in a view of peculiar application to the Jews and Gentiles; and have observed that the murmurs of the Jews against the apostles for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles (see Acts xiii. 42—50. xxii. 21, 22, and 1 Thes. ii. 16.) are represented by the conduct of the elder brother.—This was certainly a case comprehended in our Lord's design; but he undoubtedly had something more in his intention. He meant to show that, had the Pharisees been as eminently good as they themselves pretended to be, yet it had been very unworthy their character to take offence at the kind treatment which any sincere penitent might receive. Thus does he here, and in many parallel texts, condemn their conduct on their own principles; though elsewhere, on proper occasions, he shows the falsehood of those principles, and plainly exposes their hypocrisy and guilt. Thus the judicious Calvin states the matter; and it is strange so many learned writers should have puzzled themselves and their readers in so clear a case.—*Doddridge's Expositor*.—ED.

unjust steward,^e who, after having abused his trust, and wasted his master's substance, is contriving what provision to make for himself, which he does by abating his master's debtors in their bills, when he came to be removed from his place; and thereupon he teaches his disciples, not to imitate the injustice, but the forecast and policy of this steward, by employing their earthly ^f riches to make them friends in the persons of the poor, that when they should come to leave this transitory world, they might, by this means, be received into everlasting habitations in heaven; and so the children of light become as prudent in things relating to their salvation, as the children of this world are in the management of their temporal affairs.

This discourse made little or no impression upon the Pharisees; and therefore, to awaken their attention, he propounded to them the parable of a certain rich man,^h

^e There is a good deal in this and the following parable, that alludes to the notions of the Jewish rabbins, and their manner of expressing them. "The fruits of the earth," says one of their doctors, "are like a table spread in an house; the owner of this is God; man in this world is, as it were, the steward of this house: if he behaves himself well, he will find favour in the eyes of his lord; if otherwise, he will be removed from his stewardship;" *Kimchi* on Isa. xl. And so the scope of this following parable seems to be this:—that we are to look upon ourselves, not as lords of the good things of this life, as though we might use them at our pleasure, but only as stewards, who must be faithful in the administration of them. The parables indeed make mention of no other goods but those of riches; but we must not therefore imagine, that rich men only stand in the capacity of stewards, since every advantage of nature or of grace, as well as those of fortune, our life, our health, our strength, our wit, and parts, our knowledge natural and acquired, our time, our leisure, our every ability, our every opportunity, our every inclination to do well, are all our master's goods: all intrusted with us; all capable of benefiting others; and will all, at last, be brought to our account.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.

^f It is said, 'and the Lord commended the unjust steward,' namely, the master of this unjust steward. He spoke highly of the address and cunning of his iniquitous servant. He had, on his own principles, made a very prudent provision for his support; but his master no more approved of his conduct in this, than he did in his wasting his substance before. From the ambiguous and improper manner in which this is expressed in the common English translation, it has been supposed that our blessed Lord commended the conduct of this wicked man: but the word *καυχιος*, there translated *lord*, simply means the *master* of the unjust steward.—*Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament*.—ED.

^g The words in the text are, 'make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,' (Luke xvi. 9.) Now, *mammon*, or *mammona*, is a Syriac word, and properly denotes *riches* or *treasure*. It comes from an Hebrew root, which signifies, *to be hid*, and is therefore thought to comprehend, not only gold, silver, and other metals, that are hid in the bowels of the earth, but stores likewise of corn, wine, and oil, a great part of the riches of the eastern people, which they often buried in subterraneous caverns, to conceal them from their enemies. These are called the mammon of unrighteousness, because they frequently occasion much iniquity in the world, and are often acquired by very indirect means; but our Lord, by this expression, must not be supposed to command alms to be given of that which is gotten by fraud or injustice, because such charity can never be acceptable to God. No, the duty of those who have acquired wealth unrighteously is, to make restitution to the persons they have injured; if these be dead, then to their heirs or executors; and the poor are only then receivers of the fruits of injustice, when a person is conscious that he has been unjust, but does not know the persons to whom he has been so.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

^h Whether this representation, which our Saviour here makes of the different fates of the rich man and the poor, be a parable

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living in pride, and ease, and luxury, who, after his death, was carried into the dismal regions of the damned; and of a certain poor beggar, named Lazarus, ^a lying at his gate, ^b full of sores and ulcers, and desiring the fragments that came from his table, who, when he died, was transported by angels into Abraham's bosom; ^c "that, in these different states, the poor man, in compensation for his former misery enjoyed all the felicity that his heart could wish; while the rich man, in punishment of his luxury, and want of mercy to the poor, was forced to undergo the most inexpressible torments, without being able to procure so much as one drop ^d of water to cool his

or a real history, is a matter wherein several commentators are not agreed. We are told, however, that in several manuscripts, both Greek and Latin, there are these words in the beginning of the 19th verse, 'he spake to them another parable,' and that this very parable is in the Gemara Babylonicum; from whence it is cited by the learned Sheringham, in the preface to his Ioma, as indeed, if we look into the circumstances of it, such as the rich man's 'lifting up his eyes in hell,' and seeing 'Lazarus in Abraham's bosom,' his discourse to Abraham, his complaint of being tormented with flames, and his desire that Lazarus might be sent to 'cool his tongue,' or, at least, to convert his surviving brethren: if, together with the great gulf that is fixed between the two places of bliss and torment, we do but consider these particulars, I say, we must needs conclude, that, as they cannot be understood of any departed soul, in a literal sense, they must be an allegorical representation of things invisible, by terms in some measure suitable to the opinion of the Jews concerning the state of souls after death.—*Calmet's Commentary and Whitby's Annotations.*

^a Lazar, which, according to most, is but a contraction from Eleazar, is the very same with Ania-chad, a poor man in the Gemara, and properly signifies one without help, or rather one that has God only for his help: but, in the times of our blessed Saviour, we may observe, that it was a common name among the Jews, and given to men of some distinction, as we find it was to the brother of Martha and Mary.—*Whitby's Annotations, and Calmet's Commentary.*

^b This was the place where beggars stood or were laid, and asked alms: hence is that rule with the Jews, 'if a man die and leave sons and daughters, if he leave but small substance, the daughters shall be taken care of, and the sons shall beg at the gates.'—*Ep.*

^c The garden of Eden and Paradise, the Throne of Glory, and Abraham's Bosom, were common expressions among the Jewish doctors, to denote a future state of felicity; for so Josephus, in his discourse of the Maccabees, says of good men, that "they are gathered to the region of the patriarchs, and that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, do receive their souls:" and they tell us farther, that the souls of such men are carried thither by angels; for so the Targum on Cant. iv. 12, says, that "no man hath power to enter into the garden of Eden, but the just, whose souls are carried thither by the hands of good angels." Our commentators, however, have perceived something peculiar in the phrase of Abraham's bosom. They imagine, that the Jewish notion of paradise was a place abounding with delights and perpetual feastings, where Abraham, the great founder of their nation, enjoys the uppermost place at the table, and while all his children sit down with him, some at a nearer, and some at a farther distance from him, he who has the honour to recline upon his bosom, as Lazarus is here represented, is in a higher degree of felicity than ordinary. But others deride all this notion, and assert that Abraham's bosom, was so called, not from any posture of guests at table, but from little children, whom their tender parents do sometimes take in their bosom, and sometimes cause them to sleep there. For since those that die in the Lord, say they, are said to sleep, or rest from their labours, where can they be said to enjoy this rest or sleep better than in the bosom of the father of the faithful?—*Beausobre's and Whitby's Annotations, and Calmet's Commentary.*

^d A good deal of this is to be taken in a figurative sense; but our Saviour might possibly insert this passage in the parable, on purpose to strike at a vain imagination which some of the Jews were apt to entertain, namely, that hell-fire had no power

inflamed tongue, and without being able to prevail for the once despised Lazarus to be sent upon a message of admonition to his surviving brethren, because they had Moses ^e and the prophets for their instructors, or a stand-

over the sinners of Israel, because Abraham and Isaac came down thither to fetch them from thence, which could not fail of being effectually confuted, when they heard Abraham, as it were with his own mouth, declaring, that no help was to be expected from him, when once they were got into that place.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^e This appears, by considering the temper of infidelity; for where unbelief proceeds, as generally it does, from a vitiated and corrupted mind, which hates to be reformed; which rejects the evidence, because it will not admit the doctrine, and the doctrine, because it cannot admit the evidence; in this case all proofs will be alike, and it will be lost labour to ply such a man with reason or new evidence, since it is not want of reason or evidence that makes him an unbeliever. And this case chiefly our Saviour seems to have in his view; for the request to Abraham to send one from the dead was made in behalf of men who lived wantonly and luxuriously; who, as the psalmist expresses it, 'had not God in all their thoughts.' The rich man in torment could think of no better expedient to rescue his brethren from the danger they were in of coming into the same condition with himself, than sending one from the dead to admonish them, and to give them a faithful account how matters stood there, and how it fared with him. To which Abraham answers, that they had already sufficient evidence of these things; that they wanted no means of knowledge, if they would make use of those they had: 'they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.' But still he insists, 'nay, Father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.' Then follows the text, which is the last resolution of this case, 'if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' And indeed where infidelity is the effect of such profligate wickedness, it deserves not so much regard from God, as that he should condescend to make particular applications to it by new lights and evidences: and should he do it, there is reason to suspect it would be ineffectual. We see, in the ordinary course of providence, many judgments inflicted on sinners to reclaim and amend them; but they harden themselves against them; so that their last state is worse than their first. I will not answer for the courage of sinners, how well they would bear the sight of one from the dead; nay, I am apt to imagine it would strangely terrify and amaze them. But to be frightened and to be persuaded are two things: nature would recover the fright, and sin would recover strength, and the great fright might come to be matter of ridicule. How easy would it be, when the fright was over, to compare this event with the many ridiculous stories we have of apparitions, and to come at last to mistrust our own senses, and to conclude that we were misled, like a man in a dark night who follows an *ignis fatuus*? And what is worse, when the infidel had once conquered his own fears, and got loose again from the thoughts of religion, he would then conclude that all religion is made up of that fear which he felt himself, which others cannot get rid of, though he so manfully and happily subdued it. You may think it perhaps impossible that a man should not be convinced by such an appearance; the same I believe you would think of the judgments which befell Pharaoh, that it is hardly possible any man should withstand them; and yet you see he did: nay, did not the guards, who were eye-witnesses of our Saviour's resurrection; who saw the angel that rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre; who shook and trembled with fear, and became as dead men; did not they, after all this, receive money to deny all they saw, and to give false evidence against the person they beheld coming from the grave? So you see, it is in the nature of man to withstand such evidences, where the power of sin is prevalent. Besides, there are many sinners who are not infidels: they may believe Moses and the prophets, though they will not hear them, that is, obey them. Now, should one come from the dead to these men, the most they could do would be to believe him: but that does not apply their obeying him; for they believe Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, and yet obey not them; and why should obedience be the consequence of belief in one case more than another? There can be no greater arguments for obedience than the gospel affords; and therefore he who believes the gospel, and disobeys it, is out of

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ing revelation of the divine will, (and if it prevailed not with them, nothing would,) for the direction of their lives.”

Of the great numbers of people who attended our Lord wherever he went, some came out of necessity, others out of curiosity; some out of a spirit of devotion, and others out of a spirit of captiousness, and with an intent to entangle him in his discourse. Of this last sort were the Scribes and Pharisees, who, taking the question of divorces ^a to be somewhat intricate, put it to our Saviour; but he, limiting the permission of such separations to the case of adultery only, reminded them of that strict and natural union ^b between man and wife, which God had appointed at their first creation, and was not, consequently, to be disannulled by any human institution. Here the Pharisees, thinking that they had got the advantage of the argument, objected the precept ¹ of Moses, wherein he permitted the husband, ^c in many cases, to

¹ Deut. xxiv. 1, &c.

hope to be reformed by any other evidence. So that, considering the case with respect to all manner of infidels or sinners, there is reason in our Saviour's judgment; ‘if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.’—*Bishop Sherlock*.—Ed.

^a The Jews, at this time, were divided in their opinions as to the matter of divorces. Some of them, who followed the sentiments of the school of Shammai, held, that the wife was to be put away only for the crime of adultery, because Moses directs, that this might be done, in case the husband had found some uncleanness in her, Deut. xxiv. 1. But others, who adhered to the notions of the school of Hillel, and they by much were the greater number, maintained, on the contrary, that this was permitted to be done for any cause whatever; because, in the same verse it is expressed, that, if she found not grace in her husband's eyes, she was divorceable. This was the question which the Pharisees brought to our Saviour, thinking, that he must have decided it, either against the law of Moses, or against the determination of one of these two famous schools, and, one way or other, have become offensive to the people; but our Saviour evaded all this, by reducing matrimony to its original institution.—*Whitby's* and *Beausobre's* Annotations.

^b Our Saviour replied to the insidious question of the Pharisees by referring to the history of the creation, and the original institution of marriage; intimating that this was the standard by which all transactions in this important concern, ought to be regulated, as every deviation was an abuse consequent on man's depravity. The Creator first formed Adam, and from his side took the rib of which the woman was made; from this one woman and one man the whole species had descended. When the Lord brought the woman, Adam acknowledged her as a part of himself, and it was added (either by Adam as immediately inspired or by Moses,) that, ‘for this cause’ in all future ages, ‘a man should leave father and mother,’ foregoing many of the comforts, and relinquishing many of the duties of those endeared relations and ‘cleave to his wife,’ as a part of himself. Thus these two would constitute, as it were, one body, never more to be separated, except by God himself, who in this appointment of marriage had joined them together, but to have ever after the same interests, and to share each other's comforts or sorrows, as members of the same body do.—When marriage was instituted, sin and death had not entered, the sinful cause of separation afterwards mentioned, and the natural dissolution of the union was therefore not referred to, but they have since been specified, and resemble the cutting off of a mortified limb, and the separation of the parts of the body by death. In all other respects, the union is to be considered as indissoluble. It is observable that Christ inserts the word ‘twain,’ which is not in the original institution, but added by the Seventy purposely, as it seems, to obviate all misconstruction of his meaning.—Ed.

^c The Pharisees, in their reply to our Saviour, seem to intimate that the lawfulness of divorces was founded upon a divine command: ‘why then did Moses command to give her a bill of divorcement, and put her away?’ (Mark x. 4.) But Moses no where commands, but only, in some cases, permits the doing of

give a bill of divorce to the wife: but to this our Saviour replied, that, though under the Mosaic dispensation, God, knowing their obstinacy and perverse inclinations, allowed a dispensation ^d in this point, by tolerating divorces; yet, according to the original institution of marriage, it was not so; and therefore, to reduce the matter to its primary establishment, he determined, that all divorces, ^e for any less cause than that of fornication,

this; nor is the design of the whole precept to give any encouragement to this practice, but only to provide, that, in case men will be so perverse and hard-hearted, as to turn away their wives upon every slight occasion, the thing might be done in a proper and public manner, not by word of mouth, but by bill of divorcement, delivered in form, that, when the woman is thus dismissed, she may not be quite ruined, but left at her liberty to become another man's wife, Deut. xxiv. 2.

^d But here the question is,—Whether this dispensation excused the common divorces among the Jews, which our Saviour looks upon as an infringement upon the primitive institution of marriage, from all sin, especially that of adultery, in the sight of God? It is granted, indeed, that these divorces were contrary to the equity and genuine intention of God's first institution of marriage; but then it must be added, that God, by his servant Moses, had dispensed with his own institution; that under such his dispensation there could be no prohibition; and that, where there was no prohibition, there could be no transgression; unless we can suppose, that God could forbid and permit the same thing at the same time. Our Saviour, indeed, upon this occasion, prescribes a new law, which had not before obtained among the Jews; he retracts the dispensation that Moses had given; he reduces marriage to its primitive institution; and, except in cases of adultery, allows of no divorces, but accounts them all null and invalid: however, under the Mosaic dispensation it was not so. From the permission given to the women, when they were thus divorced, to be married to others, it is evident, that these divorces quite dissolved the bond of matrimony; otherwise we must say, that God gave these women, when they married again, a toleration to live in a state of adultery, and so, at long run, the whole commonwealth of Judea, must, by a divine permission, have been filled with adulteries, and a spurious offspring; which is incongruous to the wisdom and purity of Almighty God to imagine.—*Whitby's* Annotations.

^e Divorces seem to have been permitted among the Jews, before the law; but we find no example of that kind in the Old Testament written since Moses. They have been less frequent with the Jews, since their dispersion among nations which do not permit the dissolution of marriage upon light occasions. In cases where it does take place, the woman is at liberty to marry again, as she shall think proper, but not with the person who gave occasion for the divorce. To prevent the abuse which the Jewish men might make of the liberty of divorcing, the rabbins appoint many formalities, which consume much time, and give the married couple opportunity to be reconciled. Where there is no hope of accommodation, a woman, a deaf man, or a notary draws the letter of divorce. He writes it in the presence of one or more rabbins, on vellum ruled, containing only twelve lines, in square letters; and abundance of little trifling particulars are observed, as well in the characters as in the manner of writing, and in the names and surnames of the husband and wife. He who pens it, the rabbins and witnesses ought not to be relations either to the husband, or to the wife, or to one another. The substance of this letter, which they call *gheth*, is as follows:—“On such a day, month, year, and place, J. N. divorce you voluntarily, put you away, restore you to your liberty, even you, N. who were heretofore my wife, and I permit you to marry whom you please.” The letter being written, the rabbi examines the husband closely, in order to learn whether he is voluntarily inclined to do what he has done. They endeavour to have at least ten persons present at this action, without reckoning the two witnesses who sign, and two other witnesses to the date. After which the rabbi commands the wife to open her hands, in order to receive this deed, lest it fall to the ground; and after having examined her over again, the husband gives her the parchment, and says to her, Here is thy divorce, I put thee away from me, and leave thee at liberty to marry whom thou pleasest. The wife takes it, and gives it to the rabbi, who reads it once

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were illegal, and, on both sides, attended with adultery; which when some of his disciples heard, and, since the engagement was so rigorous, began to express their dislike of marriage, our Lord allowed it to be true, that in those who had the gift of continency, a single life was more conducive towards the attainment of the kingdom of heaven;^a but that those who had it not, and thought proper to marry, ought by all means to adhere to the first institution.

After this, he began to remind his disciples of several things he had instructed them in before, namely, of the impossibility of preventing scandals and offences; of the duty of forgiving our brother his repeated transgressions; of the necessity and efficacy of faith, in order to be heard in our requests to God; of humility in the performance of our duty, because at the best we are but unprofitable servants; and especially of humility in our addresses to God, for which he gave them a parabolical instance, in the behaviour of a Pharisee^b and publican; the Pharisee, vaunting over his own praise at his devotion, and preferring himself before all others: but the

publican, with a dejected heart, confessing his sins, and imploring God's mercy; and yet the latter, according to our Lord's judgment, departed more acceptable to God than the other; because the divine decree is, 'that pride should be abased, and humility exalted.'

The Pharisees, who waited for the coming of the Messiah, and had drawn up a romantic scheme of his appearing with the utmost glory of a temporal prince, came about this time and demanded of him, 'when the kingdom of God,'^c whereof he had told them so much, 'was to appear?' To which he gave them in answer, "that it should not appear with any outward pomp or splendour, as they vainly imagined; and that, in truth, it was already begun among them, though they had no perception of it." And then, turning to his disciples, he strictly cautioned them not to be deluded by false Christs, and false prophets,^d who would pretend to

more, after which she is free.—*Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible*, art. Divorce.—Ed.

^a The author here seems to favour the notion of the Romanists with regard to celibacy, but what our Lord says (Mat. xix. 11, 12.) of a single life, is entirely perverted by the papists, when they produce it to discredit matrimony, and exalt celibacy as the more perfect state. For on this very occasion marriage is declared to be an institution of God. And lest any one might have replied, that it was a remedy contrived purely for the weakness of our fallen state, it is particularly observed, that it was an institution given to man in innocence. Wherefore, as the apostle tells us, marriage is honourable in all ranks and conditions of persons, provided the duties thereof are inviolably maintained. Besides, it is false to affirm that our Lord recommends celibacy. He only gives permission for it as a thing lawful, telling them that if they were able to live continually, they would not sin though they did not marry, especially as the times they lived in were times of persecution. In which light also the judgment of the apostle Paul is to be considered, when he declared it to be better for Christians, as matters then stood, not to marry, 1 Cor. vii. 26.—*Macknight's Harmony*.—Ed.

^b The Pharisee's temper is sufficiently discovered in the form of his prayer: 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican,' (Luke xviii. 11.) The style is insolent and boasting; that of an herald, rather than a suppliant; and does not so much render God his praises, as proclaim his own. But, admitting this lofty opinion of his own excellencies to be never so just, yet what warrant or privilege could he have to disparage and vilify his brethren? 'I am not as other men:' what could be more fulsome vanity, than thus to set himself off, as an exception to a whole world at once? 'Or even as this publican?' to break that bruised reed, and, with scornful reproaches, to fall foul on a wounded soul, whose penitent sorrow called for the compassion of every stander by. The publican, quite contrary in all his expressions, in all his deportment, speaks nothing but shame and confusion, the tenderest contrition, and most profound humility. He stands afar off, as not presuming upon a nearer approach to the presence of so holy a majesty. He lifts not up so much as his eyes to heaven, but, by the guilt and melancholy of his countenance, takes to himself the ignominious titles so liberally bestowed by his scornful companion. He smites upon his breast, as conscious of the pollutions lodged there; looks not abroad, but confines his thoughts to his own misery; alleges nothing in his own behalf, no mixture of good to mitigate the evil of his past life; feels no comfort, seeks no refuge, except in the mercy of a forgiving God; brings no motive to incline that mercy, but a sorrowful sense of his own unworthiness, and an humble hope in God's unbounded goodness: and therefore upon this, this saving, this only supporting attribute, he casts himself entirely, with a 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.

^c Whether the Pharisees put this question to our Saviour in derision, because in his discourses he had so often mentioned the kingdom of God, or in sober seriousness, because at this time they were in strong expectations of the coming of the Messiah, and his erecting a secular kingdom among them, is not so easy a matter to determine. Their contemptible opinion of Christ inclines some to think the former; but their generally received opinion about the Messiah gives some countenance to the latter; but, in whatsoever sense they intended the question, our Saviour's answer perfectly fits them. Only we may observe, that by the kingdom of God here, the Pharisees and our Saviour meant two very different things: the Pharisees a flourishing kingdom, wherein the Messiah was to reduce all other nations under the Jewish yoke; but our Saviour a kingdom of wrath and vengeance, which he designed to exercise even upon the Jews themselves; and withal a spiritual kingdom, which he intended to erect in the hearts of men by the kindly operations of his word and Spirit, when his gospel should be more fully propagated. For this is the meaning of that comparison, 'As the lightning, which shineth from one part of heaven to the other part under heaven, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be in his day.' (Luke xvii. 24.) He had told them, that the kingdom of God was already come among them, and had appeared in the purity of his doctrine, and the miracles which he had wrought to confirm it, though not in that glaring light as to make them take a proper notice of it; and here tells them farther, that, after his resurrection, it would shine with such a fresh and glorious brightness, by the effusion of the Holy Ghost on his disciples, as would render it equal to the splendour of the sun, shining from one part of heaven to the other, and cause it to be propagated almost as quick as lightning through the world; and that then this Son of Man, so scornfully rejected by them, would also appear suddenly and gloriously, to revenge upon them their infidelity, and the affronts which they had offered to him.—*Poole's and Whitby's Annotations*.

^d The distinction between false Christs and false prophets is, that the former took upon them to be Christ, and came under that name; the latter were such as promised and foretold false things. Among the number of the false Christs who appeared in the time prefixed by our Saviour, that is, between his resurrection and the destruction of Jerusalem, are generally reckoned Dositheus, who, according to Origin, gave it out that he was the Christ whom Moses foretold. (*Basnage. Hist. of Jews*, b. ii. c. 13.) Simon Magus, who bewitched the people by his sorceries, and made himself pass 'for the great power of God,' (Acts viii. 9, 10.) and those many more whom the "time of the advent of their king Messiah," as Josephus expresses it, "prevailed with to set up for kings;" (*Jewish War*, b. i.) Among the number of false prophets who appeared in this period are likewise reckoned Theudas (not the person mentioned Acts v. 36.) who, in the government of Fadus, promised his followers that he would divide the river Jordan, as it was in the days of Joshua and Elias, and give them a free passage (*Joseph. Antiq.* b. xx. c. 1.) The Egyptian Jew, who, in the government of Felix, drew thirty thousand after him to the mount of Olives, where he promised by his prayers to make the walls of Jerusalem, as those of Jericho once did, fall flat on the ground; thence drive the Roman

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show them the kingdom of God where it was not; and that, before he could enter into his glorified state, he was to suffer many things, and be rejected by the Jews; but that after his death, he would give incontestable proofs of his power and dominion, by the wonderful propagation of his gospel, and by the speedy and amazing vengeance which he intended to take of that nation. He therefore exhorted them, not to imitate the security of the people in Noah's time, or of the inhabitants of Sodom, nor to express any concern for the destruction of their country, as did Lot's wife for the burning of Sodom; ^a but to use their utmost care and diligence, when they saw the Roman ^b armies advancing, not to be involved in the general calamity: and because, in involving some, and preserving others, there would be much of God's distin-

guishing providence concerned; he therefore exhorted them to pray without fainting, or being discouraged at any thing; and, to this purpose, propounded a parable of a poor woman, who, by her continued importunity alone, prevailed with an unjust judge ^c to vindicate her wrongs, though he feared neither God nor man.

Shortly after this, Jesus crossed the river Jordan into Perea, ^d where he was followed again by vast multitudes of people, whom he both taught and cured of such distempers as they had, inasmuch, that several of the company, perceiving how ready he was to do good to all that came unto him, brought their little children ^e with them, in order to partake of his divine benediction; but his disciples thinking it below the dignity of their master to be disturbed and interrupted by infants, at first refused admittance to those who brought them, until Jesus, having reprov'd them for so doing, and withal recommended the innocence and simplicity of these babes, as a pattern for their imitation, commanded all to be introduced, and, taking them up in his arms, he laid his

forces, and there fix the seat of his empire (*Jewish War*, b. ii.) A certain magician, who, in the government of Festus, led great numbers of Jews into the desert, and promised them a deliverance from all their troubles, (*Antiq.* b. xxii.) And several others, as the same historian informs us, (*Jewish War*, b. vii.) who taught the Jews, "even to the last, to expect help and deliverance." Good reason therefore had our blessed Saviour to caution his disciples against all such pretenders to a divine mission, since, according to his prediction, and, as the same historian expresses it, "the land at this time was quite overrun with impostors and seducers, who drew the people after them in shoals, though the Roman governors were so very severe, that there hardly a day passed without the execution of some of them." (*Antiq.* b. xx. c. 6.)

^a Instead of making haste to save herself, as the angel had commanded her, she, out of a vain curiosity, must needs look back, either regretting what she had left behind her in the city, or concerned for those that were destroyed in it, till she was overtaken by the flames, and changed into a statue of salt, or into the condition of a corpse salted and embalmed, which continued as a monument of her disobedience for many ages after. And, in like manner, if any of our Saviour's disciples neglected the advice which he here gave them, and continued in Jerusalem, when the Roman army had closely invested it, they very likely were involved in the common destruction.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b The words in the text are, 'Whosoever the body or the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.' (Mat. xxiv. 28. Luke xvii. 37.) These words, which our Saviour here makes proverbial, seem to have been borrowed from that passage in Job, where he speaks of the eagle in this manner: 'She dwelleth, and abideth on the rock upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood; and where the slain are, there is she.' (Job xxxix. 28, &c.) Upon the account of the swiftness, the strength, and invincibleness of this bird, no doubt it was, that the Romans made the eagle their ensign in war. And therefore our Saviour, by making use of this expression, gives us to understand that the Romans would come upon the Jews with a sudden destruction; surround them so, that there should be no escaping their hands; and, in whatsoever country they found them, there put them all to the sword. For the eagle, mentioned in Job, our translators have rendered by a word, which signifies a *vulture*, a bird consecrated to Mars, because it loves to feed upon man's flesh; and therefore by a kind of natural instinct, "travels along with armies in expectation of the carcasses that fall there." Nor is it an uncommon thing for the prophets to express the day of God's vengeance under the idea of a feast, which he hath prepared for the ravenous birds and beasts of the field: for thus saith the Lord, 'Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field; assemble yourselves, and come, gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice, that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh and drink blood, even the flesh of the mighty, and the blood of the princes of the earth.' (Ezek. xxxix. 17, 18. See Is. xxxiv. 6. and Jer. xlii. 10.)—*Hammond's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^c Though it were blasphemy to think, that God acts upon the same motives with this unjust judge, yet this we may learn from the nature of the parable, that if a person, who neither fears God nor regards man, who had neither any sense of religion nor humanity, may be supposed to be so far prevailed upon by the earnest prayer of a miserable necessitous creature, as to grant the request made to him, and to administer relief to the supplicant, merely upon the continuance and importunity of the petitions that are put up; how much more ought we to think that God, who is infinite goodness itself, who is always kind and bountiful to his creatures, who delights to do them good, even without their desiring it, and who is able to do them good, with much less pains than they can request it; how much more ought we to think, I say, that this God, upon our earnest and hearty prayer to him, especially if we be importunate, and persevering in our devotions, will return us a kind answer, and grant us such supplies, such protection or assistance, as shall be needful for us.—*Bishop Smalbridge's Sermons*.

^d This word is derived from the Greek, *εἰσεν*, beyond, and signifies the country beyond Jordan, or on the east side of that river. It was bounded, according to Josephus, to the west, by Jordan; to the east, by Philadelphia; to the north, by Pella; and to the south, by Macheron; and was a fruitful country, abounding with pines, olive-trees, palm-trees, and other plants, that grew up and down in the fields in great plenty and perfection; and, in the excessive heats, was well watered and refreshed with springs and torrents from the mountains.—*Jewish War*, b. iii. c. 2.—It comprehended the six cantons of Abilene, Trachonitis, Iturea, Gaulonitis, Batavia, and Peræa, strictly so called. It was to this latter canton that our Saviour repaired on this occasion. See Macknight's Harmony, s. 84, note to John x. 40.—ED.

^e The parents who brought their children to Christ, were doubtless such as believed him to be a prophet sent from God, and were persuaded, that the touch, or imposition of his hand, would be of great benefit to them, both to draw down a blessing from heaven upon them, and to preserve them from diseases which saw him cure in persons more advanced in years. We may observe, therefore, that though these children were no more than infants, as appears by our Saviour taking them up in his arms, (Mark x. 16,) yet their parents thought them capable of spiritual blessings, and of receiving advantage by our Saviour's prayers. They however might bring them, with no further intent than what is customary among the Jews even now, when they present their children to any of their famous doctors, namely, to obtain his blessing; but by the reason which our Saviour gives for their admission into the kingdom of heaven, it appears, that he perceived something in them, besides their being emblems of humility, that qualified them to come unto him; and what could that be, but a fitness to be dedicated to the service of God, and to enter into covenant with him early, as the Jewish children did, by the rite of baptism, which was his institution, even as the other did by that of circumcision.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

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hands upon them, *a* and blessed them, and so departed from the place where this transaction happened.

As he was on his journey, a young person of distinction, who was very rich and wealthy, desired to know of him, what he was to do in order to obtain eternal life. Our Saviour proposed to him the observation of the moral law, and remitted him, in particular, to the commandments of the second table, *b* as a certain sign of his keeping those of the first; but when the young gentleman told him, that all these he had made it his study to observe from his youth, and our Lord, who knew his covetous temper, and was willing to touch the secret sore of his mind, told him, that if he aimed at perfection in religion, his only way would be to sell his estate, *c* and give it to the poor, in hopes of a greater treasure in heaven, and to come and be one of his disciples; the young man went away very pensive and melancholy, being loath to part with his present possessions for any treasure in reversion. Whereupon our Lord, turning to his disciples, began to declare what an insurmountable obstacle riches, without the grace of God, were to any man's salvation, *d* and that 'it was easier,' according to the He-

brew proverb, 'for a camel to go through the eye of a needle,' *e* than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.' At which expression, when his disciples were not a little startled, to remove their fears, he let them know, that the salvation of the rich, though a matter of some difficulty, was not impossible with God, who could change the hearts and affections of men as he pleased.

When the apostles heard their master bidding the 'young man sell all,' and 'give it to the poor, and follow him,' and promising him, for a reward, a treasure in heaven, they began to think, that possibly it might be their case, and the promise, in like manner, concern them; and therefore, when, in the name of the rest, Peter desired to know of him what reward they were to expect, who had actually relinquished all and followed him; his reply was, that at the general resurrection, *f* 'when him-

which way soever the kingdom be understood. When it was only by means of persuasion that men were brought into a society, hated and persecuted by all the ruling powers of the earth, Jewish and pagan; we may rest assured that the opulent and the voluptuous, characters which, in a dissolute age, commonly go together, who had so much to lose, and so much to fear, would not, among the hearers of the gospel, be the most easily persuaded. The apostle James, (ii. 5, 6.) accordingly attests this to have been the fact; it was 'the poor in this world whom God hath chosen rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom;' whereas, they were 'the rich in this world who oppressed them, dragged them before their tribunals, and blasphemed that worthy name by which they were called.' As little can there be any doubt of the justness of the sentiment, in relation to the state of the blessed hereafter, when the deceitfulness of riches, and the snare into which it so often inveigles men, are duly considered. So close an analogy runs through all the divine dispensations, that in more instances than this, it may be affirmed with truth, that the declarations of scripture are susceptible of either interpretation.—*Campbell on the Gospels.*—Ed.

e There are three different opinions among interpreters concerning the meaning of this proverbial saying. Some imagine, that, at Jerusalem, there was a gate, so very low and narrow, that a loaded camel could not pass through it, and that, by reason of its littleness, it was called the needle's eye; but all this is a mere fiction, devised on purpose to solve this seeming difficulty. The Jews indeed, to signify a thing impossible, had a common proverb among them, that 'an elephant cannot pass through the eye of a needle.' Now, our Saviour, say some, was pleased to change this proverb from an elephant, which was a beast that few had seen, to a camel, a creature very common in Syria, and whose bunch on his back hindered him from passing through any strait entrance. But others, not able to discern any analogy between a camel and a needle's eye, think, that the word *Κάμινος*, here signifies a *cable*, or thick rope, which mariners use in casting their anchors; and that the rather, not only because there is some similitude between a *cable* and a *thread*, which is usually drawn through the eye of a needle, but because the Jews, as the learned Buxtorf acquaints us, have a proverb of the like import relating to the cable, as they have to the elephant; for so they say, that as "difficult is the passage of the soul out of the body, as that of a cable through a narrow hole." Whether of these two interpretations takes place, it is a matter of pure indifference: only we may observe, that the application of the proverb to the rich man's entering into the kingdom of heaven, must not be understood absolutely, but only so as to denote a thing extremely difficult, if not impossible, without an extraordinary influence of the divine grace.—*Cutmet's Commentary; Hammond's and Poole's Annotations.*

f The word, in the original, is *παλιγγενσία*, which properly signifies a *new* and *second* state, and is used among the Pythagoreans for the return of the soul, after it had left one body to take possession of another: and agreeably hereunto it is used, by sacred writers, to denote either the future resurrection, which will be the re-union of the soul and body, or that great change which was to be effected in the world by the preaching of the gospel, and, more especially, by the mission of the Holy Ghost

a It was common with the Jews to bring their children to venerable persons, men of note for religion and piety, to have their blessing and prayer, (Gen. xlviii. 14.) And it appears to have been customary among the Jews, when one prayed for another, who was present to lay his hand upon the person's head.—*Campbell's Translation of the Gospel.*—Ed.

b We must not imagine, because our Saviour refers this young man to the precepts of the second table only, that therefore they are of more obligation to us, than those of the first, or that, by performing them alone, we may attain eternal life: our Lord has elsewhere determined, that the great commandment of all is, 'to love the Lord our God with all our hearts;' and here he instances in those of the second table, not only because the love of our neighbour is an excellent evidence of our love to God, but because the Pharisee, of which sect very probably this person was one, thought these commandments of trivial account, and easy performance; and yet by some of these it was, that our Saviour intended, by and by, to convince this inquirer, that he neither had kept nor could keep them.—*Poole's Annotations.*

c Since our blessed Saviour here requires of this young man, not only to withdraw his heart from an inordinate love of his possessions, but to sell them all and give the money to the poor, we may be sure that this was a particular command to him, in order to convince him of the insincerity of his pretended love to life eternal, and not a precept common to all Christians. That there were rich men in the church, we learn from several passages in scripture, (1 Tim. vi. 17. James i. 10, and ii. 2.) St Peter, in his speech to Ananias, permits Christians to retain what is their own, (Acts v. 4.) and St Paul does not enjoin the Corinthians to sell all, and give alms, but only requests them to administer to their brethren's wants out of their abundance, (2 Cor. viii. 14.) So that if riches fall into the hands of one who knoweth how to use them to God's glory, and the relief of indigent Christians, as well as to supply his own needs, it seems a contradiction to conceive, that God requires him to part with them, and so divest himself of any further opportunity of promoting his glory and doing good to his needy members. This precept therefore of selling all we have, can only take place when we are in the same situation with this young man, namely, have an express command from God so to do, or when we find our riches are an impediment to the securing of our eternal interest; for in that case we must part with a right hand, or a right eye, the nearest and dearest things we have, 'rather than be cast into hell-fire.'—*Whitby's Annotations.*

d Drs Campbell and Boothroyd thus translate Mat. xix. 23, 'It is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.' By the kingdom of heaven is sometimes understood, in the gospel history, the Christian church, then soon to be erected, and sometimes the state of the blessed in heaven, after the resurrection. In regard to this declaration of our Lord, I take it to hold true, in

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self should be seated upon his throne of glory, they also should sit upon twelve thrones,^a judging the twelve tribes of Israel;⁷ and that not only they, but all others likewise, who, for his and the gospel's sake, should quit any worldly advantages or possessions, should receive such comforts^b in this world as would vastly surpass their losses, and in the world to come, eternal life: but then, to show them that such high rewards proceeded from the bounty of heaven, and no other title, he represented the freedom of God, in the distribution of his favours, under the emblem of a certain master of a family, sending labourers into his vineyard, some sooner, and some later, but giving them all the same wages: wherein, though he seemed kind to some, yet was he unjust to none, because he paid them all according to his agreement, and, having done so, was then certainly left to his option, whom to make objects of his liberality.

Our Saviour had not been long in Perea, before he received a message out of Judea, from two sisters in Bethany,^c Martha, and Mary, of the dangerous sickness of

their brother Lazarus, a person highly beloved and esteemed by him; but he proposing, on this occasion, to manifest the glory of God, as well as his own divine power and mission, by a greater miracle than a simple cure would be, delayed his going until Lazarus was dead,^d and then set forward.

While he was in his journey, he took his apostles aside, and^e told them still more plainly what the event of it would be; namely, that at this time of his going to Jerusalem, the chief priests and scribes would apprehend, and condemn him, and then 'deliver him to the Gentiles, who would scourge, and mock, and crucify

after our Lord's ascension into heaven.—*Hammond's Annotations.*

^a Some interpreters refer these words to that authority, both in matters of discipline and doctrine, which the apostles, after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, were, by our Lord's commission and appointment, to exercise in the Christian church; but most understand them of the honours that are to be conferred upon them in a future state. And here some have taken great pains to determine what judgment these persons shall pass; as that they shall condemn the errors of wicked men by their doctrines, and the malice and obstinacy of infidels by their persecutions, &c., while others have undertaken to assign them their parts in the process of the last great day, and represent them, as so many assessors, to the Supreme Judge sitting upon the examination and trial of mankind, while all the rest stand at the bar. But though we are well assured, that such a judgment shall be, yet, as to the particular circumstances and formalities of it, the scripture seems to give us but a slender insight; and therefore, setting aside all dark conjectures about this matter, the most safe and probable way of applying this passage is, to look upon it as spoken after the manner of men, to signify in general, a brighter crown or more exquisite degree of happiness and glory. The apostles accompanied and stuck close to Christ in his low estate. They kept the faith under the greatest pressures and temptations. They were indefatigably diligent, undauntedly constant in their labours and sufferings for the truth, and most eminently serviceable in advancing the kingdom of Christ upon earth; and therefore they shall receive an eminent distinction in the kingdom of heaven.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

^b That is, the comforts of an upright conscience, a full content of mind, the joys of the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and hopes of glory. They should have God for their father, and Christ for their spouse, and all good Christians for their friends and brethren, who would honour, succour, and support them, more than those that were allied to them by the strictest bonds of nature.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^c Bethany took its name from the tract of ground wherein it stands, so called from the word *בית*, which signifies the *fig* or *grief tree*, that grew there in great plenty. It was a considerable place, situated at the foot of the mount of Olives about fifteen furlongs, or near two miles eastward from Jerusalem; but at present it is but a very small village. One of our modern travellers acquaints us, that at the first entrance into it, there is an old ruin, which they call Lazarus's castle, supposed to have been the mansion-house where he and his sisters lived. At the bottom of a small descent, not far from the castle, you see his sepulchre, which the Turks hold in great veneration, and use it for an oratory, or place of prayer. Here, going down by twenty-five steep steps, you come at first into a small square room, and from thence creep into another that is less, about a yard and a half deep, in which the body is said to have been laid. About a bowshot from hence, you pass by the place

which they say was Mary Magdalen's habitation; and then, descending a steep hill, you come to the fountain of the apostles, which is so called, because, as the tradition goes, these holy persons were wont to refresh themselves here, between Jerusalem and Jericho, as it is very probable they might, because the fountain is both close to the road-side, and is very inviting to the thirsty traveller.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table, Wells' Geography of the New Testament, and Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.*

^d Our Saviour's stay for two days after the message, and modest address of the two mournful sisters, kept them indeed a little longer in suspense and grief; but it showed his perfect wisdom and goodness, as it made the wonderful work more remarkable, and conducive to the fuller conviction of the spectators. Had he gone before Lazarus was dead, they might have attributed his recovery rather to the strength of nature than to Christ's miraculous power; or had he raised him as soon as he was dead, they might, peradventure, have thought it rather some trance or ecstasy, than a death or dissolution: but now, to raise a person, four days dead, offensive, and reduced to corruption, was a surprise of unutterable joy to his friends; removed all possible suspicion of confederacy; silenced the peevish cavilling, and triumphed over all the obstinacy of prejudice and infidelity.—*Bishop Blackhall's Sermons.*

^e In the course of the gospel, we find our Lord forewarning his disciples, no less than three times, of his approaching sufferings and resurrection. The first intimation of this kind was in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, when, after St Peter's confession of him to be 'the Christ, the Son of the living God, he began to show unto his disciples, how he must suffer many things,' &c., (Luke ix. 22.) The next we meet with was immediately after his transfiguration in the mount, when, as he came down thence, with the three apostles who were the companions of his privacies, he reminded them of what he had told them before, namely, 'that the Son of Man should be delivered into the hands of men,' (Luke ix. 44.) The third warning was that which he gave his apostles apart, when he was going to Jerusalem to suffer, or, as some rather think, when he was going to Bethany, in order to raise Lazarus from the dead: and it is observed of these several warnings, that they rise by degrees, and grow more full and distinct, in proportion as the things drew nearer. Thus, the first is delivered in general terms: 'the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected, and slain, and raised the third day.' The second is enforced with this solemn preface, 'let these sayings sink down in your ears,' (Luke ix. 44.) And the third descends to a more particular description of that tragical scene: 'he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again,' (Luke xviii. 32, 33.) Now, whether we consider the danger the apostles were in of being oppressed with an affliction so sensible as the death of their master; or the general mistake wherewith they were infected, concerning the splendour and worldly pomp of the Messiah's kingdom, or the scandal that would necessarily rise from a crucified Saviour, this method of forewarning his disciples of what was to come upon him, was highly requisite, to sustain them in their tribulation, to rectify their sentiments, and remove all offences; as it showed that his death was voluntary, consonant to the predictions of the prophets, and agreeable to the council and appointment of God, and the shame of his crucifixion abundantly recompensed by the glories of his resurrection.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. ii.

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him; but that 'on the third day he would rise again.' Upon the mention of his resurrection, which they vainly imagined would be the beginning of his terrestrial greatness, James and John, by the mouth of their mother Salome, ^a requested of him, to have the first places in his kingdom. The first places in his kingdom, he told them, were to be disposed of according to the predetermination of his Father; but a proper qualification for them it was, to be able to take the greatest share of the bitter cup of his sufferings, ^b which very probably might be their fate; ^c and when the ambition of these two brothers provoked the indignation of the other ten apostles, he declared to them all, that his kingdom ^d was far

different from those of this world, whose princes and governors strove to exercise their utmost power and dominion over their subjects: whereas, whoever expected to be great and chief among his followers, must be a servant to the rest, according to his own example, who came, not to take state upon him, but to serve others, and even to lay down his life for their redemption.

As he drew near to Jericho, attended with a numerous company, one Bartimeus, who had long sat by the wayside begging, hearing the noise of a vast crowd of people passing by, and being informed that Jesus of Nazareth was among them, with ^e another blind man who

^a This their mother might be encouraged to ask, upon the account of her near relation to the blessed Virgin, her constant accompanying our Saviour, and diligent attendance upon him; and might conceive some hopes of her sons' future exaltation, from the pompous name which our Lord had given them, and the great privilege to which he had admitted them, but excluded others, of attending him in his privacies.—*Whitby's Annotations and Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

^b It was anciently the custom, at great entertainments, for the governor of the feast to appoint to each of his guests the kind and proportion of wine they were to drink, and what he had thus appointed them, it was thought a breach of good manners, either to refuse, or not to drink up. Hence a man's cup, both in sacred and profane authors, came to signify the portion, whether of good or evil, which befalls him in this world. Homer introduces Achilles, thus comforting Priamus for the loss of his son:

Two urns by Jove's high throne have ever stood,
The source of evil one, and one of good,
From thence the cup of mortal man he fills,
Blessings to those, to these distributes ills;
To most he mingles both; the wretch decreed
To taste the bad unmix'd is curs'd indeed;
Pursued by wrongs, by meagre famine driv'n,
He wanders, outcast both of earth and heav'n.
The happiest taste not happiness sincere,
But find the cordial draught is dash'd with care.—*Iliad* xxiv.

Not unlike what we meet with in the psalmist, 'in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full mixed, and he poureth out of the same: as for the dregs thereof, all the ungodly of the earth shall drink them out,' (Ps. lxxv. 9, 10.) And what our Saviour means by the expression, we cannot be to seek, since, in two remarkable passages, (Luke xxii. 42, and John xviii. 11.) he has been his own interpreter; *lethale poculum bibere*, or *to taste of death*, was a common phrase among the Jews, and from them we have reason to believe that our Lord borrowed it.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv. and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^c This prediction was literally fulfilled in St James, who was put to death by Herod, and so, in the highest sense of the words, was made to drink of our Lord's cup; and, though St John was not brought to suffer martyrdom, yet his being scourged and imprisoned by the council at Jerusalem, (Acts v. 18. 40.) put into a caldron of burning oil at Ephesus, (*Euseb.* b. iii. c. 18,) and banished into Patmos, 'for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ,' (Rev. i. 9.) may well be supposed to be some part of that bitter cup which our Saviour drank; and that he, who underwent such torments, as nothing but a miracle could deliver him from, may, with very great justice, be esteemed a martyr.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

^d The words in the text are, 'the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you: but, whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, (Mat. xx. 25, 26,) and from hence some have inferred, that our Saviour forbids them who will be his disciples, or the subjects of his kingdom, the exercise of all civil and ecclesiastical dominion. But if it be considered, that civil government was, from the beginning of the world instituted by God, and therefore called his ordinance, (Rom. xiii. 2,) for the punishment of evil doers, and for the defence of those that do well: that Christianity,

when it came into the world, made no alteration in things of this nature, but left the magistrate, after his conversion, still bearing the sword, in the same manner as he did before; and that the exercise of his power is a thing so sacred, as to entitle not only princes, but even their deputed ministers of justice, to the style of gods in scripture; it must needs be allowed, that what is reputed so honourable, and found so beneficial, so strict a bond of human virtue, and so firm a guard against all kinds of wickedness, can never be forbidden in any Christian commonwealth. And, in like manner, since among the gifts distributed for the use of the church, we read of 'governments,' (1 Cor. xii. 28,) and find mention made of 'those who are set over us in the Lord,' (1 Thes. v. 12,) to whom we must yield obedience, and submit ourselves, (Heb. xii. 7, 17,) since we find that the apostles had the rod, (1 Cor. iv. 21,) and power given of the Lord, to 'deliver to Satan,' (1 Cor. v. 5,) and to 'revenge all disobedience,' (2 Cor. x. 6,) and since, in the nature of the thing, it is every whit as impossible for a church to subsist without ecclesiastical government, as it is for a state without civil, it must needs follow, that the one is necessary, and of divine institution, as much as the other. All, therefore, that our Saviour can be presumed to forbid in these words, is such a dominion, whether in church or state, as is attended with tyranny, oppression, and a contempt of the subjects that live under it. Such, for the most part, was the government that obtained in eastern countries; and therefore, in contraposition to this, our spiritual rulers are put in mind, that they 'feed the flock, which is among them, taking the oversight thereof, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords of God's inheritance, but examples to the flock,' (1 Pet. v. 2, 3,) that their highest station in the church is not so much a place of dignity, as a charge and office, which subjects them to the wants and necessities of those they rule over; and that the most honourable post they can have in Christ's kingdom, is only a larger ministry, and attendance upon others; for, 'who is Paul? who is Apollo? but ministers by whom ye believed,' (1 Cor. iii. 3.) 'For we preach not ourselves,' says the apostle to the Corinthians, 'but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake,' (2 Cor. iv. 5.)—*Whitby's and Beausobre's Annotations*.

^e There is a considerable variation in the accounts of this miracle by the three evangelists. Mark and Luke notice only one blind man, Matthew two; Luke represents the miracle as performed 'when Jesus was drawing nigh to Jericho,' before he entered it; Matthew and Mark, after he had left Jericho. The joint testimony, however, of Matthew and Mark, as to the time seems to outweigh that of Luke, who is not so observant of chronological order; and as all agree, that Christ was then attended by a 'multitude,' who 'led the way,' and who 'followed him' towards Jerusalem, it is more probable that the incident took place after he left Jericho, where this multitude seems to have been collected. For he came privately from Ephraim to Jericho, attended only by the twelve.—*Hales*.—The minute discrepancies in this narrative, compared with those of Mark and Luke, involve no contradiction; since, though those evangelists mention one blind man as healed; and Mark and Luke in mentioning one might mean to point out that one who was the more known. Again, the apparent difference between Matthew and Mark, as compared with Luke, with regard to the place where the miracle was performed, may, it is thought, be removed by reading in Luke 'when, or while, Jesus was near Jericho.' If, however, the trifling discrepancies adverted to were really irreconcilable, still they would not weaken the credit of the evangelists, being such as are found in the best historians; nay, they may be rather

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begged along with him, called aloud upon Jesus to have mercy upon him. The people who accompanied our Lord, supposing that the man asked an alms, bade him cease his noise; but the benefit which he desired was of greater moment, and therefore he raised his voice, and, with more importunity, cried, 'thou son of David, have mercy upon me!' Which when our Lord perceived, he commanded both him and his companion to be brought before him; and, upon them declaring what favour they expected, he touched their eyes, and immediately they received their sight, and followed him, glorifying God, as indeed all the company did, who had been eye-witnesses of this miracle.

As our Lord was passing through Jericho,^a a certain man, named Zaccheus, of great wealth and figure among the publicans, was not a little desirous to see him; but, as he was a man of a low stature, and could not gratify his curiosity in the crowd, he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree, where he could not fail of having a full view of him. When our Saviour came near the place, he called him by his name, and bade him come down, because he intended to be his guest that day: whereupon Zaccheus received him with the greatest expressions of joy and respect, whilst others could not forbear reflecting upon him, for entering the house of a man of so scandalous a profession. But, notwithstanding all their censures, our Saviour, who from the intuition of his heart, as well as his own declaration, knew him to be a just and charitable man, pronounced him and his family in a state of salvation, and that he, though a publican, and an alien to the commonwealth of Israel, was nevertheless one of those to whom the promises^b made unto Abraham did belong.

The nearer they came to Jerusalem, the more the disciples began to think that their master had taken that journey to the passover, on purpose to seat himself upon his throne, and assume his regal authority; and therefore, to cure their minds of all such thoughts, he propounded a parable^c to them, 'of a certain great man, born heir to

thought to strengthen their authority as independent witnesses.

—*Bloomfield's Greek Testament.*—Ed.

^a For an account of Jericho, see note *b*, p. 363.—Ed.

^b Though some commentators, with our author, are of opinion that Zaccheus was a *Gentile*. Yet with Scott, Boothroyd, Doddridge, and others, we are disposed to conclude that he was a *Jew*; and the passage, Luke xix. 9, which has given rise to the doubt, seems judiciously explained by Scott, as follows:—"Jesus, knowing the sincerity and humility of his professed subjection to the gospel, declared, 'that salvation was that day come to his house,' he and his family had before been estranged from it, but it was now come thither for the benefit of all belonging to it; 'for so much as he also was a son of Abraham,' not only according to the flesh, but as being now made partaker of Abraham's faith and privileges, and the promises made to him and his seed.—Ed.

^c This parable, we may observe, consists of two parts. The former of which is contained in Luke xix. 12, 14, 15—27, and relates to the rebellious subjects of this prince, who 'went into a far country to receive a kingdom;' the latter is included in the 13th, 15th, and so on to the 27th verse, and relates to this prince's servants, to whom he had committed his money for them to improve in his absence; and the explication of the whole is generally supposed to be this:—The nobleman or prince here is our Lord himself, the eternal Son of God; his going into a far country to receive a kingdom, is his ascension into heaven, to sit down at the right hand of the Divine Majesty, and take possession of his mediatorial kingdom; his servants may be either his apostles and disciples, who, upon his return, were to give an account of the progress of his gospel, or Christians in general,

a kingdom, and going into a far country to take possession of it; but before he departed, calling his servants together, and giving each a sum of money to trade withal, until he should return. The reason of his journey to this foreign land was, because his own countrymen, over whom he had a right to reign, were obstinately set against him, and disclaimed him for their king. When therefore he had obtained his new kingdom, and was returned home, he first called his servants, with whom he had intrusted his money, to an account, rewarding the diligent with gifts proportionate to their improvements, and punishing the negligent with perpetual imprisonment; and then taking cognizance of his countrymen, who, upon his going to be enthroned in another kingdom, disclaimed all obedience to him, he ordered them, in his presence, to be put to death as so many rebels; intimating hereby both the punishment of negligent Christians, and the destruction of the contumacious Jews.

By the time that our Lord arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had now been four days dead^d and buried; and several friends and others from Jerusalem, were come to condole with the two sisters, ^e Martha and

who, for every talent, whether natural or acquired, are accountable. His citizens are, unquestionably, the Jews, who not only rejected him with scorn, but put him to an ignominious death; and his return is the day of his fierce wrath and vengeance upon the Jewish nation, which came upon them about forty years after this time, and was indeed so very terrible, as to be a kind of emblem and representation of that great day of accounts, when he will render 'to every one according to his works.' It is observable, however, by some commentators farther, that our Lord took the rise of this parable from the custom of the kings of Judea, such as Herod the Great, and Archelaus his son, who usually went to Rome to receive their kingdom from Cæsar, without whose permission and appointment they durst not take the government into their hands. In the case of Archelaus, indeed, the resemblance is so great, that almost every circumstance of the parable concurs in him. He was this *σὺργός*, or man of great *parentage*, as being the son of Herod the Great. He was obliged to go into a far country, that is, to Rome, to receive his kingdom of the emperor Augustus. The Jews, who hated him because of his cruel and tyrannical reign, sent their messengers after him, desiring to be freed from the yoke of kings, and reduced to a province of Rome. Their complaint, however, was not heard. He was confirmed in the kingdom of Judea; and, when he returned home, tyrannized for ten years over those that would have shook off his dominion. But then there is this remarkable difference between his case and that in the parable, that the Jews, upon their second complaint to Cæsar, prevailed against him, and procured his banishment to Vienna.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Beausobre's* and *Whitby's* *Annotations*.

^d It was customary among the Jews, as Dr Lightfoot tells us from Maimonides, and others, to go to the sepulchres of their deceased friends, and visit them for three days; for so long they suppose that their spirits hovered about them. But when once they perceived that their visage began to change, as it would in three days in these countries, all hopes of a return to life were then at an end. After a revolution of humours, which in seventy-two hours is completed, their bodies tend naturally to putrefaction; and therefore Martha had reason to say that her brother's body, which appears by the context to have been laid in the sepulchre the same day that he died, would now in the fourth day begin to stink.—*Whitby's* and *Hammond's* *Annotations*.

^e The time of mourning for departed friends was anciently, among the Jews, of longer continuance. For Jacob they mourned forty days, (Gen. l. 3.) and for Aaron and Moses thirty, (Num. xx. 29. and Deut. xxxiv. 8.) For persons of an inferior quality the days very probably were fewer, but some they had for all, and the general term, both among the Jews and

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Mary, for the loss of their brother. Upon the first news of our Lord's approach, the two sisters, attended with some of the company that was in the house, went out to meet him; and, pouring out a flood of tears for the loss of their dear brother, fell prostrate at his feet, and wished, over and over again, that he had come a little sooner; for then they were certain that he would not have died. The sight of their tears and sorrow, accompanied with the lamentations of their followers, affected the Son of God so that he groaned within himself; and then demanding where they had laid the body, ^a he followed them to the place, sympathizing with their sorrow, and weeping as well as they, which made some of the company remark how well he loved, and others wonder why he did not prevent his death. ^b When he was come to the grave, ^c and had ordered the stone to be removed

from it, after a short address of adoration and thanksgiving to his Father for his readiness to hear him, ^d he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth;' ^e whereupon he that was dead immediately arose from his bed of darkness, and in such sound health, that when his grave-clothes were unloosed, he was able to walk along with them to Bethany.

This great and apparent miracle caused the utmost surprise and astonishment among all the spectators, and the greatest part of them was, from that time, convinced, and believed on him; but others, more obstinate, went and reported the thing to the Pharisees at Jerusalem, who thereupon called together their sanhedrim, where, after some solemn debate, it was concluded, 'that whether the man was a prophet sent from God or not, for fear of giving any umbrage to the Roman powers, ^f

Gentiles, was seven; for so Ovid brings in Orpheus lamenting the death of his wife: "Yet for seven days he sat squalid on the bank, without the gift of Ceres: anxiety and grief of mind, and tears, were his food."—*Metam.* b. x.—An expression not unlike that in the royal psalmist, 'my tears have been my meat day and night.' (Ps. xlii. 3.) During this time their neighbours and friends came to visit them, and to alleviate their sorrows with the best arguments they could. They pray with them; they read with them the forty-ninth psalm: pray for the soul of the dead, and distribute their comforts in proportion to their loss; but nobody opened his mouth until the afflicted person had first spoken, because Job's three friends, who came to comfort him, we find did the same (Job ii. 13.) All which ceremonies made the concourse to Martha's house at this time the greater, and gave more Jews an opportunity to be the eye-witnesses of her brother's resurrection.—*Poole's* and *Beausobre's* Annotations, and *Basnage's History of the Jews*, b. v. c. 23.

^a Our Saviour could not look on the affliction of the two sisters and their friends without having a share in it. Besides he groaned deeply, being grieved to find that his friends entertained a suspicion of his loving them less than their great love to him might claim; 'and was troubled.' In the Greek it is *he troubled himself*, *σταλάζων ἑαυτὸν*, he allowed himself to be angry at the malice of the devil, who had introduced sin into the world, and thereby made such havoc of the human kind. But to keep them no longer in suspense, he asked where they had buried Lazarus, that he might go to the grave, and give them immediate relief, by bringing him to life again. On this occasion it appeared that Jesus was possessed of a delicate sensibility of human passions. For when he beheld Martha and Mary, and their companions around him all in tears, the tender feelings of love, and pity, and friendship, moved him to such a degree, that he wept as he went along, (John xi. 34.) 'And said, Where have ye laid him? they say unto him, Lord, come and see. (35.) Jesus wept.' In this grief of the Son of God, there was a greatness and generosity, not to say an amiableness of disposition, infinitely nobler than that which the stoic philosophers aimed at in their so much boasted apathy.—*Macknight's Harmony*.—Ed.

^b The words in the text are, 'some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?' (John xi. 37.) which some imagine were spoken only in admiration, that having given sight to a blind man that was a mere stranger to him, he did not cure his sick friend. But others conceive a vile sarcasm in the words, as if they went about to weaken his reputation, in a miracle wherein he had manifestly shown his divine power, because he did not preserve his friend from dying.—*Poole's Annotations*.

^c In the 23d chapter of Genesis, we have the earliest notice of the practice, which was formerly very prevalent in the east, of depositing the dead in natural or artificial caves, great numbers of which are still to be found in Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Persia. In the mountainous country of southern Palestine there are abundance of natural caves in the rocks, which might easily be formed into commodious sepulchral vaults; and where such natural caves were wanting, sepulchres were hewn in the rock for such families as were able to incur the necessary expense;

for this was the mode of sepulture decidedly preferred by those who could obtain it. The arrangement and extent of these caves varied with circumstances. Those in the declivity of a mountain were often cut in horizontally; but to others there was usually a descent by steps from the surface. The roofs of the vaults are commonly arched; and sometimes, in the more spacious vaults, supported by colonnades. These rocky chambers are generally spacious, being obviously family vaults, intended to receive several dead bodies. Niches, about six or seven feet deep, are usually cut in the sides of the vault, each adapted to receive a single corpse; but in some vaults small rooms are cut in the same manner; and in others, stone slabs of the same length are fixed horizontally against the walls, or cut out of the rock, one above another, serving as shelves on which the corpses were deposited; in others, however, the floor itself is excavated for the reception of the dead, in compartments of various depths, and in the shape of a coffin. Some of the bodies were placed in stone coffins, provided with sculptured lids; but such sarcophagi were by no means in general use; the bodies, when wound up in the grave-clothes, being usually deposited without any sort of coffin or sarcophagus. The vaults are always dark, the only opening being the narrow entrance, which is usually closed by a large stone rolled to its mouth; although some of a superior description are shut by stone doors, hung in the same manner as the doors of houses, by pivots turning in holes in the architrave above and in the threshold below.—*Pictorial Bible*.—Ed.

^d As our blessed Saviour, in virtue of his union with God the Father, had naturally, and in himself, a power of working miracles, there was no need for his addressing himself to heaven every time that he did any: however, upon this and some other occasions, we find him praying to God under the title of his Father, that all the company might know, that what he did was by a divine, not a diabolical power, and that God, in granting his petition, acknowledged him to be his Son.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^e The form of the Jewish sepulchre already described suggests an easy solution of a difficulty in the resurrection of Lazarus. The sacred historian states, that when our Lord cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus come forth, he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes.' Upon this circumstance, the enemies of revelation seize with avidity, and demand with an air of triumph, how he should come out of a grave, who was bound hand and foot with grave-clothes? But the answer is easy: the evangelist does not mean that Lazarus walked out of the sepulchre, but only that he sat up, then putting his legs over the edge of his niche or cell, slid down and stood upright upon the floor; all which he might easily do, notwithstanding his arms were bound close to his body, and his legs were tied strait together, by means of the shroud and rollers with which he was swathed. Hence, when he was come forth, Jesus ordered his relations to loose him and let him go; a circumstance plainly importing the historian's admission that Lazarus could not walk till he was unbound.—*Paxton's Illustrations*, vol. iii. pp. 268, 269.—Ed.

^f The Jews, seeing the miracles which Jesus did, this especially of raising Lazarus, did greatly fear, lest, taking upon him the public character of the Messiah, he would attempt to make himself king, and by the admiration which he had gained among

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it was highly expedient that he should die, rather than that the whole nation, for his sake, should incur the danger of being ruined : and from that time they entered into a combination to have him apprehended and put to death ; but, as ' his hour was not yet come,' at present he declined their fury, by retreating from the public, and retiring to a little place, called Ephraim, ^a in the tribe of Benjamin, where he continued, for a few days, with his apostles, until the time of the passover was approaching.

Six days before that solemn feast began, our Lord, in his way to Jerusalem, called at Bethany, where he was kindly entertained at supper ^b by the two sisters of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. Martha, according to her custom, dressed the supper, but Lazarus, whom he had raised, was one of the company that sat at table with him, while Mary, to express her love and bounty, took a vial of the most valuable essence, made of spikenard, ^c

the people, be quickly enabled to accomplish his ends, unless he was timely prevented. If then he was permitted to go on in his pretensions, the consequence seemed visible to them, that the Romans, to whom they were already subject, would look upon this as a rebellion, and so be provoked to come with an army and destroy them utterly. That this was their fear, is evident from the many groundless objections which they made against our Saviour, as that, he forbade to give tribute to Cæsar, and that he made himself a king, and so opposed the title of Tiberius. Not that they desired the continuance of Cæsar's dominion over them, but the apprehension of a still farther conquest from the Romans, made them unwilling to provoke them, and that more especially because they had an ancient tradition, that one Armolus, which is, by an easy change, Romulus, before the end of the world, would come and destroy them. This seems to be but the deprivation of some prophecy from God, which foretold the coming of the Romans in the last days, meaning thereby the days of the Messiah, to destroy them. It demonstrates, however, that they both believed and expected, that the Romans were the people, from whom the change of their religion, and the total subversion of their government, were to come; and for this reason they were, upon all occasions, so very fearful to offend them. But herein they were sadly mistaken: for the prophecy of the Romans coming to destroy their temple and nation was fulfilled, not by their letting Christ alone, or believing in him, but by their thus opposing and conspiring against him.—*Hammond's Annotations.*

^a It was situated between Bethel and Jericho, about twenty miles to the north of Jerusalem.—*Josephus on the Jewish War*, b. v. c. 8.

^b Some interpreters are of opinion, that this was the same supper which our Saviour was invited to in the house of Simon the leper; that St John has related it in its proper place, as a thing which happened six days before the passover; but that the other evangelists have mentioned it, by way of recapitulation, to show what might be the probable occasion of Judas's treachery, even his vexation for being disappointed of the money that might have been made of this precious ointment, had it been sold and put into the bag for him to purloin. But others suppose that this supper was different from that which is mentioned, (Mat. xxvi. 6. and Mark xiv. 3.) 1st. Because this was in the house of Lazarus, (John xii. 2.) that in the house of Simon the leper, (Mat. xxvi. 6.) 2dly. Here Mary anoints the feet of Christ, (John xii. 3.) there a woman not named pours ointment on his head, (Mat. xxvi. 7.) 3dly. This supper was six days before the passover, (John xii. 1.) that only two, (Mat. xxvi. 2. Mark xiv. 1.) and if the suppers were not the same, the Mary that anointed Christ's feet here, and the woman that anointed his head there, were not the same.—*Calmet's Commentary; Beausobre's and Whitley's Annotations.*

^c The spikenard (Heb. נִרְ נִרְ *nard*) is a plant belonging to the order of *gramina*, and is of different species. In India, whence the best sort comes, it grows as common grass, in large tufts close to each other, in general from three to four feet in length. So strong is its aroma, which resides principally in the husky

and, pouring it upon his feet, anointed them, and wiped them with her hair, so that the whole house was filled with the fragrant of its perfume. This action Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed his Master, and had, at that time, the custody of the bag, wherein money, for charitable and other necessary uses, was kept, highly blamed, as a piece of prodigality, in throwing away what might have been sold for three hundred pence, ^d and given to the poor; not that he valued the poor, but because he was a greedy wretch, who was always purloining some part of the public money to himself. Our Saviour, therefore, who knew the sincerity of Mary's and the naughtiness of Judas's heart, in a very gentle reply, commended what she had done, as a seasonable ceremony ^e to solemnize his approaching death; but blamed the other's pretended concern for the poor, since objects of this kind they had always with them, but his continuance among them was not to be long. While they were sitting at this supper, great numbers of Jews, out of curiosity, came to Bethany, not only to have a sight of Jesus, but of Lazarus likewise, whom he had raised from the dead; but, when the sanhedrim understood that the resurrection of Lazarus occasioned many people to believe on Jesus, ^f they consulted how to destroy him likewise.

roots, that when trodden upon, or otherwise bruised, the air is filled with its fragrance. Dr Blanc, who planted some of the roots in his garden, at Lucknow, states, that in the rainy season it shot up spikes about six feet high. This plant was highly valued among the ancients, both as an article of luxury, and as a medicine. The *Unguentum Nardinum*, or ointment manufactured from the nard, was the favourite perfume used at the ancient baths and feasts; and it appears from a passage in Horace, that it was so valuable, that so much of it as could be contained in a small box of precious stone was considered a sort of equivalent for a large vessel of wine; and a handsome quota for a guest to contribute to an entertainment, according to the custom of antiquity. In Mark xiv. 3. it is said that there came 'a woman, having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box and poured it on his [Christ's] head.' In verse 5, this is said to have been worth more than three hundred pence, *denarii*; and John (ch. xii. 3.) mentions 'a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly;'—the house was filled with the odour of the ointment;—it was worth three hundred pence, *denarii*. As this evangelist has determined the quantity, says Mr Taylor, 'a pound—and the lowest value (for Mark says more) was eight pounds fifteen shillings, we may safely suppose that this was not a Syrian production, or made from any fragrant grass growing in the neighbouring districts; but was a true ointment of Indian spikenard, 'very costly.' In the answer of our Lord on this occasion, there seems also to be some allusion to the remoteness of the country whence this unguent was brought, 'Where-soever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done, shall be spoken of for a memorial of her,' (Mark xiv. 9.) As much as to say, 'This unguent came from a distant country, to be sure, but the gospel shall spread to a much greater distance, yea, all over the world; so that in India itself, whence this composition came, shall the memorial of its application to my sacred person be mentioned with honour.' The idea of a far country, connected with the ointment, seems to have suggested that of 'all the world.'—*Calmet's Dictionary*, p. 836.—Ed.

^d As the Roman penny was sevenpence halfpenny of our money, so three hundred pence must amount to nine pounds seven shillings and sixpence.

^e It was a custom in these eastern countries, for kings and great persons, to have their bodies at their funerals embalmed with odours and sweet perfumes; and, in allusion hereunto, our Saviour here declares of Mary, that she, to testify her faith in him, as her King and Lord, had, as it were beforehand, embalmed his body with precious ointment for his burial.

^f Never was there rage and malice more unreasonable than

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In the mean time, Jesus, having tarried all night at Bethany, set forward next morning with his disciples, and others attending him on his way to Jerusalem. When he came to a place called Bethphage, ^a on the side of mount Olive, ^b he sent two of his disciples into the village to bring from thence an ass, and her colt, ^c which was not yet backed, that, to accomplish a remarkable prophecy, ¹ he might ride thereon to Jerusalem. ^d The dis-

ciples ^e did as they were ordered: and, having mounted their master on the colt, he proceeded as it were in triumph, towards the city, amidst the loud acclamations of an innumerable multitude, whilst crowds of people came forth to meet him with branches ^f of palm-trees in their hands, some spreading their garments ^g in the way, others cutting down branches, and strewing them where he was

¹ Is. lxi. 11; Zech. ix. 9.

this; for admitted that Christ had broke the sabbath, and spoken blasphemy, yet what had Lazarus done? No crime was ever alleged against him; and yet these rulers of the people conspire to put him to death, merely to preserve their own honour, and reputation. But see the providence of God, which notwithstanding all their contrivances, was pleased to preserve him, as a monument of his glory, and a testimony of the miracle which Jesus performed on him, thirty years after our Saviour's death. —*Poole's and Whitby's Annotations; and Taylor's Life of Christ.*

^a Bethphage signifies the house of figs or dates, and might very probably have its name from the several trees of these kinds that grew there. It was a small village of the priests, situate on mount Olivet, and, as it seems, somewhat nearer Jerusalem than Bethany. —*Beausobre's Annotations, and Wells' Geography of the New Testament.*

^b This place, doubtless, had its name from the great number of olive trees that grew upon it. It lay a little without Jerusalem, on the east side of it, about five furlongs from the city, says Josephus; but he must be understood of the very nearest part of it, since St Luke makes the distance to be a sabbath-day's journey, that is, eight furlongs, or a mile, unless we suppose, that he means the summit of the hill, from which our Saviour ascended, (Acts i. 12.) Mr Maundrell tells us, "that he and his company going out of Jerusalem at St Stephen's gate, and crossing the valley of Jehosaphat, began immediately to ascend the mountain; that, being got above two-thirds of the way up, they came to certain grottos, cut with intricate windings and caverns under ground, which were called the 'sepulchres of the prophets;' that a little higher up were twelve arched vaults under ground, standing side by side, and built in memory of the apostles, who are said to have compiled their creed in this place; that, sixty paces higher, they came to the place where Christ is said to have uttered his prophecy concerning the final destruction of Jerusalem; and, a little on the right hand, to another, where he is said to have dictated a second time the Lord's prayer to his disciples; that, somewhat higher, is the cave of a saint, called Pelagia; a little above that, a pillar, denoting the place where an angel gave the blessed virgin three days' warning of her death; and, at the top of all, the place of our blessed Lord's ascension." —*Wells' Geography of the New Testament.*

^c It is well remarked by Grotius, that such animals as were never employed in the service of men, were wont to be chosen for sacred purposes, insomuch, that the very heathens thought those things and sacrifices most proper for the service of their gods, which had never been put to profane uses. Thus the Philistines returned the ark in a new cart, drawn by heifers that had never before undergone the yoke, (1 Sam. vi. 7,) and thus Apollo's priest admonished Æneas: "let one be enjoined, from the select herd to take seven heifers," (Æn. vi.) But the chief design that our Saviour might have, in the orders which he gave to his disciples, was, that the prophecy might, by this means, receive its full completion: 'tell ye the daughter of Zion, behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.' The former part of the verse is taken from Is. lxi. 11, and the latter from Zech. ix. 9. Both by the Jews are acknowledged to relate to the Messiah: and with regard to the latter, R. Joseph was wont to say, "May the Messiah come, and may I be worthy to sit under the shadow of the tail of his ass!" —*Whitby's Annotations, and Surenhusii Concil. in loc. ex V. T. apud Matthæum.*

^d A great contest there is among learned men, whether our Lord rode upon the ass or the colt, or on both alternately. Those who contend for his riding upon both, observe from the words of the prophet Zechariah, (chap. ix. 9,) that mention is made of riding both 'upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass;'

and from St Matthew, (chap. xxi. 7,) they observe further, that the disciples having brought the ass and the colt which our Saviour had sent them for, 'put on them their clothes, and set him thereon.' Since, therefore, the relation of St Matthew thus literally agrees with the prophecy of Zechariah, and both expressly assert, that our Saviour did ride upon the ass as well as the colt, they see no reason why these texts should not be taken in their most plain and obvious meaning, and do hence infer, that, for the more exact fulfilling of the prophecy, our Saviour did actually ride part of the way upon the one, and the remaining part upon the other. The generality of interpreters, however, are against this. They suppose, that, as there was no occasion for our Saviour's riding upon both in so short a journey, and as the other three evangelists only make mention of the colt, there seems to be a necessity for admitting of the figure called *enallage numeri* in this place; and that, as when we read, that 'the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat,' (Gen. viii. 4,) we understand only upon one of them; so here, when St Matthew tells us, that the disciples brought 'the ass and the colt, and put their clothes on them,' by *ἵκαν αὐτῶν*, he must necessarily mean, *ἵκαν ἑνὸς αὐτῶν*, 'upon one of them,' that is, the colt, as the words of the prophecy itself will fairly bear: nor was there any other reason for bringing the mother along with it, but that foals will not usually go without their dams. —*Wells' Geography of the New Testament, part i. and Surenhusii Concil. in loca ex V. T. apud Matthæum.*

^e Very remarkable is our Saviour's prescience, even as to the most minute matters, in the orders which he gives his disciples, namely, 1. You shall find a colt; 2. On which no man ever sat: 3. Bound with his mother; 4. *In vivo*, or where two ways meet; 5. As you enter into the village; 6. The owners of which will, at first, seem unwilling that you should unbind him; 7. But when they hear that I have need of him they will let him go. And no less remarkable is the cheerful obedience of these disciples to a command, which carnal reasoning might have started many objections against, and which nothing less than a steadfast persuasion, that he who sent the message would be sure to give success to it, could have prevailed upon them to execute, as they did, without any demur or delay. —*Whitby's Annotations, and Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. i.*

^f At the feast of tabernacles, it was a custom among the Jews, not only to sing hosannas with the greatest joy, but also to carry palm-branches in their hands, (Lev. xxiii. 40,) and to desire, as the Jews still wish at the celebration of this feast, that they may rejoice in this manner at the coming of the Messiah. Nor was it only at this festival, but upon any other occasion of solemn rejoicing, that the Jews made use of this ceremony: for we find, that, upon the enemy's evacuating the tower of Jerusalem, Simon and his men 'entered into it, with thanksgiving, and branches of palm-trees, and with harps and cymbals, and with viols, and hymns, and songs,' (1 Mac. xiii. 51.) Nay, the very same manner of expressing their joy prevailed among other nations, as well as the Jews; for so Herodotus relates, that they who went before Xerxes, as he passed over the Hellespont, strewed the way with myrtle-branches: and therefore we need less wonder that we find such of the company as were by our blessed Saviour's miracles convinced of his being their king, and the promised Messiah, testifying their joy upon this his inauguration into his kingdom, in such a manner as they, as well as other nations, upon such joyful occasions were accustomed to. —*Whitby's Annotations, and Surenhusii Concil. ex V. T. apud Matthæum.*

^g It was a common practice among the people in the east, upon the approach of their kings and princes, to spread their vestments upon the ground, for them to tread or ride over. In conformity to which custom, we find the captains, when they proclaimed Jehu king, putting their garments under him, (2 Kings ix. 13.) and Plutarch relating that when Cato left his soldiers to return to Rome, they spread their clothes in the way

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to pass, ^a and all, as it were with one voice, crying, ^b ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest.’

In this triumphant manner they advanced till they came to the descent of mount ^c Olivet, when the whole body of disciples, being transported with the honours shown to their master, broke out into raptures of thanksgivings and loud doxologies to God for all the mighty works which they had seen; while the whole body of the people, as well those that went before as those that followed after, joined with the disciples in their hosannas and acclamations; so that when some Pharisees, being envious of his glory, desired him to command their silence, ‘if they should be silent,’ he told them, ^d ‘the very stones would proclaim his praise.’

But, notwithstanding all this glorious procession, as he advanced nearer to Jerusalem, so as to have a full

which was an honour, as he observes, then done to few emperors. But the Jews that accompanied our Saviour at this time looked upon him as greater than any emperor; as a prince that was come to rescue them from the Roman yoke, and reduce all nations under their subjection; and therefore in this manner they chose to testify their homage and veneration of their universal monarch, making now a public entry into his capital of Jerusalem.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^a It was usual in the east to strew flowers and branches of trees in the way of conquerors and great princes. So we find that those who esteemed Christ to be the Messiah, and their king, acted towards him. A similar instance may be found in Herodotus, (vii. p. 404.) He informs us that people went before Xerxes, passing over the Hellespont, and burned all manner of perfumes on the bridges, and strewed the way with myrtles. Boughs and hymns were usual among the Grecians on any time of festivity. Nero had flowers strewed before him upon his return from the Grecian games.—*Tacitus Ann., Appendix by Murphy*, b. 16, 12.—*Suetonius*, p. 25.—See *Adami Observat.* p. 150.—*Altmano Obsv.* vol. ii. p. 420.—*J. Lydius in Agonist. Sacr.* p. m. 152; and *Kuinoel Comment.* vol. i. p. 528.—*Ed.*

^b *Hosanna*, or rather *hosa-na*, is a Hebrew word, which signifies, *save, I beseech thee*, and was a common acclamation, which the Jews used in their feast of tabernacles, not only in remembrance of their past deliverance from Egypt, but in hopes likewise of a future one, by the coming of the Messiah. Now, the reason why the acclamations upon this occasion ran rather in these words than in the common form of ‘long live the king,’ or the like, was because in the character which the prophet gives of the Messiah, he is called a ‘Saviour,’ or ‘one bringing salvation to them.’ (*Zech.* ix. 9.) And therefore, to show the excellency of this above all other kings, the people address him in words taken from the psalmist, ‘Help us now, O Lord, send us now prosperity.’ (*Ps.* cxviii. 25.) But because *hosanna* is likewise a form of blessing, and, in the inauguration of princes, people are always pleased with the rightful succession; therefore they adjoin ‘*hosanna to the Son of David*,’ that is, the Lord prosper and heap favours and blessings upon him. Now, because God had promised the Jewish nation a king descended from that royal line, therefore they continue their good wishes, ‘blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;’ and because again it is natural for men, in such transports, to reiterate their joyful acclamations, even as if they desired to make them reach heaven as well as earth, therefore it is added, ‘*hosanna in the highest*.’—*Hammond's and Beausobre's Annotations*, and *Surenhusii Concil. ex V. T. apud Matthæum*.

^c Between this mount and the city of Jerusalem there lay nothing but only the valley of Jehosaphat, through which ran the brook Kedron.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d This is a proverbial expression, and signifies no more than that God was determined to glorify our Saviour that day; and therefore, if these his followers should be prevailed upon to hold their peace, and say nothing in his praise, God would find out some other means, though not so competent perhaps, to make it effectually be known.—*Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

view of the city and temple, he paused and looked steadfastly on the city, and then, with tears in his eyes, ^e made this lamentation over it: ‘Oh! that thou hadst known, at least in this thy appointed day, the things conducing to thy peace; but now, alas! they are hidden from thine eyes. For the fatal time shall come, when thy enemies ^f shall throw up trenches about thee, hem thee in on every side, destroy thy children, demolish thee, and ^g not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou wouldst not know the time of thy visitation.’ ^h

CHAP. II.—*Difficulties obviated, and Objections answered.*

¹ At a former passover, when the people, in admiration of our Saviour's miracles, would have paid him kingly honours, he withdrew, and refused that unseasonable testimony of their zeal, because the accepting these honours then would have been liable to misrepresentation, and might have obstructed the efficacy of his preaching. But now that the course of his prophetic office was finished, and the time of his leaving the world and returning to his Father so near at hand, he thought it not amiss to accept of their readiness to acknowledge and proclaim his royal dignity, and himself to go up to Jerusalem in a more public manner than usual, that thereby he might exasperate his blood-thirsty enemies, and so draw on his intended passion.

¹ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. i.

^e The tears which our Saviour shed upon this occasion were such as proceeded from a profound charity and deep commiseration of the evils that were coming upon Jerusalem, in both which virtues he came to be an example to us; and therefore his behaviour in this respect could not be unworthy of himself. They farther show that the calamities which befell that impious city might have been avoided, had they made a right use of the time of their visitation; otherwise his tears may rather be looked upon as the tears of a crocodile than those of true charity and commiseration.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^f How exactly this prediction was fulfilled by the Romans we may learn by the Jewish historian, who not only tells us that in this very mount Olivet, where our Lord spake these words, the Romans first pitched their tents, when they came to the final overthrow of Jerusalem; but that, when Vespasian began the siege of it, he encompassed the city round about, and kept them in on every side; that to this purpose, how impracticable soever the enterprise might seem, Titus prevailed with the soldiers to build a wall of thirty-nine furlongs, quite round the city, with thirteen turrets in it, which, to the wonder of the world, was completed in three days; and that, when this was done, all possibility of escaping was cut off, and the greatest distress that ever befell a city ensued, whereof that author gives a very lively but most dolorous account. (*Joseph. War*, b. vi. c. 13, &c.)

^g How exactly this was likewise fulfilled, the same historian relates, namely, that Titus, having ordered the soldiers to lay the city level with the ground, and to leave nothing standing but three of the most famous turrets, that overtopped the rest, as monuments to posterity of the Romans' power and conduct in taking the place, his orders were so punctually executed, and all the rest laid so flat, that the place looked as if it had never been inhabited. (*Joseph. War*, b. vii. c. 18.)

^h The word *visitation* may be taken either in a good or bad sense, for either the mercies or judgments of God; but here it denotes the former, and particularly the dispensation of the gospel, first by the ministry of John, then by the preaching of Christ himself, and afterwards by the labours of his apostles and disciples.—*Beausobre's* and *Poole's Annotations*.

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To exasperate his enemies, indeed, a more pompous appearance might have been more conducive and more agreeable to his regal dignity; but in this our Saviour was not left to his own option. Since the prophet so long before had prescribed the form of his entry into Jerusalem, as a characteristic of his being the true Messiah, there could be no deviating from it, even though he could have procured his numerous guards and triumphal chariots, splendid attendants, and other ensigns of royalty, to adorn the day of his inauguration. ¹ 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy king cometh unto thee! He is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.' This is the prophecy whereby our Saviour was directed at this time, in his approach to Jerusalem; and, to justify his conduct in this particular, it may not be amiss to inquire a little into the true reason of it.

To this purpose we may observe, with a learned prelate ² of our own, that the law which God gave to the kings of Israel, whenever there should be any, ³ not to multiply horses to themselves, was founded upon a special promise, that he would continue to be, as he had all along been, ⁴ their defence against their enemies; that this was a law wherein every prince that was to succeed to the government of Israel was concerned, and designed for a standing trial, both of prince and people, whether they had trust and confidence in God; that, while this law was observed, the troops of Israel were victorious, and though few in number, and seemingly unfit for action, proved an overmatch for royal armies; that, when it came to be laid aside, and kings, as they declined in their confidence towards God, began to multiply their horses and chariots of war, they soon sunk in their military successes, till at length the whole land was carried away captive: and therefore, ⁵ 'woe unto them,' says the prophet, 'that stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen, because they are strong, but look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord.'

Now, to apply this to the prophecy before us. Since the kings of Israel were obliged to renounce the assistance of horses and horsemen, and to depend on God for success in the day of battle; and since those who did so were their nation's deliverers, and those that did otherwise were destroyers of it, under which of these capacities, think we, should the king, whom God promised to the daughter of Jerusalem, come? should he appear, as some of the late kings of Israel did, in all the pomp and pride of war, surrounded with horses and chariots, in direct opposition to the law of God? Or should he appear, like some of the ancient worthies, ⁶ 'who by faith subdued kingdoms, and out of weakness were made strong?' Kings who feared God, and therefore feared no enemy; and who, though mounted on asses, were able to put to flight the thousands and ten thousands of chariots and horses that came against them? To resolve us in this inquiry, the prophet himself

comes in to our aid; for immediately after his description of the promised king, he adds, ⁷ 'and I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem:' plainly showing that the character given of the Messiah, namely, that he should ride on an ass, was in opposition to the pride of their warlike kings, who, by their strength in chariots and horses, had ruined themselves and their people.⁸

Thus necessary it was for the promised Messiah, and for our Saviour, consequently, who came in that character, to approach the daughter of Zion, riding on an ass, even though it were a creature more despicable than we imagine it. But, after all, it is mere prejudice, and too fond an attachment to the manners and customs of our own country, that make us conceive any thing contemptible in an ass, or any thing ridiculous or inconsistent with the gravity and dignity of our blessed Saviour in riding upon one. For ⁹ if we look into other countries, particularly into Judea, we shall find persons of the highest distinction usually so mounted. We shall find ¹⁰ the chief governors of Israel, described in the song of Deborah, as riding on white asses; and ¹¹ the thirty sons of Jair, who was judge and prince of the country for two and twenty years, riding upon as many asses, and commanding in thirty cities. Nay, we shall find Absalom, though in other respects ¹² a man of pomp, in the very day of battle, mounted on a mule, the colt of an ass; and, on his coronation-day, Solomon provided with no better equipage. And therefore we can never account it any reproach for the meek and humble Jesus to ride into Jerusalem on the foal of an ass, when David, the greatest of his ancestors, and Solomon, the wisest, as long as he was wise, rode in the same manner.

¹³ The persons who attended him in this procession

⁷ Zech. ix. 10.

⁸ Bishop Sherlock's fourth Dissertation, annexed to his Use and Intent of Prophecy.

⁹ Jud. v. 10.

¹⁰ Ibid. x. 4.

¹¹ 2 Sam. xv. 1.

¹² Ibid. xviii. 9.

¹³ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, v. i.

^a That the prophecy of Zechariah chap. ix. 9, is twice explained in the Messias in the Talmud, few of the latter Jews disagree. One that is of the greatest authority with them, saith, it is impossible to expound this text of any other than the Messias; and they that would divide it, between Messias the son of David, and Messias the son of Joseph, which is a late hypothesis to answer the two comings of the same Christ, at the same time acknowledge, that the true Messias is here prophesied of. Let them fancy what they will, the Jews in Jesus Christ's time knew but of one Messias, and to him they applied this text. For Jesus going up to Jerusalem upon an ass, at his last passover, to ease and defend himself from the crowd that followed upon the sight of his works, and the fame of Lazarus whom he had newly raised from the dead; the people were struck with this circumstance of his entry, which, however accidental it was, made them straight conclude he must be the Messias. Their actions and exclamations are ample proof of their sentiments. For what did they hereupon? 'Great multitudes spread their garments, and palm-branches in the way,' as at the reception of some great prince; 'before and behind they cried out, hosanna to the son of David, blessed be the king of Israel, blessed be the kingdom of our father David, blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' Seeing him equip, like Zechariah's Messias, they thought him to be no other than the king, that Saviour, whom they expected also at the time of the passover. After what had been thus said, and owned by the Jews, who could with any face question the evangelist for observing upon this action of Jesus, that so it was fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Zechariah.—*Chandler's Defence of Christianity*.—Ed.

¹ Zech. ix. 9.

² Bishop Sherlock's fourth Dissertation, annexed to his Use and Intent of Prophecy.

³ Deut. xvii. 16.

⁴ Ibid. xx. 1.

⁵ Is. xxxi. 1.

⁶ Heb. xi. 33, 34.

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were a mixed multitude, consisting of disciples and common people, such as were moved to do thus, from the doctrines and miracles which they had heard and seen, and were forward to pay him what honour they could. They had no quality or outward splendour, indeed, no titles or eminent posts to recommend them; but they were very remarkable for their sincerity and honest zeal, their hearty affection to Christ, and firm persuasion of his being the true Messiah; and these, to him who is no respecter of persons, and who came to set up a kingdom not of this world, rendered those tributes of praise and acknowledgment, though from men mean and insignificant as to any temporal respects, more acceptable, more becoming his character, and more truly for his honour, than any dissembled or interested homage of rulers or rabbins, the greatest or wisest of the sanhedrim, could have been; for external advantages are of no consideration with God, while they want good dispositions within to recommend them.

Whether this was the same multitude, or not another spirited up, that clamoured so loudly against our blessed Saviour but five days after these joyful acclamations, it is much to be questioned; but supposing it was, whoever considers the subtle management of men in post and power, and the easiness and servile fears usual in those of a mean depending condition, will not be much surprised at such a sudden change. Popular applause is at all times a very fickle and uncertain thing; but in the case before us, there were some incidents which might occasion this instability. Our Saviour, after his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, seemed to assume a kind of sovereignty: he purged the temple from its abuses, healed the diseases of the people, received the hosannas of the children, and for some few days, preached, exhorted, and rebuked with all authority; so that during this time, no one almost doubted but that he was the mighty prince who was to gird his sword upon his thigh, and bring salvation unto Israel. But when, instead of this, they saw him fallen into the hands of his enemies, and quite deserted by his friends; apprehended by the public officers as a common malefactor, hauled from one high-priest to another, and there blindfolded, spit upon, buffeted, and insulted; when, in the midst of all this distress, they saw him left alone, without any disciple to stand by him; any messenger from heaven, as they might expect, or any exertion of his own power, to rescue him; nay, on the contrary, when they saw that one of his own servants had sold and betrayed him, another denied and abjured him, and all unanimously had fled and forsook him; and yet these were the persons who, for some years, had been his constant companions, and consequently were the best judges of his merit and pretensions: when the multitude, I say, saw matters reduced to this extremity, and that terror and desertion was on every side, while the rulers conspired to take away his life, it is no wonder, that, at the instigation of these rulers, they changed their tone, as they saw the scene change, and their hopes vanish, and struck in with the prevailing party: for, whoever has seen a great man disgraced at court, even though before he was the nation's darling, may easily satisfy himself, what very ready the affections of the populace are; how apt they are to bend to every wind of faction and interest, and to be swayed by every calumny, or malicious insinua-

tion, even when most zealous, and seemingly most sincere.

If we take a view of the vast extent of the subject which the evangelists had before them, and the intended brevity of their books, to make them more useful to the generality of mankind, we cannot but perceive, that it was absolutely necessary for them to omit several things which must have occurred to their remembrance. The whole four gospels, bound together, make not a large volume, but each singly is a very small book; and yet, besides the miracles of our Saviour, attended, as they are, with the circumstances of place and time, the names of the persons and the occasions of their being wrought, they have, in these small tracts, inserted an account of the wonderful manner of our Saviour's birth, the dangers of his infancy, the miraculous appearances of providence in his favour, and his removals and journeyings from one place and country to another. They have recorded the substance of his doctrine in plain terms; they have set down many parables, spoken by him, together with their explications; and given us a full account of the mission of his twelve apostles, and the other seventy disciples. The cavils and questions of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, together with his answers and solutions; the observations and reflections of the people; his public discourses before all, and his private instructions to his disciples; his predictions of his own sufferings; of the destruction of Jerusalem, and many other events; a long and particular account of his persecution, condemnation, and crucifixion; as also of his resurrection and ascension, not to mention the history of the birth, preaching, baptism, and sufferings of John the Baptist, his forerunner; are all comprised in a short volume. And therefore, having such plenty of matter before them, they were obliged to be silent as to some particulars, after they had related others of the like nature, for fear of incurring that prolixity which they had determined to avoid. And hence it is easy to suppose, in behalf of the three first evangelists, that, when they came to a certain period in their history of the ministry of Jesus, and observed, that they had given a sufficient account of his doctrine and miracles, being to reserve a space for his last sufferings and resurrection, they thought proper to pass over in silence whatever happened between that period and his last journey to Jerusalem. Thus some have observed, that, from the time when our Saviour returned into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan, which, as St John¹ tells us, was soon after the feast of the Dedication, and that was always observed in winter, to the time of his last going up to Jerusalem, a little before Easter, these three evangelists make no mention at all of any journeys or movings from thence; and yet from this country, according to St John's account, it was, that Jesus afterwards came up to Bethany, and raised Lazarus, and then² 'went into the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.' And therefore, since these sacred penmen, for the avoidance of prolixity, thought it not proper to take any notice of what passed in this interval of time, they could not, with any justness or propriety, introduce into their gospels an account of the resurrection of Lazarus.^a

¹ John x. 22.

² Ibid. xi. 54.

^a The other evangelists have not mentioned this miracle,

A. M. 4035. A. D. 31; OR, A. M. 5441. A. D. 30, FROM MAT. xii. 1—xvii. 14. MARK ii. 23—ix. 14. LUKE vi. 1—ix. 37. JOHN v. 1—vii. 1.

But there is a farther reason, which some learned men¹ have given us for their silence in this respect. They tell us, that, according to an ancient tradition, Lazarus lived thirty years after his being raised from the dead; and that, as the latest of these three evangelists wrote but fifteen years^a after our Lord's ascension, they might think it a needless matter to mention a miracle concerning a person living so near Jerusalem, when the fame of it was so great, and so many witnesses living to attest it: nor can they suppose, but that, in point of prudence, the evangelists declined mentioning this story, for fear of exasperating the Jews, and giving their rage and malice a fresh provocation to cut off Lazarus. But now St John, undertaking to write his gospel, on purpose to supply the omissions of the former evangelists, above sixty years after our Lord's ascension, when, by the death of Lazarus, and most of the witnesses, who were present at his resurrection, the fame of it might be much impaired, had good reason to perpetuate his memory by a full and particular rehearsal.

He had not however, given us so fair and unexceptionable an account of the matter, had he not represented our blessed Saviour compassionating the circumstances of his friends, and weeping upon so sad an occasion as the death of Lazarus. For 'there is something in human nature,' as an ingenious author² elegantly expresses it, 'resulting from our very make and constitution, while it

retains its genuine form, and is not altered by vicious habits, or oppressed by stupidity, which renders us obnoxious to the pains of others, causes us to sympathise with them, and almost comprehends us in their case. This compassion appears eminently in those, who, upon other accounts, are justly reckoned among the best of men. They, who, of all writers, undertake to imitate nature most, often introduce even their heroes weeping. The tears of men are, in truth, very different from the cries and ejaculations of children; they are silent streams, and flow from other causes; commonly some tender, and perhaps philosophical reflections.' And in the case now before us, there might be other considerations, besides the loss of Lazarus, and the lamentation of his friends, that might draw from our Saviour these tears of compassion.

He might at that time be affected with the thought of the many afflictions to which human nature is liable in this imperfect state; and his groans and inward grief might proceed from the want of faith observable in the sisters, and the company attending them, and their diffidence of his ability to raise the dead, notwithstanding they had seen so many, so frequent manifestations of a divine and omnipotent power residing in him. He knew, that the obstinacy and inveterate prejudices of some of the spectators, and of the generality of the Jewish people were such, that the astonishing miracle he was going to work would not have its due effect upon them. This recalled to his mind that scene of misery and desolation which he foresaw would overtake them; and therefore he grieved, and sighed deeply at the prospect of the calamities which that perverse people were bringing upon themselves, and which all his endeavours, his miracles and sufferings, could not prevent. So that upon the whole, the concern which our Lord expressed upon this occasion, proceeded from the noblest motives, wisdom, goodness, friendship, compassion, and every view that is just and laudable, when he sympathised with his friends, and grieved for his enemies.

With these genuine expressions of solemn grief and sorrow, our Saviour drew near to his friend's sepulchre, which, as we may conjecture, was a hollow place hewn in a rock, whose entrance, which was closed with a stone, lay level with the surface of the earth; but then, we have so imperfect an account of the funeral habits that were in use among the Jews, that we can form no notion how far Lazarus, when revived, and set upon his feet, might be able of himself to walk to the mouth of his tomb.^b In this, however, we may satisfy ourselves, that our Saviour, who was able to recall his soul from its separate state, and convey fresh life into his body almost putrified, could give that body, though bound hand and foot, a power of moving forward, even though we suppose, as most of the ancients do, that herein he put himself to the expense of a second miracle, because the proper demonstration of the reality of the resurrection was, not to send any body into the tomb to unbind him, which might occasion a suspicion of some clandestine practice, but to have him come forth alive, in the presence of all the spectators, fairly, and without any change or alteration in his funeral dress, but what was

¹ Grotius and Whitby on John xii.

² Religion of nature delineated, sect. vi. p. 136.

perhaps out of delicacy to Lazarus, who was alive when they wrote. They did not choose to expose the friend of their master to the fury of the Jews, by holding him forth in writings that were to go through the world, as a monument of his power. But John, who lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem, probably survived Lazarus; and there was every reason why this evangelist, who has preserved other miracles and discourses which the former historians had omitted, should record this event. It is a subject suited to the pen of John: the beloved disciple seems to delight in spreading it out; for he has coloured his narration with many beautiful circumstances, which unfold the characters of the other persons, and discover his intimate acquaintance with his master's heart. It is a striking instance of that strict propriety which pervades all the books of the New Testament, and which marks them to every discerning eye to be authentic writings, that the tenderest scenes in our Lord's life, those in which the warmth of his private affections is conspicuous, are recorded by this evangelist. From the others we learn his public life, the grace, the condescension, the benevolence which appeared in all his intercourse with those that had access to him. It was reserved to 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' to present to succeeding ages this divine person in his family, and amongst his friends. In his gospel we see Jesus washing the feet of his disciples at the last supper that he ate with them. It is John, the disciple that leaned on the bosom of Jesus while he sat at meat, who relates the long discourse in which, with the most delicate sensibility for their condition, he soothes the troubled heart of his disciples, spares their feelings, while he tells them the truth, and gives them his parting blessing. It is John, whom Jesus judged worthy of the charge, who records the filial piety with which, in the hour of his agony, he provided for the comfort of his mother; and it is John, whose soul was congenial to that of his Master, tender, affectionate, and feeling like his, who dwells upon all the particulars of the resurrection of Lazarus, brings forward to our view the sympathy and attention with which Jesus took part in the sorrows of those whom he loved, and making us intimately acquainted with them and with him, presents a picture at once delightful and instructive.—*Hill's Lectures in Divinity*, vol. i.—Ed.

^a According to the best authorities, St Luke did not write his Gospel till A. D. 63. or 64.—Ed.

^b See this satisfactorily explained in note, c. p. 969. on the words 'cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth.'—Ed.

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said before the people themselves, by our Saviour's saying, 'loose him, and let him go.'

That some or other in the company was ready enough, upon this occasion, to obey our Lord's commands, can hardly be doubted; and therefore it is very wonderful, that, had there been any collusion in the matter, among so great a multitude, no one should have had sagacity enough to find it out. But the truth is, they none of them suspected any such thing. They none of them thought that, when a man had been four days buried, there wanted any proof of his being dead. They none of them thought, that Christ was only a pretended worker of miracles; for, how unwilling soever they were to own him for their Messiah, by long experience they were convinced that he was a person 'mighty in word and deed.'

Of all the wonderful deeds that we find recorded of him, there is none, I think, that is related so fully, and set off with so many circumstances, to prevent the least suspicion of fraud, as that of his curing the man who was born blind. The evangelist has expended a whole chapter upon it, and therein acquainted us with some previous questions of his disciples, which led to it; the uncommon manner of his performing it; the surprise and astonishment of the blind man's neighbours, when they saw such an alteration wrought in him; the man's open and undisguised relation of the matter, and repeated attestation of the greatness and reality of the cure; the great disturbance and perplexity which it gave the Jews; their examining, and cross-examining the man, who still continued firm and uniform in his account; their tampering with his parents, who avowed the truth of his being born blind; and at last, (when they saw that they could prevail nothing, but the more they examined, the more evidence they found,) their rage and malice, which carried them to such a degree as to excommunicate the poor man, and cast him out of their synagogue. These, and some more circumstances, are told in such a plain, convincing manner, as shows the whole story to be too well founded, for any cavils or fictions to weaken or impair.

Our Saviour might have had some sanative balsam in reserve; but what would all the balsam in the world have availed towards the cure of the distemper we are now considering? Physicians and surgeons, who have studied the texture of the eye, and made the cure of its maladies their chief employ, may give us indeed something that will strengthen the optic nerves, when weakened or relaxed: or, by some outward operation, may remove such obstructions as would otherwise impede the sight: 'but,'¹ since the world began,' as the poor man here excellently argues, 'was it ever heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind?' And, as he might have added, by a medicine so incongruous as a plaster of clay; because the uncommonness of the application is so far from diminishing, that it rather raises, the credit and reputation of the miracle: at least, it must be allowed to be as great and triumphant a display of a supernatural power, to work a cure by means that have no fitness to that end, as it is to do it without any means at all. In the former case, the person who undertakes the cure, has only the distemper to contend with; but here, he has a double difficulty to conquer, and must not

only control the power of the disease, but change the repugnant qualities of bodies, and make them productive of quite contrary effects.² The fathers here say, that Christ, to illustrate his miraculous power, used that to anoint the blind man's eyes with, which was the greatest impediment to seeing, and most pernicious to the eyes. But though all must allow, that the method which he here made use of, was of no significance as to the cure of the man's blindness, yet was it, nevertheless, highly pertinent, in order to convince the spectators, as well as the patient himself, of his sovereign virtue, which could produce such a wonderful effect, by no other application but what was indifferent, if not obstructive to the cure.

Some of the ancient fathers were so rigid in their censures against adultery, that they would not admit any persons convicted thereof into the communion of the church, even after the longest penance; and carried their zeal and resentment to such an height, as to think it no great harm to kill them. No wonder then, if men of such severe opinions were unwilling to receive into the canon of Scripture the history of the woman taken in this crime, because, as they imagined, it gave permission to lewdness, since our Saviour sent her away without condemning her; whereas,³ in his present circumstances, he had no commission to pass sentence upon her, though, in bidding her⁴ go, and for fear of the divine judgment, repent, 'and sin no more,' he sufficiently declared himself against all such practices.

^a Upon a different persuasion however, it was, that this passage came at first to be marked as dubious, and, in time, was quite thrown out, as spurious, in many ancient, especially Greek copies: but, in opposition to this, we need only observe,⁵ that this part of history was found in the sixteen manuscripts, which Stephanus, in all the seventeen, save one, which Beza, and in that infinite number, which our learned Mills has made use of; that Tatian, who lived in the year 160, that is, sixty years after the death of St John, and Ammianus of Alexandria, who flourished about the year 220, and made their several Harmonies of the Gospel out of the copies then in use, do both, as appears from the canons of Eusebius, relate it; that most of the copies of the east, according to Selden's report, retain it; and though it be not found in some manuscripts, as the Greek code, cited by Cotelarius, expresses the matter, yet it is entire in the ancient manuscripts, and all the apostles make mention of it in the Constitutions which they set forth for the edification of the church.^b

² Whitby's Annotations on John ix. 6.

³ Whitby's Annotations on John viii.

⁴ John viii. 11.

⁵ Calmet's Commentary, and Whitby's Annotations.

^a The words of St Austin upon this occasion are these:—"So that some of little faith, or rather enemies of the true faith, fearing I suppose that impunity for sinning was given to their women, would take out of their copies that sentence which our Lord spoke concerning the pardon of adultery; as if he, who said, 'now henceforth sin no more,' granted permission to sin." On Adultery, b. ii. c. 7.

^b It is strange that the author should refer to the apocryphal book entitled the "Constitutions," as a work set forth by the apostles, when it has been clearly proved to be a spurious production, both from external and internal evidence. He seems to have gone into the absurd and untenable position of Whiston, who endeavoured to prove the evidence of the genuineness of the Apostolical Constitutions, to be equal to that of the New Testament

¹ John ix. 32.

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This is enough to vindicate the truth and sincerity of this part of St John's history from the censures of critics who suspect it; ^a and, to rescue his doctrine from such false constructions as the adversaries of our Lord's divinity would put upon it, we need only be mindful to distinguish between his divine and human nature, and not to apply such words and actions of his as relate to the one, to the prejudice of the other. Those who deny the Deity of Christ, do nevertheless acknowledge, that he was a prophet sent from God, and invested with a high commission. Now, under this character he could only appear and act in virtue of his human nature, and must thereupon be deemed subservient to the orders and commands of his heavenly Father: and therefore, as the very office of a prophet requires, that he should speak nothing of himself, nor deliver his own mind or doctrine, nor seek his own glory, but speak all things in the name, and do all things for the glory of him that sent him: so are we not to wonder that we find our blessed Lord, though he had in him 'all the fulness of the Godhead,' yet, in his prophetic capacity, speaking and acting as if he had no power but what was given him from above, even as ambassadors here on earth are obliged to pursue their master's instructions, and therefore professing so frequently, that he delivered no doctrine of his own invention, nor did any thing but what he had a commission to do.

The Socinians indeed allow, that the commission wherewith our Saviour was sent into the world, to do and reveal God's will, was reason enough to entitle him to the appellation of 'the Son of God,' and that this is all that he pretends to when he seems to clear himself to the Jews from any higher assumption. But now ¹ it appears, from a due inspection of the context, that Christ did not intend to say or prove, that he was the Son of God, as being only his ambassador, extraordinarily instructed, and so sent into the world; but on a far more excellent account, namely, that, before he came into the world, he was with God the Father, and so was his true and essential Son, as being God of God, and partaking of the same nature as a son does with his father. From the 25th to the 30th verse inclusively, it is manifest that our Lord discoursed to the Jews in such a manner, that they still thought he was asserting his Godhead; and therefore, ² 'we stone thee,' say they, 'because thou, being a man, makest thyself God,' namely, by calling God so emphatically, and with such peculiarity, his Father, as that he was so to him alone, and so that ³ 'he and his Father were one.' But to this our Saviour does not

answer, by denying, either that he was God, or that he had ever challenged to himself that dignity, which, had he been only man, had been the most proper thing he could have said to take off the objection of his blasphemy; but, instead of that, he seems rather to argue, that he was so the Son of God, as to have the divine nature in him: 'for if judges and magistrates,' says he, 'are called gods, from an imperfect resemblance, and participation of the divine authority, how much more may I be called God, who am both by nature the Son of God, and, in the most excellent manner, authorized by him?' For this he signifies, by saying, that ⁴ 'his Father had sanctified him, and sent him into the world;' wherein he still declares, that God was his Father, and that he was first sanctified, and then sent, which plainly implies, that he was the Son of God in heaven before his mission into the world; and therefore, as an additional proof of his divine original, he appeals to the divine operations he performed: ⁵ 'if I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.'

When therefore our blessed Saviour says of himself, that ⁶ 'all power was given unto him both in heaven and earth;' and that unto his disciples, ⁷ 'he had appointed a kingdom, even as his Father had appointed unto him;' when St Paul styles him the ⁸ 'righteous Judge, who shall give a crown of righteousness to all that love his appearance;' and St Matthew, ⁹ 'that king, who shall separate the sheep from the goats,' and ¹⁰ 'reward every one according to his works;' it can hardly be thought, that to distribute rewards in the kingdom of glory, is a prerogative peculiar to the Father alone, and such as no way belongs to the Son; because our Saviour, in his reply to Zebedee's children, tells us, ¹¹ 'that to sit on his right hand, and on his left, was not his to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it was prepared of his Father;' since the whole and only design of the passage is to show, that these rewards shall not be distributed, upon such conditions, and in such a manner, as these petitioners vainly imagined. ¹² To this purpose we may observe, that the words, 'shall be given to them,' are only a supplement made by the translators, for they are not in the original, which is literally thus, 'to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but, or except to them alone, for whom it is prepared of my Father:' and this means no more than that the honours and degrees of happiness in the other world are not the Son's to give, in the sense that these apostles fancied, that is, he does not give them absolutely and arbitrarily; he is not led by partiality and fondness, and respect of persons; he is not carried by humour, or vanquished by the importunity of friends and suitors, as earthly princes are, but is limited by the considerations of equity and strict justice, from which it can never be consistent with the perfections of his nature to depart: for that the whole process of the final judgment, and consequently the dispensation of future rewards and punishments, is to be transacted by our blessed Saviour, we have this

¹ Bishop Bull, De judicio eccl. cath.

² John x. 33.

³ Ibid. ver. 30.

itself; but, whatever value may be attached to these and other apocryphal writings belonging to the early ages of the church, as serving to increase the evidences, and corroborate the truth of the Gospel history; they can never be received as genuine productions, much less a guide in matters of faith and practice. Those who wish to see the spuriousness of these apocryphal writings, completely proved, may consult Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel history, vol. iv. 3vo.—Jones on the Canon of Scripture, and Horne's Introduction, vol. i.—Ed.

^a For a summary of both the external and internal evidence for and against this passage, the inquiring reader may consult Bloomfield's Greek Testament, note on John viii. 1—11, where he shows that the evidence is decidedly in favour of the authenticity of the passage.—Ed.

⁴ John x. 36. ⁵ Ibid. ver. 37, 38. ⁶ Mat. xxviii. 18.

⁷ Luke xxii. 29. ⁸ 2 Tim. iv. 8. ⁹ Mat. xxv. 31, &c.

¹⁰ Ibid. xvi. 27. ¹¹ Ibid. xx. 23.

¹² Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. i.

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express testimony in Scripture, ¹ 'the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.'

Though we are not much acquainted with the condition of angels, or the ingredients of their happiness, yet thus much the scripture has informed us concerning them, that ² 'they are ministering spirits, sent out to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation;' and therefore we may reasonably presume, that they are full of tenderness for their charge, solicitous for their particular safety, and extremely glad of any good that befalls them. ³ "How these heavenly hosts were affected with the salvation of mankind in general, is evident from the hymn with which they attended at the birth of Christ, to welcome him into the world; and though their nature be far distant from us mortals, and their bliss exquisite beyond what we are able to conceive; yet, in regard that both their nature and their bliss are finite, their joy may certainly admit of an increase; and as often as a sinner is converted from the evil of his ways, there may spring up a fresh object, and a large and literal addition to it."

But can this properly be said of God too, whose perfection of happiness allows no such accumulation? No, doubtless; and therefore with respect to him, we must interpret this, as reason and religion oblige us to understand many such like passages where human parts and passions are attributed to him. As therefore the Holy Ghost, meaning to represent his displeasure and our baseness, does it, by saying, that we provoke him to anger, kindle his fury, grieve and weary his spirit, and the like; so here, by saying, that God rejoiceth over a repenting sinner, is intended, that such repentance is highly agreeable to him, and that, were his nature capable of the same unequal motions with ours, the joy of a father or a friend, for retrieving the person he loves best, and had been most in pain for, would be but a feeble and a very faint image of that satisfaction which this excites in him, who loves us better than the tenderest parent, or most affectionate friend upon earth does, or can do.

But why should the degree of joy be so intense upon this occasion? Why should the reformation of one sinner raise it above the safety of many souls, who never fell from their integrity? and the ninety-nine sheep which never strayed, excite less of it than one poor silly wanderer? In order to resolve this difficulty, we must observe, ⁴ "that, in the parables of the gospel, it is usual to represent all of the same kind, though they be sometimes the greater number, by one man." Thus, in the parable of the marriage supper, the man who had not on his wedding garment, according to the sense of most interpreters, represents all wicked men; and in that of the several talents, the slothful servant, who hid his in a napkin, is said to be one; whereas they who improved theirs, are three; and yet it can hardly be doubted, but that there are fewer who receive the grace of God to any good purpose, than they who receive it in vain; and in like manner, though, in the preceding parables, there is

mention made but of one lost piece of silver, and of one strayed sheep, yet is that one the representative of the whole tribe of sinners, which do certainly out-number the few that are righteous; and therefore, according to this acceptation, the joy in heaven may be allowed to be greater, because the objects that give occasion to it are more.

But even if this were not, as these words were spoken of God after the manner of men, so they are to be understood in a sense agreeable to human passions. Now, in ourselves we perceive, that, in obtaining what we passionately desired, in regaining what we looked upon as lost, and in securing what was in great and imminent danger, our joy is strong, and our delight transporting. The surprise of an escape, which we did not expect, and the regaining of a treasure we had given over as gone, is entertained with rapture, because it is a kind of new accession to our fortunes, and like a thing we never enjoyed before. A loving father, no doubt, finds great comfort in seeing all his children in a perfect state of health; but if one of them chance to fall sick beyond expectation of recovery, to see him out of danger, administers more present joy than does the constant health of all the rest; and, in like manner, though a continued course of goodness be in itself most valuable, yet the recovery of a lost sinner, the reviving one dead in trespasses and sins, the seeing him snatched as a firebrand out of the fire, when he was just going to fall into it, gives a more fresh and lively joy; and therefore, ⁵ 'it is meet,' says the father in the parable, 'that upon this occasion we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, was lost, and is found.'

Some interpreters are of opinion, that the parable of the Lord of the vineyard paying all his labourers alike, is to be understood of the gift of grace, or first admission to the privileges of the gospel, and not of the fruition of glory; because the wages here mentioned are given to the envious and unthankful. But allowing this to be no more than a passage inserted for ornament and illustration only, or that it may mean a reward so surprisingly great, as among men, would provoke the envy of others; yet, if we state the case of the several labourers in the parable, as it includes the Jews and Gentiles in general, and private Christians in particular, we shall find no injustice in what the Lord of the vineyard did unto them.

⁶ To the Jews God was pleased to make the first express discoveries of his will by a written law. In process of time the like benefit was extended to the Gentiles. They readily accepted it, and, by so doing, became partakers of the same grace and precious promises with those who had long been brought up under the legal, and from that, removed sooner under the evangelical dispensation. The apostles left all and followed Christ. The primitive Christians gave in their names to his doctrine, and continued steadfast in it, at the certain peril of their liberties, their fortunes, their lives: and yet, in any after ages of Christianity, they, who live and die, though quietly and peaceably, in the sincere profession of this religion, are promised the king-

¹ John v. 22, 23.

² Heb. i. 14.

³ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. iii.

⁴ Whitby's Annotations on Luke xv. 7.

⁵ Luke xv. 23, 24.

⁶ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. ii.

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dom of heaven as a reward for their faith and obedience.

In like manner, some have the happiness of a pious education, and carry on their early virtue through the several stages of life ; others, who either wanted that advantage, or have neglected to improve it, run into the same excess of riot with the unthinking part of the world ; and yet if these, though late, see their follies, and effectually forsake them, the promise of God standeth sure,¹ ' that, at what time soever the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.' This is the whole sense of the parable, and these are the common cases to which it is applied : but we mistake the meaning of it widely, if we think that it denotes an equality of rewards in the kingdom of heaven, since we have this assurance given us, that as there² ' is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, so also is the resurrection of the dead.' Those that are raised to everlasting life shall indeed be all glorious ; but still the glory of some shall be greater than that of others. Every good Christian shall, no doubt, be admitted to a state of felicity ; but when we consider these words of our Saviour,³ ' I have appointed unto you a kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,' we cannot but infer, that there are some particular marks and instances of glory, where-with the apostles of our Lord will be honoured above other Christians. And, in like manner, though a late penitent, if he be sincere, shall be received to mercy at last, yet he has not ordinarily any reason to expect a degree of glory equal to his, who has never swerved from his duty, or has quickly returned to it. His bliss shall be perfect indeed, though it be not the most exalted, and though he be less happy than some other Christians, yet he shall be much happier than he deserves.

Though the difference between the Jews and Samaritans, in matters of religion, was great, and no small obstruction to all civil intercourse, yet it was not at all times carried to such a height as to deny to each other the common rights of hospitality. Our Saviour himself was, once upon a time,⁴ when he met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, kindly received by the people of Sychar, for the space of two days ; but then he was returning out of Judea ; whereas he was now going up to Jerusalem, with a purpose to celebrate the feast of Tabernacles. The Samaritans had likewise a feast of the same kind, though not observed at the same time,⁵ of as old a date as the first separation under Jeroboam, and instituted both in imitation of, and in opposition to, the great festival that our Lord was now going to solemnize ; and therefore⁶ this travelling through their country, with a set purpose to do this, was looked upon as an affront to their way of worship. For it argued our Lord's judgment in this case to be, that Jerusalem was the only place where these feasts could be regularly celebrated, and consequently that the keeping them on mount Gerizzim, and the temple there, was a pre-

sumptuous innovation, directly contrary to the will and law of God.

" But why was our Saviour alone treated in this rude manner, when every traveller to Jerusalem, upon the like occasion, declared against the Samaritan schism as much as he did, and yet, for any thing we find, met with better entertainment?" Now this different sort of treatment can be resolved into nothing but the different character of the travellers. The Samaritans might think, that the opinions and practices of common people were not worth their regard, but that it would be of mighty consequence if a person so eminent as Jesus should declare against them ; and therefore, since his going to worship at Jerusalem, on this solemn occasion, would, in all common acceptance, bear this meaning, they contrived to prevent, as much as in them lay, the influence which that supposed indignity might have, by revenging it with another, of not receiving him ; because such refusal, they thought, was a constructive disowning of his authority, and a plain declaration to all people, that whatever esteem and veneration others might have for this famed man, they themselves took him for no prophet.

⁷ In this feast of Tabernacles, it was a custom among the Jews, derived, as some imagine, from the institution of their prophets Haggai and Zechariah, on the last day more especially, to fetch water from the fountain of Siloam in great pomp and solemnity, with trumpets and other musical instruments going before them. At such fountains, it was usual to build receptacles or wells, and in the middle of them to have pipes and cisterns laid, through which the water passed, and coming out at cocks, was received in urns, or large big-bellied vessels, and so carried to the temple. The water thus carried was given to the priests, who, mixing it with the wine of the sacrifices, offered it to God by way of intercession for the blessing of rain against the approaching seed-time. And, during the whole festivity, they read the fifty-fifth chapter of the prophet Isaiah, which begins with these words, ' Ho ! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money,' &c.

Now, whoever looks into the method of our Saviour's preaching may easily perceive, that it was customary with him to take occasion, from some obvious thing or other, to discourse of spiritual blessings, and frequently to make use of phrases metaphorically taken from the matter in hand. Pursuant hereunto we find him, in allusion to the customs of this feast, beginning his invitation with words not unlike what we have cited from the prophet,⁸ ' if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.' Water is, by God himself, represented as no bad emblem of the dispensation of grace ; for⁹ ' I will pour water,' says he, ' upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.' Which he explains in this manner : ' I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring ;' and¹⁰ the frequent libations, in the feast of Tabernacles, were supposed, by the Jewish doctors themselves, to have had a mystic sense in them : and therefore the meaning of our Saviour's words is this, ' That whoever was desirous of the spiritual blessings which were prefigured in this festival rite

¹ Ezek. xviii. 26.

² 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.

³ Luke xxii. 29, 30.

⁴ John iv.

⁵ 1 Kings xii. 32, 33.

⁶ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. iv.

⁷ Whitby's, Hammond's, and Beausobre's Annotations.

⁸ John vii. 37.

⁹ Is. xlv. 3.

¹⁰ Surehusii Concil. ex V. T. apud Joannem.

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if he would become his disciple, and believe in him as the promised Messiah, he would communicate to him such gifts of the Holy Ghost, and in such a plentiful measure, as the world was not yet acquainted with; for ¹ 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of running water.'

Whence it is, that our Saviour borrowed this metaphorical expression, is a matter not so well agreed by the learned; some think from the proverbs of Solomon; ² 'The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom a flowing brook.' Others, from the thirty-second of Isaiah, ³ 'Behold a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment, and a man shall be as rivers of waters in a dry place;' and others, with more probability, from the fifty-eighth of that prophet; ⁴ 'Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.' However this be, it is certain, ⁵ that our Saviour, taking the rise of his discourse from the customary libations at this time, had under his view and consideration the make and figure of the water-vessels that were used on this occasion, which, by reason of their large bellies, being able to hold a great quantity of water, were therefore proper emblems of that plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost, which he intended to send upon the christian church, when ⁶ 'to one should be given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another, faith, by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues: and to another, the interpretation of them.' ^a

¹ John vii. 38.

² Prov. xviii. 4.

³ Ver. 1, 2.

⁴ Ver. 11.

⁵ Surenhus. *ibid.*

⁶ 1 Cor. xii. 8, &c.

^a This is the account which is usually given of our Lord's exclamation to the people on the last day of the feast of tabernacles; and it is surely a sufficient answer to the preceding objection. The whole transactions of that day may be placed however in a light somewhat different, in which the words of Jesus will appear to have a meaning more obvious, and at the same time equally important. "The feast of tabernacles," says Bishop Horsley, "continued eight days. At what precise time I know not, but in some part of the interval between the prophets and the birth of Christ, the priests had taken up a practice of marching daily, during the feast, round the altar of burnt-offerings, waving in their hands branches of the palm, and singing, as they went,—"Save, we pray, and prosper us!" This was done but once on each of the first seven days; but on the eighth and last, it was repeated seven times. When this ceremony was finished, the people, with extravagant demonstrations of joy and exultation, fetched buckets of water from the fountain of Siloam, and presented them to the priests in the temple: who mixed the water with the wine of the sacrifices, and poured it upon the altar, chanting all the while that text of Isaiah,— "With joy we shall draw water from the fountain, or wells, of salvation." The fountain of salvation, in the language of a prophet, is the Messiah; the water to be drawn from that fountain is the water of his Spirit. Of this mystical meaning of the water, the inventors of those superstitious rites, whoever they might be, seem to have had some obscure sentiment; although they understood the fountain literally of the fountain of Siloam: for, to encourage the people to the practice of this laborious superstition, they had persuaded them that this rite was of singular efficacy to draw down the prophetic spirit. The multitudes, zealously busied in this unmeaning ceremony, were they to whom Jesus addressed that emphatical exclamation—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The first words—"if any man thirst"—are ironical. "Are ye famished," says he, "with thirst, that ye fatigue yourselves with fetching all this

CHAP. IV.—Of our blessed Saviour's miracles, and their excellency.

THAT the accomplishment of ancient prophecies, in the person and actions of our blessed Saviour, was one of the external evidences of his divine mission, and consequently of the truth of our most holy religion, was the subject of our last chapter; and how far the evidence of the miracles which he wrought is available to the same great end, we shall now endeavour to set before our reader.

⁷ To this purpose we must observe, that a true miracle is properly such an operation as exceeds the ordinary course of things, and is repugnant to the known laws of nature, either as to its subject, matter, or the manner of its performance. For though we readily acknowledge, that there are beings in the spiritual world, which are able to perform things far exceeding the power of men, and therefore apt to beget wonder and amazement in us; yet, that any created beings, and, consequently agents of a limited power, are capable of working such miracles as our Saviour did; are capable of controlling the course of nature, of supplying men's natural defects, of giving sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, and life to the dead, which are miracles relating to the subject-matter, or of doing any of these things in an instant, by a touch, by a word, at a distance, and without any kind of outward means, which are miracles regarding the manner of their performance, is a thing impossible; unless we can suppose, that limited, inferior, and created beings, have an equal power of creating, controlling, and restoring, with Almighty God, which is contradiction enough in all conscience.

It was upon this persuasion, therefore, namely, 'that true miracles are the sole operation of God,' that the world has all along agreed to acknowledge and accept of miracles as an authentic and indisputable testimony,

⁷ Bishop Smallbroke's Vindication.

water up the hill? O! but ye thirst for the pure waters of Siloam, the sacred brook that rises in the mountain of God, and is devoted to the purification of the temple! Are ye indeed athirst for these? Come, then, unto me and drink. I am the fountain, of which that which purifies the temple is the type: I am the fountain of salvation of which your prophet spake; from me the true believer shall receive the living water,—not in scanty draughts, fetched with toil from this penurious rill, but in a well perpetually springing up within him." The words of Isaiah, which the priests were chanting, and to which Jesus alludes, are part of a song of praise and triumph, which the faithful are supposed to use in that prosperous state of the church, which, according to the prophet, it shall finally attain under Jesse's root;—"In that day shalt thou say, behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and song, he also is become my salvation." Consider these words as they lie in the context of the prophet; consider the occasion upon which Jesus, standing in the temple, applies them to himself; consider the sense in which he applies them; and judge whether this application was less than an open claim to be the Lord Jehovah come unto his temple. It is remarkable that it had, at the time, an immediate and wonderful effect. "Many of the people, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet." The light burst at once upon their minds. Jesus no sooner made the application of this abused prophecy to himself, than they acknowledged the justness of it, and acknowledged in him the fountain of salvation."—*Bishop Horsley's Sermons.*—Ed.

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that the persons intrusted with such power were certainly sent and commissioned by God. To this purpose we find Pharaoh's magicians confessing, ¹ that the miracles which Moses and Aaron exhibited were the finger of God; and, in the controversy between Elijah and the priests of Baal, it was readily accepted as a fair proposal, that he ² 'who answered by fire from heaven' should be unanimously served and worshipped as God. The less reason have we then to wonder, that we hear a learned ruler of the Jews accosting our Lord in these words, ³ 'Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him:' or that a mean man, who had been born blind, should confront the whole assembly of the Pharisees, with this one argument, ⁴ 'since the world began, was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of the blind: if this man were not of God, he could do nothing;' or, that our blessed Saviour himself should so frequently appeal to the miracles he wrought, as proper testimonies of his divine mission, ⁵ 'the works which my Father hath sent me to finish; the works which I do in my Father's name, the same bear witness of me, that my Father sent me.'

Our Saviour indeed, and his apostles both, do often appeal to the predictions of the prophets relating to the promised Messiah, as fulfilled and accomplished in him; and the truth is, unless the validity of this appeal can be supported, miracles alone, or exclusive of this testimony, would not be a sufficient evidence of our Lord's commission: but then it ought to be considered, that when, among the particular predictions of a person promised to the Jews as their Messiah, it was foretold, that he should ⁶ 'be like unto Moses;' that ⁷ 'the Spirit of the Lord should rest upon him;' that ⁸ 'he should open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf; and that he should make the lame to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing.' Miracles became then an essential ingredient of his character, and a sure test of his being a prophet sent from God.

⁹ Some modern Jews, indeed, when pressed with the evidence of our Saviour's miracles, make this their subterfuge, that the Messiah, at his coming, was not to perform any wonders of this kind, but only to manage the Lord's battles, and to overcome the people that were round about him. But that this was not of old the sense of the Jewish nation, is evident from the words of the people in our Saviour's time: ¹⁰ 'when Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?' Nay, ¹¹ an author of theirs, of no great antiquity, after his having mentioned the three glorious gifts, namely, prophecy, miracles, and the knowledge of God, which the Israelites, in the time of their captivity, had lost, gives us to understand, that, upon the appearance of the Messiah, the return of miracles was justly to be expected, in completion of this prophecy, ¹² 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.'

Since the Messiah then was to work miracles when he came into the world, if we consider the design of our blessed Saviour's mission, namely, ¹³ that he was a teacher sent from God to abolish a form of worship, which had incontestably been established by the power of miracles in Moses, and to introduce a new religion, repugnant to the wisdom of the world, in many mysterious doctrines, and abhorrent to the vicious inclinations of men, in all its righteous laws and precepts; that he was appointed, in short, to destroy the kingdom of the devil, and upon its ruins to erect a kingdom of righteousness, there was an absolute necessity for him to be invested with a power of working miracles: otherwise, his pretensions to this high character had been ridiculous, and the Jews with good reason might have demanded of him, ¹⁴ 'Master, we would see a sign from thee; what sign therefore dost thou do, that we may see, and believe?' But this demand is effectually silenced by our Saviour's being able to make the reply, ¹⁵ 'if I had not done among you the works which none other man did, ye had not had sin; but now ye have both seen, and hated both me and my Father.'

John the Baptist, who was born a little before our Saviour, was his fore-runner. ¹⁶ He appeared at the time, when the Messiah was expected; and, being much famed for his virtue and sanctity of life, was followed by the people, who were prone to take him for the prophet who was to come, as there was not indeed, at that time, a greater person born among women: and yet the divine providence so ordered the matter, that, as great as he was, he wanted this character of the true Messiah, namely, the working of miracles; and therefore our Saviour, comparing himself with the Baptist, a burning and a shining light indeed, but who himself did no miracles, ¹⁷ 'I have a greater witness,' says he, 'than that of John; for the works which my Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that I am the Messiah,' or, which is all one, 'that my Father hath sent me.'

And well indeed might our Lord be allowed to claim a pre-eminence, not above the Baptist only, but above every prophet that went before him; when, upon so many occasions, he exercised a power and authority, not inferior to that of God; when, by the same omnipotence wherewith he created all things at first, he multiplied a few loaves, and two fishes, into a sufficiency to feed five thousand; when, at his command, the wind and the sea grew still; and unclean spirits departed from men's bodies, confessing him to be the Son of God; when acute diseases, and chronical griefs, ¹⁸ such as no length of time, no skill, no remedies, no expense could assuage, were equally cured with a touch, nay, with the touch of his garment, with a word, nay, with a word that operated effectually upon the absent, and at a distance; when persons at death's door, nay, actually dead, and dead for some time, were commanded back to life and health; and himself, when slain by the Jews, and committed to the grave, was, according to his own prediction, raised

¹ Exod. viii. 19. ² 1 Kings xviii. 24. &c. ³ John iii. 2.

⁴ John ix. 32, 33. ⁵ Ibid. v. 26. ⁶ Deut. xviii. 15.

⁷ Is. xi. 2. ⁸ Ibid. xxxv. 5, 6.

⁹ Maimonides, H. Melach. et Milch. cap. xi. ¹⁰ John vii. 31.

¹¹ Abravanel in Joel. ¹² Joel ii. 28. and Acts ii. 17.

¹³ Stillfleet's Origenes Sacrae, p. 172.

¹⁴ John vi. 30.

¹⁵ Ib. xv. 24.

¹⁶ Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part i. p. 45.

¹⁷ John v. 35, 36.

¹⁸ Stanhope's Sermon's at Boyle's Lectures.

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from the dead, by the same divine Spirit whereby he quickeneth and enliveneth all things.

These, and many more actions of the like nature, recorded in the gospel, are plain demonstrations of a divine power residing in our blessed Saviour: but then there is something farther to be said concerning these miraculous acts of his, namely, that they were exceedingly well chosen to characterize the Messiah, in regard of their suitableness to the end and design of his coming.

¹ The law was enacted with a very terrible pomp, such as spoke it to be, what indeed it was, a dispensation of servitude and great severity. But the gospel is a covenant of reconciliation and peace, of friendship, nay, of sonship with God, intended not so much to strike awe upon men's minds, as to charm and win them over by all the endearing methods of gentleness and love; and therefore, the wonders that bore testimony to its truth were works of mercy and kindness, such as never wrought any harm, but always brought comfort and advantage to the needy and distressed; ² sustenance to the hungry, supplies to those in want, safety to them that were ready to perish, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, eyes to the blind, understanding to the disturbed, strength to the impotent, limbs to the maimed, health to the sick, life to the dead, and release to souls and bodies held in bondage by the devil. These, these are the wonders by which our Jesus proved his mission, wonders of gentleness and pity, of beneficence and love, wherein he manifestly excels, and, as it were, triumphs over all the prophets that went before him. They proved their commission by acts of divine vengeance and sore plagues as well as by cures and corporeal deliverances; whereas our blessed Lord ³ went about always doing good; healing diseases and infirmities, but inflicting none; and releasing from death, but never hastening it; insomuch that through the whole course of his ministry we have not one instance of his power exerted in the suffering or annoyance even of his bitterest enemies.

When John the Baptist had heard of the works which ⁴ Christ did, he sent two of his disciples with this message to him, 'Art thou he that should come, (that is, the promised Messiah) or look we for another?' To whom our Lord returned this answer, 'Go, and show John again these things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up.' The answer is in a great measure taken from the prophet ⁵ Isaiah, describing the great operations of the Messiah; and, by remitting the Baptist to them, our Saviour intended to show that he must of necessity be the person he sent to inquire after, because he had not only the power of doing miracles, but even of doing the self same miracles that the evangelical prophet had predicted of the Messiah.

⁶ Now, of all the great attributes of God, there are none that shine brighter and more amiable in our eyes, than truth and goodness: the former cannot attest a lie, nor the latter seduce men into dangerous and destruc-

tive mistakes. And yet, if God should communicate any part of his power to an impostor to enable him to work miracles, and such miracles in kind as were foretold of the true Messiah, in confirmation of his pretences, what would become of these two sacred attributes? To suspect, I say, that Almighty God is capable of employing his infinite power, with a design to mislead and delude mankind, in what relates to their eternal concerns, is to destroy and subvert his very nature, and to leave ourselves no notion at all of such a being. Nay, for him to permit the same evidences to be produced for errors as for truth, is, in effect, to cancel his own credentials, and to make miracles of no significance at all. And therefore, how artfully soever some impostors may contrive their delusions, yet we are not to doubt, but that, if we examine, 1st, the works themselves, and their manner of being done: and, 2dly, the persons themselves, and the ends for which they do them, we shall be able to discern the difference between real miracles and lying wonders.

⁷ 1st. Then, in relation to the works themselves, it is required, that they be possible, since no power whatever can effect that which is strictly impossible; that they be probable, since the divine power will hardly concern itself in what savours of fable and romance; that they be not below the majesty of God, as he is the ruler and governor of the world, nor inconsistent with his character, as he is a good and gracious being; that they be done openly, before a sufficient number of witnesses; readily, without any previous forms or ceremonies which may make them look like incantation; and upon all proper and important occasions, to denote the permanency of that divine power by which they are affected.

2dly. In relation to the person pretending a divine mission, it is required that he be a man of good report for his unblameable conversation; and that he be in the perfect exercise of his reason and senses, and constant and uniform in the message he delivers; that the doctrine which he endeavours to establish by his miracles be consistent with the principles of true reason, and natural religion, consistent with great notions and worship of God, and consistent with the former revelations he hath made of his will: of a tendency to destroy the devil's power in the world, to recover men from their ignorance, to reform them from their vices, and lead them into the practice of virtue and true godliness by proper motives and arguments, and, in short, to advance the general welfare of societies, as well as every man's particular happiness in this life, and in his preparation for a better. And now to observe a little how all these characters meet in the blessed Jesus.

That Jesus of Nazareth was a person of great virtue and goodness, in full possession of his reason and senses, and constant and uniform in the message he delivered to mankind, not only the whole tenor of his conduct, as it is recorded by the evangelists, but the nature of his doctrine and excellency of his precepts, the manner of his discourses to the people, and the wisdom of his replies to the insidious questions of his adversaries, are a plain demonstration: and that ⁸ 'this Jesus was a man approved of God by miracles, wonders, and

¹ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. i.

² Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

³ Acts x. 38. ⁴ Mat. xi. 2, &c. ⁵ Chap. xxxv. 5.

⁶ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. ii.

⁷ Chandler on miracles.

⁸ Acts ii. 22.

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signs, which God did by him in the midst of all the people,¹ is manifest, not only from the testimony of his friends and disciples, but ¹ “from the concession of heathen historians, as well as the traditions of the Jewish Talmud, wherein the memory of them is preserved.”

These miracles indeed were above the skill of men or angels to effect; but they were not therefore impossible, because subject to the power of Almighty God; for the same agent, who formed the eye, could restore the blind to sight; he, who wrought the whole frame of our bodies could as easily cure the maimed, or heal the diseased; and he, who causes the rain to descend, and to water the earth, that it may minister bread to the eater and seed to the sower, could be at no loss to change water into wine, or to multiply the loaves and fishes for the relief of the hungry.

These miracles again, being acts of mercy as well as power, were not consistent with the character of an impostor, or the agency of any wicked spirit; but that God should have compassion on his creatures, and exercise his tender mercies over ‘the works of his own hands,’ that he should give bread to the hungry, limbs to the maimed, and release to such as were under the captivity of Satan, is no improbable thing at all. These were actions suitable to his majesty, and highly comporting with his wisdom and goodness, since they naturally tended both to beget reverence in the minds of men towards his messenger, and to reconcile them to the belief and obedience of his heavenly will.

Now these miracles our Saviour did openly, in the temple, in the synagogues, and on the festivals, when the concourse of people was greatest, and when the doctors of the law, who came on purpose to ensnare him, were sitting by and beholding what was done. These he did readily, and with a word’s speaking: for ² ‘peace be still,’ quelled the raging of the winds and waves; ³ ‘Young man arise,’ revived the widow’s son; ⁴ ‘Ephphatha, be opened,’ gave the deaf man hearing; and ⁵ ‘Lazarus, come forth,’ raised him from the grave who had been four days dead. These he did frequently, and upon all proper occasions; for, from the time that he entered upon his ministry, scarce a day passed without some fresh instance of his power and goodness, insomuch that if all his actions of this kind had been particularly recorded, ⁶ ‘the world itself,’ as St John, by an elegant hyperbole, declares, ‘would not contain the books which should be written.’ and, what crowns all, these he did with a design to establish a religion, whose business it is to give men the most exalted thoughts of God and his providence, and the greatest certainty of future rewards and punishments; to oblige them, by the strongest motives, to observe and practice whatsoever things are true and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report; to persuade them to mortify every inordinate affection, and to attain these excellent dispositions of mind, which will make them resemble God, and best prepare them for future happiness; in a word,

to establish the practice of the two great virtues, the love of God, and the love of our neighbour, upon these two excellent principles, of faith in God, as the rewarder of those that seek him, and faith in Jesus Christ, as the Saviour and Judge of mankind.

And, if such be the end and design of the Christian religion, there is little reason to suppose, as the Jews are very willing to object, that the devil could have any hand in assisting our Saviour to effect such miracles as gave credit to the first appearance, and strength and success to the propagation of these doctrines, which were calculated on purpose to destroy his dominion in the world, and upon its ruins, to erect the kingdom of God and his Christ. The devil is not so silly a being as to join forces with his avowed enemy, in order to ruin and depose himself: and if our Saviour could hope for no assistance from that quarter, the pretence of his doing his miracles, ^a by virtue of the name Jehovah, stolen out of the sanctuary, and used as a charm, is a fiction too gross and palpable to stand in need of any confutation.

Philostratus indeed, in his history of the life of Apollonius, ^b sets him up for a great worker of miracles; and

^a The account which some later Jews give us of this transaction, is thus related:—“That, in the time of Helena the queen, Jesus of Nazareth came into Jerusalem, and in the temple found a stone, on which the ark of God was wont to rest, whereon was written the Tetragrammaton, or more peculiar name of God; that whosoever should get the name into his possession, and be skilled in it, would be able to do what he pleased; that therefore their wise men, fearing lest any of the Israelites should get that name, and destroy the world, made two dogs of brass, and placed them at the door of the sanctuary; that whenever any had got in, and learned that name, these dogs were wont at their coming out, to bark so terribly, that they forgot the name, and the letters they had newly learned. But when Jesus of Nazareth, say they, went in, he not only learned the letters of this name, but wrote them in a parchment, and hid it, as he came out, in an incision which he made in his flesh; and though, through the barking of the dogs, he had forgot the name, yet he learned it afterwards from his parchment: and it was by virtue of this, say they, that Jesus restored the lame, healed the leprous, raised the dead, walked upon the sea, and did all his other miraculous works.—*Pag. Fidei*, pt. ii. c. 8, s. 6, as quoted in Kidder’s Demonstration, pt. i. p. 40.

^b This Apollonius is, by the enemies of Christianity, set up as a rival to our blessed Saviour, in point of his life, miracles, and predictions; and therefore it may not be improper, in this place, to give our readers a short sketch of some of the principal incidents of his life and transactions. About three or four years before the vulgar Christian era, he was born at Tyana, a town of Cappadocia, from whence he was named Tyaneus, of an ancient family, and rich parents; but to make his birth more resemble our Saviour’s, it is said, that Proteus, under the form of a sea-god, acquainted his mother, that he himself was to be born of her, and that, at the same time, she was surrounded with swans, which assisted at her labour, and, by their singing and gaiety, seemed to presage the infant’s future glory. However this may be, while he was a youth, he was observed to have a great natural genius, an excellent memory, and was in his person so very beautiful, that he drew the eyes of all men upon him. When he was fourteen years of age, his father sent him to Tarsus in Cilicia, in order to study rhetoric; but he chose rather to apply himself to philosophy, and, in a few years, professed himself of the Pythagorean sect. Pursuant to this he abstained from the flesh of all animals, as reputed impure, lived upon nothing but fruits and vegetables; and though he did not condemn the use of wine, yet he chose rather to abstain from it, as being apt to disturb the serenity of the mind. He was a person of great mortification and abstinence, renounced marriage, and professed continence, and affected to live in the temple of Æsculapius, to make it be believed that he was his peculiar favourite, and, by

¹ See Bishop Chandler’s Defence, where he proves this, as well as the traditions of the Talmud, by several instances, p. 429.

² Mark iv. 39. ³ Luke vii. 14. ⁴ Mark vii. 34, 35.

⁵ John xi. 43, 44. ⁶ Ibid. xxi. 25.

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some, of late times, have been bold enough to name him in competition with our blessed Saviour. But, besides that, this history of Apollonius has no other voucher than his servant Damis, who was confessedly a weak and ignorant person, and consequently very capable of being imposed upon by the artful juggles of his master, the very miracles related therein are, for the most part, ridiculous, unworthy the character of a prophet, and, as the learned Photius speaks, full of follies and monstrous tales. Nay, in the highest instance of his miraculous power, namely, his raising a dead woman to life again, ¹ Philostratus himself suspects, as he says the company did, that there was some confederacy and collusion in the matter; but, if even it were not so, the doctrines which Apollonius taught, and the zeal he professed for the Papan idolatry, together with his excessive pride, ambition, and vain affectation of divine honours, are a

¹ See Vit. Apoll. b. iv. c. 16.

his assistance, was enabled to perform cures. Before he appeared in a public character, he kept silence for the space of five years; but as he did not totally refrain from company, he usually spoke by signs, or, when there was a necessity for it, wrote some words. After this five years' silence he came to Antioch, and there endeavoured to improve upon the Pagan religion. The doctrines which he taught were delivered in a plain preceptive manner, and with a better grace and authority than the philosophers at that time were accustomed to. After some stay at Antioch, he undertook a long journey, in order to converse with the Brachmans of India, and, in his way to visit the Persian Magi. At Nineveh he contracted an acquaintance with one Damis, who attended him ever after, and wrote an account of his life, sayings, and actions, which have been transmitted to us in the history of Philostratus the Sophist. Upon his return from the Indies he went to Ephesus, where he was received with all the tokens of respect imaginable, was followed and admired by people of all ranks and conditions, and by making his observations upon the chirping of a bird, which came to call its companions to pick up some corn which happened to be spilt, gained himself the reputation of a very great prophet. From Ephesus he removed to Athens, where he instructed the people in the ceremonies of their religion; in the manner, and time, and place, of their offering up sacrifices, libations, and prayers, with other superstitious rites; and where, by commanding a devil to go out of a young man, and in token of his being dispossessed, to overturn a statue which stood by, he obtained the character of a mighty worker of miracles. In the twelfth year of Nero he came to Rome, where, having spoken some disrespectful words against the emperor, he was persecuted by his favourite, Tigellinus; but, to his great surprise, when his prosecutor opened the bill of accusation against him, he found nothing but a fair piece of paper, without one word written in it; and not long after, upon his restoring a young woman, who seemed to fall down dead as she was going to be married, to life again, he was accounted by all a great magician at least, if not a person sent from heaven. When Nero ordered all philosophers to depart from Rome, he left the place, and, to pass by other circumstances of his itinerant life, he was in Asia Minor, when Domitian ordered him to be apprehended for speaking with some freedom against his tyranny, and sent to Rome: where, notwithstanding the emperor's cruel usage of him, he behaved with incredible magnanimity, and, upon his trial, being honourably acquitted, immediately vanished out of the court, and was that very day seen at Puteoli, which is very near fifty leagues from Rome. When Domitian was slain, he resided at Ephesus; and, as he was then discoursing to the people, he gave them to understand, that the fatal stab was that moment given him; which accordingly proved true; for not long after an express arrived, that Domitian was dispatched in the manner he had mentioned, and Nerva unanimously declared emperor. Nerva, upon his accession to the throne, is said to have sent Apollonius a letter, desiring him to come and assist at his councils, to which he returned an answer by his servant Damis; but before Damis came back his master was dead; though as to the place and manner of his death, we have no certain account. After his death, however,

plain indication that his miracles were false, and his most surprising performances either the effects of magic, or downright cheat and imposture.

Tacitus ² indeed tells us of two cures, one of a blind and the other of a lame person, which Vespasian pretended to work at Alexandria; but, whosoever reflects on the situation of his affairs at that time, will perceive some reason to suspect a collusion. He was now in a dispute with himself what to do, whether to assume the Roman empire, or restore the ancient form of government, a commonwealth. The restoration of the latter, was what Dion and Euphrates, two eminent philosophers, advised; but Apollonius, whom he likewise consulted upon this occasion, with great vehemence persuaded the contrary, and, being himself accustomed to such artifices, might not improbably suggest to Vespasian the necessity of some miracle or other, in order to recom-

² Hist. b. iv.

he had statues erected, and divine worship paid to him; but, as he left few or no disciples behind him, his memory, which for a little while was greatly honoured, dwindled away by degrees, and, upon the downfall of idolatry, utterly ceased. This account we have from Philostratus, who, from the commentaries of Damis, and a book of one Maximus, which he happened to light upon, wrote the life of Apollonius, above an hundred and twenty years after his death; but whoever looks into it will see how much his fabulous history falls short of the gravity and simplicity of the gospel. The truth is, Julia, the wife of the emperor Severus, affected to be thought a learned woman, and therefore she set up for a wit, which was attended with an immoderate desire and thirst after novelty. She was continually surrounded with poets, sophists, grammarians, &c. Philostratus made one of the number, and from her he had the memoirs of Damis, to which he added, either from common fame, or his own fancy, whatever he thought would hit the taste of the empress, or work himself into the favour of Caracalla, who had Apollonius in high esteem, and were both great admirers of the marvellous. So that, wherever the subject came not up to the magnificence which the author desired, he usually added all the ornaments which his imagination could invent, and, without any regard to truth, or even probability itself, witness the conversation between Apollonius and the ghost of Achilles, and the long digressions on the panthers of Armenia, the elephants, the phoenix, the satyrs, the pygmies, &c., made it not so much an history, as a wild romance; in which light all the great men, not only Christians but Pagans, and ancient as well as moderns, that have had occasion to mention it, look upon it. Philostratus, however, might have a farther design in writing the life of Apollonius: for, as the Christian religion, by the strength of its miracles, had now made its way in the world, those who endeavoured to oppose it, and yet could not deny the reality of its facts, were at length reduced to this expedient, namely, to produce miracles in Paganism, and every other argument that they thought Christianity could boast of, by way of contraposition. As therefore the actions of Jesus were handed down to us by the four evangelists, who wrote an account of the principal occurrences of his life, so they, in like manner, set about writing the lives of their philosophers, in hopes of finding their account in thus opposing miracles to miracles, and magic to the power of God; and, for this reason, they have been more especially careful to accommodate the transactions of their great men to the more remarkable passages in our Saviour's life, as the learned Huetius shows, in many instances relating to Apollonius, and thereupon concludes in these words: "Philostratus besides seems to have had for his object, the depression of the increasing belief on Christ and his doctrine, by setting up this fictitious image of every doctrine of holiness and wonderful virtue. Wherefore he formed this image in imitation of Christ, and accommodated to Apollonius several things belonging to the history of our Saviour, that the Gentiles might envy the Christians in nothing."—See Huet. *Demonst. Evang.* p. 566.—*Fleury's Eccles. Hist.*—*Tellemont's Hist. des Empereurs*, vol. 2: and a *Dissert. at the end of the Translat. of Houtteville's Crit. and Hist. Discourse.*

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mend him to the people as a person highly favoured by the gods.

And indeed if we consider what an obscure person, and of what mean original, Vespasian was, there seems to be the greater reason why Apollonius, and others of that party should think of some expedient or other to raise him a reputation in the world, answerable to the new station of life they had advised him to accept: and, whoever considers farther, ¹ what various artifices were at that time made use of, to procure an opinion of divinity in the emperors, will not much wonder, that such report should be spread of them, or that certain persons should be suborned to feign such distempers, and then to give it out, that the touch of the emperor's hand had cured them; though it must be confessed, ² some are of opinion, that what is reported of Vespasian to this purpose, cannot fairly be denied, and might perhaps be providentially intended, to give some dignity and superior character to a person, who in conjunction with his son Titus, was appointed by God to be a signal instrument of the divine vengeance on the Jewish nation.

Allowing then, that God, for wise ends of his providence, might, now and then, permit some eminent person to do a real miracle; yet what is this to that vast number and great variety recorded of our Saviour, who, in the small space of his ministry, did more wonderful works of this kind, than what Moses and all the prophets put together, from the earliest account of time that we read of, are known to have done.

³ The Jews indeed, to swell the account of Moses's miracles, reckon each of those that he did in Egypt double; one, as a miracle of justice, in punishing Pharaoh and his people, and the other as a miracle of mercy, in preserving the Israelites from the like destruction. But, after all their pains and contrivance, the sum amounts to very little, in comparison to the many that are recorded of our blessed Saviour. The miracles of all the prophets put together, by the Jews on computation, do not equal those of Moses; and yet we must remember, that Moses lived an hundred and twenty years, forty of which were one continued scene of action; and that the compass of the prophets, from the creation of the world, to the destruction of the second temple, includes three thousand and some hundreds. Lay this together, and it evidently follows that such extraordinary demonstrations of the divine presence and power were very thin, and sparingly exhibited, when set against the innumerable instances of them, in the three, or, at most, four years' preaching of the blessed Jesus. And, if the wonders related by the evangelists, as done by himself, in so short a time, do far exceed what both Moses and all the prophets did, what shall we say to those many more that are not related? What to the infinitely more still, that were done by the apostles and disciples, in confirmation of the doctrine he had taught? Doubtless, the miraculous power which he communicated to them was infinitely great, when, in order to obtain cures, ⁴ 'the people brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might

overshadow some of them;' and when, from ⁵ 'Paul's body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs, and aprons, and the diseases parted from them, and evil spirits went out of them.'

To sum up what has been said on this subject. Since a real miracle is such an operation as can be done by none but God, or such as are appointed by him, and was therefore, in all ages, acknowledged as an authentic proof of a divine mission; since the prophets, in their predictions of the Messiah, represent him as working miracles of a kind and merciful nature; and our Saviour, when he entered upon his ministry, and assumed that character, displayed a wonderful power in works of the same kind; since that power could proceed from no other cause but a communication from God, and yet to imagine, that God would communicate any part of his power to give sanction to an impostor, is a thing repugnant to his sacred attributes; since, upon examination, it appears, that all the marks and characters of true miracles concur in the works of Jesus, but violent suspicions of trick and artifice in those that are named in competition with him; since besides these characters of their truth, the number of those which he did, besides those that were done by persons acting in his name, and by his authority, was greater than what all the true workers of miracles, namely, Moses, and the prophets, had done through the whole compass of the Old Testament: since these things appear to be thus, I say, we are under a necessity to conclude, that our blessed Saviour must have been the true Messiah promised to the Jews, and characterized in the writings of their prophets; that he was the great messenger of the covenant sent from God; for ⁶ 'if he had not been of God, he could have done nothing;' and consequently, that the message which he delivered to us, containing this covenant, or, what is all one, that the religion which he hath settled in the world, and confirmed by so many incontestible proofs, so far as the testimony of miracles is available, cannot but be true.

CHAP. IV.—On miracles.

SUPPLEMENTAL BY THE EDITOR.

THE preceding dissertation on miracles is satisfactory, so far as it goes, but it does not meet all the objections which the ingenuity of modern infidelity has devised with regard to this branch of the Christian evidences. The object of this chapter is to supply the author's deficiencies, and to present the reader with a comprehensive view of the arguments by which the objections of the infidel may be refuted, and the truth of Scripture miracles completely demonstrated.

The advocates of Revealed religion affirm, without any fear of refutation, that the argument resulting from the completion of prophecy is one that is continually increasing in force; while they are often as ready to admit, that the argument from miracles diminishes in proportion as we recede farther from the apostolic times. But we shall endeavour to show, that this is a

¹ Stillfleet's Orig. Sac. p. 171.

² See Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part i. p. 62.

³ Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures. ⁴ Acts v. 15, 16.

⁵ Acts xix. 11, 12.

⁶ John ix. 33.

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concession which need not be made: but that we have as good reason to believe the miraculous facts of Scripture, as any except eye-witnesses, or those who received their information immediately from the lips of eye-witnesses.

The evidence flowing from the performance of miracles is indeed so summary and convincing, that it may be stated satisfactorily in very few words: for this reason, however, as it should seem, it has been selected by ingenious unbelievers to exercise their dexterity and acumen upon; and thus it becomes requisite to discuss this subject with a minuteness and comparative proximity which might, otherwise, have been altogether avoided.

By miracles, we do not mean “juggling tricks,” but supernatural events. This genuine notion of miracles has been sometimes obscured by definition; yet a candid inquirer after truth cannot well mistake. Most of the opinions entertained by men of good sense, apart from any controversial views as to this topic are correct. No man would think that curing lameness, by a regular surgical or medical process, was miraculous: every man would say that the instantaneous production of a limb, and “making the maimed whole,” was miraculous. And this exactly reaches the logical scientific notion of miracles: for, when such effects are produced as, *ceteris paribus*, are usually produced, God is said to operate according to the common course of nature: but when such effects are produced as are, *ceteris paribus*, contrary to, or different from, that common course, they are said to be MIRACULOUS.”

Now no man will presume to affirm that it is impossible a teacher should be sent from God. It may be necessary that one should be sent; and we think that a train of observation and deduction of facts might readily be produced to establish that necessity. If one or more be sent, they must bring credentials to evince that their mission is divine; and what can those credentials be but miracles? In fact, the very idea of a revelation includes that of miracles. A revelation cannot be made but by a miraculous interposition of Deity: so that the probability of a revelation implies a correspondent probability of the occurrence of miracles; and the necessity of a revelation, a like necessity of miracles. Nay, we may venture to affirm farther, that there is a mutual and necessary correlation between the two; for, as, on the one hand, miracles, or prophecies, which are in fact miraculous, being contrary to the course of nature, are necessary to prove the divine authority of an agent; so, on the other hand, the performance of uncontrolled miracles, or the delivery of true predictions, immediately suggests to the mind the conviction that they have been permitted solely for the purpose of proving that the person, by whom they are performed, is employed by God to do something, or reveal something, which mankind would not have known in any other way.

It is, one would suppose, almost an intuitive truth, that, when a person performs evident and uncontrolled miracles in proof of any doctrine, those who have sufficient evidence of the reality of such miracles ought to admit the doctrine to be true, or from God. At all events, the proposition is easily deduced from a few steps of obvious reasoning; limiting it, as we have done, with Baxter, Barrow, and Chandler, to uncontrolled miracles, or those the apparent design of which is not

contradicted either by the absurdity of the thing they are intended to prove, or by some equal or greater miracles opposed to them. We thus exclude every thing like juggling from the idea of miracles; and at the same time free ourselves from all consideration of pretended miracles, such as those performed by the Egyptian magicians, with the permission or the performance of which, as they were controlled, we have nothing to do. The reasoning from which our proposition flows is simply this: a genuine miracle cannot be performed without an extraordinary divine interposition, either mediate or immediate. If the Supreme Being would confirm the truth of a proposition to one man, by the testimony of another to whom it was immediately revealed, we can conceive no method by which it would be so effectually accomplished, as by conferring on him power to work a miracle in confirmation of it. When a miracle is uncontrolled, we can conjecture no particular by which it can be distinguished from a miracle wrought to confirm a truth. If God were to suffer an uncontrolled miracle to be wrought in confirmation of a falsehood, there would seem to be no criterion by which his testimony could be distinguished. It is inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, to suffer an uncontrolled miracle to be wrought to establish a falsehood; since it would leave his creatures in a perpetual uncertainty, and an uncertainty that would be most painful to the most virtuous, who have always most wished for a revelation. Since, therefore, God is both wise and good, it follows that a proposition, attested by uncontrolled miracles, is attested by him, and is of necessity true.

From this reasoning it is natural to expect, that in the Scripture history there should be recorded many miracles; and thus, on examining the sacred volume, are our expectations realized. The faith of Moses was confirmed by the miracle of the burning, yet unconsumed, bush. Moses convinced the children of Israel that God employed him to lead them out of Egypt, by performing miracles by means of his rod: he appealed to similar miracles before Pharaoh for the same purpose: the passage through the Red Sea, which opened to deliver the Israelites from the Egyptians, who were afterwards swallowed up in the collapsing waters, was miraculous: the gushing of waters from a solid rock, on its being struck by Moses, was miraculous; the passage of the river Jordan, under Joshua, the standing still of the sun and moon at his command, and the falling of the walls of Jericho, were miraculous: the sacrifice kindled by fire from heaven; the raising of the Shunamite's and of the widow of Sarepta's sons; the destruction of the captains and their fifties by fire from heaven; the dividing of the waters of Jordan by means of the mantle of Elijah, and the translation of that prophet, are events of the same class; and so are those recorded in Daniel, respecting the fiery furnace and the den of lions. From the numerous New Testament miracles, beginning with that wrought at the marriage at Cana, we cannot attempt to make an adequate selection. Though it may be proper to remark, that those performed by Jesus Christ differed essentially from others: Moses could not work miracles without his rod; the apostles performed theirs, for the most part expressly, and always virtually, ‘in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth:’ the Messiah exerted miraculous power from himself, without any

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reference to another. And, farther, the miracles of Jesus Christ were uniformly benevolent:—he cured the sick,—he healed the lame, he made the maimed whole, —he made the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the dumb to speak, he raised the dead, and finally he raised himself; thus evincing at once the greatest miracle, and the sublimest act of benevolence; for, as he ‘died for our sins,’ so he ‘rose again for our justification.’ So numerous, indeed, and so beneficial were his miracles, that ‘the multitude were astonished, saying, it was never seen so in Israel;’ and well might their astonishment be excited, as our Lord wrought more benevolent miracles in one afternoon, (See Mat. ix. 18—34.) than had been performed by any of the prophets in all their lives.

That one great object, kept in view by Christ and his apostles in performing miracles, was to furnish awakening and convincing proofs of their divine mission, is evident from the uniform tenor of the New Testament Histories. The language of the Jewish Ruler was the pure unadulterated language of common sense, the force of which all the sophistry in the world cannot weaken: ‘Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.’ (John iii. 2.) The chief priests and the Pharisees had the same conviction; for, said they, after Lazarus was raised from the dead, ‘this man doeth many miracles: if we let him alone, all will believe on him.’ (John xi. 47, 48.) Jesus Christ himself appeals to his miracles: ‘I have greater witnesses, says he, than that of John, for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.’ (John v. 36.) And again, when the Jews asked him, if thou be the Christ tell us plainly. How long dost thou make us to doubt? Jesus answered, ‘the works that I do, they bear witness of me. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.’ ‘If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.’ (John x. 24, 25, 37, 38; xv. 24.) And on another occasion, when John sent his disciples to Christ to ask, ‘Art thou HE that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them.’ (Mat. xi. 3, 4, 5.) In like manner, with regard to the apostles, ‘God also bare them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.’ (Heb. ii. 4. Acts xiv. 9; x. 38, 39, &c.)

Consistently with this, the early Christian writers and apologists, in all those cases where they do not assume the history as true, and thence argue that Jesus ought to be received as the Messiah, appeal in very express terms to his miracles. Thus Quadratus appeals very strongly to those miracles. Justin Martyr asserts the performance of miracles by Jesus in as forcible words as language will admit, and assigns the reason why he rather had recourse to the argument from prophecy, than that from miracles; namely, that his opponents would ascribe the latter to magic. Irenæus, Lactantius, Ter-

tullian, Origen, Augustin, and Jerome, speak of Christ’s miracles, and often, indeed, of those wrought subsequently to the apostolic times, and notice the same evasion on the part of the adversaries to Christianity.

It is highly worthy of remark, too, that none of the early opposers of the religion of Jesus, pretend to dispute that he performed miracles. Lucian, Julian, Porphyry, Hierocles, Celsus, &c., admit that miracles were wrought. Julian, it is true, endeavours to make light of them, and wonders that so much stir should be made about a person, who merely ‘opened the eyes of the blind, restored limbs to the lame, and delivered persons possessed.’ Celsus, again, ridicules the miracles, but never disputes that they occurred. ‘Well, said he, suppose that you really did those things that ye talk of; pray must we deem the persons who perform such wonderful operations to be sons of God; or must we not rather deem them vile wretches, well versed in a diabolical art?’ Now, who can imagine, for a moment, that so violent an opposer of Christianity would have admitted the miracles of Christ as real facts, had he not been compelled to it by the universal consent of all inquiring men of the age in which he lived? Hence it may be asked, with Mr F. Cunningham, ‘whether modern infidels who have ventured to contradict the miracles of Christ, a weapon Celsus was afraid to take up, have estimated the rashness of their enterprise? Are they competent to deny what a spectator no less malevolent than themselves was compelled to admit? Has the lapse of eighteen hundred years enabled them to ascertain a fact of daily occurrence with more accuracy than a bystander? Are objects best seen at the greatest distance?’

Thus it appears, that we have the most marked and direct testimony of the friends of Revealed religion, those, too, who had been converted from heathenism by the weight of its evidence, and the concessions of its enemies, in favour of those miracles, which were performed in order to prove that the religion came from God; and this testimony, and these concessions, were delivered so near the period in which the miracles were supposed to have been wrought, that they cannot be accounted for in any other way than by admitting that both Christians and unbelievers, in the early ages, were convinced that something which required more than human energy had occurred. Why, then, should this be disputed in these remote ages?

Voltaire and Mr Hume will answer this question, by telling us in effect, though not in express words, ‘that since miracles are not wrought now, they never were wrought at all.’

The substance of Mr Hume’s argument, which I describe, because almost all later Deists have echoed his sentiments, is this: ‘experience, which in some things is variable, in others is uniform, is our only guide in reasoning concerning matters of fact. Variable experience gives rise to probability only; a uniform experience amounts to proof. Our belief of any fact, from the testimony of eye-witnesses, is derived from no other principle than our experience of the veracity of human testimony. If the fact attested be miraculous, there arises a contest of two opposite experiences, or proof against proof. Now, a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle

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from the very nature of the fact, is as complete as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined; and if so, it is an undeniable consequence, that it cannot be surmounted by any proof whatever derived from human testimony."

Now, to this reasoning, or the most prominent and essential parts of it, several decisive answers have been, or may be given. A few of these may properly find a place here.

I. Dr Campbell, in his celebrated "Dissertation on Miracles," shows the fallacy of Mr Hume's argument thus: "The evidence arising from human testimony is not solely derived from experience: on the contrary, testimony has a natural influence on belief, antecedent to experience. The early and unlimited assent given to testimony by children, gradually contracts as they advance in life: it is, therefore, more consonant to truth to say, that our diffidence in testimony is the result of experience, than that our faith in it has this foundation. Besides, the uniformity of experience in favour of any fact is not a proof against its being reversed in a particular instance. The evidence arising from the single testimony of a man of known veracity will go farther to establish a belief of its being actually reversed. If his testimony be confirmed by a few others of the same character, we cannot withhold our assent to the truth of it. Now, though the operations of nature are governed by uniform laws, and though we have not the testimony of our senses in favour of any violation of them; still if, in particular instances, we have the testimony of thousands of our fellow-creatures, and those, too, men of strict integrity, swayed by no motives of ambition or interest, and governed by the principles of common sense, that they were actually witnesses of these violations, the constitution of our nature obliges us to believe them."

II. Mr Hume's reasoning is founded upon too limited a view of the laws and course of nature. If we consider things duly, we shall find that lifeless matter is utterly incapable of obeying any laws, or of being endued with any powers: and, therefore, what is usually called the course of nature can be nothing else than the arbitrary will and pleasure of God, acting continually upon matter according to certain rules of uniformity, still bearing a relation to contingencies. So that it is as easy for the Supreme Being to alter what men think the course of nature, as to preserve it. Those effects, which are produced in the world regularly and indeminently, and which are usually termed the works of nature, prove the constant providence of Deity; those, on the contrary, which, upon any extraordinary occasion, are produced in such a manner as it is manifest could not have been either by human power, or by what is called chance, prove undeniably the immediate interposition of the Deity on that especial occasion. God, it must be recollected, is the governor of the moral as well as of the physical world; and since the moral well-being of the universe is of more consequence than its physical order and regularity, it follows, obviously, that the laws, conformably with which the material world seems generally to be regulated, are subservient, and may occasionally yield, to the laws by which the moral world is governed. Although, therefore, a miracle is contrary to the usual course of nature, and would indeed lose its beneficial

effect, if it were not so, it cannot thence be inferred that it is "a violation of the laws of nature," allowing the term to include a regard to moral tendencies. The laws by which a wise and holy God governs the world, cannot, unless he is pleased to reveal them, be learned in any other way than from testimony; since, on this supposition, nothing but testimony can bring us acquainted with the whole series of his dispensations, and this kind of knowledge is absolutely necessary previously to our correctly inferring those laws. Testimony, therefore, must be admitted as constituting the principal means of discovering the real laws by which the universe has been regulated; that testimony assures us, that the apparent course of nature has often been interrupted to produce important moral effects: and we must not at random disregard such testimony, because, in estimating its credibility, we ought to look almost infinitely more at the moral, than at the physical, circumstances connected with any particular event.

III. But the defence of miracles against the objections of infidels need not be thrown wholly upon these general and abstract reasonings, satisfactory and cogent as they are. The miracles recorded in Scripture, and especially those performed by Moses, by Jesus Christ, and his apostles, are accompanied by evidence such as you will find it difficult to adduce in support of any other historic fact, and such as cannot possibly be brought in support of any pretended fact whatever; evidence, such as the pretended miracles of Mahometanism, and those of the Romish church, are totally destitute of.

The truth of a matter of fact may be positively inferred and known, if it be attended by certain criteria, such as no pretended fact can possibly have. These criteria are at least four. It is required, first, that the fact be a sensible fact, such as men's outward senses can judge of: secondly, that it be notorious, performed publicly in the presence of witnesses: thirdly, that there be memorials of it, or monuments, actions, and customs, kept up in commemoration of it: fourthly, that such monuments and actions commence with the fact. There may be facts in favour of which these four marks cannot be produced; but the argument of Leslie, and St Real, is, that whatever has all these four marks cannot be false.

For example, could Moses have persuaded six hundred thousand men that he had led them through the Red Sea in the manner related in Exodus, or have instituted the passover in commemoration of the destruction of the Egyptian first-born, if these circumstances had never occurred? Could he make the Israelites fancy that they were fed miraculously with manna forty years in the wilderness, or that, during all that period, their 'raiment waxed not old, neither did their feet swell,' (Deut. viii. 4: xxix. 5.) unless those things, however extraordinary, were facts? Here our four criteria apply. The first two secure from any cheat or imposture, at the time the facts occurred, and the last two preserve equally against any imposition in after ages; because the authors of the book in which these facts are related, speak of it as written at that time by the actors or eye-witnesses, and as commanded by God to be carefully kept and preserved to all generations, and read publicly to all the people at stated times. (Deut. xxxi. 10, 11, 12.

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Josh. viii. 34, 35. Neh. viii.) And farther, the institutions appointed in this book were to be perpetually observed from the day of each institution for ever, among these people, in memory of the miraculous facts. Now, suppose this book to have been forged a hundred or a thousand years after the time of Moses; would not every one say when it first appeared, "We never heard of this book before; we know of no such institutions, as of a passover, or circumcision, or sabbaths, and the many feasts and fasts therein appointed; we know nothing of a tribe of Levi, or of a tabernacle in which they were to serve in such an order of priesthood: this book must be an arrant forgery, for it is destitute of all those marks which it gives of itself, as to its own continuance, and of those institutions which it relates." No instance can be shown since the world began of any book so substantiated that was a forgery, and yet passed off, as exhibiting truth, upon any people.

Mr Leslie, however, does not stop here, but adds a fifth mark as peculiar to our Bible, distinguishing it from all other histories, relating facts that formerly occurred: that is, that the book, in which the facts are related, contains likewise the law of that people to whom it belongs, and is their statute book by which their causes are determined. This will render it impossible for any one to coin or forge such a book, so as to make it pass as authentic among any people. If, for example, a person should forge a statute-book for England, and publish it next term, could he make all the judges, lawyers, and people believe that this was their genuine and only statute book by which their causes had been determined for centuries past? They must forget their old statute-book, and believe that this new book, which they never saw or heard of before, was the very book which had been referred to in the pleadings in Westminster-hall for so many ages, which had been so often printed, and of which the originals are now kept in the Tower, to be consulted, as there is occasion. Thus it is that the books of Moses contain, not only the history of the Jews, but also their municipal law, as well civil as ecclesiastical: and thus, also, it is with respect to the New Testament, which is the spiritual and ecclesiastical law to the Christian church in all nations; and which cannot, therefore, be corrupted, unless all persons in all nations whithersoever Christianity is spread, should conspire in the corruption of the Gospel.

Mr Leslie selects some striking, though familiar, examples in illustration of his general argument; among others, he adverts to the Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain, and compares it with the stones set up at Gilgal. Every one, as he observes, knows this Stonehenge, or has heard of it; and yet none know the reason why those great stones were set there, or by whom, or in memory of what. Now, suppose a person should publish a book to-morrow, and therein affirm that these stones were set up by Hercules, Polypheumus, or Garagantua, in memory of such and such of their actions: if he merely make the affirmation, some few may perhaps give him credit. But if, for farther confirmation of his assertion, he should say in this book, that it was written at the time when such actions were performed, and by the very actors themselves, or by eye-witnesses: and that this book had been received as true, and quoted by authors of the greatest reputation in all ages since: moreover, that this

book was well known in England, and enjoined by act of parliament to be taught our children; and that in consequence we did teach it our children, and had been taught it ourselves when we were children; it would seem impertinent to ask any Deist whether he thinks such a delusion could be passed upon the people of England.

Let us now compare this with the Stonehenge, as we may call it, or twelve great stones set up at Gilgal, and erected in order that when the children of the Israelites in after ages should inquire their meaning, it should be told them. (Josh. iv. 6, 7.) The occurrence, in commemoration of which these stones at Gilgal were set up, is as wonderful and miraculous as the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and free from the puerile carpings which have been raised by unbelievers against that remarkable event. Notice of this miraculous passage over the Jordan at Gilgal was given to the people on the preceding day. (Josh. iii. 5.) It took place at noonday before the whole nation. And when the waters of the Jordan were divided, it was not at any low ebb, but at the time when the river overflowed its banks. (Josh. iii. 15.) It was effected, too, not by winds, or in length of time, which winds would require to accomplish it; but all on a sudden, as soon as the 'feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, then the waters which came from above stood, and rose up upon an heap: and they that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt-sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan. And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lift up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned into their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before. And the people came out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which the twelve men, from every tribe a man, took out of the midst of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, when your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, what mean these stones? then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us until we were gone over: that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.' (Josh. iii. 15—17; iv. 18—24.)

Now to frame our argument, let it be supposed that there never was any such occurrence as that passage over Jordan; that these stones at Gilgal were set up on some other occasion, in some after age; and then that some designing man invented this book of Joshua, and pretended that it was written by Joshua at this time; adducing this erection of stones at Gilgal as a testimony of the truth of it. Would not the Israelites say to him, "we know the stonage at Gilgal, but we never before

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heard this reason assigned for it: nor of this book of Joshua. Where has it been all this while? and where, and how came you, after so many ages, to find it? Besides, we are told in this book, that this same passage over Jordan was ordained to be taught our children, from age to age; and therefore that they were always to be instructed in the meaning of that stonage at Gilgal, as a memorial of it. But we were never taught it when we were children; nor did we ever teach our children any such thing. And it is not at all likely that could have been forgotten, while so remarkable a stonage continued, which was set up for that and no other purpose."

If, then, for the reasons before assigned, no such imposition could be practised successfully upon us as to the Stonehenge upon Salisbury Plain, how much less could it be with regard to the erection at Gilgal?

And farther, if, when we know not the reason of an insulated monument, such a delusive reason cannot be imposed; how much more impossible is it to impose on us in actions and observances which we celebrate in memory of particular miraculous events? How impossible to make us forget those passages which we daily commemorate; and to persuade us that we had always observed such institutions or ceremonies in memory of what we never before heard of; that is, that we knew it before we knew it! And if it be found thus impossible to practise an imposition upon us, even in some things which have not all the four criteria before-mentioned, how much more impossible is it that there should be any deceit with regard to particulars in which all those criteria actually meet.

Similar reasoning is applied with equal success by this acute writer to the principal facts, including the miraculous ones, recorded in the Evangelical history. The works and the miracles of Jesus Christ are said, by the Evangelists, to be done publicly in the face of the world; and so, indeed, himself affirmed in reasoning with his accusers: 'I spake openly to the world, and in secret have I said nothing.' (John xviii. 20. See on this point, Horne on the Study of the Scriptures, vol. i. p. 541, 1st edit.) We learn also in the Acts of the Apostles, that three thousand at one time, and more than two thousand at another, (Acts ii. 41; iv. 4.) were converted, upon conviction of what themselves had seen and known, what had been done publicly before their eyes, and in particulars respecting which it was impossible to impose upon them. So that here we find the two first of Mr Leslie's criteria.

Then for the two second:—Baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted as perpetual memorials of these things: they were not instituted in after ages, but at the very time when the circumstances to which they relate took place; and they have been observed without interruption, through the whole Christian world, in all ages down from that time to the present. Besides, Christ himself ordained apostles, and other ministers of his Gospel, to preach and administer the sacraments: and that always 'even unto the end of the world.' (Mat. xxviii. 20.) Accordingly, they have continued by regular succession to this day. So that the Christian ministry is, and always has been, as notorious in point of fact, as the tribe of Levi among the Jews. The Gospel also is as much a law, a rule of conduct to the Christians, as

the books of Moses to the Jews: and it being part of the matters of fact or truths related in the Gospel that 'pastors and teachers,' (Ephes. iv. 11.) were appointed by Christ, and to continue till the end of the world; consequently if the Gospel history and doctrines were invented, as they must be, if forged at all, in some ages after Christ; then, at the time of the invention, there could be no such order of clergy or ministers as derived themselves from the institution of Christ; a circumstance which must give the lie to the Gospel, and demonstrate the whole to be false. The miraculous actions of Christ and his Apostles being affirmed to be true no otherwise than as there were at that identical time, whenever the Deist will suppose the Gospel history to be forged, not only sacraments or ordinances of Christ's institution, but an order of Christian pastors, &c., to administer them; and it being impossible there could be any such things before they were invented, it is as impossible they should be received and accredited when invented. Hence it follows that it was as impossible to have imposed these miraculous relations upon mankind in after ages, as it would have been to make persons believe they saw the miracles, or were parties concerned in the beneficial effects resulting from them, if they were not.

IV. Notwithstanding all that has been said, however, by Leslie and others, since there is no making a fence high enough to keep out extravagant conjectures and surmises, we find unbelievers exclaiming after all, that still men's senses might be imposed upon. To reasoning we may always oppose reasoning; and it is often perfectly legitimate to oppose conjecture to conjecture; yet, with regard to the New Testament miracles, we cannot have so ill an opinion of the intellects of infidels as to conjecture that they really believe—

"That persons afflicted with the most excruciating maladies and diseases should be juggled into perfect ease and health, and cured, as Celsus pretended, by legerdemain:

"That blind men should see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, lepers be cleansed, and dead men come to life, merely by the play of fancy, and the force of imagination:

"That the senses of whole multitudes should be imposed upon to such a degree that they should all fancy together, they saw, heard, spake, ate and drank, repeated these actions many times over, and that in different places and circumstances, too, and yet, after all, did nothing of all this; but were either asleep, or in ecstasy, or under the influence of some strange charm all the while:

"That five thousand men, for example, at one time and four thousand at another, besides women and children, should persuade themselves they fed only upon a few loaves and fishes; should publish it to all the country that they did so; refer to time, place, and persons present; and yet, instead of this, have been in fact at a splendid and magnificent feast, where plenty and variety of all provisions, fit to entertain such multitudes, were set before him."

If these things may be, of what utility are our senses? What dependence can be placed upon them? or what credit can be due to a Deist who attests nothing but upon experience, and yet admits that thousands together may be deceived in reference to some of the most

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common and frequent actions and functions in human life?

In truth, there are but four hypotheses that can be assumed with respect to the miracles of Jesus Christ, one or other of which a reasonable being must adopt.

Either, first, the recorded accounts of those miracles were absolute fictions wickedly invented by some persons who had a wish to impose upon mankind:

Or, secondly, Jesus Christ did not work any true miracles; but the senses of the people were in some way or other deluded, so that they believed he really did perform miracles, when in fact he did not:

Or, thirdly, that the spectators were not in any way deluded, but knew very well he wrought no miracles: yet were all, both enemies and friends, the Jews themselves not excepted, though they daily "sought occasion against him," united in a close confederacy to persuade the world that he performed the most surprising things. So that, while some actively circulated reports of these amazing occurrences, the rest kept their counsel, never offering to unmask the fraud, but managing the matter with so much cunning and dexterity, and such an exact mutual harmony and correspondence, that the story of Jesus Christ's performing miracles should become current, should obtain almost universal credit, and not a single person be able to disprove it:

Or, fourthly, that he did actually perform these astonishing works, and that the accounts given of them by the Christian writers in the New Testament are authentic and correct.

He that does not adopt the last of these conclusions will find it a matter of very small consequence which of the three others he chooses. For that the stories cannot be fictions is evident from the reasoning of Leslie already adduced: and it will be seen farther, from a few moments' consideration, that the denial of the miracles of Jesus Christ, in any way, leads necessarily to the admission of a series of real miracles of another kind.

The progress of the human mind, as may be seen by all the inquiries into it, is a thing of a determinate nature: a man's thoughts, words, and actions, are all generated by something previous; there is an established course for these things, as well as for the physical part of the universe, an analogy, of which every man is a judge from what he feels in himself, and observes in others: and to suppose any number of men in determinate circumstances to vary from this general tenour of human nature in like circumstances is a miracle, and may, as Dr Hartley remarks, be made a miracle of any magnitude, that is, incredible to any degree, by augmenting the number and magnitude of the deviations. It is therefore a miracle in the human mind, as great as any that can possibly be conceived to take place with regard to the body, to suppose that multitudes of Christians, Jews, and heathens, in the primitive times, should have borne such unquestionable testimony, some expressly, others by indirect circumstances, as we learn from history they did, to the miracles said to be performed by our Lord upon the human body, unless they were really performed. In like manner, the reception which the miracles recorded in the Old Testament met with is a miracle, unless those miracles were true. 'These are not however the only miracles which unbelievers in the Scripture miracles must admit. The very determination

of the apostles to propagate the belief of false miracles, independent of the additional difficulty arising from the silent concurrence of the Jews and Gentiles in the story, according to the third hypothesis suggested above, in support of such a religion as that taught in the New Testament, is as great a miracle as human imagination can conceive. For when they formed this design, whether they hoped to succeed, or conjectured that they should fail, in their undertaking, they chose what they knew to be moral evil, with the contingency of experiencing natural evil; nay, so desirous were they to obtain nothing but misery, that they made their own persecution a test of the truth of their doctrines;—thus violating the strongest possible of all laws of human nature, namely, that "no man can choose evil for its own sake."

Here, then, an unbeliever must either deny all analogy, association, uniformity of action, operation of motives, selection of good in preference to evil, &c., and become an absolute sceptic in the most extensive acceptation of the term, or acknowledge that very strong physical analogies may sometimes be violated; that is, he must have recourse to something miraculous in order that he may get quit of something miraculous. Let him next inquire which of the two opposite classes of miracles will agree best with his other notions: whether it be more analogous to the nature of God, the course of providence, the history of the world, the known progress of man in this life, &c., to allow that God imparted to certain select persons, of eminent piety, the power of working miracles; or to suppose that he confounded the understandings, affections, and whole train of associations, of thousands of persons, nay, of entire nations, in such a manner that men, who in all other things seemed to have acted like other men, should, in respect of the history of Jesus Christ, the prophets, or the Apostles, abandon all established rules of thinking and acting, and conduct themselves in a way miraculously repugnant to all our ideas and all our experience. In order to determine this inquiry, let it not be forgotten that the object of the class of miracles against which the Deists contend, is worthy of a God of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness: while the object of the latter is decidedly and absolutely inconsistent with wisdom and goodness, attributes which all Theists ascribe to that Great Being by whom alone miracles can be performed, allowing that they can be wrought at all.

V. Much of the preceding reasoning is entirely independent of any minute investigation of the nature of concurrent or successive testimony; and the whole discussion might safely be terminated without any reference to these abstruser inquiries, were it not that Hume and his disciples have frequently adverted to them, and that silence might be construed into inability to break through their web of sophistry. The argument of Dr Campbell has already been briefly sketched; we shall here add a few distinct considerations. And, first, with regard to concurrent testimony, it has been demonstrated upon genuine mathematical principles, that where the credibility of each witness is great, a very few witnesses will be sufficient to overcome any contrary probability, derived from the nature of the fact; that the evidence resulting from testimony can not only approach indefinitely near to certainty, but can at length exceed the

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evidence of any inference, however cogent, which can possibly be deduced from personal experience, or from personal and derived experience conjointly; that is, that the evidence of testimony can overcome any degree of improbability, however great, which can arise from the nature of the fact. The reason is, that the evidence of testimony admitting of an unlimited increase on two different accounts, namely, that of the veracity of the witnesses, and that of the number of concurrent witnesses, while the probability of the happening of any specific event admits only one of them, the former is capable of indefinitely surpassing the latter.

But, indeed, the force of the evidence resulting from concurrent testimony, is avowedly so great upon the minds of all who have not been biassed by the perusal of deistical speculations, or an indulgence in them, that the matter scarcely needs the support of mathematical investigation. Let it be supposed that twelve men of probity and good sense were circumstantially and seriously to tell, each independently of the others, on his own personal conviction, “a round, unvarnished tale” of a miracle performed before their eyes, and respecting which it was impossible, as they affirm, for them to be deceived, we believe few persons would wait to receive a thirteenth concurrent testimony, before they yielded their assent to the truth of the relation, however extraordinary. Let it be supposed, farther, that the twelve evidences, on being suspected of “bearing false witness,” subjected themselves to be scourged, tortured, nay strangled, rather than deny the truth of their attestation; could any reasonable or reasoning man refuse to believe their testimony? According to Mr Hume’s argumentation, we are not to believe them, were we to witness such a story and such sufferings; but we are so persuaded that no person in his senses would disbelieve them, that we will venture to say even Mr Hume, under such circumstances, could not have withheld his assent to the truth of their story.

“But,” say his disciples, “whatever might be done or conceded in such a case, those who live a thousand years after the event, can have no reason to believe it: if we admit that concurrent testimony may augment; still successive testimony diminishes, and that so rapidly, as to command no assent after a few centuries at most.” This is specious; but, as we remarked at the commencement of this letter, far from correct. We do not deny that there may be cases in which credibility diminishes with time; but no testimony is really, in the nature of things rendered less credible by any other cause, than the loss or want of some of those conditions which first made it rationally credible. A testimony continues equally credible, so long as it is transmitted with all those circumstances and conditions which first procured it a certain degree of credit amongst men, proportionate to the intrinsic value of those conditions. Let it be supposed that the persons who transmit the testimony are able, honest, and diligent, in all the requisite inquiries as to what they transmit, and how should the credibility due to their testimony be weakened, but by the omission of circumstances? which omission is contrary to the hypothesis. No calculation of the decrease of the credibility of testimony, in which a man bears witness respecting realities, and not the fictitious of his own brain, can ever proceed upon any other principle than

that of the characters and qualifications of the witnesses: and therefore, so far as the credibility of any matter of fact depends upon pure testimony, they who live at the remotest distances of time, may have the same evidence of the truth of it, as those persons who lived nearest to the time in which the thing was said to be done; that identical time being, of course, excluded.

In what possible manner, for example, can the evidence on which we believe the facts related in the gospels be less than that on which those facts were credited by Christians in the second or third centuries? They possessed the standard writings of the evangelists; so do we: what those books then contained, they now contain; and the invention of printing seems likely under the care of Providence, to preserve them genuine to the end of time. This admirable invention has so far secured all considerable monuments of antiquity, that no ordinary calamities of wars, dissolutions of governments, &c., can destroy any material evidence now in existence, or render it less probable to those who shall live in a thousand years’ time, than it is to us. With regard to the facts of the Christian religion, indeed, it is notorious that our evidence in favour of them has increased instead of diminished since the era of printing, the reformation of religion, and the restoration of letters: and as even the recent inquiries of learned men have produced fresh evidence there is every reason to hope it will continue to increase.

Indeed, it is only with regard to the facts related in the Bible, that men ever talk of the daily diminution of credibility. Who complains of a decay of evidence in relation to the actions of Alexander, Hannibal, Pompey, or Cæsar? How many fewer of the events recorded by Plutarch, or Polybius, or Livy, are believed now, on account of a diminution of the evidence, than were believed by Mr Addison, or Lord Clarendon, or Geoffrey Chaucer? It might be contended with some semblance of probability, that we know more of those ancients than the persons now mentioned: but that it is widely different from accrediting less. We never hear persons wishing that they had lived ages earlier, that they might have had better proofs that Cyrus was the conqueror of Babylon, that Darius was beaten in several battles by Alexander, that Titus destroyed Jerusalem, that Hannibal was entirely routed by Scipio, or Pompey by Julius Cæsar: though we sometimes find men of ardent and enterprising minds exclaiming, “O that I had lived and been present when such and such splendid events occurred: how lively an interest should I have taken in such scenes, how much concern in their termination!” And, indeed, it is the frequent hearing of like exclamations that causes men to confound weight of testimony, with warmth or depth of feeling; and to lose sight of the essential difference between real evidence, or the true basis for belief of history, and the sensible impression or influence which such history may make upon the mind. We believe as firmly that Lucretius stabbed himself in the delirium of a fever, as that Lucretia stabbed herself in consequence of the wrongs she had received from Tarquin’s son; yet we feel a much more lively interest in the latter event than in the former. The fate of Carthage, or the result of the contest between Antony and Octavius respecting the empire of the world, would doubtless be much more deeply felt, and much more warmly conversed about, within two centuries of the circumstances, than they ever are now: yet those who

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then conversed about them, had just as much reason to doubt their occurrence as we have; that is, just none at all. Similar reasoning will apply to all the circumstances recorded in authentic history. So that, having established the genuineness and authenticity of the books of Scripture, on evidence far superior to that on which other historic books are received, it is the most idle and ridiculous thing imaginable, to affect to disbelieve any of the facts therein recorded, on account of the remoteness of the times in which they occurred.

Let me now attempt to collect the scattered arguments, in this letter, with a few additional suggestions, to one point, and conclude. If, then, we have found, upon careful examination, that the miraculous facts proposed for our belief, and on the credit of which the divine authority of a particular system of doctrines and precepts depends, are such,—1. As do not imply a self-contradiction in them. 2. If they appear to have been performed publicly, in the view of several people, and with a professed intention to establish the divine authority of the person or persons who wrought them. 3. If they were many in number, frequently repeated, and continued for a series of years together. 4. If they were of an interesting nature in themselves, likely to have made strong impressions upon the minds of all who saw and heard of them; and for that reason, probably, much attended to, talked of, and examined at the time of their performance. 5. If the effects produced by them were not transient, but lasting, such as, however instantaneous the change might be, must have existed for many years, and were capable all the while of being disproved if they were not real. 6. If the relations were committed to writing at or very near the time when the facts are said to have occurred, and by persons of unimpeachable integrity, who tell us, that ‘that which they have seen and heard, the same declare they unto us;’ by persons who, having sufficient opportunity of knowing the whole truth of what they testify, could not possibly be deceived themselves; and who, having no conceivable motive or temptation to falsify their evidence, cannot, with the least shadow of probability, be suspected of an intention to deceive other people. 7. If there be no proof, or even well-founded suspicion of proof, that the testimony of those who bear witness to these extraordinary facts was ever contradicted, even by such as professed themselves open enemies to their persons, character, and views, though the accounts of the facts were first published upon the spot where they were affirmed to have been originally performed, and amongst persons who were engaged by private interest, and furnished with full authority, inclination, and opportunity, to have manifested the falsity of them, and to have detected the imposture, had they been able. 8. If, on the contrary, the existence of these facts be expressly allowed by the persons who thought themselves most concerned to prevent the genuine consequences which might be deduced from them; and there were originally no other disputes about them than to what sufficient cause they were to be imputed. 9. If again the witnesses from whom we have these facts were many in number, all of them unanimous in the substance of their evidence, and all, as may be collected from their whole conduct, men of such unquestionable good sense as secured them against all delusion in themselves; if

they were men who evinced the sincerity of their own conviction, by acting under the uniform influence of the extraordinary works to which they bore witness, in direct contradiction to all their former prejudices and most favoured notions; in direct contradiction also to every flattering prospect of worldly honour, profit, or advantage (as was remarkably exemplified in the case of St Paul); and when they could not but be previously assured that ‘bonds and afflictions waited them;’ (Acts xx. 23.) that ignominy, persecution, misery, and even death itself, most probably would attend the constant and invariable perseverance in their testimony. 10. If these witnesses, in order that their evidence might have the greater weight with a doubting world (each nation being already in possession of an established religion), were themselves enabled to perform such extraordinary works as testified the clear and indisputable interposition of a divine power in favour of their veracity; and after having experienced the severest afflictions, vexations and torments, at length laid down their lives in confirmation of the truth of the facts asserted by them. 11. If great multitudes of the contemporaries of these witnesses, men of almost all nations, tempers, professions, and scales of intellect were persuaded by them that these facts were really performed in the manner related, and gave the strongest testimony which it was in their power to give of the firmness and active tendency of their belief, by immediately breaking through all their previous attachments and connections of interest or friendship, and acting in express contradiction to them. 12. If concurring testimony, carried to a sufficient extent, and especially of this kind, be in its nature really irresistible; and if successive testimony, under the circumstances of the case before us, rather increase than diminish in credibility. 13. If ceremonies and institutions were grounded upon the miraculous facts, and have been uninterruptedly observed in all the successive periods of time, from the date of the facts in commemoration of which they were established. 14. If we have all the proof which the severest rules of criticism can require, that no alterations have been made in the original writings and records left us by these witnesses in any material article of their evidence since their first publication, either through accident or design; but that they have been transmitted to us in all their genuine purity, as they were left by their authors. In such a situation of things, where so great a variety of circumstances, where indeed all imaginable circumstances mutually concur to confirm, strengthen, and support each other’s evidence; without a single argument on the other side, but what arises merely from the extraordinary nature of the facts, and the admission of which inevitably leads to consequences at least as extraordinary as those our opponents are inclined to reject; may not they be justly accused of an unreasonable incredulity who refuse their assent to them? And will not such incredulity be as dangerous as it is ridiculous? If facts, attested in so clear, decisive, and unexceptionable a manner, and delivered down to posterity with so many conspiring signs and monuments of truth, are, nevertheless, not to be believed; it is, I think, impossible for the united wisdom of mankind to point out any evidence of historical events which will justify a wise and cautious man in accrediting them. Where there is

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the strongest assurance of the occurrence of any particular series of miraculous facts, which we are capable of acquiring, according to the present frame of our nature, and the state of things in the world; to reject these miracles after all, and the religion in attestation of which they were wrought, and to pretend to exculpate ourselves for not believing them, upon the bare suspicion of a possibility that they may be false, is, instead of being an indication of freedom from shackles, and erectness and greatness of mind, a monstrous contradiction to the principles of common sense, and the universal practice of mankind.

SECT. IV.

CHAP. I.—*From our Lord's last entry into Jerusalem to his ascension into heaven; containing the term of six weeks and five days.*

THE HISTORY.

UPON our Lord's entry into Jerusalem with such a vast retinue of people, the citizens were alarmed, and began to inquire who this great person was? To which the multitude that accompanied him answered aloud, that it was Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, a town in Galilee. Having therefore permitted his kingdom and divine authority to be thus proclaimed by others, he proceeded in the next place to exert it himself: for going to the temple, and there looking about him, he found the court of the Gentiles notoriously profaned and dishonoured by trading and merchandize. That therefore he might end, as he had begun his ministry, with the reformation of his Father's house, he drove out all the buyers and sellers, as he did three years before,^a from the sacred ground; he overthrew the tables of the money-changers,^b

^a It appears from Mark xi. 11. that Jesus did not do this on the day of his entry into Jerusalem, though it is there said that he entered into the temple and looked round the whole of it, but the day after; spending the night at Bethany, and returning to Jerusalem in the morning; and in the way thither working the miracle of the fig-tree. As Mark is so positive and particular in his account, and as Matthew does not expressly connect our Lord's driving out the traders with the events of the day, we ought, it should seem, to adopt Mark's account. To do which there cannot be a greater inducement than the consideration, that those who adopt the other hypothesis are compelled to suppose that the circumstances in question happened twice on two successive days. Nay, thrice; for our Lord had done much the same thing in the first year of his ministry (John ii. 14.) The reason why he did not then do it is suggested by the words of Mark, ὥφιας δι' ἡμερῶν, that is, because it being evening, the buyers and sellers had most of them retired. That it should then be evening was likely enough, considering the events of the day, which must have occupied a considerable time.—*Bloomfield*.—ED.

^b These money-changers were not unlike our merchants or bankers who deal in bills of exchange, and either remit money to foreign parts, or answer such draughts, as, by their correspondents abroad, are made upon them. And considering that the Jews, how far soever they lived from it, were obliged to repair to Jerusalem, there to offer their sacrifices, and pay their half shekel for the use of the temple, (Ex. xxx. 13.) the institution of such dealers in money was highly necessary, that the Jews, in their several dispersions, who were to come up to Jerusalem to worship, paying their money to merchants at home, might have it to answer their occasions, safe from thieves, and

and the stalls of those that sold doves; telling them that they had made the temple, which was deservedly called an 'house of prayer, a den of thieves.'^c And to let the people see that he had both commission and authority to act as he did, he cured in that instant many blind and lame persons that were brought to him into the temple.

The people indeed were filled with admiration at the sight of these things; but the chief priests and scribes, when they saw the miracles which he wrought, and heard

from the trouble of carriage when they arrived at Jerusalem. Whether therefore the business of these money-changers was only to return money from distant parts, or to change foreign money into current coin, or larger money into less pieces, or perhaps to do all this, there was certainly nothing blame-worthy in the profession, had it not been for some intervening abuse. In like manner, it may be said of those who bought or sold cattle for sacrifices, since it would have been highly inconvenient for every worshipper who lived at a considerable distance to bring them up with them, such men were necessary in their way, as were likewise the sellers of doves, because every Israelite did not keep this kind of birds, and yet no one creature was so often required in sacrifice as they. Our Saviour therefore in this transaction must not be thought to blame all such traffic in general, but only to find fault with the people for having taken up an improper place for the exercise of their respective callings. And therefore, to let them know that it was not out of passion or any peevish resentment against them, but purely in obedience to a divine command that he made this reformation, he told them, that it was written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer.' This is the character which the prophet Isaiah gives of it, (chap. lvi. 7.) and if it be a house appointed for prayer and other religious offices, then it is no proper place for 'the tables of money-changers, and the seats of those that sell doves,' who have the markets of Jerusalem and their own shops and houses to trade in.—*Hammond's and Whitty's Annotations, and Surenhusii Conciliaciones, in loca V. T. apud Mattheum.*

^c This expression is thought by some to be an allusion to those gangs of robbers which at this time infested Judea, and used to hide themselves in holes and dens of the mountains, as appears from the history of Josephus in several places. But our Lord here plainly refers to that passage in Jeremiah, where the prophet introduces God complaining, 'Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord,' (chap. vii. 11.) But how could the house of God become a den of robbers? How could such violence be committed in so sacred a place? St Jerome, in his commentary upon Mat. xxi. 12, 13., ascribes all this to the avarice of the priests, and gives us a lively description of the several artifices whereby they endeavoured to extort money. "In the temple of Jerusalem," says he, "the finest and most spacious of any in the whole world, whither Jews assembled almost from all countries, sacrifices of different kinds, some for the rich, and others for the poorer sort, were prescribed by the law; but because those who came from afar often wanted such sacrifices, the priests took the advantage to buy up all those beasts which were appointed for this purpose, and having sold them to those that wanted, received them at their hands back again. Because some who came to worship were so very poor that they had not money enough to purchase so much as the lesser sacrifices, which were birds; to remedy this inconvenience, the priests set up bankers in one of the courts of the temple, to lend them money upon security. But finding that they could not do this without transgressing the law, which forbade usury, they had recourse to another device, which was to appoint a kind of pawn-brokers, instead of bankers, that is, men who, for the advance of a small sum, took fruits, herbs, and other consumables, instead of use-money. Our Lord therefore having observed this way of traffic, which the priests had set up in his Father's house, not only expelled their agents, but arraigned them likewise for a pack of thieves; 'for he is a robber,' says the Father, 'who makes lucre of religion, and whose worship is not so much the veneration he has for God, as the opportunity of making his own interest and advantage.'"—*Beausobre's Annotations, and Calmet's Commentary.*

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the acclamations of the children, who cried out in the temple, 'Hosanna to the son of David!' were greatly enraged, and discovered their anger by asking him, 'If he heard what they said?' But he silenced their question by showing them that what was so displeasing to them, did really fulfil the scriptures, particularly that passage in the psalmist where it is said, that ^a 'out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.' This answer, however, did but enrage them the more, and put them upon seeking all occasions to destroy him, though their dread of the people, who heard him with the greatest eagerness and attention, was some check upon their malice.

The Jews were not the only persons who came up to Jerusalem at the passover; for many devout Greeks ^b used likewise to resort thither at that feast; and some of these, being desirous to have a sight of Christ, addressed themselves ^c to Philip, one of the apostles, and he, by the assistance of Andrew, had them introduced. Our Lord was at that time discoursing to the disciples of many things relating to his passion, and particularly, of

^a These words are cited from Ps. viii. 2., and seem to vary a little from the original, which is thus rendered, 'Out of the mouth of the very babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength.' But when it is considered that the only strength which can proceed from the mouth of children must be praise, or words put in their mouths, to celebrate the praises of the Messiah, the phrase in the psalmist and in the evangelist must needs mean the same thing; and our Saviour in the application of it to the chief priests and scribes seems to insinuate,—that these acclamations of the children were not fortuitous, but by divine instinct, and for the fulfilling of an ancient prophecy; and that therefore their declaring him to be the Messiah, or the son of David, should be looked upon as a kind of call from heaven, to inform and instruct others in what they were to do.—*Beausobre's Annotations*, and *Surenhusii Conciliat. ibid.*

^b Who these Greeks were, the best of our commentators are not agreed. Some are of opinion, that they were mere Gentiles, who, either out of curiosity, namely, to see the magnificence of the temple, the solemnities of the feast, or the person of Jesus, of whose fame they had heard so much, or perhaps out of a principle of devotion, and to worship the God of Israel, might, at this time, resort to Jerusalem: for the pagan religion, which admitted a plurality of gods, restrained none from worshipping the gods of other nations, so long as they were not thereby tempted to abandon those of their own. Others imagine, that they were real Jews who being scattered in Grecian provinces, after the conquests which Alexander the Great, and his successors, made upon the Jews, still continued in these countries, but kept so close to their ancient religion, as to come in great numbers to Jerusalem, upon the return of every passover. These were generally called Hellenists; and, that there was great plenty of them in several provinces of Asia, is manifest from St Peter's address of his first epistle to the strangers, as he calls them, who were scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia Minor, and Bithynia, (1 Pet. i. 1.) but the most general opinion is, that these Greeks were proselytes of the gate, who worshipped the God of heaven and earth, lived among the Jews, and conformed to their political laws, but would not engage in circumcision, or the observance of their ceremonies; and they came to Jerusalem, at this time, not because they were permitted to celebrate the feast along with the Jews, but because they were indulged the privilege to behold their solemnities, and to pay their adorations to the Creator of the universe, even while the Jews were in the height of their public worship, in the court of the Gentiles, as appears from the case of the eunuch of Queen Candace, Acts viii. 27.—*Basnage's History of the Jews*, b. v. c. 6; *Calmet's Commentary*; *Poole's* and *Hammond's Annotations*.

^c These Greeks, says Grotius, seem to have been Syro-Phœnicians, who dwelt perhaps about Tyre and Sydon, and so might easily be acquainted with the Galileans, with whom they had commerce, and with Philip of Bethsaida, to whom they made application for access to Christ.

the efficacy of his death, and what a powerful means it would prove to convert the world to his religion, more powerful indeed than his life could possibly be, even as corn, though it dies in the ground, ^d when sown, rises again with a vast abundance and increase. While he was thus discoursing of his death, he seemed, on a sudden, to be seized with a natural horror ^e of its approaching hour, and was going to request of God a reprieve from it; but then recollecting, that for this purpose it was that he came into the world, he changed his petition, and, with a resolved acquiescence in his good pleasure, desired of him, in what method he should think most proper, to glorify his name; whereupon he was answered by a voice from heaven, ^f which some of the company took for a clap of thunder, and others for an angel's speaking to him, 'that he had already glorified it, ^g and would glorify it again.'

This voice, he told them, was not so much for his information in the will of heaven, as it was for their conviction of his divine mission; and so he went on discoursing to them of his death, and the beneficial effects of it, until some of them, perceiving in what he said an inconsistency, as they thought, with some passages of scripture, told him, that they could not rightly comprehend what he meant by his death, since some prophecies ^h

^d Our Saviour's words upon this occasion are not amiss paraphrased in this manner,—'Look, as you see in your ordinary husbandry, the grains of wheat are first buried in the earth, and lose their form before they spring, and shoot up again, and bring forth fruit; so it must be with me. I must be first lifted up, before I shall draw men after me; I must first be crucified, before my gospel shall be preached to all nations, and all the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in: but when I am once dead, and have risen, then shall ye see this abundant fruit.'—*Poole's Annotations*.

^e The mention of his death, brought before him its approaching horrors; its pangs; its darkness; its unparalleled woes; Jesus was full of acute sensibility, and his human nature shrunk from the scenes through which he was to pass, See Luke xxiii. 41—44.—*Barnes on the Gospels*.—Ed.

^f The only way of revelation which the Jews, since the Babylonish captivity, and the extinction of their prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, pretend to, is that of Bath-Koll, or the daughter of a voice, so called, because it has some resemblance, though, as to distinctness, but an imperfect one, of that voice, which was uttered from the holy of holies, when the Lord spake to Moses, and, according to them, it is the will of God revealed in thunder from heaven; and therefore, though, upon this occasion, some of the company thought it thundered, and others, that an angel spake, yet neither of them were mistaken, because in this Bath-Koll there was always thunder joined with an articulate voice.—*Hammond's Annotations*.

^g I have glorified it, by causing my glory to be published and proclaimed in the world, by the preaching, and by the miracles which I have given in testimony of thy mission; and I will glorify it again, by thy resurrection and exaltation to the right-hand of glory, by the mission of the Holy Ghost upon thy apostles, and by their carrying the sound of the gospel even unto the ends of the earth.—*Poole's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^h The prophecies, from whence the Jews may be supposed to have drawn this conclusion, are, (2 Sam. vii. 16.) where God, by the mouth of Nathan, promises David, 'Thine house, and thy kingdom, shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever.' in much the same words wherein he had sworn unto David himself, (Ps. lxxxix. 29.) 'His seed will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.' To the same purpose they found the prophet Isaiah promising, (chap. ix. 7.) 'My servant David shall be their king for ever, and of his government there shall be no end.' But what seemed to express the matter in the clearest terms, was this passage in Daniel, (chap. vii. 13, 14.) 'And behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came

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had assured them that the Messiah was to live for ever. But to this objection he made no other reply, than that it well behoved them to make good use of his instructions for the short time they were to have them; and so he withdrew from them, as well perceiving that neither his divine discourses nor miraculous cures could gain the faith of any, except the populace; for though some of their rulers might believe in him, yet such was their timidity, that they durst not declare it openly, for fear of excommunication, and because 'they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.'

Towards the evening, however, he returned again to the temple, ^a and exhorted the people to believe in him as a messenger sent from God to offer salvation to mankind; and in case that they persisted in their infidelity, he threatened them with divine vengeance in the last day, when the very gospel which he then preached to them, would rise up in judgment against them, and condemn them; and, with these words, he left the temple, and taking his apostles with him, returned to Bethany, where he lodged that night.

The next morning as he returned to Jerusalem, finding himself a little hungry, he went to a fig-tree that was in the way, in hopes of finding some fruit upon it: but when he found none, to signify his almighty power, he cursed the tree, ^b and so, proceeding to the temple, began again to clear it of all the traders that were got again into it; and there continued all the day long teaching and instructing the people. While he was doing this, the chief priests, scribes, and rulers of the people, knowing that he had no commission from the sanhedrim, ^c came, and demanded of him by what authority he proceeded in that manner; but instead of answering their question directly, he put another to them, namely, 'Whe-

to the ancient days, &c., and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, &c.: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' Thus the Jews wrongfully applied to the person of the Messiah, the things which related to his kingdom; but then they gave little or no heed to what the same prophets said of the body, wherein the Messiah was to suffer, and of his hands and feet which were to be pierced, (Ps. xxii. 16.—xi. 6. of 'his giving up his life a sacrifice for sin,' Is. liii. 12. and of his being 'cut off, but not for himself,' Dan. ix. 26. All which was not incompatible with his abiding for ever; seeing that, after his sufferings, he was to rise again, (Ps. xli. 10.) and enter into glory. (1 Pet. i. 11.) So that by comparing these things together they might have easily removed this scruple, especially when he had told them so often, and they so well remembered that he had told them, that, 'after three days, he would rise again.'—*Whitby's* and *Beausobre's* Annotations.

^a It is very probable that the priests, who had the advantage of letting these shops, and were therefore not so well pleased with the reformation which our Saviour had made, ordered the traders to reassume their places, promising to know of him by what authority he made these innovations.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b On the curse pronounced on the fig-tree, see answers to objections next chap.—Ed.

^c It is pretended by some that the person who preached in the temple was to have a license from the sanhedrim, but that any might speak publicly in the synagogues without any such faculty; because we find our Saviour preaching in the latter, almost every sabbath day, without any molestation. However this be, it was certainly a vain question for the chief priests and rulers to ask our Lord, 'by whose authority he did those things,' after they had seen his miracles, and knew that he claimed his commission from God.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

ther the baptism of John was of divine or only of human institution?' To say that it was of divine institution, would be to accuse themselves of impiety and incredulity; and to say that it was purely human, would be to provoke the people, who all looked upon him as a prophet, to stone them; and therefore in this dilemma they concluded that ignorance would be the best answer, and thereupon declared 'that they could not tell;' to which our Saviour rejoined, 'Neither is it necessary for me to give you an account of my commission and authority, since you seem to grant that a man may lawfully preach and baptize, and entertain disciples, as John did, without the appointment and permission of the sanhedrim.' And so he proceeded in several parables, such as the parable ¹ of the two sons, ² that ³ of the wicked husbandmen, ^e and that ³ of the guests invited to the marriage

¹ Mat. xxi. 28.

² Ibid. xxi. 33.

³ Ibid. xxii. 2.

^d By the man in the parable is signified God, and by his two sons, the Jews and the Gentiles. The Jews are the second son: they promised to God a perfect obedience, and yet did nothing. The Gentiles are the other son, who at first refused to obey, and gave themselves up to idolatry and all manner of wickedness, but, upon the preaching of the gospel, repented; and after their conversion, applied themselves in earnest to do the will of God. The parable, according to our Lord's own interpretation of it, (Mat. xxi. 32.) is applicable likewise to two kinds of Jews—the scribes and Pharisees, who pretended to so much religion, and such mighty zeal for the performance of the law, when in reality they observed none of its weightier precepts; and the publicans and sinners, who, though at first they lived in practices quite abhorrent to the precepts of religion, yet, upon the preaching of John the Baptist, were several of them converted, and attending to the doctrine of Christ, and his apostles, in process of time, became obedient to their heavenly Father's will (ver. 31).—*Calmet's Commentary*.—Scott and others consider this parable to refer to the profligate Jews, the publicans, and harlots, who were at length brought to repentance and became disciples of Jesus; and to the Pharisees, scribes, and priests, who were the greatest enemies of the gospel.—Ed.

^e For the explication of this parable we must observe,—that the householder here (Mat. xxi. 33.) is almighty God, and the vineyard is the Jewish people, considered in their spiritual capacity; that his planting and hedging it about, signifies his peculiar favour and providence, in communicating to them his will, and by laws and ordinances peculiar to themselves, distinguishing them from all other nations to be his own people; that the wine press and tower, and other suitable conveniences, denote the temple and altar which he built among them, together with all those advantages and opportunities of serving him acceptably which he afforded them; that the husbandmen to whom this vineyard was let out were the priests and Levites, the doctors and rulers of that church and people, who are here represented as wanting in their duty, and negligent in cultivating the vineyard, or instructing the people committed to their charge; that the fruits are no other than returns of duty, proportioned to the advantages of knowing and performing it; that the servants sent to demand the fruits were the prophets, whom God from time to time commissioned to reprove, exhort, and quicken to their duty, both priests and people, by denunciations of vengeance, and promises of rewards; that the Son, whom he sent at last, was our blessed Saviour, whom the Jewish priests and rulers treated in no better manner than they had done the prophets of old, but, instead of reverencing him as the Son of God, and as he proved himself to be by divers manifestations of divine power, put him to a cruel and ignominious death: and therefore well might the Lord of the vineyard 'destroy these wicked men,' &c., as we find from the Jewish historian Josephus, as well as other writers, that God, for their great impiety, brought the Roman armies upon that nation, and by them burned their city and temple, destroyed and dispersed the people, and carried his gospel to the gentiles, 'to other husbandmen, who should render him the fruits in their seasons.' (ver. 41).—*Calmet's Commentary*, *Whitby's Annotations*, and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

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feast,^a to upbraid them with their hypocrisy, cruelty, and contempt of religion, and for these to denounce the severe judgments of God against them.

The Pharisees, who had as great a share in the application of these parables as any other, went away much enraged, and with a firm resolution to find out some occasion against him. To this purpose, therefore, they sent some of their disciples, together with the Herodians,^b to propound this insidious question to him, c

a The king in this parable represents God the Father; the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is frequently described as the spouse of his church; and the marriage feast, the dispensation of the gospel. The guests, that were first invited to the feast, were the Jews; the servants sent forth to call them, were the prophets, John the Baptist, and the apostles; upon their refusal, the other guests brought in to supply their room, were the Gentiles; and the person who wanted the wedding garment, is an emblem of all those who profess and receive, but do not live up to, the principles of Christ's religion.—*Calnet's Commentary*, and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.—Anciently kings and princes were accustomed to make presents of changes of raiment to their friends and favourites, to refuse to receive which was an expression of highest contempt. (Gen. xlv. 22. 2 Kings x. 22. Esther vi. 8; viii. 15.) It was, of course, expected that such garments would be worn when they came into the presence of the benefactor. The garments worn on festival occasions were chiefly long white robes; and it was the custom of the person who made the feast to prepare such robes to be worn by the guests. This renders the conduct of this man more inexcusable. He came in his common ordinary dress, as he was taken from the highway; though he had not a garment of his own suitable for the occasion, yet one had been provided for him, if he had applied for it. His not doing it, was expressive of the highest disrespect for the king. This beautifully represents the conduct of the hypocrite in the church. A garment of salvation might be his, wrought by the hands of the Saviour, and dyed in his blood. But the hypocrite chooses the filthy rags of his own righteousness, and thus offers the highest contempt for that provided in the gospel. He is to blame; not for being invited; not for coming, if he would come, for he is freely invited; but for offering the highest contempt to the King of Zion, in presenting himself with all his filth and rags, and in refusing to be saved in the way provided in the gospel.—*Barnes on the Gospels*.—Ed.

b It is not certainly known who these were. It is probable that they took their name from Herod the Great—perhaps first a political party, and then distinguished for holding some of his peculiar opinions. Dr Prideaux thinks that those opinions referred to two things; the first respecting subjection to a foreign power. The law of Moses was, that 'a stranger should not be set over the Jews as a king.' (Deut. xvii. 15.) Herod, who had received the kingdom of Judea by appointment of the Romans, held that the law of Moses referred only to a voluntary choice of a king, and did not refer to a necessary submission, where they had been overpowered by force. They supposed, therefore, that it was lawful in such cases to pay tribute to a foreign prince. This opinion was, however, extensively unpopular among the Jews, and particularly the Pharisees, who looked upon it as a violation of their law, and all the acts growing out of it as oppressive. Hence the difficulty of the question proposed by them. Whatever way he decided, they supposed he would be involved in difficulty. If he should say it was not lawful, the Herodians were ready to accuse him as being an enemy of Cæsar; if he said it was lawful, the Pharisees were ready to accuse him to the people of holding an opinion extremely unpopular among them, and as being an enemy of their rights. The other opinion of Herod, which they seem to have followed, was, that when a people were subjugated by a foreign force, it was right to adopt the rites and customs of their religion. This was what was meant by the 'leaven of Herod,' (Mark viii. 15.) The Herodians and Sadducees seem on most questions to have been united.—*Barnes on the Gospels*.—Ed.

c The state of the question, truly taken, seems to be this,—The government of the Jews had fallen into the hands of the Maccabees, and, in succession, to one of them named Alexander. He had two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, the younger of

'Whether it was lawful for them to pay tribute to Cæsar, or not?' never doubting but that, which way soever he answered, his business was done: if in the affirmative, the multitude would detest him, as a betrayer of their ancient liberties; if in the negative, the Herodians would then accuse him as a rebel against the emperor Tiberius: but he, knowing their treacherous design, demanded a sight of the tribute-money, and when they acknowledged that the signature^d on it was Cæsar's he sent them away quite confounded with this answer: e 'Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's.

which made war upon the elder, and assumed to himself the government. Hyrcanus and his party being not able to resist him, called in the assistance of the Romans. Pompey, at their request, besieges Jerusalem, and had the gates surrendered to him by a faction within, that favoured Hyrcanus; but Aristobulus and his adherents fought it out, till at last they were vanquished and overpowered. The Romans put Hyrcanus in possession of the government; but, at the same time, obliged him to hold it by their favour and permission, which laid the foundation of great and lasting dissensions among the Jews, some submitting to the Roman power, as thinking they had a fair title both by conquest and surrender; while others objected, that the surrender was made by a party only, and not the whole body of the people; that it was not conquest, but treachery, which brought Jerusalem to their mercy; and, consequently, that they were usurpers, and Hyrcanus and his followers betrayers of their country. That which contributed not a little to make this controversy still greater, was that Josephus and Eusebius relate concerning Judas the Gaulonite. He, about the time of the taxation, in which, as St Luke says, our Saviour was born, disquieted the minds of many, and represented the decree of Augustus for that purpose as a mark of infamy and servitude not to be borne. This man is said to have instituted a particular sect, one of whose tenets was,—That no Jew ought to pay tribute, or to acknowledge any sovereign Lord, but God only: and that they were his peculiar people, and therefore bound to maintain their liberty, especially against prophane and uncircumcised pretenders, such as the Roman emperors were. So that the paying of tribute to Cæsar was not, at this time, a question of mere curiosity, but a matter of moment with regard to practice; nor was it a point of bravery only, in the esteem of the Pharisees, and others of that party, but a scruple of conscience, and a debate of religion, whether this tribute should be paid or not.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

d Every one knows, that the Roman emperors were wont to disperse their money through all the provinces belonging to their jurisdiction; that this money was stamped with the image or bust of the emperor on one side, and on the reverse, with some figure or other, representing victory, plenty, peace, or the like; and that this tribute, or capitation tax, which according to Ulpian, the males from fourteen, and the females from twelve years old, were obliged to pay, was usually collected in this money, and no other, as the only current coin at Rome.—*Calnet's Commentary*.

e Some interpreters are of opinion, that our Saviour's words do not determine Cæsar's right to demand tribute: but since the Jews had now submitted to the Roman government, as they had formerly done to the Assyrian, which national submission, with promise of fidelity, having now obtained about an hundred years, was a just ground for Cæsar's rights; since besides this, Cæsar had indulged them in the exercise of their religion, and the enjoyment of their civil rights; had fought their battles, and protected them against the common enemy, the Arabians, and Parthians, and the like; since, more especially, it was a received maxim among the Jews, that wherever the money of any person was owned as the current coin of the kingdom, there the inhabitants acknowledged that person to be their lord and governor; and since the Jews accepted, and trafficked with Cæsar's money, and held it current in all their payments, our Saviour's answer, 'Render therefore unto Cæsar,' which is founded upon their own principles, must needs be deemed a positive declaration of Cæsar's right to receive tribute, and such other acknowledgements as belonged to the state and dignity of the post wherein providence had placed him. It might indeed be objected, says

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Upon the defeat given to these two parties, the Sadducees came to him with a question, and a difficulty, that they thought insurmountable. For, as they had no belief of a resurrection, they put a case to him of one woman, who, according to the direction of their law, had been married to seven brothers successively, and thereupon desired to know whose wife she was to be at the general resurrection? ^a In answer to which our Lord gave them to understand, that though marriage was necessary in this state, in order to raise up a posterity to mortal man, yet, that, after the resurrection, men would be immortal, and live like angels devoid of passions, and incapable of decay; and then proved the reality of the resurrection ^b from one of God's appellations in a book which themselves allowed to be canonical.

Grotius on (Mat. xxii. 20.) that the Romans ruled over the Jews, and Cæsar over the Romans, in fact only, and without any right to do so; but Christ shows, that this objection signifies nothing to the matter in hand; for since peace cannot be secured without forces, nor forces had without pay, nor pay without taxes or tribute, it follows, that tribute ought to be paid to the person actually governing, so long as he continues to govern, in consideration of the common safety and protection, which are secured by the present possessor of the government, whoever the possessor be.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

^a The discourse of the Sadducees was founded upon this mistake,—That if there would be a resurrection of bodies, there would necessarily follow a revival of the same relations likewise, and that the state of the world to come, would be like the state of this present world, in which, for the propagation and continuance of mankind, men and women marry, and are given in marriage; which gross notion of theirs our Saviour endeavours to rectify.—*Poole's Annotations*.—It would appear that the Pharisees though they believed in the resurrection entertained very erroneous notions respecting the condition of mankind in the future state. On this point there was much difference of opinion among the Jewish rabbins. Some maintaining that there is marrying in heaven; others that there is not. The general opinion was, that the dead would be raised either in their former or with other bodies. And it was the common notion, that the offices of the new bodies would be precisely the same with those of the former ones. The wiser few, however, were of quite another opinion. But of these some went into the other extreme—and maintained that the raised would have no bodies, (So Maimonides de Penit. viii. 3.) in the future state.—*Bloomfield's Greek Testament*, note to Mat. xxii. 30.—Ed.

^b The words which our Saviour produces in proof of the resurrection are those which God uses to Moses, 'I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' (Exod. iii. 6.) And the argument which is implied in this is—That since to be the God of any one, is a federal expression, which denotes God to be a kind benefactor, who either doth or will do good to such persons as are in his favour, and under his protection; since God is not the God of the dead, and can have no regard or consideration for such as are mere nonentities, or so dead as never to return to life again; since, in this life, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, received no such signal kindnesses from the Almighty, as answer the emphatical expression of his being 'their God,' it must necessarily follow, that God, in declaring himself to be 'their God,' did solemnly engage himself to make them happy after this life, according to what the author to the Hebrews observes, 'wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city,' (Heb. xi. 16.) This way of arguing was of great force against the Sadducees, who denied the immortality of the soul, as well as the resurrection of the body; and, at the same time, it fully proves the resurrection of the body: for since the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were not the entire persons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob which consisted of bodies as well as souls, it would from hence follow, that God could truly be their God, that is, their rewarder and bounteous benefactor, no other way than by a resurrection of their bodies, to be reunited to their proper souls.—*Poole's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*, and *Tillotson's Sermons*, vol. i.

The Pharisees, hearing that the Sadducees were silenced, began to rally again; and one of their doctors ^c in hopes to insnare our Saviour, in case he should prefer one part of the law above another, desired to know his opinion ^d 'which was to be accounted the greatest commandment of all?' Whereupon our Lord reduced the whole law to two general precepts of equal obligation to all mankind, 'the love of God above all things,' and the ^e 'love of our neighbour as ourselves;' in the former of which we obey the first, and in the latter, the second table of the law; ^f and with this answer the doctor was

^c The person whom we here render *doctor*, is, by St Matthew, (chap. xxii. 35.) called a *lawyer*, and by St Luke, (chap. xx. 39.) a *scribe*; but in this diversity of words there is no difference of sense: for the scribes were of two sorts, or had at least two offices; the one was, to sit in the chair of Moses, (Mat. xxiii. 2.) that is, to read and interpret the law of Moses to the people; the other, to expound to them the traditions which they pretended to have received from their forefathers. The name of scribe they seem to have derived from Ezra, about 500 years before, who is so frequently styled 'a scribe of the law of the Lord, who read in the book of the law, and expounded it,' (Ezra vii. 12. Neh. viii. 1. and xii. 36. &c.) And because the traditions which they taught, and obliged the people to observe, were called *résumes*, or *laws*, they thence had the appellation of *résumiers*, or *lawyers*: and as some of the scribes were the persons appointed to copy out the Bible for such as had occasion for it, and to take care of the preservation of the purity of the text; so others employed themselves in taking the like pains about the traditions of the elders, and from thence, very likely, though they were all of the same order of men, they might have different denominations.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and the *Introduction to Eachard's Ecclesiastical History*.

^d This was a point that often was disputed by the Jewish doctors; some contending for the law of circumcision, others for that of sacrifices, and others for that of the phylacteries. And though it was a rule among them, that the law of the sabbath was to give place to that of circumcision, yet they were not agreed as to the rest, which was the principal and most important precept; only in general they were inclined to give the preference to the ceremonial part.—Dr Lightfoot remarks, (in his *Hor. Heb.* on Mark xii. 28.) that Christ answers the scribe out of a sentence which was written in the phylacteries, in which he avoided all occasion of offence, and plainly showed, as the scribe afterwards observes, (Mark xii. 33.) that the observance of the moral law was more acceptable to God than all the sacrifices they could offer to him.—*Doddridge's Family Expositor*.—Ed.

^e That by our neighbour here, we are to understand every other person who is capable of kindness from us, or stands in need of our help, is evident from our Saviour's determination in the case of the Jew and the good Samaritan; from the examples we are called upon to imitate in this affection, namely, the love of God and our blessed Saviour; and from these evangelical precepts, which extend this duty to all men: but by the 'loving our neighbour as ourselves, it is not required, either that we should love him from the same inward principles, which excite our affections to ourselves, or that we should love him to the same degree and proportion that we love ourselves; but only that we should make the affection which we bear to ourselves, the rule we are to follow in expressing our love to him; or, in other words, that we should love him in all the instances wherein we express our love to ourselves, though not in an equal measure.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^f The words in the text are,—'On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets' (Mat. xxii. 40.) which are a metaphor taken from the custom mentioned by Tertullian, of hanging up their laws in a public place to be seen of all men; and import, that in them is contained all that the law and the prophets do require, in reference to our duty to God and man. For, though there be some precepts of temperance which we owe to ourselves, yet are they such as we may be moved to perform from the true love of God and of our neighbour. For the love of God will preserve us from all impatience, discontent, and evil lustings. It will make us watchful over ourselves to keep a good conscience, as being solicitous for our eternal welfare:

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well pleased. When our Saviour had thus resolved all their questions, he, in his turn, at last put this one to them, namely, in what sense the Messiah could be David's son, when 'David himself, by divine inspiration, 'called him his Lord?' But to this they could give no answer, because they were ignorant, that the Messiah, as God, was really the Lord of David; but as man, and descended from his family, he was his son: and after these disputes, which were the last he had with them, he went again, in the evening, with his disciples, to Bethany.

On the next morning, as our Lord was returning to Jerusalem the third time, the apostles, observing that the fig-tree, which he had cursed the day before, ^a was withered away, and dead to the very root, took notice of it to him as a thing very strange and surprising; whereupon he exhorted them to have steadfast faith in God; fervency and perseverance in their prayers, and ^b a forgiving temper to those that had offended them, in order to make their prayers accepted, and then they would not fail, in the course of their ministry, to perform as great or greater miracles ^c than this.

When our Lord was come into the temple, he began to teach the people, as he had done the day before; and to raise an aversion in his disciples, and in all that heard him, to the principles, and practices of the scribes and Pharisees, he took the freedom to expose their vices without reserve, their pride, their hypocrisy, their covetousness, their hard heartedness to parents, impiety to God, and cruelty to his faithful servants; and, upon his

mentioning this last particular, he broke out into the same pathetic exclamation against Jerusalem, for her murdering the prophets, and other messengers sent from God, that had been the matter of his frequent lamentations before.

Before he left the temple, he took notice how the people threw their money into the treasury, ^d and among many, who offered very plentifully, observing a poor woman cast in her two mites, which amount to no more than a farthing, he called his apostles, and assured them, that that poor widow had been more liberal than any of the rest, because their oblations proceeded from their superfluity, but she from her indigence had given all she had.

In the afternoon, as they were returning to Bethany, his apostles took a view of the several buildings of the temple, and were making their remarks of the largeness of its stones, ^e the richness of its ornaments, ^f and the beauty and stateliness of the whole; when our Saviour acquainted them, that how glorious soever it might appear at present, it would not be long before the whole structure should be so entirely ruined, that there should ^g 'not so much as one stone be left upon another.'

^d The first institution of this treasury, we find in (2 Kings xii. 9.) where it is said, that 'Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored an hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side, as one goeth into the house of the Lord, and the priests that kept the door, put therein all the money that was brought into the house.' This money was at that time given for the reparation of the temple, and, in after-ages, the money cast into the treasury, even in our Saviour's time, was designed, not only for the relief of the poor, but for sacred uses, and the adorning of the temple, which might occasion Josephus (in bello Jud. b. vi. c. 14.) to say, that the temple was built, not only with the bounty of Herod, but with the money contained in the holy treasury likewise, and with the tributes which were sent from all parts of the world.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^e Josephus, who gives us a description of the temple built by Herod, tells us, among other things, that the 'whole fabric was made of durable white stones, some of which were five and twenty cubits long, eight in height, and twelve in breadth.'—*Antiq. b. xv. c. 14.*

^f These ornaments were the spoils which their kings had taken in war; the rich presents which foreign princes, upon certain occasions, had made, and the costly gifts, which the Jews, from all parts of the world, used to send to the temple at Jerusalem. These were called *ανάμνηται*, because they were hung against the walls and the pillars of the temple, for the people to behold; and when Herod rebuilt it, he not only replaced all the former ornaments, but added several others, especially the spoils which he took in his war with the Arabians, and a vine of massy gold, of prodigious weight and value, which was his own free gift.—*Joseph. Antiq. and Calmet's Commentary.*

^g This prophecy of our blessed Saviour was, in a great measure, accomplished about forty years after, when, as several Jewish authors tell us, Taurus, that is, Terentius Rufus, whom Titus left chief commander of the army in Judea, did with a plough share tear up the foundations of the temple, and thereby signally fulfilled the words of the prophet: 'Therefore shall Zion for your sakes be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the Lord as the high places of the forest,' (Micah iii. 12.) It can hardly be thought, however, but that, notwithstanding this demolition, there might probably be left one stone upon another; and therefore something more was wanting towards the literal completion of our Saviour's prophecy to which the emperor Julian in some measure contributed: for having given the Jews license to rebuild their temple at Jerusalem, they took away every stone of the old foundation to help to build their new edifice; but heaven prevented their design: for flashes of lightning, as our best historians tell us, burst out from the foundation they had dug, and so blasted, and terrified them, that they were forced to give over their enterprize, after they had

1 Ps. cx. 1.

and the love of our neighbour will restrain us from all angry passions, such as envy, malice, and other perturbations, which arise against him; so that these two commands may be very justly called an abridgment or compendium of the whole Scripture.—*Whitby's Annotations; and Calmet's Commentary.*

^a It is remarked of our blessed Saviour's miracles, that they were all works of mercy and beneficence; and that if any of them had a contrary tendency, they were always shown upon brute and inanimate creatures, and that too, not without a charitable intent of conveying some symbolical instruction to the spectators, as this withering of the fig-tree was to represent to the Jewish nation their approaching doom.—*Beausobre's Annotations.*

^b The command to forgive those that have offended us, before we pray, not only shows that no resentments of what our brother hath done should stick long upon our spirits, because they indispose us for that duty which we ought continually to be prepared for, but that there is likewise some kind of forgiveness to be exercised, even towards him that does not ask it, nor show any tokens of his repentance, namely, that we should not only free our minds from all desires of revenge, and so far forget the injury as not to upbraid him with it; but be inclined likewise to show him kindness, and ready to do him any good turn: for what the law required of a Jew to do to his enemy's beast, (Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.) that, without all controversy, the gospel requires of a Christian to do to his offending brother.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^c It was a common saying among the Jews, when they were minded to commend any one of their doctors for his great dexterity in solving difficult questions, that such an one was a roofer up of mountains; and, in allusion to this adage, our Saviour tells his disciples, that 'if they had faith, they might say to a mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it should be done,' (Mat. xxi. 21.) that is, that, in confirmation of the christian faith, they should be able to do the most difficult things. For, besides that our Saviour's words are not to be taken in a literal sense, they are likewise to be restrained to the age of miracles, and to the persons to whom they were spoken, namely, the apostles, and first propagators of the christian religion, because experience teaches us, that this is no ordinary and standing gift belonging to the church.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

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The general notion was, that this temple was to last ¹ even until the end of the world. And therefore, when our Saviour had seated himself upon mount Olivet, in full view and prospect of it, his apostles desired to know, when this destruction would happen, and what would be the previous signs of it. The signs of it, he told them, would be the coming of many impostors, ^a and false Christs, the rumours of wars, ^b and famines, ^c and pestilences, dreadful earthquakes, ^d prodigies ^e and amazing sights in the air, the persecution ^f of Christians, and the

propagation ^g of the gospel all the world over: but that they might escape the calamity which would suddenly come upon their country, and utterly destroy ^h the Jewish state and government, he advertised them, that, when-

¹ 2 Chron. vi. 2.

pulled up and removed all the remains of the old temple. *Whitby's Annotations; and Calmet's Commentary; See Ammian. Marcell. b. xxiii. Socrat. b. iii. c. 2.*

^a Never were there so many impostors of this kind, as in the time a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, (Joseph. Antiq. b. xx. c. 6,) doubtless, because this was the age wherein the Jews, from the prophecy of Daniel, were taught to expect their Messiah. — *Beausobre's Annotations.*

^b Besides the war which the Jews waged with the Syrians, not long before the destruction of their city, (Joseph. Antiq. b. 2, c. 19,) the contests between Otho and Vitellius, and Vitellius and Vespasian at Rome, were much about the same time, and the oppression of the governors of Judea, who minded nothing but to enrich themselves, had so irritated the minds of the people, that, for some time before their final calamity, we read of nothing but rebellions and revolts, parties, and factions, and bands of robbers harrassing and infesting the country. — *Calmet's Commentary, and Beausobre's Annotations.*

^c In the fourth year of Claudius, as Eusebius informs us, there happened a great famine, which oppressed all the Roman empire, but more especially Palestine where many perished, according to Josephus, for lack of food. (Antiq. b. xx. c. 3.) And the same historian informs us, that when one Niger was slain by the Jews, he imprecated famine and pestilence upon their cities which God accordingly inflicted. — *On the Jewish War, b. iv. c. 23.*

^d In the reigns of Claudius and Nero, there happened many earthquakes in Asia Minor, and the isles of the Archipelago, where the Jews inhabited, (Euseb. Chron. and Tacit. Annal. b. ii.) and Josephus acquaints us, that in the night, when the Idumæans encamped before Jerusalem, “there blew a dreadful tempest of wind and rain, accompanied with such terrible flashes of lightning, claps of thunder, and bellowing of earthquakes, as put all the people to their wits’ end to think what these prodigies might portend.” — *On the Jewish War, b. iv. c. 7.*

^e In his preface to the history of the wars of the Jews, Josephus undertakes to record the miseries and calamities which befel that nation, and the signs and prodigies which preceded their ruin. To this purpose he tells us, that, for a whole year together, a comet, in the figure of a sword, hung over the city, and pointed, as it were, directly down upon it; that there were seen in the clouds, armies in battle array, and chariots encompassing the country, and investing their cities; that, at the feast of the passover, in the middle of the night, a great light shone upon the temple and altar, as if it had been noon day; that, at the same feast, the great gate of the temple made all of massy brass, and which twenty men could hardly shut, opened of itself, though fastened with bolts and bars; that, at the feast of Pentecost soon after, when the priests went into the temple to officiate, they heard at first a kind of confused noise, and then a voice calling out earnestly, in articulate words, ‘Let us be gone, let us be gone,’ and that these prodigies were really so, we have the testimony of Tacitus, a Roman historian of that age, who has thus recounted them, “Prodigies happened, conflicting armies were seen rushing through the sky, along with the appearance of gleaming armour; and by a sudden ignition of the clouds, the temple itself seemed enveloped in flames. The doors of the most sacred places were dashed open, and a voice more than human was heard exclaiming, ‘That the Gods were departed;’ the voice of the earthquake was loud amid the crash of falling battlements.” — *Hist. b. v., and Joseph, on Jewish War, b. vii. c. 12.*

^f This part of our Saviour’s prediction was literally fulfilled before the destruction of Jerusalem. As soon as Christianity

began to spread, the Jews wrote letters to every part of the world against the professors of it, in order to raise persecutions against them. St Paul, before his conversion, ‘breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ,’ (Acts ix. 1,) ‘shut up many of them in prison, both men and women,’ (Acts xxii. 4,—xxvi. 10. Himself, when converted, and Silas, were not only imprisoned, but beaten in the synagogue, (Acts xvi. 23,) as were likewise Peter and John, (Acts v. 18,) Stephen, the first martyr, was slain by the council, (Acts vii. 59,) James the Greater, by Herod, (Acts xii. 1,) and James the Less, by Ananus the high priest: multitudes of Christians were persecuted to death by Saul, (Acts xxii. 4,) by the Jews, as Justin Martyr testifies, and by the emperor Nero, as Tacitus relates, (Annal. b. xv.) For the professors of our most holy religion, before the principles of it came to be inquired into, were looked upon as the common enemies of mankind, inasmuch, that whosoever killed them, thought that he did God service, (John xvi. 2.) — *Whitby's Annotations, and Calmet's Commentary.*

^g That before the dissolution of the Jewish state, the Christian religion had spread itself over all the parts of the then known world, we may reasonably conclude from the labours of St Paul, who alone carried the gospel through Judea, Syria, Arabia, Greece, Macedonia, Achaia, Asia Minor, Italy, &c. And if the other apostles, whose travels we are not so well acquainted with, did the like, there is no doubt to be made, but that ‘their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world,’ (Rom. x. 18,) St Peter addresses his first epistle to the elect that were in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; and Clemens, who was his contemporary, and immediate successor in the see of Rome, in his epistle to the Corinthians, tells us, ‘that the nations beyond the ocean were governed by the precepts of the Lord.’ An event this, which he only could foretell, who, having all power in heaven and earth, was able to effect it. — *Calmet's Commentary, and Whitby's Annotations.*

^h The words in the text are, ‘Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven, shall be shaken,’ (Matth. xxiv. 29.) That these words are not to be taken in a literal sense, is plain; because, that, after the sackage of Jerusalem by Vespasian’s army, no such thing as here is mentioned happened to the sun, moon, or stars. The expressions therefore must be metaphorical, and do here denote, as they frequently do in the writings of the prophets and other authors, that entire destruction and utter desolation which it brought upon any nation. For in this language the prophet Isaiah speaks of the destruction of Babylon: ‘The day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it: for the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine,’ (chap. xiii. 9,) which, according to Maimonides, are “proverbial expressions, importing the destruction and utter ruin of a nation, and of such persons more especially, who, for their state and dignity, might be compared to the sun, moon, and stars,” (More Nevoch. b. ii.) And, accordingly, the sense of our Saviour’s words must be, ‘that, after the taking and destroying of Jerusalem, God’s judgments shall still pursue the people, so that those who survived the ruin of their country, should be dispersed into different regions, sold for slaves, or reduced to a condition worse than slavery.’ And so the event proved: for those who were carried to Rome served only to adorn the triumph of their conqueror: those that fled to Antioch for shelter, were cruelly massacred there: those that maintained the castle of Massada, rather than fall into the hands of the enemy, agreed to slay one another. Those that escaped to Thebes and Alexandria were brought back and tortured to death; and those of Cyrene, who joined a false prophet named Jonathan, were all cut to pieces by the Roman general. All this happened immediately after the taking of Jerusalem; and, without any farther search into their history, is enough to verify our Saviour’s expression, that ‘the sun was darkened, and the moon gave no light’ upon that wretched people. (Joseph. War, b. vii. c. 24, &c.)

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ever they should see the city of Jerusalem invested with armies, and the temple polluted with abominations, they might then conclude that this desolation ^a was approaching, and that therefore it was high time for them to provide for their safety ^b by a quick retreat.

Of the precise time of its coming, however, no created being, as he told them, could certainly know; ^c and therefore it was incumbent upon them to keep themselves in a state of perpetual watchfulness, in a faithful discharge of their respective duties, and in a constant perseverance in prayer to God, all which he endeavoured to enforce with several parables; such as that of the faithful servant, whom his master at his return from a journey found employed in his proper business, when he of a contrary character was surprised in his riot and debaucheries, and accordingly punished: ^d that of the

^a The desolation which the Jews suffered in this last war with the Romans was so vastly great, that all history can scarce furnish us with an example of the like nature. The number of the slain was eleven hundred thousand; the number of prisoners was ninety-seven thousand. Those that were above seventeen were sent into Egypt to work in the mines; those that were under that age, were sold for slaves into different countries; and a great number of others were distributed in the Roman provinces, to be exposed to wild beasts on the theatre, and as gladiators, to kill one another, for the sport and diversion of the spectators: 'Until the cities were wasted without inhabitants, and the houses without a man, and the land was utterly desolate, and the Lord had removed men far away, and there was a great forsaking in the midst of the land,' as the prophet expresses it. (Is. vi. 11, 12. *Joseph. War*, b. vii. c. 17.)

^b Which accordingly they did: for when Cestius Gallus had besieged Jerusalem, and, without any visible cause, on a sudden raised the siege, the Christians that were in the city took this opportunity to make their escape to Pella in Perea, a mountainous country, and to other places under the government of king Agrippa, where they found safety. Thus punctually were all the predictions of our blessed Saviour fulfilled: so that whoever shall compare them, as Eusebius, in his *Ecl.* b. iii. c. 7, expresses it, with the account of Josephus concerning the war of the Jews, cannot but admire the wisdom of Christ, and own his predictions to be divine.—*Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations*.

^c The text in St Matthew (chap. xxiv. 36.) is, 'but of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only,' which Boothroyd renders as follows: 'but that day and hour none maketh known: no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father only;' and adds in a note, "Whether we refer this to the time when Jerusalem was to be destroyed, or to the day in which the heavens and earth shall pass away, it is attended with difficulties, especially as it is read Mark xiii. 32. where we have 'nor the Son,' &c. By regarding the rest as transitive with Macknight, the difficulties are removed, and a plain and easy sense arises. As to the very day and hour, it was granted to no one to make known, neither to the angels of heaven nor to the Son; but the Father only had reserved this time and season in his own power. (comp. Zech. xiv. 7.; Acts i. 7.)—*Boothroyd*.—Ed.

^d The punishment inflicted on the evil servant is said to be cutting asunder, (Mat. xxiv. 51.) in the same manner as Samuel used Agag, (1 Sam. xv. 33.) and David the Ammonites, (2 Sam. xii. 31.) and Nebuchadnezzar threatened the blasphemers of the true God. (Dan. iii. 29.) This punishment was, in old times, inflicted on those that were false to their creditors, rebels to their prince, or betrayers of their country.—*Whitby's Annotations*.—Many instances occur in ancient writers of this method of executing criminals; and from Dr Shaw and other modern travellers we learn that it is still in use among some nations, particularly the western Moors in Barbary (*Shaw's Trav.* vol. i. p. 456, 457.) It is thought to have come originally from Persia or Chaldea; and it certainly corresponds with the barbarous dispositions which those bitter and hasty nations too much indulged. Calmet informs us that not many years ago the Swiss executed this terrible punishment in the plain of

wise and foolish virgins, who were differently prepared at the coming of the bridegroom: ^e and that of the talents intrusted with diligent and slothful servants. ^f And as this destruction of Jerusalem was no small emblem of the final consummation of all things, from hence he proceeds to describe ^g the manner of his com-

Grenelles, near Paris, on one of their own countrymen who had been guilty of a great crime. They put him into a coffin and sawed him at length, beginning at the head, as a piece of wood is sawn. Parises the king of Persia caused Roxana to be sawn in two alive (*Journey to Mequinez*, p. 157.) According to Windus, the same dreadful punishment is often inflicted in Morocco, where the criminal is put between two boards, and sawn from the head downwards till the body fall in two pieces. The laws of the twelve tables, which the Romans borrowed from the Greeks, condemned certain malefactors to the punishment of the saw; but the execution of it was so rare, that, according to Aulus Gellius, none remembered to have seen it practised. But in the time of Caligula the emperor, many people of rank and fortune were condemned to be sawn in two through the middle. (*Suetonius*, b. iv. s. 26.)—*Paxton's Illustrations*, vol. iii. pp. 305, 306.—Ed.

^e The better to understand the sense of this parable, we should do well to observe what the custom at marriages was to which our Saviour seems to allude. When the bridegroom was to bring home his bride, which was generally the conclusive ceremony, and done in the night time, the young women of the town to which she was to come, in order to do her honour, went to meet her with lighted lamps; she too, according to her quality and condition, had her companions and servants attending her, and some of the most beautiful ladies in the place from whence she came, going before her. Statius describes a marriage, whereat the nine muses appeared with their lamps: "The goddesses remove from Helicon, and shake the sacred fire in their nine lamps for the approaching nuptials." (*Sylv.* b. i.) And most of our modern travellers inform us, that among the eastern people, especially the Persians, this way of conducting the bride home, with lamps and lighted torches, still prevails. None need be told, that by the bridegroom we are to understand our Saviour Christ; by the bride his church; by the virgins, Christians in general; and by the oil in their lamps, the necessary qualifications of faith and good works.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^f For an explication of this parable we may observe, that the man travelling into a far country, is our Saviour Christ, who, by ascending into heaven, has deprived the church of his corporal presence; that his servants are Christians in general, or more particularly, his apostles and first ministers, who succeeded him in the propagation of the gospel; and that the talents committed to their management are the supernatural gifts which he bestowed upon them, and all the endowments both of body and mind, all the helps and means and opportunities which he gives us, in order to serve him, and to work out our own salvation.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^g The reason of our Lord's mingling the signs of the particular destruction of Jerusalem, and of the general dissolution of the world together, was to engage us, at the approach of particular judgments upon cities and nations, to be always mindful and prepared for the general judgment of the last day. There is one thing, however, peculiar in his expression upon this occasion, namely, that 'this generation should not pass away, until all these things were done,' (Mark xiii. 30.) for if his words immediately foregoing related to the coming of the day of judgment, and general dissolution of all things, it will be hard to conceive how that great event should be said to come to pass before the extinction of the race of mankind then in being. But in answer to this, it may be observed, that the Jews were wont to divide the duration of the world into three grand epochs, which, according to their style, were called generations, each consisting of 2000 years; whereof the first was before the law, the second under the law, and the third under the gospel; and it is to the last of these generations, as they called them, that this latter part of our Lord's prophetic discourse does properly belong. A misconception of this expression indeed led some primitive Christians into a mistake concerning the approach of the final judgment; and as long as that mistake had no other tendency than to make

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ing to the last and general judgment, when, surrounded with the resplendent rays of his majesty, and seated upon his bright throne of glory, with all the holy angels of heaven attending him, he should summon all the people that ever lived in the world, to appear before him; and having made inquisition into the discharge of the great duty of charity ^a should punish or reward mankind

them more fervent, and zealous, and heavenly-minded, more patient and heroic under sufferings and persecutions, and more fervent and diligent in preaching the gospel, &c., the generality of the inspired writers might think this a sufficient reason to overlook it. But St Peter we find takes particular care to rectify the mistake and to obviate the objection, which a spirit of infidelity had taken occasion to raise from it, as we may see at large in 2 Pet. iii.—*Universal Hist.* b. ii. c. 11.

a It may seem strange that in this representation of the judgment, the inquiry should be said to turn not upon the commission of crimes, but upon the performance of duties. The reason may be, that, generally speaking, men look upon the neglect of duties as a trivial affair, but dread the commission of crimes. And hence it comes to pass, that while they keep themselves clear of the latter, they are apt to find many excuses for the former. Wherefore, as there is not a more pernicious error respecting religion and morality than this, it was highly becoming the wisdom of Jesus to give such an account of the judgment as should be the most solemn caution possible against it. But since the inquiry is said to turn wholly upon the performance of duties, it may seem more strange still, that the offices of charity only are mentioned, and not a word spoken of any search made into men's conduct with regard to the duties of piety; notwithstanding the Judge himself, upon another occasion, declared such to be of greater importance than the duties of charity, that are so highly applauded in the parable. Nevertheless, to justify this part of the representation, let it be considered that piety and charity never can subsist separately; piety and its root, faith, always producing charity; and charity, wherever it subsists, necessarily presupposing piety. The connection between piety and charity will clearly appear, provided this dictate of reason and experience is attended to, namely, that no man can be truly benevolent and merciful, without loving those dispositions. If so, he must love benevolence in God, that is, must love God himself. I speak of those who believe there is a God, for piety, or the love of God, is nothing else but the regard we cherish towards God on account of his perfections. Piety and charity being thus essentially connected together, to examine men's conduct with respect to either of these graces was sufficient. In the parable the inquiry is represented as turning upon the duties of charity, perhaps because in this branch of goodness there is less room for self-deceit than in the other. Hypocrites, by showing much zeal in the externals of religion, oftentimes make specious pretensions to extraordinary piety, and uncommon heights of the love of God, while in the mean time they are altogether defective in charity; are covetous, unjust, rapacious, and proud, consequently really void of the love of God. The case is otherwise with the love of man. None can assume the appearance of this grace but by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, relieving the distressed, and performing the other friendly offices of love. Charity therefore does not easily admit of self-deceit. It is true works of charity may, in some particular cases, proceed from other principles than the holy root of a pious benevolent disposition; such as from vanity, or even from views of interest. But then it must be remembered, that an ordinary hypocrisy will hardly engage men to undertake them. They are by far too weighty duties to be sustained by those hollow false principles which support bad men, and by that means are seldom counterfeited. For which cause, wherever a genuine, extensive, and permanent charity is found, we may safely conclude that there the love of God reigns in perfection. This parable therefore teaches us in the plainest manner, that pretensions to piety, however loud, will avail a man nothing at the bar of God, if he be deficient in works of charity. At the same time, taken in its true light, it gives no man reason to hope well either of himself or others, if they be wanting in their duty to God, and that although they should not only be charitable, but grateful also, and just, and temperate, and outwardly blameless in all their dealings with men. The reason is this,

according as he finds that they have acquitted themselves in that respect.

As soon as our Lord had finished this prophetic discourse, he went in the evening to Bethany, and there supped at the house of one Simon, whom he had formerly cured of a leprosy. At supper, Mary, to testify her love and respect, came, and, out of an alabaster cruze, poured a large quantity of such rich ointment upon his head as filled the whole house with its fragrant smell. This seeming prodigality raised the indignation of the rest of the apostles as well as Judas; and, as they made the same objection, so our Saviour's defence of Mary turns upon the same topics; only he adds, 'that as she had done a great and generous action, whosoever his gospel should be preached through the whole world, there should her munificent regard to him be

the duty we owe to God is no other than what is due to men in the like circumstances, and which if we neglected we should be unjust to them. It consists of dispositions and actions the same in kind, but different in degree, proportionable to the perfection of the object. He who loves and admires holiness, justice, goodness, and truth in men, cannot but love these perfections in God, that is, must love God. So likewise he that is truly grateful to an earthly benefactor, cannot be ungrateful to one from whose bounty all the good things he enjoys do flow. And since ingratitude in men consisteth in this, that the person obliged forgetteth the benefit he has received, never thinks of his benefactor, and is at no pains to make suitable returns; how can he acquit himself from the charge of ingratitude to God, who never thinks of God, nor of the favours that he hath received from him, hath no sense of the obligations he lieth under to him, and is not at the pains so much as to return him thanks, that is to say, wholly neglects the external and internal exercises of devotion. Since therefore the duty we owe to God is the same in kind with that which men claim from us in like circumstances; it is unquestionable that true morality never can exist where there is no piety; and that for one to pretend to morality who is destitute of piety, is altogether ridiculous. But if this parable gives persons no encouragement who are destitute of piety, although they should make a fair show of many moral virtues, it much less gives those any ground of hope, who not only are void of piety, but are faulty almost in every respect, unless it be that they have a lovely kind of tenderness and humanity in their disposition, which leads them on some occasions to do excellent acts of beneficence. For though there be nothing said of any inquiry made concerning the duties of justice, temperance, chastity, and fidelity, we are by no means on that account to fancy these virtues shall not be inquired after at the judgment, and rewarded wherever they are found. Or, that the contrary vices of falsehood, and fraud, and debauchery, shall not be taken notice of, and punished. Charity being the end of the commandment, so far as it respects our duty to men, is the higher branch, and therefore has for its supports justice, veracity, and the other social virtues. Moreover, being connected with temperance, chastity, and self-government, it can never be without these attendant graces, the neglect of which is evidently a direct and gross breach of charity, or leadeth thereto. In a word, as among the vices, so among the virtues, there is a natural affinity and close connection. They are somehow absolutely essential and necessary to each other, and so can in no case subsist separately. For which reason, if any of them be wanting, much more if so capital a virtue as the love of God be wanting, it is a sure proof that our charity, our justice, our temperance, or whatever other grace we seem to have, is but the mimicry of these virtues, and not the virtues themselves. At the same time it cannot be denied, that the parable is formed so as to give us the highest idea of works of charity; they are demanded at the judgment as the fruit and perfection of all the virtues, and loudly applauded wherever they are found. On the other hand, hard-heartedness, cruelty, and uncharitableness are branded with the blackest mark of infamy, being the foundation on which the sentence of condemnation passed against the wicked is unalterably and eternally fixed.—*Macknight's Harmony*.—Ed.

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likewise published, to her everlasting honour and renown.⁷

When supper was ended, our Lord repaired to his usual lodgings at Martha's house: and, on the day following, in all probability, continued at Bethany, without going to Jerusalem, as he had done the days before. In the mean time the sanhedrim ^a assembled at the palace of Caiaphas, ^b the high priest, where the priests, scribes, and elders of the people had a solemn debate and consultation how they might take Jesus by some secret stratagem, and put him to death. This was the second council that they had held upon this occasion; and though therein it was determined that he should die, yet they thought it not so advisable to put the thing in execution in the time of the ensuing solemnity, lest it should cause a sedition among the people, who had the highest veneration for him. ^c

When evening was come, he, with his apostles, supped very probably, at Martha's house, and while they were at table, considering with himself that his time was now short, he was minded to give them a testimony of his love, and, from his own example, teach them two virtues which, of all others, were more especially requisite in their ministry of the gospel, humility and charity. To this purpose, rising from the table, laying aside his upper garment, and girding himself with a towel, ^d as the manner of servants then was when they waited on their masters, he poured water into a basin, and began to wash his apostles' feet, and to wipe them with the towel.

^a The consultation which the sanhedrim held, and the agreement which Judas made with them to betray our Lord, were on Wednesday; and therefore the church gives it as a reason why we ought to fast on Wednesday and Friday, because on the one Christ was betrayed, and suffered on the other.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^b This Caiaphas is called by the Jewish historian Joseph. The high priesthood he purchased of Valerius Gratus: and after he had ten years enjoyed that dignity, was deposed by Vitellius, governor of Syria, and succeeded by Jonathan, the son of Ananus or Anas.—*Calmet's Dictionary and Commentary*.

^c It, however, pleased God to defeat this intention, as it was proper that Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, should be sacrificed at that season; and that his death and resurrection should be rendered the more extensively known, "Maimonides saith, it was the custom among the Jews to punish those who rebelled against the sentence of the judge or the high priest, or were notoriously criminal, at one of the three feasts, because then only, by reason of the public congress of the people, all might hear and fear. (Deut. xvii. 12, 13.) From this received custom the fathers of the sanhedrim seem willing to recede, for fear of the multitude, but having so fair an offer made by Judas, they embrace that season.—*Whitby*.—God himself and not man appointed the time in which Christ should be crucified."—*Beza*.—*Scott's Comment.*—Ed.

^d The towel which was used to wipe the feet after washing was considered through all the east as a badge of servitude. Suetonius mentions it as a sure mark of the intolerable pride of Caligula, the Roman emperor, that when at supper he suffered senators of the highest rank, sometimes to stand by his couch, sometimes at his feet, girt with a towel. (chap. xxvi.) Hence it appears that this honour was a token of the deepest humiliation, which was not, however, absolutely degrading and inconsistent with all regard to decency. Yet our blessed Redeemer did not refuse to give his disciples and Judas Iscariot himself that wonderful proof of his love and humility. On the very night in which he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, while his thoughts were intensely occupied with the glory which he had with his Father before the creation of the world, to which he knew well he was in a few days to return, triumphant over all his foes, he resolved to neglect no service which might

Amazed at this condescension, St Peter, when he came to him, refused at first to admit of such a servile office from his heavenly master; but when he urged the necessity, and in some measure showed the symbolical intent of it, he permitted him to do just what he thought fit.

When our Lord had made an end of washing his apostles' feet, he put on his garment, and sat down at table again, and began to tell them the meaning of what he had done, namely, 'that since he, who was justly acknowledged to be their lord and master, had so far debased himself as to wash their feet, they, in imitation of his example, ought to think it no disparagement to them to perform the meanest offices of kindness and charity to one another: for though they were exalted to the dignity of his apostles, yet still they were but his servants; and that therefore it would be a high piece of arrogance in them to assume more state and grandeur than their master had done before them.' ^e

Soon after this, reflecting with himself how well he had loved, and, upon all occasions, how kindly he had treated these his disciples, he was not a little concerned that any of them should prove so base and ungrateful as to betray him; and when he had declared the thing, and Peter desirous to know the person, beckoned to John, who was nearest his master, to ask him the question, he signified to him that it was Judas Iscariot, to whom he gave

soften the heart of Judas, and confirm and encourage his other disciples in their duty; he condescended to stoop down and wash those feet which had followed him in many a long and fatiguing journey, giving his faithful followers in that significant action a pledge of the high honour which awaited them, and the pure and elevated joy which was to cheer their hearts in his service, and crown their labours after they had finished their appointed course. The example of humility which he set them on this occasion was absolutely incomparable: no instance ever occurred among the Jews of a lord or master washing the feet of his servants or disciples. Besides, the Son of God was not ignorant that the Father had committed all things into his hands; and that a name was soon to be given him, at which every knee should bow, and every tongue confess. Yet he did not hesitate to wash the feet of his own servants, proving by this very act, that he 'came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' Nor did he humble himself to the hosts of heaven; but to sinful and miserable men, and even to his most atrocious betrayer. 'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his upper garments; and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.' (John xiii. 3—5).—*Paston's Illustrations*, vol. iii. pp. 100, 101.—Ed.

^e That all this happened at Bethany whilst our Lord was with his apostles at supper in the house of Martha, seems to me very improbable. When he washed his apostles' feet no person appears to have been present but he and they; and he surely acted as master of the house, or at least of the supper, himself. Dr Hales is of opinion that it was after he had eaten with his disciples the paschal supper in Jerusalem, and immediately before he instituted his own supper, that he washed their feet, to give them a lesson of humility; and notwithstanding the powerful objections urged against that opinion by Whitby, I am strongly inclined to adopt it. The words *πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑσπέρης τοῦ πάσχα*, which our translators render, 'Now before the feast of the pass-over,' do not mean days before it, but rather just before they were to enter on the celebration; and though it was not till the paschal supper, or at least the first course of it, was finished, (*δὲ πρῶτον γενομένην*) that our Lord girt himself with the towel, &c. it seems to have been just before he sat down to supper, that he resolved to exhibit this proof of his love to his own. See *Parkhurst's Lexicon* on the word *ἑσπερ*.—Ed.

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a sop, as he told John he would, and when he had so done, ^a bade him go about what he had to do with all expedition; which the rest of the apostles, being ignorant of the signal which our Lord had given John, supposed to be an order to Judas, as he was the purse-bearer, either to give something to the poor, or to provide what was necessary for the feast.

As soon as supper was ended, Judas being now confirmed in his wicked resolution, left Bethany in haste; and understanding that the Sanhedrim was met at the high priest's house, thither he repaired, and upon their giving him a sufficient reward offered to betray his master, and, in the manner that they desired, to deliver him privately into their hands. This proposition was highly pleasing to the council, who immediately bargained with him for thirty pieces of silver; ^b and when Judas had received the money, from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray his Master in the absence of the multitude.

While Judas was thus bartering for his Master's blood, his Master was preparing the rest of his apostles for his departure, and endeavouring to comfort them with this consideration,—That his death would be a means to display both his own and his Father's glory, as it was a preliminary to his resurrection and ascension into heaven: As therefore it was decreed, that he must leave them, the stronger should their union be with one another; and therefore he recommended very earnestly to them the duty of mutual love, a duty which hitherto had been so much neglected, that his injoining it then might well be accounted a new commandment, and what was to be the common badge and character of his true disciples ^c for ever after.

When the day ^d before the feast of the passover was

^a This was not a command to Judas to go on with his wicked enterprise, but only a declaration made by Christ of his readiness to suffer death; "This is not a voice of commanding, but obeying; not of fear, but preparation for death," says Leo, *on the Suffering*, (ser. vii).—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^b These pieces were staters or shekels of the sanctuary, thirty of which amounted to three pounds and fifteen shillings of our money, the usual price that was given for a man or a maid servant, (Exod. xxi. 32.) It is hardly supposable, that any of those pieces are, at this time, extant, though both at Rome and Paris there are pieces shown which are pretended to be the very same that were part of the price of the purchase of our Saviour's blood; but persons, well skilled in that art, assure us, that these pieces are only the ancient medals of Rhodes, on the one side stamped with a Coloss, which represents the sun, and on the other with a rose, which was the city arms, as we call it.—*Eachard's Ecclesiastical History*, b. i. c. 4, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^c The disciples of the Baptist were known by the austerity of their lives, and the disciples of the Pharisees by their habit and separation from other men; but our blessed Saviour was willing to have his disciples known by their mutual love and affection to each other, which, in the primitive ages, was so great, that it made the heathens, with admiration, cry out, 'See how they love one another! and even hate and envy them for their mutual affection.'—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^d The words in St Matthew, xxvi. 17, are, 'the first day of the feast;' but it is no uncommon thing to put the word *first* for that which properly *went before*. Thus, in the Old Testament it is said, 'that the hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him,' that is condemned to die, 'to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people,' (Deut. xvii. 7.) But if the hands of the witnesses should first despatch him, there would be no occasion for the hands of the people; and therefore the sense of the word *first* in this place must be, that the witnesses should

come, our Lord sent Peter and John to Jerusalem to prepare all things according to the law; and lest they should want a convenient room for the celebration of the Paschal supper, he had predisposed the heart of a certain host in the city ^e to accommodate them with one. They therefore having provided a lamb, slain it in the temple, sprinkled its blood on the altar, and done every thing else that was required of them, returned to their Master at Bethany; who perceiving that his late discourse about leaving the world and them had blasted all their hopes of secular greatness, and left them melancholy and disconsolate, staid a good part of the day with them, in order to raise their drooping spirits with the assurances of an happy immortality, which, as he told them, he was going before ^f to prepare for them in heaven, and wanted not power to do it, because he and his Father, as to their divinity, were perfectly the same; and with the promise of sending them the Holy Spirit from above, which he took care to represent as a comforter, ^g to support them in their afflictions; as a teacher, to instruct them in all necessary truths; and as an advocate, to plead and defend their cause against their enemies. So that they had no reason to be dejected, because, in this sense, he would be always with them; because, whatever they asked in his name, his Father would give them; and because, when he was gone, they should be enabled to do miracles, ^h greater than what they had seen him do:

smite him before he was delivered into the hands of the people. In the first book of Maccabees, it is twice said of Alexander the Great that he reigned the *first* over Greece, (Chap. i. 1, and vi. 2,) but every one knows that before him there were several kings in Macedonia; and therefore the meaning of the words must be, that he reigned in Macedonia before he reigned in Asia; and to the same purpose in the New Testament, we find St Paul styling our Blessed Lord 'the first born of every creature,' (Col. i. 15,) that is, begotten of the Father before the production of any creature; and telling us, that 'the husbandman that laboreth must first partake of the fruits, (2 Tim. ii. 6,) that is, he must labour, before he can reap the fruits of his travel; and, in the like acceptance of the word, 'the first day of the feast' may be interpreted the day *before* the feast, as might be proved likewise by examples from Heathen authors.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^e It is to be observed, that the houses in Jerusalem, at this time of the feast, were of common right to any that would eat the Passover in them, and yet it is not unlikely that our Lord might be well known to the master of this house, who, very probably, took it as an high honour that he had made choice of his rather than any other, to eat the Paschal supper in.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^f Our Saviour speaks this in allusion to travellers, who send generally one of the company before to provide good accommodation for the rest.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^g The word *παράκλητος*, in this place, signifies both an *advocate* and a *comforter*; and the Holy Spirit, when he descended upon the apostles, did the part of an advocate, by confirming their testimony by signs and miracles, and various gifts imparted to them, and by pleading their cause before kings and rulers, and against all their adversaries, (Matth. x. 18, and Luke xxi. 1,) and he did the part of a comforter likewise, as he was sent for the consolation of the apostles, and all succeeding Christians, in all their troubles, filling their hearts with joy and gladness, and giving them an inward testimony of God's love to them together with an assurance of their future happiness, (Rom. viii. 15, 16.)—*Whitby's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

^h What interpreters say of diseases healed by the shadow of Peter, and by napkins sent from St Paul, of more miracles performed throughout the world, and for the space of three whole centuries, devils ejected every where, is not unfitly mentioned here as answering to our Saviour's words; and yet, we cannot but think that this should chiefly be referred to the wonderful

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¹ and therefore 'peace I leave with you,' says he, taking his farewell, 'my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you ^a; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'

As soon as he had ended his discourse, he arose, and, with his disciples, going towards Jerusalem, arrived at the place where they were to eat the Paschal lamb. In the evening when it grew dark, they sat down to the table in a leaning posture; ^b and, as he began to

¹ John xiv. 27.

success of the gospel preached by the apostles, after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them; to the gift of tongues, and the interpretation of them; of prophecy and discerning of spirits; and the imparting these gifts to others by baptism, and the imposition of the apostles' hands. For as this was a greater work in our Blessed Saviour to assist so many with his mighty power, when absent at so great a distance as the earth is from heaven, than to do miracles in their presence; so to communicate these gifts to men, and to enable them to transfer them to others, is, as Arnobius expresses it, "belonging to a power raised above all, and containing within it the cause of all things, and the seed of reason and philosophy," (b. i. p. 32,) and especially when our Lord succeeded so little in his three years' preaching here on earth, and had so few sincere disciples, that he should enable his apostles, at one sermon, to convert some thousands, and cause his gospel to fly like lightning through the world, and beat down all the strong holds of opposition, this is truly wonderful.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^a That is, in empty wishes of what they neither do, nor can give; or that external peace, which is both temporary and uncertain; but inward peace of conscience, arising from the pardon of your sins, (Rom. v. 1,) from the sense of the favour of God, and of my presence with you by the Blessed Spirit; that peace, which no man taketh from you, which will keep your hearts in the faith, (Phil. i. 7,) and free you from all solicitude and fear of the world.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^b At the first institution of the Paschal supper the Israelites were commanded to eat it in a standing posture and in haste, (Exod. xii. 11,) but here we find our Saviour and his apostles eating it lying down, or inclining on their left side, as it was then the manner of the Jews. When, or upon what account, this alteration came to be made, we have no other information than what we find in the writings of their Rabbins, namely, that they used this leaning posture as freemen do, in memory of their freedom. The custom of reclining was introduced from the nations of the east, and particularly from Persia, where it seems to have been adopted at a very early period; the Jews appear to have borrowed this custom from the Persians and Chaldeans, for we do not find that it was practised in the early part of their state. At the entertainments, the tables were constructed of three different parts, or separate tables, making but one in the whole. One was placed at the upper end cross ways, and the two others joined to its ends, one on each side, so as to leave an open space between, by which the attendants could readily wait at all the three. Round these tables were placed beds or couches, one to each table; each of these beds was called *clinium*; and three of these being united, to surround the three tables, made the *triclinium*. At the end of each *clinium* was a footstool, for the convenience of mounting up to it. These beds were formed of mattresses, and supported on frames of wood, often highly ornamented; the mattresses were covered with cloth or tapestry, according to the quality of the entertainer. At the splendid feast which Ahasuerus made for the nobles of his kingdom, beds of silver and gold were placed round the tables; according to a custom in the east of naming a thing from its principal ornament; these must have been couches profusely ornamented with the precious metals. To this day, the cushions in the hall of audience, and also in the room for receiving guests in private houses, are placed round the carpet in cases of gold and silver kincol, or of scarlet cloth embroidered: these are occasionally moved into the courts and gardens and placed under the canopy for the accommodation of company. (*Esth. i. 5, 6, Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. iii. p. 192.*) Each guest inclined the superior part of his body upon his left arm, the lower part being stretched out at length, or a little bent; his head was raised up, and his back sometimes supported with pillows. If several persons lay upon the same bed, then the first lay on the uppermost part, with his legs stretched out behind the

renew his discourse, 'that one in the company should certainly betray him, but that better it had been for the man who did so, if he had never been born,' the concern and sadness was so general, that every one began to inquire for himself, 'whether he was the man?' Until it came to Judas's turn, who, having the confidence to ask the same question, received a positive answer, 'that he was:' whereupon he soon withdrew ^c from his Master, and adjoined himself to his enemies, who were impatiently expecting the performance of his promise.

When the Paschal supper was ended, our Saviour proceeded to the institution of another, in commemoration of his own death and passion. For he took bread, and when he had blessed it, and broken it, he distributed it to his apostles, calling it 'his body,' and after he had so done he took the cup of wine, and having in like manner blessed it, he gave it among them, calling it his ^d 'blood of the new covenant,' and commanding them to do the same, that is, to eat bread and drink wine in this

second person's back; the second person's head lay below the bosom of the former, his feet being placed behind the third person's back; and the rest in like manner: for though it was accounted mean or sordid at Rome to place more than three or four upon one bed, yet, as we are informed by Cicero, the Greeks used to crowd five, and often a greater number, into the same bed. Persons beloved commonly lay in the bosoms of those that loved them: the fact is thus attested by Juvenal:—"The supper is waiting, the new-married bride lies in the lap of her husband." (Sat. ii. 120.) And for the same reason, according to the well-known custom, the beloved disciple lay in the bosom of his Lord, at the celebration of the passover. The head of the second being opposite to the bosom of the first, if he wanted to speak to him, especially if the thing was to be secret, he was obliged to lean upon his bosom: thus the apostle John, wishing to speak secretly to his Lord, leaned from necessity upon his bosom. (John xiii. 23, Potter's Antiq. vol. ii. p. 377, Plin. Epist. iv. p. 22.) In conversation, those who spoke, raised themselves almost upright, supported by cushions. When they ate, they raised themselves on their elbow, and made use of the right hand; (Horace, Ode i. 27,) which is the reason our Lord mentions the hand of Judas in the singular number; 'He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.' (Mat. xxvi. 23.) Sometimes the Greeks and Romans used both hands, to which practice, the *manus unctæ* of Horace refers; (Epist. i. 16, 23,) but if the custom existed among the Jews, the right hand was commonly used; or at the time when our Lord made that declaration, he and his disciples were using only their right hands.—*Paxton's Illustrations*, vol. iii. p. 92—94.—Ed.

^c The question whether Judas partook of the Lord's Supper, or not, must be decided by the interpretation given to the second verse. If the supper was ended, when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, Judas must have been present at the institution of the Lord's Supper: if the supper was then only prepared or begun, it is probable that Judas retired, before the Lord's Supper was appointed. Yet even in this supposition, much might be urged on the other side, and at least it is to us of little consequence. No discipline can exclude plausible hypocrites; and scriptural discipline would exclude openly immoral and ungodly persons, and infidels.—*Scott's Commentary*.—Ed.

^d The reason which our Saviour gives for our participating of the cup, namely, 'because it is the blood of the New Testament, which is shed for the remission of sins,' concerns the laity, as well as the priests, because his blood was equally shed for both; and therefore the command, 'drink ye all of this,' to which the reason is annexed, concerns them likewise. But there is another reason why our Lord said to his apostles, 'Eat this bread, and drink this cup,' namely, that by so doing, they might remember his death, his body broken, and his blood shed for them, says St Luke, and show it forth till his second coming, (1 Cor. xi. 26.) now this, as St Paul demonstrates, concerns all believers, as well as priests; and therefore the drinking of the cup, by which this commemoration is made, as well as eating of the bread, must equally concern them.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

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sacramental manner, even unto the end of the world, in remembrance of him.

After this institution of the form of that memorial, which his apostles and their posterity were to continue, he gave them to understand, that this was the last paschal supper which he should eat, and the last wine that he should drink with them, until ^a he drank it new in the kingdom of God: from which words some of his apostles inferring, that though his kingdom was not to be then, yet it would not fail to commence immediately after his resurrection, they fell into unseasonable contentions about priority, or who should have the office of the highest, trust and honour about their Master; which our Lord endeavoured to repress, by the same arguments that he had employed ¹ upon the like occasion. And then turning to Peter, he apprised him of the imminent danger which he and his brethren were in, and what a severe trial the great enemy of mankind would very speedily bring upon them; to whom Peter, in confidence of his own courage and resolution, answered for himself, that 'he was ready to go with him to prison, and to death:' but our Saviour, who best knew his weakness, gave him to understand, that ^b 'before the crowing of the cock he should deny him thrice.'

¹ Mat. xx. 25.

^a Some are of opinion, that by the kingdom of God here, as in several other places, we are not to understand heaven, or the happiness we are there to enjoy, but rather the gospel-state, and the kingdom of Christ, which began at his resurrection, and was more fully established, when he sat down at the right-hand of power, and was made heir of all things; and consequently, that our Lord's drinking of wine may then relate to his eating and drinking with his disciples after he arose from the dead, (Acts x. 41.) but because the felicities of heaven are frequently represented under the metaphors of eating and drinking, (Mat. xxvi. 29. Luke xxii. 18.) others make the sense of our Saviour's words to be this—'I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine, but both you and I, in my Father's glory, shall be satisfied with rivers of pleasures, far sweeter, and more excellent, than the richest wines can be.' There is, however, a third way of interpreting this passage, which, by comparing it with the words of St Luke, seems by much the most probable, and that is, by making the 'fruit of the vine' signify, in a peculiar manner, the cup in the passover, or the 'cup of charity,' in the postcoenium of the passover, wherein the sacrament of Christ's body and blood was founded. For that Christ was now to die, and neither before, nor after his resurrection, to eat any more passovers with his apostles, or any more to drink this cup of charity, now designed to a christian use, is sufficiently evident. It is observable, therefore, in St Luke, (chap. xxii. 16.) that the words are directly applied to the passover: 'I have desired to eat this passover, for I will no more eat of it;' and by repeating the cup, (ver. 18.) the evangelist must mean, 'the cup of the passover,' or the 'sacramental cup of charity,' which succeeded it; and consequently, our Saviour's meaning must be,—That he would no more use these typical adumbrations, being himself now ready to perform what was signified and expressed by them, that is, to pass suddenly from earth to heaven, through a Red sea of blood, and there to complete the mystery of the sacrament, by uniting his disciples one to another, and making them all partakers of his heavenly riches.—*Whitby's, Poole's, and Hammond's Annotations.*

^b It is commonly remarked by profane authors, that the cock usually crows twice in a night; once about midnight, and the second time at the fourth watch of the night, or much about the break of day: that this latter as being the louder and more observable, is that which is properly called ἀλεκτοροφωνία, or cock-crowing; and that of this crowing of the cock the evangelists are to be understood, when they relate Christ's words thus, 'Before the cock crow, that is, before that time of the night which is emphatically so called, 'thou shalt deny me thrice,' appears from St Mark's saying, that the cock crew after his first

After this, our Lord, in his final exhortation to his apostles, reminded them of the choice which he had made of them, and the kind treatment which he had all along shown them; and that therefore it was their duty and their interest both, to adhere to him, as the branch did to the vine, in order to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, and to continue immoveable in the profession of his religion, notwithstanding all the persecutions they should meet with, which indeed would prove so violent and outrageous, that some men would think they did God service in killing them. This however should not utterly deject them, because his absence from them would not be long. His death was but to usher in his resurrection and ascension; and the benefits which would accrue to them from these, namely, in the mission of the Holy Ghost to be their guide and comforter, in his own intercession for them at God's right hand, and in their prayers and supplications, which, if offered up in his name, would not fail of admittance to the throne of grace, would abundantly compensate the want of his presence: and ² 'therefore I have told you these things,' says he, 'that in me ye might have peace: In the world ye shall have tribulation; but ^c be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' ^d

These comfortable exhortations to his apostles were attended with a solemn prayer and intercession to Almighty God; for himself, that as he had executed the commission for which he came into the world, he might

² John xi. 33.

denial of Christ, (chap. xiv. 68.) and crew the second time after his third denial, (ver. 72.)—*Whitby's Annotations.*—For a fuller explanation of the apparent discrepancy here taken notice of, see *Paston's Illustrations*, vol. ii. pp. 338. to 344.—Ed.

^c Though to be of good cheer under tribulation does by no means infer that firmness of mind, as some philosophers of old miscalled it, which preserves a man from being at all afflicted with calamities, or moved from his usual easiness of temper; yet thus much it certainly means,—That neither the sharpness of any affliction we feel, nor the terror of any we fear, should so far vanquish our reason and religion, as to drive us upon unlawful methods of declining the one or delivering ourselves from the other. We are to satisfy ourselves in the justice, the wisdom, and goodness of him, who orders all the events that befall us; to entertain them all with meekness, and much patience; to bring our will into subjection to the divine will; to rejoice in the testimony of a good conscience, and preserve it at any rate, though with the hazard, nay certain loss, of all our worldly advantages; and to set the supports and rewards of persecuted truth, and afflicted piety, in opposition to all the discouragements and pressures from abroad, and all the frailties of feeble and too yielding flesh and blood at home. *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.

^d By the world, in this passage, we are, no doubt, to understand the evil of the world, the wickedness, the malice, the temptations, the troubles, all that we have reason to fear, or to flee from, either in this or the next life. Now the wickedness of the world Christ has overcome, by expiating the sins of mankind in the sacrifice of himself upon the cross, and by the powerful assistance of his grace, enabling all the faithful to conquer the passions of corrupt nature. The malice of it he overcame, by disappointing the designs of the devil, and his wicked instruments, against himself and his gospel, making his own sufferings fatal to the contrivers, and saving to all penitent believers. The temptations of it he overcame, by that severe, but still social virtue, and heavenly piety, which shone so bright in all his conversation: and the troubles of it, by submitting to hunger and thirst, to poverty and grief, to live like the meanest, and to be treated like the worst of men. Nay, even death itself, our last and most dreaded enemy, he has overcome; taken from this strong man, the armour wherein he trusted, and divided his spoils.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iii.

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be reinstated in the same glory which he had with his Father from all eternity; for his apostles, that they might live in brotherly love and unity, be preserved in all dangers, and sanctified in their minds and conversations; and for all succeeding christians, that they might continue in the communion of the saints here, and be admitted to the sight and participation of his glory and felicity hereafter: and, having concluded all with an hymn, ^a which he and his apostles sung together, he left the city, and passing over the brook Cedron, ^b came to a place called Gethsemane, ^c where there was a garden, well known to Judas, because thither our Lord and his apostles used frequently to repair, both for retirement and devotion.

As they were going to this place, our Lord, with mighty concern, began to tell them, that that very night ¹

¹ Zech. xiii. 7.

^a This hymn is supposed by most interpreters to be part of the great Allelujah, which began at the 113th, and ended at the 118th Psalm, and, by the Jewish rituals, was ordered to be sung constantly at the paschal supper. Others think, that it was a different hymn, composed by Christ, and accommodated to the particular institution of the Eucharist; but Grotius is of opinion, that it was no other than that thanksgiving of his, which St John has recorded in the 17th chapter of his gospel. As our blessed Saviour however, in all his religious conduct, was no lover of innovations, it seems more probable, that, upon this occasion, he made use of the psalms that were then customary in the Jewish church, in which, as the Jews observe, are mentioned the sorrows of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead.—*Howel's History*, in the notes, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^b Which in the Old Testament is called Kidron, and runs along the bottom of the valley of Jehoshaphat, which lies to the east between Jerusalem and Mount Olivet. Into this valley was conveyed the blood, poured out at the foot of the altar, which, as it discoloured the water, gave it the name of Cedron, as some think, from the word Keddar, which signifies blackness, though others rather imagine, that it had that name from the cedar-trees that were planted on each side of it.—*Well's Geography of the New Testament*, part i. and *Whitby's Alphabetical table*.

^c Between the foot of the hill and the brook Kedron, proceeding from Jerusalem, is the garden of Gethsemane; an even piece of ground, according to Mr Maundrell, 57 yards square, and thickly planted with olive-trees of an ancient growth, and asserted to be the same which stood there in the time of our Lord, though of course with little probability; as, if the trees themselves could have lasted so long, Titus is said to have cut down all the wood about Jerusalem. Chateaubriand, however, states, that some of these very trees can unquestionably be traced to the time of the Eastern empire, and from the following circumstance: in Turkey, every olive-tree found standing by the Musselmans when they conquered Asia, pays one medine to the treasury; while each of those planted since the conquest, is taxed half its produce by the grand Seigneur. Now eight of these trees, very large and old, are still charged only eight medines. Dr Clarke found in this garden a grove of ancient olive-trees, of most immense size; which, as a spontaneous produce uninterruptedly resulting from the original growth of this part of the mountain, it is impossible to view with indifference; and adds, "It is truly a curious and an interesting fact, that, during a period of little more than 2000 years, Hebrews, Assyrians, Romans, Moslems, and Christians, have been successively in possession of the rocky mountains of Palestine, yet the olive still vindicates its paternal soil, and is found at this day upon the same spot which was called by the Hebrew writers 'mount Olivet,' and the mount of Olives, 11 centuries before the Christian era. In this garden is shown the place where our Saviour sweated blood as he pronounced the words, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' A grotto has been erected on this spot, with the usual appendage of altars, &c. A few paces from hence is shown the place where Judas betrayed his Master with a kiss.—*Mansford's Scripture Gazetteer*, p. 346.—ED

the prophecy ^d of Zechariah, concerning the Shepherd's being smitten, and the whole flock dispersed, would be fulfilled in his and their persons, forasmuch as every one of them upon the distress that was going to befall him, would flee away from him and forsake him. This Peter thought a disparagement to his courage, and therefore assured our Lord, that ^e 'though all mankind should forsake him, yet would not he;' and being told again, that he would certainly deny him before the time of cock-crowing, with the utmost vehemence he affirmed, that 'though he should die, he would not deny him; and the like profession of undaunted adherence made all the rest.

When they were come to the garden, our Lord ordered the rest of his apostles to tarry for him at a certain place, whilst himself, with the three that were most intimate with him, namely Peter, James, and John, retired a while to his private devotions; and as they were going along, he required them to join their prayers with his, that they might not be delivered over to temptation. But they were not gone above the distance of a stone's cast, before he found his spirits depressed, and his soul 'sadly sorrowful even unto death:' which when he had discovered to the three apostles, and desired them to watch with him a little in this trying and momentous juncture, he withdrew from them; and then throwing himself prostrate on the ground, ^f begged of God, 'that, if it was possible, as all things were possible to him, he might be excused from drinking the bitter potion, ^g whose black

^d The passage to which our Saviour alludes is this, 'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts. Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn my hand upon the little ones,' (Zech. xiii. 7.) where we may observe, that our Saviour only cites the words in the middle of the verse, because indeed those that both preceded and followed them, were not at all to his purpose: and in this he imitated the ancient doctors of the Jewish church, who, in their allegations of Scripture passages, were wont to make use of no more than what was subservient to their argument. Some however imagine, because the words of Zechariah seem primarily to relate to an evil shepherd, to whom God threatens the sword, that Christ does not mention them as a prediction concerning him and his apostles, but only as a proverbial expression; but this I think is sufficiently confuted by our Lord's saying, 'for it is written,' (ver. 31.) Nor is the change of the person in the evangelist, from what occurs in the prophet of any moment, because it was very customary with the Jewish doctors, in their citations of Scripture, to make such alterations.—*Surenhusii Concil. in loc. ex Vet. Test. apud Mat. and Whitby's Annotations*.

^e We may be bold to affirm of this resolution, that it was as honest an one, that is, both as just in the matter, and as sincere in the intention, as ever was made by man, or ever shall be made to the end of the world; and yet this resolution miscarried, and ended only in the shame of the resolver. St Chrysostom takes notice of three faults that may be reckoned in it. 1st. The little consideration Peter had of our Saviour's predictions concerning his fall. 2dly. The preference which he gave himself above the rest of his brethren. And, 3dly. The presumption he placed in his own strength, instead of imploring ability of him, whence all human sufficiency is derived; and therefore the Son of God, says he, suffered him to fall, in order to cure his arrogance and vain confidence in himself.—*Young's Sermons*, vol. ii. and *Chrysostom* on Mat. hom. 83.

^f See observations on Christ's agony in the garden, in answer to objections next chapter.—ED.

^g What we are to understand by the 'bitter potion' which our Lord here deprecates, we shall explain at large in our answer to the following objections, and need only here observe, that the afflictions which God sends on men or nations, are often in scripture expressed by the name of a cup, (Ezek. xliiii. 31, 32.

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ingredients filled him with horror and amazement; nevertheless in this he submitted himself entirely to his divine pleasure: and having prayed to this effect, he returned to his apostles, but finding them asleep, he awoke them, and, in a reproof full of love, reminded Peter more especially of his late promises, and present neglect of him, when he most of all stood in need of his comfort and assistance. He advised him therefore to keep himself awake, for fear of the temptations that were busy about him, and added this compassionate observation, that though 'the ^a spirit was willing,' and ready enough to make good resolutions, yet 'the flesh was weak,' and unable very often to put them in execution.

Thrice did our blessed Lord retire and pray in this manner; but, in the last time, his sense of God's indignation against the sins of mankind, and the dismal prospect of what he was to suffer in the expiation of them, made his prayer more vehement, and his agonies so violent, that the sweat, which fell from his body, was like large drops of blood; ^b and human nature must have

been exhausted under it, had not an angel ^c from heaven been immediately sent to strengthen and support him. With this recruit he returned a third time to his apostles, but, finding them still in the same sleepy condition, he told them, that now they might sleep on as long as they pleased, because he had no further occasion for their assistance; that, however, it would not be improper for them to arise, because the traitor, who was to deliver him up to his enemies, was just at hand. Nor were the words well out of his mouth, before Judas, accompanied with ^d a band of soldiers, and officers, together with some of the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders of the people, all armed with swords and staves, ^e came to apprehend him.

To prevent all mistakes, the traitor had given them a sign, that the person whom he should kiss was the man they were to apprehend; and therefore approaching our Lord with an address of seeming civility, he saluted him, and, in return, received a reproof of his perfidy, ^f

Matth. xx. 23, Rev. xiv. 10,) and that this is a metaphor borrowed from an ancient custom of giving a cup full of poison, among heathen nations, to those that were condemned to die, and of gall on such occasions, among the Jews, to lessen the pain of the person that was to suffer.—*Beausobre's Annotations*, and *Howell's History*, in the notes.

^a These words of our Saviour are not intended as an excuse or mitigation of the apostles' sinful neglect of their master, but as a motive to their vigilance and prayer, and seem to imply thus much,—“You have all made large promises, that if you should die with me, you would not forsake me, and this you said really, and with a purpose so to do; yet let me tell you, when the temptation actually assaults; when fear, shame, and pain, the danger of punishment, and of death, are within view, and present to your sense, the weakness of the flesh will certainly prevail over these resolutions, if you use not the greatest vigilance, and do not pray with fervency for the divine assistance.”—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^b In Luke xxii. 48, it is said, ‘and being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.’ The word *agony* is taken from the anxiety, fear, effort, and strong emotion, of the wrestlers in the Greek games, about to engage in a mighty struggle. Here it denotes the extreme anguish of mind: the strong conflict produced between sinking human nature and the prospect of deep and overwhelming calamities. ‘Great drops of blood,’ (Luke xxii. 44.) The word here rendered great drops, does not mean drops gently falling on the ground, but rather thick and clammy masses of gore, pressed by inward agony through the skin, and mixing with the sweat, falling thus to the ground. It has been doubted, by some, whether the sacred writer meant to say that there was actually blood in this sweat, or only that the sweat was in the form of great drops. The natural meaning is, doubtless, that the blood was mingled with his sweat; that it fell profusely—falling masses of gore; that it was pressed out by his inward anguish; and that this was caused in some way in view of his approaching death. This effect of extreme sufferings—of mental anguish—has been known in several other instances. Bloody sweats have been mentioned by many writers as caused by extreme suffering. Dr Doddridge says (note on Luke xxii. 44,) that “Aristotle and Diodorus Siculus both mention bloody sweats, as attending some extraordinary agony of mind; and I find Loti, in his life of Pope Sextus V., and Sir John Chardin, in his history of Persia, mentioning a like phenomenon, to which Dr Jackson adds another from Thuamee.” Various opinions have been given of the probable causes of these sorrows of the Saviour. Some have thought it was a strong shrinking from the manner of dying on the cross, or from an apprehension of being forsaken there by the Father; others that Satan was permitted in a peculiar manner to try him, and to fill his mind with horrors: having departed from him at the beginning of his ministry for a season (Luke iv. 12,) only to renew his temptations in a more dreadful manner now; and others

that these sufferings were sent upon him as the wrath of God manifested against sin: that God inflicted them directly upon him by his own hand, to show his abhorrence of the sins of men, for which he was about to die. Where the scriptures are silent about the cause, it does not become us confidently to express an opinion. We may suppose, perhaps, without presumption, that a part or all these things were combined to produce this awful suffering. There is no need of supposing that there was a single thing that produced it; but is rather probable that it was a rush of feeling from every quarter: his situation, his approaching death, the temptations of the enemy, and the awful sufferings on account of men's sins, and God's hatred of it about to be manifested in his own death: all coming upon his soul at once—sorrow flowing in from every quarter—the concentration of the sufferings of the atonement pouring together upon him, and filling him with unspeakable anguish.—*Barnes*.—Ed.

^c St Luke is the only evangelist that makes mention of this angelical attendance upon our Saviour in this time of his agony; and as there were several, both Latin and Greek copies, that, in St Jerom's, time wanted this part of history, Epiphanius imagines that this was a correction of some ignorant, though perhaps well meaning Christians, who being offended at the supposed weakness that appears in our Saviour upon this occasion, left it out of their copies, never considering that the divinity which dwelt in him had at this time subtracted its influence, so that, being left to his human nature only, he needed the comfort of an angel: otherwise, as with a word he made the whole band of soldiers fall to the ground, and with a touch healed the ear of Malchus, he even now gave sufficient indications of the divinity residing in him.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^d At the time of the Passover, it was customary for the Roman president to send a whole band of a thousand men for a guard to the temple; and it seems to be some of these that came to apprehend our Saviour; because, by Judas' giving them a sign, whereby they might know him, it looks as if they were strangers to his person.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^e It is probable, that Judas thought they could not do this, but that, as Jesus had at other times conveyed himself from the multitude, when they attempted to stone him, (John viii. 59,) and to cast him down a precipice, (Luke iv. 59,) so he would have done now; and that when he found he did not rescue himself, he repented, and went and hanged himself, (Mat. xxvii. 5).—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^f The reproof is expressed in these words: ‘Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?’ (Luke xxii. 48.) 1st, To betray in this case was equivalent to murder. It was to deliver him into their hands, who, he knew, both from common rumour and his master's own words (Mat. xvi. 21.) had a design upon his life; and therefore this could not be done without express malice; but, 2dly, This betrayer was a servant; one who had given up his name and faith to our Lord, and done himself the honour at least, if not the benefit, to preach his gospel, and to work miracles in the power of his commission; and therefore,

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but in such gentle and easy terms, as spake a mind perfectly calm and undisturbed; and then stepping forward with an air of majesty, our Lord demanded of the soldiers 'Whom they wanted?' They told him 'Jesus of Nazareth.' He replied that he was the person: but, when they were going to lay rude hands upon him, the impetuous rays of glory which darted from his divine face struck so fiercely upon their eyes, that they fell to the ground. However, instead of taking the advantage of their consternation to make his escape, as he had done at other times, he again demanded of them 'who it was they wanted?' And, when they again made him the same answer, he told them, 'that, if he was the person, he expected that his disciples should depart unmolested.

When the multitude began to lay hands on Jesus, some of his apostles, having swords ^a with them, asked their master if they might draw in his defence; but before they had his answer, Peter had drawn his sword, and in great fury struck at Malchus, one of the high priest's servants, with a design to cleave his head, though he happened only to cut off his right ear. Our Saviour however, rebuking his intemperate zeal, commanded him to put up his sword, ^b because he had no occasion

for such an one to betray him, could not be done without great perfidiousness. 3dly, The person betrayed is called the 'Son of Man,' which is both the humblest and most obliging of our Saviour's titles, and implies that even to Judas himself he had always been a kind and gracious master, had treated him with the same respect, and given him the same advice and overtures that he had done to the rest of the twelve; and therefore to betray him was high ingratitude. 4thly, and lastly, To betray him with a kiss, which all the world had been used to interpret as a constant symbol either of love or homage, (both which his master had so well merited at his hands) and now to make this a signal of his treason, was to play a piece of the most gross hypocrisy. So severe is the accusation which our Lord brings against his abandoned apostle, though expressed in the mildest terms!—*Young's Sermons*, vol. ii.

^a Before our Saviour left the house where he supped, he had said to his apostles, 'He that has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.' (Luke xii. 36.) But that this is no command to them to buy swords, or to use them in the defence of their master, when he should be apprehended, is apparent from his saying that 'two swords were enough,' (ver. 38.) which certainly could never be sufficient to repel that band of armed men which he foreknew would come against him; and from his reprehending Peter for using one in this manner, (Mat. xxvi. 52.) which, if he intended his words to be understood literally, was no commendable thing. They therefore are only a monition to his apostles, that times were now become so perilous, that, if things were to be acted by human power, there would be more need for swords than ever: for such symbolical ways of expression were very common among the eastern people. Some annotators however have observed, that the reason why any swords, as we read but of two, were found in our Saviour's family, was, that thereby they might secure themselves from beasts of prey, which, in those parts, were very frequent and dangerous in the night time.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Taylor's Life of Christ*, part ii. s. 15.

^b Our Saviour's words to Peter are these, 'Put up thy sword into its place, for all that take the sword shall perish by the sword,' (Mat. xxvi. 52.) This passage is capable of different significations. 1st, They who resist by the sword the civil magistrate shall be punished; and it is dangerous, therefore, to oppose those who come with the authority of the civil ruler. 2d, These men, Jews and Romans, who have taken the sword against the innocent shall perish by the sword. God will take vengeance on them. But, 3d, The most satisfactory interpretation is that which regards it as a caution to Peter. Peter was rash. Alone, he had attacked the whole band. Jesus told him that his unseasonable and imprudent defence might be the occasion

for any human aid, who had legions ^c of angels at his command; and then, having cured the man's ear with a touch, he turned about and expostulated with the soldiery the indignity of apprehending him in so scandalous a manner, as if he were a thief or some vile malefactor, when they had daily an opportunity of taking him in the temple. But, say what he would, it availed nothing. They immediately bound him, and led him away.

The apostles now seeing their master thus treated, lost all their courage, and, as he had foretold them, left him and betook themselves to flight. For such was the violence of the soldiers, that, seeing a young man ^d following the company, with nothing but a night-gown on, and supposing him to be one of our Lord's disciples, they laid hold on him; but he, by quitting his garment, slipped out of their hands, and fled away naked.

The company, thus carrying away Jesus, brought him first before Annas, ^e who was father-in-law to Caiaphas

of his own destruction. In doing it, he would endanger his life, for they who took the sword perished by it. This was probably a proverb, denoting that they who engaged in wars commonly perished there.—*Barnes*.—Ed.

^c A legion in the Roman militia was a body of men consisting of six thousand, composed each of ten cohorts, as a cohort was of fifty maniples, and a maniple of fifteen men; so that twelve legions would amount to seventy thousand men; but in this our Saviour means no more than a great number.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d Who this young man has been a matter of some dispute among the ancients. Epiphane and St Jerome are of opinion that it was James the brother of our Lord; but upon our Lord's being apprehended, he, among the rest, forsook him and fled; and we hear nothing of his return. St Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Gregory have a strong imagination that it was John, the beloved apostle; but John, we read, was with Christ in the garden clothed, and cannot therefore easily conceive how he came to fly away naked. It seems most probable, therefore, that this young man might be no wise related to our Saviour, but hearing a noise in the garden, which might not be far distant from the house where he lodged in the village of Gethsemane, he arose and followed the company in his night-gown, as we have rendered it, in pure curiosity to see what was the matter, and that when the guards were for seizing him, he fled away naked, that is, with nothing but his shirt on; for so the expression may be understood.—*Calmet's Commentary*, *Whitby's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*.—Pococke observes, describing the dresses of the people of Egypt, that "it is almost a general custom among the Arab and Mohammedan natives of the country to wear a large blanket either white or brown, and in summer a blue and white cotton sheet, which the Christians constantly use in the country: putting one corner before, over the left shoulder, they bring it behind, and under the right arm, and so over their bodies, throwing it behind over the left shoulder, and so the right arm is left bare for action. When it is hot, and they are on horseback, they let it fall down on the saddle round them: and about Fajume, I particularly observed, that young people especially, and the poorer sort, had nothing on whatever but this blanket: and it is probable the young man was clothed in this manner, who followed our Saviour when he was taken, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and when the young men laid hold on him, he left the linen cloth, and fled naked."—(*Trav.* vol. i. p. 190.)—Ed.

^e Annas, who by Josephus is called Ananus, had been high-priest, enjoying that dignity for eleven years; and even after he was deposed, retained still the title, and had a great share of the management of all public affairs. When John the Baptist entered upon the exercise of his ministry, he is called the high-priest in conjunction with Caiaphas, (Luke iii. 2.) though at this time, he did not act in this character; and when our Saviour was apprehended, he was first brought to his house, according to St John, (chap. xviii. 13, 14,) though the other evangelists pass that over in silence, because there was nothing done to him there, and looks as if he were only there detained until the

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the high-priest, and had formerly borne the same office : but Annas sent him to Caiaphas, in whose palace the Sanhedrim was still sitting, even though it was thus late at night. Caiaphas examined him a great deal concerning both his doctrine and disciples ; but when our Saviour answered, ‘ That since he had always taught in the most public manner in the synagogues, and in the temple, ^a he should rather inquire of those who had been his constant hearers, an officer ^b standing by gave him a blow on the face, pretending that he had not used the high-priest with respect enough ; to which our Lord only replied, that ¹ ‘ if he had said any thing amiss, the law was open, and he might plead him, but if not, ^c he had no cause or authority to strike him.’

The council perceiving that, from his own confession, they could raise no accusation against him, called over the false witnesses that they had procured ; but these either disagreed in their stories, or came not sufficiently up to the point. Two persons indeed were consistent in what they deposed, namely, that they had heard him say, ‘ that he would pull down the temple of God, and in three days rebuild it.’ But as this accusation ² was false in fact, and founded only upon a figurative expression of our Saviour’s, it was not thought to amount to any thing capital.

All this while our Saviour made no manner of reply to the evidences that were produced against him ; whereof when the high-priest asked him the reason, and still he continued silent, having one question more in reserve, which, if he answered in the negative, would, according to his notion, make him an impostor, if in the affirmative, a blasphemer, he stood up, and, in the name of the living God, ^d ‘ adjured him to declare, whether he was the

Messiah, the Son of God, or not?’ The reverence which our Lord paid to that sacred name, made him immediately answer, and that in direct terms, ‘ That he was ; and that of this they would be convinced, when they should see him sitting on the right-hand of the Almighty, and coming in the clouds of heaven.’ Whereupon the high-priest, in testimony of his abhorrence, rent his clothes, ^e as if he had heard the grossest blasphemy, ^f and then, addressing himself to the council, told them, that there was no occasion for any farther witnesses, because what the prisoner had said was palpable blasphemy, and so demanded their opinion, who unanimously agreed, that, according to their law, he was guilty of death.

With this resolution they repaired to their respective homes, for now it was late, and left our Lord to the mercy of the soldiers, and the high-priest’s servants, who offered all the acts of insolence and effrontery that they could invent, to his sacred person, whilst some spit on him, others buffeted him, others blindfolded him, and others again, smiting him with their fists, called on him to prophecy ^g who it was that struck him, with many more indignities, and abominable blasphemies, which must have been greater than all patience, had his meekness and patience been less than infinite.

During this melancholy scene, Peter, whose fears had made him flee from his master in the garden, having a little recovered his spirits, and hoping to pass undiscovered in the throng, ventured in among others, to see the issue of this fatal night, and by the interest of his fellow-disciple, John, who went with him, was let in by a maid-servant to the high-priest’s palace. ^h It was now cold weather ; and the servants and officers having kindled a fire in the common hall, Peter went in, and sat down among them to warm himself ; when the maid who let him in, fixing her eyes upon him, was confident she knew him, and accordingly, told the company that he was a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, which he positively

¹ John xviii. 23.

² John ii. 19.

council met at the house of Caiaphas, was ready for him.—*Calmet’s Dictionary*, and *Whitby’s Annotations*.

^a It is probable, that Caiaphas questioned Jesus concerning the number and rank of his disciples ; but to this he answered nothing. He also enquired of him, what doctrine he had taught the people, with reference either to his assuming the character of the Messiah, or to the contrariety of his doctrine to the traditions of the elders. To this Jesus replied, that he had taught the people in the most frequented places, and the most open manner, and had spoken nothing in private different from his public instructions. It was not therefore proper to require his testimony in his own cause, as they were not disposed to believe it ; but that regard to due order, or to law and justice, required them to seek for witnesses among those who had heard him. It is most likely, that some were then present, who had frequently heard his instructions. This reply was peculiarly suitable to the situation, in which Jesus was at this time placed ; for he stood as a prisoner in his trial, before judges who were determined to put him to death, and only sought a pretence for their injustice and murder.—*Scott’s Commentary*.—Ed.

^b This was an outrage to all justice : for a prisoner, before he is condemned, is ever considered to be under the especial protection of justice ; nor has any one a right to touch him, but according to the direction of the law. But it has been observed before that, if justice had been done to Christ, he could neither have suffered nor died.—*Dr A. Clarke* on John xviii. 22.—Ed.

^c From this defence which our Saviour makes for himself, we may learn, that we are not literally to understand his precept of turning the other cheek to him that smites us, since instead of doing this, we find him endeavouring to vindicate the innocence of his words ; and from hence we may observe likewise, that to stand upon the defence of our own innocence, cannot be contrary to the Christian duties of patience and forgiveness.—*Whitby’s Annotations*.

^d The Jews in general, but especially their judges and magis-

trates, had a custom of conjuring by the name of God, or of exacting an oath of those whose crimes did not sufficiently appear by the evidence of witnesses, or any other means. The person thus interrogated was obliged to speak truth, and, in all doubtful cases, his confession or denial was decisive, either to acquit or condemn him.—*Calmet’s Commentary*.

^e The rending the clothes was a token of indignation, holy zeal, and piety, among the Jews, expressed on several occasions, especially of grief in humiliation : and of anger, in hearing any blasphemous speech. This however was forbidden the high-priest, not only as to his sacerdotal vestments, but also as to his other garments, (Lev. xxi. 10.) because he was not to appear before God in the habit of a mourner ; but they, by their traditions, had so qualified that precept, as to allow him to rend his clothes at the bottom, though he was not permitted to do it from the top to the breast.—*Beausobre’s* and *Whitby’s Annotations*.

^f From hence we may observe, that the Jews of that age did not think, that the Messiah was to be God, but only a man, who could not challenge to himself divinity ; seeing they never concluded our Lord to be a blasphemer, because he said he was the Christ, but only because he said he was the Son of God, and thereby made himself equal with God, (John v. 18.)—*Whitby’s Annotations*.

^g By this kind of insult, they tacitly reproached him with being a false prophet.—*Calmet’s Commentary*.

^h The Jews themselves allow, as Dr Lightfoot informs us, that there might be frost and snow at the time of the passover ; and a common thing it was for great dews to fall then, which would make the air cold, until the sun had exhaled them.—*Whitby’s Annotations*.

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denied to them all, and, as he withdrew into the porch, heard the cock crow, ^a but his troubled thoughts took no notice of it.

While he was in the porch, another maid charged him with the same thing; but he denied it again, not only with the same confidence, but with the solemnity of an oath; and, about an hour after, when another inferred from his dialect, ^b that he must necessarily be a Galilean, and a relation of the man whose ear he had cut off strongly affirmed that he saw him in the garden, this so intimidated him, that, with horrid oaths ^c and imprecations upon himself, he denied the matter, till the cock crew the second time, and our Saviour, who was then in the hall, turning to Peter, gave him such a glance, as reminded him of his prediction, and the foulness of his own crime; whereupon, being stung with compunction, and sadly oppressed with shame and grief, he went out, and wept; he wept abundantly, he wept bitterly.

Early next morning the sanhedrim ^d met again in a full body at their room in the temple, whither they ordered Jesus to be brought; and, having again inquired of him, whether he was the true Messiah, and the Son of God? and again received the same answer from him, they adjudged him guilty of blasphemy; and accordingly, having condemned him, carried him to the palace ^e

^a It is reported of St Peter, that, ever after, when he heard the cock crow, he wept, remembering the old instrument of his repentance and conversion and his own unworthiness, for which he never ceased to do acts of sorrow and penance.—*Howell's History*, in the notes.

^b The Galileans spake the same language that the rest of the Jews did; but then they had a certain uncouth accent and manner of expression, which distinguished them from others, and made them to be contemned, and ridiculed by the natives of Judea.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

^c Some of the ancients have taken great pains to extenuate this fault of Peter's. St Ambrose on Luke, and Hillary on Matthew, both assert, that the apostle did not lie in saying; 'I know not the man,' but only disguised the truth, renouncing Christ in the quality of a man, but not as the Son of God. But this according to St Jerome, is to defend the servant by accusing the master of a lie; for if St Peter did not actually deny him, our Lord must have falsely affirmed, 'Thou shalt deny me thrice.' The opinion of those therefore is rather to be embraced, who acknowledge that St Peter, by denying Christ with his mouth committed a mortal sin, and fell from grace; and, as it is certain, that, confirming this denial with an oath, and added horrid execrations to it, his sin was highly aggravated; instead of accounting as some do, his denial a sin of infirmity, wherein his heart was true, though his mouth false, we can hardly think, that he could do all this without great checks of his conscience, and that, consequently, for the present he was in a state of defection, though his bitter weeping, and quick repentance, after that Christ had looked upon him, might make an atonement for his transgression.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^d The assembly, which was held the night before, and wherein our Saviour was declared worthy of death, was neither general nor judicial, according to the sense of the law, which did not allow justice to be administered in private, or in the night time; and therefore the high priests and rulers met again in the morning in the council chamber in the temple, which they could not do the night before, because the temple was then always shut, there to re-examine our Saviour, and condemn him in form.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^e At Jerusalem the people show you, at this time, the palace of Pilate, or rather the place where they said it stood; for now an ordinary Turkish house possesses its room. In this pretended house, which stands not far from St Stephen's gate, and borders on the area of the temple, on the north side, they show you

of the Roman governor, whose name at that time was Pontius Pilate, ^f desiring of him to ratify their sentence, and demanding a warrant ^g for his execution.

Judas in the mean time watching the issue of these proceedings, and finding that his master was delivered to the secular power, repented of his perfidy, and, taking the money which was the reward of his treason, went to the council ^h and threw it among them, declaring openly that he had acted very wickedly in betraying the innocent blood. But as people that employ such instruments have no regard to what becomes of them, all the comfort that he had from them was, that since it was his own act and deed, ⁱ it was his business to look to

a room, in which Christ was mocked with the ensigns of royalty, and buffeted by the soldiers; and, on the other side of the street, which was anciently another part of the palace, is the room, where they say our Lord was scourged.—*Well's Geography of the New Testament*, part i.

^f It is not well known of what family or country this governor was, though it is generally believed that he was of Rome, at least of Italy. He succeeded Gratus to the government of Judea, in which he continued fourteen years, that is, from the twelfth to the twenty second of Tiberius, and is represented by Philo, (*De Legatione ad Caium*) as a man of an impetuous and obstinate temper, and a judge who used to sell justice, and for money pronounce any sentence that was desired. The same author makes mention of his rapines, his injuries, his murders, the torments he inflicted upon the innocent, and the persons he put to death without any form of process. In short, he describes him as a man that exercised an excessive cruelty during the whole time of his government, from which he was deposed by Vitellius, the proconsul of Syria, and sent to Rome, to give an account of his conduct to the emperor. But though Tiberius died before Pilate arrived at Rome, yet his successor Caligula banished him to Vienna in Gaul, where he was reduced to such extremity, that he killed himself with his own hands. The evangelists call him the governor, though, properly speaking, he was no more than the procurator of Judea, not only because governor was a name of general use, but because Pilate, in effect, acted as one, by taking upon him to judge in criminal matters, as his predecessors had done, and other procurators, in the small provinces of the empire where there was no proconsul, constantly did.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Pilate*.—*Eachard's Ecclesiastical History*, b. ii. c. 2. and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

^g Not that the Romans had, at this time, taken from the sanhedrim the power of life and death; for, about a year after this, we find the proto-martyr Stephen regularly tried, condemned, and stoned by their sole authority: but therefore the Jewish rulers desired the concurrence of the Roman governor, that they might make our Saviour undergo a more severe and ignominious punishment than they could have inflicted upon him by their own power, because crucifixion was a death that their law had not prescribed. To this purpose we may observe, that to induce the governor to comply with their demand, the accusation which they brought against him was of a civil nature, and such as would consign him to the punishment they desired: 'we found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar,' Luke xxiii. 2.—*Universal History*, b. ii. c. 11.

^h Such is the purchase of treason and the reward of covetousness. It is cheap in its offers, momentary in the possession, unsatisfying in its fruition, uncertain in its stay, sudden in its departure, horrid in the remembrance, and a ruin, a certain and miserable ruin, in the event.—*Taylor's Life of Christ*, s. iii.

ⁱ The answer of the chief priests to Judas, when he brought back to them the thirty pieces of silver, and declared that he had betrayed the innocent blood, was a perfectly natural one for men of their character: 'What is that to us? see thou to that.' Men who had any feeling, any sentiments of common humanity, or even of common justice, when so convincing a proof of the accused person's innocence had been given them, would naturally have relented, would have put an immediate stop to the proceedings, and released the prisoner. But this was very far from entering into their plan. With the guilt or innocence of

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it, not theirs; so that being tortured with the agonies of guilt, and finding no relief any where, he went and hanged himself; ^a but in his death there was something so particular, that it made all the inhabitants of Jerusalem take notice of it. The money, however, which he threw among the council, the priests thought not proper to put in the treasury, because it was the price of blood, ^b and therefore they purchased with it a spot of ground, ^c

Jesus they did not concern themselves. This was not their affair. All they wanted was the destruction of a man whom they hated and feared, and whose life and doctrine were a standing reproach to them. This was their object: and as to the mercy or the justice of the case, on this head they were at perfect ease; 'What is that to us? See thou to that.' And yet to see the astonishing inconsistency of human nature, and the strange contrivances by which even the most abandoned of men endeavour to satisfy their minds and quiet their apprehensions; these very men, who had no scruple at all in murdering an innocent person, yet had wonderful qualms of conscience about putting into the treasury the money which they themselves had given as the 'price of blood!'—*Porteus's Lectures on Mat.*—Ed.

^a There are some difficulties concerning the manner in which Judas died. Matthew says, simply, that he hanged himself; whereas Luke (Acts i. 18.) says further, that 'falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.' This apparent discrepancy has occasioned much controversy, and various solutions have been offered. Mr Hewlett we think has hit upon the true one. He considers the narrative of Luke to be supplemental to that of Matthew's, and to state an additional fact. Matthew having related that Judas departed, and went and hanged himself, Luke had not the least doubt respecting the fact, but knew that all suicides, who hang themselves, are cut down sooner or later by those who find them. It is at this point that Mr Hewlett supposes the short supplementary narrative in the Acts to begin. The rope being cut or untied (*τεννὺς γυνόμενος*), 'falling headlong,' or rather 'falling on his face, he burst asunder,' &c. It was perfectly natural for Luke on this occasion, if not as an evangelist, yet as a physician, to relate by way of parenthesis, the pathological fact here recorded; which is so far from being incredible, that it is very natural, and not unlikely to happen. A skilful physician informed Mr Hewlett, that in cases of violent and painful death there is usually an effusion of lymph, or lymph mixed with blood, into the cavities of the chest and abdomen. If the body be kept till putrescence takes place, a gas is evolved from the fluid in such quantity as to distend enormously, and sometimes to rupture the peritoneum and abdominal muscles: this effect has been observed in bodies hung on gibbets in England; and it would take place much more readily in warmer climates.—*Calmet's Dictionary.*—Ed.

^b It was a custom among the Jews, which was afterwards imitated by the first Christians, that it should not be lawful for executioners to offer any thing, or for any alms to be received from them; and so, by analogy, any money with which a life was bought was not to be put into the treasury.—*Hammond's Annotations.*

^c The valley of Jehoshaphat runs cross the mouth of another valley, called the valley of Hinnom, lying at the bottom of mount Sion. On the west side of this valley is the place called the Potter's field, where, not improbably, the people of that trade were used to dry their pots before they baked them. It was afterwards called the Field of Blood, for the reason that the evangelist assigns; but at present, from that veneration which it has obtained amongst Christians, it is named *Campo Sancto*, or the *Holy Field*. It is a small plat of ground, not above thirty yards long, and about half as much broad; and one moiety of it is taken up by a square fabric about twelve yards high, built for a charnel-house, and covered over with a vault, in which are some openings, to let down the bodies that are to be buried there. The earth must certainly be impregnated with a very corrosive salt, if what some tell us be true, namely, that it can dissolve a body in the space of four and twenty hours. Those, however, who have looked down through these openings, tell us, that they could see many bodies under several degrees of decay, from whence they conjectured, that this grave does not make such quick dispatch with the corpses committed to it as is com-

monly reported. The Armenians have the command of this burying-place, for which they pay to the Turks the rent of a zequin a-day: and a little below the Campo Sancto is shown an intricate cave, or a sepulchre, consisting of several rooms, one within another, in which the apostles are said to have hid themselves when they forsook their master and fled.—*Wells's Geog. of the New Test.*, part i.

^d The strangers here meant may be either men of other nations, with whom the Jews would have no commerce, even when they were dead, and therefore provided a separate burying-place for them; or they might be Jews, who coming from far to Jerusalem to sacrifice, died there before their return home, and so the priests provided a burying place for them.—*Hammond's Annotations.*

^e Because in the governor's palace there was a guard of Roman soldiers, and a great company of servants, and as they were heathens, they thought that by touching any of them they should be defiled, and consequently made incapable of eating the Passover, of which no unclean person was to partake. By the Passover, however, here in St John, (chap. xviii. 28.) we are not to understand the Paschal lamb, which the rest of the Jews, as well as our Saviour, had eaten the night before, but the Chagigah, or peace offering, that is, the sheep and oxen that were offered all the seven days of the feast, and are expressly called the Passover, (Luke xxii. 1.) Thus the Jewish doctors remark upon Deut. xvi. 2. 'Thou shalt sacrifice the Passover to the Lord, of the flock, and of the herd,' that the flock signifies the lambs, which were eaten on the 14th, and the herd, the offerings of the Chagigah, which were consumed on the 15th day of the month Nisan. The Jewish rulers therefore would not go into the judgment hall, that they might not be unfit to eat the Passover, that is, those paschal-offerings of the herd, which were holy things, and of which none might eat in their defilement.—*Whitby's Annotations, and Appendix to St Mark.*—(See Calmet's Commentary upon this passage of St John, where he opposes this opinion with reasons that seem to have some weight in them.)

^f By this answer they seem willing to make Pilate not so much a judge of the cause, as an executor of their sentence. But there cannot possibly be a higher act of injustice, than to desire that a judge should suppose the accused person guilty of the crime, without any farther examination. It is no strange and extraordinary thing to see innocent persons oppressed by arbitrary proceedings, without any legal process; but for a man to be brought before a judge, in order to be delivered up directly to execution, without one proof of his crime, or any examination concerning it, is a new way of oppression, first invented and contrived against the Saviour of the world.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^g Whether the Jews had at this time the power of life and death is a point much controverted among the learned. The answer which the Jewish rulers here give to Pilate, and the general opinion of their Rabbins, who suppose that their rulers lost that power about forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, seem to incline to the negative. But those who take

¹ Acts i. 19.

² John xviii. 28.

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By these reserved answers, Pilate perceiving that their intention was to make him the instrument of their malice against an innocent man, refused to intermeddle in the affair, unless they would exhibit some articles of accusation against him. Knowing therefore that Pilate was a creature of the Roman court, and a slave to its greatness, they alleged against our Lord, that, ^a he was guilty of seditious practices, of dissuading the payment of the tribute to Cæsar, and of setting himself up for a king. Pilate, hearing the name of a king, thought himself concerned to examine that point; and therefore, returning to the judgment-hall, and seating himself upon the tribunal, he asked Jesus, whether he was the king of the Jews? Which our Lord never pretended to deny; but then he informed the governor, that 'his kingdom

was not of this world,'^b and could therefore give no umbrage to the Romans; for that, had it been a worldly kingdom, his subjects and followers would have certainly fought for him, and saved him from the hands of the Jews. When Pilate heard that he disclaimed all right to secular kingdoms, he thought he had nothing to do to examine him about the nature of his spiritual empire; and therefore, withdrawing from the court into the Vestibulum, where his accusers were impatiently expecting the ratification of their sentence, in order to execution, contrary to their hopes, he plainly told them, that he found nothing worthy of death in him.

Upon this disappointment, the chief priests, and elders, grew exceeding fierce and clamorous, representing our Lord as a turbulent mover of the people, and charging him with the spreading of seditious principles through all ^c Galilee and Judea, even as far as Jerusalem. Pilate hearing them name Galilee, and understanding that he was a Galilean, and consequently, belonged to ^d Herod's jurisdiction; in order to get rid of the importunity of the Jews, and withal to free himself from this odious and puzzling affair, sent him immediately to Herod, who was then at Jerusalem, upon the occasion of the feast. Herod was no less proud of the honour done him by Pilate, than glad of having this opportunity to gratify his curiosity.^e

the other side of the question argue thus: that the Jews, when reduced to a Roman province, had still the privilege granted them, to use the sacred institutions and customs that were derived to them from their fathers, (*Joseph Antiq.* b. xiv. c. 17.) that it was granted to Hyrcanus the high-priest, if any controversy should arise concerning their discipline that the judgment of it should be referred to him; that, pursuant to this grant, we find the high-priest and his council stoning Stephen, not by the rage of zealots, as some conceive, but according to the law, which requires, that the blasphemer should be stoned, (*Levit.* xxiv. 16;) that Saul, armed with the power of the high-priest and elders, persecuted the Jewish Christians unto death, and led them bound to Jerusalem to be punished, (*Acts* xxii. 4. 5,) that the Jews would have judged Paul after their own law, (*Acts* xxiv. 6.) and have put him to death, (*Acts* xxiii. 27.) had not Lysias, the chief captain, rescued him from their hands, which, they say, he did by violence, that is, by an invasion of their rights, but he affirms he did it because he understood that Paul was a Roman: and from hence they conclude, that they still retained the power of judging, and condemning these to death, who were Jews by nature and descent, and by their laws deserved to die, though as to some persons, and in some cases, they had not that power. Thus, when Annas, or Ananus, the high-priest, killed James, the brother of our Lord, and stoned many other Christians, as transgressors of the law, the wisest part of the nation, says Josephus, disliked his proceedings, because he should not have called a council concerning life and death, without licence from Albinus, the Roman president. From whence we may infer, that the power of inflicting capital punishments, even upon the Jews converted to the Christian faith, was then so far taken from them, that they could not regularly do it, without first obtaining leave from the Roman governor: and in the case of our blessed Saviour, the Jews had debared themselves from the power of putting him to death, after they had accused him before Pilate, not of crimes committed against their law, but of sedition, and aspiring at a kingdom, to the prejudice of Cæsar and the Roman government, whereof it belonged to Pilate, and not to them, to judge and determine. And therefore their saying to him, 'it is not lawful for us to put any man to death,' (*John* xviii. 31.) is looked upon, either as a kind of complaint of the encroachments which the Romans had made upon their civil constitution, or as a mere pretence, since Pilate gave them enough, when he bade them to take him, and judge him according to their law; and that the true reasons of their bringing him before the Roman tribunal, were, that he might be condemned for sedition, which would be a means to secure them from the rage of the people, and that he might be crucified, which was a Roman death, and generally inflicted on those that were found tampering against the government.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's* and *Beausobre's* Annotations.

^a When our Lord's accusers came before Pilate, they said nothing of his pretended blasphemy, his destruction of the temple or violation of the law of Moses, because they were questions that the governor, they knew, would not concern himself with; and therefore they forged such accusations against him as they thought might make him odious and suspected to the Roman government, and oblige Pilate to be severe against him.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b Jesus then intimated, that he was a king; but that 'his kingdom was not of this world,' it had nothing to do with men's temporal interests or privileges; it left rulers and subjects in the same situation as it found them; and it was therefore no object of jealousy to any government. Had he claimed a kingdom of an earthly nature, he would of course have armed his followers, and they would have fought in his cause, but as his disciples had been few in number, inoffensive in their habits, and forbidden to fight for him, even when he was apprehended, it was evident that his kingdom was not of a secular nature, but related wholly to spiritual and heavenly things, and would be supported entirely by spiritual sanctions and authority, *John* xviii. 33. 36.—*Scott's Commentary*.

^c Here they artfully make mention of Galilee, to incite Pilate against him as a seditious person, and to confirm their own suggestion that he was so; for they give him to think, that, as he was a Galilean, he might probably embrace the opinion of Judas Gaulonites, who held it was not lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar: a notion which the inhabitants of Galilee had generally imbibed, and, upon that account, were always prone to sedition and rebellion, for which some of them, not long before, had been set upon and slain by Pilate.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^d Pilate's government did not extend to Galilee; it included Judea only. Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, was, at this time, king or tetrach of Galilee; Jesus, consequently, was his subject; and therefore, according to the Roman laws, it was Pilate's duty to send him to his proper sovereign, especially as he was accused of rebellion, and a design to make himself a king.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Grotius* on *Luke* xxiii.

^e Herod was greatly rejoiced to see Jesus, perhaps desiring to satisfy himself whether he were indeed 'John the baptist risen from the dead' as he once supposed (*notes* xiii. 31—33. *Mat.* xiv. 1, 2.) He had, however, long wished to see him, having heard many reports concerning his doctrine and miracles, in hopes of having his curiosity gratified, by beholding some effects of his power in working miracles. But our Lord saw good not only to disappoint that expectation, but also to keep a profound silence in his presence, not returning any answer to his multiplied questions, or to the vehement accusations of his enemies. Yet Herod, though doubtless vexed and mortified, did not choose to have any hand in putting him to death, having probably been greatly terrified in his conscience, on account of his murder of John the baptist. He therefore contented himself with treating Jesus as a despicable person, beneath his notice; except that he joined with his officers and guards in deriding and insulting him. In token of their contempt of his pretensions

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For, having heard much of our Saviour's fame, he expected to see some miracle or other done by him; but found himself sadly disappointed. For though the scribes and rulers pursued him with their accusations to Herod's palace, and Herod, in hearing the cause, asked him several questions, yet he would not vouchsafe so much as an answer; which made the tetrarch look upon him as an insignificant, despicable person; and, accordingly, having committed him to the derision and insults of his guards, who used him with the utmost indignity, he sent him back again to Pilate, arrayed in a white robe, ^a whether it was to make a mock of him, or to indicate his innocence, or both; but so it was, that, from that time, Herod and Pilate, ^b who before were at great variance, were, upon this occasion, perfectly reconciled.

When our Lord was remanded back in this manner, Pilate addressed himself to the priests and rulers of the people, telling them, 'That though they had brought this man before him as a seditious person, and a seducer of the people, yet, upon examination, he could not find him guilty of any of the crimes that were laid to his charge; that this was not his own opinion only, but that Herod who was a more competent judge of the affair, and to whom he had sent him, on purpose to take cognisance of it, had no wise signified that his crimes were capital; and therefore, instead of taking away his life, he proposed some lesser punishment, if they thought fit, such as ^b scourging him a little with whips, and so dismissing him.' But this lenity was so disagreeable to their enraged temper, that they peremptorily demanded execution, saying, 'Crucify him, crucify him.' Pilate, still tender of shedding innocent blood, expostulated the matter with them, desiring to know what evil he had done; for, as for his part, he could find no fault in him, much less any crimes deserving of death; but this did but the more exasperate, and make them more clamorous for a speedy execution.

to be a king, they clothed him with some splendid garment, which had perhaps been worn by Herod; and he was sent back thus attired to Pilate, that he might dispose of him as he pleased. Probably, the Roman soldiers took the hint, from this insult of Herod and his guard, to clothe Jesus with a purple robe, and to put on him a crown of thorns.—*Scott's Commentary*, on Luke xxiii. 6. 12—ED.

^b A white or shining robe, for this is the meaning of the original. The Roman princes wore purple robes, and Pilate therefore put such a robe on Jesus. The Jewish kings wore a white robe, which was often rendered very shining or gorgeous by much tinsel or silver interwoven. Josephus says that the robe which Agrippa wore was so bright with silver, that when the sun shone on it, it so dazzled the eyes that it was difficult to look on it. The Jews and Romans, therefore, decked him in the manner appropriate to their own country, for purposes of mockery. All this was unlawful and malicious, as there was not the least evidence of his guilt.—*Barnes on the Gospels*, vol. ii.—ED.

^c It is generally thought, that the cause of this difference between them was the massacre that Pilate made of some Galileans at Jerusalem, in the time of the Passover, (Luke xiii. 1.) which Herod resented as an indignity put upon him, and an invasion of his authority, who was at that time tetrarch of Galilee.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^d This chastisement, as Pilate calls it, was not in order to his crucifixion, and therefore was not that punishment which the Romans used to inflict upon malefactors, as a preparative to their execution; for Pilate intended it as a means to procure his release; and therefore he seemed willing to consent to it as a punishment, which the Jews so commonly inflicted upon those

The governor had one expedient more, which he thought would not fail him. Every passover ^e he was obliged, by a certain custom, to pardon one criminal whom the Jews should nominate; and therefore when the people came, and were urgent with him to grant them that usual favour, he proposed two persons to them; Barabbas, a notorious malefactor, who, in an insurrection with some other seditious persons, had committed murder; and Jesus, who was called 'Christ;' never doubting but that the populace, who he knew were better inclined to our Lord than their rulers, would have preferred an innocent man before a thief and a murderer. But, at the instigation of their priests, and others in authority, they required that the favour might be granted to Barabbas. Hereupon, when the governor desired to know what he was to do with the person whom they called Christ, they, one and all, cried out, 'Crucify him, crucify him;' and as he still insisted on his innocence, and proposed some lighter punishment, which was all, to be sure, that he could deserve, they began to redouble their clamours, and, in the most tumultuous manner imaginable, demand that he might be crucified.

The governor, in the mean time, received a message from his wife, ^f desiring him by no means to condemn the innocent person that was then before him, because, upon his account, she had had that night many frightful and uneasy dreams; which made him the more earnest to release him, or at least to spare his life; and therefore, in hopes of pacifying the people's rage, he ordered him to be scourged. The soldiers who were to do this, thinking it not enough to execute his orders, took him into the common hall, where, having stripped him of his own clothes, they put a loose purple coat about him as a robe, ^g a wreath of thorns upon his head for a crown, and

who had acted perversely against their laws and their traditions, that he might exempt him from that sentence, which they were so urgent with him to pronounce. But the result of this his compliance was, that he neither saved our Lord, nor preserved justice. Instead of one punishment, the innocent was made to suffer two, being at last both scourged and crucified.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmé's Commentary*.

^e As the feast of the Passover was celebrated by the Jews in memory of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, it was very agreeable to the nature of that feast, and therefore customary at that time, though practised on no other festivals, to make this release. It is observed, however, that this practice was no custom of the Jews, even when they had the civil administration in their hands, but a piece of popularity, or favour of the procurator, first brought in by Pilate, and afterwards continued by some christian emperors, who, by a general law, commanded the judges, that, on the first day of the Passover, all Jewish prisoners, except such as were committed for particular crimes, should be discharged.—*Whitby's* and *Hammond's Annotations*.

^f From the time of Tiberius, the governors of provinces were allowed to take their wives along with them, which was a privilege not granted them before. This wife of Pilate's according to the general tradition, was named Claudia Procula; and, in relation to her dream, some are of opinion, that as she had intelligence of our Lord's apprehension, and knew, by his character, that he was a righteous person, her imagination, being struck with these ideas, did naturally produce the dream we read of. But, as our Saviour was apprehended about midnight, out of the city, and without Pilate's privy, and detained in the house of Annas, until it was day, there was no possibility for her having any notice of it before she went to sleep; and therefore we have the juster reason to believe, that this dream was sent providentially upon her, for the clearer manifestation of our Lord's innocence.—*Calmé's Commentary*.

^g It is said, and they put on him a 'scarlet robe.' Mark

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a reed in his hand for a sceptre; and then, in derision, saluted him, and bowing their knees, mocked him with the sham profession of allegiance. After this they spit in his face, smote him on the cheek, and to make his crown of thorns pierce the deeper, struck him on the head with his phantastic sceptre; and then leading him to a pillar, where they tied him fast, they scourged him with whips, and with such unrelenting cruelty, that his tender flesh was torn in pieces, and the pavement crimsoned with his most precious blood.

In this piteous plight, with his head, face, and body imbrued in blood, and with all his mock ornaments on, Pilate, in hopes of moving the people's compassion, ordered him to be brought forth; and when he appeared, 'See the man!' says he, 'this rueful spectacle of suffering innocence!' But so far were they from melting at the sight of so deplorable an object, that they raised their cries still louder and louder for his crucifixion; and when the governor still insisted on his innocence, ¹ 'We have a law,' ^a said they, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.'

These last words raised some terror in Pilate, and gave him more uneasiness; for, taking them in such a sense as an Heathen might well put upon them, he began to apprehend, that if he should proceed to sentence against him, he might destroy not only an innocent person, but possibly some hero, or mighty demi-god, and so at once commit an act of injustice and impiety both. He therefore, returning with Jesus to the judgment-seat again, began to inquire into his original and pedigree. But as it was no part of our Saviour's intention to escape death, he thought it not proper to say any thing in his own justification; until his silence having given the governor some offence, insomuch that he put him in mind, his life or death, his release or crucifixion, depended upon him, he then replied, that such power he could not have over him, 'were it not permitted him from above; and that therefore they who had delivered him up, had the greater sin ^b to answer for than he'

¹ John xix. 7.

says they clothed him in purple. The scarlet colour was obtained from a species of fruit, purple from shell-fish. The ancients gave the name purple to any colour that had a mixture of red in it, and consequently these different colours might be sometimes called by the same name. The robe here used was the kind worn by Roman generals, and other distinguished officers of the Roman army, and also by the Roman governors. It was made so as to be placed on the shoulders, and was bound around the body so as to leave the right arm at liberty. As we cannot suppose that Pilate would array him in a new and splendid robe, we must suppose that this was one which had been worn and cast off as useless, and now used to array the Son of God, as an object of ridicule and scorn!—*Barnes on the Gospels*, vol. i.—Ed.

^a When the Jews perceived that Pilate looked upon the accusations which they brought against Jesus, of his being a seditious person, and one who aimed at a kingdom, as idle suggestions, and what had no shadow of probability in them, they had recourse to another allegation, namely his being a violator of the laws of their nation, and guilty of blasphemy, which, as they were allowed to be governed by their own law, they had a right to demand of their governor to see punished, and accordingly did it with arrogance enough.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b Pilate indeed sinned heinously, in abusing his power to the condemnation of the innocent; but Judas sinned more, in delivering up to the chief priests, and the chief priests in delivering up to Pilate, than Pilate himself, whom they made a tool to

This reply made Pilate still the more desirous to release him; which when the Jews perceived, they found out at last this expedient to work upon his fears, by telling him plainly, 'that if he did not punish a man who set himself up for a king, he was an enemy to the emperor; a menace, which he, ^c who knew the jealous temper of his master Tiberius full well, and how easily a wrong representation of these proceedings might prove his ruin, had not the courage to withstand: and therefore, returning to the hall, he ordered Jesus to be brought in the same habit to his public tribunal, which stood in a paved place, called Gabatha, ^d and, before he gave sentence, calling for water, and washing his hands ^e before all the people, he solemnly declared, that he

serve their malice and revenge. They had better means of knowledge than he, and so sinned against more light, and consequently their guilt was greater, and their condemnation heavier than his.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^c Pilate repeatedly endeavoured to deliver our Saviour from the Jews, knowing that they accused him capitally, only from malice and envy. His wife also, who had been disturbed with dreams, sent and desired him not to participate in condemning that just person. In order to effect his purpose, he adopted several expedients. 1. He required legal accusation, evidence, and conviction; and, in default of these, he proposed to refer his condemnation to the Jews; who had not, as he well knew, the power of inflicting a capital punishment, (John xviii. 29, 31.) 2. He attempted to appease the Jews, and to give them some satisfaction, by whipping our Saviour. 3. He tried to take him out of their hands, by offering to deliver him, or Barabbas, on the festival day of the passover. 4. He wanted to discharge himself from pronouncing judgment against him, by sending him to Herod, king of Galilee. 5. When he saw all this would not satisfy the Jews, and that they even threatened him, saying he could be no friend to the emperor, if he let Jesus go, he caused water to be brought, washed his hands before all the people, and publicly declared himself innocent of the blood of that just person. Yet at the same time he delivered him up to the soldiers, that they might crucify him. This was enough to justify Christ, and to show that Pilate held him to be innocent; but it was not enough to vindicate the conscience and integrity of a judge, whose duty it was, as well to assert the cause of oppressed innocence, as to punish the guilty criminal.—*Calmet's Dictionary*.

^d The word *Gabatha* in the Syriac, for that is the language which was then commonly spoken, and which the writers of the New Testament do therefore call the Hebrew, signifies an elevation; and therefore the place where Pilate had his tribunal erected, was probably a terrace, a gallery, or balcony, belonging to his palace, and paved with stone or marble, as the word *ἀνέστητος* imports.

^e Washing of hands, with a design to denote innocence, was not peculiar only to the Jews, but customary among other nations, because by the element of water it is natural to signify purity and cleanness; but then the question is, Whether in conformity to the Jews or Gentiles, it was that Pilate made use of this ceremony? To expiate an unknown murder, the elders of the next adjacent city were wont to wash their hands, and say, 'Our hands have not shed this blood,' (Deut. xxi. 6, 7.) And the Psalmist, having renounced all confederacy with wicked and mischievous men makes this resolution, 'I will wash my hands in testimony of my innocency,' (Psalm. xvi. 6.) From which passages Origen is of opinion, that Pilate did this in compliance with the manners of the Jews, that by actions, as well as words, he might declare to them the opinion he had of our Lord's innocence. But as Pilate was a Roman, others are rather inclined to think, that, in this action, he conformed himself to the manners of the Gentiles. The scholiast upon Sophocles (*in Ajax*) informs us that it was the custom among the ancients, when they had killed a man or shed blood, to wash their hands in water, whereby to purify them from their defilement; and to the same purpose Virgil introduces Æneas speaking: "It is wickedness for me, coming from so great carnage and bloodshed, to touch it till I have washed myself in the living stream," (*Æneid*, ii. ver. 118.) Nay, Clemens Romanus informs us, (b. ii. c. 52,) that when

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was 'innocent of the blood of that just man, and that they must answer for it;' whereupon the whole body of the people cried out, 'may his blood fall upon us and our posterity!' An imprecation as black as hell, and what has been too long (may it please the Almighty to shorten their punishment!) verified upon them. ^a

Barabbas being thus released, and Jesus condemned to the cross, the soldiers and officers, after they had acted over again their former insults and indignities, took off the purple coat, and put his own garments on, and having laid an heavy cross upon his ^b shoulders, led him away ^c to his crucifixion: ^d but when they came to the gate of the city, his strength was so entirely exhausted,

judges were going to pronounce sentence of death, they usually lifted up their hands to heaven, thereby to denote their own innocency; and it is not improbable that they washed their hands before they did so, that they might lift them up with the more purity.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^a This imprecation was most dreadfully fulfilled upon them at the siege of Jerusalem, when the vengeance of heaven overtook them with a fury unexampled in the history of the world; when they were exposed at once to the horrors of famine, of sedition, of assassination, and of the swords of the Romans. And it is very remarkable that a strong correspondence may be traced between their sin and their punishment. 'They put Jesus to death when the nation was assembled to celebrate the passover, and when the nation assembled for the same purpose, Titus shut them up within the walls of Jerusalem. The rejection of the true Messiah was their crime: and the following of false Messiahs to their destruction was their punishment. They sold and bought Jesus as a slave: and they themselves were bought and sold as slaves at the lowest prices. They preferred a robber and murderer to Jesus, whom they crucified between two thieves: and they themselves were afterwards infested with hands of thieves and robbers. They put Jesus to death, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation: and the Romans did come and take away their place and nation. They crucified Jesus before the walls of Jerusalem: and before the walls of Jerusalem they themselves were crucified in such numbers, that it is said room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies.'—*Newton on the Prophecies*, and *Porteus's Lectures on Matt.*—Ed.

^b It was a custom, that he who was to be crucified, should bear his own cross to the place of execution: but whereas it is generally supposed that our Lord bore the whole cross, that is, the long and transverse part both, this seems to be a thing impossible; and therefore Lipsius, in his treatise, (*De supplicio crucis*) has set the matter in a true light, when he tells us, that Jesus only carried the transverse beam, because the long piece of timber, or body of the cross, was either fixed in the ground before, or made ready to be set up, as soon as the prisoner came; and from hence he observes, that painters are very much mistaken in their description of our Saviour carrying the whole cross.

^c Capital punishments, both among the Jews and Romans, were inflicted without their cities. This was particularly observed in the crucifixion of malefactors.—Ed.

^d A death the most dreadful of all others, both for the shame and the pain of it. So scandalous, that it was inflicted, as the last mark of detestation, upon the vilest of people. It was the punishment of robbers and murderers, provided that they were slaves too; but otherwise if they were free, and had the privileges of the city of Rome, this was then thought a prostitution of that honour, and too infamous a punishment for such an one, let his crimes have been what they would. The form of a cross was that of two posts, cutting one another at right angles. On that which stood upright the body was fastened, by nailing the feet to it, and on the other transverse piece, by nailing the hands on each side. Now, because these parts of the body, being the instruments of action and motion, are provided by nature with a much greater quantity of nerves than others have occasion for, and because all sensation is performed by the spirits contained in these nerves, it will follow, that wherever they abound, the sense of pain must needs, in proportion, be more quick and tender. But though the

that he was not able to stand under it any longer; and therefore they compelled one Simon, ^e a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear it the rest of the way.

Among the vast throngs that followed to this execution, there were many people, especially some pious women, who could not behold this sad spectacle without the highest grief and lamentation; which when our Saviour observed, lifting up his face, all bloody and disfigured, 'Weep not for me,' said he, 'but weep for yourselves and your children; for it will not be long before those shall be accounted happy, who shall have no posterity ^f to inherit the miseries that shall then come upon this nation: for how dismal must their condition be, who shall call upon the ^g hills to cover them, and the

pain of this kind of death was exceedingly sharp, yet as none of the vitals were immediately affected, the body continued thus stretched out, and hanging upon the nails that fastened it to the cross, until excess of anguish had by degrees quite exhausted the spirits, and driven out the soul; which must needs make the death which our Saviour submitted to for our sakes, slow and lingering, as well as painful and ignominious; so lingering, that St Andrew was two whole days upon the cross, and some other martyrs have been rather starved, and devoured by birds, than killed with the torments of the tree.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospel's*, vol. ii., and *Howell's Hist.* in the notes.

^e Libya, in its proper acceptation, denotes those parts of the African continent which lie about the Mediterranean Sea, from Egypt eastward, to the Greater Syrtis, or Gulph of Sidra, westward. In the western part of this Libya stood Cyrene, a city of great note, and once of such power, as to contend with Carthage for some pre-eminences. But whether this Simon, whom the soldiers compelled to carry our Saviour's cross, was a Jew or Pagan, is a question that has been disputed among the ancients. Several fathers have thought that he was a Gentile, and that herein he was a type of that idolatrous people, who were afterwards to be called to the profession of the gospel and to carry the cross after Christ. But others, from his name, rather imagine that he was a Jew, and that, as there were great numbers of that nation in Egypt, and the neighbouring countries, this Simon might be one, whose habitation was at Cyrene in Libya, but was now coming up to Jerusalem, at the time of the Passover. He is called by St Mark, (chap. xv. 21.) the father of Alexander and Rufus, because these two persons were become famous in the Christian church, at the time when this evangelist wrote his gospel; but whether he himself was at this time a disciple of Christ, and afterwards bishop of Bostres in Arabia, where he suffered martyrdom, by being burnt alive by the Pagans, is much to be questioned, though some have asserted it, but not, I fear, from sufficient authority.—*Well's Geography of the New Testament*, part i. and *Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary*, under the word *Simon*.

^f This they undoubtedly had occasion to think at the siege of Jerusalem, and during the war against the Romans, not only on account of the loss of their children, and the sale of them who were under seventeen, for bond slaves, but chiefly on the account of that famine in Jerusalem which forced Mary the daughter of Eleazar, a woman of some figure and quality, to eat her own sucking child: 'Upon which,' says Josephus, 'the dread of famine made men weary of their lives, and the living envied the dead, that were taken away before the extremity came to this height.'—*Jewish Wars*, b. 7. c. 8.

^g That this is a proverbial expression, which the prophet (Hosea, x. 8.), makes use of to denote the utter despair of a people, when they see unavoidable calamities coming upon them, cannot be doubted; for so the Targum upon Hosea explains it, "He will bring such judgments upon them, as will render their condition as miserable as if the mountains should cover them, and the hills fall upon them." Isaiah speaks of the wicked that 'they should go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord,' (Isa. ii. 19.) And accordingly Josephus relates of the Jews, that after the taking of Jerusalem, many of them hid themselves in vaults and sepulchres, and there perished, rather than surrender to the Romans.—*Ibid.*

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mountains to fall on them, that by a sudden destruction they may escape the lingering calamities of famine and fear, and the horror of a thousand deaths!

When he came to the place of execution, which was called *Golgotha*^a or *Mount Calvary*, the soldiers, before they nailed him to the cross, offered him a potion^b of wine mixed with gall, which, when he had tasted it, he refused to drink. They then stripped off his clothes, and having with four great nails fastened his hands and

^a *Golgotha* in the Syriac, vulgarly called the Hebrew tongue, signifies the same that *Calvary* does in Latin; and was so called, either because the form of the mount somewhat resembles a man's skull, or rather, because it being the common place of execution, a great number of dead men's skulls was usually to be seen there. The former conjecture, however, is the more probable, for reasons stated in another part of this work, (see description of Jerusalem.) This mount was a small eminence on the western side of the larger mount of Moriah, and is represented to have been 200 paces without the ancient walls of Jerusalem. The ancient summit of Calvary has been much altered, by reducing it level in some parts, and raising it in others, in order to bring it within the area of a large and irregular building, called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which now occupies its site. But in doing this, care has been taken that none of the parts concerned in the crucifixion should suffer any alteration. The same building also encloses within its spacious walls several other places reputed sacred: as 1, the place where Christ was derided by the soldiers; 2, where the soldiers divided his garments; 3, where he was shut up while the hole was dug to set the cross in, and the other necessary preparations were made for his crucifixion; 4, where he was crowned with thorns; 5, where he was nailed to the cross; 6, where the cross was erected, and the hole in which it was fixed; 7, where the soldiers stood who pierced his side; 8, the stone on which his body was anointed previous to his burial, commonly called the stone of unction, which stone is about eight feet in length and two in breadth; 9, where his body was deposited in the sepulchre; 10, where the angels appeared to the women after his resurrection; 11, where Christ himself appeared to Mary Magdalen; 12, where he appeared to the Virgin Mary. All those stations are distinguished by as many separate chapels or altars. This sacred place is now, alas! doubly profaned: for besides its being as is well known, in the possession of the followers of Mahomet, the most relentless enemies of Christ and his disciples, it is still further outraged by the idolatrous rites of the Greek and Latin churches. A kind of chapel has been made of the sepulchre, and on the very slab on which the body of our Lord was laid; and where an end was made of all sacrifice, the pretended sacrifice of the mass continues to be daily offered up. Nor is this all: for this place, sacred above every other to peace and truth, is made the scene of one of the most riotous and disgraceful festivals, as well as one of the most impudent frauds, which superstition ever gave birth to. Here, on Holy Thursday, it is pretended that the angel Gabriel brings fire from heaven; and the deluded multitude flock in crowds, with a dreadful tumult and uproar, to carry it away with them by means of candles, torches, &c.: the original fire being presented to them for that purpose by the priest, who pretends to receive it from the angel. It is a painful and humiliating reflection, that those very places which witnessed the overthrow of the empire of Satan, and from whence the pure light of the gospel should issue and spread over the whole earth, should be consigned to the practice of the most degrading superstitions. This, in the unsearchable wisdom of His purpose, is permitted by the Almighty for a time; but he is pledged to rescue his favourite country, as well as his favourite people, in 'the last days,' from darkness and oppression; and the Christian may entertain the pleasing hope, that the scene of the Saviour's sufferings will be made the seat of his visible glory.—*Mansford's Gazetteer*.

^b Interpreters and others vary very much about this passage, taking it two different ways, as St Matthew, (chap. xxvii. 34.) and St Mark, (chap. xv. 23.) seem to express it. Some will have it, that in St Matthew's sense, vinegar mingled with gall was a bitter, poisonous draught, to stupify the person who drank it, that by benumbing his senses, he might feel less pain. Those that differ from this, say that, by the piety of some of the dis-

feet, with his body stretched out, to the cross, they so raised it up, and fixed it in the ground. To stain his innocence, and to put him to the greater shame, they crucified him between two common malefactors.^c But what might make an amends for that, was the inscription which Pilate ordered to be fixed on the top of his cross. JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS, in the three most general languages,^d Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, then in vogue. This the high-priests would gladly have had him alter; but, either out of spite to them, who had forced him upon an unjust act, or out of honour to our Lord, whom he knew to be a righteous person, he positively refused to do it.

As soon as our Lord was fixed on the cross, which was much about noon, four soldiers, who were his executioners, went to the dividing the poor spoil of his garments. His mantle they cut into four parts, and took each of them one; but as for his coat, because it was one entire piece,^e wove without seam, and would therefore

principles, and, not improbably, of some of those good women who used to minister to Jesus, there was prepared wine mingled with myrrh, which according to Pliny, was an excellent and pleasant mixture, and such as the piety and indulgence of these nations used to administer to condemned persons, to fortify their drooping spirits against the terrors of approaching death. As the design of this mixture, however, was in some measure to intoxicate the sufferer, and to make him less sensible of his pain, our blessed Lord might therefore refuse to drink it, because it became him, who was then going to offer himself a free and voluntary sacrifice to God, for the sins of men, and was to show them a pattern how to bear afflictions, with due resignation to the divine will, to avoid a thing which might too far discompose his thoughts, and show too ill a precedent to his followers. To reconcile the difference then between the two evangelists, since the former affirms, that the potion offered to our Saviour was vinegar mingled with gall, the latter, wine mingled with myrrh, the easiest way is, to say, (with our learned Dr Lightfoot) that there were two cups offered to our Lord at the time of his passion; one of wine mixed with myrrh, by some of his friends, before he was nailed to the cross: and the other with vinegar, by the soldiers, in a scoffing and insulting manner, after he was nailed to the cross; which is better than to assert, with some great names, that the ancient translator of St Matthew from the Hebrew or Syriac, mistaking the word *marar*, which properly signifies bitterness, might put gall, which in Syriac is *marar*, and derived from the same root, instead of myrrh.—*Hovell's History* in the notes; *Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^c The malefactors here mentioned were probably some of those factious and seditious gangs which Judea, at this time, was full of. Under pretence of public liberty, they committed all manner of violence and outrage; and stirring up the people against the Roman government, drew upon the nation all the calamity which afterwards befel it. As it was customary to crucify several malefactors at the same time, especially if convicted of the same crimes, our Saviour, who was accused by the Jews of seditious practices, had two, who were really guilty of that crime, executed with him, and him they placed in the midst, as in the most honourable place, purely in derision, and with the same malevolent spirit that made them array him in a purple robe, a sceptre, and a crown.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^d In Hebrew, or the Syriac, which was then the common language of the country: in Greek, which was the language of commerce almost all the east over; and Latin, because of the majesty of the Roman empire, which at that time, had extended its dominion over the then known world. The whole inscription however, is said to have been written after the Jewish manner, that is, from the right hand to the left, that it might be legible to the Jews, who, by conversing with the Romans, began now to understand a little Latin.—*Calmet's Commentary* and *Hovell's History* in the notes.

^e Some of the fathers are of opinion, that this coat of our Saviour's was made of two pieces of woollen stuff, wove in a loom, and so fine drawn, that the joining could not be perceived.

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be spoiled if it were divided, for it they cast lots, and therein fulfilled a famous prophecy.¹

While he thus hung upon the cross, in the most exquisite torments, several people of different denominations, the chief-priests, rulers and soldiers, most of the multitude, and almost every common passenger, insulted his misery; presuming, that a person, reduced to that low estate, could never be the promised Messiah. But all the reply that he made to their bitter and reviling speeches, was only by way of petition to his heavenly Father, that in respect of their ignorance, and confirmed prejudice against him, he would be pleased to overlook their barbarous treatment of him, and to pardon their provoking blasphemies.

Nay, of the two malefactors who were crucified with him, ^a one of them reviled, and mocked him in the same gross manner, requiring him to give the company, as they desired, a demonstration of his being the true Messiah, by rescuing both himself and them from the crosses whereon they were fixed. But the other malefactor ^b reproved his companion for insulting the innocent, and, while himself was receiving the just reward of his crimes, for upbraiding a person who suffered undeservedly; and

¹ Psal. xxii. 18.

Others will have it, that it was all needle-work, that is, knit, not wove from top to bottom. But Braunius, in his treatise on the dress of the Hebrew priests, has plainly proved, that the ancients had the art of weaving any habit, of what make or size soever, all of one piece, in a loom; that in several eastern countries, the art is still preserved and practised; and that himself made a machine, which Calmet in his Dictionary, under the word Vestments, has given us, wherein such a habit might be wrought. As it was customary formerly for women to weave stuffs and cloth, not for their own wearing only, but for their husbands' and children's use, (for so the character of the virtuous woman in Solomon, (Prov. xxxi. 13.) and the practice of Penelope, the wife of Ulysses, show,) it was the ancient tradition, that the blessed Virgin herself wove her son's coat: but that she made it for him when he was young; that it grew with him as he increased in stature, and continued always fresh without decay, is a mere fiction, in order to assimilate to the habits which the Israelites wore in the wilderness.—*Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary.*

^a If we compare Mat. xxvii. 44. where it is said, 'that the thieves, who were crucified with Jesus, cast the same in his teeth,' with what we find in Luke xxiii. 39. where it is said, 'one of the malefactors that was hanged railed on him,' we may be apt to fancy some contradiction in the evangelists; but this the commentators reconcile, by showing, that it is a very common thing in the Hebrew style, to use the plural number instead of the singular: As when it is said, that the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, (Gen. viii. 4.) that is, on one of the mountains, and 'that God overthrew the cities where Lot dwelt,' (Gen. xix. 29.) when he could only dwell in one at a time; with several other examples both in the Old and New Testament. But I see no reason why we may not understand this passage, as St Chrysostom and St Jerom have done, namely, 'That both of the thieves did at first rail on Jesus, probably thinking by that artifice to obtain some help towards procuring their pardon; but being disappointed of their hopes, and hearing Jesus pray for his crucifiers, one of them was thereby prevailed upon, and converted:' especially since, according to this interpretation, the operations of God's grace upon this man's mind were more sudden and strong, and his conversion more miraculous.—*Whitby's and Hammond's Annotations; and Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. ii.

^b This thief is called by some authors Dimas or Dismus, and, out of the false gospel of Nicodemus, they produce many fables concerning him, but too absurd to be here related. Several of the fathers however give him the title of a martyr, because of the testimony which he bore to truth even when it seemed to be utterly deserted by every one else.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

then looking upon Jesus, with a noble reliance, and most wonderful faith, he humbly intreated him to retain some remembrance of him when he came into his kingdom. To which our Lord returned him this most gracious promise of speedy felicity, ^c 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.'

In the mean time there stood by our Saviour's cross, sad spectators of this dismal tragedy, the holy Virgin-mother, Mary the wife of Alpheus, ^d Mary Magdalene, and John his beloved apostle; to whose care and protection he recommended his sorrowful mother; ^e and from that

^c The word paradise comes from the Hebrew, or rather from the Chaldee *pardes*; and, according to the force of the original, it should properly signify an orchard, or plantation of fruit-trees, as in some passages of the Old Testament, particularly in Neh. ii. 8. it denotes a forest. The Septuagint make use of the word Παράδεισος, when they speak of the garden of Eden, which the Lord planted, in the beginning of the world, and therein placed our first parents. The Jews commonly call paradise the garden of Eden; and they imagine, that at the coming of the Messiah, they shall there enjoy an earthly felicity, in the midst of all sorts of delights; and, till the resurrection, and the coming of the Messiah, they think their souls shall abide here in a state of rest. In the books of the New Testament, the word paradise is put for a place of delight, where the souls of the blessed enjoy everlasting happiness; but where our Lord promises the penitent thief, that he 'should be with him in paradise,' it is thought by the generality of the fathers, that he means heaven itself; though modern commentators make no more of it, than that state of felicity which God has appointed for the reception of the pious, until the time of the general resurrection. Whether the place of departed souls is above, within, or beneath, the highest heavens; whether there is one common receptacle for the souls of the righteous and unrighteous till the resurrection; or whether, from their departure out of their bodies, they dwell in separate mansions, as is more probable, are speculations we are no ways concerned to be inquisitive about, whilst we are satisfied of this main truth, that the righteous are, in the intermediate time between their death and resurrection, in a state of happiness, and the wicked in a state of misery. For, as far as our apprehensions of these matters go, a material place can no ways contribute either to increase or to diminish the happiness or misery of an immaterial spirit. Spirits that are divested of flesh and blood, wherever they are, carry heaven or hell along with him. The good angels are as happy here upon earth, whilst they are employed in the execution of God's will, as whilst they are conversant in the regions above, because they do always behold the face of God, in whose presence is fulness of joy; and Satan was no more happy when he came among the sons of God to present himself before the Lord, (Job i. 6.) than he was when he was going to and fro in the earth. The happiness and misery of pure spirits have no relation, that we know of, to the place where they are; but the happiness and misery of embodied spirits, or of men, who are made up of souls and bodies, have a dependence upon the place of their abode; and therefore we are sure, that wherever separate souls are lodged till the resurrection, after the resurrection, righteous and wicked men shall have places allotted to them, suitable to their different states; the former shall be carried up to the highest heavens, and the latter shall be thrown down to the nethermost hell.—*Calmet's Commentary, and Bishop Smalbridge's Sermons.*

^d It is not determined in the original whether she was the wife, or mother, or daughter, of Cleopas; but critics generally suppose she was his wife, and that he was also called Alpheus, and was the father, as this Mary was the mother, of James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, who are therefore called our Lord's brethren or kinsmen. (Mat. viii. 55.) Grotius indeed thinks that Cleopas was her father, and Alpheus her husband. After all we cannot certainly determine it; but, like most other undeterminable points, it is a matter of no great importance. I know none who has set it in a plainer and juster light than Dr Edwards, *Exercit.* part ii. No. 1, p. 163. *et seq.*—*Doddridge's Expositor.*—Ed.

^e The generality of commentators do infer from hence, that

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time forward he took her to his house, and all along paid her the respect due to a parent.

During these melancholy transactions, the whole frame of nature began to be changed: The sun withdrew its light;^a the stars appeared; and the eclipse was the more remarkable, because the moon, being then at full, could not be in conjunction. This eclipse began about twelve, and lasted till three in the afternoon; when all things were full of horror and amazement. Men's hearts began to relent; and, instead of their former insults, they stood in silent expectance what would be the issue. All this while our blessed Lord continued meek and

her husband Joseph was at this time dead; and therefore our Lord took care that she should not be destitute, by charging his beloved disciple to treat her as his mother. As Jesus now showed the tender concern he had for his mother, in committing her to the care of John, so this concern that he expressed for her support, must have affected her no less than if he had called her, Mother: which some have thought he might not choose to do, to avoid exposing her to the abuses of the populace, by a discovery of her near relation to him. But *woman* was a title he before had used in speaking to his mother, where no such caution was necessary; and it was frequently applied in ancient times, even to persons that were the most respected. Neither her own danger, nor the sadness of the spectacle, nor the reproaches and insults of the people, could restrain her from performing the last office of duty and tenderness to her Divine Son on the cross. Grotius justly observes, that it was a noble instance of fortitude and zeal. Now a sword, according to Simeon's prophecy, Luke ii. 35, struck through her tender heart, and pierced her very soul; and perhaps the extremity of her sorrows might so overwhelm her spirits, as to render her incapable of attending the sepulchre, which we do not find that she did; nor do we indeed meet with any thing after this concerning her in the sacred story, or in early antiquity; except that she continued among the disciples after our Lord's ascension, which Luke observes, Acts i. 14. Andreas Cretensis, a writer of the seventh century, does indeed tell us, she died with John at Ephesus, many years after this, in an extreme old age, and it appears from a letter of the council of Ephesus in the fifth century, that it was then believed she was buried there. But they pretend to show her sepulchre at Jerusalem, and many ridiculous tales are forged concerning her death and assumption, or being taken up into heaven, of which the best Popish authors themselves appear heartily ashamed.—See *Calmet's Dictionary*, vol. ii. p. 141.—*Doddridge's Expositor*.—Ed.

^a Whether this darkness was confined to the land of Judea, or extended itself much farther, even over the whole hemisphere where it happened, is a question wherein the ancients are not so well agreed. Origen, and some others, are of the former opinion; but the majority differ from them, and for this they quote Phlegon, the famous astronomer under the emperor Trajan, affirming, that, in the fourth year of the CCII^d Olympiad, which is supposed to be that of the death of Christ, there was such a total eclipse of the sun at noon day, that the stars were plainly to be seen; and from Suidas they likewise cite Dionysius the Areopagite, then at Heliopolis in Egypt, expressing himself to his friend Apollonides, upon this surprising phenomenon, 'Either that the author of nature suffered, or that he was sympathizing with some one that did.' For whereas in common eclipses the sun's total darkness can continue but twelve, or fifteen minutes at most, this is recorded to have lasted no less than three full hours, Matt. xxvii. 45.—*Universal History*, b. 2. c. 11. It is, however, at best very doubtful if the passage from Phlegon has any reference to this particular darkness; and as to the story told of Dionysius the Areopagite, it is entitled to still less attention, since Dr Lardner has proved that all the writings attributed to him are spurious. The probability is, that the darkness was confined to the land of Judea. And there was surely, (if we may venture to pronounce on the inscrutable purposes of almighty providence), a peculiar propriety in the darkness being so confined, as indicating the wrath of God on that country for the enormity then perpetrating; and presenting an apt emblem of the spiritual darkness in which that benighted region was involved.—Ed.

silent, though languishing and wasting under the agonies which his body endured, and the heavy load of the divine indignation against sin; till, in the words of the Psalmist, he complained at last, 'Eli! Eli! lama sabachthani, that is, ^b My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

One of the soldiers, hearing the word *Eli*, or *Elohi*, out of ignorance of the Hebrew tongue, thought, that he called for Elias to help him in his distress; and thereupon dipping a sponge in vinegar,^c put it on a reed, which St John calls a stalk of hyssop,^d and, as he complained of being thirsty, gave it to him to drink. Others however were for letting him alone, to see whether Elias^e would come and help him. But when he had tasted the vinegar, and now knew, that all the types and prophecies

^b In the Hebrew way of speaking, it is certain, that God is said to *leave* or *for sake*, any person, when he suffers him to fall into great calamities, and lie under great misfortunes, and does not help him out of them. To this purpose Zion, having been long afflicted, is brought in by the prophet complaining, 'The Lord hath forsaken me, the Lord hath forgotten me,' Isa. xlix. 14. and as the royal Psalmist is very frequent in such complaints, so he explains the sense of them, when he addresses himself to God, 'Why art thou so far from my prayer,' so that, though 'I cry in the day-time, thou hearest not?' Psal. xxii. 1, 2. That David was not fallen into any despondency, is manifest from his calling God so *fiducially* his God; and that our blessed Saviour was not, as some think, under any failure of his trust in God, or any perturbation of spirit from the sense of divine wrath, is evident from his saying of his suffering condition, 'It is finished,' and from the very words wherein he breathed his last, 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' The truth is, this very thing shows the great composure of his mind; that while he was hanging upon the cross, he was so far master of himself, as to repeat the 22^d Psalm, whereof the title or first words are, *Eli, Eli*, &c., a psalm which is allowed by all commentators to relate to the Messiah; which contains a most lively description of all the remarkable particulars of his passion, and for that reason, was a portion of Scripture which he thought proper to recite upon this mournful occasion. Upon the supposition, then, that our Lord was now repeating that noble psalm, which, after a recapitulation of his sufferings, concludes with very comfortable promises both to him and his followers; this shows, that he was far from being under any doubt or despair; that he kept his mind indeed all along calm and serene; and under the pressure of whatever he suffered, supported himself with the comfortable prospect of what was to follow.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Universal History*, b. 2. c. 11.

^c The vinegar and sponge, in execution of condemned persons, were set ready, to stop the too violent flux of blood, that the malefactor might be the longer in dying; but to the blessed Jesus they were exhibited in scorn; for being mingled with gall, the mixture was more horrid and unpleasant.—*Howell's History*, in the notes.

^d It may be pretended perhaps, that a branch of hyssop might not be long enough to reach our Saviour's mouth, as he was hanging upon the cross; but, besides that crosses were not in some places erected so high, but that beasts of prey could reach the bodies that were fastened to them; and that hyssop in those countries, as well as mustard seed, was of a much longer growth than it is with us; I cannot see, why the person that offered our Saviour this vinegar, might not make use of a ladder, if the cross was so high that he could not fairly reach him. Nor is the difference in St Matthew's calling that a reed, which St John calls hyssop, of any manner of moment; because the Greek word *καλαμος*, is put to signify a stalk, a shoot, or branch of any kind; so that St Matthew speaks of that in general, which St John specifies in particular.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^e There was a tradition among the Jews, that it was Elias's proper office to come and succour such as were in misery; and, accordingly some of the Jews, either deceived with the resemblance of the words, thought that our Lord called Elias to his help; or giving a malicious turn to the sense of the words, which they well enough understood, did thereby insult him for his calling in vain Elias to his help.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

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concerning him were fulfilled, his Father's wrath appeased, and the great work of man's redemption accomplished, he said, 'It is finished,' and then, 'bowing down his head,' recommended his soul into his Father's hands, and so gave up the ghost. ^a

Upon his expiration there immediately happened a terrible earthquake, ^b which rent the vail ^c of the temple from top to bottom, split the rocks, ^d and opened the graves and tombs, so that the bodies of several who were

^a The original phrase may denote a delivering up, or, as our Saviour expresses it, (Luke xxiii. 46,) a committing his spirit into the hands of God, as a sacred trust, to be restored again, and united to his body, at the time prefixed by his own infinite wisdom; and plainly implies such a dissolution, and actual separation of soul and body, as every common man undergoes when he dies. But herein is a remarkable difference, that what is in other men the effect of necessity, was in Jesus a voluntary act, and the effect of his own free choice. Hence the generality of interpreters have thought, that St John takes notice, that Christ bowed his head before he gave up the ghost; whereas, in common cases, the falling of the head follows after the breath's going out of the body; and hence also St Mark observes, that Jesus crying out with so loud and strong a voice, immediately before his expiring, was one reason that moved the centurion to think him an extraordinary person: for this showed that it was not the excess of pain and sorrow that had tired out nature, and hastened his death, but that he who (as himself professes, John x. 18,) had power to lay down his life, and could not have it taken from him without his own permission and consent, did freely and voluntarily lay it down, at such a time as himself saw convenient.—*Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. ii.

^b Some are of opinion, that this was the same earthquake that happened in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, and was the greatest that ever was known in the memory of man. Both Pliny and Macrobius make mention of it; and the latter informs us, that it destroyed no less than twelve cities in Asia. But by the sacred text it appears, that the earthquake here mentioned affected only the temple of Jerusalem, and the parts which are there specified, the vail, the ground, the rocks, the tombs, &c. Nor does it seem improbable, that this prodigy was shown particularly in this place, to foretell the destruction of the temple, and its worship, upon the people's sad impiety in crucifying the Lord of life.—*Hammond's Annotations*.

^c In the second temple, between the holy place, and the most holy, says Maimonides, there was no partition wall, though in the first temple there was one built of the thickness of a cubit. The division between them was made by two vails, one from the extremity of the holy place, and the other from the extremity of the most holy, with the void space of a cubit between. The like form of separation was observed in the temple which Herod rebuilt, as Josephus informs us, (*Jewish wars*, b. vi. c. 14.) and therefore it must be a mistake in those who think that this vail was a partition wall of stones. Whether of the two vails, that which belonged to the holy place, or that which hung in the most holy, was at this time rent in twain, is a question among the ancients; though the words of the author to the Hebrews, where he tells us, that 'Christ as our high-priest, has consecrated for us a new way through the vail, so that we may with boldness enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. x. 19, &c., seems to be a pretty clear determination of it.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Cabnet's Commentary*.

^d In the church of the sepulchre, which stands on mount Calvary, is still to be seen that memorable cleft in the rock, occasioned, as it is said, by the earthquake which happened at our Lord's crucifixion. This cleft (as to what now appears of it) is about a span wide at its upper part, and two deep. After this it closes; but then it opens again below, and runs down to an unknown depth of earth. That this rent was made by the earthquake which happened at our Lord's passion, there is only tradition to prove; but that it is a natural and genuine breach, and not counterfeited by any art, the sense and reason of every one that sees it may convince him; for the sides of it fit like two tallies to each other, and yet it runs in such intricate windings, as could not be well counterfeited by art, or performed by any instrument.—*Wells's Geog. of the New Test.*, part i. and *Mr Maundrell's Journey*, &c.

dead ^e arose, and went into Jerusalem, where they were seen, and known by many. These prodigies, which attended our Lord's death, struck the spectators with such amazement, that as they returned home, they smote upon their breasts, and, with great lamentation, declared that the person who had suffered that day, was innocent. Nay, the very centurion, ^f and other soldiers, who attended the execution, from a conviction of what they had seen, were not afraid to affirm, that he certainly was the Son of God.

The day whereon our Saviour suffered, was the eve, or preparation, to the Paschal festival, which fell that year on the Jewish sabbath-day, and so was a feast and sabbath together. That therefore so great and solemn a day might not be profaned ^g by the suspension of the

^e Since St Paul styles our Saviour, 'the first-born from the dead,' Col. i. 18, 'and the first fruits of them that slept,' 1 Cor. xv. 20, most commentators are of opinion that though several tombs were opened as soon as our Saviour expired, yet none of the saints arose until he returned from the grave. But then, who these saints were, it is no easy matter to conjecture. Some think, that the man after God's own heart, king David, or some of the ancient patriarchs, might best deserve this pre-eminence. But, on the day of Pentecost, St Peter tells the Jews plainly, that the body of David was still in the sepulchre, and not ascended into heaven, (Acts ii. 29—34.) and St Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, tells us of the patriarchs, that 'they had not received the promise, God having designed that they without us, should not be made perfect,' Heb. xi. 39, 40. The most probable conjecture therefore is, that they were some of those who believed in Jesus, as old Simeon did, and died a little before his crucifixion; because, of these persons it is said, that they 'went into the holy city, and appeared to many;' and so, very probably, were well known to those to whom they appeared, as having been their cotemporaries.—*Cabnet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^f 'This was the Son of God.' As the Roman officer and guard, who were ordered to attend the crucifixion of Jesus, were heathens, it becomes a difficult question in what sense they used these expressions. But since it can scarcely admit of doubt that the centurion, at least, knew on what grounds Jesus was condemned by the Jews, it may well be supposed that, on perceiving the miraculous circumstances accompanying his death, he exclaimed, 'this man was truly what he represented himself to be, the Messiah, the Son of God.' He was the 'just one' whose coming the Jews have looked for with so much anxiety. It does not follow that he comprehended the full force of these expressions; he might mean nothing more than that Jesus was an innocent man favoured by the gods; that he was merely a 'righteous man,' as St Luke has it, (chap. xxiii. 47.) However understood, these expressions in the mouth of a soldier and heathen, form a strong attestation to the character and innocence of our Lord. It is worthy of observation that St Matthew mentions the centurion, and they that were with him, as using these words, but St Mark, (xv. 39.) and St Luke, (xxiii. 47.), only the former, but it is easy to reconcile them. The sacred writers sometimes use the plural, when only one person is meant, or both the officer and the soldiers may have made similar observations, though with some variety of expression; and it may be more than once; which will account for the differences in the narratives of the evangelists.—*Holden's Christian Expositor*.—Ed.

^g The Jews had a strict injunction in their law, that the dead bodies of those who were executed should not hang all night, but by all means be buried that day, (Deut. xxi. 22, 23.) But the Romans used to do otherwise; they suffered the bodies to hang upon the cross always until they were dead, and, in some cases, a considerable time longer. On this occasion, it seems as if the Jews had left the Romans to follow their own custom, in relation to the crucified persons, and were in no concern to have them taken down, had it not been for the near approach of their Passover, whose joy and festivity they thought might be damped by so melancholy a sight. Upon this account they petition Pilate to have them removed: and the reason why Pilate might be rather induced to grant their request was, that the Romans themselves

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bodies on the cross, the rulers of the Jews came, and requested of Pilate, that their legs might be broken, to hasten their deaths, and their bodies taken down; which accordingly was executed upon the two thieves; but when the soldiers came to Jesus, and found him already dead, instead of breaking his legs, ^a one of them pierced his side with a spear, ^b from which issued out a great quantity of ^c blood and water.

Among the disciples of our Lord, there was one named Joseph, a man of great wealth and honour, ^d born in Arimathea, ^e and not improbably one of the council of the Sanhedrim, but who stood in some fear of them, while

had such respect for the feasts of their emperors, that on those days they always took down the bodies from the cross, and gave them to their parents.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^a The prophecy which foretold, 'that a bone of him should not be broken,' is usually referred to the command concerning the Paschal lamb, 'Thou shalt not break a bone of it,' (Exod. xii. 46.) But as David was likewise a type of Christ, we cannot see why it may not refer to these words of his, 'He keepeth all his bones, so that none of them is broken,' (Ps. xxxiv. 20.) or why the promise, which respects all righteous persons, might not more particularly be fulfilled in the just one.—*Whitby's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

^b The man who did this, was not one of the horse, as he is usually painted, but of the foot soldiers; because a spear, or short pike, was one part of the armour belonging to the Roman infantry. And the reason why this was done, was not only that a prediction concerning him might be fulfilled, (Zech. xii. 10.) which the Jews apply to the Messiah, but that his death might be put beyond all dispute, which, had it been doubtful, must have made his resurrection, upon which the truth of our religion depends, remain doubtful likewise.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^c 'Blood and water,' Medical writers differ whether this was the small quantity of water in the pericardium, or what is called *lymph*, or a watery effusion such as sometimes is found in the cavities of the pleura in cases of violent death. There may, however, have been something miraculous in the phenomenon, but there is not a shadow of proof that it was designed to convey a typical meaning. The soldier who pierced Jesus doubtless intended to dispatch him, if he were not quite dead; and the issuing of blood and water was clear evidence that the wound would have been mortal had he been then living.—*Holden's Christian Expositor*.—Ep.

^d His riches and honourable station are mentioned, not out of any vanity and ostentation, that a person of so considerable a figure should pay respect to the body of our blessed Lord; but, chiefly, to show how strangely God brought about an ancient prophecy concerning the Messiah, namely, that notwithstanding the infamous manner of his dying, he should 'make his grave with the rich at his death,' (Isa. liii. 9.) which in itself was a most unlikely thing, not only because the bodies of them that were crucified, did, by the Roman laws, hang upon the gibbet, sometimes until they were consumed, but because the Jews, though they did not allow of this severity to the dead, did nevertheless always bury their malefactors in some public, neglected, and ignominious place; and so, in all probability, must our Saviour have been treated, had not Joseph applied himself to the governor, in whose disposal the bodies of executed persons were.—*Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. ii.

^e Arimathea, or Ramah, now called Ramlé, or Ramla, a pleasant town, beautifully situated on the borders of a fertile and extensive plain, abounding in gardens, vineyards, olive and date trees. It stands about thirty miles north-west of Jerusalem, on the high road to Jaffa. Rama and Lydda were the two first cities that fell into the hands of the Crusaders. The former being abandoned by its inhabitants in the night, was thrown open to the invaders; who made it their rendezvous, and place of feasting for three days. Dr Clarke describes Rama as being in a state of desolation and ruin, although making a considerable figure at a distance. Mr Buckingham represents it as covering a considerable space over a level plain, and containing about 5000 inhabitants, who are principally occupied in husbandry, for which the surrounding country is highly favourable. The principal

our Saviour was alive. After his death ^f however, he took courage, and going to Pilate, begged leave of him to let him take down the body of Jesus, and bury it. The governor was surprised to hear that he was dead so soon; but being informed, by the centurion, that it actually was so, he ordered the body to be delivered to Joseph; who, for the present, wrapped it up in fine linen clothes, which he had provided for that purpose; and, at the same time, Nicodemus, ^g another private disciple of our Lord's, brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, with other spices and perfumes, to embalm his body, according to the manner of the Jews.

Not far from the place of execution, there was a garden ^h belonging to Joseph, where he had lately hewn

commodities produced are corn, olive oil, and cotton, with some soap, and coarse cloth, the manufacture of the place. According to the same traveller, Rama bears marks of having been once a considerable city; for which its position on the high road from Jerusalem to Joppa, the principal port of the country, eminently favoured it. There are still to be seen the remains of some noble subterranean cisterns, not inferior either in extent or execution to many of those at Alexandria; being intended for the same purpose, namely, to serve in the time of war, as reservoirs of water. At this Rama, which was likewise called Ramathaim Zophim, as lying in the district of Zoph or Zoph, Samuel was born. (1 Sam. i.)—*Mansford's Scriptural Gazetteer*.—Ep.

^f It may well seem strange, that Joseph, who never durst openly profess a regard to Jesus while living, should now, when he had suffered all the ignominy of a malefactor, not stick to interest himself for his honourable interment. But besides that this might be an instance of the efficacy of those impressions which God makes upon men's minds, even at the most unlikely seasons of prevailing; the desire which Pilate had expressed to save our Lord's life, and avowed unwillingness to condemn him, together with the prodigies that had accompanied his crucifixion, and made now every heart relent, might be motive enough for him to go in boldly to Pilate, as St Mark expresses it, and beg the body of him, before it was taken from the cross. According to the Mishna, the nearest relations of those that suffered as criminals were not permitted to put their bodies into their family tombs, until their flesh was all consumed in the public sepulchres: and this might possibly be the reason why Joseph made such haste with his request to the governor, namely, that he might prevent our Lord from being cast into one of the public charnel houses, appointed for the reception of malefactors' bodies.—*Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. ii. and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^g This is the same ruler of the Jews, and 'master of Israel,' as the evangelist calls him, (John iii. 1, 10.) who, at our Lord's first coming to Jerusalem, after he had entered upon his ministry, held a private conference with him, and for ever after was his disciple, though he made no open profession of it, till after his passion. Whether it was before or after this time, that he received baptism from some of Christ's disciples, is a thing uncertain, but there is reason to believe, that the Jews, when they came to be informed of this, deposed him from the dignity of a senator, excommunicated him, and drove him out of Jerusalem. Nay, it is farther said, that they would have put him to death, but that, in consideration of Gamaliel, who was his uncle, or cousin-german, they contented themselves with beating him almost to death and plundering his goods. It is added likewise, that Gamaliel conveyed him to his country-house, where he provided him with things necessary for his support, and, when he died, buried him honourably by St Stephen.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the name.

^h This garden has been long since converted into a church, called the church of the sepulchre, as being built over the place where our Lord's sepulchre was. The sepulchre, as it is now exhibited, presents rather a singular and unexpected appearance to a stranger; who, for such a place, would naturally expect to find an excavation in the ground, instead of which, he perceives it altogether raised, as if artificially above its level. The truth is, that in the alterations which were made on Calvary, to bring all the principal places within the projected church, the earth around the sepulchre was dug away; so that, what was originally a cave in the earth, has now the appearance of a closet

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out of a ^a rock a sepulchre for his own proper interment. Having therefore embalmed our Saviour's body, and wound it up in the linen clothes, here they buried it, and, with a large stone cut out of the rock for that purpose, closed the mouth of the sepulchre. But Mary Magdalen, and the other women who were present at his death, and assisted at his burial, having taken good notice of the place where he was laid, went and prepared fresh spices for his farther embalment, as soon as the sabbath-day was over.

On the sabbath-day the rulers of the Jews came to Pilate, and informing him, "that our Lord, whom they called an impostor, having, in his lifetime, made it his boast, that on the third day he would rise again from

or grotto above ground. The sepulchre itself is about six feet square and eight high. There is a solid block of the stone left in excavating the rock, about two feet and a half from the floor, and running along the whole of the inner side; on which the body of our Lord is said to have been laid. This as well as the rest of the sepulchre, is now faced with marble: partly from the false taste which prevailed in the early ages of Christianity, in disguising with profuse and ill-suited embellishments the spots rendered memorable in the history of its Founder; and partly, perhaps, to preserve it from the depredations of the visitants. This description of the holy sepulchre will but ill accord with the notions entertained by some English readers of a grave; but a cave or grotto, thus excavated in rocky ground, on the side of a hill, was the common receptacle for the dead among the Eastern nations. Such was the tomb of Christ; such that of Lazarus; and such are the sepulchres still found in Judæa and the East. It may be useful further to observe, that it was customary with Jews of property to provide a sepulchre of this kind on their own ground, as the place of their interment after death; and it appears that Calvary itself, or the ground immediately around it, was occupied with gardens; one of which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, who had then recently caused a new sepulchre to be made for himself. It was this sepulchre, so close at hand, and so appropriate, which he resigned for the use of our Lord; little thinking, perhaps, at the time, how soon it would again be left vacant for its original purpose.—(*Mansford's Scripture Gazetteer*.) The church of the holy sepulchre, a splendid edifice, erected by the empress Helena, fourteen hundred years ago, was destroyed by fire in 1808. It has since been repaired, though in a style much inferior to the original edifice. Dr Clarke, however, is of opinion that another tomb, which he particularly describes, and not the one enclosed in the church, is really the place where Jesus was laid. See his disquisition on the subject in his *Travels*.—Ed.

^a There are several circumstances in the description of our Saviour's tomb, which contribute very greatly to the confirmation of the truth of his resurrection. As, 1st, The place of his interment was near adjoining to the city, that thereby the miracle of his resurrection might be better known to all the Jews, and his own apostles more especially. 2dly, His tomb was a new one, wherein never man before was laid; and therefore, when his body left this sepulchre empty, no suspicion could remain of its being any other body than that which Joseph had taken down from the cross, and disposed of in that place. 3dly, It was hewn out of a rock, incapable of being undermined, or dug through; and therefore there was no possible way for the person deposited in a place so contrived, to get out again, except only at the mouth or door of the cave. And yet, 4thly, A large stone, which according to Mr Maundrell, who saw it, is two yards and a quarter long, one broad, and one thick, closed up the entrance of it; all which were watched by a strong guard of sixty soldiers: so that, as the sentry would not suffer the body to be conveyed out by this way, the nature of the place would not allow it by any other; and therefore, had not our Lord been more than man, he could never have forced his passage out. Of such mighty significance it is to us, that so punctual a description is given the world of our blessed Lord's burial, and all the circumstances relating to it, since they all contribute great strength to these two most important articles of the Christian faith, the death and resurrection of Jesus.—*Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. ii. and *Whitby's Annotations*.

the dead, they therefore requested of him, that he would order the sepulchre to be kept under a strong guard, until that day was passed, lest his disciples should steal him away by night, and then give it out that he was risen from the dead, which might prove a more dangerous seduction to the people than any thing they had yet fallen into." Whereupon he gave them leave to take a detachment of the guard ^b of the temple, and to post them near the sepulchre: which accordingly they did; and to secure it against all private attempts, set a seal ^c on the stone that was at the mouth of it.

Early next morning, even just as the sun was rising, Mary Magdalen, and the other women, who, on Friday evening, had prepared spices and perfumes, went to the sepulchre to embalm again our Saviour's body, ignorant of the guard that was placed there. Their whole care and consultation in the way was, how they might get the large stone that was at the entrance removed. But, before they arrived at the place, an angel from heaven had rolled it away, ^d and sat upon it; at the sight of whom, for his countenance was like lightning, and at the noise of the earthquake which accompanied his appearance, the guards fell down like so many dead men, so that the women had free entrance into the sepulchre; but were not a little astonished to see the body gone, and an angel, in a refulgent habit, sitting in the place where it had lain. Frightened at this apparition, they made all the haste they could out of the sepulchre; but were met by another angel, in the like glorious apparel, who not only acquainted them with our Lord's resurrection, according to what he had foretold his disciples, but, to give them a fuller conviction, reconducted them into the sepulchre; showed them, that the place where he had lain was empty; and ordered them to go immediately and carry the apostles, but more especially ^e Peter, the news thereof. The women, accordingly, filled with fear, and joy, and wonder altogether, hastened to find out the apostles; to whom they related what they had heard and seen: but, instead of believing them, they looked upon this as no more than the product of a weak and frightened imagination.

^b It is generally supposed, that this guard of the temple was a large detachment of Roman soldiers, who, in the time of the feast, kept sentry in the gates of the temple, to prevent such disorders as might very well happen among such a large concourse of people: for by the sequel of their story, it appears, (Mat. xxviii. 11.) that they depended upon Pilate, were subject to his correction, and consequently, were not Levites, as some imagine, but Roman soldiers.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^c When Daniel was cast into the lions' den, it is said, 'That the king sealed the stone that was laid upon the mouth of it, with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel,' (chap. vi. 17.) And from hence some have supposed, that the stone wherewith our Lord's sepulchre was closed, was sealed with Pilate's signet, because it was a matter of public concern; as others have fancied that it was further secured by a great chain that went across it, and that the marks thereof were visible in the venerable Bede's time. All fables.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d For an explanation of the apparent discrepancies in the accounts given by the evangelists, respecting our Lord's resurrection, the reader is referred to the supplementary chapter on the subject, chapter iii. of this Section.

^e Peter is here named, not as the prince of the apostles, but, as the fathers say, for his consolation, and to take off the scruple which might lie upon his spirits, whether after his threefold denial of his Master, with such horrid aggravations attending it, he had not forfeited his right to be one of our Lord's disciples.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

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Out of curiosity, however, Peter and John ran to the sepulchre, and found the thing true according to the women's report; the body gone, ^a the burying-clothes lying on the ground, and the napkin that was about his head, very carefully folded, and laid by itself. Notwithstanding this, such was their incredulity, ^b that they returned home, never supposing any thing else, but that somebody had taken him away. Mary Magdalene, who, by this time, was again returned to the sepulchre, staid behind the two apostles weeping; and, as she stooped down to look in, saw two angels in bright apparel, sitting where the body had lain, one at the head, and the other at the feet. As the angels were enquiring of her the occasion of her tears, and she telling them, that it was the loss of her Lord's body, she happened to turn herself round, and saw Jesus himself; but supposing him to be the master of the garden, where the sepulchre was, she desired of him, that if he had removed the body any where, he would be so kind as to let her know, that she might take care of it. Hereupon our Lord calling her by her name, she immediately knew him, and throwing herself at his feet, was going to embrace him: but he forbade her, upon the account that ^c 'he had not, as yet ascended to his Father;' and only required her to acquaint his apostles with his resurrection, and immediate ascension into heaven; which she failed not to do; but still they gave no credit to her report.

^a The custom of interment among the Jews, was to roll the dead body, (as we read our Saviour's was, John xix. 39, 40.) up in spices; which though they preserved it in some measure from corruption, by their gluey nature, could not but make the clothes that were used with them cling so close to the skin, as not to be drawn off without a great deal of time and difficulty. When therefore these coverings were found regularly pulled off, wrapped up, and laid by, this plainly shows, that the disciples could have no hand in stealing away the Master's body. For do thieves, after they have rifled an house, use to spend time in putting things in order again? Or can it enter into any sober man's thoughts, that they, who come by stealth, and in danger of their lives, as the disciples certainly must have done upon such an adventure, should thus stay to awaken the guard, and trifle away their time in such hazardous and unnecessary niceties? Had they been really engaged in this affair, they certainly would have taken away the body at once, without tarrying to unbind and undress it. And therefore the condition in which the sepulchre was found, to every considerate man, must be a sufficient confutation of that idle pretence of the Jews: 'His disciples came, and stole him away.'—*The literal sense of the scripture vindicated*, p. 383.

^b The remark of one of the ancients upon this subject is very good, that their doubting is the confirmation of our faith; and the more difficulty they showed in believing Christ's resurrection, the greater reason have we to believe it; because the testimony of those who themselves believe not till after full conviction, is, upon that account, much more credible.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^c Various are the senses which interpreters have been pleased to affix to the reason which our Lord here assigns for his rejecting this woman's homage and embraces, 'I am not yet ascended to my Father.' Some imagine, that Mary, still retaining her notions of a temporal kingdom, concluded that our Lord was now risen on purpose to assume it, and therefore fell down to adore him: but that he, willing to raise her mind to spiritual and celestial thoughts, gave her to understand, that, as yet, it was not a proper time for her to make her addresses to him, because he was not yet ascended into heaven, from whence he was to administer his kingdom, and to send down the Holy Ghost, in order to form a spiritual communion between him and his true disciples.—*Beausobre's Annotations*. Others suppose that this woman imagined, that our Lord was risen again in the same manner that Lazarus did, namely, to live upon earth

In the mean time some of the guards, in a great fright, fled into the city, and related all that had happened to the chief-priests and rulers; who immediately assembled themselves to consult upon this important affair, and came at length to this resolution, namely, 'to bribe the soldiers with a large sum of money, and thereby engage them to give it out among the people, that, while themselves were asleep, the disciples of Jesus came, and stole him away; promising them withal, that, in case this their pretended neglect should come to the governor's ears, they would take care to pacify him.' The soldiers accordingly took the money, and obeyed their orders; and this ^d report was current among the Jews for many years after.

On this same day of Christ's resurrection, as two of his disciples were taking a walk in the afternoon, to a town called Emmaus, ^e and discoursing, as they went along, of what had lately happened; Jesus joined himself to their company, ^f but they knew him not: and observing that they looked melancholy, he asked them the

as he had done before; and that therefore to convince her of the contrary, he bid her not touch him as a mortal man, because 'I am not yet ascended into heaven,' but in a short time shall, and that is the place where you are to pay me your homage and adorations.—*Calmet's Commentary*. Others again say, that by a figure, common enough among grammarians, who frequently change one tense for another, our Saviour's words may denote, that he was not then about to ascend, but to stay many days upon earth; so that Mary might have space and opportunity enough to pay her adorations, and to satisfy herself in the truth of his resurrection.—*Whitby's Annotations*. But these, and several other interpretations of the like kind, are far from being natural, and seem calculated on purpose to exclude the notion of our Saviour's frequent ascensions during his stay upon earth after his resurrection, which, in the course of the subsequent answers, we hope to evince to be true.

^d Some are of opinion, that the report which the evangelist speaks of, as current among the Jews, was, not that our Lord's disciples came and stole him away, but that the soldiers were corrupted by the high priests to say so. This indeed gives a quite different turn to the thing, and is very favourable to the Christian cause; but yet, whoever considers the circular letters mentioned by Justin Martyr, which the rulers in Jerusalem sent to the principal Jews all the world over, concerning this fact, and the great pains which, as Tertullian informs us, they every where took to propagate it, together with the care which he and the other ancient apologists employed to confute this senseless, but malicious lie, must needs be of a contrary opinion, namely, that the report was spread, not against the Jewish rulers, but the Christian disciples, and was not quite extinct when St Matthew wrote his gospel, chap. xxviii. 15, which was much about eight years after Christ's death.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^e Emmaus, which was afterwards made a city, and called Nicopolis, was at this time a small village, about seven miles distant from Jerusalem to the west, where it is supposed, by Bede and others, that either Cleophas, or his companion, had a house, which, by their importuning Jesus to go with them, seems not improbable, because they could not propose to entertain him so commodiously or hospitably in an inn.—*Well's Geography of the New Testament*, part i. and *Howell's History*, in the notes.

^f Whether it was, that after his resurrection, his person was so considerably changed, that those who knew him before, could not easily distinguish him; or that he appeared in an habit quite different from what he used to wear, which, for some time, might hinder them from recollecting who he was; or that he suspended the operation of their senses, that he might have a better opportunity to instruct their understandings; or that by an extraordinary power, he withheld their eyes from perceiving him, by which, upon removing of that impediment, they immediately knew him; any of these causes will answer the purpose better, than that we should impute, as some do, their not know-

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subject of their discourse, and what it was that made them so disconsolate? To which one of them replied, ^a 'That the subject of their discourse was too notorious even to escape the knowledge of the greatest stranger; that it was concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who indeed was a great prophet; one whom they expected would have been the king and redeemer of Israel; but to their great disappointment had of late been delivered to death by their rulers, and crucified. And, what is more astonishing, continued he, this very day, which is the third since his death, some women of our company, having been early at the sepulchre, and not finding the body, surprised us with an account, that they had seen a vision of angels, who assured them that he was alive; which, in part, was confirmed by some of our men too, who went to the sepulchre, and found it empty, but did not see him.

Hereupon our Lord took occasion to reprove their incredulity, and, from the testimony of the prophets, to convince them, that it was highly necessary the Messiah should suffer death, and rise again, in order to a glorious exaltation. As they drew near to the village, where they intended to spend that night, Jesus ^b seemed as if he had farther to go; but being unwilling to lose his good conversation, they, with some entreaty, ^c prevailed with him to stay. He did so: and as he was sitting at the table with them, took bread, blessed it, brake it, and delivered it to them, as he was wont to do; whereupon their eyes were opened, and they knew him; but immediately he vanished ^d out of their sight.

As soon as the two disciples had recovered from their surprise, they hastened to Jerusalem, where the apostles were met together, who upon their arrival, informed

them that their Lord was certainly risen, and ¹ had appeared unto Peter; whilst they, in their turn, related what had happened to them in the country, how Jesus had walked, and conversed with them, and how they came to know him by breaking of bread. But notwithstanding all these testimonies, several among them remained still incredulous.

For fear of the Jews, the apostles had shut the door, and were now set down to supper in a private room, late in the evening, when our blessed Saviour came in, and saluted them; and, that they might not take him for a spirit, or phantom, but for the very person that was crucified in their sight, he showed them the wounds in his hands, his feet and his side. Nay, that he might cure them of all scruple and doubtfulness, he eat a piece of broiled fish, ^e and some honey-comb, before them all, and then, having a little upbraided them with their unbelief, he gave them several great and weighty instructions, an ability to understand the scriptures ^f more perfectly, a renovation of their commission to preach to all nations, ^g a power and authority to remit or retain sins, a communication of the blessed Spirit by breathing on them, and a promise of sending him more plentifully, to enable them to be witnesses ^h of his resurrection, be-

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 5.

Deity are, we cannot tell; only we may infer, that our Saviour could, at least with the same facility, disappear to his disciples now, as he did to the Jews, when they were about to stone him, John viii. 59. which, it is generally supposed, he did, by the medium of a cloud cast over his body.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^e This he did, not to satisfy any hunger that his body could suffer after its resurrection, but to prove to them that his body was truly raised, and himself was really present. And, since it cannot be supposed, that Christ in this action, designed any illusion, it follows from his very eating, that his body had those parts by which we chew our meat, and withal a stomach to receive it.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^f This, the evangelist tells us, our Saviour did, by opening their minds, Luke xxiv. 45. for it is one thing, to open the scriptures themselves, or to explain them, and another to open their understandings to perceive them; and Christ, very probably, did the latter, by giving them now some first-fruits of that spirit of prophecy, which fell more plentifully on them at the day of Pentecost.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^g Though the word *ἐθν* does, in some particular places, signify the tribes and families of the Jews, exclusive of other people, and, in very many places, the nations of the heathen world, in opposition to the Jews; yet this we are to observe, that wherever mention is made of preaching the gospel, in order to gain converts to the Christian faith, the word relates primarily to the several parts of Judea, and to the Jews, where-soever they are in their dispersions abroad; then, secondarily, to the Gentiles mingled with the Jews; and finally, to the whole Gentile world, when, upon the Jews' rejecting the gospel, the apostles were forced to depart from them; for such the tenor of their commission, and such their constant practice was; 'It was necessary,' says Paul and Barnabas to the Jews, 'that the word of God should first have been spoken to you,' which refers, I suppose, to some precept of Christ, (see Matt. x. 6. and xv. 24.) which made it necessary, 'but seeing ye have put it from you, lo, we turn to the Gentiles,' Acts xiii. 46.—*Hammond's Annotations*.

^h As Christ's resurrection was a matter of fact, it must be proved by the testimony of eye-witnesses, who, if they be honest men, and suffer the greatest prejudices in their fortunes, reputation, and life, for this testimony, give us the greater reason to believe it. For their honesty will not suffer them, upon any account whatever, to deviate from the truth, their interest and prudence will not permit them, without any necessity laid upon them, to testify a falsehood, much more the grossest falsehood, to their utmost damage, and without any prospect

ing their master to their excessive grief and sorrow.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^a He who was the spokesman upon this occasion, is said to be Cleophas, Luke xxiv. 18. who was the brother of Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary, and so the reputed uncle of Christ; whose son Simeon, (says Eusebius, b. iii. c. 10.) by the joint consent of the apostles then living, was made bishop of Jerusalem, after St James, as being the nearest of kin to our Saviour.—*Howell's History*.

^b And so very probably he would have done, had not the disciples pressed him to stay with them. But supposing he had been resolved to abide with them, and was minded to try the temper of his fellow-travellers, we cannot from hence charge him either with dissimulation, or deceit: because, though our words ought to be the certain interpreters of our thoughts, and are therefore not to be employed so as to deceive any, yet walking hath no certain signification, nor was it ever instituted to be an indication of the mind.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^c The original word in St Luke is *κατεβιάσαντο*, which our translation has rendered, 'they constrained him.' But how did they constrain him? Did they lay violent hands on him, and carry him in whether he would or not? The sequel shows—saying, 'abide with us; for it groweth late, and the day is far spent.' The expression in such cases, must always be interpreted according to popular usage. Usages, such as this, of expressing great urgency of solicitation by terms which, in strictness, imply force and compulsion, are common in every tongue. How little, then, is there of candour, or at least of common sense, in the exposition which has been given by some, of a like phrase of the same writer, chap. xiv. 23. 'Compel them to come in.'—*Campbell on the Gospels*.—ED.

^d Origen is of opinion, that our blessed Lord for the forty days that he was upon earth after his resurrection, could make himself visible or invisible, when and to whom he pleased. It is not to be doubted, but that he had the same body that was deposited in the grave; but then, what the powers of a raised and glorified body, especially when in conjunction with the

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fore they were to depart from Jerusalem. And thus ended the first day of the week, which, in honour of our blessed Saviour's resurrection, has ever since been kept as the sabbath ^a among Christians.

At the above mentioned appearance of our blessed Saviour, all the apostles, except Thomas, ^b were present; and when they recounted to him every particular that had happened in his absence, so far was he from giving his assent to them, that he openly declared, that, unless he had the utmost evidence ^c of sense, by putting his

of advantage: and then, if they confirm this their testimony by all kinds of signs, miracles, and wondrous powers, exercised by themselves, and others who embraced their testimony, and if this be done in all places, and on all persons, for a whole age, or ages; this makes it a thing impossible, that they should thus attest a lie: and therefore our Lord bids his apostles stay at Jerusalem, till they were thus empowered, by virtue from on high, to confirm this testimony, (Acts i. 8.)—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^a The Jewish sabbath was at first instituted, not barely in commemoration of God's creating the world, but, as there is another reason subjoined, in memory of their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage: 'For remember, that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, therefore the Lord thy God commandeth thee to keep the sabbath-day,' (Deut. v. 15.) Now this bondage of theirs was an emblem of our captivity under sin, and their deliverance a type of our spiritual redemption. When therefore our redemption was accomplished, it became proper, that the day of sabbath should be altered; especially when the wise providence of God had so ordered matters, that the old Jewish sabbath, that is the seventh day, should be passed over, and the first made choice of, to be honoured with two such glorious miracles, as the resurrection of our blessed Lord from the dead, and the coming of the Holy Ghost from heaven. After this, indeed, we find the apostles frequenting the synagogue on the Jewish sabbath, but, from the time of their Lord's resurrection they never did it, as they did before, according to the commandment, (Luke xxiii. 56.) but according to custom, or as the manner was, (Acts xvii. 2.) and therefore we have reason to believe, that, from the very first, they looked upon the ancient sabbath as superseded by this other, which from the beginning they called ἡ Κυριακή, the Lord's day, and from the beginning employed in acts of religious worship. To which purpose we find Ignatius exhorting Christians, not to "sabbatize with the Jews, but to live according to the Lord's day, in which our life arose with him;" *Epist. ad Mag.* vol. iii.—*Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, and *Whitby's Annotations.*

^b What might be the occasion of this apostle's absence is variously conjectured. Some are of opinion, that, as all fled from their Master, when he was apprehended in the garden, they did not so soon assemble again, but by degrees dropped in, one by one, as they recovered from their fright; and that therefore, at this time, Thomas was not returned to the company. But others, from the natural temper of this apostle, as it appears from the scripture passages where he is concerned, to be very scrupulous, and hard of belief, do rather think, that taking offence at the apostles' easy credulity, as he deemed it, and looking upon all that the women from the sepulchre, and the two disciples from Emmaus, had said, as so many idle tales, he left the company in pure disgust, not long before our Saviour came in.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Young's Sermons*, vol. ii.

^c The manner by which the apostle might bring himself to this resolution, might possibly be by some such arguments as these:—"Jesus of Nazareth was put to death upon the cross; and, being dead, was laid and sealed up in a sepulchre, which was strictly watched by a guard of soldiers: but I am told, and required to believe, that, notwithstanding all this, he is risen, and indeed alive. Now, surely, things suitable to the stated course of nature should be believed before such as are quite beside it; and for a dead man to return to life is preternatural, but that those who report it may be mistaken, is very natural and usual. Dead I saw him; but that he is risen I only hear. In what I see with mine own eyes, I cannot easily be deceived; but in what I only hear, I may, and often am. Here being two things then proposed to my belief, my reason tells me, that I ought to choose that which is most credible; but it seems more credible,

finger into the holes in his hands and side, he would not believe a word of what they told him. On the Sunday following therefore, when, in the same place, they all met together, with the doors shut for fear of the Jews, and Thomas was with them, Jesus came, and standing in the midst of them, saluted them as formerly, with the blessing of peace. After that, turning to Thomas, he offered him the satisfaction which he desired, namely, the feeling his hands, and his side, where the nails and the spear had pierced; which when the apostle had done, and upon conviction cried out in transport, 'My God, and my Lord!' ^d our Saviour gave him to understand, that his believing, after such a demonstrative evidence, was neither so praiseworthy, nor rewardable, as was the faith of those who had not the like conviction.

After this appearance to the apostles in a full body, they all resolved, pursuant ¹ to their Lord's directions, to leave Judea, and return into their own province of Galilee. They had not been long there, before Peter, and several others of them, went a fishing ^e in the lake or sea of Tiberias, but after much toiling all night, they caught nothing. In the morning, as they were making to shore, a person, ^f unknown to them, being informed of their ill success, advised them to cast their net on the right side of the ship, which, when they had done, they enclosed so great a number of large fishes, as made John suspect that the person on shore might possibly be their master. This he no sooner suggested to Peter,

¹ Mat. xxvi. 32.—xxviii. 7.

that a small number of witnesses, frightened and disturbed as they are, should be deceived, or, as honest as once they were, may conspire to deceive me, than that one should rise from the dead; and therefore, excepting," &c.—*Young's Sermons*, vol. ii.

^d This is a noble confession of the apostle's faith, wherein he not only recognises Jesus for the Messiah, the very same Lord to whom he had been a servant and companion during the space of his ministry, but owns likewise, and proclaims his divine nature. For the original here is in terms so strict, and with such an addition of the Greek article, as the very heretics, and enemies to truth, confess to be the character of the word of God, when taken in its proper sense, and intended of the true God only. Nor can the words, if put for a note of admiration only, be of force sufficient to express any conviction in Thomas; because expressions of wonder, though they properly speak astonishment and surprise, do not always imply belief, and may therefore import the strangeness, without the truth, of the thing: whereas our Saviour, in his answer to Thomas, 'Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed,' (John xx. 29.) accepts this as a full and sufficient declaration of his assent; and therefore, to make it such, we must admit of that paraphrase, which some ancient translations supply it with, by reading, 'Thou art my Lord, thou art my God.'—*Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. ii.

^e The apostles, as such had nothing to do, until the Holy Ghost should descend upon them; and, among the Jews, it was accounted a disgrace to be idle. Since fishing therefore was the ordinary occupation of several of them in this intermediate time, they thought it the best way to betake themselves to it, and that, not only to keep themselves employed, but to supply their own want of necessaries likewise, until they should have a proper call to the ministry, when, in all probability, they gave over the labours of their secular employs, and devoted themselves entirely to that work.—*Grotius's Annotations.*

^f By this one would think, that our blessed Lord, after his resurrection, was not a little changed in his outward appearance, since his apostles, notwithstanding more interviews than one, could not so readily distinguish him, either by his voice or looks. Upon this occasion, however, he seems by his question, John xxi. 5. to personate one who might be come to buy some fish of them, and under this guise, whilst they were busy and employed, might more easily pass upon them.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

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but Peter, impatient of delay, throws on his coat, ^a and jumps into the sea, and gets to land, while the other apostles had much ado to haul the vessel, and the net so loaded with fish, safe to shore. The number of the fishes was an hundred and fifty; but, what was more surprising, at their landing, they found a fire ready made, fish broiling on it, and bread standing by. This notwithstanding our Lord ordered them to bring some of those which they had caught, and having ^b asked them to sit down with him, he not only distributed to them, but eat ^c some of the bread and fish himself, to give them a still farther assurance of the reality of his resurrection.

When dinner was ended, he entered into conversation with Peter; and having thrice demanded ^d of him, if he loved him, and thrice received a declaration that he did; he, each time, enjoined him to take care of the flock which he had committed to him. After this, in a figurative speech, he signified to him, by what manner of death he was to glorify God, even by crucifixion; ^e but,

^a The text tells us, that he was 'naked' before; but what is called 'naked' signifies only to have part of the body 'uncovered,' or to be without a gown, or upper garment, according to the custom of the eastern people, and of the Romans, who, when they went abroad, or made any public appearance, wore a long upper garment called in Latin 'Toga.' Of this kind was what the evangelist calls 'a fisher's coat;' and from hence it seems pretty plain, that Peter did not swim, as it is usually thought, but wade to land; since, if decency was the motive of putting on his coat, he could not have preserved that decency, had he come dripping wet, as he must have done, upon the supposition of his swimming, into his master's presence.—*Howell's History*, in the notes, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^b The fire, fish, and bread, on the shore, were all created, and produced by Christ out of nothing, to evidence, at this time, his divine power, but, lest there should be thought any delusion in these, he ordered likewise some of the others, that were just then taken, to be dressed; and, that they might not take him for an apparition only, he invited them to dine with him. As therefore by the miracle of creating, and miraculously catching the fishes, he proved himself to be a God; so, by his present eating of the fish, he evinced himself to be a man, and consequently teacheth us, that our exalted high priest continues our kinsman in heaven.—*Hammond's* and *Burkitt's Annotations*.

^c It is not indeed said expressly, that at this time he did eat; but, since St Peter tells us, that 'they did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead,' Acts x. 41, and St Luke testifies, that, on another occasion, he did eat before them, chap. xxiv. 42, 43, as he did it then for the confirmation of his resurrection, it is hardly to be doubted, but that he did it now for the same end.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^d Our Saviour's words to St Peter are, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?' John xxii. 15. More than these? What? Some will tell us, that our Saviour here pointing at the nets and fishing boats, demanded of Peter, whether he loved him and his service better than his ordinary employment and occupation; but this is a forced and jejune exposition. The apostle, to be sure, before our Lord's being taken into custody, had been very liberal in his professions of love to him. He had promised to go with him to prison and to death; and, to show how much he surpassed the rest of his brethren, 'though all should be offended because of thee,' says he, 'yet will not I,' Matt. xxvi. 33, and yet upon the approach of the first danger, he forgot all his promises, and behaved more ingloriously than the rest. It is in allusion, therefore to this, that our Lord begins this discourse with Peter; that he calls to his mind his former speeches, and contrary performances: and, by thrice repeating this question, 'Peter, lovest thou me?' in respect of his three denials, and at first adding the words 'more than these,' in regard to his magnifying his love, above all others, he now engages him, by the sense and consideration of his fall, to a better discharge, and a more constant expression of his love, in converting men to the faith of Christ.—*Whitby's* and *Hammond's Annotations*.

^e The occasion of his being put to death is generally reported

when Peter desired to know the fate of his favourite apostle St John, instead of gratifying his curiosity, he required him rather to attend to his own concerns, and as he was to resemble him in the manner of his death, so to endeavour to imitate him in his deportment under it. ¹ 'If I will that he stay till I come, ^f what is that to thee; Follow thou me.' This answer of our Saviour's, however, gave occasion to a report among the rest of the disciples, ^g that John was never to die; but ² himself refuted that opinion in his gospel, and, by surviving the fate of Jerusalem, verified what our Saviour meant.

After this, our Lord having appointed a solemn meeting of as many of his disciples as could conveniently be got together, and named a certain mountain in Galilee ^h for that purpose, he there appeared, not only to the eleven apostles, but ³ to five hundred brethren at once. Here he acquainted his apostles, that all power, both in heaven and earth, was given unto him; commanded them to instruct all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and to press them to the observation of all his precepts; foretold them what mighty signs ⁱ and wonders would

¹ John xxi. 22.

² Ibid. xxi. 23.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 6.

to be,—that he, assisted by St Paul, had at Rome confounded the diabolical illusions of Simon Magus: whereupon Nero, who was a favourer of magicians, being provoked, or as others think, to ingratiate himself with the people of Rome, after he had fired their city, gave orders for his being put to death, which the prefects, in the emperor's absence, took care to see executed upon him and St Paul at the same time. The latter, as a denizen, was beheaded with a sword; but St Peter, who had no such claim to the like privilege, was sentenced to crucifixion. This, and the torment preparatory to it, he underwent with marvellous patience, and, as a mark of his humility, requested, and obtained, to have his body fastened to the cross, with his head downwards, as judging it too great an honour to suffer in the same manner and posture that his Lord had done before him.—*Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. iv.

^f That is, come in judgment to take vengeance on the Jews. For though there are but two personal advents mentioned in Scripture; the first, when our Lord came into the world to redeem it; and the second when he shall return again to judge; yet this is no objection against his intermediate advent, which was not personal by any visible descent of his from heaven, but virtual, and effected by his sending the Roman army against the Jews, and giving signs from heaven and in the clouds of their approaching ruin. So that the sense of our Saviour's words is—'If my pleasure is, that he live till the dissolution of the Jewish state;' and accordingly, we find that, though Peter was put to death under Nero, yet St John continued even to the time of Trajan's reign, above an hundred years after our Saviour's birth, and so thirty years after that this coming of his was past.—*Whitby's* and *Hammond's Annotations*.

^g Because the Christians, at that time, by the coming of Christ, understood the last judgment; whereas our Saviour intended it of the destruction of Jerusalem, which, in effect, was a full emblem of the final dissolution of all things.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^h This mountain is generally supposed to be Tabor, the place where our Lord was transfigured, though some suppose it to be one that stood nearer the lake of Tiberias.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

ⁱ We are not to suppose, however, that our Lord promised the gift of miracles, to every Christian convert; since this would have made miracles, which should only be employed on important occasions, where the glory of God, or the good of mankind is concerned, too common, and consequently of no validity at all. So that this promise, though expressed in general terms, must necessarily be limited to the apostles, and apostolic men. Of their casting out devils, healing diseases, and speaking with new tongues, we have instances almost innumerable. Their taking up serpents seems to be foretold by that Sybil, from whose oracles Virgil very probably borrowed this verse of his:

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attend those who were true converts to his religion; and promised them his daily protection ^a and assistance, even unto the end of the world.

Forty days was the time pre-ordained for our Lord's continuance upon earth after his resurrection. These days were now almost expired, when the apostles, according as they were ordered, with some of their select friends, returned to Jerusalem, and there assembled themselves in a private place. Our blessed Saviour came to them; and, among other things, ¹ relating to the government of his church, gave them particularly in charge, that they should not depart from ^b Jerusalem, until they had received that miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost ^c

¹ Acts i. 3.

"The serpent shall perish, and the deceitful poisonous herb." And from St Paul it appears, that this promise was literally fulfilled, who, after a viper had fastened upon his hand for some time, shook it off into the fire without receiving any hurt, (Acts xxviii. 5.) And as to the drinking of deadly poisons, we have it recorded by Papias, of Barsabas, surnamed the just; by Ado, in his martyrology, of the Cæcilian soldier; and by Gregory of Tours, of Sabinus, bishop of Canoso; that they three did this without any mischief to themselves. But as miracles of this kind were more liable to exceptions, than such as were performed upon unbelievers, men being apt to think, that there might be some antidotes against the venom of these beasts, or the pernicious effects of these draughts, it must be owned, that providence thought fit to be more sparing in affording these.—*Calmet's Commentary*, *Hammond's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

a Our Saviour's words are,—'Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world,' (Mat. xxviii. 20.), where we must observe, that this promise was made, not to all Christians in general, but only to those whom Christ authorised to teach and baptize in his name, as the words themselves, and the occasion of speaking them, plainly show: and it contains a full declaration of our Lord's intention, that they should always be succeeded by others in the same office. For since the apostles all died within the compass of fourscore years, after this extensive promise was made, it could no ways be fulfilled but by our Lord's being with their successors in the gospel-ministry until the world's end. For what some imagine, that the *συντελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος* relates to the end of the Jewish age or economy, which lasted, as they say, to the destruction of the temple under Vespasian, and so confine this promise to the persons of the apostles only, is void of all foundation, unless we can suppose, that all sacred functions were to cease; neither baptism to be administered, nor the gospel preached after the destruction of Jerusalem, which is false in fact: and therefore, if we may be allowed to explain the design and meaning of this promise by the manner of its completion, we must conclude, that our Lord here engages himself to be present with his ministers, both by his special grace, and his authority, after the end of the Jewish economy, as well as till that time: and hence we may assure ourselves, that the ministry of the word, and administration of the sacraments, are a standing and perpetual ordinance, to continue in the Christian church throughout all ages; and that all the faithful ministers of Christ, in what part of the world soever God shall cast their lot, and what time soever they shall happen to live, may comfortably expect Christ's gracious presence with their persons, and his blessing upon their labours.—*Archbishop Potter's Church government*, c. iv. and *Burkitt's Annotations*.

b Of all places the apostles would least of all have chosen Jerusalem to tarry in, had not our Lord positively commanded them to continue there. For Jerusalem was now a place justly abhorred and detested by them, as reeking fresh with the blood of the holy and innocent Jesus; and yet Jerusalem is the place chosen by Christ for the pouring forth of his Holy Spirit upon his apostles; because there was the greatest company of spectators to behold it, and to be wrought upon by it; and because there had been the scenes of his greatest humiliation, and therefore he was minded to show forth his power and glory.—*Burkitt's Annotations*.

c The reasons assignable for this wonderful dispensation, are, 1. To enable them to be powerful witnesses of our Lord's resur-

rection, (Luke xxiv. 48.), and consequently that he was the true Messiah, or the prophet who was to come into the world, and was to be the Saviour of it: and therefore St Peter speaks thus to the Jews, 'Ye have killed the prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses,' (Acts iii. 15.) 2. To enable them to give an exact account, as far as divine wisdom saw it necessary, of what our Saviour did and taught: and therefore himself tells them, that 'the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, should testify of him, and bring all those things to their remembrance, which he had said unto them,' (John xv. 26.—xiv. 26.) And 3. To make them able ministers of the New Testament, that is, able to acquaint Christians with all saving truths, and to teach them all things that Christ had commanded to be observed, throughout all the ages of the church; and upon the strength of this promise, all Christians, in all ages, have believed, that the apostles and writers of the New Testament, both spake and wrote as they were moved or directed by the Spirit of God, and accordingly have received their doctrines, 'not as the words of men, but as they were in truth, the word of God,' (1 Thess. ii. 13.)—*Whitby's Annotations*.

d Thus the apostles preached in the most considerable cities of the then known world, as at Antioch, Alexandria, and even at Rome itself, as well as at Jerusalem and Samaria. They taught at Athens, and Corinth, and throughout all Greece, in such towns as were most learned, most corrupt, and most idolatrous. It was in the presence of all nations, of Greeks and barbarians, of the learned and the ignorant, of Jews and Romans, of princes and their people, that the disciples of Jesus Christ gave witness of the wonders they had 'seen with their eyes, heard with their ears, and touched with their hands,' and particularly of their Lord's resurrection: which testimony they supported, without any interest, and against all the reasons of human prudence, even to their last breath, and sealed it with their blood. Such was the establishment of Christianity!—*Fleury's Church History*.

e The custom among the Jews was, to give the benediction to a good number or congregation of people, with an elevation and extension of the hands, as appears from the practice of Aaron, Lev. ix. 22. But to any particular person, the blessing was given with the imposition of hands, as the example of Jacob, with regard to Ephraim and Manasseh, plainly shows, Gen. xlviii. 14.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

f This must be understood of his human nature only, because the divine nature fills all places, both in heaven and earth, and is at all times incapable of that which we properly call 'motion.' The same body of Christ therefore, which was born, and suffered and died, was actually carried up thither; and so our Saviour's ascension was no imaginary and figurative, but a real, proper, and corporeal ascent into heaven, and that in the most elevated part and noblest signification that this word, at any time does, or can possibly admit; and therefore he is said to have entered into the holy place, Heb. ix. 12. and to have 'ascended up far above all heavens,' Eph. iv. 10. into the 'presence of God and where he was before,' John vi. 62. So that, whatever heaven is higher than all the rest which are called heaven; whatever sanctuary is holier than all which are called holies, whatever place is of greatest dignity in all those courts above,

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sitteth at the ^a right hand of God, ¹ 'God blessed for ever.' Amen. ^b

CHAP. II. *Objections answered, and difficulties obviated.*

St Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, argues, from the majesty of Christ's divine nature, to the greatness of his condescension in becoming the Son of man, 'who being in the form of God,' as he expresses it, 'thought it no robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death.'² In this state of humiliation, it was highly proper and suitable to his character, to speak modestly of himself, and to make use of the lowest title that he had, as best becoming his present condition.

But there is another reason which some have assigned for the frequent use that he makes of this appellation; and that is, its being a prophetic name, whereby Daniel has thought fit to describe the promised Messiah. ³ ¹

¹ Rom. i. 25. ² Phil. ii. 6, &c. ³ Dan. vii. 13, 14.

into that place did our Saviour ascend, where, in the splendour of his deity, he was before he took upon him our humanity; as our learned bishop Pearson fully and elegantly expresses it; art. 4. and *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. iii.

^a This is one of those expressions wherein the Holy Ghost condescends to our capacity, by attributing to God the parts and gesture of a human body. The hand is the chief instrument of exerting our strength, and therefore often used to denote the power of God. The right-hand is the usual place of honour and respect, and therefore this denotes the highest dignity. Sitting, in like manner, intimates a state of ease and rest, and is properly the posture of those that are in power and authority, of kings upon their thrones, and magistrates in courts of justice; and therefore 'Christ's sitting at God's right hand,' implies thus much,—'that the same bliss, glory, and power, which, as the Son of God, he did before his incarnation enjoy with his Father, from all eternity, his human nature is now made partaker of in the highest heavens; that this God-man is invested with an absolute authority, and boundless dominion, and does now, in both natures, rule, as he shall one day judge, the whole world; and that till that day come, it is the duty of us, and all mankind, to reverence and obey, to trust in, and pray to him, as our only head and king, our rightful and universal Lord.'—*Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. iii.

^b In this illustrious manner did the Saviour depart, after having finished the grand work which he came down upon earth to execute; a work which God himself, in the remotest eternity, contemplated with pleasure, which angels anciently, and superior natures, with joy described as to happen, and which through all eternity to come shall, at periods the most immensely distant from the time of its execution, be looked back upon with inexpressible delight by every inhabitant of heaven. For though the little affairs of time may vanish altogether and be lost, when they are removed far back by the endless progression of duration, this object is such, that no distance however great can lessen it. The kingdom of God is erected upon the incarnation and sufferings of the Son of God, the kingdom and city of God comprehending all the virtuous beings that are in the universe, made happy by goodness and love: and therefore none of them, can ever forget the foundation on which their happiness stands firmly established. In particular the human species, recovered by this labour of the Son of God, will view their deliverer, and look back on his stupendous undertaking with high rapture, while they are feasting without interruption on its sweet fruits, ever growing more delicious. The rest of the members likewise of the city of God will contemplate it with perpetual plea-

saw in the night vision,' says he, 'and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days: and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people nations, and languages, should serve him.' It is in allusion to this therefore, as these men think, and in order to assert his claim to the office of the Messiah, that our Saviour so commonly calls himself by that name.

However this be, it is certain, that he is not so fond of the name of the Son of man, as not to desire to be considered in the capacity of the Son of God likewise. For, when he put the question to his disciples, 'Whom say ye that I am?' and Peter, in the name of the rest, replied, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,' he is far from being displeased with the answer, when he returns the apostle this compliment, 'blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father that is in heaven.'

Our Saviour indeed was so far from making any unnecessary declarations of himself, that, ⁵ on some occasions, we find him labouring to conceal his divine character, and charging his disciples to say nothing of it, until his resurrection: ⁶ but, notwithstanding this, whenever he was fairly called upon, and especially by persons invested with authority, he never concealed it. When ⁶ the Jews came around him in Solomon's porch, and said unto him, 'how long dost thou make us doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plain:': his answer is express: 'I told you, and you believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me: for I and my Father are one.' When he stood before the judgment-seat, and the high-priest demanded of him, ⁷ 'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God;': his reply is, 'Thou hast said,' or, as St Mark ⁸ expresses it, 'I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' Nay, there are some instances, wherein, of his own accord, and without any demand of this kind, he freely discovers who he was; for having cured the man that was born blind, and afterwards meeting him accidentally, ⁹ 'dost

⁴ Mat. xvi. 15, &c. ⁵ See Mark viii. 30. and Mat. xvii. 9.

⁶ Jno. x. 23, 24. ⁷ Mat. xxvi. 63, 64. ⁸ Chap. xiv. 62. ⁹ Jno. ix. 35. sure, as the happy means of recovering their kindred that were lost, and it may be as the grand confirmation of the whole rational system, in their subjection to him who liveth and reigneth for ever, and whose favour is better than life.—*M^r Knight's Harmony*.—Ed.

^c That Christ was very cautious of acknowledging himself to be the promised Messiah, in his conversing with the Jews, is very apparent; (compare Mat. xvi. 20. Mark viii. 29, 30; Luke xxii. 67. and John x. 24.), and the reason was, that the Jews had such notions of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, that they would have construed an open declaration of himself under that character as a claim to the throne of David; in consequence of which, many would have taken up arms in the cause, (John vi. 15.) and others would have accused him to the Roman governor, as a rebel against Cæsar, (Luke xx. 20.) as they afterwards did, (Luke xxiii. 2.)—This Mr Locke has stated at large in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 59—77. Yet I think there was a nicety in Christ's conduct, beyond what is there represented: for our Lord in effect declared the thing, while he declined that particular title; and in a multitude of places, represents himself as the Son of man, and the Son of God, which were both equivalent phrases, and generally understood by the Jews, though a Roman would not so easily have entered into the force of them. Accordingly we find this interpretation was in fact given to them, (John vii. 31, 41. and ix. 22.)

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thou believe on the Son of God?" says he: whereupon the man asking, 'who is the Son of God, that I may believe on him?' our Saviour replies, 'Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that talketh with thee.'

Though therefore our blessed Saviour delighted much in the appellation of the Son of man; yet as he did not, upon that account, decline the title of the 'Son of God,' and had consequently two natures united in the same person, our business must be, to distinguish between these two natures, and then we shall soon perceive the reason of our Saviour's informing his apostles, that his Father was greater than him, namely, greater with respect to the Son's humanity, though, as touching their divinity, they are perfectly equal; or greater, as he is the Father, and consequently the fountain and original of the Godhead, though their nature and essence be one and the same.

¹ In the very notion of paternity and filiation, there is some kind of subordination implied; but then we are to observe, that this is not a subordination of nature and substance, no, nor of essential attributes, or natural properties, but merely a personal subordination, founded on the personal properties: and, to be satisfied in this, we need only consider, that the communication of the essence, upon which this subordination is grounded, is only a personal action, and not an act or attribute of the divine essence. To generate, and to be generated, are not essential attributes of the divine nature, but merely personal acts of the Father and Son; and, consequently, the sole foundation of this subordination being merely in personal properties, the subordination itself, founded therein, can only relate to the personal, and not at all to the essential properties; for, notwithstanding the Son's personal subordination, he still continues, with the Father in substance equal, in majesty, co-eternal.

When therefore our Saviour seems to own his inferiority of knowledge, and to profess himself ignorant of some future events, that the Father had reserved to himself, the meaning must be, ² Either that as man, he did not know beyond the capacities of a human and finite understanding, and not what he knew as God; or that, as a prophet sent from God, he had no commission to declare it, and what was no part of his prophetic office, he knew nothing of, that is, had no instructions to reveal it. For, that in this sense ^a the original word is sometimes taken, we may learn from that passage to the Corinthians, where St Paul tells his disciples, that³ he had determined not to know any thing among them, that is, not to teach or instruct them in any point of doctrine, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

"It is one thing therefore," says the learned ⁴ Light-foot, "to understand the Son of God, barely, and abstractly, for the second person in the Holy Trinity, and another, to understand him for the Messiah, or second person incarnate. To say, that the second in the Trinity is ignorant of any thing, is blasphemous: but to say so of the Messiah, though he be that second person in the Trinity, is not so. For, though the second person, abstractly considered, according to his mere Deity, be

co-equal with the Father, co-omnipotent, co-omniscient, co-eternal with him; yet the Messiah, who is God-man, considered as the Messiah, was a servant and a messenger to the Father, from whom he received commands and authority, as himself frequently declared, ⁵ "that he spake nothing of himself, but that the Father, who sent him, gave him commandment what he should say, and what he should speak." Though therefore it plainly appears, both from the many prognostics which he mentions, and the exact description which he gives of the destruction of Jerusalem, that our Saviour could not but know the precise day and hour of its happening, yet this he might call one of ⁶ "those times and seasons which the Father had put in his own power," because he had received no order or direction for him to reveal it.

The generality of the ancients however run into the other notion, which arises from the consideration of the two natures in Christ; and therefore, with Cyril of Alexandria, they say, that he sometimes declared himself as God, and sometimes as man, thereby to show, that he was very God, and very man; that as he was pleased, in respect of his manhood, to suffer hunger and thirst, and other inconveniences of that kind, so he condescended to take upon him the innocent infirmities of it, among which ignorance of future events is one, but this without any disparagement to his ⁷ "Godhead, wherein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" and that, in short, he both knew, and knew not, when the day and hour here spoken of would come; the former, with respect to his divine, and the latter, to his human nature.

This solution however does not please so well. For, if we refer the day and hour, as they were primarily intended, to the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, what signs and prognostics does our Saviour give his disciples of this great event? Why he foretels them, That not one stone of all these glorious buildings should be left upon one another: that there should be wars and rumours of wars, when nation should rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; that there should be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places; that false prophets, and false Christs, should arise, who should amuse them with destructive hopes of imaginary deliverances; that Jerusalem should be encompassed with a foreign enemy, who should at last make a final destruction of it, and of all that was therein; that the abomination of desolation should stand in the holy place, where, of all places in the world, it ought not to have stood; and that all these things should come to pass, while some of the present generation were still alive. ⁸ Now, since all these things did literally come to pass, as our Lord, forty years before, had foretold that they should; since, at the time of his foretelling them, the Romans were in peaceable possession of Judea, nor was there any prospect at all of the troubles and commotions which afterwards ensued; and since the completion of these prophecies is preserved to us by a Jewish writer, who himself was concerned in these very troubles, and did not record them with any design to gratify us Christians; can we imagine, that Jesus Christ, who was this prophet, could possibly be

¹ Stevens on the eternal generation.

² Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part ii. p. 60.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 2.

⁴ On Mark xiii. 32.

^a For an explanation of this passage, (Mat. xiii. 32) — See note to 1001. p. — Ed.

⁵ John xii. 49.

⁶ Acts i. 7.

⁷ Col. ii. 3.

⁸ Wotton's Omniscience of the Son of God.

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ignorant of the day and hour when these predictions should be completed? or rather, ought we not to think, that all he intended by that expression, was to signify to his hearers, that it was then an improper time for him to reveal the particular period when that catastrophe was to overtake them? But two days after this, his disciples own his divinity, and acknowledge, that ¹ he knew all, and ² all things that he had heard from the Father, or had a commission to declare from the Father, himself avers, that he had not failed to make known unto them; and therefore we may well presume, that the individual day and hour when Jerusalem was finally to be destroyed, as it was a matter of no concern for them to be acquainted with, so was it no part of his instructions from heaven to let them into a minute knowledge of it; that in the signs and forerunners which he had discovered to them, he had said enough to put them, and all considering men, upon their guard; that fuller and more particular indications of the time, as things then stood, were by no means proper; for though they might possibly be able to ³ bear his words, yet others might be tempted to make an ill use of them, contrary to his original meaning.

It is to be observed, however, that, in regard our blessed Saviour had the divine and human nature both united in one person, great caution must be used, in observing his actions and affections, that we do not mistake in assigning any of them to a wrong principle. ⁴ For as those works of wonder which exceeded or controlled all the powers of created nature, must be attributed to a principle omnipotent and divine; so in those others, which relate either to joy or sorrow, subjection or exultation, he must be understood to proceed upon a principle purely human, and that the faculties of the divine nature were in such cases, totally suspended.

Now it is certain, that the perfections of the divine nature will admit of neither any increase nor diminution of its power and greatness. The author to the Hebrews ⁵ applies to our Saviour Christ these words of the Psalmist, ⁶ 'Thou, O Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hand;' and surely he who created the world, and ⁷ 'without him not any thing was made, that was made,' could not fail of having, from all eternity, a sovereign power both in heaven and earth. It is not in respect of his divinity, therefore, that our Lord speaks of his enlargement of power, but of his human nature; which, in reward of his obedience and humiliation, ⁸ 'was highly exalted; and obtained of God a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

It is equally certain, that the divine nature is not capable of any grief or sorrow, or other perturbation of mind arising from an apprehension of some imminent danger, or a sense of some incumbent calamity; and therefore when our Saviour complains of the vast load of sorrow that lay heavy upon his spirits, and almost quite

sunk them down, this he must be supposed to say with regard to his human nature only, because his divine was exempt from all such suffering. But then the question is, from what particular cause it was, that all this sorrow and fear, and consternation of mind, for ^a so the original words import, could possibly arise?

⁹ Those who impute all this to nothing more than a natural dread of pain and death, have this difficulty to contend with, that how grievous soever these things may be, especially to sinful flesh and blood, yet they are such as have been corrected by reason, and in their most tremendous shapes, borne with great patience and resignation of mind; and therefore it can hardly be imagined, that the prospect of a crucifixion could have raised such commotions in a soul which had the testimony of a good conscience to support it, and a glorious reward set before it, to make a full recompense for what he suffered.

¹⁰ Others are of opinion, therefore, that this excessive sorrow and dejection of mind were occasioned by the perfect and penetrating light, which then diffused itself in our Saviour's mind all at once, concerning the guilt of sin, and the wrath of an incensed God; that the horror of these filled and amazed his vast apprehensive soul; and that these apprehensions could not but affect his tender heart, full of the highest zeal for God's glory, and the most relenting compassion for the souls of men; for, if the true contrition of one single sinner, ¹¹ say they, bleeding under the sting of the law, only for his own iniquities, cannot be performed, without great bitterness of sorrow and remorse, what bounds can be set to that grief, what measure to that anguish, which proceeded from a full apprehension of all the transgressions of so many millions of sinners?

¹² This is the most common solution: and yet there is something in the context which has induced others to think, that on this occasion, the devil and his angels had collected all their forces, in order to fill our Saviour's mind with the most dismal terrifying scenes of horror, thereby to divert him from his intended enterprize. For, 1st, we may observe that, before he entered the garden, where this agony seized him, he expected some terrible assault from these infernal powers, and therefore he tells his disciples, 'The prince of the world cometh,' ¹³ that is, is now mustering up his legions to make his last effort upon me; but this is my comfort, that he will find nothing in me, no sinful inclination to take part with

⁹ See Stillingfleet's sermons; Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. ii. and his sermons on several occasions.

¹⁰ Pearson on the creed; and South's sermons, vol. iii.

¹¹ Ibid. ¹² Scott's Mediator. ¹³ Jno. xiv. 30.

^a The words in the original are three,—*λυπίσθαι, ἐκθαμβισθαι, and ἀδηνουίν.* The first *λυπίσθαι* is of a known and ordinary signification; but, in this case, it is to be raised to the highest degree of signification, as appears by the words which follow, *περίλυτός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἕως θανάτου*, Mat. xxvi. 38. So that it does not only signify the excess of sorrow, surrounding and encompassing the soul, but also such as brings a consternation and dejection of mind, bowing the soul under the pressures and burden of it. The second *ἐκθαμβισθαι*, in the vulgar Latin, is *pavere*, but, according to the Greek idiom, bears a much stronger sense, and signifies indeed the highest degree of fear, horror, and amazement. The third *ἀδηνουίν* denotes the consequences of excessive fear and sorrow, that is, anxiety of mind, disquietude and restlessness.—Pearson on the creed.

¹ John xvi. 30. ² Ibid. xv. 15. ³ Ibid. xvi. 12.

⁴ Stanhope's sermons on several occasions. ⁵ Heb. i. 10.

⁶ Psal. cii. 25.

⁷ Jno. i. 3.

⁸ Phil. ii. 9.

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him, no guilty reflection to expose me to his tyranny. 2dly, That when the disciples entered the garden with our Lord, he gave them a strict charge, ¹ 'to watch and pray, that they might not enter into temptation:' which plainly implies, that, in that time and place, there was some occasion for a more than ordinary application to these duties; and this cannot so well be imputed to any thing else, as those numbers of evil spirits, who were going furiously to assault their Master, and would not altogether spare them. And, 3dly, that when the three elect apostles were a little advanced with him into the garden, he earnestly entreated them to watch with him; and yet we find them suddenly asleep, and no sooner awake, but asleep again, and again: for the text tells us, ² 'that their eyes were heavy;' which prodigious drowsiness of theirs, upon so momentous an occasion, cannot be ascribed to any thing so well as to a preternatural stupefaction of their senses by some of these infernal spirits now conflicting with their Master, and who, perhaps, to deprive him of the solace of their company, did, by their diabolical arts, produce that extraordinary stupor which oppressed them, that so having him alone, they might have the greater advantage to tempt and terrify him.

These observations make it highly probable, that this his last agony was occasioned by a mighty struggle and conflict with the powers of darkness, ³ who having, by God's permission, mustered up all their strength, intended once more to try their fortune against him, and to this purpose surrounding him, very probably, with a mighty host, exerted all their power and malice in persecuting his innocent soul; in distracting it with horrid phantasms; in afflicting it with dismal suggestions: in vexing and tormenting it with dire imaginations, and dreadful spectacles; and, in short, in practising all the arts and machinations that their malice and subtily could invent, to tempt and deter him if possible from his gracious design of redeeming mankind.

⁴ Had our Lord indeed, in this conflict, been assisted with any succour from his divinity, this would have set him far above the opposition of any created power; but, that the second Adam might make a reparation for the fall of the first, and, in that very nature, left to itself, and, unassisted by any foreign aid, vanquish the enemy that had given it so grievous a foil before, the divine perfections lay by, as it were, and forbore to engage: they withdrew their influence for that time, and suspending their operations, left him to encounter as man, though much more perfect than any other man.

Putting all these dismal and distracting things together then, the apprehension of a cruel and ignominious death, the sense of the guilt and heinous nature of sin, the prospect of God's wrath, the combination of devils, and the suspension of the divine power and protection, we need not much wonder that we find our blessed Saviour in the garden complaining, that 'his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;' or on the cross crying out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' That we find him, in the midst of his agony, sweating out blood in great abundance; deprecating death with more vehemence than some heathen sages, and many Christian

martyrs did; and when his spirits were thus depressed, his human nature quite exhausted, and no relief from the divine afforded him, that an angel should be sent from heaven to revive and strengthen him. For when the divinity, which resided in him, had either suspended or subtracted its influence, he, who, in respect of his manhood, ⁵ was made a little while inferior to the angels, and, in respect of his sufferings, was now in a more distressed condition than ever man knew, being left to his human nature alone, could not but stand in need of the comfort and consolation of an angel.

All this while the divine nature of Christ, though it did not think fit to exert itself, ⁶ was inseparably united to the human. Nor can we conceive why it should not still continue, even after death, in the same manner united; since no power has any force against omnipotence, nor could any finite agent work any alteration in that union. To understand the nature of this union, we must observe, ⁷ that in the person of Christ, after the assumption of our nature, there were two different substantial unions; one, of the two parts of his humanity, his soul and body, whereby he was truly man: and the other, of his divine and human nature, whereby he was both God and man in one person: and that, though at his death the constituent parts of him as man, that is, his human soul and body, were parted, and so continued for some time, yet the union of his two natures still remained; ⁸ death made no alteration in that, nor were his soul and body ever separated from the Godhead, but, as the divine nature still subsisted, they still continued in conjunction with it: upon which account, as we are taught to believe, that God redeemed us with his blood, so has it been the constant language of the church, that 'God died for us,' which in no sense could be true, unless our blessed Saviour's soul and body, in the instant of separation, and until their conjunction again, were united to the Deity. And therefore, when we hear him crying upon the cross, ⁹ 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' he means the same thing as when he calls upon us to ¹⁰ 'behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.' For from these words we can infer nothing more than this,—that he was then bereft of such joys and comforts as he expected from the Deity, to assuage and mitigate the acerbity of the torments he was under. The truth is, what seems to solve all difficulties best, is the ancient notion of the Godhead's being quiescent, and not exerting its power and efficacy in such instances, where the humanity is known to have suffered. In this manner it confessedly withdrew at his death; otherwise we cannot see how he could have died at all; and in this manner, by parity of reason, it might continue its

⁵ Heb. ii. 7. ⁶ Pearson on the Creed, art. iv. ⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Mat. xxvii. 46.

⁹ Lam. i. 12.

¹⁰ The words of St Austin are very full and excellent to this purpose. "Wherefore the Word became flesh, that he might dwell among us, and from the Word was he formed man, namely, a whole man, soul and body. What did his suffering do, what did his death do, unless the separating of his body from his soul? It did not separate his soul from the Word; for though the Lord died, (undoubtedly his flesh died,) but his soul, I affirm, was not separated from the Word; the soul only left the body for a short time, to rise again with returning animation. To the soul of the robber he said, 'To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise.' He did not leave the faithful soul of the robber, and did he leave his own? Forbid it: as he had such care for the thief's soul, his own he must inseparably have retained."—*Tract on John*; 47.

¹ Mat. xxvi. 41. ² Mat. xxvi. 43. ³ Scot's Mediator.

⁴ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. ii.

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quiescence during the whole space of his interment, and until its power and operation were requisite, in order to effect his resurrection.

As our blessed Saviour then was both God and man in one person, and the efficacy and mystery of man's redemption consisted in this union,¹ it was necessary that there should be a clear and undoubted demonstration given of the reality of both these natures. But, since the distinguishing marks of human nature lie chiefly in the soul, there had not been that demonstration given of our Saviour's perfect humanity, unless he had discovered, in his conduct, an exact resemblance to us, in all the natural passions and inclinations of our souls. Now, in this soul of ours there is a twofold principle, sense and reason. Sense catches at the present, pursues ease and safety, and industriously consults the preservation and advantage of the body; whereas reason enlarges our prospect, takes into consideration distant and future objects, and persuades the foregoing of some satisfactions, the running of some hazards, and enduring of some difficulties in the discharge of our duty, and the expectation of a greater good in reversion. Under the former of these are comprehended all our natural passions, which are the secret springs that move us to what we do; under the latter are the understanding and judgment, which direct, and regulate, and bound, and over-rule these passions. But still both these are constituent parts, and as necessary to make a perfect soul, as the rational soul and human body are to make one perfect man; and from hence it follows, that the weakness and corruption of our nature, as it stands depraved by sin, does not consist in our being tenderly touched with the fear of present evil, or the desire of present good, but only in suffering these fears and desires to prevail, and take place, against the dictates of reason and duty.

Aversion to pain and conflict, to sorrow and death, and whatever is shocking and frightful to human nature, are affections interwoven with our original frame and constitution. Adam, in his state of innocence, felt them; and therefore it is no just reflection upon the second Adam, that he, in like manner, felt them too. Infirmities indeed these aversions may be called, in comparison of those perfections which belong to God, and unbodied spirits; but then they are such infirmities as all who partake of bodies, must have, and which if our Saviour had been destitute of, he could not have been truly man.

Now, if Christ, as man, could not be altogether indifferent and unconcerned at such severe trials, as the imposition of the burden of our sins, the infliction of pain and torment, his approaching conflict with the powers of darkness, and the utter subduction of all divine aid and assistance, must necessarily bring upon him; then surely it could not misbecome him to use all possible means for declining them, and consequently to express his concern, by praying against them, but with this modest reserve and limitation,² 'Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.' For it was no disparagement either of his obedience to God, or love to mankind, that he had an aversion to death, and pain, and sufferings; but, in truth, an higher commendation to both; since notwithstanding so tender a sense of what he was to suffer, he offered him-

self to undergo whatever God, for their benefit and salvation, should think proper to lay upon him. So that the more passionate his wishes were for a release, the more meritorious was his submission; and the stronger his aversions were, the more was the resignation of his own will; and, consequently, the more acceptable was his compliance with that of his heavenly Father.

His heavenly Father, no doubt, could³ have exempted mankind from punishment, without an equivalent compensation for their guilt. As an all-wise being, he could have invented many methods of salvation, without the sacrifice of his beloved Son; and as a supreme lawgiver, he might have extended mercy to whom, and upon what terms he thought fit; but then, as he was the supreme lawgiver, and governor of the world, it was consistent with his justice, and his infinite wisdom, we may say, required it of him, to vindicate the authority of his laws, and see sin punished in such an exemplary manner, as to deter, if possible, his subjects from it for the future.

Now this was the state and condition of mankind, when God's infinite wisdom contrived the scheme of their redemption. They had alienated themselves from him; were under sin, under condemnation, under the curse of the law, under the sentence of death. In this condition, however, they were not to be left to perish; God's infinite goodness would not permit that: but then, how to accomplish their recovery, and preserve his attributes inviolate, this was the difficulty. For how, in consistence with the glory, and justice, and sanctity of God, could such enemies be reconciled, and such offenders pardoned? Would omnipotent majesty think of any treaty, without an advocate and intercessor? Would the sovereign ruler of the world suffer his honour to be slighted, without a proper vindication? Would the great patron of justice relax the terms of it, and permit wickedness to pass unpunished? Would the God of truth reverse his decree, and stop the sentence of death from falling upon sinners? Or would the God of righteousness omit any opportunity of expressing the love he bore to innocence, and abhorrence to iniquity? How then could we well be cleared from our guilt, without an expiation; or reinstated in freedom without a ransom; or exempted from condemnation, without some vicarious punishment? No, God was pleased so to prosecute his designs of goodness and mercy, as not in the least to impair or obscure it, but rather advance and illustrate the glories of his sovereign dignity, of his severe justice, of his immaculate holiness, and immutability both in word and purpose.

He was willing to listen to a treaty, but from the mouth of no mediator but such as was of equal dignity with himself. He was willing to remit the punishment due to our sins, but not without a sacrifice that would make full atonement for them. He was willing to give us back our lives again, but not without a substitution of another life equivalent to them all. But now, how could these things be done? Where could we find a mediator, proper and worthy to intercede for us, and to negotiate a new covenant, whereby God might be satisfied and we saved? Who could offer for us a sacri-

¹ Stanhope's Sermons on several occasions.

² Luke xxii. 42.

³ Stanhope's Sermons on several occasions.

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fice of value sufficient to atone for sins so vastly numerous, and all committed against infinite majesty? Or who could undertake for the everlasting redemption of all the souls, since the first creation, and lay down a competent price for them? Nothing on earth, nothing in heaven, was found able to do this.

Man, the most innocent and upright man, could by no means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him. Angels have obligations enough of their own to discharge, and cannot be solvent for any more than the debt of their own gratitude and praise. The brightest of that heavenly host cannot, over and above this, make compensation for one human sin; but, for the sins of the whole world united, there was no propitiation to be found, until the Son of God offered himself, and was accepted by the Father. Our humanity he assumed, to enable him to suffer, and interest us in what he did; but the divinity, which he had with the Father from the beginning, this he brought with him, to derive an infinite value upon his sufferings, and to make the ransom and oblation which he paid down for us a full satisfaction for sins innumerable, and infinitely heinous.

In the expiation of these sins, we own, that the punishment which our Saviour submitted to, was but temporal, whereas that to which sinners are obnoxious, is eternal; but for that several good reasons may be alleged. The author to the Hebrews, in his comparison between the Levitical and Christian dispensations, tells us, that ¹ 'such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and who needeth not daily, as the high priests under the law, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for those of the people.' So that what qualified him to offer a sacrifice for the sins of mankind, was his perfect innocence; for had he been, in any degree a sinner himself, he must have suffered for his own offences: and consequently, been incapable of effecting an expiation for ours.

² Now, if our blessed Saviour was entirely innocent and holy, it was impossible that he should suffer the same punishments, which by the just decree of God, are due to wilful and impenitent sinners. ³ He could not do it in his body; for that could only die by what he suffered on the cross; and he could not do it in his soul; for how could that soul, which knew no sin, be under a remorse of conscience for any thing that he had done? How could he, ⁴ 'who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross,' lie under any sense of God's unchangeable displeasure? or he, who knew that ⁵ his soul should not be left in Hades, nor his body see corruption, be seized with an absolute despair of any better state, or an uneasy apprehension of no release from what he was to suffer? The punishments of the damned are without end, and without hope: but everlasting misery and despair could never be consistent with the condition of one who had not deserved them, and whose innocence secured and preserved him from them. These are the consequences of sin and rebellion against God; but the sufferings of Jesus, were the greatest proof of an entire obedience in the most difficult instance of sub-

mission, and so far from incurring the divine displeasure, that, from this very cause ⁶ God hath highly exalted him.

But though, from the nature and reason of the thing, it appears that our Lord neither did, nor could suffer such punishments, in kind and measure, as were due to sinners; yet it must be observed, that he underwent such things as bore some analogy to what sinners are to suffer, and what he would not have suffered had he not been punished for our transgressions.

⁷ For whereas sinners lie under the sentence of condemnation, and are sure to find a public exemplary judgment; so was our Saviour solemnly condemned and sentenced as a malefactor, a seditious person, a perverter of the nation, a rebel against Cæsar, and a blasphemer against God. Whereas sinners will be exposed to shame and ignominy, at the great day of judgment, before men and angels; so our Lord suffered a very shameful and ignominious death, and that attended with all the mockeries, affronts, and obloquies, that the malice of his enemies could cast upon him. And whereas sinners are obnoxious to very grievous torments both of body and soul, and these inflicted by the hand of an enraged God; so, in his person, our Lord suffered death painful to such a degree, as to make the most exquisite tortures be called *cruciatu*s, from the cross; and, in his mind, such a load of grief and anguish, as might well justify the mournful complaint of the prophet, ⁸ 'all ye that pass by, behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger.'

Now, from this fair resemblance between what our Lord actually suffered, and what sinners had deserved to suffer, there seems to be sufficient ground to say, that he bore the punishment of our iniquities, and suffered in our stead; though what he underwent was not, in every point, the same that we, had it not been for his interposition, must have been obliged to suffer.

⁹ All that was requisite indeed in his sufferings was, that the injuries and affronts offered to the divine justice by the provocation of wicked men, should receive a sufficient compensation; that the honour of God and his laws should be vindicated, and sin made as terrible and full of discouragement, as it could possibly be; though no such method of mercy had ever been devised. Now all these ends were fully satisfied by the Son of God condescending to suffer in our stead; and, if there was any thing wanting in the duration or extremity of his sufferings, that was abundantly made up by the dignity of the person, who, ¹⁰ 'through the eternal spirit, that is, the divine united to our human nature, offered himself without spot to God,' and in virtue of that union, exalted the value of his oblation to an infinite degree, and paid a ransom to offended justice of more worth than an hundred thousand worlds.

But how great soever the benefit was which accrued to mankind from the death of our Saviour Christ, there is no apologizing for those that were the bloody instruments of it, and least of all for Judas. For, besides the aggravation of his being a disciple, a friend, a constant companion, one that had been taught and sustained by

¹ Heb. vii. 26, 27. ² Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. ii. ³ Whitby's appendix to Mat. xxvi. ⁴ Heb. xii. 2.

⁵ Psal. xvi. 10.

⁶ Phil. ii. 9. ⁷ Whitby's appendix to Mat. xvi. ⁸ Lam. i. 12. ⁹ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. ii. ¹⁰ Heb. ix. 14.

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him, and not only an hearer of his doctrine, and an eye-witness of his miracles, but, in virtue of the commission received from him, a preacher of the gospel, and a worker of miracles himself; besides all this, I say, it is evident, that his wickedness was not the effect of a sudden surprise, or want of recollection, but the work of deliberation, and long contrivance, and solemn debate. For he consulted with the high-priests and elders concerning the time, the place, and every circumstance, for the most convenient execution of his villany. After such consultation, he continued his attendance upon his master, that, under the disguise of friendship, and by much laboured hypocrisy, he might better carry on his design to destroy him; and as his design was advancing to maturity, he had all along had broad hints and monitions given him, that his plot was discovered, and many warnings of the sin and danger he was running into; but none of these altered his purpose. So that, in this act of his, there is a complication of ingratitude and perfidy, hypocrisy and malice, and a settled inflexible resolution to do wickedly, beyond the power of advice and warning, and the most awful menaces to control it: and this might be some reason why his repentance met not with success, as it is evident it did not, from our Lord's calling him ¹ 'the son of perdition,' and declaring, that ² 'it had been better for him if he had never been born.'

³ The evangelists indeed tell us, ⁴ 'that he repented himself;' but then it is evident, that by repenting is not every where intended a change of heart and life; nor the whole of that which repentance strictly signifies, when made the condition of pardon and salvation, but only some part and imperfect degree of it. Judas found that matters were grown to so desperate an height, that there was no probable appearances of his Master's escaping the malice of the Jews; and recollected, very likely, the predictions of our Lord concerning the dreadful vengeance which should overtake the person that betrayed him to death. These, and probably many other dreadful reflections, working together with all that confusion which fear and guilt are known to create in men's minds, seem to have made up that concern which the text hath expressed by 'repenting himself;' a concern resulting from a principle of self-preservation, in the most carnal sense of the word. But we find not in him any due sense of the villany of the fact, nor any condemning himself, as the basest, most ungrateful, the most abandoned wretch alive; one that had violated the laws of God, and society, and nature, and cast all fidelity and gratitude, and common humanity behind his back. All which, and a great deal more, were not only aggravations due to his crime, but the very properest occasions of remorse.

He felt indeed some regret for what he had done, as an awakened conscience cannot fence off such reflections, and he wished perhaps he had never done it; but the regret which he felt, seems rather to have been the effect of confusion and rage, than any godly relenting; the agonies of frenzy, and amazement, and despair; which are the most distant things in the world from that sober and regular sorrow, ⁵ 'which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of.'

Herein then lay the defect of Judas's repentance, that the horror of his sin led him into despair. For repentance, we must know, does not barely consist in sorrow for sin, but in such a sorrow as is tempered and supported with hope; not in a mere confession of our transgressions, but in such a confession as trusts and depends on forgiveness; and, as it imports a change of manners, unless we are first persuaded that our sincere endeavours for the future will be kindly received, and our former transgressions generously passed over, all ground and encouragement for such a change is utterly taken away.

Reason indeed cannot lead us to infer, that sorrow for the past, or amendment for the time to come, can be any equivalent satisfaction for our offences; but revelation assures us, that God may be appeased, and it hath told us withal in what manner he is appeased, even by the precious blood of his Son, 'who came to give his life a ransom for many.' In this matter God hath declared himself so fully, that the very heinousness of our sins is not a greater provocation, than the distrust of mercy, which, in effect, is making God a liar, and disparaging the merits of Christ's sacrifice, after we have committed them. So that hope of mercy, and faith in the promises, and satisfaction of Christ, are the very life and spirit of true repentance, essential and indispensably requisite to quicken and recommend every part of it: and therefore no wonder if Judas's repentance proved so ineffectual, which was plainly destitute of these necessary qualifications.

If it be inquired, how Judas came to be wanting in this point? The immediate cause, no question, was, that God had forsaken him, and withdrawn his grace from him. But then if we pursue this inquiry still farther, and drive it up to its true fountain-head, the matter will fall upon Judas himself, as the proper and original cause of his own misery and destruction.

For, whatever we may think of the doctrine of predestination, it is certain that the miserable Judas was not aware of any power in it to sustain his mind, when he came to reflect on what he had done. He could not interpret, that the foreknowledge of God had any causality or influence upon his sins, because he found cause enough for that arising from his own deportment: ⁶ for, having given way to a covetous desire, and hardened his heart by a sinful indulgence of it against all impressions of wholesome counsel, he was convinced that the prophecy of his treason could not fail of its event; because, when the temptation offered he could not choose but do what he did. He had indeed lost all his power and liberty to do better, though still the necessity which he then lay under, was not fatal, but natural; not of God's decreeing, but of his own procuring. Under these just apprehensions of his crime, he is said to have repented, in the worst sense of the words; that is, he grieved, he despaired, and then he hanged himself. And though we allow that his passions transported him too extravagantly in these latter violences, yet even from what was rational in his grief, we may learn this lesson,—"That when an awakened conscience comes to estimate the nature of its guilt, there will be found but poor shelter in all these palliations that can be formed by human subtilty, and licentious wit."

¹ John xvii. 12.

² Mat. xxvi. 24.

³ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. ii.

⁴ Mat. xxvii. 3.

⁵ Cor. vii. 10.

⁶ Young's Sermons, vol. ii.

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The aggravations of St Peter's offence in denying our Lord, are much of the same kind with that of Judas in betraying him. That a person, who for the space of three years and more, had the honour of our Lord's conversation, the conviction of his miracles, and the instruction of his doctrine; who had been let into the knowledge of those mysteries, which, for wise reasons, were delivered in parables, and concealed from others; admitted to his transfiguration upon the mount, his converse with Moses and Elias, and to hear that voice from God's excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,'¹ as himself testifies; that a person, who hereupon had made confession of his Master's divinity, and received his commendations for it; had been chosen a companion of his agonies, and forewarned frequently of the great danger of denying him; and hereupon grown so very resolute, that he offered² to go with him into prison, and to death, and, to distinguish himself above any of his brethren,³ 'Though all should be offended,' says he, 'because of thee, yet will not I be offended; and though I were to die with thee, yet would not I deny thee:' that a person, I say, placed in this rank and elevation, should fall off in the time of trial, should deny and abjure his Master, whose greatest honour it was to own, implies a guilt still more heinous, the more his knowledge and former conviction, the more his warning and long experience, the more his professions and boasted firmness of mind were conspicuous.

This however may be said with relation to the difference between the crime of Judas and that of St Peter, that the former proceeded from a spirit of malice, and fixed resolution to do evil, occasioned by a sordid and covetous temper; that it was nourished up by long contrivance and deliberation, was carried on by hypocrisy and deep dissimulation, was executed with perfidy and great violence, and ended, at last, in the agonies of horror and despair; whereas St Peter's crime, though a very great one, was but of short continuance, and never in his intention at first; was indeed the effect of fear and human infirmity, occasioned, in a great measure, by surprise and want of recollection; not so much the act of the man, as it was the force of the temptation he was under; and therefore when he⁴ came to remember the words which Jesus had said unto him, and thereupon to consider how shamefully he had fallen from his courage and constancy, how easily he had been betrayed into a crime he thought himself not capable of, how base he had been to so kind a Master, how false to his promises, how regardless of truth, how peremptory in a most notorious falsehood, and how profane and profligate in his oaths and curses; when he came to consider all this, I say, a godly sorrow swelled his heart, and tears gushed out of his eyes; 'He went out and wept bitterly.'

Judas, in like manner, might weep for his transgression perhaps; but his tears must have been ineffectual, because the season of that grace which he had long resisted and defeated, was departed from him, and God provoked to give him over to his own perverseness; whereas our Saviour, who foresaw from what principle St Peter's offence would arise, and how sudden his conversion would be,⁵ 'had prayed for him, that his faith might not

fail,' and thence his recovery did proceed. We should be injurious however to the memory of this apostle, if we should here neglect to relate how his after behaviour showed the sincerity of his repentance, and made an ample amends for the scandal of his offence.

⁶ It was this same St Peter, who, after our Lord's resurrection, returned to the fervour of affection for which he was remarkable before; that so exerted himself at the day of⁷ Pentecost, and proved, by irrefragable arguments, 'that Jesus Christ was the Son of God,' and maintained his point against the Jewish rulers,⁸ despising their rebukes and angry menaces, and telling them plainly,⁹ that God was to be obeyed rather than man; that confirmed his brethren by his resolute behaviour, and¹⁰ made it a matter of rejoicing, that he was accounted worthy to suffer shame for the once abjured name of Christ. In a word, it was he who, after a long labour of preaching, and persecutions of all kinds, at length finished his course, and glorified God by the same sort of death that his blessed Son condescended to undergo for our sakes. So that St Peter was not more different from himself, when trembling at the voice of a silly damsel, than the same St Peter afterwards, the glorious and invincible apostle, before the council, in prison, and upon the cross, was from the cowardly and infamous renegade in the high-priest's palace. This settled and deliberate fidelity was a noble compensation for the infirmity and transports of this fall. This showed what the man was when perfectly himself, and supported by the grace of God, as the other did what he was when naked, and destitute of heavenly succours, depending upon his own strength, and left in the hand of his own passions.

St Paul¹¹ represents our Saviour as 'a merciful high-priest because he was touched with a feeling of our infirmities;' and as it is natural for us to compassionate those that are in the same state of misery with ourselves, so might our Lord, from the society of suffering, have been induced, at this time, to admit the penitent upon the cross into a participation of bliss, who at another time, would not have met with so ready a reception.¹² It might therefore be no small advantage to the penitent thief, that he happened to die in company with Christ, though it is certain, that the good disposition which he discovered in his behaviour and confession, was enough to recommend him to the divine mercy.

It is highly probable, that this man never knew anything of Jesus before, otherwise than by common fame; nay, that he was prepossessed against him as an impostor, and joined with his companion in reviling him at first: and therefore the greater was his virtue in overcoming these prejudices so soon, and in suffering the meekness and patience, the charity and piety, of our Lord's miraculous death to disabuse him. This is so far from making him a late penitent, that it gives him the glory of an early convert; one whose heart was open to the first impression of grace, and wanted not so much the inclination as the opportunity, of embracing the truth before.

But admitting that he had seen and heard of Christ before; yet, that he should now come in to the acknowledgment of him, and believe him to be the Saviour of the world, when one of his disciples had betrayed, another

¹ 2 Pet. i. 17, 18.

² Luke xxli. 33.

³ Mat. xxvi. 35.

⁴ Mat. xxvi. 75.

⁵ Luke xxii. 32.

⁶ Stanhope's sermons on several occasions.

⁷ Acts ii. 14.

⁸ Ibid. iv. 19, 20.

⁹ Ibid v. 29.

¹⁰ Ibid. ver. 41.

¹¹ Heb. iv. 15.

¹² Taylor's Life of Christ.

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had denied, and all of them had forsaken him; and to be the Son of God, and Lord of Life, when he was hanging upon the cross, suffering the pangs of death, and seemingly deserted by his Father: that he should take sanctuary in a dying and universally despised man, publish his innocence in the face of triumphant malice, and, through the thickest cloud of shame and suffering that ever intercepted the glories of the Son of God, discover his divine power, acknowledge his celestial kingdom, throw himself upon his protection, and call upon him, as the great disposer of rewards and happiness after death; this was a confession so resolute, so singular, so illustrious, as never was undergone, as never can in all respects, be equalled, except the same Jesus were again to be crucified. For no man's conversion ever had, ever can have, upon other terms, such disadvantageous and discouraging circumstances, as this man laboured under, and yet so generously overcame.

Well therefore might ¹ St Chrysostom, as he does with great force and eloquence, rebuke the impudence of those late penitents, who presume to take sanctuary in this example; for what affinity, what shadow of resemblance is there, between a man submitting to the first impression, and accepting of offers as soon as made; and one who has lived under the ministry of the gospel, and enjoyed both the outward calls of God's word, and the inward solicitations of his Spirit, but turned the deaf ear continually to both? between a man who to our Lord paid the highest degree of homage and respect, even when he had made himself of no reputation, and appeared in the guise of the vilest malefactor; and one who, notwithstanding his resurrection from the dead, and exaltation to glory, notwithstanding the conquest made by the gospel, and the infamy of denying him now, continues still to injure and affront, to despise and defy him, in his most prosperous and triumphant condition?

In a word, no Christian, who hath lived under the dispensation of the gospel, can, at the end of his days, plead the same ready compliance to the calls of grace, and no man whatever can have the opportunity of exerting the same vigorous faith, because Christ could die but once, and it was his shame and suffering alone that made the confession of this penitent so peculiarly glorious, and such as the whole series of a pious life in other men can hardly parallel. So that if we are allowed to make any use, or to draw any consolation from this example, it can be no more than this,—that repentance, when true, is never too late, and therefore the thief upon the cross, is a sovereign antidote against despair. But men may out-stay the day of grace: they may not go about the work until it is too late; until they have lost both the will and the power to repent; and therefore this example, when truly considered, is an excellent preservative likewise against presumption. ^a

It may be deemed perhaps some mistake in the evan-

gelist, or rather a disparagement to the Holy Spirit, by whose direction, we say, it was he wrote, that St Matthew cites Jeremiah for a passage, which no where occurs but in the Prophet Zechariah; but then it should be proved that St Matthew does actually cite Jeremiah. ² In most of the Latin and Greek copies indeed, we have the word Jeremiah at present, but it is much to be questioned whether it was in the original, since the Syriac and Persic versions mention no name, but barely the prophets, and those copies, in ³ St Austin's opinion, are most to be relied on, which have not the name of Jeremiah inserted in them, because this might possibly proceed from the ignorance or carelessness of some transcriber. ⁴ Some of our modern reconcilers have another way of accounting for this. They endeavour to prove, ⁵ from the writings of the Jewish Rabbins, that both before, under, and after the second temple, the order of the sacred books were several times transposed, and that, in the time when St Matthew wrote his gospel, the book of Jeremiah, as does now that of Isaiah, stood first in the volume of prophets, and so became the running title of all the rest. For, that the first book in a volume may give the name to the rest, is obvious, say they, from the words of our Saviour's telling his disciples, that ⁶ 'all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning him;' where, by the word Psalms, he means all the Hagiography, consisting of hymns to God, and documents of life; and are all so called, because in that part of the division of the Old Testament, they had obtained the first place.

But as there are no words cited in the like manner from any other prophet in the whole New Testament, ⁷ others have imagined, that the passage which St Matthew quotes, was originally in the authentic copies of Jeremiah, but that, by the malice of the Jews, it was erased, because it was looked upon as too plain a prophecy for this circumstance of our Saviour's life; or rather, that it was recorded in a certain apocryphal book of Jeremiah's, from whence St Matthew took it. That there was such a book extant, is evident from the testimony of St Jerome, ⁸ who expressly tells us, that he read the very words here quoted in an Hebrew volume communicated to him by a Jew of the Nazarene sect. And, that it was no disparagement to cite an apocryphal book, is manifest from the practice of the apostles, who made mention ⁹ of Jannes and Jambres, though they no where occur in the canonical Scripture; who quote ¹⁰ the prophecy of Enoch, though generally reputed an apocryphal book; nay, and produce the sayings of Aratus, ¹¹ Epimenides, ¹² and Euripides, ¹³ though these were profane heathen authors: for though such books, say they, were not received into the canon, yet they might nevertheless contain such truths as were worthy of belief.

Those, however, who have compared the writings of

¹ Tom. 5. orat. 7.

^a The account of the pardoned criminal is related by one evangelist only, as if the Holy Spirit foresaw the perversion of the passage. One instance only, to use the language of a celebrated divine, of the acceptance of a dying repentance is recorded; one only that none might despair, and one only that none might presume.—*Townsend's Harmony*.—Ed.

² Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part ii. ³ De content. evan. tom. 4. b. iii. c. 7. ⁴ Lightfoot in loc. and Surenhusius, in conciliat. in loc. et Vet. Test. apud Mat. ⁵ In cod. Talmud. Bava Batra, fol. 14. col. 2. ⁶ Luke xxvi. 44.

⁷ See Calmet's Commentary, Whitty's Annotations, and Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part ii. ⁸ In Mat. xxvi. 1. ⁹ 2 Tim. iii. 8. ¹⁰ Jude, ver. 14. ¹¹ Acts xvii. 28. ¹² Tit. i. 12. ¹³ 1 Cor. xv. 33.

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these two prophets together, have observed, that Zechariah was so close an imitator of Jeremiah, as to give just occasion for the saying of the Jews, namely, That the spirit of Jeremy had passed into Zechary, and so both together made but one prophet: and from hence others have concluded, that the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of Zechariah were not wrote by him, but by Jeremiah, though, at present, they go under the other's name. The book of Psalms, we know, though the whole collection be called David's, contains many pieces that were not of his composition. In that of Proverbs, there are several wise sentences, besides those of Solomon, ascribed to ¹ Agar, the son of Jakeh, and to ² the mother of King Lemuel; and, by parity of reason, these chapters of Zechariah might originally have been written by the prophet Jeremiah, though, in process of time, they happened to creep in among the verses of his great imitator.

And indeed, whoever looks into the contents of these chapters will soon perceive, that such things are related in them, are as inconsistent with the time wherein Zechariah lived, but very well agree with that of Jeremiah: that what he says, for instance,³ of the pride of Assyria being brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt being departed, could not be foretold by him, because these events were then passed and gone, but might very well be predicted by Jeremiah; that what he says ⁴ of Gaza, and Ashkelon, as cities then in being, could not be recorded of them, forasmuch as these places were destroyed long before his days, but might properly enough be mentioned by Jeremiah, because in his time they were subsisting; and that the earthquake ⁵ which he alludes to, in the days of Uzziah, was of too distant a date to be remembered in his time, though it is not unlikely that tradition might have transmitted the report of it down as far as the days of Jeremiah. If then there be found in Zechariah things inconsistent with his time, but such as comported very well with the period wherein Jeremiah lived, it is natural to think, that though the whole book went under another's name, yet still such parts of it as contained these things, must have been wrote by a person with whom they were coincident; and that therefore St Matthew is so far from committing any blunder, that he makes a very valuable discovery, in ascribing the prophecy now before us to its proper author.

Thus, take it which way we will, we cannot justly accuse the evangelist of any misquotation: and much less can we charge him with any misrepresentation of a matter of fact, in his making our blessed Lord able enough to drive all the buyers and sellers out of the temple. St Jerom ⁶ indeed reckons this one of the greatest miracles that ever our Saviour did; and imputes his ability to do it to a certain divine majesty, which, at that time, appeared in his looks, and struck the company with such reverential awe and respect to his person, as restrained them from making any opposition: but, without having any recourse to any thing miraculous in this transaction, we need only remember, that our Lord was just now come up from Bethany to Jerusalem in a sort of royal and triumphant procession; that he was attended on the road, and into the city, with ⁷ a very great multi-

tude, nay, with multitudes, that went before, and followed after; that these all went along with him into the temple, and proclaimed, as they had done on the road, 'Hosanna to the son of David;' and that the concourse, in short, was so great, that ⁸ all the city was moved, and even the chief priests were afraid of him, and of the people too, because they took him for a prophet, and ⁹ were attentive to hear him.

Now it is no hard matter to imagine, that the people, seeing our Saviour proceed to the temple in this triumphant manner, might seasonably enough call to mind the prediction of the prophet Malachi, ¹⁰ 'The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple: even the messenger of the covenant, in whom ye delight: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer to the Lord an offering of righteousness;' and that, from the remembrance of this prophecy, they might be encouraged to abet his reformation of the temple. ¹¹ Nor is it to be doubted, that a consciousness of guilt in the profaners themselves might, in some measure, contribute to their submission and acquiescence, even in the same manner as his enemies were struck backwards with the sense of their own guilt, as well as the majesty of his appearance, and fell to the ground, when they came to apprehend him in the garden. So that, upon the whole, we are to consider our Saviour in this action, not in the form of a despised man, but of a triumphant monarch rather, at the head of an infinite number of people, all rejoicing in the completion of an ancient prophecy, all acknowledging him for their Messiah and king, and thereupon all ready to support him in any reformation that he should think proper to attempt.

The like is to be said of the relation which the evangelists give us of the darkness which happened at our Lord's crucifixion; that it is far from being a misrepresentation of the matter of fact, since we have it confirmed ¹² by the testimony of Phlegon, who, in the 40th book of his *Chronicles*, tells us, that in the 4th year of the CCIIId Olympiad, which answers exactly to that of our Lord's death, "there was the greatest eclipse of the sun that had ever been before, insomuch that at noon-day the stars were seen in the sky;" by the authority of Thallus, ¹³ a Greek historian, who, in his third book, speaks of the darkness that accompanied our Saviour's death, and which he, in like manner, called an eclipse; by the appeal which Tertullian, ¹⁴ and others make to the Roman archives, where the account that Pilate sent to Tiberius, of the miracles which happened at our Lord's passion, was deposited, for the truth of this prodigious darkness; and, ¹⁵ lastly, by the general consent of all Christian authors, for the space of the first six centuries, who, in treating this subject, have constantly made mention of this testimony of Phlegon and Thallus, together with this appeal to the Roman records, without the least hesitation, or diffidence of their truth: so that the only difficulty is, to know by what means this strange phenomenon was effected.

Phlegon and Thallus indeed, as they are cited ¹⁶ by Christian writers, seem to make this darkness a common

¹ Prov. xxx. 1.

² Ibid. xxxi. 1.

³ Zech. x. 11.

⁴ Ibid. ix. 5.

⁵ Ibid. xiv. 5.

⁶ In Mat. xxi. 12.

⁷ Ibid. ver. 8, 9.

⁸ Mat. xxi. 10.

⁹ Luke xix. 48.

¹⁰ Mal. iii. 1. &c.

¹¹ Bishop Smallbrooke's Vindication, p. 136.

¹² Vid. Orig. cont. Cels. b. ii.

¹³ African. Chronogr.

¹⁴ Apolog. c. 21.

¹⁵ Whiston's Testimony of Phlegon vindicated.

¹⁶ Cabnet's Dissert. sur Les Tenebres.

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eclipse, occasioned as others are, by an interposition of the moon between the sun and the earth; and thence some have inferred, that there was nothing extraordinary in it. But as it is a thing very well known, that the passover, when our Lord suffered, was always appointed at the full of the moon, and a thing naturally impossible, that an eclipse should happen when the moon is in this condition, we have reason to think, that this was an hasty conclusion which these two authors made, without ever bethinking themselves of the rules of astronomy; that finding, in the public records of the time of Tiberius, an account of a prodigious darkness which at noon-day made the stars appear in the firmament, this they suppose could have been effected only by an eclipse of the sun, and, upon such supposition, affirmed that it was so. But, for one circumstance unwarily advanced, it were madness to reject their testimony, which in other respects, exactly agrees with the account of the sacred writings.^a

Others, by the manner of their expression, seem to imply, that the sun, upon this occasion, withheld its rays, and, as it were, eclipsed itself, by restraining its lustre from issuing forth; never considering, that light in the sun is no accidental thing, nor any quality which it can suppress, or exert as it thinks proper. To shine is as necessary to it, as is its being: nor can its rays meet with any obstruction, but when some opaque body or other intervenes between us and them; and therefore, when the fathers in conformity to the style of the Scripture, say, that the sun or the stars withdrew their shining, this must be looked upon as a figurative and popular manner of expression, which seems to give these celestial bodies a kind of free action, thereby to make us more sensible of the absence or suspension of their effects.

Others therefore, with more probability, think, that as the sacred history says nothing of the sun, this darkness, which it takes notice of, was occasioned by a great number of condensed clouds, which gathering in the air, intercepted the light of the sun, and, for the space of three hours, produced the same effect that once happened in the land of Egypt, a darkness that might be felt. This hypothesis makes the matter very easy, but placing the whole miracle in the quick formation of the clouds at such a point of time, and the speedy dispersion of them after such a continuance, ^b only we must suppose, that ¹ by the whole earth, which the evangelist tells us

was covered with this darkness, we are to understand the land of Judea only, in which sense the phrase does not unfrequently occur in Scripture.

And indeed,² as the other wonderful things which came to pass at our Saviour's passion, such as the trembling of the earth, the rending of the rocks, the opening the graves, and tearing the veil of the temple, were transacted at Jerusalem, or at most in Judea only; so have we reason to believe, that the darkness which accompanied these miracles was of no greater extent than they; because the chief design of this uncommon appearance in the heavens was, to convince the Jews who blasphemed our Lord, and his disciples who believed on him, both then present at his crucifixion, that notwithstanding all the humiliation to which he voluntarily submitted, he was in reality the great creator of the universe, and ^b even while he was hanging on the cross, the ruler and director of all its elements and motions.

God indeed, as he is an omniscient Being, cannot but foreknow all the actions of mankind, and therefore, when he pleases, may foretell any of them; but then ³ if his foreknowledge, or predictions, did so far influence the will of men, as to lay them under a necessity of doing what he foreknew, or has foretold he shall do, all freedom in human actions must be destroyed; consequently all vice and virtue must be empty names, because none can be blamed for doing what he could not help; nor does any one deserve to be praised, who does only that which he cannot avoid: and consequently again, all future rewards and punishments must be discarded; because, as it would be unjust to punish one man for that which was not in his power to avoid, so would it be unreasonable to reward another for doing such actions as he found himself constrained and compelled to ^{do}.

When therefore we find the evangelist declaring, that ⁴ 'the Jews could not believe, because Isaiah ⁵ had said, God had blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts,' we must not suppose that this prophecy was either the cause or motive of their infidelity. It was simply a prediction, and, as such, laid upon them no manner of necessity or compulsion. Such prophecies indeed always include a tacit condition, which preserves to man the liberty of choice; and if, in their event, they prove certain and infallible, it is only because God certainly and infallibly foreknows the future bad dispositions of the people of whom he speaks, and has a clear prospect of that blindness and obduration which their perverseness brings upon them.

In relation to the Jews in particular, it is certain that

¹ Ἐπὶ πάντων τὴν γῆν, Mat. xxvii. 45.

^a See note on this subject, p. 189.—ED.

^b This is a very unphilosophical solution of the difficulty, if indeed there be any difficulty in the case, and such as cannot be admitted by common sense. If the rays of the sun were intercepted merely by a congeries of dense clouds, how came the feeblér rays of the stars to penetrate those clouds which were impervious to the rays of the sun? The darkness was unquestionably miraculous, of which therefore no other account is to be given than that it was produced by the immediate interposition of God, as all other miracles have been; but what is now known of the constitution of the sun, renders it unnecessary to imagine either that masses of dense clouds, which indeed would not have answered the purpose, were interposed between the land of Judea and the sun; or that the moon was carried out of her course, and then rendered stationary for three hours in order to cause this preternatural darkness. If the sun be such a body as some philosophers seem to have lately ascertained it to be, the darkness might be produced, and produced over all the earth, merely by an aperture of the luminous atmosphere made much larger than those which are now known to produce the dark spots observed occasionally in the surface of the sun.—*Bishop Gleig*.—ED.

² Origen, in Mat. tract 35.

³ Whitby's Annotations on John xii. 28. ⁴ John xii. 39, 40.

⁵ Isa. vi. 9.

^b From the astronomical tables, some that are versed in this kind of knowledge, have informed us, that on the same day, when our Saviour died, about three in the afternoon, that is, immediately after the miraculous darkness which began at noon, and lasted three hours, there was a natural eclipse of the moon, in which half of its orbit was obscured; so that this day produced a literal accomplishment of two remarkable prophecies: that of Joel, 'The earth shall quake before them, the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining,' (chap. ii. 10.) and that of Amos, 'In that day saith the Lord, I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and will darken the earth in the clear day; and I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation,' (chap. viii. 9, 10.)—*Calnet's Commentary*.

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our blessed Saviour did not think that his heavenly Father had, by an action or prediction of his, made it impossible for them to believe on him; ¹ for, had he thought so, he would never have exhorted them, as we find he does in the verses just going before, ² 'to walk in the light, and believe in the light whilst they had it;' and that to this good purpose, that they 'might become the children of light;' because every exhortation to do a thing which we know to be impossible, must not only be vain and delusory, but, if we know that impossibility to proceed from a divine judicial act, repugnant likewise to the will of God, which to suppose our Lord capable of, is the height of blasphemy.

Since, therefore, in the eastern phrase, a person is said to do that which he only permits to be done, God's blinding the eyes, and hardening the hearts of the Jews, must mean no more, than his suffering them to blind their own eyes, and harden their own hearts; which, upon the mere subduction of his grace, without the infusion of any perverse inclinations from him, they would not fail to do. And, accordingly, we may observe, that the same evangelist, in another place, speaks of their obduration and blindness as their own act and deed: 'For ³ this people's heart is waxen gross,' says he, 'and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest, at any time, they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them.'

Whoever considers the series of the sacred history, may soon convince himself, that the miracle which our Saviour wrought on the barren fig-tree, happened about the eleventh day of the Jewish month Nisan, on Tuesday, very probably before the passover; for the passover, we know, was kept on the fourteenth day of Nisan, which answers to the latter end of our March: and that, at this time, there were figs in Judea ripe and fit for gathering, we have some authority to believe.

When Moses sent away the spies to search the land of Canaan, it was, we are told, ⁴ 'in the time of the first ripe grapes,' ⁵ and they returned from searching after forty days, and brought from thence ⁶ pomegranates and figs, as well as clusters of grapes. Now, the Septuagint version says, that it was in the spring when these spies set forward; and Philo, in his life of Moses, seems to be of the same opinion. Supposing then that it was about the middle of spring, which, in Judea, began about the middle of January, that the spies set out, and that they were gone forty days, it will follow, that they returned some days before the passover; and if the figs, which they brought, as well as the grapes, were ripe and full-grown, then were they ripe in Judea in the very same time that our Saviour is here said to look for them.

Solomon, in his book of Canticles, gives us a lively description of the spring; and among other signs of its being come, makes mention of this,—that ⁷ 'the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs;' ⁸ and the vines, with their

tender grapes, give a good smell,' or as it may more literally be rendered, 'the fig-tree hath begun to give a flavour to her young figs, and the vines a good smell to the tender grape.' Now, if, in the middle of our January, the figs were so forward as then to give a flavour, it is

sorts, the boccure, and the kermouse. The black and white boccure, or early fig, is produced in June, though the kermouse, the fig properly so called, which is preserved, and made up into cakes, is rarely ripe before August. There is also a long dark coloured kermouse, that sometimes hangs upon the trees all the winter. For these figs generally hang a long time upon the tree before they fall off; whereas the boccures drop as soon as they are ripe, and according to the beautiful allusion of the prophet Nahum, 'fall into the mouth of the eater upon being shaken,' ch. iii. 12. Dr Shaw, to whom we are indebted for this information, remarks, that these trees do not properly blossom, or send out flowers, as we render תפירה, Hab. iii. 17. They may rather be said to 'shoot out their fruit,' which they do, like so many little buttons, with their flowers, small and imperfect as they are, enclosed within them. When this intelligent traveller visited Palestine, in the latter end of March, the boccure was far from being in a state of maturity: for in the scripture expression, 'the time of figs was not yet,' (Mark xi. 13), or not till the middle or latter end of June. The time here mentioned, is supposed by some authors, quoted by F. Clusius, in his Hierobotanicon, to be the third year, in which the fruit of a particular kind of fig tree is said to come to perfection. But this species, if there be any such, needs to be further known and described, before any argument can be founded upon it. Dionysius Syrus, as he is translated by Dr Loftus, is more to the purpose: 'it was not the time of figs,' he remarks, because it was the month Nisan, when trees yielded blossoms, and not fruit. It frequently happens in Barbary, however, and it need not be doubted in the warmer climate of Palestine, that, according to the quality of the preceding season, some of the more forward and vigorous trees will now and then yield a few ripe figs, six weeks or more before the full season. Something like this may be alluded to by the prophet Hosea, when he says he 'saw their fathers as the first ripe in the fig tree at her first time,' (ch. ix. 10); and by Isaiah, who, speaking of the beauty of Samaria, and her rapid declension, says she 'shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer: which, when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand, he eateth it up,' ch. xviii. 4. When the boccure draws near to perfection, then the kermouse, the summer fig, or carice, begin to be formed, though they rarely ripen before August; at which time there appears a third crop or the winter fig, as it may be called. This is usually of a much longer shape, and darker complexion than the kermouse, hanging and ripening on the tree, even after the leaves are shed; and provided the winter proves mild and temperate, is gathered as a delicious morsel in the spring. We learn from Pliny, that the fig tree was bífera, or bore two crops of figs, namely, the boccure, as we may imagine, and the kermouse; though what he relates afterwards, should intimate that there was also a winter crop. 'Its late fruit remains on the tree during winter, and grows ripe among the new foliage in the following summer.' 'The fig tree produces a second crop,' says Columella, 'and protracts its ripeness till late in the winter.' It is well known, that the fruit of these prolific trees always precedes the leaves; and consequently, when our Saviour saw one of them in full vigour having leaves, (Mark xi. 13.), he might, according to the common course of nature, very justly look for fruit; and haply find some boccures, if not some winter figs, likewise upon it. But the difficulties connected with the narration of this transaction, will not allow of its dismissal in this summary manner. We say, in the narration, for we apprehend that the remark of Dr Shaw is quite satisfactory as to the reasonableness of our Lord's conduct on the occasion, notwithstanding the multiplied objections which ignorance and irreligion have urged against it. It is due to the late indefatigable editor of Calmet, to notice the conjecture which he formed, of the tree in question being the sycamore, which bears fruit several times in the year, without observing any certain seasons, so that a person cannot determine, without a close inspection, whether it has fruit or not. But, to say nothing against the authority by which the συκη is here proposed to be ren-

¹ John xii. 35, 36.

² Whitby, *ibid.*

³ Mat. xiii. 15.

⁴ Numb. xiii. 20.

⁵ *Ibid.* ver. 25.

⁶ Numb. xiii. 24.

⁷ Cant. ii. 19.

⁸ The fig-tree is very common in Palestine and the east, and it flourishes with the greatest luxuriance in these barren and stony situations, where little else will grow. Figs are of two

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reasonable to think, that, in so warm and fruitful a climate as Judea was, there might be ripe ones about the latter end of March, which is the precise time when our Saviour sought for them upon this fig-tree.

The truth is, there were in Judea fig-trees of different kinds; and, besides the ordinary sort, which¹ according to our Saviour, did not put forth its leaves until the next approach of summer, the Jewish writers make mention of one early kind in particular, called by them *Banoth-shuaoth*, which never wanted leaves, and very seldom fruit. Nay, Pliny² tells us of some sort of fig-trees in Syria, under which name he frequently comprehends Judea, that had always leaves, and when the fruit of the preceding year was gathered, the new fruit began immediately, and was growing all the winter long: and therefore we need less wonder at what the emperor Julian asserts, namely, that, at Damascus in Syria, there was a sort of fig tree, whose fruit, both old and young, grew together, and lasted beyond a year. From all which we may be allowed to conclude, that there might be figs in Judea fit to eat at the time when our Saviour went to look for some on this tree; and for this reason some have³ imagined, that without offering any great violence to the text, the original words *οὐ γὰρ ἦν καιρὸς σύκων* for 'where he was,' or, in the place he then was in, 'the time of figs was come.' And this, by the way, is enough to vindicate our Saviour in what he did, since there could be no injustice to the owner, as some would suggest, in ridding the ground of a tree which only encumbered it, and sucked its nourishment from it, without making any return.^a

¹ Mark xiii. 28.

² Natural history, b. 13. c. 8.

³ Universal history, b. 2. c. 11.

dered a sycamore, which has its own proper appellation *συκομορέα* (Luke xix. 4.), the assumption seems inadequate to account for the malediction which was levelled against it; because it is plain that such a tree might at that time have been destitute of fruit, and yet by no means barren. Dr Shaw's conjecture, therefore, seems to be the most satisfactory; namely, that as the fig tree always puts forth the fruit before its leaves, and this was not the season for figs, [rather fig harvest, for so the words, *καιρὸς σύκων*, import] our Saviour was justified in expecting to meet with some on the tree.—*Carpenter's Scripture Natural History*.

^a The alteration here proposed in the common version of Mark xi. 13, is inadmissible and is besides unnecessary. *Καιρὸς σύκων* properly signifies, 'the season of gathering figs,' as *καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν* Mat. xxi. 34, signifies 'the season of gathering the fruits,' (Macknight). In our translation the passage stands thus, which is strictly according to the order of the words in the original text: 'And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, Jesus was hungry: and seeing a fig tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever,' Mark xi. 13—14. Here the whole difficulty results from the connexion of the two last clauses of the 13th verse: 'and when he came to it he found nothing but leaves—for the time of figs was not yet;' for the declaration, that it was not yet fig harvest, cannot be, as the order of the words seems to import, the reason why there was nothing but leaves on the tree; because, as we have seen, the fig is of that tribe of vegetables on which the fruit appears before the leaf. Certainly fruit, says Mr Weston, might be expected of a tree whose leaves were distinguished afar off, and whose fruit, if it bore any, preceded the leaves. If the words had been, 'he found nothing but green figs, for it was not the time of ripe fruit,' says Campbell, we should have justly con-

Without entering into any other solutions; if there were two sorts of fig-trees in Judea, the one much earlier than the other, and thence two seasons of ripe figs, the one much later than the other, and as it is natural to suppose the latter much more common and plentiful than the former; the latter was properly called 'the time of figs,' and the evangelist might very truly say, that, at the time of the passover, 'it was not yet come,' that is, the common and ordinary season for figs was not come: though, admitting this to be one of the early kind, our Lord might well expect to find something upon it, since, by the speciousness of its leaves, it looked so promising at a distance.

He without all doubt, knew perfectly well, before he went up to it, whether it had any fruit on it or no; but as he intended to work a miracle upon it, and, by its speedy withering away, emblematically to show his disciples the near approaching ruin of the Jewish nation; be it what it would, it answered his main end: but then it could not have been so fit a type and resemblance of the Jews, had it not been barren; nor exhibited their fate in so lively a manner, had it not been cursed, and so withered away.

The Jewish nation indeed, at our Saviour's coming, was, in all degrees and orders of men, sadly corrupted; but in none so much as in the Scribes and Pharisees, who, pretending to be the doctors and expounders of the law, had vacated the obligation to almost all moral honesty, by the introduction of their false glosses and comments. Their great show of outward sanctity, however, much ostentation in their prayers and piety, and punctual performance of the ceremonial part of their religion, gave them great authority among the people, and as high a conceit of themselves; insomuch that they expected a blind submission to their injunctions, and all imaginable tokens of respect and veneration, whenever they appeared in public; though all this while, their pretended sanctity was but a veil to cover their vices, and inward impurity; an art to gain a reputation, by making the best of the shadow, while they wanted the substance of godliness.

Now, if such was the depravity of the Scribes and Pharisees when our Saviour lived among them, none

cluded that the latter clause was meant as the reason of what is affirmed in the former, but, as they stand, they do not admit this interpretation. All will be clear, however, if we consider the former of these clauses as parenthetical, and admit such a sort of *trajectio* as is not unfrequent in the ancient languages, though in translating into modern ones a transposition ought to be adopted, to adapt such passages to the genius of those languages: and such is here employed by Dr Campbell. The sense of the passage will then be as follows: 'He came to see if he might find any thing thereon, for it was not yet the time to gather figs: but he found leaves only; and he said,' &c. Similar inversions and trajections have been pointed out by commentators in various other parts of the New and Old Testaments, and Campbell particularly notices one in this very gospel (ch. xvi. 3, 4.): 'They said, who shall roll us away the stone? and when they looked the stone was rolled away, for it was very great,' that is, 'they said, who shall roll us away the stone, for it was very great,' &c. The spiritual application of this transaction to the case of the Jews is sufficiently obvious. We may, however, observe, with Storr, that the cursing was a symbolical action; and with Lightfoot, that it injured no one, since the tree, as we learn from Matthew, grew by the wayside, and therefore was common property.—*Carpenter's Scripture Natural History*.

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can doubt, but that, as he was a teacher sent from God, he had a proper authority to reprove them, since under the Mosaic law, this was a duty incumbent even in private persons, and what they could not, without a manifest breach of charity, decline: for, ¹ 'thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him:' where we may observe, that, in the eye of this law, not to rebuke our brother is interpretatively to hate him; and therefore our Saviour stands in need of no further apology for reproving the Scribes and Pharisees, who had such a number of sins upon them, since there was no omitting that, without violating this command.

In his rebukes indeed there seems to be a spirit of severity, something that looks like anger, and several terms of diminution and disrespect. But then it should be considered, that as anger is a passion implanted in human nature, in itself, and upon all occasions, it cannot be unlawful; nay, when employed about proper and deserving matters, such as the honour of God, and reverence due to his laws, the love of virtue, and the correction of vice, it is not only innocent, but highly necessary and commendable. For there is a tameness of spirits which deserves censure; and, in such cases as these, we even do well when we are angry.

² In like manner, it may be observed, that terms of disparagement and reproach are, in some cases, allowable; and more particularly, when men, as St Paul expresses it, ³ 'are rebuked sharply, to render them sound in the truth.' From the mouth of a superior they are often of use, sometimes of necessity, to rouse and awaken stupid men; to make them more effectually both sensible and ashamed of their follies; to expose the horrid absurdity of pernicious opinions, or the flagrant enormity of wicked practices; and, in short, are hardly ever discommendable, where charity is at the bottom; and an high authority in the reprover gives such language countenance.

Now, as none can call in question our Saviour's authority, if he thought it convenient to make use of such severity in his reproofs of a set of people, that most justly deserved it; so need not any be offended at his denouncing so many woes against them, when he finds God giving the prophets of old, sent to his priests, who were negligent in their duty, and corrupted in their morals, just as they were now, instructions to address them in the self-same manner; ⁴ 'Thus saith the Lord God, wo be unto the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves; should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flocks,' &c. And again ⁵ 'Wo be unto those pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture. Thus saith the Lord, 'Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them. And if inferior prophets were commissioned to make such denunciations, much more might this great Messenger of the covenant, who was both invested with supreme power from the Father, and perfectly knew what was in every man's heart, and therefore could not miscall things, be allowed ⁶ 'to reprove and

rebuke with all authority,' and without violation of that great law of charity, which is so peculiarly fitted to the evangelical institution, that, upon sundry accounts, it may not improperly be called a 'new commandment.'

⁷ This commandment indeed of loving one another, is by our Lord and Saviour so much enlarged as to the object of it, extending to all mankind, and even to our greatest enemies; is so greatly advanced and heightened as to the degree of it, even to the laying down of our lives for one another; and is so effectually taught, so mightily encouraged, and so much urged and insisted upon, that though it was a precept delivered by Moses, yet, considering in what manner the scribes and Pharisees had perverted the sense, and confined and discouraged the practice of it, it may well enough be said to have received in our Saviour a republication. And though it was not altogether unknown to other nations before, yet it was never so taught, so encouraged; never was such an illustrious example given of it, never so much stress and weight laid upon it, by any philosophy, or religion, that was ever before in the world.

There are three passages in the prophet Daniel which mention ⁸ 'the abomination that maketh desolate; and to any of these our Saviour may be supposed to allude; for they are all predictions of the dissolution of the Jewish state, when the sacrifices and oblations should be made to cease. It is the sense indeed that our Saviour seems more to attend to, than the words of the prophecy; and because it was the custom of the Roman armies to have an eagle for their ensign, in which they placed a kind of divinity, and to carry their emperors' images along with them, to which they paid a religious adoration, and therein committed such idolatry as was highly detestable to every Jew; ⁹ it is hence supposed, that the abomination standing in the holy place, means the Roman army, with these hated objects of their idolatry, besieging Jerusalem; and that it is therefore called a desolation, because it was appointed by Almighty God to lay the country, city, and temple of Jerusalem, desolate and waste; for so St Luke seems to have explained it by a parallel place, ¹⁰ 'When you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know, that the desolation thereof is nigh.'

Jerusalem indeed may perhaps, in some places of Scripture, ¹¹ be called the holy place; ¹² but this is a title so peculiar to the temple, that we cannot but think, that our Saviour, in the application of the prophecy, intended it here; especially ¹³ since his disciples, by showing the stateliness of its buildings, gave the whole rise to his discourse. But now, if we suppose the temple to be this holy place, we cannot see how the abomination here spoken of could be the Roman army, and their ensigns; because neither of these were ever in the temple, until the taking and sackage of the city, and could therefore, in this respect, be no presages at all. If we suppose the city of Jerusalem to be this holy place, it is certain that this abomination was lodged in it long before the approach of Titus with his army; because the Romans had, all along, a strong garrison over against the tem-

⁷ Tillotson's Sermons, fol. vol. i.

⁸ Dan. ix. 27.—xi. 31.—xii. 11.

⁹ Whitty's and Hammond's Annotations. ¹⁰ Luke xxi. 20.

¹¹ Mat. iv. 5.; 1 Mac. x. 31. ¹² Calmet's Commentary.

¹³ Mat. xxiv. 1, 2.

¹ Lev. xix. 17.

² Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. iii.

³ Tit. i, 12. 12.

⁴ Ezek. xxxiv. 2, &c.

⁵ Jer. xxiii. 1, 2.

⁶ Tit. ii. 15.

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ple, in Fort Antonia, where their colours and standards were set up; nor can we readily conceive, why the military ensigus under Titus should be thought an abomination to the Jews, more than those under Pompey, Socius, and Cestius, who had all before him besieged Jerusalem.

These are some of the difficulties that attend the common interpretation; and therefore we should rather think, that the abomination and desolation here spoken of, should refer to that gross profanation of the temple which happened a little before the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem. While the Roman arms were in Judea, there were two contending parties in Jerusalem. ¹ Some were for accommodating matters with an enemy so vastly superior to them in power, and from whom nothing less than utter ruin was to be expected at last; others again were for making no terms at all, but, in hopes of some strange deliverance, for standing it out to the last; and among these was a crew of ruffians and robbers, who, from their pretended concern for the honour of God, which they could not bear to see prostituted to Gentile power, were called Zealots. This gang of men seized upon the temple, and fortified it; and having got into their possession the engines which had been left in the country by Cestius Gallus, when he besieged the city about three years before, with these they shot from the battlements of the temple upon the town, whilst those in the town shot likewise at them; by which means great numbers were killed on both sides, and the temple became thereby polluted with the blood of the slain that were within it, and by which means the daily service was intermitted, and the sanctuary, according to the Jewish notion of the word, became desolate. Here then was a sign peculiar, and what never had happened at any siege before, which our Saviour gave his disciples, in order to provide for their escape. Wars, famines, murders, massacres, divisions among desperate men, and investing cities by hostile troops, are no uncommon things in cases of this nature, and what the Jews, upon this occasion knew too much of by woeful experience; but to have the sanctuary filled with armed men, who were after killed in the holy place, and who, by being brought into the courts of the temple, actually defiled it with the carcasses, and blood of the slain, which were both of them to the highest degree abominable by the Mosaic law, was the distinguishing mark of this calamity; and when this once began to appear, the disciples were cautioned to decline the approaching storm, by making the best of their way out of Jerusalem; which they could not have done so well, had they staid till the siege was formed, and the Roman army had invested the town.

² That it was a custom among the Jews, before our Saviour's time, and, as they themselves affirm, before the beginning of the law, to baptize, as well as circumcise, any proselyte that came over to them from another nation; and in case such a person had any infant children then born to him, that they, at their father's desire, were, in like manner, circumcised, baptized, and admitted as proselytes, is manifest from the incontestible evidence of their writers. The incapacity of the child to declare or promise for himself, was not looked upon as

a bar against his reception into the covenant; but the desire of the father to dedicate him to the true God, was accounted available and sufficient to justify his admission: and the reason they give for this is, that the things they were admitted to, were undoubtedly for their good; for one may privilege a person, say they, though he be incapable of knowing it; but one ought not to disprivilege any one without his knowledge and consent.

Now this gives great light to our better understanding the meaning of our Saviour, when he bids his disciples 'go and teach all nations, baptizing them.' Baptism he took, as the easier rite of the two; and, having converted it into an evangelical precept, made it the federal form of admission into his religion, as circumcision had been in the Mosaic dispensation; and, as he gave his apostles no directions in their commission concerning little children, it may justly be presumed, that, with regard to them, he left them to proceed just in the same manner as the church wherein they lived had been accustomed to do; and that was, to make them proselytes to his religion by baptism.

³ That in the Jewish church infants were part of those who engaged in covenant with God, is evident from these words of Moses to all the people: 'Ye stand this day before the Lord your God; you, and your little ones, that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, that thou mayest be a people to him, and he unto thee thy God;' and that, in the Christian church, children, in like manner, are under the covenant of grace, is more than intimated in St Peter's exhortation to such persons as he had converted, that they would receive baptism, in order to make their children likewise capable of it, because ⁴ 'the promise was to them and their children;' that is, the promise of remission of sins, and of receiving the Holy Ghost, mentioned immediately before, which appertained to the covenant, belonged to them and their children.' Now, if the promise and covenant belonged to the children, as well as parents, there is no question to be made, but that baptism, which is the seal of the covenant, and the visible confirmation of the promise, belongs to them likewise; and if infants have a covenanted right to baptism, we may safely infer, that Christ never intended to debar them of it; and that, consequently, though they are not expressly named, yet are they most certainly implied in the commission of baptizing all nations. For, since the universal includes all particulars, and children make up a considerable part of all nations, the words of the commission may reasonably be supposed to comprise them. Nor can we forbear thinking, but that, when we read of whole families that were baptized, there must, of course, have been several children in them; because the word *οἶκος*, which, in this case, is rendered household, according to the observation of the learned, ⁵ is of a large signification, and takes in every individual person in the family, women as well as men, and children as well as grown persons.

⁷ The adult, indeed, before they were admitted as proselytes to the Jewish religion, were to be instructed in the fundamentals of the law, in the weight and burden

³ Hopkin's Doctrine of the two sacraments.

⁴ Deut. xxix. 10, &c.

⁵ Acts ii. 39.

⁶ Edward's Body of Divinity, vol. i.

⁷ Whitby's dissertation, added to his notes on Mat. xxviii.

¹ Joseph. Jew. Wars, b. iv.

² Walls' His. of Infant-baptism.

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of it, and in the nature of its rewards and penalties, and so profess their submission to it; but then it must be observed, that these pre-requisites in the parent, who was capable of such instruction, did not exclude the children, then born, from the rite of baptism: so far from this, that by the sentence of the Sanhedrim, the church was obliged to baptize them, as having a right to the ordinance by their parents' faith. And in like manner, they who are arrived at a competent age and understanding, were to be instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, were to ¹ 'confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and to believe in their heart that God had raised him from the dead,' before they were admitted to baptism. This was a condition required of them, because they were able to do it: but why this condition should exclude their children any more than it did the children of Jewish proselytes, who were usually baptized together with their parents, we cannot see.

Our children indeed cannot understand the nature and end of the ordinance of baptism; but neither were the Jewish children, at eight days old, able to know what the purpose of circumcision was. They had no actual faith of their own, but the faith of those who present them in the congregation, is imputed, and themselves are sanctified by being born of believing parents. They have no manner of room for repentance, but then they have innocence, which is a much better qualification; and though they cannot stipulate for themselves, yet have they proxies and sureties, of ² early institution both in the Jewish and Christian church, to contract in their names, whose act is looked upon, and accepted by God, as theirs. In the mean time, that infants, and young children though insensible of what is done for them, may have favours conferred upon them, and are capable of receiving spiritual advantages to their souls, is plain from that passage in the evangelical history, where, when ³ young children were brought to Christ, he took them up in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them, namely, by praying for a blessing, by pronouncing a blessing, and by actually conferring a blessing on them; and if they are capable of being blessed, why should they be thought incapable of being baptized, since baptism in the main is but a solemn benediction, as it instates us in the privileges and benefits of the gospel, such as adoption and grace, the pardon of our sins, and the acceptance of our persons?

In short, ⁴ the covenant of grace is a deed of gift, made to us by Christ, wherein he promises to bestow upon us eternal life and happiness; and, as it would be absurd to say, that a child's name ought not to be put in any deed or legacy, until he come of age to understand it; so it is equally absurd, and far more injurious, to exclude our children from this heavenly legacy, which Christ out of the riches of his goodness, has bequeathed unto them: especially considering ⁵ that the primitive church did all along, and ⁶ every national church at this day in the world, does admit their children into the Christian covenant by this ordinance: that ⁷ many of the most ancient writers plead the necessity of it, for

the expiation of original guilt, and ⁸ speak of it as a great sin in parents, and others, that have opportunity, to suffer any child of theirs, or any other person under their care, to die unbaptized.

In relation to the other sacrament, there can be no great difficulty in our Saviour's words, if we will but admit that the scripture very frequently makes use of figurative expressions, and in matters of a sacramental nature more especially, is apt to put the sign for the thing signified, ⁹ 'the three baskets are three days,' ¹⁰ 'the seven good kine are seven years,' ¹¹ 'the ram with the two horns are the kings of Media and Persia'; ¹² 'Sarah and Agar are the two covenants,' and ¹³ 'the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches,' are instances of this kind: and when Moses, speaking of the paschal lamb, tells the Israelites, ¹⁴ 'this is the Lord's passover,' even before the Lord had passed over them, and smitten the Egyptians: and of the unleavened bread used at the paschal feast, this is the bread of affliction, which your fathers did eat in the land of Egypt; his meaning can be no other, than that these things were a representation and memorial of what had befallen their forefathers in Egypt. And therefore it is no wonder, that our blessed Saviour, in the institution of this sacrament, should make choice of the like form of expression as was in use in the Jewish church upon the like occasion; and consequently, that when he says, 'this is my body, and this is my blood,' his meaning must be, that, 'this bread in my hand, and the wine in this cup, do signify and represent to you my body and blood, and that, in eating and drinking of these, you are made partakers of my body and blood, that is, of the real benefits of my death and passion.'

¹⁵ And indeed, if we consider, that our blessed Saviour celebrated this sacrament before his passion, we shall soon perceive that his words could not possibly bear any other construction. For how could he hold himself in his own hand, or give his disciples his body broken, and his blood shed, when at this time he was alive, and no violence had passed upon him? ¹⁶ They saw his body whole before them, and knew that his blood was in his veins, and therefore could not but conclude, that what they eat and drank, according to the evidence of their senses, was bread and wine, for had they understood our Saviour's words in the literal meaning, it is hardly imaginable, but that they, who, upon all other occasions, were so full of their questions and objections, would, upon the first hearing of this paradox, have started some such scruple as this:—'We see this to be bread, and that to be wine, and we see that thy body is distinct from both; we see that thy body is not broken, nor is thy blood shed: how therefore can these things be?'

The ancient apologists for our holy religion take notice, that this was one of the greatest accusations which heathens brought against Christians, that they did eat human flesh, which they endeavoured to refute, and constantly rejected as the vilest calumny, and most abominable thing. But now, had they understood our Saviour's words in a literal sense, and thereupon made

¹ Rom. x. 9.

² See Wall's Infant Baptism, introduction, sect. 34. part i. c. 4. part ii. c. 9. ³ Luke xviii. 15. ⁴ Hopkin's Doctrine of the two Sacraments. ⁵ Wall's History of Infant Baptism, part i. passim. ⁶ Ibid. part ii. c. 8. ⁷ Ibid. part i. passim.

⁸ Ibid. c. 4, 15, 18, &c. ⁹ Gen. xl. 18. ¹⁰ Ibid. xli. 26.

¹¹ Dan. viii. 20.

¹² Gal. iv. 24.

¹³ Rev. i. 20.

¹⁴ Exod. xii. 11.

¹⁵ Tillotson's sermons in folio, vol. i.

¹⁶ Whitby's Annotations on Mat. xxvi. 26.

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it an article of faith, that they did daily eat the flesh of the Son of man, with what sincerity could they without all limitation or distinction not only have denied, but even detested the doing so.¹ Nay, nothing is more obvious, than that primitive writers continually ridicule the heathens for worshipping such deities as might be eaten; an instance particularly in the Egyptians, who made the same flesh which some of them did consecrate as a god, the food of others. But how can it possibly be conceived, that they should thus ridicule and expose the religion of heathens, for that very thing which made so great a part in their own; or brand that, as the very extremity of madness and folly, when done by others, which their faith taught them was the highest act of religious worship, when performed by themselves?

² These things surely give us sufficient reason with Scotus, to admire, that such an interpretation should be put upon this one article, as makes our faith contemptible to all that are guided with reason; and at the same time to assert, that, it is apparently against humanity, and against piety, to break with our hands, to tear with our teeth, and to devour, as we do common food, the flesh and blood of Christ; and that the scorn of atheists and infidels will never cease, until the doctrine, which established these positions, be banished from the Christian church.

We own indeed, that the whole stress of the Christian cause lies upon the truth of our Lord's resurrection, and that all proper methods of convincing the world were necessary upon this occasion; but then it should be considered³ that our Lord being now, after his resurrection, to act according to the majesty of the divine nature, and not according to the infirmities and condescension of the human, it did not so well comport with the dignity he had assumed, to converse publicly, or to submit himself to the censures, and fresh affronts of his enemies. But allowing it had been consistent,⁴ yet the unbelieving Jews, especially the chief priests and rulers, were of all men most unworthy to have so extraordinary a way of conviction afforded them.

They had already despised the evidence that was given them; and not only so, but maliciously imputed the plainest miracles that ever were wrought, to the power and operation of the devil. Now, if any thing can render men incapable of the favour of a farther conviction, such a malicious resistance of the evidence which our Saviour's miracles carried along with them, would probably do it; especially if we consider, that the greatest of all the miracles which he wrought in his lifetime, I mean the raising Lazarus from the grave, after he had been dead four days, was so far from convincing them, that though they could not deny the thing, they took occasion to resolve to put him to death: and therefore, what reason was there, that Christ should appear to them for their conviction, who had conspired to compass his death, even because they knew that he had raised one from the dead?

But supposing, for the present, that our Saviour had appeared publicly to the Jewish rulers; yet, since neither the darkness at his death, nor the earthquake at

his resurrection; neither the declaration of the centurion on the one, nor the confession of the soldiers on the other occasion, had wrought in them any remorse, we can hardly suppose, but that, had he so appeared, they would have offered to lay violent hands upon him, as they before designed against Lazarus, and for the same reasons:⁵ in which case, had our Saviour vanished out of their hands, as doubtless he would, what would they have concluded from thence, but that they had seen a ghost, a spectre, or apparition? And what conviction would that have wrought, but that their senses had been imposed upon by a magical illusion? And what effect would this have had upon their minds towards bringing them to a belief that Christ was truly risen? None at all.

In many of the Jews, especially their chief-priests and elders, the god of this world had so blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they would not have believed one title of our Saviour's resurrection; or, in case they did believe it, such was their malice and perverseness, that they would not have testified that they ever had seen him after his resurrection. Now they that are wicked enough to deny what they believe, will, at a pinch, deny also what they know to be true; and therefore, supposing that our Lord had shown himself to all his enemies, and to all the people, and but some of them, especially of the great men in authority, had denied that ever they saw him after his resurrection, this would have exceedingly weakened the testimony of those who vouched and confessed it: for he that appeals to the knowledge of another for the truth of a matter of fact, is so far from gaining, that he loses credit by the appeal, if the other person denies that he knows any thing of it. If therefore our Lord had appeared to his persecutors, (it being likely that his disciples would appeal to their knowledge,) they, by protesting the contrary, would have made a terrible advantage against the Christians upon that appeal. Herein therefore, is manifest the wisdom of Christ, that in making choice of particular witnesses, namely, such persons only as would be so far from dissembling their knowledge, that they would always be ready to seal their testimony with their blood, he hath settled the Christian faith upon a better foundation than if he had appeared in the temple, or in the midst of Jerusalem, to the whole people of the Jews.⁶

The truth is,⁷ it is not the number of witnesses, but the character and qualifications of the persons, together with the evidence itself, in its full force and circumstances, that are chiefly to be regarded in matters of this nature. If but a few men can, as the apostles did, by undeniable miracles make it sufficiently appear, that what they say is true, and that God himself confirms the truth of it; they can appeal to every man's own senses, before whom they work miracles, and make every one that sees them a witness to the truth of their doctrines. In this case, God himself bears witness to it; and what the high-priest said upon a very different occasion, every stander-by finds himself constrained to declare in this; 'What need have we of any further witnesses? for we ourselves have heard of their own mouths,' in the miraculous gift of tongues, 'and seen with our own eyes,' in the many won-

¹ Whitby's Annotations on Mat. xxvi. 26.

² Ibid.

³ Jenkins's Reasonableness of the Christian religion, vol. ii.

⁴ Tillotson's sermons.

⁵ South's Sermons, vol. v.

⁶ Clagget's Sermons, vol. i.

⁷ Jenkins's Reasonableness of the Christian religion, vol. ii.

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derful works which they have publicly wrought, a full and authentic testimony of Christ's resurrection.

And this possibly may suggest the reason, why God permitted the apostle St Thomas to be so scrupulous and doubtful in this great article of our faith. He had been told, that our Saviour was risen from the dead, and the truth of it had been attested to him by evidences beyond exception:¹ several companies, who had seen him and conversed with him several times; to whom he had exposed the sight and feeling of his wounds; to whom he had expounded the scriptures concerning himself; with whom he had broken the sacramental bread, and conferred on them the benediction of the Holy Ghost; all these, with all these convincing tokens, had told Thomas that Christ was risen: but Thomas's reply was,² 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into his side, I will not believe.' It might indeed be urged before, that our Lord had not given all the proofs of his resurrection, that the nature of the thing was capable of; but³ now, when nothing is left unasked, that the most sceptical doubts could pretend to desire; when the very apostles themselves had one of their number that held out a while, and they preached not this doctrine, until his scruples were removed; when even this doubter himself was no less vigorous and positive afterwards in asserting the truth of a point, which nothing but demonstration could make him believe; this takes off all imputation of credulity and easiness. It shows, that the apostles proceeded with great caution, before they embarked in the cause of Christianity, which could not but reap great advantages from this apostle's backwardness to believe; and therefore our church justly acknowledges, that⁴ 'God, in his wisdom, suffered Thomas to doubt, for the greater confirmation of our faith,' according to that saying of one of the ancients, 'The unbelief of Thomas has been more profitable for our faith, than the faith of the disciples has been; because while he is brought to believe by the evidence of the sense of touch, our minds, casting off all unbelief, are confirmed in the faith.' This disciple, in short, doubted and was satisfied for us all. His former unbelief adds strength to the cause he pleads, and makes him a witness so much above exception, that the scruples, which in him were weaknesses, in those that pretend to follow him, and know his story, they will be wilfulness, and resolved infidelity.

His story, indeed, and the means which, as we therein read, our Saviour made use of to convince him, will instruct us in this, that, whatever changes our Saviour's glorified body might undergo after his resurrection, it was not altered, as to the properties of a body, whereof our outward senses are competent judges. To these senses it is that our Lord appealed; by these he composed the disciples, suspecting him to be a phantom; by these he satisfied the doubtful and incredulous; and by these the apostles make it their business to persuade the world, when they so frequently testify, that they⁵ 'had seen and heard him, had eaten and drank with him.' But now, if our Saviour's body was not subject to the

same laws with other corporeal substances; if it could then pass through the doors in the manner of a spirit, and may at this time be, where our senses can discern nothing of it, though no other body can be so; then what satisfaction could Thomas receive in feeling his hands and side? or wherein would the strength of St John's argument lie, when he declares to his proselytes,⁶ 'that he had seen, and heard, and his hands had handled of the Word of Life?'

The indulgence indeed which our Saviour gave his apostles, to try all their senses upon him, gave them full satisfaction, both as to the materiality and identity of his body. But then, as all philosophy informs us, that no body can penetrate through another,^a we may reasonably infer, that when our Lord came to his apostles, on purpose, as it were, to convince them of the reality of his resurrection body, he did not glide into the room like a spirit, or phantasm, but, by his sovereign power, opened the door himself, even as the angel did the prison-gates to release Peter, secretly, and without the perception of any in the company, who might then be at the upper end of the room perhaps, and employed in some such business as took up their whole attention. For,⁷ unless we can suppose, that our Saviour designed to invalidate the strength of what he said and did, to convince his apostles of the truth of his resurrection, we cannot believe, that at the same time he would do a thing,

⁶ 1 John i.

⁷ Whitby's Annotations on John xx. 19.

^a Philosophy teaches us that all material bodies are impenetrable, or in other words, that every body possesses the property of excluding every other body from occupying the same space at the same time; but philosophy does not teach us (as the author asserts,) that no body can penetrate through another, for this would contradict common experience. Solids penetrate one another in the sense in which our author seems to use the term penetrate; fluids penetrate solids and solids fluids. Heat penetrates all bodies and expands them. Light penetrates transparent substances, the magnetic and electric fluids also pass through almost all substances. With regard, however, to the precise manner in which our Saviour appeared to the disciples while the doors were shut, it is vain, if not presumptuous, to inquire. Of the real nature of a glorified body we know little, but we may infer, from the reasoning of the apostle Paul, that at the resurrection bodies of the saints will possess powers and capabilities which far transcend those of our present gross corporeal bodies; and if this be true in regard to the spiritual bodies of the saints, it must be so in a far higher sense in regard to our Lord's glorified body; at all events, we can safely assert that the divine nature which resided in the glorified body of Christ, was able to effect greater miracles than the entering into a shut apartment by penetrating the substance of the door or wall, even supposing this to be implied by the Evangelist, (John xx. 19.) In what manner the miracle was effected (for undoubtedly the entrance was of a miraculous nature,) we are indeed not told; but nothing seems so probable in itself, or so agreeable to the analogy of the divine operation in other cases, or the beautiful economy which existed in our Saviour's working of miracles, in which he never employed more power than was necessary to accomplish any point, as to suppose that our Lord caused the doors to open of themselves. So Acts v. 19, 'the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors,' &c. and 23, 'The prison we truly found shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened we found no man within.' Acts xii. 6, 7, 10. When they were past the first and second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which 'opened to them of its own accord.' The above would then be as much a miracle as that supposed by the commonly received hypothesis, and unquestionably an equal proof of Christ's divine omnipotence. The same view of the subject has also been taken by Calvin.—(See Doddridge.)—Bloomfield's *Crit. Digest*.—Ed.

¹ Young's Sermons, vol. ii.

² John xx. 25.

³ Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. iv.

⁴ Collect. on St Thomas's day.

⁵ Acts x. 41.

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known and observed by them, which would in effect evacuate the force of all his proofs.

It is difficult, however, to imagine the reason, why our Saviour should so far condescend to his apostles, as to show his hands and his feet, desiring them to handle them, when, not long before, he forbade Mary Magdalene to touch him, because he was not yet ascended; unless we may suppose, that, after his resurrection, he might ascend several times, and that his first ascension was immediately ensuant upon it.

Now, to make this more obvious, we must remember, that, a little before his passion, our Saviour foretold to his apostles his sudden ascent to his Father, and as sudden descent to them again: ¹ 'yet a little while,' says he, 'and ye shall see me, and again a little while, and ye shall not see me, because I go to my Father;' and that afterwards, upon their surprise, and dispute about the meaning of the expression, ² 'Jesus said unto them, do you inquire among yourselves of what I said, a little while, and ye shall see me; and again, a little while, and ye shall not see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall ye sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy,' &c. ³ Now, if we compare this prediction with the event, how sad and disconsolate the apostles were upon our Saviour's death, and how refreshed and joyful they were soon after his resurrection; and consider withal, that this sorrow was to last till Christ had been with his Father, and then their joy to commence; we shall be inclined to believe, that what our Lord would be understood to say, is, that he was to go to his Father immediately after his resurrection, and then very soon to return to his apostles again, even the very same day in the evening.

And indeed, considering that Christ was our high-priest, it was necessary for him to ascend into heaven, as soon as his sufferings were finished. For, as the high-priest, under the law, was not only to slay the sacrifice, but to carry the blood, that moment, within the sanctuary, and there present it before God, to complete the atonement, and make intercession for the people; so Christ, having shed his blood, and offered his body on the altar of the cross, was immediately to ascend into the heavenly sanctuary, and there obtain for us the remission of our sins, and all the other benefits of his passion.

But this is not all. In several parts of scripture our Saviour is invested with a regal, as well as sacerdotal character; but now, if, according to the testimony of the same scripture, he could not exercise any supreme authority, until he was exalted to his heavenly kingdom; if he could not ⁴ give gifts unto men, until he was ascended upon high; nor ⁵ send his Holy Spirit upon his disciples, until he was glorified, and had, by his intercession, ⁶ obtained that great promise of the Father; if he could not, I say, administer the affairs of his mediatorial kingdom, before he had conquered death by his resurrection, and had presented himself as a slain sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the world, before the presence of the divine majesty; this makes it evident, that, on the very day of his resurrection, he must have

ascended to heaven, because, in the evening of that day, we find him ⁷ giving a commission and instructions to his apostles; promising them the mission of the Holy Ghost; ⁸ blessing them in a solemn manner; ⁹ sending them as his Father had sent him; ¹⁰ giving them the power of remitting and retaining sins; and afterwards, in Galilee, ¹¹ assuring them, that all power was given him in heaven, as well as earth; and therefore commanding them to go, and teach, and baptize all nations, and promising his powerful presence with them, even unto the end of the world.

Now, if these exercises, both of the sacerdotal office and regal power, could not properly belong to our Saviour until his exaltation, then we have reason to suppose, that, in the morning of his resurrection, he privately ascended into heaven, to receive the reward of his humiliation in our flesh; and that the reason for his forbidding Mary to touch him, was, that by her officious embraces and importunity, she might not hinder him from ascending that moment, and, what was the crown of all his labour, carrying our glorified nature, as soon as possibly he could, into that blessed place where God's majestic presence appears, and where thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, angels, and archangels have their abode.

CHAP. III. *Of our Blessed Saviour's Doctrine, and the Excellency of his Religion.*

THE completion of the prophecies relating to the promised Messiah, in the person and actions of our Saviour Christ, and the miracles which he wrought, in testimony of his divine mission, and in conformity to what the Messiah was to do, were the subjects of the two preceding chapters, as the great external evidences of the truth of our holy religion; and the internal evidence is, the goodness and perfection of those precepts relating to practice, which he hath enjoined, and of those doctrines relating to faith, which he hath taught us in the course of his gospel, and which, when duly considered, will manifest the excellency of the Christian religion above all others.

Now, the practical parts of our holy religion, or those precepts which were intended to direct us in our duty towards God and man, are such as either tend to the perfection of human nature, or to the peace and happiness of human society. Of those which tend to the perfection of human nature, some enjoin piety towards God, and others require the good government of ourselves with respect to the pleasures of this life; and our business is, to show, that all and every of these are both conformable to the dictates of right reason in their practice, and declarative of the wisdom of God in their appointment.

¹² 1. That we should inwardly reverence and love God, and express that reverence by external worship and adoration, and by our readiness to receive and obey all the revelations of his will; that we should testify our

¹ John xvi. 16.

² Ibid. ver. 19.

³ Mr Whiston's Essays.

⁴ Eph. iv. 8.

⁵ John vii. 39.

⁶ Acts ii. 33.

⁷ Mark xvi. 15, &c.

⁸ Luke xxiv. 50.

⁹ John xx. 21.

¹⁰ Ibid. ver. 23.

¹¹ Mat. xxviii. 18, &c.

¹² Tillotson's Sermons in folio, vol. i.

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dependence upon him, and our confidence in his goodness, by constant prayers and supplications to him for mercy and help, both for ourselves and others; that we should acknowledge our obligation to him for the many favours and benefits which every day, every moment, we receive from him, by continual praises and thanksgivings; and that, on the contrary, we should not entertain any unworthy thoughts of God, nor give that honour and reverence which is due to him to any other; that we should not worship him in any manner that is either unsuitable to the perfections of his nature, or repugnant to his revealed will; that we should carefully avoid the profanation of his name, by customary swearing or cursing; and take great heed, that we be not guilty of the neglect or contempt of his worship, or of any other thing that belongs to him; in short,¹ that we should possess our minds with such a due sense of the majesty, and holiness, and justice, and goodness of God, as may make us, upon all occasions, thoroughly fearful to offend him; of his majesty, lest we affront it by being irreverent; of his holiness, lest we offend it by being carnal; of his justice, lest we provoke it by being presumptuous; and of his goodness, lest we forfeit it by being unthankful. These are the general heads of those duties which every man's reason tells him he owes to God, and yet these are the very things which the Christian religion expressly requires of us; so that, in this part of Christianity, there is nothing but what exactly agrees with the reason of mankind.

In respect to the good government of ourselves, amidst the pleasures and enjoyments of this life, St John, when he tells us, that² 'all that is in the world, is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' distributes the irregular appetites of men into three kinds, voluptuousness, covetousness, and ambition, answerable to the three sorts of tempting objects that are in the world, pleasures, riches, and honours; but when our holy religion requires of us, that³ 'we should not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit; that we should, in short,⁴ walk decently, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness; but⁵ being holy in all manner of conversation,⁶ abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;' when it gives us this strict caution,⁷ 'to take heed, and beware of covetousness; because a man's life,' or the happiness of his life, 'consisteth not in the things which he possesseth;' and calls upon us so frequently⁸ 'to be meek and lowly in spirit,' and not⁹ 'to mind high things; to¹⁰ let nothing be done through vain glory, but, in lowliness of mind, to let each esteem other better than themselves;' it is plain that it lays a prohibition upon all such irregular appetites and passions as are the bane of human ease and happiness, and enjoins such virtues and good dispositions as are not only highly reasonable, suitable to our nature, and every way for our temporal convenience and advantage, but such as dispose us likewise to the practice of piety and religion, by purifying our souls from the dross and filth of sensual delights.

2. In relation to the other sorts of precepts, which, as we said, tend to the peace and happiness of human so-

ciety, they are such as enjoin all those virtues that are apt to sweeten the spirits, and allay the passions and animosities which sometimes happen among men. For when our most holy religion requires us, 'to love our neighbour,' that is, every man in the world, even our greatest enemies, 'as ourselves,' and, in pursuance of this general precept, 'if it be possible, and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all men;' to be kind to one another, ready to gratify and oblige those that we converse with; to be tender-hearted and compassionate to those that are in want, and misery, and ready, upon all occasions, to supply and relieve them; to sympathise with one another in our joys and sorrows; 'to mourn with those that mourn, and to rejoice with them that rejoice; to bear one another's burdens, and to forbear one another in love; to be easily reconciled to them that have offended us, and to be ready to forgive, from our hearts, the greatest and most reiterated injuries that can be done us; it discovers itself not only to be the most innocent and harmless, but the most generous and best-natured institution that ever was in the world.

In like manner, when our holy religion endeavours to secure the private interests of men, as well as the public peace, by confirming and enforcing all the dictates of nature concerning justice and equity; by recommending the great rule of doing to others what we would have them to do to us, as the sum and substance of the law and the prophets; by commanding obedience to human laws, which decide men's rights, and submission to all government, under pain of damnation; and by forbidding whatever is contrary to these, namely, violence and oppression, fraud and over-reaching, perfidiousness and treachery, breach of trusts, oaths or promises, undutifulness to superiors, sedition and rebellion against magistracy and authority; and if there be any thing else that is apt to disturb the peace of the world, and to alienate the affections of men from one another, such a sourness of disposition, and rudeness of behaviour, censoriousness, and sinister interpretation of things; in short, all cross and distasteful humours, and whatever else may render conversation uneasy or unsociable: when the laws of Christianity, I say, forbid these vices and evil dispositions, and, upon every occasion, command the contrary virtues,¹¹ 'whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise,' requiring us to 'think of these things;' we cannot but allow, that nothing can be devised more proper and effectual, to advance the nature of man to its highest perfection, to procure the tranquillity of men's minds, to establish the peace and happiness of the world, and, if they were duly practised, to make it, as it were, an heaven upon earth, than the precepts which we find recorded in the gospel: and, what is no small commendation of them, there is nothing in all these precepts, but what, if we were to consult our own interest and happiness, we should think ourselves obliged to do, even though it were never enjoined us; nothing, in short, but what is easy to be understood, and as easy to be practised by every honest and well-meaning mind.

Some, indeed, have represented even the moral part

¹ Young's Sermons, vol. i. ² 1 John ii. 16. ³ Rom. viii. 1.

⁴ Ibid. xiii. 13. ⁵ 1 Pet. i. 15. ⁶ Ibid. ii. 11.

⁷ Luke xii. 15. ⁸ Mat. xi. 29. ⁹ Rom. xii. 16. ¹⁰ Phil. iii. 3.

¹¹ Phil. iv. 8.

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of the Christian religion, as an heavy burden and grievous to be borne; difficult to be kept, and yet dangerous to be broken; that it requires us to govern, and keep under our passions, to contradict our strongest inclinations, and many times to deny ourselves even lawful enjoyments; that it enjoins us to forgive and love our enemies, 'to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate and persecute us;' and, what is more, that it commands us to part with all the advantages of this world, and even to lay down life itself, in the cause of God, and the discharge of a good conscience. Hard sayings these, in some men's opinion, and such as our nature, in its state of degeneracy, is not able to perform. But this is for want of duly considering the obligation and tendency of such duties.

Some of the wisest heathens, even by the strength of reason, were able to discover the general corruption of human nature; but then they were ignorant both of the rise and progress of it; whereas, by the Christian revelation, we are sufficiently instructed in both. Here we find the baleful venom of our first ancestor's transgression entailed on their posterity; here the perpetual strugglings of flesh and spirit, and that violence of passions and desires that so often carries us into excesses, which our sober and better sense cannot but disapprove; and here that general bent to evil and backwardness to good, which every one, but such as are obdurate and insensible, is forced both to feel and lament; and therefore, since the gospel does not only show us our disease, but the malignity and true original of it, there is good reason why it should be allowed to press upon us the great duties of mortification and self-denial, as the best means within the compass of human power to cure us of it.

¹ The heathen sages, in the passage of their Hercules fighting with Antæus, seem to insinuate, that the only way to gain the mastery over our passions, is never to cease contending with them. Whilst Hercules grasped his adversary, and held him up in his arms, he could manage and master him with ease; but no sooner did he let Antæus touch the earth, but he got strength again, and was able to renew the combat. Antæus's touching the earth is morally no other than an earthly affection permitted to its element, that is, suffered to have its fill; at which time it gets strength, and grows masterly, and becomes less manageable than it was before: whereas, to grapple with our desires, to hold them off from the reach of their quarry, and to restrain them even from the lawful measures of enjoyment, is the only way, both to bring them into subjection, and to confirm our government over them.

The truth is, every time that we indulge our appetites beyond what is convenient, we give away so much power out of our own hands, we strengthen the enemy for the next attack, and disable ourselves still more for resisting it; and therefore, as the Christian state is deservedly called a warfare, that is, the necessary and continual engagement of our rational desires against our sensual, in order to bring them under, and keep them in obedience; and as in this warfare there must be no league, no truce, no laying down of arms, because the enemy is perfidious, and will never keep the peace; so are we never out of danger, but while we are actually fighting.

² The more we gratify our appetites, the more craving they will be, and the more impatient of denial; for every lust is a kind of hydropic distemper, and, in this case too, the more we drink, the more we shall thirst. If we give way to our passions, we do but gratify ourselves for the present, in order to our future disquiet; but if we resist and conquer them, we lay the foundation of perpetual peace and tranquillity in our minds; so that, in the whole, by retrenching our desires, especially when they prove exorbitant, we do not rob ourselves of any true pleasure, but only prevent the pain and trouble of farther dissatisfaction.

³ The ancient moralists, though they sometimes decry an insensibility of just provocations as a mark of an abject and little soul; yet upon no occasion are they so profuse in their praises, as where they speak of persons touched with a sense of injuries and indignities, and yet able, with a generous contempt, to overlook, and show themselves above them; for the passing by, and forgetting such things, the being very hardly incensed, and very readily appeased again, is constantly set forth as one of the brightest virtues that give lustre to a brave and truly noble mind. And if such were the notions of heathens, who professed to follow no other guide but the light of reason, surely the duty of loving and forgiving those that have injured and offended us, cannot be a task so very difficult to Christians, who, in matters capable of any tolerable construction, are required to put on that charity,⁴ 'which believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;' and, in the worst that can be, such a generous greatness of mind as 'puts away from us all bitterness, and wrath, and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice; such as should make us kind and tender-hearted,'⁵ restoring those that are overtaken in a fault in the spirit of meekness; and such as should prevail with us,⁶ to forbear one another, and to forgive one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us.

And indeed, he who considers, that the very foundation of our religion is laid in the belief and profession of a pardon extended to the highest of all provocations, of love inconceivable to the worst of all enemies, and both these expressed and effected by a person the most highly injured, and in a method the most beneficial, the most amazingly kind; insomuch that no instance of generosity or goodness besides presents us with any thing like it, with any thing near it, with any thing fit to be named with it: he who considers this, I say, cannot but acknowledge, that the precept of loving and forgiving our enemies is peculiarly suitable to the condition of Christians, who owe all their hopes and happiness to it: and that it would have been absurd not to have obliged those men to a virtue, which they confess themselves so infinitely beholden to, and⁷ which no man can think a grievous command, who considers the pleasure and sweetness of love, the glorious victory of overcoming evil with good, and then compares these with the restless torments and perpetual tumults of a malicious and revengeful spirit.

² Tillotson's Sermons, in folio, vol. i.

³ Stanhope Sermons at Boyle's Lectures. ⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

⁵ Gal. vi. i.

⁶ Eph. iv. 31, 32.

⁷ Tillotson's Sermons, in folio, vol. i.

¹ Young's Sermons, vol. i.

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¹ 3. The Stoics of old represented their wise man, as no more concerned at the loss of his estate, his liberty, or life, than if they were the rattles or gewgaws of a child, which might afford him some little ease, and present diversion, indeed, but were by no means essential, or in any degree necessary, to his real happiness. This however is a flight too romantic to be credited. To lay down this life, and all the comforts of it, while men were so much in the dark about another, and to expose the body to sufferings, when doubtful, and in distrust about the soul, is too great an infraction upon self-preservation, because it is to part with one's all, at least our all in certainty and opinion: but to do this, when men know the reality of a future state, and the value of their immortal souls; ² to fear him, who, when he hath killed, can cast both body and soul into hell, rather than them who can only kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do; to receive, embrace, rejoice in ³ the light affliction, which is but for a moment, when thoroughly persuaded, that it worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; this is, not to destroy, but to save and profit ourselves, and what, in the affairs of this world, we esteem it our wisdom to do every day.

If by any sad accident our house happens to be set on fire, no man is to be blamed for doing his best to save his goods; but, when that is found impracticable, every wise man will choose to leave all, and escape naked, rather than out of foolish fondness for any furniture of value or curiosity, there stay and perish with it. Now this is no improper emblem of the case before us. When the fire of persecution breaks out among us, we have our Lord's permission, by all prudent and honourable methods, to decline it; but when it comes at last to catch upon these earthly tabernacles, that is, when our circumstances admit of no other choice, but either sinning or suffering, the loss of our lives, or the loss of our virtue, we owe it then, not only to God, but to ourselves, rather to quit this house of flesh, than bring the glorious inhabitant in it into danger of being buried in its ruins.

Upon the whole, therefore, this taking up our cross, or suffering upon the account of religion, is not choosing evil as such, but choosing an infinitely less evil, which, in this respect, is a great good. It is not exposing ourselves, when we might be safe; but, where we cannot be safe in our whole persons, redeeming one part with another, the better with the worse: it is not sustaining a loss, but making an exchange; an exchange of fugitive and perishing goods, for lasting and substantial; and parting with something of less value, in order to receive another thing unspeakably better, and more desirable.

Thus it appears that the three great precepts, which are commonly objected against, as heavy impositions, are the necessary result of the state and circumstances wherein we are placed; that the duty of denying ourselves arises from the corruption of the nature we are born with; that of loving our enemies, from the very genius and foundation of the religion we live under; and that of taking up our cross, from such prudential considerations as make us always choose the less evil; and are all so suited to the reason of mankind, that we find some of the best im-

provers of it prescribing the same rules to their disciples; ⁴ which is enough to convince us, that our Lord, who has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, ought not by any means to be accounted an hard Master, when he imposes no other terms than the heathens thought fit to engage in, upon the mere spur of private conscience, or public shame; and that speechless, and without apology, a great part of the Christian world must needs stand in the day of inquiry, when it shall appear that Pythagoras, and Plato, and Zeno, could have their scholars run through such discipline, as is necessary to the character of a virtuous man, which those who profess Christ are not ashamed to call foolish and needless, only because it is unpleasing.

4. The other part of the Christian religion is, as we said, those doctrines which were designed for the direction of our faith, in matters that were not sufficiently revealed before.

⁵ That there is one supreme, absolute, and independent cause, and original of all things, eternal, infinite, all-powerful, all-sufficient, the maker and Lord of all things, himself derived from none, made of none, begotten of none, proceeding from none; that by him all creatures, material and immaterial, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, mortal and immortal, in heaven and in earth, were made, or created out of nothing: that having made the world, at first, he still governs it by his perpetual providence, insomuch that the most fortuitous accident does not happen, a sparrow does not fall to the ground, nor an hair from our heads, without his permission or direction; that, in the exercise of this his providence, every thing is submitted to his will; no strength can resist his power, no swiftness can flee from his presence, no secrecy can conceal from his knowledge, no art can evade his justice, and every creature participates of his goodness: that this infinite and almighty being did, from all eternity, and long before any ages commenced, in an ineffable manner, which the scriptures call generation, communicate the essence of the God-head so entirely to his Son, as to make him the same with himself, very God, of very God: that this eternal Son of God, having a being in the bosom of his Father, was partaker of his glory and power in the creation and government of the world, and, by the divine appointment, is our Saviour, Mediator, Intercessor, and Judge: that, having a tender compassion for sinful man, and willing to procure for him the grace of repentance, he voluntarily condescended to take our nature, with all its innocent infirmities, upon him: that, in this nature, miraculously conceived, and born of a virgin, he lived a life as we do, and was affected as we are, but without sin, revealed unto us his Father's will, and did many wonderful works in confirmation of his divine mission: that, after a life spent in doing good, he submitted, in his human nature, to a painful and ignominious death, that thereby he might make an atonement to God, and reconciliation for our sins: that, after a stay of three days in the grave, by his almighty power he raised himself to life again, conversed upon earth for the space of forty days, instructed his disciples in matters relating to his kingdom, and, at length, in the sight of a great

¹ Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

² Luke xii. 4, 5.

³ 1 Cor. iv. 17.

⁴ Young's Sermons, vol. ii.

⁵ Clarke's Sermons, vol. ii.

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number of spectators, ascended visibly into heaven: that, upon his ascension, he was exalted to the right-hand of God, where he now makes intercession for us, and is invested with all power and authority, wherewith he governs the whole church, and is hereafter to judge the whole world: that, upon his investiture, he soon sent down the Holy Ghost, the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity, to be the immediate comforter and director of his apostles, to lead them into all truth, to inspire them with the gift of tongues and to impart to their followers such other gifts as might best serve the end of their ministry: that this blessed Spirit still continues with all good men, and ¹ by illuminating their understandings, rectifying their wills and affections, renewing their natures, uniting their persons to Christ, and helping the infirmities of their prayers with his own intercession, is the great sanctifier of their souls and bodies, in order to make them acceptable in the sight of God for ever: these, together with the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and, after their re-union, an eternal state of misery or happiness in the other world, are the great and fundamental principles of the Christian religion and mysteries, as the apostle ² calls them, 'which have been hid from ages, and from generations, but are now made manifest to the saints.'

'But how are these things made manifest,' says the objector presently, 'when, notwithstanding all the pretended light of revelation, they still remain obscure and unintelligible? Some articles of the Christian faith, such as the existence of a God, the dispensations of providence, the spirituality of our souls, a future state, and future judgment, we readily allow, because these are founded in the nature of things, and rise in the mind upon the disquisitions of reason; but, as for the stories of a trinity in unity, a co-equality in the Son, the incarnation of a God, and the propitiation made by the man Christ Jesus, of these we can frame no manner of conception; and therefore you must excuse us, if we do not believe them; for where is the crime of not performing impossibilities, or of not believing what does not appear to us to be true.'

It cannot be denied indeed, but that, in the Christian religion, there are many great mysteries, or doctrines of too much sublimity for the powers of reason, unassisted by revelation, to find out, or, when discovered, fully to comprehend; but this is no more than what we might reasonably expect, considering the nature and quality of the things it treats of. In its main intentment, it is a kind of comment upon the divine nature, or an instrument to convey right conceptions to the soul of man, as far as it is capable of receiving them. But now God, we know, is an infinite being, without any bounds or limitations of his essence; wonderful in his actions, inconceivable in his purpose, and inexpressible in his attributes: and how can such vast and mighty things be crowded in a little finite understanding? how shall our poor short faculties be able to measure the length of his eternity, the breadth and expansions of his immensity, the heights of his prescience, the depth of his decrees, and, least of all, the unutterable incomprehensible mystery of two natures united into one person, and

again, of one and the same nature diffused into a triple personality? when a man that is born blind, as ³ one expresses it, shall be able, on hear-say, to conceive in his mind all the varieties and curiosities of colours, or to draw an exact scheme of some fine city, or map of some large province, then may we expect, in this degenerate state of our understanding, to comprehend the ways of the Almighty, and by searching find out God. But, to do justice to the argument on the other side, as it would be extremely foolish and irrational, for a blind man to affirm, that there is no such thing as colours, or lines, or pictures, because he finds that he cannot form in his mind any true perception of them; so would it be equally, if not superlatively more unreasonable, for us to deny the great mysteries of our faith, because the plummet of our reason will not reach them.

While we continue in this state of imperfection, we must be content ⁴ to know in part. A full and adequate perception of these sublime mysteries is reserved, as a principal ingredient of our felicity and happiness above, when all the heights and depths, which we now stand amazed at, shall be made clear and familiar to us; when God shall display the hidden glories of his nature, the wonders of his providence, and the wisdom of his counsels; and, withal, fortify the eye of the soul to such a degree, as to make it able, as far as the capacities of an human intellect can be able, to behold, and take them in.

To have a right notion of the doctrines of our religion, however, we are to distinguish between those things that are above reason, and incomprehensible, and those that are against reason, and utterly inconceivable. ⁵ Some things are above reason, because of their transcendent excellency, and distance from us; whereas those that are against reason involve a contradiction, and have a natural repugnancy to our understandings, which cannot conceive any thing that is formally impossible. And from hence it will follow, that though we neither can, nor should believe those things that are contrary to our reason, yet we both may, and ought to believe those that are above it: and the reason is, ⁶ because the only evidence we can give of our acknowledging the infallible truth of God, is by assenting to what he affirms upon his own authority.

In assenting to a proposition whose truth we perceive from the reason of the thing, we do not assent upon any authority at all. To such a proposition we should assent, though it were affirmed by the most fallible man, nay, though it was affirmed by the most notorious liar; and, consequently, our assenting to such a proposition is no manner of proof that we acknowledge the infallible veracity of God. This can only appear by our assenting to a proposition whose truth we do not perceive by any evidence from the nature of the thing; for here we assent upon the simple authority of God's affirmation, and our assent is an explicit acknowledgment of his absolute veracity. If then it be reasonable to expect, in a divine revelation, that God should require our acknowledgment of this attribute, especially, and without such acknowledgment no revelation would be of any use; and if this acknowledgment can appear only by our assenting,

³ South's Sermons, vol. i.

⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

⁵ Bates's Harmony of the Divine Attributes.

⁶ Rogers's Necessity of a Divine Revelation.

¹ Pearson on the Creed.

² Col. i. 26.

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upon the authority of God, to such propositions as we cannot perceive the truth of by an internal evidence; it certainly cannot be incongruous, to expect such propositions in a divine revelation. Nay, much more incongruous would it be, and ¹ a probable objection against the divinity of any revelation, if we should not find some propositions of this kind in it; because it is hardly conceivable, why God should make an external revelation of those things only, which, by a due exercise of our reason, he has enabled us to find out.

Seeing it is so far from being unreasonable, then, that it is highly expedient, and in some sort necessary, that there should be some propositions above the reach of human understanding, in every revelation that comes from God; if we can but show, that in the Christian system there are no doctrines, but such as stand clear of all absurdity and contradiction, the more abstruse and mysterious they are, the more they deserve our belief; for this very reason, because, ² if what is revealed concerning God were every way easy, and adapted to our comprehension, it could never reach, nor, with any fitness, represent that nature, which we all allow to be incomprehensible.

The holy scriptures, for instance, teach us, that in the divine nature, which can be but one, there are three distinct persons, to whom we ascribe the same attributes and perfections, the same worship and adoration. This indeed is a doctrine above our comprehension, as to the manner how three should be one, and one three; ³ but still we affirm, that there is no contradiction in it, if we will but distinguish between numbers, and the nature of things. For three to be one indeed, is a contradiction in numbers; but whether an infinite nature can communicate itself to three different substances, without such a division as is among created beings, must not be determined by bare numbers, but by the absolute perfections of the divine nature, which must be owned to be above our comprehension. The holy scriptures teach us, that the Son of God was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us; and that therefore our Redeemer was both God and man in one person. This, we own, is, in its nature, one of the great mysteries of godliness, as St Paul calls it; but then we must remember that, in reality, it is not much more difficult, than the union of the soul and body in all mankind, which, however unaccountable it may be to our reason and imagination, is too certain, in fact, to be called in question. Once more, the holy scriptures teach us, that our Saviour Christ, who was both God and man in one person, became the Redeemer of the world, by offering himself a propitiation to God for sinners. This, in many respects, is a mystery too, and what we could not have known, had it not been revealed to us; but now that it is revealed, it is far from deserving the imputation of being absurd. ⁴ That all mankind are sinners, and have fallen from their primitive integrity, not only the scriptures, but the constant experience of our own irregular appetites, is but too convincing a demonstration. Now, since this was our condition, and God was minded to rescue us from it, but entirely at liberty in what method to effect it; since the soul of our Saviour Christ was a free im-

maculate being, that might voluntarily suffer for us, if he pleased, and by the dignity of his nature, enhance the value of his sufferings to the full pardon of our sins upon his Father's acceptance of a vicarious sacrifice; there appears nothing in this doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, now that we have it fully revealed to us, but what corresponds with common reason, and all judicial proceedings among mankind.

These are some of the principal doctrines that we, as Christians, profess; and being free, when rightly considered, from all appearance of contradiction, ⁵ we may appeal to the judgment of any considerate person, whether it be not for the dignity and advantage of religion, that some articles of it should exceed the largest human comprehension; whether we should entertain the same awful impressions of the divine Majesty, if the perfections of his nature and operations were only such as we could see to the end of; whether it does not raise the value of man's redemption, to have it brought about by miracles of mercy, not only without example, but even beyond our present understanding. Had all these things been less, we should indeed have known them better; but then so much as we abate of their mysteriousness, to bring them down to our capacity, so much we impair their dignity, and weaken the power of them upon our affections. It is therefore the very commendation, as we said before, and excellency of these doctrines, that they are so far above us; and we ought to esteem it an instance of the divine goodness, no less than wisdom, so to have tempered his revelations, that we want not knowledge enough to engage our piety and holy wonder, and yet have not so much as should destroy our humility and godly reverence: and upon the whole, have reason to believe, that it could not have been better, nay, probably, not near so well, if either less had been discovered to us, or less concealed from us.

The other doctrines, which in some measure were discoverable by the strength of reason, but have been set in full light, and cleared of all their ambiguity and doubtfulness, by the revelation of the gospel, such as that of the being of a God, the inspection of his providence, the supreme end of man, the immortality of his soul, the resurrection of his body, a future judgment, and an eternal state of happiness or misery hereafter, are so rational in themselves, and have so natural a tendency to what is the great end of all religion, the reformation of men's lives and tempers, that a very small illustration will suffice to recommend them. For,

⁶ What can be a more necessary and excellent foundation of true piety, than that doctrine which the Christian religion clearly and distinctly teaches us concerning the nature and attributes of the only true God, who inhabits eternity, and yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth? What can afford more comfort and security in all conditions of life, than the sense of a providence, by which the very ⁷ hairs of our head are numbered, concerning itself for our welfare, and, for that reason, bidding us ⁸ 'to be careful for nothing, but, in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make our requests known unto God?' What can be a more effectual means to wean us

¹ Law's Case of Reason.

² Young's Sermons, vol. ii.

³ Stillingfleet's Sermons.

⁴ Whiston's Essays.

⁵ Stanhope's Sermons.

⁷ Mat. x. 30.

⁶ Clarke's Evidences.

⁸ Phil. iv. 6.

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from the love of the world, and the allurements of sin, than to consider, that the proper and ultimate end of man is the fruition of God; and that though¹ it does 'not yet appear what we shall be, yet this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is?' What a greater incitement to purity and holiness, to love, and hope, and heavenly-mindedness, than the assurance given in the gospel, that when we are² dissolved, we shall immediately be with Christ; that³ 'this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality;' that our souls, when they go hence, return to God that gave them, and our bodies, when laid in the dust, after a short repose, are to be raised in power, and⁴ 'fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body?' In fine, what stronger and more powerful motive to deter us from vice, and allure us to all kind of virtue, than the discovery we have of God's having 'appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness,'⁵ and render unto every man according to his works; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.' So that the articles of our Christian faith, you see, are far from being arbitrary impositions,⁶ calculated for the exercise of our credulity, or the gratification of our idle curiosity, but have an immediate relation to practice. They are indeed the genuine principles and foundations of all human and divine virtues; and,⁷ taken altogether, make a far more rational and consistent scheme of belief, than what the wisest ancient philosopher ever thought of, or the most opinionative modern unbeliever ever yet contrived.

But besides these doctrines, there are two ordinances peculiar to the Christian religion, which have an equal tendency to practice, and are so far from being vain and superstitious,⁸ as some are pleased to call them, that they carry their own plea and justification along with them. For what reasonable man can pretend to say, that it is anywise superstitious, for every member of the society which Christ has instituted, to be solemnly admitted into the profession of his religion by a plain and significant rite, intitling him to all the privileges, and charging him with all the obligations which belong to the members of that society as such, which is the design of one of the sacraments; or that it is unreasonable, or superstitious, for men frequently to commemorate, with all due thankfulness, the love of their greatest benefactor, and humbly and solemnly to renew their obligations and promises of obedience to him, which is the design of the other? But then, if we consider further the manifold benefits which we receive from these sacramental ordinances; that, by the former, we are admitted to the pardon of all our sins, the assistance of divine grace, the adoption of sons, and a title to a glorious inheritance; and that, by the latter, we have the covenant of mercy renewed, our breaches repaired, and our right to eternal happiness confirmed; that, in both, in short, we are made, and recognized to be, the children of God, and if

children, then, according to that happy climax, are we heirs, heirs with God, and joint heirs with Christ, to the intent that we may be glorified with him: if we consider these great privileges, I say, we shall soon perceive the wisdom and love of our master, and only Saviour, in thus⁹ opening to us a fountain for sin, and for uncleanness, and in thus giving us the¹⁰ medicine of immortality, as the ancients style the eucharist, an antidote to preserve men from dying, and to give them a life that is everlasting.

But whatever inherent efficacy some may think fit to ascribe or deny to these sacred ordinances, it can hardly be thought but that, since, when they are duly observed, they are productive of many virtues and good dispositions; ¹¹ since, in the sacrament of baptism, we profess our sincere belief in the truth of that doctrine which God the Father revealed by his blessed Son, and confirmed by the miraculous operations of the Holy Ghost; in it we declare our humble acceptance of the overtures of mercy and grace, purchased for us by our Saviour, and in this sacrament exhibited to us; in it acknowledge our obligations to all piety, righteousness, and sobriety, as loyal subjects, faithful servants, and dutiful children to God; and in it devote ourselves to the faith and obedience of God the Father, our great and glorious maker, of God the Son, our great and gracious redeemer, and of God the Holy Ghost, our blessed guide and comforter: and, in like manner, since a devout reception of the supper of our Lord exercises and excites in us an awful sense of mind, answerable to the greatness and holiness of him whom at that time we approach; an hearty contrition for our sins, which exposed our Saviour to such pains and agonies as are therein remembered; a fervent love and gratitude to him, for his wonderful goodness and love to us; a deep humility, upon the sense of our unworthiness to receive such testimonies of his favour; a pious joy, in consideration of the excellent fruits accruing to us from his performances; a comfortable hope of obtaining the benefits of his passion, by the assistance of his grace; and, lastly, an enlarged good-will and charity to all our brethren, as being made heirs of the same hope, and not only washed in the same baptism, but fed at the same table with ourselves: since these, I say, are the graces and benefits which accrue to us by these holy ordinances, we cannot but applaud the wisdom of their institution, which affords such mighty helps to our Christian progress, and, by the blessing of God, are the happy instruments both of our living well, and of our living for ever.

From this brief review of the Christian religion, it appears, that the purity and practicableness of its precepts, the truth and sublimity of its doctrines, and the wisdom and piety of its sacramental institutions, cannot but recommend it to every man's conscience, that is neither bribed with vice, or tinctured with infidelity; for¹² if our gospel 'be hid,' if the beauty and excellency of our holy religion be hid, 'it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.

¹³ And now, methinks, we may, with some confidence, challenge any religion in the world, to show us such

¹ 1 John iii. 2. ² Phil. i. 23. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 54.

⁴ Phil. iii. 21.

⁵ Rom. ii. 7, &c.

⁶ Archbishop Sharpe's Sermons.

⁷ Clarke's Evidence.

⁸ See Christianity as old as the Creation.

⁹ Zech. xiii. 1.

¹⁰ Ignat. Epist. ad Eph.

¹¹ Barrow on the Sacraments.

¹² 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

¹³ Tillotson's Sermons, in folio, vol. i.

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a complete body and collection of doctrines, both speculative and practical; of mysteries more sublime, and rational withal, more agreeable to the divine nature, and more perfective of human understanding; and of rules and precepts that would make men more pious and devout, more holy and sober, more just and fair in their dealings, better friends and better neighbours, better magistrates, better subjects, and better in all relations, than what we find recorded in the gospel.

Were there no other argument of the divinity of the Christian religion, but only the excellency of the doctrines which it teaches, this would be enough to convince any considering man, that it came from God. ¹ For, if it were nothing else but the result of natural reasoning, why should not other religions in the world, and other systems of morality, be as good as this? How comes the doctrine of Jesus Christ to excel those of all the famous legislators and philosophers in the world? How comes an obscure person in Judea to draw up such an admirable scheme of ethics, that whatever is laid down by the Lycurguses, and Numas, and Platos, and Aristotles, should not be comparable to it? How should he, in one or two years preaching, nay, in one short sermon, advance the practical doctrines to a greater height and perfection than ever they were brought to by any of the sects of philosophers, who had made it their business to study them for some ages? Most certainly unless God had been assisting in contriving this new model of the morality of Jesus Christ, it is impossible that it could ever have equalled, much less so far exceeded that of the Grecian schools, which had all the human advantages that he wanted on their side.

It cannot be denied indeed, but that, almost in every age there have been, in the heathen world, some wise, brave, and good men, who have carried human reason to a great height; and in the study and disquisition of natural religion, have made no mean discoveries; but then there is room to suspect, that their discoveries of this kind were not so much owing to the strength and sagacity of their own reason, as to the traditions they might receive from their ancestors, or the conversation they might have with the Hebrews, who had all their instruction from revelation.

That there were certain principles delivered by God to Noah, and by him propagated among his posterity, through all ages and nations, is what we may easily conceive; and thence we may suppose, that many points which seem now to be deductions from natural reason, might have their original from revelation, because things, once discovered, may seem easy and obvious to men, which they, notwithstanding, would never of themselves have been able to find out.

However, this be, it is certain, that, as the ancient philosophers might borrow many helps from their knowledge of the Jewish religion, which was the only revelation then pretended to; so, ² whoever compares the writings of later philosophers, of Epictetus, Antoninus, and some others, who lived since the gospel got footing in the world, with theirs who went before them, will find so manifest a difference, so much more unaffected solidity, and so near a resemblance to some of the most exalted Christian precepts as cannot well be accounted

for, without supposing some acquaintance with a set of principles, which they could not but approve and admire, and affected to ingraft into their own systems of morality, though they never expressly avowed the authority on which they stand. These were great helps; and it is no wonder, that under the influence of these they wrote so well. But if we look into the tracts of those that went before them, and were unassisted by revelation, we shall find them miserably ignorant of many important points that are delivered to us with the greatest perspicuity.

They were ignorant, as we had occasion to show ³ before, of the creation of the world, and the origin of mankind; ignorant of the rise of evil, or the cause of human depravation; ignorant of any form of worship that might be acceptable to God, and of any way to appease his displeasure; and quite ignorant of the method which he, in his eternal counsel, had ordained for the recovery of lost man, without any infraction upon his attributes. They had but confused notions of the nature of the supreme being, and talked very inconsistently of the *summum bonum*, or ultimate felicity of man. They taught but little of God's exceeding love towards us, and desire of our happiness; and were entirely silent as to the divine grace and assistance towards our attainment of virtue, and perseverance in it. The immortality of the soul was to them a moot point; the certainty of a future state they were not well agreed in; and, as for the resurrection of the body, this, ⁴ in their very seats of learning, was thought a doctrine highly absurd and ridiculous. So doubtful, so ignorant were they in these main and fundamental points, which are the great restraints of our inordinate appetites; and therefore no wonder, if, ⁵ having their understanding darkened, as the apostle describes them, and being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, they gave themselves up unto lasciviousness, and to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Nay, well had it been, had they confined their lewdness and debauchery within private walls; but the misfortune was, that they entered their temples, and made no small part of their religious worship. ⁶ They deified the worst of men, a drunken Bacchus, an effeminate Ganymede, a Romulus unnatural to his brother, a Jupiter as unnatural to his father. ⁶ They paid adoration, not only to the ghosts of such as these, but to birds, and beasts, and creeping things, and even to the devil himself, under images of such hideous forms and shapes, as were

³ See Cave's Apparatus the first, p. 18. *et seq.*

⁴ Acts xvii.

⁵ Eph. iv. 18, 19.

⁶ Jenkins's Reasonableness of the Christian religion, vol. i.

^a Can any thing be so stupid, as to load the divine nature with so many crimes and imperfections as the heathen theology does; to make one God, and that the supreme God too, an adulterer, and another a pimp; one goddess a scold, and another a whore; to stock heaven with strumpets and sodomites, and drunkards, and bastards; to make their deities fighting and quarrelling, dissembling and lying; to be lame, and blind, and old, and wounded? Can any thing be more foolish, than the stories of their theogony: of their gods, not only begetting children like men, but eating them like cannibals; their battles with Titans and giants, and their running out of heaven for security upon earth? What wretched silly stuff is the history of their demi-gods or heroes, of Perseus, Theseus, Orpheus, and all the other contradictory tales which we read of in Ovid's Metamorphoses, which is nothing else but a compendium of the heathen divinity.—*Nichols's conference with the Theist*, vol. ii. part 4.

¹ Nichols's conference with the Theist, vol. ii. part 1.

² Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

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frightful to behold. Nay, and in the worship of him, they made their altars smoke with the blood of human sacrifices, of their sons and their daughters, and that in some places, every day, and upon extraordinary emergencies, even as it is the practice of some Pagan countries at this very time, in whole hecatombs. So blinded were the eyes of their understanding, and so hardened their hearts, against all tender impressions, by the deceitfulness of sin, and the infatuation of the devil.

Men may talk of the natural light and power of reason as long as they please; and the topic perhaps is well enough for popular eloquence to flourish upon; but when we appeal to experience, we shall soon find it empty boast, and pompous harangue. If ever there was a time when human reason might be a guide in matters of religion,¹ it was when our Saviour came into the world, or some time before; when knowledge of all kinds, and particularly the study of philosophy, was cultivated and improved with the greatest application, by the ablest hands; and yet it is hardly possible to read the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, without amazement, and many mortifying reflections, to find rational creatures capable of so wretched a degeneracy, as to verify the apostle's description of them, when he tells us, that they² 'were filled with unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; were full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; were whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things; were disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, and (what is worse still) not only did these things themselves, but took pleasure likewise in those that did them.

In this light it is that the apostle represents the state of the heathen world, while it was under the guidance of unassisted reason: and if our reason seems to guide us any better now; if it rejects those detestable deeds of darkness, and impious modes of worship, which it once revered and embraced, it is not because its faculties are in themselves any clearer or stronger than they were, but because it has submitted its weakness and ignorance, its pride and passions, to the light and authority of the Christian revelation.³ Take but away the direction and restraint of this authority, and it will act just as it did, and relapse into the same extravagances, the same impiety, the same folly and superstition, that prevailed on it before.

And if the pagan religion, when supported with the highest improvements of human understanding, fell so far short of being a rational service, what shall we say to the Mahometan, which envelops itself in ignorance, and makes its main foundation the gratification of men's brutal lusts and appetites? One would really wonder how so corrupt an institution came to spread so wide in the world, but that there was a concurrence of circumstances, at that time, which did not a little contribute to its propagation.

⁴ When Constantine and his followers had made the profession of the Christian religion not only safe but honourable, bishops grew ambitious, and minded nothing so much as their advancement to the best preferments.

¹ Bishop of London's second Pastoral Letter. ² Rom. i. 29, &c.

³ Rogers's Necessity of Divine Revelation.

⁴ Grotius De verit. b. 6.

Schisms and heresies over-ran the church; rites and ceremonies were more esteemed than purity of heart; and a general corruption infected both clergy and laity alike. This juncture God in his just judgment permitted Mahomet to lay hold on, to set up a new religion,⁵ which being a kind of medley, made up of Judaism, the several heresies then in the east, and the old Pagan rites of the Arabs, with an indulgence to all sensual delights, and the enforcement of secular power and violence, did too well answer his design in drawing or forcing men of all sorts to the profession of it; insomuch that it soon gave birth to an empire, which, in eighty years' time, extended its dominions over more kingdoms and countries than ever the Roman could in eight hundred. And although it continued in its strength not above three hundred years, yet out of its ashes have sprung up many other kingdoms and empires, of which there are three at this day, the largest and most potent upon the face of the earth, namely, the empire of Turkey, the empire of Persia, and the empire of the Mogul in India, which God, in his all-wise providence, has permitted still to continue, for a scourge unto us Christians, who, having received so holy and so excellent a religion through his mercy to us, in Christ Jesus our Lord, will not yet conform ourselves to live worthy of it.⁶

This we must observe, however, that God does not always approve those actions and designs, which, to demonstrate the wisdom of his providence, he is sometimes pleased to permit and prosper; that a religion propagated by force, and supported by the methods of external strength, is so far destitute of any proof, that its original is from heaven; and that, when it contains such doctrines as are repugnant to the dictates of right reason, or the known properties and attributes of God, it can be the product of nothing else but human invention.

⁶ When therefore, we find Mahomet establishing his religion by the dint of the sword, persecuting with war all that would not submit to it, and threatening with no less than death all that pretended to dispute the least article of it;⁷ whereas the Christian, quite otherwise, was planted in weakness and disgrace, in tears, and prayers, and patience, and watered with the blood of many thousands of its professors: when we find him allowing of fornication, justifying adultery, and talking of war, rapine, and slaughter, as things enjoined and commanded by Almighty God; whereas what we have learned from Christ and his apostles is,⁸ 'possess every one his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence; to live peaceably with all men;' and, instead of invading any other's property,⁹ 'to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, knowing that in heaven we have a better and enduring substance:' when we find him, the better to allure his followers, telling them¹⁰ of pleasant

⁵ Prideaux's Life of Mahomet.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures. ⁸ 1 Thes. iv. 4, 5.

⁹ Heb. x. 34.

¹⁰ Prideaux's Life of Mahomet.

^a Since the period at which our author wrote, the extent and power of these empires have been greatly diminished; whilst that of the Mogul has been in fact annihilated. But we lately saw another power, founded in atheism, spread its dominion, undoubtedly for the same purpose, over almost all the Christian states of Europe. It too hath been overturned; but whether Christians have really profited by the severe chastisement which they received, can be ascertained only by their conduct during the peace of the world, which has not yet been of very long duration.

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gardens, curious fountains, delicate beds, and beautiful women with black eyes and fair complexions, in paradise, with whom they shall enjoy continual pleasures and solace themselves with amorous delights to all eternity; whereas we are told, that in the resurrection we¹ neither 'marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven,'² where we shall come to company suitable to our glorified natures,³ to the general assembly and church of the 'first born, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to an innumerable company of angels, to God the judge of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant:' when we compare these things together, I say, we shall find the one abhorrent to the nature of God, injurious to the dignity of mankind, and a contradiction to that eternal law of righteousness which is written in every one's breast; but the other agreeable to the notions we have of the supreme being, and consonant to the rational dictates of our nature.

If we proceed to compare the transactions of Christ's life with those that are related of Mahomet; how our blessed³ Saviour went about doing good, healing all manner of sickness and of disease among the people, giving sight to the blind, and feet to the lame, and life to the dead; how the miracles which he wrought were solemn and grave, acts of his love to mankind, and demonstrations of his omnipotence; and⁴ how those who embraced his religion, in virtue of those miracles, were men of innocence and simplicity, who lived good lives, and feared God, and were therefore under the divine protection, secured from the deceivableness of error; whereas the followers of Mahomet were a gang of robbers and plunderers, void of all piety, and all humanity; himself a bold ambitious man, greedy of empire, and resolved to raise himself even at the destruction of his fellow-creatures; and the miracles reported of him, such as⁵ his cleaving the moon in two, the trees going out to meet him, the stones saluting him, the camel and the shoulder of mutton speaking to him, and his wonderful journey to heaven, with all the strange sights he there beheld, are, to the highest degree, absurd^a and ridiculous: if we compare these things together, I say, we shall soon perceive in whom the characters of a true prophet meet, and who is to be deemed the wicked impostor; whose religion was intended to civilize and sanctify human nature, and consequently is the gift of God; and whose calculated to gratify the cruel and carnal appetites of rude barbarians, and consequently is the forgery of man.

The Jewish religion indeed derived its origin from

¹ Mat. xxii. 30. ² Heb. xii. 23, 24. ³ Mat. iv. 24.

⁴ Grotius de Verit. ⁵ Prideaux's life of Mahomet.

^a What strange stuff do we find in the Alcoran about the angel of death, whose head is so big, that from one eye to another is a journey of a thousand and seventy days; of the angels in the sixth heaven, one of which has seventy thousand heads, and as many tongues: of the cow supporting the earth, which has four hundred horns, and, from one horn to another, is a journey of a thousand years; of the angels which support the throne of God, and have heads so big, that a bird cannot fly from one ear to another; of the key of the treasury of one of Moses's subjects, which was so heavy, that it weighed down a camel; and of the wives and different shapes of angels, some of which are like men, others like horses, bulls, and cocks, &c. with many more nonsensical absurdities of the like nature!—*Nichol's Conference with the Theist*, vol. ii. part iv.

heaven, and Moses seems to glory in the excellency of its institutes, when he asks the people, 'what nation is there so great, that has statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?' and yet, if we were to descend to an examination, we should soon perceive, in many great discoveries, the pre-eminence of the gospel above the law.

⁷ 1. That there is a God, and that there is but one God; that the only one God is incorporeal, invisible, immortal, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, of infinite justice, wisdom, and goodness, the maker of heaven and earth, the supreme governor of the world, and of all things therein, and a gracious rewarder of those that seek him, is absolutely necessary to be known by all who would attain eternal life; and it cannot be doubted, but that the faithful, from the beginning, had this knowledge of God; but then, before the coming of Christ, they had not so certain, so clear, and so distinct a knowledge of these things, as we have now under the gospel. For, over and above the knowledge of these things, which the pious, before Moses, had either from a serious contemplation of the works of God, or from the tradition and instruction of the patriarchs, and which the Jews, in succeeding ages, had from the writings of Moses and the prophets; we, Christians, have a more clear, more distinct, and evident manifestation thereof from the books of the evangelists and apostles.

The faithful, under the Jewish dispensation, did, without doubt, believe God to be an invisible and omnipresent spirit; and yet his frequent appearances, sometimes under one resemblance, and sometimes under another, the building of an ark, a tabernacle, and temple, whither he was pleased to call his people together into his immediate presence, and to talk with them, as Moses⁸ expresses it, face to face, must necessarily turn their eyes and minds towards the mercy seat; make them apprehend God shut up, as it were, within the holy of holies, and consequently perplex and obscure their notions of his spirituality and omnipresence: whereas there is no room now, under the gospel, for any gross conceptions of the Deity, when we are called upon, not to turn our eyes towards a visible tabernacle, but⁹ 'to pray every where,' in any place, 'lifting up holy hands;' and are taught by Christ,¹⁰ that 'God is a spirit,' and that 'they who worship him, worship him in spirit and in truth.'

The believers under the law were persuaded, that all things were ordered and governed by an all-wise and all-powerful being; and yet the most sagacious of them were not able to account for the justice of divine providence, in suffering the wicked to prosper, and the righteous to be afflicted. But now this difficulty every common Christian is able to solve, by the help of what he has learned from the gospel concerning the retributions of a future state; and can apply to all such cases the reflection made by Abraham, on the rich man's desire of some relief from Lazarus,¹¹ 'son, remember that thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

2. The nature and obliquity of sin is what men, in all ages, could not but perceive; but how to account for its

⁶ Deut. iv. 8. ⁷ Smallridge's Sermon. ⁸ Deut. v. 4.

⁹ 1 Tim. ii. 8. ¹⁰ John iv. 24. ¹¹ Luke xvi. 25.

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cause and origin, they were at a strange loss: and therefore some imagined a pre-existent state, from whence they brought depravity along with them; while others devised two contrary principles, equally actuating the world, the one the author of all the good, and the other of all the evil they did. ¹ 'The wickedness of man,' as Moses tells us, 'was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil continually;' but whether these expressions are to be extended to the whole race of mankind, and so are a proof of the general depravation, has been doubted by some: whereas all such doubts must now be silenced by the plain assertions in the New Testament, that ² 'by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so that ³ by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;' that all who are of the race of mankind, are sinners, ungodly, enemies of God, children of the devil, and by ⁴ nature the children of wrath; that ⁵ when they would do good, evil is present with them, having a law in their members warring against the law of their mind, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin; and that this is the state of depraved nature, wherein men are born, and wherein those that live and die shall ⁶ 'be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.'

3. And as the gospel gives us a more distinct account of the origin and demerit of sin, so does it furnish us with a clearer discovery of the method whereby the guilt of it is atoned. Those who lived under the Mosaic dispensation, were saved by the same means of redemption, as we who live under the evangelical; but the mystery of our common redemption was not, in any degree, so fully manifested to them as it is to us: and hence it is, that the apostle compares the writings of the Old Testament to a ⁷ light, or, as the original is, to a candle shining in a dark place; but the revelation which was made by Christ in the gospel, to the day-dawn, and the day-star arising in our hearts. The revelation made to the Jews was to them a light, but a faint one; it shone, but in a dark place. The nativity, life, and death of Christ, the several offices of his mediatorship, the remission of our sins through his blood, the sanctification of our hearts by his Spirit, and the glories of the world to come, were taught them, not in words at length, but in figures, and a dark veil was over the writings as well as over ⁸ the face of Moses, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold his doctrine, any more than they could his countenance. In a word, ⁹ they were saved, as well as we, by the blood of Christ; but there was as great a difference between their knowledge of the mystery of our redemption by the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and ours, as there was between that dark cloud wherewith God led the people at one time, and that pillar of light wherewith he guided them at another.

4. And as the gospel gives us clearer notions of the expiation of sin, so does it exhibit a fuller assurance of our being justified, or having our sins pardoned thereby. Religious persons, who lived before the coming of Christ, knew that they were sinners, and that they therefore had need of the mercy and favour of God, for the remission

of their sins; but then, being not sufficiently instructed in the method of obtaining God's favour, they could not but groan sorely under the weight of them. Severe curses were denounced in the law against all who should, in any case, transgress it; these curses were plain, and easy to be understood; but the promises of a pardon, through the merits of a Saviour, were more intricate and involved. When therefore the danger which threatened them was so apparent, and the methods of their escape so obscurely notified to them, it is no wonder if their fears did very much overbalance their hopes. Hence it is, that the spirit by which they were governed, is in the gospel represented as a spirit of bondage; but the spirit by which we Christians are influenced, is a spirit of adoption: ¹⁰ 'ye have not now,' says the apostle, 'received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;' that is, whereby we are as well assured of the love of God, as a child is sure of the affection of an indulgent father; as surely entitled to the joys of heaven, as an adopted son is to the inheritance of him who therefore adopted him, that he might make him his heir; for, as the apostle goes on to display the privileges of the Christian dispensation, 'the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs with God, and joint-heirs with Christ.'

5. And as the assurances given us of this inheritance are greater, so, lastly, is the inheritance itself much more plainly revealed to us in the gospel, than ever it was before. Whatever could be learned of a future state from the light of reason, that, and much more, was known to the Jews; what, by reason and by revelation, was made known to the Jews concerning an immortal life, that, and much more, is manifested to us Christians. The texts in which a future state is revealed to the Jews, are few, and here and there thinly scattered in some particular books of the Old Testament; but there is no one book, scarce one chapter, in which this doctrine is not taught in the New. Those in the Old Testament are not so clear of ambiguity, but that they are capable of another interpretation; those in the New are so plain and perspicuous, that there is no room for the most ignorant to misapprehend, or the most impious to pervert them: and therefore it is with great justice that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, who himself was excellently versed in the knowledge of the Jewish law, hath observed, that ¹¹ 'the law had only the shadow of good things to come, but not the very image of the things;' that is, it did but obscurely and faintly typify the glories of heaven; not give us so bright an image, and so lively a representation of the rewards of another world, as is pictured out to us, and, in all its full proportion and lineaments, accurately described in the gospel.

¹² Upon the whole, therefore, it appears how incomparably happy we Christians are under the gospel, above what the Jews were in the time of the law; God having placed us under the best of dispensations, under the clearest discoveries and revelations, and given us the most noble, rational, and masculine religion; a religion

¹ Gen. vi. 5. ² Rom. v. 21. ³ Ibid. ver. 18. ⁴ Eph. ii. 3.

⁵ Rom. vii. 21, 23.

⁶ 2 Thess. i. 9.

⁷ 2 Pe. i. 19. ⁸ 2 Cor. iii. 7. ⁹ Smallridge's Sermons.

¹⁰ Rom. viii. 15, &c.

¹¹ Heb. x. 1.

¹² Cave, in his Apparatus to the Lives of the Apostles.

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the most perfective of our natures, and most conducive to our happiness. And what indeed can be a nobler privilege, what a more generous and delightful pleasure, what a more powerful incentive to obedience, than for a rational creature clearly to discern the equity, the necessity, the benefit, the decency, and beauty of every action he is called upon to do: and thence to be duly sensible how gracious a master he serves; one who is so far from loading him with fruitless and arbitrary impositions, that each command, abstracted from his authority who gives it, is able to recommend itself, and nothing required but what every wise man would choose of his own accord, and cannot, without being his own enemy, so much as wish to be exempted from? ¹ 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see,' says our Saviour to his disciples, and in them, to all professors of his religion in succeeding generations: 'for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' But in vain were these great privileges conferred on us, unless we make an answerable improvement of them; and far from blessed shall we be, when we come to appear before the dread tribunal, unless we endeavour ² 'in all things to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

SECT. V.

CHAP. I.—*From the Ascension of Christ, to the Completion of the Canon of the New Testament in all about sixty-four Years.*

THE HISTORY.

AFTER that our blessed Saviour was ascended out of sight, the apostles and other disciples still stood gazing up to heaven, till two angels in the shape of men, and gloriously apparelled, came, and informed them, that their Lord and Master, who was then departed into heaven, should at the great day of judgment, in the same visible manner, come again from thence; whereupon they all returned to Jerusalem, full of joy and consolation; and, being about an hundred and twenty in number, besides Mary the mother of our Lord, and some other pious women, who had attended him in his ministry, they there spent their time in acts of religious worship assembling daily in a certain upper room, ^a which they had made choice of for that purpose.

¹ Luke x. 23, 24.² Titus ii. 10, 14.

^a Some annotators are of opinion, that the upper room, where the apostles and other believers so frequently met together, was one of the chambers of the temple, which not only served for the use of the priests, but stood constantly open likewise for any religious assemblies. It is granted indeed, that in the temple there were several upper rooms; but then, that they belonged to any besides the priests and Levites, is an assertion destitute of proof; nor is it easy to conceive, how a company of poor fishermen and Galileans, who were odious to the priesthood for their Master's sake, should be permitted to come in such numbers as the sacred history takes notice of, and to hold their assemblies,

In one of these assemblies, St Peter reminding them, that the number of the apostles which our Lord had appointed was originally twelve, but that Judas, by his transgression, had forfeited that honour, thought proper to propose the choice of another person ^b to succeed in

which were thought destructive to the established religion, within the verge of the temple. As, therefore, it was a thing very common among the Jews, to have their oratories, or private chapels, on the tops of their houses, where they generally met to read the law, and to treat of any religious matters; so it is much more probable, that this was a room belonging to some private family, that were converts to the Christian faith, where, consequently, the apostles and other professors might meet to consult about the affairs of the church, and to pay their adorations to their heavenly Master, without fear of molestation: and, if conjectures may be allowed in matters of such uncertainty, it is not improbable that their customary place of meeting was at the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, because St Peter, upon his miraculous escape out of prison, is said to have gone directly thither, and there to have found several of his brethren gathered together, (Acts xii. 12.)—*Eckhard's Ecclesiastical History, Whitby's Annotations and Calmet's Commentary.*

^b The words according to our translation, are these,—'That he might take part of the ministry and apostleship, from which Judas, by transgression, fell, that he might go to his own place, (Acts i. 25.) These words, by different interpreters, have been referred both to Matthias and Judas. Those who refer them to Matthias say that they mean, that Judas fell that Matthias might 'go to his own place,' that is, to a place for which he was fitted, or well qualified. But to this there are many objections. 1. The apostolic office could with no propriety be called, in reference to Matthias, his own place, until it was actually conferred on him. 2. There is no instance in which the expression to go to his own place, is applied to a successor in office. 3. It is not true that the design or reason why Judas fell was to make way for another. He fell by his crimes; his avarice, his voluntary and enormous wickedness. 4. The former part of the sentence contains this sentiment: 'Another must be appointed to this office which the death of Judas has made vacant.' If this expression, 'that he might go,' &c., refers to the successor of Judas, it expresses the same sentiment, but more obscurely. 5. The obvious and natural meaning of the phrase is to refer it to Judas. But those who suppose it to refer to Judas differ greatly about its meaning. Some suppose it refers to his own house; that he left the apostolic office to return to his own house; and they appeal to Numbers (xxiv. 25.) But it is not true that Judas did this; nor is there the least proof that it was his design. Others refer to the grave, as the place of man, where all must lie; and particularly as an ignominious place where Judas should lie. But there is no example of the word *place* being used in this sense: nor is there an instance where a man by being buried is said to return to his own or proper place. Others have supposed that the manner of his death, by hanging, is referred to, as his own or his proper place. But this interpretation is evidently an unnatural and forced one. The word *place* cannot be applied to an act of self-murder. It denotes habitation, abode, situation in which to remain; not an act. These are the only interpretations which can be suggested of the passage, except the common and obvious one of referring it to the future abode of Judas in the world of woe. This might be said to be his own, as it was adapted to him; as he had prepared himself for it; and as it was proper that he who had betrayed his Lord should remain there. This interpretation may be defended by the following considerations: 1. It is the obvious and natural meaning of the words. It commends itself by its simplicity, and its evident connexion with the context. It has in all ages been the common interpretation; nor has any other been adopted unless there was a theory to be defended about future punishment. Unless men had previously made up their minds 'not to believe in future punishment,' no one would ever have thought of any other interpretation. This fact alone throws strong light on the meaning of the passage. 2. It accords with the crimes of Judas, and with all that we know of him. The future doom of Judas was not unknown to the apostles. Jesus Christ had expressly declared this; 'it had been good for that man if he had not been born;' a declaration which could not be true if, after any limited period of suffering, he were at

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his place; and especially such an one as had been familiarly conversant with our Saviour from first to last; that so he might be a competent witness both of his doctrines and miracles, his life and death, and especially his resurrection from the dead. This the company readily assented to; and having appointed Joseph, ^a surnamed Barsabas, and Matthias, ^b one of the seventy disciples, for the two candidates, they solemnly implored the divine direction in what they were going to do; and so drawing lots, elected Matthias, upon whom the lot fell, into the number of the twelve apostles.

When the vacancy of the sacred college was thus filled up, the apostles and other disciples were all met together in their accustomed place, on the day of Pentecost: ^c when on a sudden, a prodigious noise, much

last admitted to eternal happiness. This declaration was made in the presence of the eleven apostles, at the institution of the Lord's supper, at a time when their attention was absorbed with deep interest in what Christ said; and it was therefore a declaration which they would not be likely to forget. As they knew the fate of Judas, nothing was more natural for them than to speak of it familiarly as a thing which had actually occurred when he betrayed his Lord, hung himself, and went to his own place. 3. The expression 'to go to his own place,' is one which is used by the ancient writers to denote going to the eternal destiny. Thus the Jewish Tract, *Baal Turim*, on Num. xxiv. 25, says, 'Balaam went to his own place, that is, to Gehenna,' to hell. Thus the Targum, or Chaldee Paraphrase on Eccl. vi. 6, says, 'Although the day's of a man's life were two thousand years, and he did not study the law, and do justice, in the day of his death his soul shall descend into hell, to the one place where all sinners go.' Thus Ignatius, in the Epistle to the Magnesians, says, 'Because all things have an end, the two things death and life shall lie down together, and each one shall go to his own place.' The phrase *his own place*, means the place or abode which is fitted for him, which is his appropriate home. Judas was not in a place which befitted his character when he was an apostle; he was not in such a place in the church; he would not be in heaven. Hell was the only place which was fitted to the man of avarice and of treason.—*Barnes on the Acts*.—Ed.

^a It is not certainly known what the name Barsabas denotes. The Syriac word *Bar* means Son, and the word *Sabas* has been translated an oath, rest, quiet, or captivity. Why the name was given to Joseph is not known; but probably it was the family name—Joseph the son of *Sabe*. Some have conjectured that this was the same man who, in ch. vi. 36, is called Barnabas. But of this there is no proof. Lightfoot supposes that he was the son of Alpheus, and brother of James the Less, and that he was chosen on account of his relationship to the family of the Lord Jesus. He was also called Justus. This is a Latin name, meaning just, and was probably given him on account of his distinguished integrity. It was not uncommon among the Jews for a man to have several names. (Mat. x. 3.)—*Ibid.*—Ed.

^b Nothing is known of the family of Matthias or of his character, further than that he was numbered with the apostles, and shared their lot in the toils, and persecutions, and honours of preaching the gospel to mankind.—*Ibid.*—Ed.

^c This word is derived from the Greek *πεντηκοστή*, which signifies the fiftieth, because the feast of Pentecost was celebrated the fiftieth day after the sixteenth of the month Nisan, which was the second day of the feast of the passover, (Lev. xxiii. 15, 16,) and for the same reason it is called the feast of weeks, because it was observed seven weeks after the passover, Deut. xvi. 9. It was at first instituted, in order to oblige the Jews to repair to the temple of the Lord, there to acknowledge his dominion and sovereignty over all their labours, and there to render thanks to him for the law which he gave them on the like day, namely, the fiftieth day after their departure out of Egypt. In like manner, the Christian church celebrates the feast of Pentecost fifty days, or seven weeks after the passover, or the resurrection of our blessed Saviour, to put us in remembrance, that the gifts of the Spirit were then poured out in a plentiful manner, as the first-fruits of our Saviour's ascension into heaven, and that the gospel began to be published by the apostles on the

like the rushing of a loud impetuous wind, filled all the house where they were, and a kind of fiery vapour, or exhalation, formed into the figure of a man's tongue, but divided a little at the tip, sat on the head of each of them; whereupon they were all immediately filled with the Holy Ghost, ^d and, by its divine inspiration, began to speak in several different languages.

At this time, there were Jews of every quarter of the world sojourning in Jerusalem, besides proselytes, who, from almost all nations, came thither to the celebration of the feast: and no sooner did they hear of this miraculous event, but they began to wonder, not a little, how persons illiterate, and all born in the land of Galilee, should be able, with so much facility, to speak the languages of the several countries from whence they came; but others, who were willing to elude the force of the miracle, imputed their talking in this wild extravagant rate, as they called it, to the power and strength of new wine. ^e

Hereupon the apostles all stood up, and Peter, as president of the assembly, took upon him to confute this injurious calumny, by showing the audience, 'that then it was early in the morning, not above nine o'clock, and consequently no proper time to have eaten or drunk any thing; that the present effusion of the Holy Ghost, was a full completion of that famous prophecy

same day that the ancient law was given to the Hebrews.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, *Pool's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

^d It is a question much debated whether the *all* here mentioned relates to the whole hundred and twenty, who are said to have been present at this time, (Acts i. 15,) or to the twelve apostles only: and in some measure to solve this, we may observe, that when the apostles came to appoint the seven deacons, they ordered the assembly to look out among them men full of the Holy Ghost, (Acts vi. 3,) which plainly implies, that there were several persons among them remarkable for such extraordinary gifts; yet we cannot suppose any time so proper for their reception of these gifts as this wonderful day of Pentecost. Nay, if the apostles themselves, by the imposition of their hands, could communicate the Holy Ghost to those whom they ordained ministers in particular churches; it seems unreasonable to think that such persons as had been constant companions of Christ and his apostles, and were to be the great preachers of the gospel in several parts of the world, should not, at this time, be endowed with the like gifts. So that from hence we may, with St Chrysostom, and others, be allowed to infer, that 'the Holy Ghost fell, not only upon the apostles but also upon the hundred and twenty that were in company with them.'—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^e As it was not at this time the season for new wine, those scoffers may be supposed to mean no more than any strong agreeable liquor, whether natural, or made by art. The ancients we are told, had a secret how to make a wine, which would preserve its sweetness all the year round, and which they generally used for a morning draught: 'it is proper to put only what is mild into empty veins, and it is best to wash the bowels with light metheglin.' Hor. sat. ii. 4. But it seems incredible, that any men in their senses should think, that either wine, or any other liquor, should enable the apostles to speak all languages, and to declare the wonderful works of God. It is well conjectured therefore by our learned Lightfoot, that they who said this, were men of Judea, who, not understanding what the apostles spake in other languages, imagined that as drunken men are wont to do, they babbled some foolish gibberish, which they could make nothing of.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^f This was the ordinary time for their morning sacrifice and prayer, before which they never used to eat or drink any thing. Nay, on their festival days, it was customary with them not to eat or drink until the sixth hour, that is, noon time, that they might be more fit for, and intent upon the service of the day. And from this custom the apostle draws an argument, which, in those sober times, was thought to be conclusive.—*Pool's Annotations*.

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in Joel,¹ where God had expressly promised it; that Jesus of Nazareth was the person who had poured down these extraordinary gifts upon his church; that from the testimony of holy David it plainly appeared, that God all along intended to raise him from the dead, and exalt him to his right hand; and that the present mission of the Holy Ghost abundantly declared, that the same person whom they, by divine permission, had crucified, God had ordained to be both Lord and Christ.*

This sermon, though the first that St Peter made in public, was so very moving to the audience, that it converted no less than three thousand souls; ^a who thereupon were received into the profession of the Christian faith by baptism; and by their diligent attention to the apostles' doctrine afterwards, their constant attendance on public prayers, their frequent celebration of the Lord's supper, their cheerful intercourse with one another, their parting with their goods and possessions, and communicating to every one according to their necessities, even to the love and admiration of all that beheld them, were daily and hourly confirmed therein.

Not long after this, as Peter and John, about ^b three o'clock in the afternoon, were going into the temple to pray, they saw a poor cripple, who was forty years old, and had been lame from his mother's womb, lying at the

¹ Joel ii. 21.

^a A quick and plentiful harvest this! But it is highly probable, that, as Peter preached to the Jews of Judea, in the Syriac tongue, the other apostles spake, at the same time, and to the same purpose, to the foreigners, in their respective languages; while the late sufferings of our Lord, the present miracle of languages, the authority of the speakers, and, above all, the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, contributed more than a little to this numerous conversion. The only question is, how such a multitude of converts could possibly be baptized in one day? To which some reply, that this rite of initiation into the Christian church was then performed by way of sprinkling as it is among us; but whoever looks into history will find, that the form of baptism among the Jews was plunging the whole body under water; and that, in conformity to them, the primitive Christians did, and the Eastern church, even to this day, does administer that sacrament in this manner. There is no necessity therefore for us to suppose, that all these proselytes to the Christian faith were baptized in one day. St Luke delivers in the gross what might possibly be transacted at several times; for it seems indeed expedient, that those new converts should be a little better instructed in the principles of their religion, and the apostles more fully convinced of the sincerity of their change, before they finally admitted them into the number of the saints.—*Echard's Ecclesiastical History*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^b Though, by the death of Jesus Christ, all sacrifices, and other things required in the ceremonial law, were utterly abolished, and a new covenant introduced; yet, for fear of offending the weak, and estranging them from his religion, our blessed Lord permitted his disciples to frequent the assemblies of the Jews, and, in some points, to comply with the observances of the law, until a more pure and spiritual form of worship could conveniently be established. This is the reason why we find the apostles so frequently in the temple at the stated hours of prayer; of which the Jews had three: the 1st, at the third hour of the day, which answers to our ninth, at which time they offered their morning sacrifice, (Exod. xxix. 39.) the 2d, at the sixth, that is, our twelve o'clock, either before or after dinner, at which time we find Peter praying, (Acts x. 9.) and the 3d, at the ninth, or our three in the afternoon, when they offered their evening-sacrifice, (Acts x. 30.) These stated hours, as the Rabbins tell us, they received from their three great patriarchs; that of the morning from Abraham, that of noon from Isaac, and that of the evening prayer from Jacob. However this be, it is certain, that the royal Psalmist makes mention of these three times, 'at evening, and at morning, and at noon, will I pray to thee,' (Psal. lv. 17.) and of Daniel it is recorded, that he 'kneled

Beautiful-gate, ^c and begging an alms of those that went in. Silver and gold, as Peter told the man, he had none to give him, but, what was much more valuable, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, he intended to heal him; and no sooner were the words spoken than the cure was effected. His joints were made straight, and his nerves became strong, so that he went along with the apostles into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

Every one knew that this was the person who had been the lame beggar at the temple-gate; and as he kept close by the two apostles, when the multitude, in much amazement, came flocking together to them in Solomon's porch, ^d St Peter took this occasion to inform them, 'that it was by the efficacy of the name of Jesus, whom they had crucified, but God had raised from the dead, and not by any power or holiness of their own, that this impotent man was made whole; that their crucifixion of Jesus was, in some measure, a sin of ignorance, but his rising again, and advancement to a celestial kingdom, a sure evidence of his being the promised Messiah; that the coming of such a Messiah, as well as the whole evangelical state, was all along foretold, not only by Moses, but by every prophet that succeeded him; and therefore, as they were the professed descendants of the prophets, and heirs of the covenant ratified with Abraham, God had made the first overtures of mercy to them, in hopes they would receive the gospel of his beloved Son, and repent of the iniquities which they had done unto him.'

This was the purport of St Peter's speech; and such was its efficacy, that it converted no less than five thousand of its hearers. But as the apostles were thus busied in instructing the people, at the instigation of the ^e priests and Sadducees, the captain of the temple came

down three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks,' (Dan. vi. 10. 13.)—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^c Several of the gates, as Josephus tells us, were plated all over with gold and silver, post, front, and all; but this, which he calls the Corinthian gate, because it was made of Corinthian brass, did far surpass in glory those of gold and silver, being built with such art and sumptuousness, as well became the frontispiece of that place where the Divine Majesty vouchsafed to dwell.—*Jewish Wars*, b. vi. c. 6. and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^d Some are of opinion, that this porch, being one of those which Solomon built, had the fortune to escape, at least some part of it, when the Babylonians set fire to the temple; and that, though Herod the Great pulled it down, and rebuilt it in a more magnificent manner, it still retained its ancient name. It is certain, from Josephus, that the vast foundation of the east side of the court of the Gentiles, which Solomon built, was still subsisting in the time of the second temple: and as Herod, when he repaired that, made no alteration in this part of the work, the portico, or cloister, which, upon the old foundation, was built round this court, might, in memory of so great a prince, and first founder of the temple, still be called by Solomon's name;—*Joseph. Jewish History*, b. xv. c. 14. and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^e These were three different kinds of men, and, upon different accounts, prejudiced against the apostles. The priests were offended, because the apostles, whom they looked upon only as private men, undertook publicly to teach and instruct the people. The Sadducees were displeased, because, in testifying that Christ was risen, and become the first-fruits of them that slept, they effectually preached the resurrection of the dead; a doctrine which these men detested. And the captain, who was placed with a band of soldiers near the temple, in order to guard it, seeing such a crowd of people gather together about the apostles, began to be apprehensive of a tumult. But whether this captain was a Jew or a Roman, it is difficult to determine, unless we will acquiesce in what our learned Lightfoot, with some others,

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suddenly upon them, seized them, and clapped them up in prison. The next morning the great Sanhedrim met; who having summoned the apostles before them, demanded of them, by what power they had wrought that miracle upon the lame man, and who it was that gave them authority to preach to the people? to which Peter, without the least hesitation, boldly replied, 'that their power and authority were both from Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, but God had raised him from the dead, and thereby declared him to be the Saviour of the world.'

The miracle was indisputable. The man who had received the cure was standing by the apostles, and ready to attest the fact, and therefore the council had nothing to object against it; only, after they had ordered the apostles to withdraw, and consulted together what was proper to be done upon this occasion, they called them in again, and, in hopes of awing them into silence, gave them strict charge, not to teach any more in the name of Jesus. But to this they made answer, 'That since they had received a command from heaven, to declare to all nations what they had heard or seen, it was certainly their duty to ^a obey God, rather than them.'

This was a fair appeal to the consciences of their very judges; but their judges, instead of being satisfied with it, would probably have proceeded to greater violence, had not the people's veneration for the apostles put a restraint upon their malice; all that they dared to do therefore was, to repeat and enforce their menaces, and so dismiss them. When the apostles were come to their brethren, and had reported to them the treatment they had met with, they all joined in prayer to God for a supply of courage and assistance extraordinary, in that trying and perilous juncture; and, at the conclusion of their prayer, the house where they were was shaken with a mighty wind, as before on the day of Pentecost; whereupon they were instantly replenished with fresh measures of the Holy Ghost, and, notwithstanding all the threatenings of the Jewish rulers, found themselves invigorated to preach the gospel of Christ with more boldness and resolution than ever.

The charity at this time among believers was very large and extensive. Such of them as had houses, or possessions of any kind, sold them, and deposited the money in the hands of the apostles, by them to be distributed in due proportions, according to the necessities of their brethren. This a certain Levite, a native of

seem to assert, viz. that the priests kept watch in three places of the temple, and the Levites in twenty-one; that to every one of these watches there was a chief, and to them all, one, who was eminently the ἀρχιερέας, the 'captain, or, ruler of the temple;' and that this captain is the very same, who, in Jewish writers, is so frequently called 'the man of the mount.' Whereupon he supposes, that this captain was an officer of the high priest's, appointed to bring those who any way offended in the temple, as the apostles were thought to do for having preached therein the doctrine of Christ, before the Sanhedrim, in order to be punished;—*Colinet's Commentary, Pool's and Whitby's Annotations.*

^a Whether or no this was an axiom commonly received among the Jewish rabbins, and therefore very pertinently here applied by the apostles to their angry judges, this is certainly true, that Socrates answered his accusers in this manner, 'O ye Athenians, I will obey God rather than you; (Apol. p. 23.) and that Arius delivers this as a general precept, 'When thy superiors command thee any thing, thou must remember that there is one above, who sees thee, and that thou oughtest rather to please him than man;'—*Whitby's Annotations.*

Cyprus, ^b called Joses, but by the apostles surnamed Barnabas, or the Son of consolation, did with great readiness, and singleness of heart; ^c and in imitation of him, Ananias and his wife Sapphira, pretending to devote all they had to the service of the church, sold their estate, but making a reserve of some of the money to themselves, they brought only part of it into the public fund, hoping thereby to impose upon the apostles. By the spirit of prophecy, Peter however perceiving their deceit, rebuked them severely for it, and by the miraculous power wherewith he was then invested, struck them both dead upon the spot; thereby to inject terror into the rest of the believers, and thereby to prevent the like hypocrisy and dissimulation among them for the future.

Miracles of severity were not however much practised by the apostles: acts of mercy were their proper province, and healing the diseased, and freeing the possessed, a great part of their employment; wherein the divine power so far attended them, that even the shadow of Peter passing by, cured the sick; who, in the very streets, were laid on beds and couches, on purpose to receive the benefit of his salutary influence. Nor were these marvellous cures confined to the inhabitants of Jerusalem only, but the people of the several neighbour-

^b A large island of the Mediterranean, about 100 miles from the coast of Syria, and 60 from that of Cilicia, in Asia Minor. It is 200 miles in length and 60 at its greatest breadth; and had once many considerable cities. Cyprus was famous in the times of the Greeks and Romans for the worship paid to Venus: whence her title of Cyprian; a name still given to certain modern and abandoned votaries of that goddess. But a higher honour was paid to this island by the visit of St Paul, and the subversion of its heathen abominations by the planting of Christianity. (Acts xiii.) This was also the birthplace of Barnabas, who accompanied Paul in his travels. Cyprus, originally governed by several petty kings, after having shared in most of the fortunes of the East, by passing through the hands of the Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Saracens, is at present in possession of the Turks; and, like most other of their possessions, from having been a populous and flourishing country, is reduced to a barren desert. The Rev. James Connor visited Cyprus in 1820; and was received in the kindest manner by the Greek Archbishop, who is the political as well as spiritual head of the Greeks in the island. He is also independent of any patriarch; and is the only one of all the ecclesiastical dignitaries who is empowered to wear a purple robe, to carry a sceptre, and to sign his papers with red ink. The island contains about 40,000 Greeks, 14,000 Turks, 500 Maronites; and has forty Greek monasteries, with about 300 monks; and two Catholic convents, with six fathers: but no Jews.—*Mansford's Scripture Gazetteer.*—See also Wood's Progress of Christianity, p. 115.—Ed.

^c Though Barnabas was a Levite, he might have had land of his own by private purchase. The Levites, as a tribe, had no land in Israel; but the individuals certainly might make purchases any where in the country: but, as Barnabas was of Cyprus, his land probably lay there; and as it is likely that he was one of those strangers that came up to Jerusalem to the late feast, and was there converted, he might have sold his land in the island to some of his own countrymen who were at Jerusalem at this time; and so, being called to the work of the ministry, continued to associate with the apostles, travelling every where, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. He was the constant companion of St Paul, till the separation took place on account of John Mark, mentioned chap. xv. 36—39. It is worthy of remark that the two apostles of the Gentiles, though of Jewish extraction, were both born in Gentile countries; Paul in Cilicia, Barnabas in Cyprus: this gave them many advantages; served to remove prejudices from the heathens; and gave them no doubt much facility in the Greek tongue, without which they could have done but little in Asia Minor, or in most parts of the Roman empire where they travelled. How admirably does God determine even the place of our birth, and the bounds of our habitation.—*Dr A. Clarke.*—Ed.

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ing towns and villages brought thither their sick, their lame, and possessed, who from the hands of the apostles never once missed of a cure.

Provoked at the fame of these cures, and at the success which they saw Christianity gaining by the miracles and preaching of the apostles, the high-priest, and some others of the Sanhedrim, who were of the sect of the Sadducees, had them apprehended, and thrown into the common prison. But the next night an angel from heaven, having set them at liberty, encouraged them to proceed with boldness in their ministry, and ordered them even to go the next morning, and preach the doctrine of Christ in the midst of the temple; which accordingly they failed not to do. ^a

In the morning the council being met, sent their officers to bring the apostles before them; but were not a little surprised, when the officers returned, and told them, that they found the doors of the prison shut indeed, and the keepers all upon their guard, but as for the persons whom they were sent for, there was not one of them to be found. This report put the whole court in great perplexity, until word was brought them, that the prisoners whom they wanted were preaching in the temple: whereupon the captain of the guard, with some other officers, went and intreated them to come before the council, not daring to offer any violence to them, for fear of being stoned by the people.

When the apostles were brought before their judges, and the high-priest demanded of them, how they durst presume to preach a doctrine which so lately had been interdicted them, they returned much the same answer that they had done once before, namely, 'That they were bound to obey God rather than man; that Jesus whom they had murdered, was undoubtedly the true Messiah; and that of his resurrection, and ascension into heaven, both they, and the Holy Ghost, whereby they acted, were authentic witnesses.' Which so exasperated the high-priest, and some other of the rulers, that, upon their ordering them to withdraw, their first resolution was, to have put them to death. But this was prevented by the wise advice of a certain Pharisee, named Gamaliel, ^b who, from some,

^a The Lord brought the apostles out of prison, not for the purpose of delivering them from the hands of their enemies, for he afterwards suffered them to be brought back before the council and beaten with rods; but he wished to show by the miracle, that they were under his care and protection, in order that they might vindicate and establish the truth of the gospel; partly that the church might thence receive an accession of strength, and partly that every ground of excuse might be removed from wicked men. Wherefore we ought not always to hope, or even to wish that God would deliver us from death, but we ought to rest contented with this one consideration that our life is under his special protection, in so far as he sees it expedient.—*Calvin*.—Ed.

^b This was the Gamaliel at whose feet Paul was brought up, (Acts xxii. 3.) and some of the ancients are of opinion, that he was tutor likewise to other apostles, Barnabas and Stephen; and for this reason it is reported of him, that when that proto-martyr suffered, he encouraged the Christians to go by night, and carry off his body, for which purpose he lent them his chariot, and allowed them a burying place in his own estate, about eight leagues distant from Jerusalem. He certainly was a doctor of great repute among the Jews, and was therefore usually called Rabbini Gamaliel, a title of the highest eminence, and never given, say they, to any more than seven. He is supposed to have been the grandson of Hillel, and either uncle or cousin to Nicodemus, of whom we read in the gospel, (John iii. 1.) &c., for thirty-two years to have continued the Nasi, or president of the Sanhedrim; and to have died about ten years after the destruction of Jerusalem. Christian authors make no doubt but that he embraced the faith of Jesus, but at what time he became a con-

examples in former history, represented to the court, 'That if the apostles were no better than impostors, their fraud and fallacy would quickly be discovered; but that if they acted by a proper authority from God, it would badly become the wisdom of that assembly to contend with the Almighty, in persecuting his servants: and by this speech he so far diverted the indignation of the council, as to have the sentence, at first designed against the apostles' lives, changed into a corporal punishment. The court accordingly having ordered them to be scourged, and charged them very strictly never to teach any more in the name of Jesus, dismissed them; and the apostles went away greatly rejoicing, not so much that they had escaped death, as that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame and punishment for the name of their dearest Lord and Master.

The great increase of believers, and access of money to the common fund for the relief of their poor, made the institution of another order of men in the Christian church highly necessary. For when the Hellenists ^c complained that in the distribution of the charity money, an undue preference was given to the Hebrew widows, whilst theirs were too frequently neglected, the apostles, who had matters of greater importance upon their hands,

vert, or by whose hands he was baptized, they no where tell us. To reconcile his conversion, however, with what the Jewish writers relate of his being at the head of the Sanhedrim so long, they affirm, that he was a Christian even when that assembly sat upon the apostles, and that the apostles persuaded him to continue in it, and not to discover his religion, that thereby he might be capable of doing more service to the church. But the author of the Acts has noted the true reason of his speaking in favour of the apostles, namely, that as the Sadducees, after our Lord's resurrection, became the apostles' greatest enemies, because they 'preached through Christ the resurrection of the dead, (Acts iv. 2.) so Gamaliel, who was a Pharisee, and consequently a stiff assertor of the resurrection, did therefore give his advice for the dismissal of the apostles; even as we find the Pharisees afterwards, almost in the same words, pleading for St Paul preaching the same doctrine, namely, that they ought not to molest him in what he did, 'lest they should be found fighters against God,' (Acts xxiii. 9.)—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^c Some are of opinion, that these Hellenists, or Grecians, as our translations render them, were originally Gentiles, first converted to the Jewish, and afterwards to the Christian religion, even as the Hebrews here mentioned were originally Jews. But though it be allowed, that Gentiles of all nations are frequently called 'Hellenes,' yet it no where appears that they are styled 'Hellenists.' And that these Grecians must mean something different from the common Hellenes, or Greeks, is evident from the case of St Paul, who when he came to Jerusalem, and disputed *πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλλήνιστας* 'against the Grecians, they went about to kill thee,' (Acts ix. 29.) whereas had they been strangers of other nations, they durst not have attempted to kill a Jew among a nation of Jews, without bringing him to their tribunal. It is reasonable therefore to believe, that these Hellenists were originally Jews, and descended from such as, in the several calamities that befel the Jewish state, were either forced, or chose to leave their own country: and settling at Alexandria, and other places where only the Greek tongue was spoken, in process of time came to forget their own, and to make use of the Greek only, both in their common conversation and religious offices. Of this kind of Jews, we are told, there were great numbers in Jerusalem, where there was a synagogue particularly appointed for such as understood no other language than Greek, and where the version of the LXX. was constantly read in their assemblies. As therefore the apostles had hitherto made no tender of the gospel to the Gentiles, the Hellenists here spoken of must necessarily mean such Jews, converted to the Christian religion, as had disused the Hebrew or Syriac, and spake the Greek language only.—*Calmet's Commentary*, *Whitby's* and *Pool's Annotations*.

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and were not at leisure to attend on this affair themselves, called the church together, and having ordered them to single out seven ^a men of great repute for their wisdom and prudence, as well as spiritual endowments, to be chosen stewards of the public stock; these they ordained to the office of deacons, by the solemnity of prayers, and the imposition of their hands. ^b ^c The names of the persons who were ordained to this office, were Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenus, and Nicholas, all taken out of the number of the seventy disciples whom our Lord had chosen; but of these the most eminent for the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit was Stephen.

He preached the gospel with a noble courage and resolution, and confirmed it with many public and unquestionable miracles among the people, inasmuch that by his means the Christian religion gained ground abundantly. Converts came in apace; and great numbers of the priests themselves laid aside their prejudices, and embraced the gospel. ^d This zeal and success of his,

^a The words in the text are these,—‘Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you seven men, of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business, Acts vi. 3. Though they were selected by the church, yet the power of ordaining them, or setting them apart, was retained by the apostles. Thus the rights of both were preserved, the right of the church to designate those who should serve them in the office of deacon, and the right of the apostles to organise and establish the church with its appropriate officers; on the one hand, a due regard to the liberty and privileges of the Christian community, and on the other, the security of proper respect for the offices as being of apostolic appointment and authority.—*Barnes on the Acts*.—Ed.

^b Selden and Wolf deduce the origin of laying on hands from the age of Moses, advertising to the seven seniores, on whom Moses laid his hands (Num. xxvii. 18.). Hence the custom obtained in the Jewish church, and was thence introduced into the Christian. As laying on of hands had always been used in praying for the good of any person present, in order to show for whom the benefit was entreated, so it was also from the earliest ages a rite of institution to office, which it confirmed by symbol.—*Bloomfield's Greek Testament*.—Ed.

^c The names of these seven deacons, we may observe, are all of Greek extract; from whence we may infer, that very probably they were all Hellenists; and that consequently, by their designation, the church was desirous to give full satisfaction to the complaint of those whose widows had been neglected. Of the two first of these, namely, Stephen and Philip, the sacred history has given us a sufficient account; but of the rest we have nothing certain; except we will admit of what the Latins tell us of Prochorus, namely, that on the 9th of August, he suffered martyrdom at Antioch, after having made himself famous for his miracles; of Nicanor, that on the 10th of January, he suffered in the isle of Cyprus, after having given great demonstrations of his faith and virtue; of Timon, that on the 19th of April, he was first thrown into the fire, and when he had miraculously escaped from thence, was fixed upon a cross at Corinth; of Parmenus, that on the 23d of January, he suffered at Philippi in Macedonia; and of Nicholas, that either by design or indiscretion, he gave rise to the infamous sect of Nicolaitans, and therefore no Christian church has ever yet paid any honour to his memory. One thing we may observe in this place, namely, that much about the time of the institution of these deacons, James, the Less, so called to distinguish him from the other James, who was the son of Zebedee, and for his eminent virtues surnamed the Just, was chosen bishop of Jerusalem, and for this reason preferred before all the rest, because he was a near relation, namely, a cousin-german, to our blessed Saviour.—*Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary*; and *Fleury's Ecclesiastical History*.

^d We learn from Ezra, (chap. iii. 36.—39.) that four thousand two hundred and eighty-nine priests returned from the captivity, the number of which was now probably much increased.—I see no foundation in the authority of any ancient copies, for reading with Casaubon, *καὶ τῶν ἱερέων*, and explaining it as if it were *καὶ*

however, soon awakened the malice of his adversaries to procure some members ^e of the most learned synagogues then in Jerusalem, to dispute with him; but when they found their disputants baffled, and unable to withstand the force of those arguments which the divine wisdom inspired him with, they betook themselves to vile practices; and having procured men of profligate consciences to accuse him of blasphemy, caused him to be apprehended, and, in a tumultuous manner, brought him before the Sanhedrim, in order to obtain a formal sentence of condemnation against him.

Whilst he stood before the council, the judges, and all the people then present, beheld a lustre and radiancy in his countenance, not unlike the appearance of an angel; and when he was indulged the liberty of speech, in a grave and severe oration, he endeavoured, not only to vindicate himself from the imputation of blasphemy, but, at the same time, by an historical deduction of the most memorable actions and events that had happened in the Jewish nation, from the time of Abraham to that of Solomon, he undertook to show, ‘That religion was not confined to the holy land, or the temple-service; that the law, for which they expressed so vehement a zeal, was unable to contain mankind within the bounds of their duty; that as their forefathers were all along a stubborn

τῶν τῶν ἱερέων, and some of the priests. It is indeed wonderful that a great multitude of them should embrace the gospel, considering what peculiar resentments they must expect from their unbelieving brethren, and the great losses to which they must be exposed in consequence of being cast out of their office; as it is not to be imagined, that when Christians were cast out of the synagogue, they would be retained as temple-ministers: but the grace of God was able to animate and support them against all. And it is very probable the miracle of rending the veil of the temple, and the testimony of the guards to the truth of the resurrection, which some of the chief of that order heard and might perhaps be whispered to some others, might contribute considerably toward their conversion, in concurrence with the miraculous gifts and powers of the apostles, the most convincing proofs of which they saw before their eyes in their own temple.—*Doddridge's Expositor*.—Ed.

^e There has been very great difference of opinion about the meaning of this word. The chief opinions may be reduced to three. 1. The word is Latin, and means properly a freedman, a man who had been a slave and was set at liberty. And many have supposed, that these persons were manumitted slaves, of Roman origin, but which had become proselyted to the Jewish religion, and who had a synagogue in Jerusalem. This opinion is not very probable; though it is certain, from Tacitus (Annal. b. ii. c. 85.), that there were persons of this description at Rome. He says that four thousand Jewish proselytes or Roman slaves made free were sent at one time to Sardinia. 2. A second opinion is, that these persons were Jews by birth, and had been taken captives by the Romans, and then set at liberty, and thus called freedmen or libertines. That there were many Jews of this description there can be no doubt. Pompey the Great when he subjugated Judea, sent large numbers of the Jews to Rome. (*Philo in Legat. ad Caium*.) These Jews were set at liberty at Rome, and assigned a place beyond the Tiber for a residence. See introduction to the Epistle to the Romans. These persons are by Philo called libertines, or freedmen. (*Kuinöel in loco*.) Many Jews were also conveyed as captives by Ptolemy I. to Egypt, and obtained a residence in that country and the vicinity. But 3. Another and more probable opinion is, that they took their name from some place which they occupied. This opinion is more probable from the fact that all the other persons mentioned here are named from the countries which they occupied. Suidas says that this is the name of a place. And in one of the Fathers this passage occurs: ‘Victor bishop of the Catholic church at Libertina, says, unity is there,’ &c. From this passage it is plain that there was a place called Libertina. That place was in Africa, not far from ancient Carthage.—See Bishop Pearce's Comment. on this place.—*Barnes on the Acts*.—Ed.

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and rebellious people, and grievous persecutors of the prophets, who were sent to foretell the coming of the Messiah, so were they likewise a wicked and perverse generation, who in all things had equalled, but in this surpassed, the impiety of their ancestors, namely, that, contrary to that law which had been delivered to them by the ministry of angels, they had betrayed and murdered that very person who was sent into the world to fulfil it.^a

These last words, which were but too true, incensed the Jews to such a degree, that they fell upon him with the utmost expressions of their rage and fury; whilst he, regardless of what they were about, had his mind employed in the ^b delightful prospect of heaven, and the sensible appearance of the blessed Jesus, in our glorified nature, standing at the right-hand of God; which when he had declared to all the company, the Jews were

^a There has been great diversity of opinion about the object which Stephen had in view in this defence, and about the reason why he introduced at such length the history of the Jewish people. But a few remarks may perhaps show his design. He was accused of blasphemy in speaking against the institutions of Moses and the temple, that is, against every thing held sacred among the Jews. To meet this charge, he gives a statement, at length, of his belief in the Mosaic religion, in the great points of their history, and in the fact that God had interposed in a remarkable manner in defending them from dangers. By this historical statement he avows his full belief in the divine origin of the Jewish religion, and thus indirectly repels the charge of blasphemy. It is further to be remembered, that this was the best way of securing the attention of the council. Had he entered on an abstract defence, he might expect to be stopped by their cavils or their clamour. But the history of their own nation was a favourite topic among the Jews. They were always ready to listen to an account of their ancestors; and to secure their attention, nothing more was necessary than to refer to their illustrious lives and deeds. Comp. Ps. lxxviii. cv. cxxxv. Ezek. xx. In this way Stephen secured their attention, and practically repelled the charge of speaking reproachfully of Moses and the temple. He showed them that he had as firm a belief as they in the great historical facts of their nation. It is to be remembered, also, that this speech was broken off in the midst (ver. 53, 54,) and it is therefore difficult to tell what the design of Stephen was. It seems clear, however, that he intended to convict them of guilt, by showing that they sustained the same character as their fathers had manifested (ver. 51, 52;) and there is some probability that he intended to show that the acceptable worship of God was not to be confined to any place particularly, from the fact that the worship of Abraham, and the patriarchs, and Moses, was acceptable before the temple was reared (ver. 2, &c.), and from the declaration in ver. 48, that God dwells not in temples made with hands. All that can be said here is, that Stephen (1.) showed his full belief in the divine appointment of Moses, and the historical facts of their religion; (2.) That he laid the foundation of an argument to show that those things were not perpetually binding, and that acceptable worship might be offered in other places and in another manner than at the temple.—*Barnes*.—See also Bloomfield's *Crit. Digest*.—Ed.

^b Whether to afford St Stephen this delightful prospect, the opening of the heavens was real, (as it is believed to have been at our Lord's baptism,) or whether this, like other appearances to the prophets of the Old Testament, was represented to him by way of vision, as we cannot certainly know, so it is of no great consequence that we should, for, since a vision is described by those that are particularly curious in these matters, to be such a distinct and strong impression upon the faculty of the imagination, as sets the object before the man, as plainly as if it actually was present, and perceived by his bodily senses, [Mainm. Mor. Nev. part ii. c. 26.] it is not to be doubted, but that either of these ways comes all to one, as to the certainty of the persuasion, and every other effect which we can suppose it is intended to produce in the mind of the person whom it actuates.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*.

so enraged, that, raising a loud clamour, and stopping their ears against all cries for mercy, they unanimously rushed upon him, dragged him out of the city, and there stoned him to death; whilst he, having first devoutly ^c recommended his soul to God, upon his bended knees, made loud intercession for his murderers, that the sin they were then committing might not be laid to their charge; and so gave up the ghost: but his body was buried by devout men, (probably proselytes to the Christian faith,) who made great lamentations over it.

Among the many that were thus enraged against Stephen, one particular person, who had but too great a hand in his death, was a young man of Cilicia, named Saul. He out of his great officiousness to have him executed, undertook to look to the clothes of the witnesses, who usually stripped themselves to throw the first stones, as the law directed, at the person who died by their evidence; and, out of his passionate concern for the traditions of the ancients, having procured a commission from the Sanhedrin, he immediately put it into execution. For he broke open houses, seized upon all who looked like the disciples of Jesus, and, without any regard to sex or age, scourged and hauled them away to prison, compelling them to blaspheme and deny Christ, and breathing out nothing but threatenings and slaughter wherever he came; insomuch that most of the believers, except the apostles, ^d were forced to leave Jerusalem, and disperse themselves in the regions of Judea and Samaria, Syria and Phœnicia, Cyprus and Antioch, &c. preaching the gospel to the Jews that were in those places.

Among those who were thus dispersed, Philip the deacon, the second in order after Stephen, came to Samaria, ^e where, by his preaching and miracles, he con-

^c In this prayer of our dying martyr, there are these four things observable. (1.) That he looked upon his soul as a substance distinct from his body; and, (2.) That it continued to exist after its separation from the body. (3.) That he declared our blessed Saviour to be God omniscient, and omnipotent, able to hear and grant his prayer, and to preserve the souls committed to his care and protection. And, (4.) That the spirits received by him are in a state of safety and happiness. The time of this martyrdom is, by some, placed after our Lord's death, about eight months; by others, at the distance of about four; by others again, seven years. Eusebius is express, that it followed quickly after his election into the office of deacon. From St Chrysostom, and some others, who speak in his honour, we are to conclude, that he was martyred young; and from ecclesiastical history we are informed, that the place where he suffered, had a stately church built upon it by Eudocia, the empress, wife to Theodosius.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. i.

^d It is a very ancient tradition, mentioned by Clemens of Alexandria, that our Lord assigned twelve years after his ascension, for the conversion of the unbelieving Jews in Judea, lest any of them should say, that they 'had not heard of the glad tidings of the gospel;' and Apollonius, who flourished at the same time, speaks of this *ὡς ἐκ παραδίδωται*; as delivered by tradition, that our Lord commanded his apostles, 'not to depart out of Jerusalem for the space of twelve years;' which, if there be any truth in it, shows the reason why the apostles continued at Jerusalem, when the rest of the disciples were scattered abroad.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^e This does not mean a city whose name was Samaria, for no such city at that time existed. Samaria was a region. (Mat. i. 22.) The ancient city Samaria, the capital of that region, had been destroyed by *Hyrchanus*, so completely as to leave no vestige of it remaining; and therefore he 'took away,' says Josephus, 'the very marks that there had ever been such a city there.' (Antiq. b. xiii. ch. x. sect. 3.) Herod the Great afterwards built a city on this site, and called it *Sebaste*, that is, Augusta, in honour of the emperor Augustus. (Jos. Antiq. b. xv. ch.

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verted many. In this place there was one Simon,^a who, by his sorcery and magical arts, had so strangely gained the veneration of the people, that they looked upon his diabolical illusions, as real operations of the power of God; but seeing great numbers of his admirers fall off from him, and embrace the doctrines which Philip preached, he, in like manner, pretended to be a convert, and, in hopes of obtaining some share of the miraculous gifts, which he could not but admire in the apostle, desired by him to be baptized.

The news of the conversion of so large a city as Samaria was soon brought to the apostles at Jerusalem; who thereupon sent Peter and John to confer the gifts of the Holy Ghost upon the new converts. The magician, perceiving that a power of working miracles, and speaking with tongues, was consequent upon the imposition of the apostles' hands, offered to give them money to enable him to do the like. But the offer St Peter rejected with scorn and detestation, denouncing an execration against him and his money; which so terrified the caittiff, that, possibly fearing to be made an example of dissimulation, as Ananias was, he begged the apostles' prayers to God for the pardon of his sin, and the aversion of those judgments which his denunciation seemed to portend. But how false and feigned his repentance was, the sequel of this history will show.

viii. sect. 5.) Perhaps this city is intended, as being the principal city of Samaria; or possibly *Sychar*, another city where the gospel had been before preached by the Saviour himself. (John iv.)—*Barnes on the Acts*.—Ed.

^a This man was a native of Gitton, a village of Samaria, and a pretended convert to Christianity; but, upon his being rejected by the apostles, he soon turned apostate, and being a man of an ambitious and daring temper, in pure revenge, set himself in opposition to them, and became the first broacher of several abominable heresies. The account indeed, which according to St Luke, this magician gives of himself is only this—That he was *μύγας τις*, some great person, as mountebanks usually represent themselves, and the opinion which his magical pranks had wrought among the Samaritans, only this—That he was the great power of God; by which words perhaps he only meant some legate or minister of God, assisted by his mighty power; and yet from these words very probably, the fathers tell us, that he declared himself to be the prime God; the God above all principality, power, and virtue whatever; and that to the Samaritans, he was the Father; to the Jews, the Son; and to other nations, the Holy Ghost. But, since the history of the apostles informs us, that he believed, and was baptized in the name of Jesus, it is difficult to conceive, how he should persuade the Samaritans, that he was God the Father; or the Jews, that he was the Son, or that Jesus into whose name he was baptized: or the Gentiles, that he was that Spirit which he would have purchased with money. And therefore we may presume, that these venerable writers, out of their ardent zeal against this arch heretic, might be induced to magnify his arrogant pretensions above measure, by putting too strong an interpretation upon St Luke's words. However this be, it is certain, that he did not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God, but looked upon him as a rival, and pretended himself to be the Christ; that he held the world was not created by God, but made by angels, and therefore divine honours were due to them, as appointed mediators between God and men; that he accounted the ordinary worship of idols as a thing indifferent, and in times of persecution, that men might lawfully abjure the Christian faith; that he maintained an universal licence to sin, men might act as they were inclined, women might be in common, and that to press the observance of good works was inconsistent with the gospel-liberty. These were some of his principles; and in consequence of these, as Irenæus tells us, he and his followers lived in all lust and impurity, and wallowed in the most horrible and unheard-of bestiality.—*Calmet's Dissertation on Simon the Magician*; *Echard's Ecclesiastical History*, and *Cave's Life of St Paul*.

The two apostles, having thus confirmed the church of Samaria, preached the gospel in many of the neighbouring villages with good success, and so returned to Jerusalem; while Philip, being ordered by an angel who appeared to him, to go southward into the road which led from Jerusalem to Gaza, ^b he there met with an eunuch ^c that waited on Candace ^d Queen of Ethiopia, who had been to pay his devotions at Jerusalem, ^e and

^b The city of Gaza is mentioned in Acts viii. 26. with the parenthetical remark,—that *αὐτὴ ἐστὶν ἔρημος*—it [or the same] is desert; which has greatly exercised the ingenuity of commentators, some of whom refer *αὐτὴ* to *ἰδὼς*, and translate it by *unfrequented*; while others, referring it to the city, explained it by *deprived of fortifications*; others again suppose the ancient city to have remained desolate, and that which flourished in the days of St Luke to have occupied a somewhat different site nearer to the sea; and others consider these words to be a mere gloss which has found its way into the text. A passage, however, in Josephus, which has escaped the researches of most of the learned men, clears up the difficulty, and shows the minute fidelity of the sacred historian. A short time before the siege of Jerusalem, in consequence of a massacre of the Jews at Casarea, the whole nation became greatly enraged, and in revenge laid waste many villages and cities; and among these were Anthedon and *Gaza*, which they utterly demolished. Gaza therefore was actually *ἔρημος*, a desert, at the time St Luke wrote.—*Josephus, Jew. War*, b. ii. c. 18. sect. 1. *Hug's Introd.* vol. i. p. 25.—For an account of Gaza, ancient and modern, see note (a), p. 413 of this work.—Ed.

^c This word is derived from the Greek *εὐνούχος*, which signifies one who guards the bed; because generally, in the courts of the eastern kings, the care of the beds and apartments belonging to princes and princesses was committed to them; but more especially those of the princesses, who, in these countries, live in great retirement, and remote from the sight and company of men. It is not to be denied, however, that this word is in Scripture frequently set to signify any minister belonging to a prince, attending at his court, and employed more especially in some office belonging to the inner part of the palace, whether he be really an eunuch or not. Thus Potiphar, though he was married, is called in the Septuagint version of Gen. xxxvii. 36. *παῖδων Φαραὼ* (the word, *σπαδων*, Lat. *spado*, having the same import as eunuch.) and in Gen. xxxix. 1. he is called *εὐνούχος Φαραὼ*, 'the eunuch of Pharaoh.' Hence it is most probable that this Ethiopian was not a eunuch in the strict sense of the term, but merely a court officer, or rather treasurer of Candace. It does not appear, as some have imagined, that the Abyssinians were converted to the Christian faith by this eunuch, nor by any of the apostles; as there is strong historic evidence that they continued Jews and Pagans for more than three hundred years after the Christian era. Their conversion is with great probability attributed to Frumentius, sent to Abyssinia for that purpose by Athanasias, bishop of Alexandria, about A. D. 330.—See *Bruce*.—Ed.

^d In the time of our Saviour (and indeed from that time forward,) by Ethiopia, was meant, in a general sense, the countries south of Egypt, then but imperfectly known: of one of which, that Candace was queen, whose eunuch was baptized by Philip. Mr Bruce, on his return from Abyssinia, found in latitude 16° 38' a place called Chendi, where the reigning sovereign was then a queen; and where a tradition existed, that a woman, by name Hendaquè (which comes as near as possible to the Greek name *Χανδακη*), once governed all that country. Near this place are extensive ruins, consisting of broken pedestals and obelisks, which Bruce conjectures to be those of Meroe, the capital of the African Ethiopia; which is described by Herodotus as a great city in his time, namely, 400 years before Christ: and where, separated from the rest of the world by almost impassable deserts, and enriched by the commercial expeditions of their travelling brethren, the Cushites continued to cultivate, so late as the first century of the Christian æra, some portion of those arts and sciences to which the settlers in the cities had always more or less devoted themselves.—*Mansford's Gazetteer*, art. Cush.—Ed.

^e That this eunuch was a proselyte of justice, or one who, from Paganism had embraced the Jewish faith, to which he might be converted by those Jews who, from Alexandria, spread them-

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was then upon his journey home. As he drew near to the chariot, Philip found him commendably employed in reading a passage in the 53d chapter of Isaiah, relating to the sufferings of the Messiah; and, when the treasurer expressed his desire of having the passage, which he did not so well understand, a little explained to him, ^a and thereupon invited him into the chariot, Philip took this opportunity to preach unto him the gospel of Jesus Christ, and thereby to show him, that not only the sense of that passage, but of several others in the ancient prophets, was fully accomplished in his person and transactions. This so fully convinced the eunuch, that, with much eagerness, he desired to be baptized into the Christian faith; which, when Philip had done, the Spirit of the Lord immediately transported him to Azotus, ^b from whence he proceeded as far as Cæsarea, ^c preach-

selves into the African Ethiopia, is a reasonable conjecture, not only because he came so long a journey to worship at Jerusalem, probably at some great festival, but because Cornelius is expressly declared to be the first-fruits of the Gentiles; and, it is not unlikely, that the fame which he had heard at Jerusalem, of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, might be the reason of his reading the prophet Isaiah, who speaks more plainly of the times of the gospel than any other, and that particular chapter, which (as Abarbinel testifies) all the Jewish rabbins did, with one mouth, confess, that it related to the sufferings of Messiah the king.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^a It certainly does not follow that because this nobleman wanted an interpreter of a prophecy which was obscure to him, we must want also an unerring guide; and therefore this passage does not prove the necessity of an infallible interpreter, as the Romanists pretend; but it does prove, first, The advantage of authorized and competent teachers; and, secondly, The duty of applying to them for instruction. Let all devout Christians diligently read the holy Scriptures like this Ethiopian grandee, and with the same humble and teachable disposition seek for edification at the hands of the authorized interpreters of the word of God. With ver. 32. comp. Isa. liii. 7, 8.—*Holden's Christ. Expositor*, Acts viii. 31.

^b That it was a common thing for the Spirit of God to convey his prophets of old from one place to another, as it were in an instant of time, is plain from Obadiah's words to Elijah, 'It shall come to pass, that, as soon as I am gone from thee, the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee where I know not,' (1 Kings xviii. 12.) and from what the sons of the prophets say to Elisha, 'Let these men, we pray thee, go, and seek thy master; lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain,' (2 Kings ii. 16.) This very probably might be done by the ministry of some angel, here called 'the Spirit, or power of the Lord.' And the reason that is commonly assigned for it, in the case of Philip, is, That the eunuch had requested of him to go with him into Ethiopia; whereas God, having designed him to preach the gospel in other parts of the world, removed him in this extraordinary manner; and thereby not only prevented his compliance with the request, but gave the eunuch assurance likewise of his being a messenger sent from heaven; and, consequently, that the things which had been taught him, were true.—*Calmet's Commentary*, *Whitby's* and *Pool's Annotations.* According to Bloomfield, the meaning of Acts viii. 39. is, that Philip went away quickly under the directions and influence of the Spirit, but was not transported in a miraculous manner. See his note on the passage.—*Greek Test.*—Ed.

^c This city is in the Old Testament called Ashdod. The Greeks gave it the name of Azotus, the Arabs called it Mezdel, and the Syrians Ezdoud. It stands on the summit of a grassy hill, near the coast of the Mediterranean, between Gaza and Joppa. This was one of the five cities of the Philistines; and is memorable for having sustained the longest siege mentioned in history, when Psammetichus, king of Egypt, took it after a siege of 29 years. It is represented as having been a place of great strength, and sustaining repeated sieges from the kings of Egypt and Assyria: by both of whom it was desired as a frontier town. It was made an episcopal see by the early Christians, and is described

ing the gospel in all the cities, while the Ethiopian pursued his journey with great joy and satisfaction of mind.

The dispersion of believers, which occasioned a propagation of the gospel in other countries, soon excited the furious zeal of Saul to procure proper letters ^d of authority from the high-priest of Damascus, ^e that in case he should find any there, whether they were men or women, professing the Christian faith, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem, there to be punished. But as he was upon the road, and now drawing near to Damascus, all on a sudden, about mid-day, a most amazing gleam of light, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, was darted from heaven upon him, and those that were with him, and threw them all for fear prostrate upon the ground. This light was accompanied with a voice in the Hebrew, or rather Syriac, tongue, demanding of him, why it was that he persecuted him so violently? And as Saul was uncertain from whence the words came, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth,' continued the voice, 'whom thou persecutest; but it is 'in vain for thee to resist the decrees of Providence; and therefore be no longer refractory, but obey the commands that shall be given thee.' Whereupon Saul, in a terrible dread and agony, desiring to know what he was to do; 'Go to Damascus,' replied the voice, 'and there thou shalt know my will.' Those that accompanied Saul in his journey were struck with fear and amazement, wondering that they should hear a voice, ^f and yet see no man speak, whilst Saul himself was so dazzled and overpowered by the light, that he quite lost his eye-sight, and was led by the hand into Damascus, where he continued for the space of three days, without taking any manner of sustenance.

At this time there was in the city a certain disciple named Ananias, ^g whom the Lord in a vision commanded

by Jerome as a fair village; but it is at present an inconsiderable place, being provided with two small gates, and having in the centre a mosque with a beautiful minaret. It also abounds with fragments of columns, capitals, cornices, &c. in marble. Here the ark of Jehovah triumphed over the Philistine idol Dagon (1 Sam. v. 2.) and here Philip the evangelist was found after he had baptised the Ethiopian eunuch.—*Mansford's Gazetteer.*—Ed.

^d From hence it appears, that however the Jews were cramped in several privileges originally belonging to their nation, yet, even after they became a Roman province, their great council at Jerusalem had a jurisdiction, which extended to all synagogues, even those that were out of Judea; and that the power of capital punishments was not so far taken from them, but that, either by their own authority, or at least the consent of the Roman governors, they might, in some cases, inflict them.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations.*

^e For an account of Damascus see note b, p. 628. The inquiring reader may also consult *Calmet's Dictionary*, abridged, *Scripture Gazetteer*, Edin. 1836—7, and *Mansford.*—Ed.

^f In Acts xxii. 9. it is said expressly, that the men who were with Saul 'heard not the voice of him that spake to him;' but as the words φωνή and ἀκούειν, both employed in these passages, will admit of different significations, they will be easily reconciled, by saying,—That the people that accompanied Saul heard a sound, a noise, a thunder in the air, for to all these the word φωνή is applicable, but did not hear any articulate words, or did not understand, (for in this sense the word ἀκούειν is often taken,) what that noise or sound meant: in the same manner, as when a voice from heaven was addressed to our Lord, the people that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered, and others, that an angel spake to him, and perhaps none of them understood distinctly what it said, John xii. 29.—*Hammond's*, and *Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary.*

^g Who this Ananias was, we have no certain information from antiquity. The apostolical constitutions assert, that he was a

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to go and find out Saul, then lodging at the house of one Judas, a Jew, and by the imposition of his hands to cure him of his blindness. Ananias was startled at the name of the man, and, to excuse himself, alleged his violent persecutions of the church, and with what a wicked intent he was then come to Damascus: but to this the vision replied, that he was appointed by God to be a powerful instrument in the propagation of the gospel, both among the Jews and Gentiles; and how much soever he had persecuted Christianity heretofore, he was now to become a zealous defender of it, and even to die in testimony of its truth.

Encouraged with this assurance, Ananias repaired to the house where Saul was, with this joyful message,—‘That the Lord Jesus, who had appeared to him in his journey, had sent him, not only to restore his eye-sight, but to bestow upon him likewise the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, such as might qualify him for the ministry to which he was then appointed.’ And no sooner had Ananias ended his speech, than thick films, like scales, fell from the other’s eyes, whereupon he recovered his eye-sight, and, being baptized, for some days continued with the disciples at Damascus, preaching in the synagogues, and proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

After some stay at Damascus, he retired ¹ into the neighbouring parts of Arabia Deserta, ^a where he first planted the gospel; and, in the beginning of the next year, returned to Damascus again, and there preached Christ publicly in the synagogues; so that all the Jews in that city were not a little amazed and confounded, both at the strange change in his opinions and proceedings, and the powerful efficacy of his arguings and discourses. Their malice however being incensed at having lost so considerable a champion, pursued him close. They contrived all possible means to dispatch him; and after many attempts to no purpose, ² made their request at last to the governor under Aretas, ^b king of Arabia, that he would gratify them in his destruction. Saul, however, had early notice of this, and, knowing that the gates were day and night strictly guarded to prevent his escape,

¹ Gal. i. 17.

² 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.

layman; St Austin will have it that he was a priest; but (Eusebius, and some moderns, are of opinion that he was a deacon. The Greeks maintain, that he was one of the seventy disciples, was made bishop of Damascus, and having obtained a crown of martyrdom, was buried in the same city. However this be, it is certain, that in the place where he is said to have been interred, there is a very fine church, which though the Turks have turned into a mosque, yet they still preserve a great respect for his monument.—*Culmet’s Commentary, and Dictionary.*

^a The reader need not be told, that Arabia, which is one of the most considerable divisions of Asia, is distinguished into three parts, Deserta, Petrea, and Arabia Felix; or that the Deserta borders upon Syria, and is not far distant from Damascus. What we had rather observe to him is, that, as we learn this passage of the apostle’s life from his own account only, (Gal. i. 17.) St Luke, who makes no mention of it in his history, in all probability did not accompany him in this journey; and this makes it the rather believed that the intent of his going into Arabia was not to propagate the gospel, but to find out a retreat, where, by meditation and prayer, he might fit and prepare himself for his future ministry; though it is hardly conceivable, how a person of St Paul’s zeal and activity could suffer himself to lie still amidst so many poor creatures that stood in need of his instructions and therefore others have supposed that the chief intent of his taking this journey was, to carry the glad tidings of the gospel into a country that had never heard of it before.—*Culmet’s Commentary.*

^b This Aretas, whose name is said to have been *Aeneas* before

from one of the houses that stood upon the city-wall he was let ^c down by the disciples in a basket, and so made the best of his way to Jerusalem.

Three years were now past and gone since the time of his conversion; but, notwithstanding this, when he came to Jerusalem, he found but a cold reception among many of the disciples, who were sensible of his former conduct, and, as yet, diffident of the reality of his change; until Barnabas ^d who was privy to all his circumstances, having introduced him to the apostle Peter and James, vouched for his sincerity, and, by declaring the miraculous manner of his conversion, and his zealous preaching at Damascus, dissipated all their doubts, and gained him the right-hand of fellowship, or an intimate communion with the apostles. Here he continued preaching with all boldness, and his sermons were so powerful, and disputations with the Hellenists so unanswerable, that they too, like the Jews at Damascus, formed designs against his life; which when the brethren understood, they conducted him to Cæsarea, ^e from whence he set sail to his own

he came to the crown of Arabia, was father-in-law to Herod Antipas, who some time after divorced his daughter, and made Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, the consort of his bed. But how this Aretas, who, in the beginning of his reign, by the insinuations of one Syllæus, fell under the displeasure of Tiberius, came to be possessed of the sovereignty of Damascus, the capital of Syria, which had been a long while a Roman province, we can no where learn.—*Joseph Antiq. b. 16. c. xvi.*

^c This was so far from betraying any want of courage in the apostle, that it was only putting in practice his Master’s direction, ‘when they persecute you in one city, flee to another,’ (Mat. x. 23.).

^d Barnabas is supposed to have been an old acquaintance of St Paul’s and a fellow-student under Gamaliel; and, having been lately at Antioch, it is not unlikely that he might there receive the account of his conversion, and consequent behaviour, which made him the readier to become, upon this occasion, his guarantee with the apostles.—*Culmet’s Commentary.*

^e Some commentators are of opinion, that the place to which the brethren conducted St Paul, was Cæsarea Philippi, in the extreme northern parts of Palestine, from whence his way lay directly through Syria to Tarsus in Cilicia; but others, with more justness, have observed, that wherever mention is made in the New Testament of Cæsarea alone, and without any addition, it is always to be understood of the Cæsarea which Herod the Great built, and whereof Josephus gives us the following account: ‘There was a certain place by the sea-side, formerly called Straton’s Tower, which Herod looked upon as a very commodious tract of ground whereon to raise a city. Accordingly he drew his model, and set people to work, and in twelve years’ time finished it. The buildings were all of marble, private houses as well as palaces; but his master-piece was the port, which he made as large as the Pyæum, or port belonging to Athens, and a safe station against all winds and weathers. The city stands between Dora and Joppa, two wretched sea towns, where there is no riding in the harbour with a south-west wind, which bears so furious upon the shore, that merchantmen are forced to keep off at sea many times, for fear of being driven a-ground. To encounter this difficulty of the place, Herod ordered a mole to be made, in the form of a half-moon, and large enough for a royal navy to ride in; which he did, by letting down stones of a prodigious size, fifty feet in length, eighteen over, and nine deep, and some larger, in twenty fathom water. This mole was two hundred feet in extent, whereof the one half served to break the setting in of the sea, and the other half for the foundation of a stone wall that was fortified with turrets; and underneath this was a quay, or landing place, with a large walk upon it round the port, as a place of pleasure to take the air in. The houses about the port were all uniformly built, of the most excellent sort of marble, and, in the middle of them, on a mount stood a temple, which served as a sea-mark to the mariners, and was celebrated no less for its materials than its workmanship. In this temple there were two statues or images; one of Rome, and the other

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city, Tarsus, ^a and saw not Jerusalem till several years after.

The church at this time had peace, and flourished exceedingly. Saul diligently preached the word in Cilicia, ^b and Syria; ^c and Peter made a general visitation of all the saints in Judea, Galilee and Samaria. In his progress he arrived at a town called Lydda, ^d where he cured

of Cæsar, from whom the city took its name; and, in this city, the contrivance of the very vaults and common sewers, laid at equal distances, and discharging themselves into the sea, was very wonderful. Besides these, Josephus makes mention of a stone theatre, a spacious amphitheatre, and several other buildings; which made him, in another work of his, call it one of the fairest cities in all Judea.—*Joseph. Antiq. b. xv. c. 13. on the Jew. War, b. iii. c. 14. and Wells's Geography of the New Testament.* Mr Buckingham found this place a scene of desolate ruins: the whole of the surrounding country is also, according to the same traveller, a sandy desert towards the land. The waves wash the ruins of the mole, the towers, and port, towards the sea; and not a creature, except jackalls and beasts of prey, resides within many miles of this silent desolation.—*Mansford's Scripture Gazetteer.*—Ed.

^a This city is the same with what, in Hebrew, is called *Tarshish*; and as it stands in a plain, on the banks of the river Cydnus, it was all along, in ancient times, accounted so great a trading town, that all merchant-ships are in holy writ frequently called by the name of ships of Tarshish. In the times of the Romans it was a city of great note, as being not only the metropolis of the province of Cilicia, but honoured likewise with the privileges of a Roman colony, which we find St Paul pleading in his own behalf, (Acts xxii. 25, 28.) and with an academy, furnished with such eminent men, that Scæro scruples not to say, they excelled all others in polite learning and philosophy, even those of Alexandria and Athens; and that Rome itself was beholden to this nursery of all sciences for its best professors; and therefore no wonder that St Paul, who had the first foundation of his erudition laid here, became so well instructed in the liberal arts, and so well acquainted with heathen authors.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*

^b Cilicia, a country of Asia Minor on the sea-coast, south of Cappadocia and Lycaonia, and bounded by Syria on the east and Pamphylia on the west. Bochart derives its name from the Phœnician word *challekim*, which signifies a *stone*, a designation which is well-suited to part of it to this day, which the Turks call *Tis-Wileith*, or the *Stony Province*. Cilicia Proper is described as an extensive plain, well cultivated, and producing great quantities of timber. Tarsus, the birth-place of St Paul, was its capital, and near it is the tomb of Julian the Apostate. The Cilicians enriched themselves by piratical excursions before they were conquered by Pompey, and are represented as having been cruel, dishonest, and barbarous in their manners. Cicero presided over the country as consul, and it was reduced to a province by Vespasian. Josephus says that this country was first peopled by Tarshish, the son of Javan, after whom the whole country was called Tarsis. Cilicia is repeatedly mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and it is probable that St Paul himself introduced the gospel into his native country. We find the Cilicians, among others, disputing with St Stephen, (Acts vi. 9.) and we find St Paul, in company with Silas, proceeding 'through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches,' (Acts xv. 41.) Christianity continued to flourish in this country until the eighth century, when it fell into the hands of the Saracens, by whom, and especially by the Turks, it was almost extinguished. It is at present a province of the Turkish empire.—*Scripture Gazetteer, Edin. 1837.*—Ed.

^c Though Syria, by heathen authors, is generally used in a large acceptance, and so comprehends both Phœnicia and the Holy Land; yet, as it commonly occurs in the New Testament in a stricter sense, it is bounded on the east by the Euphrates, on the west by Phœnicia and the Mediterranean sea, on the north by the Turks, and on the south by Judea and Arabia Deserta.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table, and Calmet's Dictionary.*

^d Josephus tells us, that this was a village, not yielding to a city for greatness; (Antiq. b. 20.) and he elsewhere expressly styles it a city. (Jew. War, b. ii.) It was burnt by Cestius, whilst the men were gone from it to Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of tabernacles; but, after the destruction of Jerusalem, it was rebuilt, and made one of the Jewish academies. By the Gentiles

one Æneas of a paralytic disorder, which had confined him to his bed for eight years, and thereby prevailed with the inhabitants of Lydda, and of Saron, ^e a neighbouring town, to embrace the Christian profession. From Lydda he was intreated by two messengers to come over to Joppa, a noted port about six miles distance, upon the account of one Tabitha, ^f in Greek called Dorcas, a Christian woman, venerable for her piety, and diffusive charity, who was lately dead. When he came to the house, he found the body in an upper chamber, ready washed, and prepared for its funeral, and attended with many sorrowful widows, who durst not request of him to raise her from the dead, but by their tears and lamentations, and large commendations of her charity, sufficiently testified their desire; so that the apostle, having caused the company to withdraw, first kneeled down, and made his supplications to God: and then turning to the body, with one word speaking, raised her up, and presented her alive to her friends and relations, which gained him a great number of converts at Joppa, and encouraged him, for some considerable time, to take up his abode there, lodging in the house of one Simon a tanner.

While he abode at Joppa, retiring one day ^g to the top of the house about noon-tide to pray, after he had ended his devotions, he found himself hungry; but while the people were preparing his dinner, he fell into a trance, wherein was presented to him a large sheet, or table-cloth, laid down, as it were, by the four corners from heaven, wherein were creatures of all kinds, clean and unclean; and at the same time he heard a voice, calling him to kill and eat freely of them, which when Peter, a little too tenacious of the rites and institutions of the Mosaic law, declared his aversion to do, the voice replied, that what God had pronounced clean, he ought

it was called Diospolis, or the city of Jupiter; but, by the Christians, in the times of the holy wars, it had the name of St George's, partly from a magnificent temple, which the emperor Justinian there erected in honour of that saint, and partly from an erroneous opinion then prevailing among them, that in that place he obtained the crown of martyrdom.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament.* Volney, describing this town, says, that a place lately ravaged by fire and sword would have precisely the same appearance; and that, from the huts of the inhabitants, to the palace of the Aga, is one vast heap of rubbish and ruins. There is, however, a kind of weekly market held here; and the Christian residents show the ruins of the church of St Peter, and many spots where tradition says that apostle preached, prayed, &c.—Ed.

^e Is a town adjoining to Joppa, giving name to the spacious and fruitful vale which reaches from Cesarea to Joppa, and among the Rabbins is famous for its vines.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*

^f The true reason why St Luke gives this interpretation of her Syriac name, seems to be this,—that as she was a Jewess, who spake nothing but Greek, she was called by her first name among the Jews, and by her second among the Greeks; for in both languages the two names signify the same thing, namely, a goat or a roe.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^g At the dedication of the temple, Solomon had so oft and so solemnly requested of God that he would hearken to the supplications of his people, who should at any time spread out their hands towards that place, (2 Kings viii. 30, 38.) that it thence became a custom among the Jews, whenever they were absent from Jerusalem, to offer up their prayers in places where they might have a free prospect towards it. Thus of Daniel it is recorded, that when he prayed, as he did it three times a day, the windows of his chamber were opened towards Jerusalem, (Dan. vi. 10,) and therefore, in all likelihood, St Peter being now at Joppa, went up to the roof of the house, to pray, for the same reason.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

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by no means to account common or unclean. ^a This representation was made to him three several times, after which the sheet was again taken up, and the vision disappeared. But while Peter was revolving with himself what the meaning of this might be, three messengers knocked at the door, desiring to speak with him; and when they had delivered their message, namely, that Cornelius, a Roman, captain of a company in the Italian legion, ^b then at Cæsarea, and a person of eminent virtue, piety, and charity, had, by an immediate command from God, sent to him; he the next day, with six other brethren from Joppa, went along with them, and the day following arrived at Cæsarea.

Cornelius, in expectation of his coming, had invited his friends and relations to his house, and as Peter drew near, fell down at his feet to worship him; but the apostle rejecting the honour, as what was due to God alone, entered into the house, and there made his apology to the company, namely, 'that though they could not but know, that it was not lawful for a Jew to converse, in the duties of religion especially, with those of another nation: yet, since God had now taught him to make no distinction, he very readily attended their pleasure, desiring to know the occasion of their sending for him.' Whereupon Cornelius made answer, 'that he did it upon the express command of God, who, by his angel, ^c had

^a The great distinction thrown by God around his people, to preserve them separate from the Gentiles, was the diet peculiar to themselves; which was an effectual bar to familiar intercourse and to idolatrous customs, as he declares, (Lev. xx. 23—25.) Thus Eleazer in Aristæus, apud Joseph. p. 17. and Eusebius, Præp. Evang. i. 8. c. 9. p. 371. Hence the Jews esteemed the Gentiles who ate these meats as unclean; and held, that the unclean beasts signified the nations of the world. The vision included all manner of beasts, &c., and creeping things, because they are included in the text of Lev. xx. 25. This explains Acts ix. 3. and the meaning of St Peter's saying, ver. 28. that God had showed him that he should 'call no man common or unclean,' because by the vision he took off the restriction which hindered any converse with other nations. And it was highly expedient that this liberty should be expressly revealed from heaven, or the apostles could not, as Jews, teach all nations, 'putting no difference between them,' (chap. xi. 12. and xv. 9.) or have any intercourse, which violated a former law given by God himself.—*Whitby*. The vision, besides its figurative meaning, had a literal one, and signified that the distinction of meats as well as of men, was now to be abolished.—*Bishop Warburton*.—Ed.

^b The cohorts of the Romans, which the Greek renders *στῆλαι*, and we, band, was a body of infantry, consisting of five hundred men, ten of which bands made a legion. And the manner in which the Romans distinguished and denominated their bands and legions was very various. Sometimes it was from the order of places; and so they were called the first or second band, according to their rank and precedence; sometimes from the commanders they were under; as, the Augustan and Claudian band, &c., because persons of that name did lead them; sometimes from their own behaviour; as, the Victrix, the Ferrea, the Conquering, the Iron band, &c., by reason of the great valour, which, in some sharp engagements, these had shown; sometimes from the countries they were chiefly quartered in; as the German and Pannonian band, &c., and sometimes from the parts from whence they were gathered, as this of Cornelius is called the Italian band, because it was raised out of that country, and was a body of forces well known, for their gallantry and great exploits, among the writers of the Roman history.—*Cabinet's Commentary*.

^c But if God was so very kind to Cornelius, as to send an angel to him, why did he not at the same time give that angel commission to instruct him in what he was to do, and to save his apostle a journey from Joppa to Cæsarea? Now, besides the honour which God, in this method of proceeding, designed to confer upon St Peter and his ministry, it is apparent, that hereby

ordered him to send for him at Joppa, from whom he should receive some special instruction; and that for this reason they were all then met together, attending the commands which he had brought them from God.'

Hereupon St Peter began his discourse, and declared, 'that now he perceived plainly, that God had made no distinction of persons and people, but that the pious and godly of all nations were to meet with acceptance; that peace and reconciliation between God and man was a doctrine published by the prophets of old, and of late since the time of John the Baptist, preached through Galilee and Judea; that of this peace Jesus of Nazareth was the only mediator between God and man, as appeared by the divine powers and graces wherewith he was invested, and which he constantly exercised in doing good to mankind; that of his life and actions, more especially of his crucifixion by the Jews, and resurrection from the dead, of his appearing to his disciples, and even eating and drinking with them after his resurrection, he and the rest of the apostles were chosen witnesses; and that from him they had received, before his ascension, a command and commission, to publish to all nations under heaven, that he was the person whom God had appointed to be the great judge of all the world.'

While Peter was thus preaching to them, the Holy Ghost fell upon all that heard him, without the imposition of the apostle's hands. This made the Jewish converts who came along with Peter, wonder not a little, that the gifts of the Holy Ghost should be poured upon the Gentiles; but Peter perceiving it, ordered them ^d imme-

diately to be baptized. This was a new and extraordinary way of instruction, where he hath instituted ordinary means. The angel, no doubt, might as readily have told Cornelius what he ought to do, as bid him send for Peter, and God could as easily have given him his Spirit at that time, as four days after; but then this would not have been so agreeable to the order which Christ had settled in his church. Christ had appointed his apostles to minister his ordinances; and therefore God did not suffer even an angel to break in upon this economy, but ordered St Peter to wait upon the centurion, that his divine mercy might not redound upon him only, but be extended to his relations and friends.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^d But whom did he order to do this? the Gentiles. It seems at first sight not a little absurd, that they who were not yet baptized themselves, should baptize others. Or were they some of those who came along with him to Cæsarea? These are generally supposed to be no more than lay-brethren, who were not permitted to baptize, but in cases of necessity. But, considering that St Peter was now upon his visitation through Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, it seems reasonable that he should carry some of his deacons, at least, along with him, to attend in such offices as these. Such was the beginning of the conversion of the Gentiles; for that Cornelius and his company were the first fruits of the heathen world, is evident from the injunction which our Saviour gave his apostles, 'not to go into the way of the Gentiles,' (Mat. x. 5.) from the practice of those that were scattered abroad upon the death of Stephen, but preached the word to the Jews only, (Acts xi. 19.) from the wonder which the Jewish converts with St Peter expressed, when they saw, 'that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gifts of the Holy Ghost,' (Acts x. 45.) and from the altercation which the brethren at Jerusalem had with him at his return. 'Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them,' (Acts xi. 3.) which to some is a proof sufficient that the door of faith was not opened to the Gentiles before the conversion of Cornelius; who, according to the account of some Latin writers, was made afterwards bishop of Cæsarea of Palestine, where he suffered martyrdom. But since Eusebius, who was bishop of that church, does not reckon him among the number of his predecessors, we have reason to suspect the truth of this piece of history.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Cabinet's Commentary*.

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diately to be baptized, and, to instruct them more fully in their Christian profession, tarried for some considerable time with them.

When he returned to Jerusalem, the Jewish converts, ^a who still retained their inveterate prejudice against the Gentiles, utterly condemned him for conversing so familiarly, and eating with them; but, for his apology, having given them a plain narrative of the whole affair, and the occasion of it, he concluded at last with this inference, 'that since God had been pleased to bestow upon these Gentiles the same privileges and marks of conversion that he had done on his select disciples, it would in him have been direct disobedience to the divine will, had he denied them admission into the church, or refused them his instructions and conversation;' which fully satisfied the audience, and turned their displeasure against him into praise and thanksgiving to God, for having communicated the same mercy to the Gentiles that he had done to the Jews.

After the general dispersion which followed upon St Stephen's death, some disciples who were born in Cyprus, and Cyrene, ^b having travelled through several countries, and hitherto preached to the Jews only, when they came to Antioch, ^c and there heard of the conver-

^a The ancient fathers are generally of opinion, that the apostles themselves had no hand in this controversy; and some of them suppose, that the great fomentor of it was Cerinthus, whose heresy grew afterwards famous in the church. But if we consider how zealous the Jews, even after their conversion, were for their laws and customs, (Acts xxi. 20, 21.) how St Peter himself, before he received this vision, laid it down for a rule, that it was unlawful for a Jew to converse with an alien, (Acts x. 28.) and, even after this vision, how he withdrew from the believing Gentiles, for fear of the censure of those who came from Jerusalem, (Gal. ii. 12.) we cannot see why it should be inconsistent with the character of the very greatest of the apostles, to inquire into the reason of St Peter's conduct, which according to their present persuasion, was not warrantable; since 'this was a mystery,' as St Paul tells us, 'which in other ages was not known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, namely, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promises in Christ, by the gospel,' (Eph. iii. 5, 6.)—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^b This was a city of great note, and once of such power, as to contend with Carthage for some pre-eminencies. It stood upon the western parts of Lybia, properly so called; and, as it was the principal city, it sometimes gave the name of Cyrenaica to the whole country, which by the sacred writer is paraphrastically called 'Lybia about Cyrene,' (Acts ii. 10.) The city itself is famous in profane writers, for being the birth place of Ératosthenes the mathematician, of Callimachus the poet, and, in holy writ, of Simon, whom the Jews compelled to bear our Saviour's cross.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.—See a further account of this city in the *Scripture Gazetteer*, Edin. 1837.

^c This Antioch, to distinguish it from sixteen other cities, which, in Syria, and other countries, bore that name, was frequently called *Antiochia Epidaphne*, from its neighbourhood to Daphne, a village where the temple of Daphne stood. It was built, as some say, by Antiochus Epiphanes; as others, by Seleucus Nicanor, the first king of Syria after Alexander the Great, in memory of his father Antiochus; and was, after that, the royal seat of the kings of Syria. In the flourishing times of the Roman empire it was the ordinary residence of the prefect, or governor of the eastern provinces, and was also honoured with the residence of many of the Roman emperors, especially of Verus and Valens, who spent here the greatest part of their time. As to its situation, it lay on both sides of the river Orontes, about twelve miles distant from the Mediterranean sea; was in former times adorned with many sumptuous palaces, and stately temples, and, both by nature and art, fortified even to admiration; but, being taken by the Saracens, and afterwards by the Turks, it began to grow into decay, and is now in so desolate and

sion of Cornelius, and others, they applied themselves to the Greeks, ^d who lived in that city, and, by the blessing of God, made great numbers of converts daily; inso-much that the apostles, who remained at Jerusalem, when they heard of this happy progress, sent Barnabas, ^e a

ruinous a condition, that the patriarch has long since removed his dwelling to Damascus.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table*, and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*. We have the testimony of Chrysostom, both of the vast increase of this illustrious church in the fourth century, and of the spirit of charity which continued to actuate it. It consisted at this time of not less than a hundred thousand persons, three thousand of whom were supported out of the public donations. It is painful to trace the progress of declension in such a church as this. But the period now referred to, namely, the age of Chrysostom, towards the close of the fourth century, may be considered as the brightest of its history subsequent to the apostolic age, and that from which the church at Antioch may date its fall. It continued indeed outwardly prosperous; but superstition, secular ambition, the pride of life, pomp and formality in the service of God, in place of humility and sincere devotion, the growth of faction, and the decay of charity, showed that real religion was fast disappearing, and that the foundations were laid of that great apostasy, which, in two centuries from this time, overspread the whole Christian world; led to the entire extinction of the church in the East; and still holds dominion over the fairest portions of the west. Antioch, under its modern name of Antakia, is now but little known to the western nations. It occupies, or rather did till lately occupy a remote corner of the ancient enclosure of its walls. Its splendid buildings were reduced to hovels; and its population of half a million, to 10,000 wretched beings, living in the usual debasement and insecurity of Turkish subjects. Such was nearly its condition when visited by Pocock about the year 1738, and again by Kinneir in 1813. But its ancient subterranean enemy, which since the destruction of 587 has never long together withheld its assaults, has again triumphed over it: the convulsion of the 13th of August, 1822, laid it once more in ruins; and every thing relating to Antioch is past.—*Mansford's Scripture Gazetteer*.—Ed.

^d The learned Grotius is pretty positive, that instead of *πρός τοὺς Ἕλληνας*, as it is in our vulgar copies, and denotes such Jews as spake the Greek language, we should read, *πρός τοὺς Ἕλληνας*, that is, Greeks who were Gentiles: for which he produces not only the Syriac, Arabic, and Latin versions, but the Alexandrian manuscript likewise, as indeed the whole series and purport of St Luke's discourse seems to require it. For, having given us an account of what happened to Cornelius at Cesarea, he next proceeds to another piece of history of the like nature, namely, the conversion of several other Gentiles in the city of Antioch, which, when it came to be known at Jerusalem, confirmed the brethren in the belief of God's design to receive the Gentiles into the bosom of his church, and gave a great weight to what St Peter had testified concerning this matter.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.—Bloomfield, in his Greek Testament, contends strenuously in favour of the received reading, *Γrecians*, *Ἕλληνας*; and shows by various arguments that the reading *Ἕλληνας*, *Greeks*, approved of in this note, has no support from either external or internal evidence. Boothroyd translates 'Hellenists,' by which he means Greek proselytes to Judaism; but the Hellenists were Jews who lived in Grecian countries and spoke the Greek language.—Ed.

^e The Scripture acquaints us, (Acts iv. 36.) that his name was originally Joses; that he was descended of the tribe of Levi, but born at Cyprus; and that, as he was the first who sold an estate, and put the purchase money into the common fund then applied to the sustenance of poor Christians, he very likely from that action received the name of Barnabas, which, according to St Luke's interpretation, signifies the son of consolation. But, besides the qualifications mentioned in the text, there were two other reasons that might induce the apostles to make choice of Barnabas, preferably to any other, upon this occasion: 1st. Because he was a great master of the Greek, which was the current language of Antioch, as being himself born at Cyprus, where that language only was in use; and, 2dly. Because the apostles thought it might be more agreeable to these first planters of the gospel in Antioch, who were a great many of them natives of Cyprus, to have a fellow-labourer of the same country sent amongst them.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

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pious man, and endued with many excellent gifts, to assist the disciples, and confirm the believers in that city. The success of the gospel in so large a place was no small consolation to him: and therefore, having exhorted the brethren to hold fast the profession of their faith, he thence departed to Tarsus, to find out Saul, and with him in a short time returned to Antioch; where, for the space of a whole year, they daily resorted to the places of public concourse, and gained converts so numerous and considerable, that in this city the disciples of Jesus Christ first obtained the honourable name of Christians.^a

This opened an intercourse between Jerusalem and Antioch; so that, when certain persons, who at that time had the spirit of prophecy, were come from Jerusalem, and among them one named Agabus, ^b had foretold, that there would shortly be a great famine in many parts of the Roman empire, which accordingly happened in the fourth year of the reign of Claudius, the Christians of Antioch determined to make a collection for their brethren in Judea, ^c which, upon the approach of the dearth, they accordingly did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. But, before their arrival at Jerusalem, Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, merely to ingratiate himself with the Jews, raised a sharp persecution against the Christians. He ordered James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John,

^a Before this they were called amongst themselves, 'brethren, saints, disciples, believers, the faithful,' and 'those that called on the name of Christ,' and among their enemies, 'Galileans, Nazarenes,' and 'the men of the sect;' but now, by the conversion of so many heathens both in Casarea and Antioch, the believing Jews and Gentiles being all made one church, this new name was given them, as more expressive of their common relation to their master Christ. And that it was given them in a solemn manner, we have reason to conclude from the propriety of the original word; for *χηματίσαι* is commonly used with regard to edicts and proclamations, such especially as contain the people's professions of allegiance to emperors, and the privileges granted by them to the people; and therefore it seems not improbable, that the imposition of this name was done by a public act and declaration of the whole church, about the beginning of the reign of Claudius, ten years after our Lord's ascension, as an ancient historian informs us, whether Euodius was at that time the bishop of Antioch or not.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, and *Cave's Lives of the Apostles*.

^b Who this Agabus was, we have no account in any ecclesiastical history; only the Greeks tell us, that he was one of our Lord's seventy disciples, and as he is said to have suffered martyrdom at Antioch, accordingly they observe his festival on the eighth of March. But, in regard to the truth of this prophecy, Eusebius tells us, that the famine which he foretold, oppressed almost the whole empire, and was recorded by historians the most averse to the Christian religion, namely, by Dion Cassius, who calls it 'a very great famine,' (Hist. b. xvi.) by Josephus, who tells us 'that in Judea many perished for want of victuals,' (Antiq. b. xx. c. 2.), and by Suetonius, who observes, that the emperor himself, upon this occasion, was so insulted by the people in the common market-place, that he was obliged, by a postern gate, to retire into his palace: in Claudio, c. xviii.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.—History records no fewer than four famines which happened in the reign of Claudius, but it is generally agreed that the famine here referred to was that which took place in the fourth year of his reign.—Ed.

^c The reasons why this supply was principally sent to Judea, might be, either because there the calamity fell heaviest, or because believers were like to find least pity there, or because this was a fitting testimony of gratitude to the country, from whence the means of their conversion first came, according to that subsequent reasoning of St Paul's, 'if we have sown unto you spiritual things, ought it to be accounted a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things,' (1 Cor. ix. 11.)—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*.

commonly called the Great, ^d to be beheaded; and, having apprehended Peter, and put him in prison, he set a guard of sixteen soldiers upon him, designing, immediately after the feast of the passover, to bring him forth to the Jews, and, if they desired it, to have him executed. But the very night before the day intended for his arraignment and execution, God sent an angel from heaven, who knocked off his chains, ^e opened the prison-door, and, without the guards once perceiving it, carried him quite out; whereupon he went directly to the house of Mary, ^f the mother of John, surnamed Mark, where several disciples were met together, and sending up their prayers to heaven for his deliverance. As he stood knocking without, a maid of the house, named Rhoda, perceiving that it was his voice, ran in, and acquainted the company, that Peter was at the door; but, when she persisted in the thing, they concluded rather, that it must have been his angel, ^g until, being let in, he related to them the whole manner of his miraculous escape: and, having ordered them to acquaint James, and the other

^d This was James the greater, son of Zebedee, and must be distinguished from James the less, son of Alphaeus. This latter was put to death by Ananias the high-priest, during the reign of Nero. This James with his brother John were those who requested to sit on the right and left hand of our Lord, (Mat. xx. 23.) and our Lord's prediction was now fulfilled in one of them, who by his martyrdom drank of our Lord's cup, and was baptized with his baptism. By the death of James, the number of the apostles was reduced to eleven; and we do not find that ever it was filled up. The apostles never had any successors; God has continued their doctrine, but not their order. By killing with the sword, we are to understand beheading. Among the Jews there were four kinds of deaths: 1. Stoning: 2. burning: 3. killing with the sword, or beheading: and 4. strangling. The third was a Roman as well as a Jewish mode of punishment. Killing with the sword was the punishment which, according to the Talmud, was inflicted on those who drew away the people to any strange worship. James was probably accused of this; and hence the punishment mentioned in the text.—*Dr. A. Clarke*.—Ed.

^e In chap. xii. 6. we are told that Peter was placed between two soldiers, and bound with two chains. The way in which prisoners were chained among the Romans, was as follows: an iron chain of convenient length was fastened at one end to the hand of the prisoner, and at the other to the arm of the soldier. When a person was committed to the care of one soldier, which was commonly done, there was consequently but one chain, and this was fastened to the right hand of the prisoner, and to the left arm of the soldier, as we learn from Seneca. It is very easy to conclude, that when a second soldier, and a second chain were appointed, the prisoner must wear the second chain on his left hand and the soldier on his right.—*Lardner's Credibility*, b. i. c. 19.—Ed.

^f This house stood upon mount Sion; and according to Epiphanius, having escaped the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, it was afterwards turned into a famous church, called the church of Sion, which endured for several ages.—*Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary*.

^g That the word *ἄγγελος*, or 'angel,' signifies not only a celestial spirit, but also a messenger sent from one to another, we allow is manifest from several passages in scripture; but that it cannot, in this place, denote a common messenger, is evident for this reason, namely, that the damsel could know St Peter no otherwise than either by his voice or face, which the company might believe his angel was capable of imitating; whereas St Peter could not but know, that no messenger from the prison, had he been allowed to send one, was able to do this; and therefore, since it was a vulgar opinion among the Jews, that good men had their tutelar angels, or at least that angels were sent down from heaven about their affairs, they, by this angel, might understand, either erroneously a guardian angel attending on him, or agreeably to scripture, an angel sent down from heaven to acquaint them with something relating to him in answer to their prayers.—*Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations*.

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brethren, with this good news, he withdrew himself to a place of more retirement and security.

In the morning, as soon as it was day, the soldiers missing their prisoner, were in the utmost confusion; and Agrippa, finding himself disappointed in his wicked design, commanded the keepers to be put to death, as supposing them accessory to St Peter's escape, and so departed from Jerusalem to Cæsarea. ^a While he was here, the ambassadors of Tyre and Sidon, relying on the interest they had with Blastus, the lord high chamberlain, came to solicit an accommodation of some difference that had lately happened between their states and the king, and that the rather, because in this time of scarcity, their ^b country was in a great measure dependent on the king's dominions for its support. Agrippa, though highly displeased with them, appointed them a day of audience; and being dressed in his royal robes, and seated on his throne, made such an oration, as the flattering multitude called 'the speech of a god, and not of a man;' which he, with a secret pride and vanity, assuming to himself, was that moment struck by an angel with a mortification in his bowels, ^c of which, in a short time, he died.

About the time of the death of Agrippa, Saul and Barnabas, having disposed of their contributions to the

^a Josephus, who gives us an account both of this journey and the occasion of it, informs us, that he went down to the city of Cæsarea to perform the solemnities, and the games, which were there celebrated every Olympiad, to the honour of Cæsar, and that the nobles and governors of Syria repaired to that city for the same purpose.—*Antiq.* b. xix. c. 7.

^b The inhabitants of the countries of Tyre and Sidon, which were very narrow, and pent up by the sea, took little pains in the cultivation of their ground. Their whole business and employment was commerce; and therefore they were beholden to Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, which were all at this time under Agrippa's jurisdiction, for most of the common necessities of life, as appears from 1 Kings v. 9, 11, and Ezek. xxvii. 17.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^c In testimony of the truth of this piece of sacred history, Josephus relates the manner of this king's death, and what was esteemed the occasion of it, in the following terms:—'Upon the second day of the festival, Agrippa went early in the morning to the theatre, in a silver stuff, so wonderfully rich and curious, that the beams of the rising sun striking upon it, people's eyes were dazzled with the reflection, and, as the sparkling of the light seemed to have something divine in it, it moved the spectators, at the same time, both with veneration and dread. Hereupon a crew of, fawning parasites cried him up for a god, and beseeched him in form to forgive them the sins of their ignorance, when they took him only for flesh and blood, like another man; but they were now convinced, they said, of an excellency in his nature more than human. This impious flattery passed upon him without either check or repulse; but while he was in the vanity of this contemplation, lifting up his eyes, he saw an owl in the air over his head, sitting upon a rope, which he found, soon after, to be the presage of mischief to him, as it had been before of good luck: for he fell immediately into violent gripes and torments in his bowels, and in this agony, directing his speech to his friends about him, Look ye, says he, your god is now condemned to die; and by this fatal necessity, I am about to prove all my flatterers to be a company of profligate liars, and to convince the world, by dying, that I am not immortal;—but God's will be done. With these words his pain increased upon him, so that he was forced to remove into his palace; and, as it continued without any manner of abatement, at the end of five days it carried him off, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign.'—*Antiq.* b. xix. c. 7.—Josephus indeed does not say, that he was eaten up with worms; but he tells us, that he had terrible pains in his guts, which, in the space of five days, might breed worms in him, as he confesses they did in his grandfather.—*Whitby's Annotations.*

Christians in Jerusalem and Judea, returned back to the city of Antioch, and brought with them Mark; ^d but they had not long been there, before God, by some particular inspiration, gave them to understand, that he had appointed them to carry his word into other places: whereupon the church that was at Antioch, betook themselves to fasting and prayer; and Simeon, ^e Lucius, ^f and Manaen, ^g men endued with a spirit of prophecy, laid their hands ^h on them, and so sent them away to preach, wherever the Holy Ghost should require them to go.

When therefore they had departed from Antioch, they first came to Seleucia, ⁱ from whence they took shipping for Cyprus, and in the city of Salamis ^k first began their

^d Calmet is of opinion, that John Mark is a different person from Mark the evangelist; but they are considered to have been the same person by Jones, Lightfoot, Wetstein, Lardner, Michaelis, and Taylor. To strengthen this opinion, Mr Taylor remarks that it should be observed, that throughout the Acts he is spoken of as 'John whose surname was Mark;' that is, Luke, writing in Italy, latinizes; it being customary for Jews, when in foreign countries, to use names more familiar to those countries, than their Hebrew appellations; and if Mark, as is beyond a doubt, accompanied Peter to Rome, he would be known there by his surname only.—*Calmet's Dictionary abridged.*—Ed.

^e This Simeon, who is surnamed Niger, is supposed by some to be the same with Simon the Cyrenean, who bore our Saviour's cross; but for this opinion there is no other proof than the similitude of names; which, in this case, is far from being exact, since St Luke always call Simon the Cyrenean by the name of Simon, but Simon Niger by the name of Simeon.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^f This Lucius is said by some to have been one of our Lord's seventy disciples, and by the apostles to have been constituted the first bishop of Cyrene; but of these and some other pretended passages of his life and death, we have no manner of certainty.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^g This Manaen must needs have been a person of a considerable family and distinction, because we find that he was brought up with Herod Antipas, the tetrarch, who put John the Baptist to death; and yet we are told, that he was one of the seventy disciples, and suffered martyrdom in Antioch; but when, or in what manner, we have no information.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^h Some have imagined, that this imposition of hands was a solemn ordination of Paul and Barnabas to be bishops in the Christian church; but, besides the incongruity of an apostle's being ordained bishop by those of an inferior order, as prophets and teachers were, (Acts xiii. 1.) St Paul declares for himself, that he 'was an apostle, not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ,' (Gal. i. 1.) And as the apostleship comprehends in it all ecclesiastical power, this laying on of hands was not designed to give them any episcopal authority, as is pretended, but merely to 'recommend them to the grace of God, for the work which they were to fulfil,' (Acts xiv. 26.) as being a ceremony that attended prayer and benediction, and other solemn actions, as well as ordination. Thus the children of Israel laid their hands on the Levites when they were separated to the service of Aaron and his sons, Numb. vii. 10, and thus our blessed Saviour, when the children were brought to him, put his hands upon them, and blessed them, (Mat. xix. 15.) so that this imposition of hands upon Paul and Barnabas was precatory, not consecratory; designed to implore the blessing of heaven upon their mission to the Gentiles, and not to ordain, or confirm them bishops of the church of Christ.—*Miscell. Sac.* vol. ii.

ⁱ This city lay on the west, or rather a little north-west, of Antioch, upon the Mediterranean sea; and was so named from the founder of it, Seleucus, who was reputed to be the greatest builder in the world: for he is said to have founded nine cities, called by his own name; sixteen in memory of his father Antiochus: six by the name of Laodice, his mother; and three in honour of Apamea, his first wife; besides many others of great note in Greece and Asia, either new built, or beautified and repaired by him.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*

^k This was once a famous city in the isle of Cyprus, opposite to Seleucia, on the Syrian coast; and as it was the first place

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ministerial office. Here they preached in the synagogues, and employed Mark, who was of their company, in several offices of the church, which they could not attend themselves. From Salamis they crossed the island unto Paphos,^a where the proconsul, or governor of the place,^b who at that time was Sergius Paulus, had his residence; a man of great wisdom and prudence, but unhappily seduced by a Jewish sorcerer, named Barjesus. Upon their preaching there, the governor, being informed of something extraordinary, sent to the apostles to hear their doctrine. But the sorcerer warmly opposed this, and used all possible methods to hinder his conversion: which, when Saul perceived, he, in the governor's presence, having sharply rebuked him, denounced a judgment of blindness upon him; which being immediately inflicted, convinced the proconsul, and converted him to the faith; and from this event, as some imagine, our apostle had the surname of Paul^c given him.

From the isle of Cyprus, St Paul and his company sailed to Perga in Pamphylia;^d where Mark, not greatly

where the gospel was preached, it was, in the primitive times, made the see of the primate or metropolitan of the whole island. In the reign of the emperor Trajan it was destroyed by the Jews, and rebuilt; but after that, being, in the year 648, sacked, and razed to the ground, by the Saracens, it never recovered its former splendour, though out of its ruins is said to have arisen Famagusta, which was the chief place of the isle when the Turks took it from the Venetians in the year 1570.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*

^a This was another city of Cyprus, lying on the western, as Salamis did on the eastern, tract of the island, where Venus, who from hence took the name of Paphia, had her most ancient and celebrated temple, and where the Roman proconsul at this time had his seat of residence.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*—Paphos is at present the seat of a Greek bishop, but is reduced to a very low state of poverty and insignificance.—*Mansford.*—Ed.

^b At this time the provinces of the Roman empire, according to the division of Augustus, were of two kinds; the one having governors appointed by the emperor, and called pro-prætors, the other having governors appointed by the senate, and called pro-consuls, though they had never filled the consular chair. Cyprus, though it had been once prætorian, was now a province of the latter kind.—*Holden's Christian Expositor.*

^c It is very observable, that all along before this passage of the apostle's life, St Luke calls him by the name of Saul, but ever after by that of Paul; which makes some imagine, that he assumed that name to himself, in memory of his converting Sergius Paulus; just as the ancient Roman generals were wont to adopt the names of the provinces which they conquered. St Austin more than once asserts, that he took it out of a principle of humility, by a small variation changing his former name, whereby a proud, haughty king of Israel was called, into that of Paulus, which signifies little; and that, in conformity to this, he calls himself *Ἰακωβέως*, (Eph. iii. 8.) which is a word made by himself on purpose, 'less than the least of the apostles.' But the most rational account of the matter seems to be that of Origen, viz. that he being of Jewish parentage, and born in Tarsus, a Roman city, had at his circumcision two names given him, Saul, a Jewish, and Paul, a Roman name; and that when he preached to the Jews, he was called by his Jewish, and when to the Gentiles, as he did chiefly after this time, by his Roman name.—*Calmet's Commentary, and Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations.*

^d Pamphylia is a province of Asia Minor, which gives the name to that part of the Mediterranean-sea which washes its coasts, (Acts xxvii. 5.) To the south it is bounded by the Mediterranean, and to the north by Pisidia; having Lycia to the west, and Cilicia to the east: and as for Perga, a city of this province, it is memorable among the heathens for the temple of Diana, who was thence called Diana Pergæa; and for the solemn festivals which, in honour of her, were there annually observed.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*

liking this itinerant course of life, took his leave of the apostles, and returned to Jerusalem. At Perga they made no stay, but proceeded directly to Antioch in Pisidia;^e where, going into the synagogue, and being courteously invited^f to make a comment, or discourse, as the custom then was, upon the lessons out of the law and the prophets, that were just before read in the congregation, St Paul took this opportunity, in a long discourse, to show, 'That Jesus was the true Messiah, foretold by the prophets, and declared by John the Baptist; that though he was barbarously treated, and crucified, and slain by the Jews, yet this was no more than what the same prophets had foretold would happen to the Messiah; that God's raising him from the dead, according to the predictions relating to the Messiah, and, after his resurrection, showing him to multitudes of witnesses then alive, and ready to attest the truth of it, were the highest demonstrations of his being the Son of God; and that therefore, since forgiveness of sins and justification, which could not be attained by the law of Moses, were now tendered to them by their believing in Jesus, it nearly concerned them, as a matter of the last importance, not to neglect so great salvation.'

This the congregation heard with great attention; and, as they were going out of the synagogue, the Gentiles desired of St Paul to speak again to them upon the same subject on the following sabbath; and several Jews, and proselytes, who believed, waited upon Paul and Barnabas for further instruction. The next sabbath, the whole city flocked to the synagogue to hear the apostle's discourse; which when the unbelieving Jews saw, such was their envy and despite, that they not only opposed themselves with blasphemy against what St Paul preached, but, perceiving the progress which the gospel made, not in that city only, but in all the neighbouring country, they applied themselves to some female^g proselytes of distinction, who, by their interest with the principal men of the city, forced the apostles to depart to Iconium;^h and after some stay there, their malice pursuing them

^e Pisidia is a small province in Asia Minor, bounded on the south by Pamphylia, and on the north by Galatia, having Lycaonia to the east, and Phrygia to the west. Its inhabitants are commended by Livy for their skill in war above other Asiatics, (b. xxxviii. c. 13.) and its chief city was Antioch, built by Seleucus, in honour of his father Antiochus, and, to distinguish it from others of the same name, usually called Antiochia Pisiðæ.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table, and Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*

^f What the service of the synagogue was, particularly as to the reading of the law and the prophets, and expounding thereupon, we had occasion to explain before.

^g Women, who being originally Gentiles, had embraced the Jewish religion; and of converts of this kind it is generally observed, that their zeal and superstition is usually blinder, and their attention to reason, in matters of religion, weaker, than what belongs to the other sex; insomuch, that some ecclesiastical writers have made it their remark, that there never was any heresy or schism in the Christian church, but what was either begun or fomented by women of wealth and distinction.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^h Iconium was the chief city of Lycaonia, a small province of Asia Minor. The church planted at this place by St Paul continued to flourish, until, by the persecutions of the Saracens, and afterwards of the Seljukian Turks, who made it the capital of one of their sultanies, it was nearly extinguished. But some Christians of the Greek and Armenian churches, with a Greek archbishop, are still found in the suburbs of this city, who are not permitted to reside within the walls. Iconium is now called Cogni, and is still a considerable city: being

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thither likewise, caused them to hasten to Lystra; where they continued for some time, preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of that city, and to the people of the parts adjacent.

At Lystra there was a man named Æneas, lame from his birth, whom St Paul, perceiving by his diligent attention to his preaching, that he had faith to be healed, immediately cured. This so amazed and transported the standers by, that, acknowledging a divine power in the miracle, they took them for two gods, ^a disguised in human shape; calling Paul, ^b as chief speaker, Mercury; and Barnabas, perhaps for his gravity, or majestic looks, Jupiter. The priest of Jupiter therefore, as soon as he was acquainted with the matter, brought oxen, all adorned with garlands, ^c to the door of the house where Paul and Barnabas were, in order to sacrifice to them. But when the apostles saw what they were going to do, they rent their clothes, and running in among the people, cried aloud, that they were mistaken in the object of their worship; that, notwithstanding the miracle they had wrought, they were no more than men; and that the chief end of their preaching was to turn them from these idolatrous practices, to the worship of the only true God, who by his almighty power had made heaven and

the capital of the extensive province of Caramania, as it was formerly of Lyeaonia, and the seat of a Turkish beglerberg, or viceroy. It is the place of chief strength and importance in the central parts of Asiatic Turkey, being surrounded by a strong wall of four miles in circumference; but, as is the case with most Eastern cities, much of the enclosed space is waste. It is situated about 120 miles inland from the Mediterranean, on the lake Trogilis.—*Mansford*.—Ed.

^a That this was a common notion of the heathens is evident, not only from that passage in Homer,

Often the gods, disguised, at pleasure roam
From town to town like men without a home,
To judge the earth, and by experience prove
Who wrong commit, or right and justice love.

Odys. xvii. 485.

and that in Ovid,

A god I glide from high Olympus' top,
And o'er the earth I range in human guise.

but even from the testimony of their philosophers; and therefore we find Cicero endeavouring to prove, that the gods must be of human shape, because they never appeared in any other form. *De nat. deorum*.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^b The account which St Paul's enemies gave of him, is this,—‘his letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible,’ (2 Cor. x. 10.) His discourses indeed were not formed upon the plan of the Greek orators. The vain ornaments, which they were so fond of, as tending only to impair the strength and majesty of the truths which he taught, were by him held in great contempt; for ‘his speech and his preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but with demonstration of the Spirit and power,’ (1 Cor. ii. 4.) St Jerom, who finds some fault with his style, as to its harshness, and want of purity, does nevertheless declare, that, when he reads them every word seems like a clap of thunder, in *Catal. Scrip. Eccles.* And St Chrysostom, in his book de *Sacerdotio*, makes mention of the great admiration which his epistles had gained him both among Jews and Gentiles. No wonder then that the people of Lystra, upon hearing his strong and unaffected eloquence, should take him for Mercury, who according to the heathen notion was the constant companion of Jupiter, the teacher of men, and the interpreter of the gods.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^c These στίματα, which may be rendered crowns, or garlands, some think were to be put upon the heads of Paul and Barnabas, according to the heathen custom of crowning their gods; but it seems more likely, that they were to adorn the head and neck of the ox or heifer that was to be sacrificed; for so we read in Ovid: ‘A victim, free from blemish, and of most beautiful shape, being also adorned with fillets and gold, is placed before the altar.’

earth, and by his kind providence given all the blessings they enjoyed. But with all these arguments, it was as much as they could do to restrain them from sacrificing.

It was not long, however, before they turned to the other extreme: for some Jews, who had pursued the apostles from Antioch and Iconium, so far instigated the giddy multitude against them, that they took Paul, whom just before they would have adored, and stoned him, and then drew him out of the city, supposing him to be dead; but when the disciples came, probably to inter his body, he rose up and went into the city for that night; but the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe; where having preached the gospel, and converted many to the faith, they thence returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch; in which places, having confirmed the new converts in the belief and profession of Christianity, and, with fasting, and prayer, and imposition of hands, ordained governors in every church, they recommended them to the special protection of God, and so took their leave.

From Antioch they passed through Pisidia, and thence came to Pamphylia; and, having preached to the people at Perga, they went down to Attalia, ^d and from thence returned by sea to Antioch in Syria, whence they had set out about three years before, upon this holy expedition. Here they assembled the church together, ^e and, having given an account of their success, what miracles God had wrought by their hands, and what a large door of faith he, by their ministry, had opened to the Gentiles, they suspended their journeyings for the present, and, for some considerable time took up their abode among the disciples of this place.

While they continued here, some persons, coming from Judea, pretended to teach that there was no salvation without circumcision, ^f and the observance of the

^d Attalia, which takes its name from king Attalus, its founder, and, with a small variation, is still called Statalia, is a city of Pamphylia, which stands upon a fair bay, and is so commodiously seated for trade, that the Turks have preserved it from ruin, and, at this day, are very careful to keep its fortifications and castle in repair.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^e St Luke gives us no manner of an account of what passed in the church from St Paul's returning to Antioch in Syria, which was in the 46th, to his deputation to the council at Jerusalem, which was in the 51st year of Christ. How he spent this intermediate time, we cannot tell; but sure we are, that his zeal for the Christian cause would not permit him to be idle; and therefore, we may suppose, that this was the opportunity he took to preach the gospel, not only through the provinces adjacent to Antioch, but through several other places, where Christ had not been named, that he might not build upon another man's foundation; (Rom. xv. 20.) Himself in his second epistle to the Corinthians, acquaints us with many journeyings, and labours, and stripes, and imprisonments, that are not recorded in the book of Acts; particularly he tells us, that five times he had been scourged by the Jews, and three times beaten with rods by the Romans; that thrice he had suffered shipwreck, and a day and a night had been in the deep, tossed to and fro in the sea, upon some plank or broken piece of the ship, (2 Cor. xi. 23.) &c., and a proper time for these sad events to befall him we cannot assign, than where the sacred history has made a vacancy in his life.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^f Those who maintained this position were Jews, of the sect of the Pharisees, (Acts xv. 5.) converted to Christianity, but still too zealous for the observance of the law; and their coming immediately from Judea might make it the rather believed, that the necessity of circumcision, in order to salvation, was a tenet of the apostles'. It is to be observed, however, that the Jews themselves were of different opinions in this matter, even as to men's admission into their religion. For some of them would allow those of other nations, who owned the true God, and

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other legal ceremonies. Paul and Barnabas strongly opposed this doctrine; but, after many conferences and disputations, it was at length proposed, that the decision of the question should be referred to the general assembly of the apostles at Jerusalem. ^a This the whole church readily agreed to; and, having deputed Barnabas and Paul, together with some others of their body, to go with the message, they conducted them part of their way; and the two apostles, in passing through Phœnicia ^b and Samaria, took care to relate what success they had met with in the conversion of the Gentiles, to the great joy and comfort of all the brethren in those parts.

When they were come to Jerusalem, they first addressed themselves to Peter, James, and John, the pillars, and principal persons in that place; who received them very kindly; and perceiving, by the account which St Paul gave them, that the ¹ gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to him, as that of the circumcision was to Peter, they ratified it by compact and agreement, that Peter should preach to the Jews and Paul to the Gentiles; and, upon calling of the council, wherein Peter declared his sense of the insufficiency of all legal observances to save those who could expect salvation only through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; and wherein Paul and Barnabas gave an account of the wonders and miracles which God had enabled them to work in converting the Gentiles, it was finally determined by St James, as bishop of the place, and president of the council, that the Gentiles who were converted to Christianity should not be obliged to submit to the yoke of the law, but only abstain from fornication, ^c and from

1 Gal. ii. 7.

practised moral duties, to live quietly among them, and, even without circumcision, to be admitted into their religion; whilst others would admit of no such thing. Thus Josephus tells us, that when Izates, the son of Helen, queen of Adiabene, embraced the Jews' religion, Ananias, who converted him, declared, that he might do it without circumcision; but Eleazar, another eminent Jew, maintained, that it was great impiety, in such circumstances, to remain uncircumcised; and this difference of opinion continued among the Jewish converts after their embracing Christianity, some allowing Gentiles to become converts to Christianity, without submitting to circumcision and the Jewish law, whilst others contended, that without circumcision, and the observance of the law, their profession of the Christian faith would not save them.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^a St Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, lets us into a circumstance that is not recorded in the history of the Acts, viz. that he went up at this time to Jerusalem by revelation, chap. ii. 2. for, as the prophets and teachers at Antioch had before separated him and Barnabas, by revelation, to preach to some of the Gentiles, and they having fulfilled that work, returned to Antioch again, (Acts xiv. 26.) so it is probable, that by another revelation made to the same persons, they were sent up to Jerusalem, as being the fittest to convince those of a contrary persuasion, by declaring what God had wrought by them among the uncircumcised Gentiles, and his acceptance of them without circumcision, or the observance of the law of Moses.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^b This was a province of Syria, which, in the times of the New Testament, lay between the two rivers Eluthrus to the north, and Chersus, or the Kishon in Scripture, to the south. In the phrase of the gospel it is called the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, because these two towns stood in the southern part of it; and for its great skill in navigation, and the invention of letters, which, according to Herodotus, were brought thence by Cadmus into Greece, is justly celebrated by the ancients.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*, and *Whitby's Alphabetical Table*.

^c That we are absolutely obliged to abstain from fornication no good Christian can seriously make a matter of dispute; for

eating things offered to idols, things strangled, ^d and blood, ^e which, in the present circumstances of the church, were highly necessary. With this decree, which was drawn up in the form of an epistle, Paul and Barnabas were sent back to the church of Antioch; and with them the council joined Judas ^f and Silas, two eminent men of their own number, that, by their testimony of what was transacted at Jerusalem, the false teachers might be silenced, and the believing Gentiles confirmed in the truth. Being arrived at Antioch, they assembled the church, and presented the decretal epistle to them, in the presence of the whole congregation: which when they had read, the Gentile converts rejoiced greatly to find themselves discharged from the burden of the law, and confirmed in their Christian liberty, by an apostolic decree.

While they were in Antioch, Judas and Silas were not idle; but being both men of excellent gifts in the inter-

how favourably soever the Gentiles might look upon it, or how much soever it might obtain among the Jews, under the name of polygamy, nothing is more plain, than that fornication was accounted an heinous crime under the Old Testament, and that the wisest of the heathen world always esteemed chastity a virtue. However, since the greatest part of them acted as if they thought fornication a thing indifferent, and in many of their idolatrous festivals made lewdness a necessary and principal ingredient, it hence came to pass, that the council at Jerusalem thought proper to insert this prohibition in their decree.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^d The heathens of this age used the same arts to seduce the Christians, and bring them to their temples, that the Moabites had formerly done to corrupt the Israelites, calling and inviting them to eat of the sacrifices which they had offered to their gods. To this purpose our Saviour, in his letter to the church of Pergamus, makes mention of some who held 'the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols,' (Rev. ii. 14.) Great reason therefore had the council to forbid Christians this profane practice, because, as St Paul expresses his sense of the matter, 'we cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils,' (1 Cor. x. 21.) that is, it is highly unfit that Christians, who eat of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, should defile themselves with meats that have been sacrificed to what the Gentiles call gods, but are in reality no better than devils.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^e The Jews had so strong an aversion to blood, that they accounted all who made use of it in food as creatures sadly polluted, and gross transgressors even of the law of nature. The Gentiles, on the contrary, looked upon blood as the most delicious food of their gods, and thought that by eating of it they entered into a more intimate communion with them; and therefore the prohibition of it was necessary for these two reasons: 1st, that no offence might be given to the Jewish converts, who would be loath to converse, much more to join in any religious offices, with persons who indulged themselves in such meats as they detested; and, 2dly, that the Gentile converts might be in no danger of relapsing into idolatry, which they possibly might do, if a toleration to eat things offered to idols were still indulged them.—*Beausobre's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^f It is generally thought, that Judas, who is surnamed Barsabas, was the brother of Joses, or Joseph, who, together with Matthias, was proposed as a candidate for the apostleship, which Judas the traitor by his transgression had forfeited; and Silas is supposed to be the same person, that, under the name of Sylvanus, is mentioned in the title of both St Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians, and whom St Peter, in his first epistle, styles a faithful brother. St Luke says of them both, that 'they were chief men among the brethren,' (Acts xv. 22.) which gives us room to think, that they were of the number of the seventy, and might therefore be sent back with Paul and Barnabas, to carry the decision of the council to Antioch, because Paul and Barnabas, being strenuous assertors of the liberty of the gospel, might otherwise have been suspected by those of the contrary party, who maintained the necessity of circumcision.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

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pretation of the Scriptures, they employed their time in confirming believers in the truth of Christianity; and, after a short stay, were with all kindness and civility dismissed by the church in order to return to Jerusalem. But Silas, for some reasons, was unwilling to depart so soon, and chose rather to tarry with Paul and Barnabas, who, with several others of their fraternity, employed themselves in instructing those who had already received the Christian faith, and in preaching it to others, who had not yet embraced it, in this great and populous city.

It was not long after the determination of the council at Jerusalem that Peter came to Antioch; where, using the liberty which the gospel had given him, for some time he conversed familiarly with the Gentile converts, eating with them, and living in the same manner as they did. But when some Jewish Christians, still tenacious of the ceremonial law, came from Jerusalem, for fear of offending or displeasing them, he separated himself from the Gentile converts, and refused to eat with them; whereby he not only confirmed the Jews in their darling opinions, but filled the Gentiles likewise with new doubts and scruples. St Paul, who was not ignorant of what pernicious influence the example of so great an apostle might be, especially when he saw Barnabas carried away with the stream of his dissimulation, was not afraid, even in the face of the whole church, to reprove him sharply, for endeavouring to impose that yoke upon the Gentiles, which he, though a Jew, thought himself at liberty to shake off. But how St Peter received this reproof, we are no where told; and this indeed is the last time that we read of him in the history of the Acts.

It was not long after this that Paul and Barnabas resolved upon visiting the churches which they had lately planted among the Gentiles. To this end Barnabas proposed to take his cousin Mark with them; which Paul would by no means agree to, because he had deserted them in their former journey; so that, after a warm dispute on both sides, they separated ^a from each other; Barnabas, with his nephew, betook himself to Cyprus, which was his native country; and Paul, after he had been recommended to the blessing and assistance of God, by the prayers of the church, made choice of Silas for his companion in his intended visitation of the several places where he had propagated Christianity.

Parting from Antioch, he travelled over the provinces of Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, and leaving with them copies of the synodical decree which had lately passed in the council at Jerusalem. Thence, very probably, he sailed to Crete, ^b where he planted Christian-

^a From hence we may learn, not only that these great lights in the Christian church were men of the like passions with us, but that God, upon this occasion, did most eminently illustrate the wisdom of his providence, by rendering the frailties of two such eminent servants instrumental to the benefit of his church, since both of them thenceforward employed their extraordinary industry and zeal, singly and apart, which till then had been united and confined to the same place.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

^b This is one of the noblest isles in the whole Mediterranean sea, which had once an hundred considerable towns or cities in it, from whence it had the name of Hecatonpolis, and, for the goodness of the soil, and temper of the air, was likewise styled Macaricus, or Macarionessus, 'the happy island;' for though the inland parts of it are very mountainous, yet are they extremely fruitful, especially of vines, called the Muscadine; though not so productive of corn. At present it is commonly called Candia,

ity, and, having constituted Titus to be bishop of the place, left him there to regulate such matters as the shortness of his stay would not permit him to do. From Crete he returned to Cilicia, and came to Lystra, where he met with a young man, named Timothy, whose father was a Greek, ^c but his mother Eunice, from whom he had received all the advantages of a pious education, and an extraordinary skill in the sacred writings, was a Jewish convert. Him Paul designed to make the companion of his travels, and a special instrument in the ministry of the gospel: and, therefore, being willing, in indifferent matters, to accommodate himself to the humour of some particular men, he caused him to be circumcised, as knowing very well what a mighty prejudice the want of that rite would have been in the opinion and estimation of the Jews. ^d

From Lystra, Paul, with his companions, passed through Phrygia ^e and Galatia, in which country he was ^f

from its principal town, which bears that name; it is situated over against the mouth of the Ægean sea, or Archipelago; and while it continued in the hands of the Venetians, was an archbishop's see, great, rich, and populous; but since it came into the possession of the Turks, which was in the year 1669, it has lost all marks of its former happiness and grandeur.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.—See also *Scripture Gazetteer*, Edinr. 1837.—Ed.

^c The law of Moses, as Grotius understands it, forbade the Jewish males to marry with women of another religion; but did not forbid a Jewish woman to marry with a Gentile, even as Esther did with Ahasuerus, if so be he was a man of piety and moral honesty. To this purpose he observes, that Ezra, when he went about a reformation in this matter, made inquiry only into those males who had taken strange wives, (chap. ix. and x.) but none at all into the women who had taken strange husbands. It is certain, however, from Josephus, that, in his days, the Jews looked upon both these practices as contrary to the true interpretation of their law, and therefore he calls Drusilla's marriage with Felix a manifest contempt of it.—*Antiq. b. ii. c. 5.*; and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^d The reason is added by the historian, (Acts xvi. 3.) namely, that he might not offend the Jews, who concluded that Timothy was uncircumcised, because his father was a Greek, and who would not listen to the doctrine of any uncircumcised person. The decree in the preceding chapter only pronounced circumcision not to be necessary to the Gentile converts, but it might occasionally be expedient; and though Christians are freed from the yoke of the Mosaic law, St Paul conformed to it here, and (ch. xxi. 20.—26.) in order to conciliate the Jews, and to promote the success of his preaching, agreeably to the principles laid down in 1 Cor. ix. 19, &c. In other circumstances the apostle steadily resisted every attempt to impose the rites and ordinances of the Mosaic law, (Gal. ii. 3—5. v. 2.)—*Holden's Christian Expositor*.—Ed.

^e It is a province of Asia Minor, having Bithynia to the north, Galatia to the east, Lycia to the south, and Mysia to the west. The inhabitants of this country, who are said to have been the inventors of augury, and other kinds of divination, were anciently more superstitious than the other Asiatics; as appears from the rites which they used in the sacrifices of Cybele, and other heathen goddesses. They were noted for their effeminacy and lightness of conversation, as well as for their servile and stupid temper, which gave occasion to these proverbs, 'the Phrygians are long in getting wisdom,' and 'the Phrygians become better by stripes.'—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.—Phrygia was formerly governed by kings of its own, but it has successively been subjected by the Syrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Turks.—Ed.

^f It is a province of Asia Minor, bounded on the west by Phrygia, on the east by the river Halys, on the north by Paphlagonia, and on the south by Lycaonia. It took its name from Galate, or the Gauls, who under their captain Leonorius, as Strabo informs us, left their own country in Europe, and, having ranged over Italy and Greece, passed into the Asiatic continent, and brought a great part of it under their command; but being

A. M. 4055. A. D. 51, OR, A. M. 5462. A. D. 51, &c. FROM ACTS i. 10. TO THE END.

entertained with great kindness and veneration, ¹ as if he had been 'an angel sent from heaven;' and hence he intended to have continued his progress in the Proconsular Asia, but that, by a particular revelation, he was forbidden as yet to preach the gospel there. Being therefore come to Mysia, ^a and attempting in vain to go into Bithynia, ^b he came to Troas, ^c where he had a vision commanding him to direct his course for Macedonia, ^d and

¹ Gal. iv. 14.

broken by Attalus, king of Pergamus, and driven out of other parts, they were at last confined to this province; where, in a short time, they established their own language, which, as St. Jerome informs us, in his Commentaries on St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians, was in use in his time, and very much like that which the people of Triers or Treves, in the European Gaul, are known to speak.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table*, and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.—In this country stood the ancient city Troy, as also that of Pergamos, one of the seven churches of Asia. Under the Romans it was made a province, and called Hellespontus.—*Mansford*.—Ed.

^a It is a small province of Asia Minor, bounded on the north by Bithynia, on the east by Phrygia, on the west by Troas, and on the south by the river Hermus. It had its name very probably from the great quantity of beech-trees which grew there; but why its inhabitants came to be accounted base and contemptible, even to a proverb, as Tully, in his oration for Flaccus, has noted, we cannot tell.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table*, and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^b This was a country in the northern part of Asia Minor, bounded by the Euxine on the north, by the Thracian Bosphorus and the Propontis on the north-west and west, by Phrygia and Mysia on the south, and by the Sangarius river, now called *Sacaria*, and Paphlagonia, on the east. This country is filled with mountains covered with ship timber, and its valleys and plains are fruitful, particularly in oil. The places of importance in the province are Prusa, Nice, Nicomedia, Chalcedon, Libyssa, and Therma, two of which are celebrated in ecclesiastical history for the councils of the church held in them. Bithynia was anciently an independent kingdom, but no event of any importance occurs in its history except the treacherous conduct of one of its monarchs, named Prusias, who basely delivered the illustrious Hannibal to the Romans. His great-grandson, Nicomedes IV., was the last king. He died about seventy-five years before the Christian era, and bequeathed his kingdom to the Romans, who reduced it to a province. It now forms one of the districts of Turkish Anatolia, and is the nearest province to Turkey in Europe, being separated from it only by the very narrow strait of the Thracian Bosphorus opposite Constantinople, on which is situated the suburb called the Scutari, a short distance from Chalcedon, containing upwards of 30,000 inhabitants. A considerable proportion of the population of Bithynia belong to the Greek and Armenian churches. This country was anciently called *Bebrycia*. The *Bythini* from Thrace gave it the name of Bithynia.—*Scripture Gazetteer*, Edinburgh, 1837.

^c This was a small country belonging to Phrygia Minor, according to Strabo, and lying on the west of Mysia, upon the Hellespont. It took its name from its principal city, which was a sea-port, about four miles from the situation of old Troy, so famous in the works of Homer. This city was built by Lysimachus, one of Alexander's captains, who peopled it from the neighbouring places, and called it *Alexandria*, or *Troas Alexandri*, in honour of his master, who himself indeed began the work, but did not live to bring it to perfection; but in process of time, it lost that name, and both city and country was called *Troas* only.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table* and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^d This is a large province of Greece, bounded on the north by the mountains of Hemus, on the south by Epirus and Achaia, on the east by the Ægean sea, and on the west by the Æonian and Adriatic seas. Its ancient name was *Ennathia*; but, from the kings of Macedon it was afterwards called *Macedonia*; and became famous in all histories, as being the third kingdom, which, under Alexander the Great, obtained the empire of the world, and had no less than an hundred and fifty nations under its command.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table*.—The kingdom of Macedon continued till the year 168 B. C., when Perseus, the last king, was defeated by the Roman general Paulus Æmilius,

where St. Luke seems to have joined him, and, for ever after, to have been his inseparable companion.

Embarking therefore at Troas, they touched upon the island Samothracia, ^e and the next day landed at Neapolis, ^f a port in Macedonia, from whence they travelled a few miles to Philippi, ^g a Roman colony. A little distant ^h from the city, the Jews had a 'Proseuche,' or place of devotion, ⁱ whither the apostle and his company used

and his kingdom made a province of the Roman empire; in which state it was in the time of the apostles, when St. Paul was called by a vision to visit it, (Acts xvi. 9.) Thessalonica was then the capital city; but the province appears to have been further sub-divided into four parts or sections, each with its chief city or capital.—*Mansford*.—Ed.

^e It is a small island in the Ægean sea, lying west from Troas, over against the coast of Thrace, from whence it has its name, to distinguish it from the isle of Samos, situated over against Ionia. At present it is called *Samandrachia*, and is said to have more commodious harbours than any other island in this sea.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^f This sea-port, which stood very near to Thrace, belonged at first to that province, but was afterwards taken into Macedonia.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^g Philippi was a city of Macedonia, on the Ægean Sea; and as it is situated east of the River Strymon, it is included in the division which anciently belonged to Thrace. In Acts xvi. 11, 12. Luke says, 'We came to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony,'—a passage which has given much embarrassment to critics and commentators; Thessalonica being the capital of Macedonia. Mr. Milner supposes the word *Πρωτη* to apply to the situation of the city; being the first which St. Paul arrived at in his way from Neapolis. But Mr. Horne gives a different and more satisfactory interpretation of the above passage; which he says, is more correctly rendered thus: 'Philippi, a city of the first part of Macedonia,' or of 'Macedonia Prima.' It is well known that Macedonia underwent various changes under the Roman government; and more particularly appears to have been divided into four parts or sections, under the name of first, second, third, and fourth. In proof of which, medals have been found, chiefly of silver, and bearing this inscription: *ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΩΝ ΠΡΩΤΗΣ*, or the first part of Macedonia. (See *Fragments to Calmet's Dictionary*.) Medals have also been found of Macedonia Secunda, (see *Calmet*;) and Quarta, (see *Wielhamer*, *Animadversiones in Nummos*;) but not of the third; though its existence is of course sufficiently implied. Thus have the researches of the antiquary converted this apparent difficulty into an evidence both of the extreme accuracy of St. Luke, and of the time in which he lived and wrote. St. Luke further says that Philippi was a colony; to express which he used the word *κλωνα*, derived from the Latin *colonia*, instead of the corresponding Greek word *αποικια*, another proof of his accuracy; for although we have no historical account of the colonization of this place by the Romans, the discovery of ancient medals again assists us, particularly one which explicitly states that Julius Cæsar bestowed the dignity and privileges of a colony on the city of Philippi, which were afterwards confirmed by Augustus. Philippi has a peculiar claim to our attention, as it was the first city on the shores of Europe in which the gospel was preached. Philippi was anciently called *Datus*, but received its new name from Philip, the father of Alexander; who fortified it, and made it a frontier town against the Thracians. It is celebrated in profane history for two important battles fought in its vicinity: the one, between Cæsar and Pompey; and the other, between Marc Antony and Augustus, on the one side, and Brutus and Cassius on the other.—*Mansford's Scripture Gazetteer*.

^h Because the laws, very probably, would not permit them to exercise a strange religion within the city.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

ⁱ The Jewish proseuchai were places of prayer, in some circumstances similar to, in others different from their synagogues: the latter were generally in cities, and were covered places, (Stehelin's *Traditions of the Jews*, vol. ii. p. 246.) Whereas for the most part the proseuchai were out of the cities, on the banks of rivers, having no covering, except perhaps the shade of some trees, or covered galleries. Their vicinity to water was for the

A. M. 4056. A. D. 52; OR, A. M. 5463. A. D. 52, &c. FROM ACTS I. 10. TO THE END.

to resort, for the exercise of their religion, and the preaching of the gospel to such as frequented the place. Here they found several devout women; and, among others, one named Lydia, a dealer in purple; whom when they had converted, they baptized, as likewise her whole family; and she in return gave them an invitation to lodge at her house, during the time of their abode in that city.

As they were going to this place of devotion, they were frequently followed by a maid-servant, who being actuated by a spirit of divination, ^a proclaimed them to be, ^{as} indeed they were, the ^b servants of the most high God, and preachers of the way to salvation. But Paul, well knowing that the Christian religion needed not the testimony of Satan to confirm it, commanded the demon, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. The demon was forced to obey; but immediately raised a storm against the apostles. For, when the masters of the maid saw, that, by this miracle, all their prospect of future gain from her divinations was gone, they apprehended Paul and Silas, and having brought them before the magistrates, to them they insinuated, that as they were Jews, ^c there was reason to believe that they

convenience of these frequent washings and ablutions which were introduced among them.—*Vide Lardner's Credibility of Gospel History*, vol. i. c. 3. and *Prideaux's Connection*, vol. i. part i. b. vi. p. 387.—Ed.

^a 'A certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination,' Greek, 'having a spirit of Python,'—*πνευμα πυθωνος*. *Πύθων* was properly an appellation of Apollo. But, as he was the God of divination, it came to be applied to soothsayers, conjurors, and those who pretended to evoke spirits. Now as ventriloquism was a most useful art to persons of that profession, they generally acquired more or less of it: hence the word is sometimes explained to mean ventriloquist in the Greek lexicographers. Now whether this girl was a ventriloquist, has been much debated; but the negative is the view adopted, and I think rightly, by the most eminent commentators. (See Deyling, Wolf, and Kuin.) There is no sufficient reason to suppose so from the name, and still less from the circumstances. This is closely connected with another, and more important question,—'whether she was a pretender to the gift of divination.' This also has been by Deyling, Wolf, and Biscoe, decided in the negative. There is somewhat to countenance the opinion of certain eminent recent commentators, that she was a lunatic, who, like Joanna Southcote, fancied that she was inspired to foretell future events. See *Rec. Syn. and Townsend* in loc., in his Dissertation on the nature of the Spirit of Divination in the Pythoness; whence it will appear that this notion involves insuperable difficulties, being inconsistent with the view taken by the sacred writer; which requires us to suppose, as the ancient, and most modern commentators have done, that the girl was 'possessed with an evil spirit,' which enabled her occasionally to foretell future events.—*Bloomfield's Greek Testament*.

^b Why she did this, or under what pretence, the sacred writer has not informed us. Various conjectures have been formed of the reason why this was done. It may have been, (1.) That as she prophesied for gain, she supposed that Paul and Silas would reward her if she publicly proclaimed that they were the servants of God. Or, (2.) Because she was conscious that an evil spirit possessed her, and that she feared that Paul and Silas would expel that spirit; and that by proclaiming them to be the servants of God, she hoped to conciliate their favour. Or, (3.) More probably, it was because she saw evident tokens of their being sent from God, and that their doctrine would prevail; and by proclaiming this she hoped to acquire more authority, and a higher reputation for being herself inspired. *Comp. Mark v. 7.—Barnes on the Acts*.—Ed.

^c At the first appearance of the Christian religion, the Gentiles looked upon it as no other than a particular sect, or reformation of Judaism; because at that time, those who professed it, were descended from the same stock, born in the same country, observed in the main the same laws, adored the same God, and re-

intended to introduce a religion and form of worship contrary to the law of the Roman empire. Upon this slight occasion, the magistrates ordered them, though unconvicted, to be scourged; ^d and, having committed them to close prison, gave the jailor-strict charge to keep them safe; who thereupon thrust them into the inner dungeon, and made their feet fast in the stocks, ^e but in vain was all his contrivance. While the apostles, at midnight, were singing hymns and praises to God, an earthquake suddenly shook the foundations of the prison, the doors flew open, and their chains fell off. The jailor, awakened at the noise, and supposing that the prisoners had made their escape, drew his sword, ^f with an intent to kill himself; but being assured by St Paul to the contrary, he came trembling in; and, having taken the two apostles home to his own house, he washed their wounds, entertained them courteously, and gave such evident proof of his faith and repentance, as not only to be baptized himself, but to make his whole family likewise become proselytes to this persecuted religion.

The magistrates next morning reflecting upon what they had done, would have dismissed the apostles privately: but the apostles refused to accept of their discharge, alleging, that they were not only innocent persons, but denizens ^g of Rome; that as they had been

ceived the same scriptures. This was enough to denominate them Jews. And accordingly Suetonius, in his life of Claudius, c. 25. tells us, that the emperor banished all the Jews out of Rome, because they were always raising tumults at the instigation of one Chrestus; for so he calls our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And, in like manner, the people of Philippi, to make Paul and Silas more odious to the magistrates, did not stick to acquaint them, that they were Jews, and intended some innovations in religion. For though, as yet, there was no express edict against Christians, yet there was an old law of the Romans, which required them to worship the gods of their own country only, (Tully, *De leg. b. ii.*) And yet Christianity dissuaded them from this: 'for we preach unto you,' says St Paul, 'that ye should turn from these vanities to the living God, who made heaven and earth,' (Acts xiv. 15.)—*Calnet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^d It was usual for the Roman magistrates to command the lictors to rend open the clothes of the criminal, that he might the more easily be beaten with rods. No care was taken of the garments on these occasions, but they were suddenly and with violence rent open. Wetstein, among other instances, cites from Plutarch in *Publ. p. 99*: 'But the lictors immediately taking the young men, tore off their clothes, and beat their bodies with rods or twigs.' Thus were Paul and Silas treated in this instance.—Ed.

^e It is generally supposed that these were the cippi, or large pieces of wood used by the Romans, which not only loaded the legs of prisoners, but sometimes distended them in a very painful manner; so that it is highly probable the situation of Paul and Silas here might be made more painful than that of an offender sitting in the stocks, as used among us, especially if (as is very possible), they lay with their bare back, so lately scourged, on the hard or dirty ground; which renders their joyful frame, expressed by songs of praise, so much the more remarkable. Beza explains it of the numelle, in which both the feet and the neck were fastened, in the most uneasy posture that can well be imagined.—*Doddridge in loc.*—Ed.

^f Every jailor was made responsible for his prisoner, under the same penalty to which the prisoner himself was exposed. The jailor, awakening, and finding the prison-doors open, taking it for granted that all the prisoners had made their escape, and that he must lose his life on the account, chose rather to die by his own hand than by that of others. For it was customary among the heathens, when they found death inevitable, to take away their own lives. This custom was applauded by their philosophers, and sanctioned by some of their greatest men.—*Dr A. Clarke*.—Ed.

^g Silas might likewise be a Roman citizen; but, as St Paul

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illegally scourged and committed, their delivery should be as public as was the injury, and attended with a solemn retraction of what they had done. The magistrates, when they heard that they insisted on their privileges, were not a little afraid; and therefore repairing to the prison, with all submission, desired them to leave the city; which the apostles, after some conference with the converts in Lydia's house, were not averse to do.

From Philippi, Paul and his companions, passing through Amphipolis,^a and Apollonia,^b came to Thessalonica,^c the metropolis of Macedonia, where he disputed

was undoubtedly one, this was enough to justify the language which he uses. The only dispute is, how he came by this privilege? And to this some reply, that the city where he was born, for its faithful adherence to Julius Cæsar, was by him made a Roman colony, and all its inhabitants admitted to the usual rights and immunities of Romans. Others contend, that though Tarsus might, at that time, be made a free town; yet it was never a Roman colony, until the reign either of Caracalla or Heliogabalus; and that therefore the right of a Roman citizen was not common to all the people of the place, but only to some particular persons who might purchase it, as a title of honour, for them and their heirs for ever; of whom they suppose St Paul's father to be one; and that, upon this foundation, his son might very properly say that he was born free. However this be, it is certain, that the quality of a Roman citizen was highly esteemed, especially in all Roman colonies, whereof Philippi was one. Every injury offered to such a one was looked upon as an affront against the majesty of the whole people of Rome; to bind him was a violation of the law, and much more to have him beaten; but to be scourged and bound, without being first legally heard and tried, was not only against the Roman, but against the laws of all nations; and the more public any such injury is, the greater is its aggravation, and the more solemn should its reparation be.—*Beausobre's Annotations, Calmet's Commentary, and Cave's Lives of the Apostles.*

^a Amphipolis, called in modern times Crisopoli, and situated in European Turkey, was a city of ancient Macedonia or Thrace, and subject to the Macedonian kings. It stood on the banks of the river Strymon, which nearly surrounded it, in the immediate vicinity of 'Evnia' Odoi, or the 'nine ways,' a spot so called from a number of roads which met there from different parts of Thrace. It was built by Cimon the Athenian about 470 years before the Christian era, and peopled with upwards of 10,000 Athenians, who settled there. This city was a source of great annoyance to Philip, king of Macedonia, who drove the Athenians from it, and allowed the citizens to form a republic. It was afterwards taken by Brasidas, the Lacedæmonian general, but Philip again recovered it. The Athenians, nevertheless, always considered Amphipolis as belonging to them, and Philip promised to restore it to them, when it was finally ceded to him by a treaty of peace. The spot on which the ruins of Amphipolis are still to be traced, is called Jenikevi. 'The position of Amphipolis,' observes Colonel Leake, 'is one of the most important in Greece. It stands in a pass which traverses the mountains bordering the Strymonic Gulf, and it commands the only easy communication from the coast of that Gulf into the great Macedonian plains, which extend for sixty miles from beyond Meleniko to Philippi.' There is a miserable place near it called Emboli by the Turks.—*Scripture Gazetteer*.—Ed.

^b This is another city of Macedonia, lying between Amphipolis and Thessalonica.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table*.

^c A large and populous city and seaport of Macedonia, the capital of one of the four districts into which the Romans divided that country after its conquest by Paulus Æmilius. It was situated on the Therian bay, and was anciently called Therme; but, being rebuilt by Philip the father of Alexander, after his victory over the Thessalians, it then received the name of Thessalonica. At the time of writing the epistle to the Thessalonians, Thessalonica was the residence of the proconsul who governed the province of Macedonia, and of the quaestor who had the charge of the imperial revenues. Besides being the seat of government, this port carried on an extensive commerce, which caused a great influx of strangers from all quarters; so that Thessalonica was remarkable for the number, wealth, and learning of its inhabitants. The Jews were extremely numerous

in the synagogues of the Jews three sabbath-days successively, proving, from the predictions of the Old Testament, that the Messiah was to suffer, and rise again, and that the blessed Jesus was this Messiah. Great numbers, especially of religious proselytes, and several women of the better rank and quality, were converted at his preaching: but the unbelieving Jews raised a tumult in the city, and went to the house of Jason,^d where St Paul lodged; but not finding him there, they seized Jason, and carried him before the magistrates, where they accused him of harbouring in his house persons disaffected to the Roman government, and who set up one Jesus in opposition to Cæsar. He however, upon security for his good behaviour, was dismissed; and Paul and Silas, for fear of greater disturbances, were, by the brethren, conveyed next night to Berea.^e Here they found the people in a better disposition to entertain the Christian doctrine, but yet not willing to take it merely upon the apostles' word, until they had examined the scriptures, and found that their preaching agreed very well with the characters therein delivered of the Messiah; and then great numbers, both of men and women of distinction, were converted; but the Jews of Thessalonica, hearing of their success, came down to Berea, and there raised such disturbances, that the brethren thought proper to send Paul privately away to Athens,^f while Silas and Timothy continued some time in the place to confirm the new believers, but, after that, had orders to follow him as soon as possible.

While Paul waited for his company at Athens, he went about several parts of the city, to see the rarities of it, and wherever he came, found abundance of superstition ^g and ignorant zeal, even for deities that themselves

here. The modern name of this place is Salonichi; it is the chief port of modern Greece, and has a population of sixty thousand persons, twelve thousand of whom are Jews. According to Dr Clarke, who has given a very interesting account of the antiquities, present state, and commerce of Thessalonica, this place is the same now it was then; a set of turbulent Jews constituted a very principal part of its population: and, when St Paul came hither from Philippi, where the gospel was first preached, to communicate the 'glad tidings' to the Thessalonians, the Jews were sufficient in number to 'set all the city in an uproar.'—*Horne's Introduction*.

^d The Greeks say, that he was afterwards made bishop of Tarsus in Cilicia.

^e This was likewise another great and populous city of Macedonia, lying to the south of Thessalonica, and almost directly in the way of Athens.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^f This was one of the most renowned cities in the world, situated on the gulf of the Ægean sea, which comes up to the isthmus of the Peloponnesus, or Morea, in that district of Greece properly so called, which was named Attica, and was the parent of that dialect which is esteemed the purest and finest Greek. The city itself was the great seat of arts and sciences, and as Cicero will have it, the fountain whence civility, learning, religion, and laws, were derived to all other nations; so universally flocked to by those that had the least kindness for the muses and good manners, that he who had not seen Athens was accounted a block; he who having seen it, and not in love with it, a dull stupid ass; and he, who, after he had seen it could be willing to leave it, fit for nothing but to be a pack-horse.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament and Cave's Lives of the Apostles*. Our space will not permit us to insert a lengthened account of Athens here; but the inquiring reader may consult Mansford and Scripture Gazetteer, Edinburgh, 1837.—Ed.

^g Several of their own writers have made their remark, that Athens had greater numbers of deities and idols than all Greece besides; and Strabo, in particular, notes, that the Athenians were not more fond of strangers than forward to comply with any

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knew nothing of. This therefore he esteemed no improper place and time for him to apply himself to the discharge of his great work; and accordingly, he not only disputed with the Jews and proselytes in the synagogues every sabbath-day, but took all opportunities, wherever he met with a convenient auditory, and this he seldom missed of in the public forum, where people of all sorts daily resorted to hear and tell news, which was the great business of their lives, to instruct them in the coming of the Messiah, and in the doctrine of a resurrection and a future state.

Athens was, at this time, the great academy of the Roman empire, and abounded with philosophers of all sects; but those which St Paul had chiefly to deal with were the Epicureans ^a and the Stoics, who treated him with a great deal of scorn and contempt; while others looked upon him as a setter-up of new gods, supposing Jesus, and Anastasis, or the resurrection which he preached, to be two new unheard-of deities, and therefore brought him before their famous senate at Areopagus. ^b Here, in a most excellent discourse, he endeavoured

to convince them of their present errors and delusions, and to inform them who that true God was, whom they, under false notions, blindly worshipped. 'The deity to whom they had dedicated an altar, under the title of 'the unknown God,' ^c was no other, he told them, than the great God; the creator of all things, the supreme governor and ruler of the world; that, as he was infinite in all perfections, it was not to be supposed that he could be confined within any temple or human fabric, that any image could be made to represent him, or that he could stand in need of their gifts or sacrifices, who is the sole fountain of all the blessings they enjoyed; that it was entirely from him that they had either life, motion, or existence, as one of their own poets, ^d by calling them his offspring, acknowledged; and therefore incongruous it was to think, that their creator could be the work of their hands, as every image of gold, silver, or stone was; that though his divine patience had for a long time borne with men's blind idolatries, yet now he expected a general repentance and reformation from the

novelties in religion, and ready to entertain any foreign deities and rites of worship.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles.*

^a The Epicureans were practically Atheists,—since they held that the world was neither created by God, nor under the direction of his providence. Pleasure they accounted the *summum bonum*, and virtue to be practised only for the sake of pleasure, not for its own sake. They maintained that the soul was material, like the body, and would perish with it, leaving nothing to be either hoped or feared after death. As to the Stoics, they did, indeed, believe in the existence of a God, but held such chimerical notions of his nature, attributes, and providence, as rendered that belief almost nugatory. They maintained, that both God and man were bound by a *necessitas fatalis*; that the wise man yielded in no respect to God; of whom they believed that his nature was fire, and diffused throughout the world. On the condition of the soul after death, and on the existence of a state of rewards and punishments, they varied in opinion; but all denied the immortality of a future state. Nay, some thought that, sooner or later, the soul merged in the celestial fire of the Deity. Thus while the former denied the existence, or at least providence, of God; the latter, though professing to believe both,—yet, by ascribing all human events to fate, destroyed the foundation of all religion as much as the former. It is obvious that both the above systems were as far as possible removed from the doctrines of Christianity; and therefore it is no wonder that the latter should have been both unaccountable and unacceptable to these philosophers. There were, besides, two other sects, the Platonists, and the Peripatetics, the latter of whom probably came not near Paul, since their places of discussion were far removed. The opinions of the former made far nearer approaches than those of the other sects to the doctrines of Christianity; and these probably formed the far greater part of those who gave a qualified approbation of Paul's doctrines, by proposing to 'hear him again,' on the subject of the immortality of the soul.—*Bloomfield's Gr. Test.*—Ed.

^b This was a place in Athens, where the senate usually assembled; and took its name, as some think, from *Æens*, which is the same as Mars, the god of war, who was the first person that was judged here for having killed Apollo's son. But, as *Æens* does sometimes signify fighting, murder, or violence of any kind, and *παγος* is properly a rock, or rising hill, it therefore seems to denote a court situated upon an eminence, as the Areopagus was, where causes of murder, &c. were tried. This court, at present, is out of the city, but in former times it stood almost in the middle of it. Its foundations, which are still standing, are built with square stones of a prodigious size, in the form of a semicircle, and support a terrace, or platform, of about an hundred and forty paces, which was the court where this senate was held. In the midst of it there was a tribunal cut in a rock, and all about were seats, cut likewise in stone, where the senate heard causes in the open air, without any covering, and, as some say, in the night-time, that they might not be moved to com-

passion at the sight of any criminal that was brought before them. For this judicature was so famous for its uprightness, and held by all in such esteem and veneration, that when the Romans had conquered Greece, and sent their procursors to rule there, it was no uncommon thing for them to refer difficult causes to the judgment of the Areopagites. After the loss of their liberty, however, the authority of this senate, which used before to determine in all causes both civil and religious, declined apace; so that, in our apostle's time, the Areopagus was not so much a court of judicature, as a common rendezvous, where all curious and inquisitive persons who spent their time in nothing else, but either in hearing, or telling some new thing, were accustomed to meet, (Acts xvii. 21.) But though their power, in other matters, was greatly impaired; yet they seem still to have retained the privilege of canonizing all gods that were allowed public worship; and therefore St Paul was brought before them as an assertor and preacher of such a deity as they had not yet admitted among them.—*Calmet's Commentary, Beausobre's and Hammond's Annotations.*

^c That the Athenians, in their public places, had altars without any names on them, and others inscribed to unknown gods, or demons, is evident from the testimony of Laërtius, who informs us, that when a great plague raged at Athens, and several means had been attempted for the removal of it, they were advised by Epimenides, the philosopher, to build an altar, and dedicate it, *τῷ ἀγνωστῷ θεῷ*, 'to the proper and peculiar God,' to whom sacrifices were due. In Vita Epimen. (b. 11.) And the Athenians, as Chrysostom supposes, not knowing by what name to call him, erected an altar with this inscription, ΘΕΟΙΣ ΑΣΙΑΣ, ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΩΠΗΣ, ΚΑΙ ΑΙΘΙΩΣ; ΘΕῷ ΑΓΝΩΣΤῷ ΚΑΙ ΞΕΝῷ. 'To the gods of Asia, Europe and Africa; to the strange and unknown God;' whereby, as some imagine, the Athenians intended the God of the Jews, who had given such wonderful deliverances to his own people. Nor is this conjecture unreasonable, considering that the writings of Plato, Pythagoras, and many others, are a plain proof, that the scriptures had been read by their philosophers, though not being able to comprehend his divine nature and attributes, they might call him the unknown God, in conformity perhaps to the Hebrews themselves, who held the name of their God in great secrecy and veneration, and, from the mouth of the prophet, had received it as one of his distinguished titles, 'Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour, (Isa. xlv. 15).—*Hammond's Annotations, and Cave's Lives of the Apostles.*—See an able note on this subject in *Bloomfield's Greek Test.* Acts xvii. 23.—Ed.

^d The poet whom St Paul means was Aratus, born in Cilicia, and consequently his countryman; and what he attributes to Jupiter, the apostle applies to the true God: 'we are his offspring.' This indeed was no argument to the Epicurean auditors, who held the poets in great contempt, because on all occasions they introduced the gods and taught the separate existence of human souls; but it was of great weight to the common people, who paid a mighty veneration to the poets, from whose

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world; especially since, by the publication of the gospel, he had fully evinced a future judgment, had appointed the holy Jesus to administer that judgment, and given us sufficient assurance of such his appointment, by having raised him from the dead.⁷ But no sooner had he mentioned the resurrection, than some of the philosophers^a mocked and derided him, whilst others^b expressed their desire to hear him upon the same subject another time: and the good effect of his discourse was, that it converted several of the best rank and quality, among whom was Dionysius, ^c one of the senators of the Areopagus, and Damaris, whom the ancients, not improbably, account his wife.

From Athens St Paul departed to Corinth, ^d where he

works some of the greatest philosophers then living were wont to borrow citations, thereby to confirm and adorn their discourses. To the honour of human learning, therefore, we may observe, that in the New Testament, the Holy Ghost is pleased three several times to make mention of the heathen poets; of Aratus here, (Acts xvii. 2, 8.) of Menander, (1 Cor. xv. 33.) and of Epimenides.—*Beausobre's* and *Burkitt's Annotations*, and *Bentley's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures*.

^a These were the Epicureans, who believed no resurrection, no immortality of the soul, nor any future judgment, which St Paul here asserts.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^b These were the Stoics, who maintained a conflagration and reviviscence of the world; held that souls might live long, though not always, in another state; and allowed something of future recompences, though with great fluctuation.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^c The name of Dionysius the Areopagite became very celebrated in after ages; but it was principally in consequence of some voluminous writings, which have been quoted as written by him, but which are undoubtedly spurious, and were perhaps composed as late as the fourth century. Little or nothing is known authentically of Dionysius, except the brief notice of him which is found in the Acts of the Apostles; but a bishop of Corinth, who lived within a hundred years of this time, speaks of him as having been the first bishop of Athens: from which we may safely conclude that the Athenian Christians were committed to his care. The church of Athens continued to flourish for a long time, and we know the names of some of its bishops in the second century; so that there may have been good reasons for the memory of Dionysius being held in such esteem. Paul does not appear to have resided long at Athens: but, while he was at Corinth, he was at no great distance off; and the Athenian converts may have had the benefit of his counsel, if he did not occasionally visit them in person.—*Burton's History of the Church*.—Ed.

^d Corinth was a large and wealthy city of Greece, the metropolis of Achaia, and seated on the isthmus of the same name which joins the Morea to the continent. Its favourable situation gave rise to the cultivation of trade by the inhabitants; from which they acquired great wealth. It was destroyed in the year 146 B. C. by the Romans; when, during the conflagration, various metals in a fused state accidentally running together, gave rise to the composition called Æs Corinthium, or Corinthian brass. It was, however, rebuilt a hundred years after by Julius Cæsar; who planted a Roman colony there, and made it the residence of the pro-consul of Achaia. Like all other cities advantageously situated for trade, it soon regained its former prosperity; and as science and the arts generally follow in the train of commercial wealth, here were many celebrated artists and philosophers: whence the address of St Paul to them, 'Ye are rich, ye are wise and honourable.' The order of architecture chiefly used in this city, gave the name of Corinthian to that style so called. The manners of the citizens were particularly corrupt: they were indeed infamous to a proverb. The Isthmian Games were held in the vicinity of the city; which gave occasion to the allusion of St Paul, in the ninth chapter of his first epistle. In the centre of the city also was a celebrated temple of Venus, a part of whose worship consisted in prostitution: an example which gave the Corinthians very lax ideas on the illicit intercourse of the sexes. Corinth also possessed numerous schools of philosophy and rhetoric; in which, as at Alexandria,

found a certain Jew, named Aquila, ^e lately come from Italy, with Priscilla his wife, because the emperor Claudius, towards the latter end of his reign, had made an edict ^f to banish all the Jews from Rome; and, having instructed them in the Christian faith, he took up his lodgings, and wrought with them, for they by profession were tent-makers ^g as well as himself, and every sabbath-day he preached in the synagogues, labouring to convince both Jews and Greeks, that Jesus was the true Messias.

Before Paul departed from Athens, Timothy, according to his request, came to him from Berea, and brought him an account, ¹ that the new Christians at Thessalonica had been under great persecution ever since he left them. This obliged Paul to send him back again into Macedonia, in order to establish and comfort the brethren under their afflictions; which when Timothy had done, he took Silas along with him, and returned from Thessalonica with the joyful news of the steadfast adherence to the truth which that church had shown in all its distresses. This was a matter of no small consolation to the apostle; who thereupon wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians; ² 'wherein he highly applauds their courage and zeal, in the belief of the Christian religion, and exhorts them to a noble constancy and perseverance amidst their afflictions: wherein he commends their

¹ 1 Thes. iii. 1, &c.

Ibid. passim.

the purity of the faith, by an easy and natural process, became early corrupted. Corinth is now in a most ruinous state, consisting only of a few wretched huts. The situation is also said to be extremely unhealthy.—*Mansford*.—See *Edinr. Scrip. Gaz. Art. Athens*.—Ed.

^e Aquila was a native of Pontus, in Asia Minor, and, together with his wife Priscilla, who is sometimes called Prisca, was made a convert to the Christian religion by St Paul at Antioch. When the apostle left that city, in order to return to Jerusalem, these two persons accompanied him as far as Ephesus, where he left them for some time to preach the gospel, and, by their example and instruction, to confirm the faithful in that church. Here it was, that they did him singular service, and for his life laid down their own necks, as himself acknowledges, (Rom. xvi. 4.) When he wrote his epistle to the Romans, they were returned to Rome, because he therein salutes them with great commendations; but when he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, they were come back to Ephesus; because in it he desires him to salute them in his name, (2 Tim. iv. 19.) What became of them after this, we have no certain account, but it is supposed, that they continued at Ephesus until the time of their death, which, according to the Roman martyrologies, is set down on the eighth of July.—*Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary*.

^f Suetonius in his life of Claudius, makes the occasion of this decree to have been the tumults which the Jews, or Christians, who went under the notion of Jews, were perpetually fomenting in Rome. But as we find nothing of this in any other historian, it is rather supposed that this severity proceeded from the behaviour of some thieves in Judea, who had assaulted a servant of the emperor's, named Stephen, taken from him the imperial baggage, and killed the Roman troops that were appointed to guard it; as both Tacitus, in his Annals, b. xii. and Josephus, in his History of the Jewish Wars, b. ii. have informed us.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^g It was a received custom among the Jews, for every man, of what rank or quality soever, to learn some handicraft; for one of their proverbial expressions is, that 'whoever teaches not his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief.' and in those hot countries, where tents, which were commonly made of skins, or leather, sewed together, to keep out the violence of the weather, were used, not only by soldiers, but by travellers, and others, whose business required them to be abroad, a tent-maker was no mean or unprofitable employ.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, and *Poole's Annotations*.

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charity to the believers of Macedonia, and gives them many instructions concerning a good life and conversation : wherein he exhorts them to the practice of all purity and holiness, especially in the use of the marriage-bed ; to avoid idleness ; to be diligent in their callings, and not immoderate in their grief for the dead ; and wherein he instructs them in the doctrine of the resurrection, the manner of Christ's coming to judgment, and the obligation all were under to make a timely preparation for it.^a

Upon the accession of Timothy and Silas, St Paul preached the doctrine of Christ with fresh ardour to the Jews ; but when he perceived, that instead of attending to it, they only opposed it with blasphemous and opprobrious language, he openly declared his rejection of them, and purpose of applying himself to the Gentiles.^a However, before he did this, some persons of distinction among them, such as Crispus,^b the chief ruler of the synagogue, and Stephanus and Gaius, together with their whole families, had embraced the doctrine of the gospel, and were baptized into the Christian faith. Among the Gentiles he made a multitude of converts ; and, by a vision from heaven, being encouraged to proceed in his ministry with boldness, under the divine protection, and in certain hopes of success, he there continued for the space of one whole year and six months.

During his stay in this place, the Jews made a general insurrection against him, and brought him before Gallio,^c who at that time was proconsul of Achaia, accusing him of attempting to introduce a new religion, contrary to what was established by the Jewish law, and permitted by the Roman powers. But as Gallio apprehended that this was a controversy, which fell not under the cognisance of the civil judicature, he would have no concern in it, and therefore ordered his officers to drive them out of the court. Whereupon the common people took Sosthenes,^d a ruler of the synagogue, and one of St Paul's chief accusers, and beat him publicly be-

^a His words are, 'from henceforth I will turn to the Gentiles,' (Acts xviii. 6.) and these at first sight seem to be a declaration, that he would leave off preaching to the Jews, wherever he came, and wholly apply himself to the conversion of the Gentiles ; but by comparing his actions with the places where this phrase, or something like it, does occur, it appears, that he only intended to say, he would no longer preach to the Jews of that place ; for after this is said, we find him still entering into the synagogues, and preaching to the Jews, and calling upon them to hear the word, (Acts xv. 8. and xxviii. 23, &c.)—*Whitby's Annotations.*

^b Crispus is said to have been made by St Paul bishop of Ægina, an island near Athens ; and Origen makes mention of one Gaius, a disciple of St Paul, who by him was appointed bishop of Thessalonica ; but of Stephanus we have no other account than what we learn from the Acts of the Apostles.—*Calmet's Dictionary.*

^c The name of this proconsul was once Marcus Annæus Novatus, but being adopted by Lucius Junius Gallio, he took the name of his adoptive father, and was brother to the famous Seneca, tutor to Nero. To him it is that that philosopher dedicates his book *De vita beata* ; and of him the Roman historians give us the character, that he was a man of sweet temper and disposition, an enemy to all vice, and particularly a hater of flattery. He was twice made proconsul of Achaia ; first by Claudius, and afterwards by Nero ; but as he partook of his brother's prosperity when he was in favour at court, so was he a sharer in his misfortunes when he fell under Nero's displeasure, and at length was put to death by the tyrant, as well as his brother.—*Calmet's Commentary, Poole's and Beausobre's Annotations.*

^d Crispus, we read, was ruler of the synagogue at Corinth ; and therefore we may suppose, either that there were more synagogues in that city than one, or that there might be several rulers in one and the same synagogue ; or that Crispus, after his

fore the tribunal. But this gave the proconsul no disturbance.

After this tumult was over, St Paul continued some time in Corinth, and, before his departure thence, wrote his second epistle to the Thessalonians :¹ 'Wherein he endeavours to confirm their minds in the faith, and to animate them courageously to endure persecution from the unbelieving Jews, a lost and undone race of men, whom the divine vengeance was ready to overtake : wherein he rectifies the misinterpretation which false teachers had made of some passages in his former epistle, relating to the day of judgment, as if it were just at hand ; and shows what events, especially that of the coming and destruction of the man of sin, must precede the approach of that day ; and wherein, having craved their prayers in his behalf, and made his request to God in theirs, he concludes with divers precepts, especially to shun idleness and ill company, and 'not to be weary in well-doing.'

Having thus planted the church of Corinth, St Paul resolved to return into Syria ; and, taking along with him Aquila and Priscilla, from Cenchrea, the port or road for ships in the Archipelago, belonging to Corinth, he sailed to Ephesus,^e where he preached a while in the synagogue of the Jews ; but, being resolved to be

2 Thess. passim.

conversion to Christianity, might be succeeded in that office by Sosthenes ; but then we are at a loss to know who the people were that thus beat and misused him. The Greek printed copies tell us, that they were the Gentiles ; and those who read the text thus, imagine, that when they perceived the neglect and disregard wherewith the proconsul received the Jews, they, to insult them the more, fell foul upon the ruler of their synagogue, who was at their head ; whether out of hatred to them, or friendship to St Paul, it makes no matter. But others think, Sosthenes, however head of the synagogue, might be a secret friend and disciple of St Paul, and that the other Jews, seeing themselves neglected by Gallio, might vent their malice upon him ; for they suppose that this was the same Sosthenes, whose name St Paul, in the beginning of his first epistle to the Corinthians, written about three years after this scuffle happened at Corinth, joins with his own. It must be owned, however, that this opinion was not universally received, since, in the time of Eusebius, it was thought that the Sosthenes mentioned in the epistle, was one of the LXX disciples ; and consequently, could not be the chief of the synagogue of Corinth twenty years after the death of Jesus Christ.—*Beausobre's Annotations, Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary.*

^e Ephesus, the metropolis and principal mart of the proconsular Asia, is situated upon the river Cayster, and on the side of a hill, which, towards the west, has the prospect of a lovely plain, watered and beautified with the pleasant circles of the river, turning and winding in so many curious mazes, that some travellers have mistaken it for the Meander ; and this the rather, because the Turks gave it the name of the *Lesser Mendres*. Among heathen authors this city was once much celebrated for its famous temple of Diana, which, for its largeness and workmanship, was accounted one of the seven wonders of the world. It is said to have been 425 feet long, 220 broad, and to have been supported with 127 pillars of marble, 70 feet high, whereof 27 were most curiously wrought and all the rest polished. One Ctesiphon, a famous architect in his time, contrived the model of it ; and that with so much art and curiosity, that it took up two hundred years before it was finished, even though it was built at the common charge of all Asia, properly so called. After it was finished, it was seven times set on fire ; but once more especially, on the very same day that Socrates was poisoned, 400 years before Christ ; and, at another time, when Erostratus fired it only to get himself a name, on the same night that Alexander the Great was born. It was rebuilt, however, and beautified by the Ephesians, to which work the ladies of Ephesus contributed very largely. In the time of our apostle, it retained

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at Jerusalem at the passover, he could not be persuaded to stay longer. Leaving therefore Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, and promising, if God would permit, to return to them again, he set sail for Cæsarea in Palestine, and from thence proceeded to Jerusalem. After he had visited the church, and kept the feast, he went down to Antioch; and having there staid sometime, he traversed the countries of Galatia and Phrygia, confirming, as he went along, the new converted Christians, and returned to Ephesus.

In his absence, Apollos, a Jew of Alexandria, eminent for his eloquence, and great knowledge of the Old Testament, came to Ephesus, and though he was only initiated by the baptism of John,^a yet being by Aquila

a great deal of its former grandeur; but, at present, it is only an heap of ruins, and the very place where it once stood, is so little known, that it affords matter of various conjecture to travellers. The only two buildings worth observation, are a strong and lofty castle, situated on an eminence, and a beautiful church, honoured with the name of St John, but now converted into a Turkish mosque. All the rest of the place is the habitation of herdsmen and farmers, who live in low and humble cottages of dirt, covered on the top with earth, and sheltered from the extremity of the weather by mighty masses of ruinous walls, the pride and ostentation of former days, and in these the emblem of the frailty of the world, and the transient vanity of human glory.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table*, and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.—Ephesus is now under the dominion of the Turks, and is in a state of almost total ruin. The plough has passed over the city; and in March, 1826, when visited by the Rev. Messrs Hartley and Arundell, green corn was growing, in all directions, amidst the forsaken ruins: and one solitary individual only was found who bore the name of Christ, instead of its once flourishing church. Where once assembled thousands exclaimed 'great is Diana of the Ephesians,' now the eagle yells and the jackall moans.—*Horne's Introd.*—ED.

^a The account which St Paul gives us of the baptism of John, our Saviour's forerunner, is this,—'John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people, that they should believe on him who should come after him,' that is, 'on Jesus Christ,' (Acts xix. 4.) And herein he discovers a wide difference between the baptism of John and that of Jesus Christ, namely, that the baptism of John was a solemn rite of renouncing sins, and profession of obedience for the future; that it opened a way for a more perfect institution of the like nature, and exhibited Christ as the object of faith, and the master and guide which men ought to follow. For, being thus baptized, they were thereby led and consigned over to him, and qualified for the Christian baptism, which vastly exceeds the other both in dignity and efficacy. For here the Spirit accompanies the water; this confirms and completes that pardon of sins, and those assistances of grace, which belonged to no other washings, farther than as they were approaches to the Christian; which is therefore, by way of distinction and eminence styled, 'the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,' (Tit. iii. 5.) But if the baptism of John was so imperfect, how came it to pass, that, even twenty years after our Lord's ascension, this Apollos should have no knowledge of any other? or, being so well acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, to be able to teach others, how could he be ignorant of the necessity of his baptism? Now the only reply to this is, that Apollos might be one of those Jews, who, having received the baptism of John some two or three and twenty years before, might, soon after that, or before the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost on the apostles at the day of Pentecost, remove from Judea to Alexandria, where, having not yet seen any of the gospel-histories that might possibly be published at this time, nor had an opportunity of conversing with any of the apostles, to gain farther information, he acquiesced in the baptism he had received, until he came to understand better; unless we suppose, with St Chrysostom, (Hom. 40.) that God vouchsafed him, as he did Cornelius, the baptism of the Spirit, which supplied the want of external baptism, both as an encouragement and recompence for his zeal in preaching the gospel. What became of this great preacher, after his return

and Priscilla more fully instructed in the rudiments of the Christian religion, and baptized, he taught the word of God with great boldness, and a most powerful zeal. After some stay in Ephesus, he obtained commendatory letters^b from the brethren, and with them went over to Corinth, where he proved highly serviceable, and¹ watered what St Paul had before planted, confirming the disciples, and convincing the Jews, that Jesus was the true and only Messiah promised in the holy Scriptures.

At St Paul's return to Ephesus, he found several disciples, as well as Apollos, who had received no more than the baptism of John, and had never once heard of the gifts of the Holy Ghost: however, when they were sufficiently instructed in the principles of Christianity, and solemnly admitted to Christian baptism, upon the imposition of the apostle's hands, they immediately received the Holy Ghost, in the gift of tongues, prophecy, and other miraculous powers that were conferred on them. For three months after this, St Paul went into the synagogues, and preached to the Jews, endeavouring, with much earnestness, to convince them, that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah, but when, instead of success, he met with nothing but refractoriness and infidelity, he left the synagogues, and, for the space of two years, instructed the heathen converts, as well as all others who resorted to him, in the school of one Tyrannus.^c By this means all the inhabitants of the Proconsular Asia had an opportunity of having the gospel preached to them, and of seeing it confirmed by miracles of an extraordinary nature, which St Paul was enabled to do; insomuch that if napkins, or handkerchiefs, were but touched by him, and applied to those who were anywise sick, or possessed with devils, they immediately received cure.

Seven brothers, the sons of one Sceva, a Jewish priest, who travelled from town to town to cure diseases, and cast out devils by their exorcisms,^d observing with what

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 6.

from Corinth to Ephesus, we have no manner of account, unless we may credit what St Jerom tells us of him, namely, that being dissatisfied with the division which his preaching at Corinth had occasioned, (1 Cor. iii. 7.) he retired into Crete, with Zena, a doctor of the law; but that after St Paul, by his letter, had appeared that dissension, he returned again to Corinth, and was made bishop of that city.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^b That commendatory epistles, certifying the piety and orthodoxy of the person to whom they were given, and recommending him to an hospitable reception in the places which he travelled to, were an ancient custom in the primitive church, is evident from the testimony of several fathers, and other ecclesiastical writers; but whether they took their rise from *tessera hospitalitatis* among the heathens, or from the Jews, among whom the same custom prevailed, is a point wherein the learned are not agreed.—*Hammond's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^c Among the Jews there were two kinds of schools wherein the law was taught, private and public. Their private schools were those wherein a doctor of the law entertained his scholars, and were usually styled 'houses of learning.' Their public schools were those where their consistories sat to resolve all difficulties and differences of the law; but it seems most likely that the Tyrannus who lent St Paul his school to preach in, was not a Jew, but a Gentile; not a doctor of the law, but some philosopher, or public professor of rhetoric, whom the apostle had converted; because, when he departed from the Jews, and separated the disciples, (Acts xix. 9.) it is reasonable to think, that the place made use of for their instruction, should appertain to a Gentile rather than a Jew.—*Howell's Annotations*.

^d The word comes from the Greek *ἱερεῖς*, which signifies

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facility St Paul effected his miraculous cures and dispossessions, attempted themselves to do the like, and, to add greater force to their charms, presumed to change their form ^a by invoking the name of Jesus over a demoniac. But here it pleased God to put a visible difference between those that applied this powerful name regularly, and with commission, and others, who, of their own heads, and for ill designs, dared to usurp it: for the demoniac, falling upon the exorcists, tore off their clothes, wounded their bodies, and scarce suffered them to escape with their lives. This was an event, which, when the Jews and Gentiles in Ephesus came to know it, filled them with such a reverential fear, that none dared to mention the name of Jesus but with a profound respect; and that many who had addicted themselves to the study of magic, ^b came, and confessed their sins, and publicly burnt their books, which amounted to the value of above fifteen hundred pounds of our money. ^c So prevalent was the gospel of God in these parts.

While St Paul was thus diligently pursuing his mini-

to adjure, or use the name of God, with a design to drive devils out of places and bodies which they possess. And that the Jews had several incantations in use and veneration, which they had in greater credit, because of an opinion common among them, that they had been invented by Solomon, is evident from the testimony of Josephus. That even in our Saviour's time, exorcists were very frequent among them, is manifest from these words of his, 'If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges,' (Mat. xii. 27.) And that they practised their exorcisms sometimes with success, is plain from the acknowledgment of Ireneus, who says, 'all things are subject to the most High, and by invocation of his name, even before the advent of our Lord, men were saved from evil spirits, and all kinds of demons.'—*Calmet's Dictionary*, and *Commentary* on Acts xix. 13; and *Whitby* and *Grotius* on Mat. xii. 27.

^a Their common form of incantation was, 'in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'

^b The word used here (*μαγεία*) denotes properly those things that require care, or skill; and was thus applied to the arts of magic, and jugglery, and sleight of hand, that were practised so extensively in eastern countries. That such arts were practised at Ephesus is well known. The *Ephesian letters*, by which incantations and charms were supposed to be produced, were much celebrated. They seem to have consisted of certain combinations of letters or words, which, by being pronounced with certain intonations of voice, were believed to be effectual in expelling diseases, or evil spirits; or which, by being written on parchment and worn, were supposed to operate as *amulets*, or charms, to guard from evil spirits, or from danger. Thus Plutarch (*Sympos.* 7) says, 'the magicians compel those who are possessed with a demon to recite and pronounce the *Ephesian letters*, in a certain order, by themselves.' Thus Clemens Alex. (*Strom.* ii.) says, 'Androcydes, a Pythagorean, says, that the letters which are called Ephesian, and which are so celebrated, are symbols,' &c. Erasmus says, (*Adagg.* Cent. 2), that there were certain marks and magical words among the Ephesians, by using which they succeeded in every undertaking. Eusath. ad Homer *Odys.* says, 'that those letters were incantations which Cresus used when on the funeral pile, and which greatly befriended him.' He adds, that in the war between the Milesians and Ephesians, the latter were thirteen times saved from ruin by the use of these letters. See Grotius and Kuinoel in loco.—*Barnes on the Acts*.—ED.

^c If the 50,000 pieces of silver mentioned in the text be taken for Jewish shekels, and valued at three shillings each, (which are the principles of Dr Benson's computation, *Hist.* vol. II. p. 149.) the sum will amount to £7500 sterling, or, setting it at half-a-crown, to £6250. But as the Attic drachm seems to have been more frequently used among the Greeks, than any coin equal to the Jewish shekel, I think it more natural to compute by that, which, if with Dr Prideaux we reckon it at 9d. reduces the sum to £1875.—*Doddridge's Expositor*.—ED.

stry, St Peter was preaching the gospel to the Jews in several provinces of the Lesser Asia; and so travelling eastward came at length to the ancient city of Babylon ^d in Chaldaea, from whence he wrote his first epistle, which is called a catholic or general epistle, to the converted Jews that were of the dispersion; and, 'after solemn thanksgiving to God for their call to Christianity, whereby they had obtained a lively hope of an eternal inheritance in heaven, he advises them to the practice of several virtues, as a means to make their calling and election sure; namely, that they should live in a constant worship and fear of God, and imitate their master Jesus Christ in holiness and purity; that they should be diligent hearers of the gospel, and grow up to perfection by it; that they should lead exemplary lives among the Gentiles, abstaining from carnal lusts, and behaving themselves with modesty, thereby to convince their enemies that their calumnies were unreasonable; that they should behave themselves well under their respective relations, submitting themselves to their governors, whether supreme or subordinate; that servants should obey their masters, wives be subject to their husbands, and husbands honour their wives; that they should all love one another fervently and unfeignedly, bear afflictions patiently, live in union, and sympathise with each other in their afflictions; and, lastly, that the ministers and pastors of the several churches should take special care of the flocks committed to their charge, teach them diligently, and govern them gently, not seeking their own gain and profit, but the salvation of the people's souls.' This is the purport of the epistle, and the whole is written with a fervour and zeal not unbecoming so great an apostle. But to proceed with St Paul.

After a stay of about two years in Ephesus, he determined to return into Macedonia and Achaia, and having wintered in Corinth, to pass thence to Jerusalem, where he purposed to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, and after that to proceed in his long intended journey to Rome. In pursuance of this design, he sent Timothy and Erastus ^e before him into Macedonia, but himself

^d Those who take Babylon in a mystical sense, understand by it Rome, from whence they suppose that St Peter wrote this epistle, not long after his coming thither; and for the confirmation of this, they tell us, that St John, in his book of Revelations, calls Rome by the name of Babylon, either from its conformity in power and greatness to that ancient city, or from its resemblance of it in idolatry, and oppression of God's people. Others, who still take it in a figurative sense, by Babylon had rather understand Jerusalem, no longer now the holy city, say they, but a kind of spiritual Babylon, in which the church of God did at this time groan under great servitude and captivity: and to support this notion of the word, they produce the authority of some fathers who understood that of the prophet, 'We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed,' in this sense, (*Jer.* li. 9.) But, as a mystical and figurative sense does not so well agree with the date of a letter, and to conceal the place from whence they wrote, was never the practice of any of the apostles, it is more natural to understand it of Babylon, properly so called, though whether it was Babylon in Egypt, where St Peter might preach the gospel, or Babylon, the ancient metropolis of Assyria, where, ever since the time of their captivity, great numbers of Jews were settled, we leave the inquisitive reader to determine.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles*, and *Beausobre's Preface* on 1 *Epist.* of *Pet.*—See a note on this subject in Bloomfield's *Greek Testament*, 1 *Pet.* v. 13. in which the evidence adduced seems greatly in favour of its being the ancient Babylon in Chaldaea.—ED.

^e Erastus, was very probably born at Corinth, and, as the apostle informs us, was made chamberlain of that city, (*Rom.* xvi. 23.) but being converted by St Paul, and resolving to pur-

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stayed behind at Ephesus, very probably to answer a letter which Apollos, and some other brethren, had brought him from the church of Corinth, desiring his resolution of several points relating to marriage, and chastity, and some other subjects. The Corinthians were, at this time, unhappily divided into parties and factions on account of their teachers, each one preferring the person from whom he had received his instruction, and disparaging the rest. They committed great disorders in their love-feasts,^a and celebrated the holy sacrament very irreverently. They were addicted to fornication; and one in particular, had run into incest, in marrying his father's wife. They were unjust and fraudulent in their dealings; they went to law, at heathen tribunals; and among them were found some who were bold and profligate enough to deny the resurrection. In opposition to all this, the apostle, in what is called his ^b 'first epistle to the Corinthians,' shows the equality of Christ's ministers, and their insufficiency for the work to which they are ordained, without the divine assistance; orders the incestuous person to be excommunicated, lest his example should infect others; blames their litigious law suits, as thinking it much better to refer their differences to some of their own body; propounds the first institution of the sacrament, and a previous examination of their lives, to bring them to a right use of it; answers their questions relating to marriage, celibacy, and meats offered to idols; and having added several things, concerning a decent behaviour, both of men and women, in their churches; concerning the gifts of the Holy Ghost,

sue his fortune, he resigned his employment, followed him all along, until his last voyage to Corinth, in the way to Rome, where the apostle suffered martyrdom. The Latin writers say, that St Paul left Erastus in Macedonia: that he made him bishop of that province, and that he died a martyr at Philippi: but the Greeks, in their calendars, make him bishop of Paneas, near the sources of the river Jordan, give him the title of an *apostle*, place him in the number of the seventy disciples, and say, that he died in peace, after having gone over all the earth, preaching the faith of Jesus Christ: but not any of these produce one proof of what they say.—*Cabnet's Commentary*.

^a These feasts of charity, which were in use among the primitive Christians in memory of the last supper, which our blessed Saviour had with his apostles when he instituted the holy eucharist, were kept in the church towards the evening after the common prayers were over, and the word of salvation had been heard. When this was done, the whole congregation eat together what every one had brought with him, in great simplicity and union, so that there was no distinction between rich and poor; and after a frugal and modest supper, they partook of the sacrament, and gave each other a kiss of peace, and so departed. But this custom, as good and laudable as it was in its original, came in a short time to be abused.—*Cabnet's Dictionary* under the word *Agape*.

^b That this was an epistle written by St Paul the apostle, as is asserted in the first verse, was never once doubted in the church of God; but whether it was his first epistle to the Corinthians, has been a matter of dispute; because he says in it, 'I have written to you an epistle,' (chap. v. 9.) which seems plainly to relate to a former epistle. But as none of the ancients ever ascribed to St Paul more than fourteen epistles, even including that to the Hebrews, no Christian writer ever cited any thing from an epistle of his to the Corinthians, supposed to be lost; and all the Greek scholiasts declare, that the apostle in these words speaketh not of another, but of this very epistle; the words *ἔγραψα ὑμῖν*, which we translate, 'I wrote,' should rather be rendered 'I had wrote,' (it being a common observation of grammarians, that the Aorist is so called, because it is of an indefinite signification, sometimes used for the perfect, and sometimes for the plusquam-perfect tense, 'I had wrote,') but made some alteration in my letter before I sent it.—*W hitby's Preface to the first epistle to the Corinthians*.

the excellency of charity, the gift of tongues, and prayer in an unknown language; he proves the truth of the gospel, and the certainty of a future resurrection, almost to a demonstration.^c

About the same time it was that St Paul, in like manner, wrote his epistle to the Galatians.^c For being informed, that since his departure several impostors had crept in among them, who strongly insisted on the necessity of circumcision, and other legal rites, and greatly disparaged his authority, as being but a second-hand apostle, in comparison of Peter, James, and John, from whom they pretended to derive their instructions; in this epistle, 'he reproves them with some necessary warmth and severity, for suffering themselves so easily to be imposed upon by crafty artifices of seducers. He largely refutes those Judaical opinions wherewith they were infected, and by several arguments proves, that the slavery of the law brought a curse with it, was destructive of their Christian liberty, and incapable of procuring their justification in the sight of God. Among these reproofs and arguments, however, he mingles several exhortations full of paternal and apostolic charity; and towards the conclusion, gives them many excellent rules and directions for the conduct of their lives and conversations.'

A little before St Paul's departure from Ephesus, one Demetrius, a silver-smith, who dealt in making little models ^d of the temple of Ephesus, with the image of Diana included in them, perceiving, that if the Christian

^c There is great diversity of opinion among learned men concerning the date of the epistle to the Galatians. Weingart supposes it to have been written so early as the year 48; Michaelis in 49; Cappel, in 51; Bishop Pearson, in 57; Mill, Fabricius, Moldenhawer, and others, in 58; Van Til and Dr Doddridge, in 53; Hottinger, in 54; Lord Barrington, Drs Benson and Lardner, in 53; Beausobre, Rosenmuller, and Dr A. Clarke, in 52 or 53; Bishop Tomline, in 52. Theodoret, who is followed by Dr Lightfoot and some others, imagine that it was one of those epistles which St Paul wrote from Rome during his first confinement; but this opinion is contradicted by the apostle's silence concerning his bonds, which he has often mentioned in the letters that are known to have been written at that time. It is evident that the epistle to the Galatians was written early, because he complains in it of their speedy apostasy from his doctrine (Gal. i. 6.) and warns them in the strongest and most forcible terms against the Judaizing teachers, who disturbed the peace of the churches in Syria and Asia Minor. (i. 7—9. iii. 1.) The warmth of the apostle's expressions led Tertullian to conclude that St Paul was himself a neophyte or novice in the Christian faith at the time of writing this epistle. And as no intimation is given through the whole of it that he had been with them more than once, we are authorized to conclude, that he wrote this letter from Corinth about the end of 52, or early in the year 53. The subscription, indeed, states it to have been written from Rome: but this is evidently spurious, for St Paul's first journey to Rome did not take place until at least ten years after the conversion of the Galatians.—*Horne's Introduction*.—Ed.

^d In the idolatry of the heathens, they used to carry the images of their gods in procession from one city to another, which they did in a chariot consecrated for that purpose. But besides this greater, there was a less frame, wherein it was placed, by the Romans, called *ferculum*, not much unlike that which the Greeks called *naos*, 'a little chapel,' representing the form of a temple, with an image in it, which being set upon the altar, or other solemn place, and the leaves of the door opened, the image appeared, sitting or standing in state, and so was represented to the spectators. The making of these temples and images in miniature, was certainly a very profitable employment at Ephesus, because few people of distinction came to visit this great wonder of the world, who did not carry home with them some of these little models of it, not only as an evidence of the pilgrimage they had performed, but as a means likewise to incite their devotion to the

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religion prevailed, this gainful employment of his would be totally ruined, called together a great number of the same profession, and, having represented to them the injury which St Paul, by his preaching every where against idolatry, was like to do, not only to the trade, whereby they subsisted, but to the honour and reputation likewise of the great goddess Diana, ^a whom all the world adored, he so inflamed them with his speech, that immediately they cried out, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' And as the spirit of mutiny soon spread from the workmen to the rabble, it was not long before the whole city was in an uproar.

In this confusion, the people, seizing upon Gaius and Aristarchus, ^b two of St Paul's companions, hurried them to the theatre, with a design, very probably, to throw them to the wild beasts, as their custom was to treat malefactors; ^c which when Paul understood, he would have ventured himself among them, had not the Christians then present, and even some of the prefects of the theatrical games, ^d well knowing what danger this would have exposed him to, earnestly dissuaded him from it: and to this, without doubt, he alludes, when elsewhere he tells us, that ¹ he fought with beasts at Ephesus.^e

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 32.

goddess Diana.—*Hammond's, Beausobre's and Poole's Annotations.*

^a The heathens, who had their superior and inferior gods and goddesses, always placed Diana in the number of the former, which are all included in the two verses of Ennius:

Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars,
Mercurius, Jovi, Neptunus, Vulcanus, Apollo.

These were worshipped by the Gentiles of all nations; but the inferior kind, who were called *Di minorum gentium*, were only known and worshipped in some particular countries and places.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^b He was a Macedonian, and native of Thessalonica, who adjoining himself to St Paul, accompanied him to Ephesus, and there continued with him for the two years of his abode, partaking in all the labours and dangers of the apostleship. From Ephesus he followed him into Greece; from Greece into Asia; from Asia into Judea; and from Judea into Rome; where, as some say, he was beheaded with him in Nero's reign.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^c It does not appear that such was their immediate design. The theatres of the Greeks were not only places for public exhibitions, but also for holding assemblies, and often for courts, elections, &c. The people, therefore, naturally rushed there, as being a suitable place to decide this matter.—*Barnes.*—Ed.

^d Among the heathens there were games instituted in honour of the good deities, even as sacrifices and victims were to appease the bad and angry. Of these games, at Rome, the pontifices, or high-priests, were presidents, and, in other places, the priests and chief magistrates, who, from their provinces, were called 'Asiarchæ, Syriarchæ, Bithyniarchæ,' &c. They were generally chosen out of the chief cities, and best families in the province, and had the regulation not only of what concerned the worship of their gods, but of several other public affairs, particularly of the games and combats which were exhibited to the people in their theatres. Thus in the martyrdom of Polycarp at Smyrna, the people asked Philip, the ruler of the games there, to let out a lion upon the aged bishop; which he refused to do, because, as he tells them, the games were ended; from whence it appears, that it belonged to the Asiarchæ, here mentioned, to let loose the wild beasts upon the malefactors; and therefore, having some kindness for St Paul—a great work of God's providence that they had—they sent him word to keep close, and not venture himself upon the theatre, knowing that the full purpose of the people was to set him to the *ἑρμιοναχία*, or 'combating with wild beasts,' if he did.—*Whitby's, Beausobre's and Hammond's Annotations.* It is more probable, however, that the danger which Paul would have incurred by going into the theatre, was that of being torn in pieces by an infuriated multitude.—Ed.

^e That St Paul, in this place, does actually refer us to what

The tumult, in the mean time, increased rather than diminished; when a certain Jew, named Alexander, ^f breaking through the crowd, and making a sign with his hand for silence, would have made a speech to the people, with a design, very probably, to excuse the Jews, and throw the odium upon the Christians; but they perceiving him to be a Jew, and thereby suspecting him to be one of Paul's associates, began to raise an outcry for near two hours together, wherein nothing was heard, but 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' When the noise was a little abated, however, the recorder of the city came out, and calmly told them, that it was sufficiently known to all the world, what a mighty veneration the city of Ephesus had for their great goddess Diana, and the famous image, ^g which fell down from heaven; so that there needed not any disturbance to vindicate and assert it, that they had seized on persons who were not guilty either of sacrilege, or blasphemy against their goddess; that if Demetrius and his company had any just charge against them, the courts were sitting, and they might

beheld him at Ephesus, is manifest from his own words in another epistle to the Corinthians, where he mentions his great persecution in Asia, whereof Ephesus was the metropolis, and a 'pressure so heavy, that he despaired even of life, having the sentence of death in himself; but that, trusting in God, who raised the dead, he was delivered from so great a death,' (2 Cor. i. 8, &c.) But then the question is, whether these beasts at Ephesus are to be taken in a literal or metaphorical sense? That cruel and bloody-minded men are often represented under the metaphor of beasts, cannot be denied; and that St Paul was actually exposed to beasts, but they would not touch him, those (says Nicephorus, Hist. Eccl. b. ii. c. 25.) who wrote the life of this apostle do affirm. Either of these senses therefore may be true; but as we read no where in the Acts, or in the catalogue of his afflictions, (2 Cor. xi.) that St Paul did really fight with wild beasts, our best way is to render the preceding words κατ' ἀνθρώπους, not according to the manner, but according to the intention of men, and then the sense will be, that according to the intention of the men of Ephesus, he had fought with beasts, because, in the tumult which Demetrius had raised, the people's design was to have dealt so with St Paul's companions, and much more so with him, had not his friends dissuaded him from entering into the theatre.—*Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations.*

^f Who this Alexander was, whether a Jew, or a Jewish convert, and whether for or against St Paul, it no where appears from the sacred history; and therefore some have imagined, that this was the Alexander who afterwards revolted from the Christian faith, of whom St Paul complains so loudly, (1 Tim. i. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 14.) but that now being a friend and retainer to the apostle, he was about to stand up in his defence, and make his apology. We can scarce think, however, that had the thing been thus, the Jews would have encouraged or put him forward, (Acts xix. 33.) and therefore the more probable conjecture is, that he was a Jew, who, perceiving his countrymen involved in this affair, at their solicitation, was for addressing himself to the multitude, in order to excuse them, and to lay all the blame of the tumult upon the Christians.—*Beausobre's Annotations.*

^g The image of this Diana was not set out in an hunting dress, with a bow and arrows in her hand, and a crescent upon her head, but it was covered with breasts, sometimes from head to foot, and sometimes her bosom only and belly were covered with them; and all besides was a kind of pedestal, adorned at proper distances with the heads of stags and dogs, having about half their bodies prominent. The multitude of her breasts denoted her fertility, as being called 'the nurse of all living creatures;' and the dogs and stags which belonged to her were the indication of her being the goddess of hunting. This image, singular as it was, is said to have been the work of one Canetius, whose name is still upon record; but as it had subsisted long beyond the memory of man, the crafty priests persuaded the credulous multitude that it fell from heaven, that thereby they might advance both its honour and their own profit.—*Calmet's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

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enter their accusation; or, if the controversy was about any other matter, there were proper judicatures to determine it in; that therefore they should do well to be pacified, having done more already than they could answer, and being in danger of incurring a severe punishment if they should be called to an account, as very likely they might, for that day's riotous assembly. And with this prudent discourse he appeased and dispersed the multitude.

As soon as this storm was dispersed, St Paul having called the church together, and constituted Timothy bishop of the place, took his leave and departed by Troas for Macedonia; where, having instructed some, and confirmed others in the principles of a sound faith and holy life, he continued his preaching all over the country, even as far as Illyricum.^a While he was in Macedonia, Titus came to him, and gave him an account of the good effects which his epistle had at Corinth, and how great reformation it had wrought; but as several vain-glorious teachers still persisted in their contumacy, vilifying his authority, and misrepresenting his words and actions; charging him particularly with levity in not coming according to his promise, with severity in his dealings with the incestuous person, with imperiousness in his writings, abjectness in his person, and some small tincture of irreligion, in overthrowing the Mosaic law, all which he understood from Titus, he thought it necessary to write a second epistle to the Corinthians; 'wherein he excuses his not coming directly to Corinth, for fear of occasioning their sorrow, and giving himself uneasiness, in being obliged to treat with severity those who had not yet amended their faults; wherein he commends their zeal against the incestuous person, but now, that he had suffered and sorrowed enough for his transgression, allowed them to be reconciled to him; wherein he justifies his conduct, vindicates the dignity and ministry of the gospel, and proves its great excellency above the law; wherein he disclaims those false teachers, who, to estrange them from him, made it their business to traduce and vilify him; and threatens them with his apostolic authority, whenever he came among them, wherein he speaks of himself with some advantage, and though he mentions his supernatural gifts and revelations, yet seems to glory most in his extraordinary labours and sufferings for the gospel; and wherein he exhorts them all to the works of penance and mortification, lest, when he comes, he should be obliged to use his power against offenders; and to have their alms in readiness, that they may not be a hinderance to him at his arrival at Corinth.'

^a This is a province of Europe lying to the north or north-west of Macedonia, along the Adriatic sea, now called the gulf of Venice; and its ancient boundaries were, to the east, the upper Mæsia and Macedonia; to the west, Istria; and to the north, the two Pannonias; and to the south, the Adriatic sea. It was commonly distinguished into two parts; Lyburnia to the north, where now lies Croatia; and Dalmatia to the south, which still retains its name. St Paul tells us, that 'from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ,' (Rom. xv. 19.) So that he must have travelled into Syria, Phœnicia, Arabia, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Galatia, Pontus, Paphlagonia, Phrygia, Troas, Asia, Caria, Lycia, Ionia, Lydia, the isles of Cyprus and Crete, Thracia, Macedonia, Thessalia, and Achaia. So justly, and without ostentation, might he say, that in relation to the other apostles, 'he laboured more abundantly than they all,' 1 Cor. xv. 10.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament, and Calmet's Dictionary.*

Having passed over Macedonia, St Paul came into Achaia,^b and continued there for the space of three months, residing principally at Corinth, from whence he wrote his famous epistle to the Romans:^c 'wherein he states and determines the great controversy between the Jews and the Gentiles, about the obligation of the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and those main and material doctrines of Christianity which depend on it, such as that of Christian liberty, and the use of indifferent things, &c. wherein he discovers the effects of original sin, and the power it has even in the regenerated; and then explains the profound questions concerning election and reprobation, in his discourse of the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews; and wherein he intermixes several admirable instructions and exhortations to the duties of an holy and religious life, such as the Christian doctrine does naturally tend to produce.'

From Corinth, St Paul, being to carry the alms which he had gathered in Macedonia and Achaia to the poor Christians in Judea, intended at first to have taken the shortest cut into Syria; but, upon intimation of a conspiracy that the Jews had formed against his life, he altered his course, and determined to go through Macedonia. Accordingly, he and his company set forward, and came to Philippi, where he staid for some time, and there celebrated the feast of the Passover. From Philippi, he went on board, and in five days landed at Troas, where, having tarried a week, on the Lord's day,^d when the Christians of the place met together to receive the sacrament, he preached to them, and intending to be gone next morning, continued his discourse till midnight; so that a young man, named Eutychus, sitting in a window, and being overtaken with sleep, fell down from the

^b Achaia, in the largest sense, comprehends Greece, properly so called; and so is bounded, on the east, by the Ægean sea; on the west, by Epirus; on the north, by Macedonia; and on the south, by the Peloponnes; but Achaia, strictly so called, is the northern region of the Peloponnes; bounded, on the north, by the gulf of Corinth; on the south, by Arcadia; on the east, by Syria; and on the west, by the Ionian sea.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table.*

^c It is a general observation of the ancient commentators, that though this epistle has obtained the first place and rank, it is far from being the first that St Paul wrote; that those to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, and the Galatians, were prior; nay, that it was the very last of all that he composed before his first journey to Rome; and therefore they think that it had the first place assigned it in the canon, either from the majesty of the imperial city to which it was sent, or from the excellency of the doctrine which it contained.—*Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations.*

^d The words in the original are, 'Ἐν δὲ τῇ μίᾳ τῶν σαββάτων, which we render, 'on the first day of the week;' and that this first day of the week was our Lord's day, or the day of our Lord's resurrection from the dead, is obvious from the account of all the evangelists; (see Mat. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 9. Luke xxiii. 56. and John xx. 1.) And from hence we may observe, that from the very beginning, Christians used to assemble on the first day of the week, to perform their religious worship; for Pliny, in his epistle to the emperor Trajan, tells him, that 'he found nothing to allege against the Christians, but their obstinacy in their superstition; and that it was their custom to meet together on a set day, before it was light;' (Ep. b. x. ep. 97.) And what that set day was, Justin Martyr, who wrote, not a great many years after Pliny, has taken care to inform us: for, 'on Sunday,' says he, 'all Christians, in the city or country, meet together, because that is the day of our Lord's resurrection: and then we have read unto us the writings of the prophets and apostles. When this is done, the president makes an oration to the assembly, to exhort them to imitate and do the things which they have heard, and then we all join in prayer; and after that celebrate the sacrament.'—(Apol. ii.)—*Whitby's Annotations.*

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third story, and was taken up dead. But Paul went down, and soon recovered him; and so going up again, he resumed his discourse, and in the celebration of the sacrament, and other divine offices, continued until break of day, and then departed.

From Troas he went on foot to Assos, ^a where, with St Luke, and the rest of the company that were come thither by sea, he embarked, and from thence came to Mitylene; ^b then passing by Chios, ^c he arrived at Samos; ^d and, having stayed a short while at Trogyllium, ^e the next day came directly to Miletus, ^f not so much as putting in at Ephesus, because he was resolved, if possible, to be at Jerusalem at the feast of Pentecost.

^a This is a sea-port town, situated on the south-west part of the province of Troas, and over against the island Lesbos. By land, it is a great deal nearer Troas than it is by sea, because of a promontory that runs a great way into the ocean, and must be doubled before we can come to Assos, which was the reason the apostle chose rather to walk it.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.—There is notice of a Christian church existing here in the eighth century, and John bishop of Assos, is mentioned as one of the Nicean council. The ruins adjoining the modern sea-port are described as numerous and interesting.—*Edin. Scripture Gazetteer*.—ED.

^b This was one of the principal cities of the isle of Lesbos, seated in a peninsula, with a commodious haven on each side; and soon became so considerable, as to give name to the whole island, at present called Metelin, many years ago. The island, which is one of the largest in the Archipelago, was in former times renowned for the many eminent persons it had produced; such as Sappho, the inventress of Sapphic verses; Alcæus a famous lyric poet; Pittacus, one of the seven wise men of Greece; Theophrastus, the noble physician and philosopher; and Arion, the celebrated musician: and the Turks, who have it now in their possession, think it still a place of consequence enough to deserve a fortress and garrison to defend it.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^c This is an island in the Archipelago, next to Lesbos, or Metilene, both in its situation and bigness. It lies over against Smyrna, and is not above four leagues distant from the Asiatic continent. It is celebrated by Horace and Martial, for the wine and figs that came from thence; but at present its renown is, that it produces the most excellent mastic in the world, where the people pay their tribute to the Grand Signior. Nor is it less remarkable for what Sir Paul Ricaut, in his Present State of the Greek Church, tells us of it, namely, That there is no place in the Turkish dominions where Christians enjoy more freedom in their religion and estates, than in this isle, to which they are entitled by an ancient capitulation made with Sultan Mahomet II., which to this day is maintained so faithfully, that no Turk can strike or abuse a Christian, without severe correction.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^d This is another isle in the Archipelago, lying south east of Chios, and about five miles from the Asiatic continent. It is famous among heathen writers, for the worship of Juno; for one of the Sibyls, called *Sibylla Samina*; for Pherecydes, who foretold an earthquake that happened there, by drinking of the waters; and more especially, for the birth of Pythagoras, who excelled all the seven wise men, so renowned among the Greeks. It was formerly a free commonwealth, and the inhabitants were so powerful, that they managed many prosperous wars against their neighbours: but at present, the Turks have reduced it to such a mean and depopulated condition, that a few pirates dare land and plunder it as they please: so that ever since the year 1676, no Turk has ventured to live upon it, for fear of being carried into captivity by these rovers.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table*, and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^e It is a cape or promontory, on the Asiatic coast, opposite to Samos, and not much below Ephesus, having a town of the same name.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table*, and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^f This is a port-town on the continent of Asia Minor, and in the province of Caria, memorable for being the birth-place of Thales, one of the seven wise men in Greece, and father of the Ionic philosophy; of Anaximenes, his scholar; Timotheus, the

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus to assemble the bishops and pastors of the neighbouring churches, and at their arrival, put them in mind—'With what uprightness and integrity, with what affection and humility, and with how great danger and trouble he had been conversant among them, and preached the gospel to them, ever since his coming into those parts: that he had not failed to acquaint them, both publicly and privately, with whatsoever might be profitable to their souls, urging both Jews and Gentiles to repentance and reformation, and an hearty entertainment of the faith of Christ: that now he was determined to go to Jerusalem, where he did not know what particular sufferings would befall him, only that he had been foretold by those who were endued with the prophetic gifts of the Holy Ghost, that in every place afflictions and imprisonment would attend him; but that he was not concerned at this, no, nor unwilling to lay down his life, if so be he might but successfully propagate the gospel, and triumphantly finish his course: that he knew, that from henceforth they should see his face no more; ^g but that this was his particular comfort and satisfaction, that they themselves could bear him witness, that he had not, by concealing any part of the Christian doctrine, betrayed their souls: that, since therefore he was finally to bid them adieu, and the whole care of the church was to devolve upon them, he conjured them to be infinitely careful both of themselves, and of that flock over which the ^h Holy Ghost himself had made them overseers, and for which Christ had paid no less a purchase than his own blood: that all their care, in this respect, would be no more than necessary, because it was certain, that, after his departure, not only heretical teachers ⁱ would break in upon them, and endanger the

musician; and Anaximenius the philosopher. At present it is called by the Turks *Melas*; and not far distant from it is the true Meander, which, though it encircles all the plain it runs through with many wanton mazes, and innumerable windings, yet, in some places, it goes with such a current, as stirs up the earth and gravel from the bottom, which makes its waters not so clear and crystalline as might be expected.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table* and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^g If St Paul, as it is generally thought, came again into these parts, the meaning may be, either that it was then his firm persuasion and belief that he should see them no more, or that he should not again see all the presbyters so assembled together. But it is not certain that he ever did see any of them again, even if he visited that part of Asia, as seems probable, from Phil. 22, 25; Phil. i. 25—27. ii. 24.—*Holden's Christian Expositor*.—ED.

^h That in these early times of Christianity, the divine Spirit did enable the apostles to discern who were fit to be governors of the church, and that, by its movement or inspiration, they were accordingly chosen to that office, seems to be evident from several passages in scripture. Thus, the Spirit, in the prophets at Antioch, said, 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them,' (Acts xiii. 2.) And thus the Holy Ghost is said to have constituted the bishops and presbyters in Asia, (Acts xx. 28.) because, as Clemens Romanus says, 'they made trial of them by the Holy Ghost;' or, as Clemens Alexandrinus has it, 'they were signified to them by the Spirit,' and therefore Ignatius testifies of the bishops of his time, that 'they were not appointed by men, but by the 'counsel of Christ Jesus:' even as St Cyprian says of those in his time, that they were constituted, 'not only by the consent of the people and the suffrages of their fellow bishops, but by the judgment and testimony of God:' and therefore we need not doubt, but that to this kind of election it is that the words of the apostle refer.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

ⁱ What we termed 'heretical teachers,' St Paul describes by the metaphor of 'grievous wolves, not sparing the flock,' (Acts

A. M. 4662. A. D. 58; OR A. M. 5469. A. D. 58, &c. FROM ACTS I. 10. TO THE END.

ruin of men's souls, but that even among themselves, there would arise some, who, by their crafty methods, and unsound doctrines, would make rents and schisms in the church, even as he, with much grief and sorrow of heart, for these three years past, had forwarned them; that, to this purpose, he now recommended them to God's special care and protection, wishing them all the benefits of the gospel, perfection of knowledge, and an heavenly inheritance hereafter; cautioning them against avarice, and making a prey of their flocks; and referring them to his own example, what pains they ought to take to support the weak, and relieve the poor, in remembrance of that excellent saying ^a of our Saviour, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' ^b After this farewell sermon, the apostle kneeled down, and concluded all with a solemn prayer: whereupon they all melted into tears, and, with the greatest expressions of sorrow, attended him to the ship; though that which made the deepest impression upon them, was, his having told them that they should see his face no more.

From Miletus, Paul and his companions came in

xx. 29.) and well may they be compared to wolves for their craft and cruelty, their mortal hatred to all good Christians, and lying in wait to circumvent and destroy them. The prophet likens them to evening wolves, (Zeph. iii. 3,) which come secretly in the dark, and are very hungry, zealous, and passionately desirous to pervert harmless and unwary souls; and, lest their malice should be perceived, these ravenous wolves disguise themselves in sheep's clothing, that is, they pretend to great innocence and simplicity, they seem to pity the mistakes and desire the salvation of such as they would insinuate into, and under this veil, they are taken for friends, though still they remain the worst of enemies. — *Comber on Ordination.*

^a None of the evangelists have recorded these words, but St Paul's evidence is sufficient that our Lord actually spoke them. This will give no countenance to the Romish doctrine of tradition, until they can prove that their traditions rest upon apostolical authority; and when they do, Protestants will readily receive them. — *Holden's Expositor.* — Ed.

^b These words are to be expounded according to the measures and limitations of other proverbial sayings in scripture. For though, generally speaking, they are true; yet, in some cases, they will admit of an exception. If he that gives, for instance, does it out of a principle of interest or vain-glory, to get a reputation or strengthen a faction; if he does it to encroach upon the liberty of the obliged, to upbraid him with his necessities, to betray him into any sinful compliance, and make him obnoxious to his humour; it is not to be doubted, but that, in this case, a grateful and benevolent receiver is much a greater man than such a pretended benefactor: but then if we suppose the giver and receiver, purely considered as such, to be both free from every vile principle and moral indisposition, the circumstances of the giver are more desirable than those of the receiver: 1st, because giving includes more perfection in it, and is a more secure and honourable condition. 2dly, because, generally speaking, it is a clearer evidence of a virtuous disposition. 3dly, because charity is a nobler virtue than gratitude, and will be more considered in another world: and, 4thly, because there is more pleasure in giving than receiving. — *Collier's Sermons.*

^c This was an island in the Archipelago, lying near the south-west point of Asia Minor, and having a city of the same name. At present it is commonly called *Lango*, and was formerly celebrated for the birth of Hippocrates the famous physician, and Apelles the famous painter; for a stately temple dedicated to Apollo, and another to Juno; for the richness of its wines, and the fineness of a stuff made here, which was perfectly transparent. — *Whitby's Alphabetical Table and Wells's Geography of the New Testament.* It is now called *Stan-Co*, (not *Lango*) and presents to the view fine plantations of lemon trees, intermixed with stately maples. The inhabitants of Cos were a Dorian colony. St Paul merely sailed past this island, and it does not appear that Christianity was professed in it till a considerable period afterwards. The island contains upwards of 8000 inhabitants, of whom about 5000 are stated to have been Turks, and 3000

a straight course to Coos, ^c the next day to Rhodes, ^d and thence to Patara, ^e where, finding a ship that was bound for Phœnicia, they went on board, and arrived safe at Tyre. Here they made a stop for seven days; and St Paul, being advised by some Christians of the place who had the gift of prophecy, not to go up to Jerusalem, would by no means listen to their proposal; ^f but as they, together with their wives and children, accompanied him to the ship, before he went on board, he embraced them all, and prayed with them on the shore, as he had done before at Miletus. From Tyre they sailed to Ptolemais, ^g

Greeks, with about fifty Jews. The Greek religion, says Mr Turner (*Tour of the Levant*, 1815,) is farmed by the bishop of Cos from the Patriarch of Constantinople; he pays 3300 piastres a year for his post, and gains by it from 5000 to 6000. He takes a tenth of the corn of all the island. — *Scripture Gazetteer.* — Ed.

^d Rhodes is an island of the Mediterranean, about eight miles south of Caria in Asia Minor, and 120 in circumference. It is supposed by some to have derived its name from the Rhodanin or Dodanin, by whom it is said to have been first peopled, and by others from the abundance of roses which grew upon it. This island was anciently celebrated for the fineness of its climate and of its wines, but chiefly for the Colossus, a brazen statue, seventy cubits high, which stood across the mouth of the harbour of the city of Rhodes, and admitted the largest ships to sail between its legs. It was computed to contain 720,000 pounds weight of brass; and after standing 60 years, was thrown down by an earthquake: in which fallen state it remained above 800 years, when Mausolus, the sixth caliph of the Saracens, sold it to a Jew, who broke it up, and loaded 900 camels with the metal. Rhodes, after being governed by its own kings, who were sometimes sufficiently powerful to hold in subjection the adjoining parts of Asia Minor, fell a prey to the Romans; then to the Saracens; after which it was retaken by the Greeks, who held possession of it about 600 years; when it was wrested from them by the Seljukian Turks; from whom it was again taken by the knights of St John of Jerusalem, who kept possession of it till the year 1552; when it was taken by the Ottoman Turks, after a year's siege of the city of Rhodes, and the loss of 90,000 men; the knights retiring to Malta. It is still in the hands of this barbarous people; but it is chiefly inhabited by Greeks, who are under the spiritual direction of an archbishop, residing in the city of Rhodes, who has also under his jurisdiction, according to Mr Connor, the following islands: Leros, the seat of a bishop, with about 600 Greeks; Calymne, under the bishop of Leros, 3000; Nisera, 1200; Delos (not the celebrated island of the same name), 1000; Syrne, 3200; and Karke, 600. The Greek population of Rhodes amounts to about 18,000. The number of Jews is about 1000. — *Mansford.* — Ed.

^e This is a sea-port of Lycia, formerly beautified with a fair harbour and many temples, whereof one was dedicated to Apollo, and had an oracle in it, for wealth and credit not inferior to that of Delphi. — *Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*

^f But if the persons who dissuaded St Paul from going to Jerusalem, were really moved by the Holy Ghost to do this, how could he act contrary to their advice, without opposing what the Spirit of God required, and running himself rashly into what it did forbid? Now to this it may be said, that all that the Spirit discovered to the disciples of Tyre, was, that if St Paul pursued his journey, he would certainly meet with very cruel usage; and therefore, out of pure kindness and concern for his welfare, they intreated him to consult his own safety, and not to expose himself to the malice of his enemies, by going to a place where they were so violently bent against him. Their dissuading him therefore was properly the effect of their love, and the result of what the Spirit had foretold them; but no part of the Spirit's instructions to St Paul to desist from his journey. Himself tells us, 'that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, that bonds and afflictions abide him,' (Acts xx. 23.) But this, we may be sure, was not to prevail with him to abandon the work of the gospel, but rather to arm him with strength and resolution to accomplish it, without giving himself any pain about the perils that would ensue. — *Whitby's and Beausobre's Annotations, and Calmet's Commentary.*

^g This city was anciently called *Accho*; but when Ptolemy

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and there having but just saluted the brethren, they came by land the next day to Cæsarea of Palestine, and lodged at the house of Philip, the deacon and evangelist, ^a who had four daughters, all endued with the gift of prophecy. During their stay in this place, the prophet Agabus came from Jerusalem, and taking St Paul's girdle, ^b bound his own hands and feet with it, thereby intimating, that the owner of it should be served in the same manner by the Jews at Jerusalem, and by them be delivered over into the hands of the Gentiles. But St Paul's constancy was not in the least shaken by all these predictions, being ready, as he told those who were dissuading him from going, not only to suffer bonds, but

I. had enlarged it, it took its name from him; though since its subjection to the Turks, it has recovered some resemblance of its former name, it being now called Acca or Acra. As to its situation, it enjoys all possible advantages both by sea and land: for on its north and east sides, it is compassed with a spacious fertile plain; on the west, it is washed by the Mediterranean sea; and on the south, by a large bay, which extends itself from the city, as far as Mount Carmel. This made it one of the fairest and most commodious cities in Galilee; and for a long time, it was the theatre of contention between the Christians and infidels, till, having divers times changed its masters, it was at last, after a long siege, finally taken by the Turks, A. D. 1291, and by them destroyed in such a manner, that besides a large Kane, wherein the French factors have taken up their quarters, one mosque, and a few poor cottages, there is nothing to be seen, but a vast spacious ruin; though even here there are some remains, such as those of the church of St Andrew and St John, the convent of the Knights Hospitalers, and the palace of the Grand Master of that order, which distinguished themselves from the general heap by certain marks of superior strength and magnificence.—*Maunderell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*.—Acre has been rendered famous in our own times by the successful resistance made by our countryman Sir Sydney Smith, aided by the celebrated Djeddar Pasha, to the designs of the French under Napoleon Buonaparte. Since this period, the fortifications have been considerably increased; and although to the eye of an engineer they may still be very defective, Acre may be considered as the strongest place in Palestine. Mr Connor says, on the authority of the English Consul, that there are about 10,000 inhabitants in Acre; of whom 3000 are Turks, and the remainder Christians, chiefly Catholics.—*Mansford*.—Ed.

^a An evangelist is a preacher of the gospel, who, being settled in no particular place, was by the apostles sent into different parts of the world, either to confirm the churches which they had founded, or, by his own labour and application, to found new ones himself. St Paul makes mention of this order of men, and ranks them next to the apostles and prophets, (Eph. iv. 2.) and to let us know that marriage is not inconsistent with any sacred function, St Luke acquaints us, that this deacon and evangelist had four daughters. And indeed the rules which St Paul gives Timothy, are a sufficient demonstration, that he allowed bishops as well as deacons to be married men. Nor is there any thing, either in scripture or antiquity, that denies them that liberty. For it is evident, that St Peter had a wife, (Mat. viii. 14.) and that St Paul asserts his right to marry, if he pleased, (1 Cor. ix. 5.) Ignatius affirms, that he had a wife as well as St Peter, and others of the apostles; and St Ambrose testifies, that all the apostles were married men, except St John and St Paul.—*Beausobre's Annotations, Calmet's Commentary, and Comber on Ordination*.

^b It was a common practice among the ancient prophets, to give their predictions a stronger impression, to foretell future events by figurative or symbolical actions. Thus Isaiah went naked and barefoot, to show what the people of Israel should meet with under the kings of Assyria, (Isa. xx. 2.) and Ezekiel was to pack up his household goods, and remove, to signify their being carried away into captivity, (Ezek. xii. 3.) and in like manner here Agabus uses a sign: he takes St Paul's girdle, and binds his own hands and feet with it, thereby denoting, that the Jews at Jerusalem would so bind the apostle, and deliver him to the Gentiles, first to the Roman governor of Judea, and afterwards to Nero, the Roman emperor.—*Calmet's Commentary, and Burkit's Annotations*.

even death itself, for the sake of Christ and his religion; so that, finding his resolution immovable, they importuned him no more, but left the event to the will of God: whereupon he and his companions set forward on their journey, and having arrived at Jerusalem before the feast of Pentecost, were received by the Christians there with the utmost demonstrations of joy.

The next day, Paul and his company went to the house of St James, the apostle, and bishop of Jerusalem, where the rest of the elders and governors of the church were met together. After mutual salutations, he gave them an account of the success he had met with in the propagation of Christianity among the Gentiles; for which they all glorified God; but withal told him, 'That since he was now come to a place where there were many thousands of Jewish converts, who all retained a mighty zeal and veneration for the law of Moses, and who had been informed of him, that in every place he taught the Jews whom he had converted, to renounce circumcision, and other ritual observances, the best expedient to obviate their clamours, would be for him to ^c join himself to four men who were just then going to accomplish a vow of Nazaritism, to perform the usual rites and ceremonies with them, to be at the charge of having their heads shaved, and to provide such sacrifices as the law directed; whereby it would appear that the reports spread of him were groundless, and that himself was an observer of the Mosaic institutions.' To this advice Paul consented; and taking the four Nazarites with him to the temple, told the priests, that as the time of their vow was now expired, and their purification regularly performed, they were come to make their oblations according to law. ^d

^c The better to understand this, we must observe, that among the Jews it was accounted a kind of meritorious action to contribute to the expence of the sacrifices and offerings, which those who had taken upon them a vow of Nazaritism were to make, when the time of the vow came to be accomplished. Thus Josephus, to magnify the zeal and devotion of Herod Agrippa, king of the Jews, tell us, 'that he caused several Nazarites to be shaved;' whereby he means, that he bore the expence of the whole ceremony: and Maimonides informs us, that he who would partake of the merits of another's Nazaritism, went to the temple, and said to the priest, 'such an one will finish his vow, and I intend to defray the charge of his tonsure, either in part, or in the whole;' and whoever did so, was reputed to partake in the merits of him who had fulfilled his vow.—*Calmet's Commentary, and Dictionary*.

^d The conduct of Paul on this occasion enables us fully to understand his views with respect to the obligation of observing the law of Moses. He had constantly told the Gentiles, that there was no necessity for their observing any part of it; and he had been equally explicit to the Jews, in telling them that the law was of no effect at all in procuring their justification: if they continued to observe its ceremonies, they were to look upon them merely as ceremonies; and, accordingly, when he was living with Gentiles, who cared nothing for the law, he felt no scruples in disregarding its precepts; but when he was living with Jews, whose consciences would have been hurt by a neglect of the legal ceremonies, he observed all the customs in which he had been brought up. His conduct on the present occasion was exactly in conformity with this principle. Having consulted with James, who still continued at Jerusalem as the resident head of the Christian church, and who perfectly agreed with Paul in his notions about the law, he took upon himself the vow of a Nazarite, and appeared publicly in the temple, as a person who submitted implicitly to the law of Moses. This conformity, though it might have satisfied the Judaizing Christians, was not sufficient to remove the prejudices which the unbelieving Jews had conceived against the apostle. Seeing him upon one occasion in the temple, they got together a crowd of people, with the

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These oblations were to be continued for seven days, which were now almost ended, when certain Jews from Asia, who had there been opposers of St Paul, finding him in the temple, began to raise an uproar, and laying hold on him, called out to the rest for help, because 'this is the fellow,' said they, 'who, in all places, vents doctrines injurious to the prerogative of the Jewish nation, destructive to the institutions of the law, and abhorrent to the sacredness of this place, which, by his bringing uncircumcised Greeks into it, he has grossly profaned.' This they affirmed, because they had seen Trophimus ^a in the city with him; and hereupon they seized him, dragged him out of the temple, shut the gate upon him, and would certainly have killed him had not Claudius Lysias, commander of the Roman garrison in the castle of Antonia, ^b come with a considerable force to his rescue and deliverance. As he was going into the castle, Paul, addressing himself to the governor ^c in Greek, desired the liberty to speak to him; but the governor, supposing him to be the Egyptian, ^d who, not many years before,

avowed intention of putting him to death. Nor would they have failed in their purpose, if the commander of the Roman garrison, who was always on the watch to prevent an insurrection, had not suddenly come upon them with his troops, and rescued Paul out of their hands.—*Burton's History of the Church*.—Ed.

^a This Trophimus was a disciple of St Paul, a Gentile by religion, and an Ephesian by birth. After his conversion, he accompanied our apostle wherever he went, and very probably followed him to Rome, and forsook him not in his bonds. After that St Paul obtained his liberty, some pretend that he went into Spain, and passing through the country of the Gauls, left Trophimus there in the capacity of their bishop. But it is not a little difficult to reconcile this with what the apostle writes to Timothy, namely, that he had left Trophimus sick at Miletus, (2 Tim. iv. 20.), unless we can suppose that he returned into Asia again, about a year after that St Paul had left him at Arles, and, as the Greeks will have it, accompanying him to Rome again, at the same time that the apostle suffered, had his head likewise struck off by Nero's command.—*Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary*.

^b This was a tower or fortress, where the Romans kept a constant garrison at Jerusalem. It was originally built by the Asmonean princes, who called it *Baris*; but Herod the Great, having repaired it changed its name, in honour of his friend M. Anthony. It was situated towards the west angle of the temple, upon an eminence cut steep on all sides, and inclosed with a wall three hundred cubits high. It was built in the form of a large square, having within the magnificence of a palace, and the conveniences of a city; and without, several fortifications, and a tower at each corner to strengthen and defend it. So that, considering its form and situation, we may be allowed to say, that it was a citadel to the temple, even as the temple was, in some sort, a citadel to the town.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, and *Fleury's Ecclesiastical History*.

^c That Lysias was no Roman is plain from his telling St Paul, that 'with a great sum he had purchased his freedom,' (Acts xxii. 28.), but that he was a Greek, we may, in some measure, learn from the common analogy of his name; and therefore it was no bad policy in our apostle to address the governor in his own language; and the governor might be the rather pleased with it, because that, by this means, he might have an opportunity of knowing from St Paul himself the cause of the present tumult.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^d 'While Felix was procurator of Judea, there came a certain person,' says Josephus, 'out of Egypt to Jerusalem, setting up for a prophet, and persuading the people to follow him to the top of Mount Olivet, some five furlongs from the city; for when he came thither, he told them, he would but speak the word, and immediately they should see the walls of Jerusalem fall flat to the ground, and make way for them to enter the city. But when Felix came to hear of this adventure, he fell upon them with his horse and foot, killed four hundred upon the spot, took two hundred, and put the Egyptian to flight.' It is to this story, no doubt, that Lysias

had raised a sedition in Judea, and headed a party of four thousand profligate wretches, seemed to refuse him that favour, until the apostle, informing him that he was a Jew of Tarsus, a freeman of a rich and honourable city, and therefore humbly hoped, that he would not deny him the privilege of vindicating himself, the governor consented; and the apostle, standing upon the stairs, and making signs for silence, began his speech ^e in the Hebrew language; which, when the people heard, they were a little pacified, and stood attentive to him while he gave them a particular account of his birth and education; of his extraordinary zeal for the rites and customs of their religion; of his violent persecution of the Christians in all parts, whereof the Sanhedrim could bear him witness; of the miraculous manner of his conversion, and of the commission which he immediately received from God to preach salvation to the Gentiles. Thus far the people heard him with patience; but when he proceeded to defend his practice in preaching to the Gentiles, they could contain themselves no longer, but unanimously cried out to have the villain put to death; and the more to express their indignation, threw off their clothes, and cast dust into the air, as if they had intended that moment to stone him. But Lysias, to avoid farther tumult, ordered him to be carried into the castle, and to be examined by scourging, ^f until he confessed what it was

alludes, and therefore it seems to be a mistake in Grotius, and others, to say, that the Egyptian mentioned by Josephus, was later than these times; for it is apparent from Josephus himself, both in his *Antiquities*, (b. xx.) and his history of the Jewish Wars, (b. ii.) that this Egyptian marched his rabble up to Jerusalem in the first or second year of the reign of Nero; whereas it was not till the fourth of Nero, that St Paul made his last journey to Jerusalem.—*Hammond's and Whistley's Annotations*.

^e To give some account of the apostle's conduct in this particular, we must observe, that there were two sorts of Jews at this time; some who used no other language in their common discourse, nor allowed of any bible in their religious assemblies, but the Hebrew; and these St Chrysostom calls *οἱ βαβυλῆς Ἑβραῖοι*, *profound Hebrews*; others that spake Greek, and used the Greek translation of the bible in their places of worship; and these were styled *Hellenists*. Of this latter sort was St Paul, because, as we may observe in his writings, he always makes use of the Greek translation of the Old Testament; so that, in this respect, he might not be so acceptable to the other sort. Those of them who were converted to Christianity, had great prejudices against him, (Acts xxi. 21.), which is said to be the reason why he concealed his name in the epistle written to the Hebrews; and as for those who were not converted, they could not so much as endure him; and this is the reason which Chrysostom gives why he preached to the Hellenists only, (Acts ix. 28.) That therefore he might avert the great displeasure which the Jews had conceived against him, he here speaks to them in the language which they best knew, and most esteemed; and they, by his compliance in this respect, were so far pacified, as to give him audience. For they were well enough pleased to hear him discourse of matters relating to religion, and especially of the vocation of the Gentiles, in a language which the Romans did not understand; whereas, had he, in the course of his apology, exposed the contempt and hatred which the Jews entertained of all heathens, in a language which the chief captain and his men were acquainted with, and in such a light as his known eloquence would have enabled him to do, it is not to be imagined, what terror, or confusion at least, he would have brought upon his enemies. So that it was a point of charity, as well as prudence in him to speak to them in Hebrew, that thereby he might both screen them from the resentment of the soldiery, and cure them, if possible, of their false prejudices against him.—*Hammond's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^f As Lysias did not understand Hebrew, he could not tell what the purport of St Paul's speech to the people was; but, by their mad and outrageous behaviour, he guessed, that he must

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he had done that so much exasperated the Jews against him.

While the lictor was binding him in order to his punishment, Paul asked the centurion that stood by, whether the Roman laws permitted them to treat, in this manner, a citizen, even before any sentence was passed upon him? which, when the centurion heard, without making any reply, he went directly to the governor, and advised him to act cautiously in this affair, because the prisoner, as he understood, was a Roman citizen; and a citizen indeed he was by birth-right, ^a whereas the governor himself was such only by purchase. ^b This made him waive all farther thoughts of scourging him, as being not a little afraid, that he had already done more than he could answer; but being desirous to know the bottom of the matter, the next day he convened the Sanhedrin, and brought down Paul, and set him before them.

The sight of so awful an assembly struck no terror into the apostle, who began his apology with an open declaration of the integrity and good intentions of his heart: 'Men, and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience'

have said something very provoking, either against the authority of their law, or the dignity of their nation, and therefore he was willing to know the truth of it from himself. Scourging was a method of examination used by the Romans and other nations, to force such as were supposed guilty to confess what they had done, what were their motives, and who were accessory to the fact. Thus Tacitus tells us of Herennius Gallus, that he received several stripes, that it might be known for what price, and with what confederates, he had betrayed the Roman army. It is to be observed, however, that the Romans were punitive in this wise, not by whips and scourges, but by rods only; and therefore it is, that Cicero, in the oration *pro Roburio*, speaking against Labienus, tells his audience, that the Porcian law permitted a Roman to be whipped with rods, but he, ^{as} a good and merciful man, (speaking ironically,) had done it with scourges; and, what is further observable, neither by whips nor rods could a citizen of Rome be punished, unless he was first adjudged to lose his privilege, to be uncitizenized, and declared an enemy to the commonwealth, and then he might be either scourged or put to death; for the form of disfranchising him was this, 'Lictor, bind his hands, or cover his face, hang him, scourge him, either within or without the suburbs;' all which shows the great propriety of the apostle's question to the centurion, 'is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?' (Acts xxii. 25.)—*Calmet's Commentary*, *Whitby's*, and *Hammond's Annotations*.

^a In what manner St Paul obtained this privilege, the learned are not agreed; but it seems to make for the opinion of those who think that the people of Tarsus had it bestowed on them by the favour of some emperor, that Dio Cassius, b. xlvii. reports, that they sided so far with Julius Cæsar in the civil war, and afterwards with Octavius, that the city obtained the name of Juliopolis, and was honoured with the greatest privileges; which makes Carthusianus, and the gloss upon 2 Tim. iv. 12. say more fully, that the inhabitants received this freedom, because they met the Roman ambassadors with peace and crowns, and that Paul's father going out with arms, received the penula or cloak, as a mark and ensign of a Roman citizen, 2 Tim. iv. 13.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^b Photius, in one of his letters, tells us about what time it was that the privileges of a Roman citizen came to be enjoyed, not only by those who were natives of the place, but by as many as either by favour or money were made partakers of that appellation; and several historians have observed, that under the first emperors, it was highly valued, and cost dear; but that in the reign of Claudius it came to be disesteemed, and purchased at a very low rate.—*Hammond's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^c The apostle, by a good conscience, does not mean here a conscience void of all error and offence; for he owns himself to have been guilty of a great sin in persecuting the church of Christ, (1 Tim. i. 13.) but such a conscience as acted according

before God, until this day.' This asserting of his innocence, Ananias, the high-priest, looked upon as a kind of reflection upon the justice of their tribunal, and therefore, ordered the officers that stood near him to strike him on the face; an indignity which the apostle resented with severity of language; but when the standers-by accused him with calumniating the high-priest, he excused himself, by saying, that he did not know, or could not well believe, that a person who had given such unjust orders could be invested with so sacred a character.

to his persuasion that he ought so to act; in which sense he says, that when he blasphemed against Christ, and persecuted his church, he did it out of a belief, that 'he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus,' (Acts xxvi. 9.) so that the sense of the apostle is, while I was persuaded that the Christian religion was false, I persecuted it with the utmost rigour; but, as soon as I came to perceive its divine institution, I declared for it, and have, ever since, maintained it, even to the hazard of my life. The religion of the Jews I did not forsake out of any hardships that I required, or any prejudice I had conceived against its precepts; nor did I embrace that of the Christians upon any other account than a full conviction of its truth and veracity. I was a good Jew, in short, as long as I thought it my duty to be so; and when I thought it my duty to be otherwise, I became a zealous Christian; in all which God knows the sincerity of my heart, and is witness of my uprightness.'—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^d The apostle's words are these, 'God shall smite thee, thou whitened wall.' A whitened wall was a proverbial expression, denoting a hypocrite of any kind; and the propriety of it appears in this, that as the wall had a fair outside, but nothing but dirt or sticks and stones within, so the high-priest had the outward appearance of a righteous judge, sitting as one that would pass judgment according to law, and yet commanding him to be punished for speaking the truth, and so condemning the innocent, against the law of nature, as well as that of Moses, (Lev. xix. 15.) Our blessed Saviour makes use of a comparison much of the same nature, when he calls the scribes and Pharisees, 'whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful outwards, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness,' (Mat. xxiii. 27.) And we need but look into the history of the ancient prophets, and there observe, with what an air of authority Elijah and Elisha speak to the kings of Israel, and with what boldness Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, reproach the priests, the princes, and the people of Judah, when by their transgressions, to justify our apostle, in taking the same freedom with this proud pontiff, who belied his character by his unjust proceedings. It is to be observed, however, in further vindication of St Paul, that these words of his, 'God shall smite thee,' are a prediction, and not an imprecation; and a prediction which, according to Josephus, was fulfilled in a short time; for when, in the government of Florus, his son Eleazar set himself at the head of a party of mutineers, who, having made themselves master of the temple, would permit no sacrifices to be offered for the emperor, and being joined by a company of assassins, compelled persons of the best quality to fly for their safety into sinks and vaults, Ananias and his brother Hezekias, were both drawn out of one of these places, and murdered: though Dr Lightfoot will have it, that he perished at the siege of Jerusalem.—*Calmet's Commentary*, *Whitby's Annotations*, and *Joseph. Jewish Wars*, b. ii. c. 17, 18.

^e It is asked, 1. Who this Ananias was? 2. How his being now called high-priest can suit the chronology, as it is certain, from Josephus, that he held the office much earlier? 3. How St Paul knew not that he was the high-priest? He must have known him by the external marks of office. These obscurities are cleared up on examining the special history of this period; and the light thrown on them extends to the following chapters; insomuch, that it cannot be doubted, that this book was written, not after the destruction of Jerusalem, but by a person contemporary with the events there related. Ananias was the son of Nebedene, as is proved by Krebs from Josephus, and high-priest, when Helena, queen of Adiabene, supplied the Jews with corn from Egypt in the famine of the 4th year of Claudius. (Acts xi. 28.) St Paul, therefore, going at that time to Jerusalem, (Acts xv. 2.) must have known that he was then raised to that dignity. Soon after the first council of the apostles at Jer-

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Perceiving, however, that the council consisted partly of Sadducees, and partly of Pharisees, to elude the malice of his enemies, he made open declaration, that he was a Pharisee, even as his father was before him, and that the great offence taken against him was his belief of a future resurrection; which so divided the council, that however the Sadducees, who were violent opposers of this article, were bent against him, the Pharisees, who were zealous maintainers of it, were for acquitting him; so that the dissention among them grew so high, that the governor, fearing lest Paul should be torn to pieces among them, commanded the soldiers to take him from the bar, and to return him back to the castle; where, to comfort him after all his frights and fears, God was pleased to appear to him that night in a vision, encouraging him to constancy and resolution, and assuring him, that as he had borne testimony to his cause at Jerusalem, so in despite of all his enemies, he should live to the same thing in Rome.

The next morning, above forty Jews entered into a wicked confederacy, which they ratified with an imprecation, never to eat nor drink until they had killed Paul, and having acquainted the Sanhedrim with their design, they thought it advisable that some of their body should solicit the governor to bring him down before them, under pretence of inquiring more accurately into his case, and that then, before he reached the court, they would not fail to way-lay and dispatch him. This conspiracy, however, was discovered to St Paul by a nephew of his, and by him imparted to Lysias; who immediately commanded two parties of foot, and one of horse, to be ready by nine o'clock that night, in order to conduct Paul, first to Antipatris, ^a and thence to Cæsarea, where Felix, ^b the governor of the province, had his residence. Lysias

usale, Ananias was dispossessed of his office, and on a dispute between the Samaritans and the Jews sent a prisoner to Rome, (J. Ant. i. xx. c. v.) whence he was released, and returned to Jerusalem. From that period he was not in the proper sense, the high-priest, though named so by Josephus, sometimes, as one of the chief-priests. Jonathan had been raised in the meantime to that dignity; and from the murder of Jonathan by Felix, (J. Ant. b. xx. c. vi.) to the high priesthood of Ismael, invested by Agrippa, (Ant. b. xx. c. vi.) this dignity remained vacant. Now it was precisely in this interval, that St Paul was apprehended in Jerusalem; and the Sanhedrim being destitute of a president, Ananias undertook of his own authority the discharge of that office, which he executed with the greatest tyranny. (Ant. b. xx. c. viii.) It is possible that St Paul, who had been only a few days at Jerusalem, might be ignorant, that he, who had been dispossessed of the priesthood, had taken a trust to which he was not entitled, and naturally exclaim,—‘I wist not,’ &c.—or, if he knew, it was an indirect reproof, and tacit refusal to recognise usurped authority. Thus this obscure passage is brought into a clear light; and St Paul’s imprisonment, the conspiracy against him with the consent of the Sanhedrim, and their petition to Festus to send for him to Cæsarea with intent to murder him on the road, are facts which correspond with the character of the times in Josephus, who mentions the principal persons, and attributes to them greater profligacy than St Luke.—*Elsley’s Annotations*.—ED.

^a This place, which was formerly called Capharsalama, (1 Mac. vii. 31.), stood upon the sea-coast, between Joppa and Cæsarea Palestine, but was of little or no repute, until it was rebuilt, or at least repaired and beautified, by Herod the Great, who, in honour of his father Antipater, changed its name.—*Whitby’s Alphabetical Table* and *Wells’s Geography of the New Testament*.

^b Claudius Felix, who in Tacitus is likewise called *Antonius*, because he was a slave both to the emperor Claudius and his mother Antonia, was the brother of Pallas, the freed-man and first

at the same time sent a letter to the governor signifying, ‘That the person whom he had sent was a freeman of Rome; that the Jews had evil-treated him, and conspired against his life; that he had taken that method to secure him against their violence; and had ordered his enemies to appear before him at Cæsarea, to manage their charge and accusation.’ This letter the governor received with great civility; and finding that Paul belonged to the province of Cilicia, promised him a fair hearing, as soon as his accusers should come down; and in the mean time ordered him to be secured in a place called ‘Herod’s judgment-hall.’

About five days after this, Ananias the high-priest, with others of the Sanhedrim, came down to Cæsarea, and brought with them an advocate, named Tertullus, ^d who, in a speech set off with all the insinuating arts of eloquence, to prepossess the governor ^e in their favour, accused St Paul ‘of being a seditious person, and a disturber of the public peace; who had set himself at the head of the sect of the Nazarenes, ^f and made no

favourite of the emperor, by whose interest he obtained the government of Judea; but in the administration of it, practised all manner of violence, avarice, and lust. The above cited historian tells us of him, ‘That he made his will the law of his government, ruled the province with all the authority of a king, and the insolence of a freed slave, whom neither shame nor fear could restrain.’ He stuck at no manner of cruelty or injustice, having caused Jonathan the high-priest to be assassinated, merely because he sometimes reminded him of his maladministration; and to gratify his debauchery, he scrupled not to violate all laws, both human and divine; for being in love with Drusilla, who was married to Azizus king of the Emisenes, by the help of Simon the magician, a Jew of Cyprus, he took her from her husband’s bed; and, in defiance of all law and right, kept her for his own wife. In short, his government was so grievous to the Jews, that they recurred his recall, A. D. 60. And as several of them went to come after him, to complain of his extortions, and other acts of violence, he had undoubtedly been executed, had not his brother’s credit preserved him.—*Calmet’s Commentary*, *Beausobre’s Annotations*, and *Joseph. Antig. b. xx. c. 5, 6*.

^c The word *ἡγεμόνιον*, which we render judgment-hall, is properly of Latin extract, and signifies the house where the chief Roman governor lived; and this in Cæsarea is called *Herod’s pretorium*, because it was a magnificent palace, which Herod the Great had built for his own habitation whenever he should go to Cæsarea; but which in after-times, the Roman governors made use of for the place of their abode, as well as a place of confinement for some particular prisoners.—*Calmet’s Commentary*.

^d It seems very likely, that this Tertullus, whose name was properly Latin, was a Roman orator, or advocate, whom the Jewish rulers employed in his cause against Paul, as being a person better versed in the Roman language, and formalities of Roman courts, than they were.—*Beausobre’s Annotations*.

^e In this preamble which Tertullus makes to Felix, there is a great deal of gross flattery, mixed with some truth: for though it be true, that Felix did some kindness to the Jewish nation, in delivering them from thieves and magicians that infested them; in destroying Eleazar, in particular, who was at the head of one of these bands of robbers; and in defeating the Egyptian impostor, who drew so many thousands of poor people after him; yet had the orator been minded to have told the whole truth, he might have accused him of numberless injuries done the province, since no governor was ever known to exercise his authority with more injustice and cruelty than he; but this was not the business of one, who, in the beginning of his speech, was to insinuate himself into his favour.—*Whitby’s* and *Beausobre’s Annotations*, and *Calmet’s Commentary*.

^f This is the only place in scripture wherein Christians are called *Nazarenes*, though the author and founder of their religion is frequently so called, from Nazareth, a city of Galilee, the place of his nativity, as some supposed, because it was that of his usual abode. At the first appearance of the gospel, Christians

A. M. 4062. A. D. 53; OR, A. M. 5469. A. D. 58, &c. FROM ACTS I. 10. TO THE END.

scruple to profane even the temple itself.' But, to the several parts of this accusation, the apostle, when permitted by Felix to make his defence, answered distinctly. The charge of sedition he utterly denied, and challenged them to prove, that they had ever found him so much as disputing in the temple, or stirring up the people in the synagogues, or any other place of the city. The charge of what they called *heresy* he readily admitted: but then he affirmed, that, long before him, this was the way in which all the patriarchs of the Jewish nation worshipped God, firmly believing another life, and a future resurrection. And as to the charge of profaning the temple, he allowed, indeed, that several times since his coming to Jerusalem, he had been there; but then it was without any multitude, and only to purify himself according to the Mosaic law. Felix gave both sides the hearing, but refused to make any final determination, until Lysias himself came down, of whom he might be more fully informed in the controversy; but in the mean time, he commanded, that, though Paul should be kept under a guard, yet his custody should be so free and easy, that none of his friends should be hindered from visiting or doing him any office of kindness.

A few days after this, when his wife Drusilla, ^a who had been a Jewess, was come to Cæsarea, Felix being minded to have her hear Paul, ordered him to be brought before them, and gave him leave to speak freely concerning the doctrines of Christianity. In his discourse he took occasion particularly to insist upon the great obligation which the laws of Christ lay upon men to justice and righteousness towards one another, and to sobriety and chastity both towards themselves and others, from this consideration more especially, namely, the strict and impartial account that must be given in the day of judgment, of all the actions of their past lives, to be either eternally punished, or rewarded for them: subjects that were wisely adapted to the governor's condition and circumstances, and which stung his conscience

were generally looked upon as a particular sect of the Jews, even as the Pharisees and Sadducees were. The heathens almost always confounded them with the Jews, nor was the distinction properly made, till after the destruction of the Jewish temple, and the large increase of Pagan converts. But as the word *αἱρεσις*, or *sect*, bears often an indifferent sense, both in the Scriptures, and in ancient Jewish writers, we might possibly suppose it so here, did not Justin Martyr (con. Tryph. p. 234.) inform us, that the Jews very early sent their emissaries to all nations against the Christians, representing them as *αἱρεσις ἀθεος, καὶ ἀνομος* an *atheistical and wicked heresy*: and therefore we have reason to believe, that in this sense they accused St Paul as being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.—*Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

^a This Drusilla was the daughter of that Agrippa who put James to death, and imprisoned St Peter, and was herself miraculously smitten in the midst of his oration at Cæsarea, whereof we have given a full account before. This daughter of his passed for one of the greatest beauties of her age; but was far from being remarkable either for her piety or chastity. At first she was promised in marriage to Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus, king of Comagene, upon condition that he would submit to be circumcised; but when he refused to comply with that, the match broke off, and she was afterwards married to Azizus, as we said before, who accepted of the condition. When she left him, and took it in her head to live with Felix, who was a Gentile, she forsook her own and conformed to his religion, according to the testimony of Josephus, *Antiq. b. xx. c. 5*. And therefore, when St Luke calls her a Jewess, he must be understood thereby to denote her birth and parentage, rather than the form and profession of her religion.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

so feelingly, that he could not forbear trembling, which made him break off the apostle's discourse, with a 'go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.'

When Portius Festus ^b succeeded to the government of Judea, he found Paul still in prison, left there by his predecessor to gratify the Jews. ^c Upon his first coming to Jerusalem, the high-priest, and other members of the Sanhedrim, exhibited fresh accusations against him, and in order to his trial desired that he might be sent up to Jerusalem, meaning to assassinate ^d him by the way. But Festus, unwilling to grant their request, ordered them to come down to Cæsarea, where he himself would shortly be, and then he would not fail to do them justice. The Jews accordingly went down; and when Festus was seated on the tribunal, they renewed their charge, and produced their articles against him: which differed not much from what they had accused him of before Felix. But Paul defended himself so well, by making it appear, that he neither had offended against the Jewish laws, nor against the temple, nor against the emperor, that their charge soon fell to the ground for want of sufficient proof. Festus, however, being willing to oblige the Jews at his first coming to the government, proposed to the apostle his going up to Jerusalem, there to be judged of the matters that were alleged against him: but he, knowing full well the malice of his enemies, and being unwilling to trust himself in their power, boldly declared, that as he then stood at the emperor's judgment-seat, where he ought to have a final trial, if he had done anything worthy of death, he did not at all decline it; but that as he had injured none of the Jews, and they could prove nothing criminal against him, he ought not to be made a victim to their fury; and therefore, as he was a Roman, he appealed ^e to the emperor.

^b When Festus came into Judea, which was in the sixth or seventh year of Nero, he found all in desolation and distress: the country laid waste; the people forced from their habitations; their houses exposed to fire and pillage; and all at the mercy of a brutal rout of vagabond free-booters, who in great numbers ravaged up and down at pleasure. In these days there was a famous impostor likewise with a train of credulous rabble at his heels, whom he had deluded into an opinion, that if they did but follow him into such a wilderness no harm should ever befall them. Both these sorts of people the governor endeavoured to suppress; and the latter he did effectually; but had not time to accomplish the other, because, in the space of two years he died, and was succeeded in the province by Albinus.—*Joseph. Antiq. b. xx. c. 7, 8*.

^c He had sorely exasperated them by his unjust and violent proceedings while he continued in the government, and therefore upon his dismission, he thought to have pacified them in some measure, by leaving Paul, whom he might have discharged long before, still in custody, and still liable to become a prey to their greedy malice. But herein he found himself sadly mistaken; for no sooner was his disgrace at court known, than several of the principal Jews at Cæsarea took a journey to Rome on purpose to accuse him, and as we said before, would certainly have wrought his ruin, had not his brother Pallas, who was now in equal favour with Nero, as formerly he had been with Claudius, interceded for his pardon.—*Joseph. Antiq. b. xx. c. 7*.

^d Which might easily be done by any of the bands of robbers and assassins, those persons whom Josephus calls 'Sicarii,' from sica, or the short sword they wore, something betwixt the Persian scymitar and the Roman falchion, which at that time infested the whole province; and would have done it for a small sum of money, without any suspicion upon the true authors of his murder.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^e This way of appealing was frequent among the Romans, introduced to defend and secure the lives and fortunes of the

A. M. 4063. A. D. 59; OR, A. M. 5470. A. D. 59, &c. FROM ACTS i. 10. TO THE END.

Whereupon Festus, being not a little startled, first conferred with his own council, ^a and then, with some seeming emotion, told the apostle that since he had appeared unto Cæsar, unto Cæsar he should go.

Not many days after, king Agrippa, ^b with his sister Berenice, ^c and a numerous train, came to Cæsarea to

populace from the unjust encroachments and over-rigorous severities of the magistrates: whereby it was lawful in cases of oppression, to appeal from them for redress and rescue; a thing more than once settled by the sanction of the Valerian laws. These appeals were generally made in writing, by appellatory libels given into the court, and containing an account of the appellant, the person against whom, and from whose sentence he did appeal; but where the cause was done in open court, it was enough for the criminal verbally to declare that he did appeal. In great and weighty cases, the appeal was made to the prince himself; whereupon not only at Rome, but in all the provinces of the empire, every proconsul and governor was strictly forbidden to execute, scourge, bind, or put any badge of servility upon a citizen, or any that had the privilege of a citizen, who had made his appeal, or any wise hinder him from going to Rome to obtain justice at the hands of the emperor, who had as much regard to the liberty of his subjects, says the law itself, as they could have for their good-will and obedience to him. And this was exactly St Paul's case: who, knowing that he should have no fair and equitable dealings at the hands of the governor, when once he came to be swayed by the Jews, his sworn and inveterate enemies, appealed from him to the emperor; which was a privilege so often, so plainly settled by the Roman laws, that Festus durst not deny his demands.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles.*

^a Some annotators are of opinion, that the persons with whom the governor advised upon this occasion, were part of the Sanhedrim who were come to Cæsarea to prosecute Paul; but we can scarce think, that any of this body of men would have counselled him to admit of St Paul's appeal, or to send him to Cæsar out of their reach; and therefore we suppose, that as these governors of provinces were not always great lawyers, though they might sometimes have very nice controversies come before them, they were usually provided with men of sufficient abilities in the Roman laws, who, sitting behind a veil or curtain, drawn between them and the governor's tribunal, were ready in all difficult cases, to assist him with their advice.—*Whitby's Annotations, and Calmet's Commentary.*

^b This prince, who was the son of Agrippa, surnamed Herod, of whom we read so much in the 12th chapter of the Acts, was at Rome with the emperor Claudius when he died. The emperor was inclined to have given him all the dominions which his father possessed; but those who were about him dissuaded him from it; so that, sending Cuspius Fadus as procurator to Judea, he kept Agrippa still at court, until he was in a condition to reign. When Herod, king of Chalcis, his uncle by his father's side, died, he gave him his dominions: but soon after translated him to a larger kingdom; for he bestowed on him, not only all the territories formerly belonging to Philip the tetrarch, but added likewise the country of Abilene, which belonged to Lysanias. After the death of Claudius, his successor Nero, who had a great affection for Agrippa, to his other dominions added Julius in Peræa, and that part of Galilee to which Tarichæa and Tiberias belonged. When the war broke out between the Jews and the Romans, this prince was constrained to join his troops with those of Rome, to reduce his countrymen, and assist in the taking of Jerusalem. After the destruction of that city, he retired to Rome with his sister Berenice, with whom he had always lived in an indiscreet manner, and there died at about seventy years of age.—*Calmet's Commentary, and Dictionary, Echard's and Fleury's Ecclesiastical Histories.*

^c She was at first married to Herod, king of Chalcis, her own uncle by her father's side; but, after his death, she betook herself to her brother, and with him continued for some considerable time, till at length, being censured as having an incestuous familiarity with him, in order to justify herself, and wipe off the disgrace, she thought proper to be married again to Polemon, king of Cilicia; who, for the sake of her riches, was persuaded to be circumcised, that he might have her: but they did not live long together; and when she left her husband, she returned to her brother, with whom she behaved in such a manner, as made all the world, as well as the satirist, take notice of her: 'thence the

make a visit and compliment to the new governor; to upon some occasion or other took an opportunity to entertain them with Paul's case; telling them, 'that Felix, upon his parting with the government, had left a certain prisoner, against whom some of the chief of the Jews had brought information, and immediately demanded judgment, which, according to the Roman law, ^d could not be done without first hearing the cause, and bringing the parties face to face; that to this purpose he had ordered his accusers to come to Cæsarea, but, upon the result, found, that the dispute between them was about matters of their own superstition, ^e and whether a person, whom they call Jesus, was really dead or alive; that being himself unacquainted with such kind of controversies, he had referred the prisoner to the Jewish sanhedrim; but that he, declining their judgment, had appealed to Cæsar; and that therefore he kept him still in prison, until he could meet with a convenient opportunity to send him to Rome.'

This account excited the curiosity of Agrippa, who was very desirous to see and hear the prisoner; ^f and accordingly, the king and his sister, accompanied with Festus, and other persons of quality, came into the court, with a pompous and magnificent retinue; and when Paul was brought forth before them, Festus acquainted the king, and the whole assembly, 'how much he had been solicited by the Jews, both at Cæsarea and Jerusalem, concerning the prisoner at the bar, that, as a notorious malefactor, he might be put to death; but that, having found him guilty of no capital crime, and the prisoner himself having appealed to Cæsar, he was determined to send him to Rome; that he was willing, however, to have

well known gem which on the finger of Berenice became enhanced in value,—Agrippa gave it to his incestuous sister.'—*Joseph. Antiq. b. xx. c. 5.—Juv. Sat. 6.*

^d Of this law and custom of the Romans, Philo Judæus, speaking of their precepts, gives us this account—'they yielded themselves to be common judges, hearing equally the accusers and defendants, condemning no man unheard, prejudging no man, but judging without favour or enmity, according to the nature of the cause.'—*Hammond's Annotations.*

^e The word in the original is *Δεισιδαιμονία*, that is, a vain and groundless fear of the gods: for the pious man, according to Varro, honours and fears God, but the superstitious man dreads him, and is seized with terror before him. And to the same purpose Maximus Tyrius tells us, that a man truly pious, looks upon God as a friend full of goodness: but the superstitious man serves him with sentiments of base and servile flattery. Now, considering that Festus was addressing himself to Agrippa and Berenice, who were certainly Jews, one may be apt to think it a breach of good manners for him to call the religion they professed by no better a name than that of superstition: but then we must observe, that he is supposed to speak here in the common strain of heathens, who generally looked upon all Jewish ceremonies as superstitious usages; and that he made no scruple to express himself in this manner, as either accounting himself so much superior to such petty princes, that he thought he might make free with them, or as judging that themselves would not be offended at his representing the particular points in dispute between St Paul and his adversaries in such a contemptuous light.—*Calmet's Dictionary and Commentary.*

^f As Herod, the father of this Agrippa, had been so active an instrument in endeavouring to destroy Christianity, having killed James, and was about to have put Peter to death also, had not God sent him to his own place, there is no doubt that Agrippa had heard much about Christianity; and as to St Paul, his conversion was so very remarkable that his name, in connexion with Christianity, was known, not only throughout Judea, but through all Asia Minor and Greece. Agrippa, therefore, might naturally wish to see and hear a man of whom he had heard so much.—*Dr A. Clarke.—Ed.*

A. M. 4064. A. D. 60; OR, A. M. 5471. A. D. 60, &c. FROM ACTS i. 10. TO THE END.

his cause again discussed before so judicious a person as Agrippa, that he might be furnished with some material instructions to send along with him, since it seemed absurd to him to send a prisoner to the emperor, without signifying his crimes.' When Festus had ended, and Agrippa had signified to St Paul, that he had liberty to answer for himself; after silence was made, he addressed himself chiefly to Agrippa, and thus began his speech:

'I think myself happy, O king Agrippa, in that I am permitted to make my defence against the accusations charged upon me by the Jews, before a person so exactly versed in all the rites and customs, the questions and controversies, of the Jewish law; for which reason I intreat your Majesty to hear me with patience.^a My manner of life from my youth, which was among the Jews at Jerusalem, they all know, and that I was brought up under the institutions of the Pharisees,^b a sect the strictest of all others in the Jewish religion. Accordingly, now I am accused for asserting the resurrection^c of the dead, which is not only a doctrine acknowledged by the Pharisees, but a fundamental promise made by God of old, which the generality of the Jews^d depend upon, and in hopes of which they spend their

^a From what has been alleged relating to Herod Agrippa, it is plain he was a zealous Jew, or at least appeared so at Jerusalem, and had educated all his children in the Jewish religion. This Agrippa, his son undoubtedly, maintained the same profession, and at this time he had, by permission of the emperor, the direction of the sacred treasury, the government of the temple, and the right of nominating the high priests, as we learn from Josephus. No wonder therefore that St Paul told Agrippa he knew him to be expert in all customs and questions which were among the Jews.—*Lardner's Credibility*.—Ed.

^b That of the three sects which were then of greatest credit in Judea, the Pharisees were the most strict, and held in the greatest veneration, we have the testimony of Josephus, who, in more places than one, informs us, that this sect was thought to be more pious than others, and more exact in their knowledge of the customs of their fathers, and in the interpretation of their laws. For, as for the other two famous sects, the Sadducees, by denying the resurrection, and all future punishments, took away the rewards of a virtuous, and gave licence to a vicious life; and the Essenes, by being Jews, and yet separating themselves entirely from the worship of the temple, were guilty of a great schism, and, by making their prayers and religious addresses to the sun, as Josephus, who lived three years among them, testifies, were chargeable with idolatry.—*Jewish Wars*, b. ii. c. 7.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^c But why should St Paul say, that he was accused for asserting the general resurrection: when it was only the resurrection of Christ that he was called in question for? Now, in answer to this it must be observed, that before our Saviour's passion, the doctrine which he preached was chiefly levelled against the vain traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees; but that after his resurrection, the testimony of the apostles being this, 'that Christ was risen from the dead,' which was directly contrary to the notion of the Sadducees, these people became their hottest enemies, being grieved, as the text expresses it, that they preached the resurrection of the dead through Jesus, (Acts iv. 1, 2,) as easily perceiving that the proof of the one, namely, that Christ was risen, was a confirmation of the general resurrection. As therefore the resurrection of Christ was a pledge and assurance of a general resurrection, it was impossible for the apostles to attest the one, without asserting the other, since in the truth of the thing, and according to the sentiments of the Jews themselves, the resurrection was to be effected by the Messiah; for which reason we find St Paul styling our Lord 'the first fruits of them that slept,' and declaring farther, 'that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' (1 Cor. xv. 20, 22).—*Whitby's Annotations*.

^d That the Jews had grounds sufficient in the writings of the Old Testament, to expect a future resurrection, is evident from

time in constant piety and obedience to God; and yet for believing and expecting this, O king, I am accused and persecuted by the Jews. But why should it be thought an incredible thing that God, who is omnipotent, should raise the dead? I confess, indeed, that once I was of opinion, that I was bound in conscience to persecute this profession and doctrine of Christ; and accordingly, having obtained a commission from the high priest, many holy men and women in Jerusalem I not only hurried to prison, but, when any of them were put to death, was myself not a little assenting and assisting in it. Nay, in other places too, I brought them before courts of judicature, by several methods of severity, forced them to deny Christ, and was so much enraged against them, that I compelled them to flee to the heathen cities, and even thither pursued them. To this purpose, having received authority from the Sanhedrim to go to Damascus, at noon-day, O king, I saw a light from heaven, far exceeding that of the sun, which struck me and those that accompanied me to the ground, and heard a voice in the Hebrew tongue, calling me by name, and admonishing me to forbear my cruel and persecuting temper; because, from that time, I was chosen to be a preacher and promoter of that doctrine which I was then labouring to destroy, and particularly commissioned to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, in order to convert them from their idolatrous worship to the service of the true God. In obedience therefore to this heavenly vision, I have ever since been very diligent in preaching the doctrines of repentance and reformation, not in Judea only, but in other nations; and not to the Jews only, but likewise to the Gentiles. This, O king, is my great crime, and for this it was that the Jews apprehended me in the temple, with a design to have murdered me; but being supported by a divine power, I continue in my duty to this day, asserting nothing but what is agreeable to Moses and the prophets, who have plainly foretold, that the Messiah should be put to death, and rise again, and, by his doctrine, enlighten both Jews and Gentiles.'

our Saviour's application of God's own words, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' (Exod. iii. 6.) 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,' (Mat. xxii. 32.) Wherever God is styled the God of any one, it always signifies that he either is or will be the benefactor of that person; and in naming Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he must mean it of their complete persons, which consisted of bodies as well as souls; and from hence it will follow, that as the troubles and afflictions, which these three patriarchs underwent in their life-time did not answer those favours and kindnesses which are included in the phrase of his being the God of any one, God was still engaged to make them happy after this life, and completely happy in their whole persons, that is, both in body and soul, which could only be effected by their resurrection. This is the deduction which our Saviour makes; but, when we read in the prophets, 'that the earth shall cast out the dead, and those that dwell in the dust shall arise,' (Isa. xxvi. 19.) and more expressly still, 'that many of them who sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting confusion,' (Dan. xii. 2.) we need less wonder that we find the martyrs in the Jewish church not doubting 'but that the Creator of the world would give them breath and life again, and would raise those up, who died for his laws, unto everlasting life,' (2 Maccab. vii. 9, 23.) Good reason therefore had the apostle to represent this as the hope of their tribes; for though the Sadducees denied it, yet, as Josephus informs us, they were but a handful of men in comparison; and whenever they came to bear offices, they were forced to profess the doctrine of the Pharisees, otherwise the common people would not have endured them.—*Antiq.* b. xviii. c. 2.—*Whitby's Annotations*.

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While he was thus discoursing, Festus, who happened to be no great master of the argument, was ready to think, that his talking in this abstruse manner must be the effect of some deliriousness, and therefore told him abruptly, that his too much learning ^a had made him mad. But to this he calmly replied, 'I am in my perfect senses, most noble Festus, and what I say, without excess or transport, is literally true. For this I appeal to Agrippa, before whom I take this freedom of speech, and am confident that he knows it to be true. The life, death, and resurrection of Christ, were things of public note, and cannot be a secret to him, who was a Jew born. Believest thou the prophets, O king? I am satisfied thou dost, and therefore cannot but know that their predictions are fulfilled in Christ.' This moving and persuasive eloquence so wrought upon Agrippa, that he could not forbear declaring, that the apostle had almost persuaded him to be a Christian.^b To which he readily replied, 'That he heartily wished, that not only he, but the whole company then present, were not only almost, but altogether, though not prisoners, as much Christians as himself was'.^c Upon this the assembly broke up; and when Agrippa and Festus had conferred together about Paul's case, they freely owned, that the accusation laid against him amounted neither to a capital offence, nor to any thing deserving imprisonment, but that, had he not appealed unto Cæsar, he might have been legally discharged.^d

His journey to Rome, therefore, being thus finally

^a Festus must have known from some other hand, that Paul was a learned man; because, in this speech of his, he gives us no indication of his proficiency either in the Greek or Roman literature; though he might think, from the terms which he heard him make use of, that the subject of his discourse must be vastly mysterious; for to hear him speak of the resurrection of the dead, of a vision and voice from heaven, of faith in Christ, of conversion from darkness to light, of deliverance from the power of Satan, of an inheritance among them that are sanctified, and of Christ's showing light unto the people, and to the Gentiles, which were so many enigmas to the governor, was enough to make him think, that there possibly might be some disorder in the apostle's brain that made him talk in so unintelligible a manner.—*Calmet's Commentary*.

^b This seems to imply, that, since the time that they took it upon themselves at Antioch, the name of *Christians* was become their common appellation.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^c While the apostle's heart glows with affection for their best interests, he wishes that they might enjoy all his blessings, if possible, without being obliged to bear any cross on the account. His holding up his chain, which was probably now detached from the soldier's arm, and wrapped about his own, must have made a powerful impression on the minds of his audience. Indeed, it appears they could 'bear the scene no longer'; the king was overwhelmed, and rose up instantly, and so did the rest of the council, and went immediately aside; and, after a very short conference among themselves, they unanimously pronounced him innocent; and his last word, *ταυ δεσμων*, 'bonds!' and the action with which it was accompanied, had made such a deep impression upon their hearts, that they conclude their judgment with that very identical word *δεσμων*. Would to God, says the apostle, that all who hear me this day were altogether such as I am, except these 'bonds!' The whole council say—'This man hath done nothing worthy of death nor of 'bonds!' *Δεσμων*, 'bonds,' is echoed by them from the last words of the apostle; as we may plainly perceive that, seeing such an innocent and eminent man suffering such indignity, had made a deep impression upon their hearts.—*Dr A. Clarke*.—Ed.

^d Though this declaration of Agrippa would not secure Paul's deliverance, yet it might do him some service that a testimony to his innocence was pronounced by so learned and honourable a person of the Jewish nation and religion. Festus would pro-

determined, he and some other prisoners of note,^e were committed to the charge of one Julius, a centurion, or captain of the legion called *Augusta*, having Luke the evangelist, Aristarchus, Trophimus, and some others, to accompany him in his voyage.^f About the latter end of September, they went on board a ship of *Adramyttium*,^g and coasting along Asia, arrived at Sidon; where Julius, who all along treated Paul with great civility, gave him leave to go ashore, and refresh himself. From Sidon they set sail, and came in sight of Cyprus; and, having passed over the seas of Cilicia and Pamphylia, landed at Myra,^h a port in Lycia, where this ship finished

ably entertain a better opinion of him upon this account, and would give directions to the officer who attended him, to treat him with so much the greater regard. I shall only add, that though it might seem in this view an unhappy circumstance that Paul had made this appeal, yet as it was, at the time he made it, the properest method he could take for his own security, he would have reason to reflect upon it with satisfaction; and we before observed, that his visiting Rome under the character of a prisoner, was overruled by Providence to answer some important purposes. Comp. Phil. i. 12, &c.—*Doddridge's Expositor*.—Ed.

^e It was common to send persons from Judea to be tried at Rome; numerous instances about this period are given in *Lardner's Credibility*, b. i. c. x. sect. 10.—Ed.

^f 'When the fast was now already past,' is the signification of time in the text, (Acts xxvii. 9.), and without all controversy this was the great annual fast of expiation for the sins of the people of Israel, (Lev. xvi. 29.), which began on the tenth day of the month Tisri, answering to the 25th of our September. This was the commencement of their civil year; and therefore it is no wonder that St Luke should make use of this epocha, 'the fast being already past,' to denote a particular part of the year, since he wrote his gospel for the use of Christians, who, at this time, were chiefly Jewish converts, and consequently no strangers to this kind of language.—*Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^g *Adramyttium* was a maritime town of Mysia Major in Asia Minor, opposite the island of Lesbos, and was sometimes also called *Pedassus*, situated with its harbour and docks at the foot of Mount Ida, near the *Cæcus*. It gave its name to an arm of the *Ægean Sea*, and is supposed to have derived its designation from *Adramys*, the brother of *Cræsus*, by whom it was built, or from *Hermon*, one of the kings of Lydia, who, in the Phrygian language, was called *Adramys*. It is now termed *La Andramiti*, and is a wretched place, inhabited only by a few Greek fishermen. St Jerome and others have erroneously supposed this city to be the same as that built by Alexander the Great at the Canopic mouth of the Nile in Egypt, and which is understood to be the same as Thebes.—*Scripture Gazetteer*, Edin. 1837.—Ed.

^h Lycia, a province of Asia Minor, bounded on the north by Phrygia, on the south by the Mediterranean, on the east by Pamphylia, and on the west by Caria. This country, or rather kingdom, was originally distinguished by the names of *Mylias* and *Tremile*, from the *Mylæ* or *Solyimi*, a people of Crete, who settled there; the name Lycia being given to it at a subsequent period by *Lycus*, the son of *Pandion*. From the remotest age in the history of Lycia its inhabitants were commended for their sobriety and justice, but towards the commencement of the Christian era they became greatly degenerated, many of them being noted for piracy. Lycia being conquered by Cyrus, its inhabitants were still permitted to be governed by kings of their own, on paying an annual tribute to the Persian monarchs. They afterwards became subject, first, to the Macedonian, and then to the Roman empires, Lycia forming one of the Roman provinces of Asia Minor when the apostle Paul sailed from Myra, its metropolis, for Rome; (Acts xxvii. 5.) At that period the country contained twenty-three cities, besides large towns, the chief of which were Myra, Telmisus, Patara, Olympus, Phaselis, and Limyra. That Christianity was propagated in Lycia at a very early period, is beyond dispute, but whether, as the present Greeks affirm, Paul preached in Myra, and established there a Christian church, is destitute of proof. That city did, however, afterwards become the metropolitan of thirty-six suffragan sees. But, subsequently, the Mohammedan imposture supplanted the

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its voyage. At Myra, Julius, and the prisoners that were under his care, went on board a ship of Alexandria, bound for Italy; and having passed by Cnidus,^a with much ado they made for Salmone, a promontory on the eastern shore of Crete; from whence, by many days' slow sailing, they arrived at a place called 'the Fair Havens,'^b on the coast of the same island. Here St Paul advised the centurion to put in and winter, because the season of the year was far advanced, and sailing,^c in those seas especially, was now become dangerous; but he, preferring the judgment of the master of the ship, and the wind at this instant blowing gently at south, they put again to sea, in hopes of reaching Phœnice, another harbour of Crete, where there was safe riding, and there to winter. It was not long however before they found themselves disappointed; for the calm southerly gale, which blew before, suddenly changed into a stormy and tempestuous north-east wind,^d which bore down all be-

Christianity which remained in the province; and, at the present time, the few Greek Christians who are still to be found within its limits, are almost as ignorant as their Turkish rulers, of that gospel which they profess to believe.—*Sime's Sacred Geography*.—Ed.

^a This is a city which stands on a promontory or foreland of the same name, in that part of the province of Caria which was more particularly called *Doris*, remarkable among the ancients for the worship of Venus; thence called by Horace, *Regina Cnidi*, and for the celebrated statue of that goddess, which was made by the great artificer Praxiteles.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*, and *Whitby's Alphabetical Table*.—Extensive ruins of this place, which is supposed to have been two miles in circumference, still remain.—*Mansford*.—Ed.

^b This port still remains, and is known by the same name; it is situated toward the northern extremity of the island.—Ed.

^c It is a common observation of mariners, that for some weeks before and after Michaelmas, there are at sea sudden and frequent storms, commonly called 'Michaelmas flaws,' which, at that time of the year, make sailing, especially in the Mediterranean, dangerous. Nor is this any new observation, but as old as Hesiod himself, who tells us, that at the going down of the Pleiades, which was at the end of autumn, navigation was hazardous: the very same thing that the apostle here asserts.—*Hammond's Annotations*.

^d Interpreters have been greatly perplexed with this word; and the ancient copyists not less so, as the word is variously written in the MSS. and Versions. Dr Shaw supposes it to be one of those tempestuous winds called 'Levanter,' which blow in all directions, from N. E. round by the E. to S. E. The euroclydon, from the circumstances which attended it, he says, 'seems to have varied very little from the true east point; for, as the ship could not bear, *ἀντροφλαμίν*, 'loof up,' against it, (ver. 15.) but they were obliged to let her drive, we cannot conceive, as there are no remarkable currents in that part of the sea, and as the rudder could be of little use, that it could take any other course than as the winds directed it. Accordingly, in the description of the storm, we find that the vessel was first of all under the island Claudia, (ver. 16.) which is a little to the southward of the parallel of that part of the coast of Crete from whence it may be supposed to have been driven; then it was tossed along the bottom of the gulf of Adria, (ver. 27.) and afterwards broken to pieces, (ver. 41.) at Melita, which is a little to the northward of the parallel above mentioned; so that the direction and course of this particular euroclydon seems to have been first at east by north, and afterwards, pretty nearly east by south.' These winds, called now 'Levanter,' and formerly it appears 'euroclydon,' were no determinate winds, blowing always from one point of the compass: euroclydon was probably then, what Levanter is now, the name of any tempestuous wind in that sea, blowing from the north-east round by east to the south-east; and therefore St Luke says, there rose against it, that is, the vessel, a tempestuous wind called euroclydon; which manner of speaking shows that he no more considered it to be confined to any one particular point of the compass, than our sailors do their Levanter. Dr Shaw derives *ευροκλυδων* from *ευρου κλυδων*, 'an eastern tempest,'

fore it, so that they were forced to let the ship drive; but, to secure it from splitting, they under-girt it; and, to prevent its running aground on the shallows, threw out a great part of its lading and tackle.

For fourteen days the company continued in this condition, without ever seeing either sun or stars, and began all now to give up their lives for lost; when St Paul, having a little blamed them for not taking his advice, desired them however to be of good courage, because he had assurance from heaven, that, whatever became of the ship, they should escape to an island, and not one of their lives be lost. On the fourteenth night, as the sailors were throwing the lead, and sounding, they found themselves nigh some coast; and apprehending they might strike upon some shelves in the dark, thought proper to come to an anchor, till the morning might give them better information. But, not staying for that, they were attempting to save themselves by getting into the boat, when St Paul, perceiving it, told the centurion, that unless they all staid in the ship, none could be safe; whereupon the soldiers cut the ropes, and let the boat drive. A little before day-break, St Paul persuaded them to take some nourishment, because, in all that time of danger, which had been ^e for fourteen days, they had eaten in a manner nothing; and to encourage them to do this, he assured them again, that 'not a hair of their heads should perish.' In the morning they discovered land; and, discerning a creek, which seemed to make a kind of haven, they resolved, if possible, to put in there; but, in their passage, unexpectedly fell into a place where two seas met, and where the fore-part of the ship striking upon a neck of land that ran out into the sea, the hinder part was soon beaten in pieces by the violence of the waves. When the soldiers saw this, they proposed putting all the prisoners to the sword, lest any of them should swim to land, and make their escape; but the centurion, who was willing to save Paul, by no means allowing of that, gave orders that every one should shift for himself; and the issue was, that, some by swimming, others on planks, and others on pieces of the broken ship, to the number of two hundred and seventy-six persons, they all got safe to shore.

The country upon which they were cast, as St Paul

which is the very meaning affixed to a Levanter at the present day. The reading of the Codex Alexandrinus is *ευρακλων*, 'the north-east wind,' which is the same with the euro-aquilo of the Vulgate. This reading is approved by several eminent critics; but Dr Shaw, in the place referred to above, has proved it to be insupportable.—Dr A. Clarke, on Acts xxvii. 14.—Ed.

^e The words in the text are, 'this is the fourteenth day that ye have continued fasting, having taken nothing,' (Acts xxvii. 33.) Now, because it was impossible for them, without a miracle, to continue fasting fourteen days, without eating any thing, some have been induced to render the words thus, 'ye have continued expecting this day, which is the fourteenth day,' that is, waiting to see the success of it, which it seems, in the opinion of the mariners, was a critical day to them, wherein their danger was at the highest, and therefore they eat nothing all that day, as having no leisure to consider hunger, when their greater danger and more immediate fear was drowning. But as we read of nothing of this critical day, so the long fasting mentioned in ver. 21. determines the sense otherwise, and makes St Paul's words indeed amount to no more than a common familiar expression, that may, almost every day, be heard at any table, where there happens to be a puny stomach: 'you have eat nothing,' says the master of the house to such a one, 'very little, or next to nothing.'—*Whitby's*, *Hammond's*, and *Beausobre's* Annotations.

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had foretold, was an island called ^a Melita, now Malta; and the natives of the place received them with great civility and kindness, making them fires to dry their wet clothes, and cherish their benumbed limbs. But as Paul was throwing some sticks upon the fire, ^b a viper dis-

^a There were two islands of this name: one in the Adriatic Gulf, or Gulf of Venice, on the coast of Illyricum, and near to Epidaurus; the other in the Mediterranean Sea, between Sicily and Africa, and now called Malta. It is about fifty miles from the coast of Sicily; twenty miles long, and twelve miles in its greatest breadth; and about sixty miles in circumference. It is one immense rock of white soft freestone, with about one foot depth of earth on an average, and most of this has been brought from Sicily! It produces cotton, excellent fruits, and fine honey; from which it appears the island originally had its name; for *Mela*, 'meli,' and in the genitive case *Μελιτος*, 'Melitos,' signifies honey. Others suppose that it derived its name from the Phœnicians, who established a colony in it, and made it a place of refuge, when they extended their traffic to the ocean, because it was furnished with excellent harbours, on the east and west shores: hence, in their tongue, it would be called מליטה 'Meliteh,' 'escape or refuge, from מלט *malat*, 'to escape.' The Phœnicians were probably the first inhabitants of this island: they were expelled by the Phœnicians; the Phœnicians by the Greeks; the Greeks by the Carthaginians; the Carthaginians by the Romans, who possessed it in the time of the apostle; the Romans by the Goths; the Goths by the Saracens; the Saracens by the Sicilians, under Roger, earl of Sicily, in 1190. Charles V., emperor of Germany, took possession of it by his conquest of Naples and Sicily; and he gave it in 1525 to the Knights of Rhodes, who are also called the Knights of St John of Jerusalem. In 1798, this island surrendered to the French, under Buonaparte, and in 1800, after a blockade of two years, the island being reduced by famine, surrendered to the British, under whose dominion it still remains, (1838.) Every thing considered, there can be little doubt that this is the Melita at which St Paul was wrecked, and not at that other island in the Adriatic, or Venetian Gulf, as high up northward as Illyricum. The following reasons make this greatly evident: 1. Tradition has unvaryingly asserted this as the place of the apostle's shipwreck. 2. The island in the Venetian Gulf, in favour of which Mr Bryant so learnedly contends, is totally out of the track in which the euroclydon must have driven the vessel. 3. It is said, in ver. 11. of this chapter, that another ship of Alexandria, bound, as we must suppose, for Italy, and very probably carrying wheat thither, as St Paul's vessel did, (chap. xxvii. 38.) had been driven out of its course of sailing, by stress of weather, up to the Illyrican Melita, and had been for that cause obliged to winter in the isle. Now this is a supposition which, as I think, is too much of a supposition to be made. 4. In St Paul's voyage to Italy from Melita, on board the Alexandrian ship that had wintered there, he and his companions landed at Syracuse, (ver. 12, 13.) and from thence went to Rhegium. But if it had been the Illyrican Melita, the proper course of the ship would have been, first, to Rhegium, before it reached Syracuse, and needed not to have gone to Syracuse at all; whereas, in a voyage from the present Malta to Italy, it was necessary to reach Syracuse, in Sicily, before the ship could arrive at Rhegium in Italy.—*Dr. A. Clarke*, (Acts xxviii. 1.)—*Ed.*

^b This serpent, which in the sacred writings is called *אֶפֶס*, *apha*, is no doubt the *epha* of the Arabs, thus described by Dr Shaw: but the most common as well as malignant of this tribe, is the *leffah*, which, like our viper or adder, is of a less uniform turn of body than the *zurrike*, and rarely exceeds a foot in length. It is not always of the same colour, but varies a little according to the quality of the earth, sand, or rocks where it is found. The torrida dipsas answers very well both to the name and to the quality of the *leffah*, which is so called from *leffah*, *urere*, 'to burn.' The Arabs report that there is the same antipathy betwixt the *leffah* and the *taith*, chameleon, which was long ago assigned to the chameleon and the viper; and that a little drop of clammy juice, which the *taith* lets fall on the *leffah* will throw it into such violent convulsions as are attended with immediate death. This creature is remarkable for its quick and penetrating poison, and on this account has been made, from the remotest antiquity, an emblem of what is hurtful and destructive. Nay, so terrible was the nature of these creatures, that they were very commonly thought to be sent as execution-

loded by the heat, came out of the wood, and fastened on his hand. Which when the natives saw, they immediately concluded that he was some notorious malefactor or murderer, whom the divine vengeance, though it suffered him to escape the sea, had reserved for a more public and solemn execution. But when they saw him shake off the venomous creature into the fire, and no manner of harm ensue, they changed their sentiments to the other extreme, and cried out that ^c 'he was a god.'

Not far from this place was the residence of ^d Publius, the governor of the island, who entertained this shipwrecked company with great hospitality for three days; in acknowledgment of which, St Paul by his prayers, and the imposition of his hands, recovered his father, from a fever and bloody flux, and several others of the inhabitants, afflicted with any kind of disease, he restored to their former health and strength; for which they not only showed him the highest marks of their esteem, but furnished both him and his company with all necessaries proper for the rest of their voyage.

After three months stay in this island, the centurion and his charge went on board the ^e *Castor* and *Pollux*, a

ers of divine vengeance upon mankind for enormous crimes which had escaped the course of justice. An instance of such an opinion as this, we have in the history of St Paul (Acts xxviii.), whom the people of Melita, when they saw the viper leap upon his hand, presently concluded to be a murderer; and as readily made a god of him, when, instead of having his hand inflamed, or falling down dead, he, without any harm, shook the reptile into the fire, it being obvious enough to imagine, that he must stand in a near relation, at least to the gods themselves, who could thus command the messengers of their vengeance, and counterwork the effects of such powerful agents—*Carpenter's Scripture Natural History*.

^c Hercules was one of the gods whom the people of this island worshipped, and to him they ascribed the power of curing the bite of serpents.—*Beausobre's Annotations*.

^d That he was governor of the island, is highly probable from an inscription found there, and set down by Grotius, wherein the *ἡγετος μελιταιων*, is reckoned among the Roman officers; and that both he, and most of the people under him, were converted to the Christian faith, is the joint opinion of St Chrysostom, and some other Greek authors; whereas Ado, with several Latin writers, affirm that Publius, joining himself to St Paul, was by him made a bishop, and sent to preach the gospel; and that coming to Athens, he there settled, governed that church in the quality of a bishop for some time, and then ended his life by martyrdom. But this is a mistaken piece of history, since the Publius who was the bishop of Athens did not suffer martyrdom till the time of Marcus Aurelius.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles, and Calmet's Commentary*.

^e It was the custom of the ancients to have images on their ships, both at the head and stern, the first of which was called *παραστῆν*, 'the sign,' from which the ship was named, and the other was that of the tutelar deity to whose care the ship was committed; which probably might give occasion to the fable that Europa was carried away by Jupiter in the shape of a bull. There is no doubt but they had sometimes deities at the head; and then it is most likely, if they had any figure at the stern, it was the same, as it is hardly probable the ship should be called by the name of one deity, and be committed to the care of another. The figure that was used for Castor and Pollux, as Dr Lightfoot says, was that of two young men on horseback, with each of them a javelin in his hand, &c. But others have observed that the sign of Castor and Pollux was that of a double cross; and though the Greeks took them for a sign in the zodiac which was called the twins, and considered as sacred to those fictitious deities, whom they supposed to be the sons of Jupiter by Leda, it was not at first represented by two boys, but by two beasts, as referring to the fruitfulness of goats in producing twin kids about the time the sun was in that constellation. The appearance of both these constellations together was, as Dr Hammond has observed, after Strabo, Pausanias, and other ancient

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ship of Alexandria, bound for Italy. At ^a Syracuse they put in and tarried three days; thence sailed to ^b Rhegium, and so to ^c Puteoli, where they landed; and finding some Christians there, at their request staid a week with them, and then set forward in their journey to Rome. The Christians of this city hearing of the apostle's coming, went out to meet him, some as far as ^d Appii-forum, and others as far as the ^e Three Taverns;

writers, thought favourable to mariners, and therefore for a good omen, they had them carved or painted on the head of the ship, and gave it a name from hence, which the sacred historian does not scruple to use.—*Doddridge's Expositor*.

^a This was a city of Sicily, seated on the east side of the island, with a fine prospect from every entrance both by sea and land. Its port, which had the sea on both sides of it, was almost all of it environed with beautiful buildings, and all that part of it which was without the city, was on both sides banked up, and sustained with very fair walls of marble. The city itself while in its splendour, was the largest and richest that the Greeks possessed in any part of the world. For according to Strabo it was two and twenty miles in circumference; and both Livy and Plutarch inform us, that the spoil of it was equal to that of Carthage. It was called *Quadruplex*, as being divided into four parts,—*Acradina*, *Tyche*, *Neapolis*, and the island of *Ocetygia*. The first of these contained in it the famous temple of Jupiter; the second, the temple of Fortune; the third, a large amphitheatre, and a wonderful statue of Apollo in the midst of a spacious square; and the fourth, the two temples of Diana and Minerva, and the renowned fountain of *Arethusa*. About two hundred and ten years before the birth of Christ, this city was taken and sacked by Marcellus the Roman general; and in storming the place, Archimedes the great mathematician, who is esteemed the first inventor of the sphere, and who, during the siege, had sorely galled the Romans with his military engines, was slain by a common soldier, while he was intent upon his studies. After it was thus destroyed by Marcellus, Augustus rebuilt that part of it which stood upon the island; and in time it so far recovered itself, as to have three walls, three castles, and a marble gate, and to be able to set out twelve thousand horse, and four hundred ships. But the blow which the Saracens gave it, A. D. 884, when they razed it to the ground, it even feels to this day.—*Whitby's Alphabetical Table*, and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^b Rhegium, now called Reggio, is a port town in Italy, opposite to Messina in Sicily; and is thought to have had this name given it by the Greeks, who suppose that much about this place Sicily was broken off from the continent of Italy by the sea. At present it is an archbishop's see, and a considerable place for trade, though it has several times formerly been surprised and plundered by the Turks.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^c This place, which is now commonly called Pozzuoli, is a city in Terra di Lavoro, a province in the kingdom of Naples, situated upon a hill, in a creek of the sea, and just opposite to Baïæ, on the other side of the creek, a place of great renown among the Roman writers. Within the bounds of this city there are five and thirty natural baths of different sorts of warm waters, very useful for the cure of several diseases; and from these baths, or pits of water, called in Latin, *putei*, the town is said to have taken its name. At present it is a bishop's see, under the archbishop of Naples; and in it are to be seen many Roman antiquities, and natural rarities, not easily to be found elsewhere.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

^d This place, at present called *Cassarilla di St Maria*, was an ancient city of the Volsci, about fifty miles distant from Rome; and is probably thought to have had its name from the statue of Appius Claudius, that Roman consul who paved the famous way from Rome to Capua, which was set up here.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^e This was another place that stood upon the Appian way, about thirty miles distant from Rome. And that it was a city, properly so called, and not a parcel of inns only for the reception and entertainment of travellers, is evident from its being an episcopal see in the time of Constantine; for among the nineteen bishops who were delegated by that Emperor to decide the controversy between Donatus and Cæcilianus, Felix a Tribus Taber-

nis, which when he saw, he blessed God and took courage: They all conducted him, in a kind of triumph, into the city; where, when they were arrived, the rest of the prisoners were delivered over to the ^f captain of the guard, but Paul was permitted to stay in a private house, only ^g with one soldier for his ward.

Three days after his arrival at Rome, St Paul sent for the heads of the Jewish ^h consistory there, and to them related the cause of his coming, namely, 'That though he had been guilty of no violation of the laws of their religion, yet by the Jews at Jerusalem he had been delivered into the hands of the Roman governors, who more than once would have acquitted him, as innocent of any capital offence, but that, by the perverseness of his persecutors, he was constrained, not with any intention to accuse his own nation, but only to clear and vindicate himself, to make his appeal to the Emperor.' Having thus removed a popular prejudice, and insinuated the cause of his suffering to be that which their own religion had taught him, namely, the belief and expectation of a future resurrection, he gained so far upon their affections, as to have a second conference, by their own appointment, for explaining the principles of Christianity to them. Accordingly, when they were met together, he discoursed to them, from morning to night, concerning the religion and doctrine of the holy Jesus, proving from the promises and predictions of the Old Testament that he was the true Messiah. But the success of his discourse was different, some being convinced, and others persisting in their infidelity; so that they parted with no small difference and disagreement among themselves.

For two whole years Paul dwelt at Rome, in a house which he hired for his own use, wherein he constantly employed himself in preaching, and writing for the good

nis, Felix bishop of the city, called *Tres Tabernæ*, was one. And indeed, if we will allow of Scaliger's interpretation of the word *tabernæ*, namely, that it was the name of the frontier towns, which were built against the excursions of the barbarians: Zosimus (Hist. b. ii. part 65.) acquaints us, that Dioclesian everywhere erected such on the borders of the Roman empire; and we have reason to think, that the like was done in earlier times by other emperors; and that therefore the *Tres Tabernæ*, where the *Sauromata*, as Ausonius tells us, had their habitation assigned them, in order to garrison and defend these places, were such.—*Hammond's Annotations*.

^f This *στρατοπύδαρχος*, or chief commander of the Emperor's guards, is generally supposed to have been Burrhus, whom Claudius made his prætorian prefect, A. D. 51. He had a great hand in advancing Nero to the empire; and, while he lived, had so much influence or authority over him, as to keep his evil inclinations under some sort of restraint: but he died A. D. 62, about two years after St Paul's arrival at Rome, leaving behind him, according to the account of historians, a great reputation for wisdom and moderation.—*Echard's Ecclesiastical History*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

^g The manner of the soldiers guarding the prisoner among the Romans was, by having a chain, at one end fastened to the prisoner's right hand, and at the other to the soldier's left, and this made so long, that they might conveniently go together. But sometimes, for greater security, the prisoner was guarded with two soldiers, and so had two chains, one of them made fast to one soldier, and the other to the other; (Acts xii. 6, 7. and Acts xxi. 33.)—*Whitby's* and *Hammond's Annotations*.

^h Hence it appears, that the edict of Claudius, which banished the Jews from Rome, was of no long continuance, but probably expired with his life; because we find, by St Paul's epistle to the Romans, which he wrote about two years before his going among them, that there were great numbers both of Jews and Christians then residing at Rome.—*Beausobre's Annotations* and *Calmet's Commentary*.

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of the church. He preached daily without interruption, and with good success, inasmuch that his imprisonment very much redounded to the propagation of the gospel, and made him famous even in the emperor's court, where he converted several to Christianity.

Among other of the apostle's converts at Rome, was one ^b Onesimus, who had formerly been a servant to Philemon, ^c a person of distinction ^d in Colosse but had

^a Among these the Roman martyrology reckons Terpes, an officer of prime note in Nero's palace, and afterwards a martyr for the faith: and St Chrysostom, if Baronius cites him right, tells us of Nero's cup-bearer, and one of his concubines, supposed by some to have been Poppæa Sabina, of whom Tacitus gives us this character,—‘That she wanted nothing to make her one of the most accomplished ladies in the world, but a chaste and virtuous mind.’ And I know not how far it may seem to countenance her conversion, at least inclination to a better religion than that of paganism, that Josephus styles her a pious woman, and tells us, that she effectually solicited the cause of the Jews with her husband Nero; and what favours Josephus himself received from her at Rome, he relates in his own life.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles.*

^b This was no uncommon name given to slaves; and as it signifies in the original ‘profitable,’ the apostle may be supposed to allude to it, when he tells Philemon, concerning this servant of his, ‘in time past he was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable both to thee and me,’ (Phil. ver. 11.) and indeed so he proved; for, not long after his return to his master, he was sent back again to Rome, that he might be of service to St Paul in his prison. The epistles which St Paul wrote in his confinement, were by his hand conveyed to their respective churches. After the apostle's release from prison, he was assistant to him in the propagation of the gospel, and according to the Apostolic Constitutions, was by him made bishop of Berea in Macedonia, where he suffered martyrdom; though others say, that he succeeded Timothy in the bishopric of Ephesus; and that, being taken into custody, and carried to Rome, he was there stoned to death for his faith in Jesus Christ. That he was a true convert to Christianity, and a sincere penitent for his private offences, is evident from the appellations which St Paul gives him, of ‘his son, the son of his bowels,’ (Philem. 10, 12.) and, ‘his faithful and beloved brother,’ (Col. iv. 9.) But that he was either bishop or martyr, St Chrysostom, St Jerom, and Theodoret, who have all wrote commentaries upon the epistle to Philemon, make not the least mention.—*Calmet's* and *Beausobre's* Preface to the Epistle of Philemon.

^c He was a person of some consideration in Colosse, a city of Phrygia; for his family was there remaining in the time of Theodoret, who flourished in the fifth age of the church. St Paul, we read, was twice in Phrygia; and yet we do not find that he was ever at Colosse; nay, he seems to declare himself that he was never there, (Col. iii. 1.) and therefore we must suppose, that either he converted Philemon, as he seems to intimate he did, (ver. 19.) at Ephesus, or some other place in Asia Minor, while he was preaching the gospel there; or that Epaphras, who was St Paul's disciple, and by him appointed evangelist to the Colossians, was the person who converted him. However this be, it is certain, that, upon his conversion, he became a fellow-labourer in the gospel, (ver. 1.) and, as the Apostolic Constitutions tell us, by St Paul was made the bishop of the church of Colosse, which, by his extensive charity, (Philem. 5, 6.) he edified, as much as by his preaching of the gospel, until he and his wife Appia both suffered martyrdom in the time of Nero.—*Calmet's* and *Beausobre's* Preface to the Epistle of Philemon.—See also Horne's Introduction, vol. iv.—Ed.

^d This was a great city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, built by the river Lycus, near the place, as Herodotus informs us, (i. 7. c. 30.) where it begins to run under ground, as it does for five furlongs before it rises again, and empties itself into the Meander. This city was situated at an equal distance between Laodicea and Hierapolis, and therefore we find St Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians, (chap. iv. 13.) making mention of the inhabitants of all these three cities together; which, according to the account of Eusebius, were all destroyed by an earthquake, in the tenth of Nero, about two years after that this epistle was sent to them.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament*, and *Whitby's Alphabetical Table.*

run away from his master, and taken things of some value with him. He rambled as far as Rome; where, by St Paul's means, he was converted, instructed, and baptized, and afterwards became highly serviceable to him in his imprisonment. But being another man's servant, he sent him back to Colosse, and, at the same time, wrote ^e a short letter to his master, ^f earnestly desiring him to pardon him, and, notwithstanding his former faults, to treat him kindly, and use him as a brother; and promising withal, that if he had wronged or owed him any thing, he himself would not fail to repay it.

The Christians of Philippi having heard of St Paul's imprisonment at Rome, and not knowing what straits he might be reduced to, raised a contribution for him, and sent it by Epaphroditus, ^g their bishop; by whom he returned an epistle ^h to them; ‘wherein he gives some

^e This epistle may pass for a masterpiece of eloquence in the persuasive way. For therein the apostle has recourse to all the considerations which friendship, religion, piety, and tenderness can inspire to reconcile a servant to his master; and yet some of the ancients were of opinion, that it did not deserve a place in the canon of scripture; because it was wrote on a particular occasion, and with a design not so much to instruct Christians in general, as to recommend a fugitive servant. But though the subject of this epistle be a private affair, yet it contains such general instructions as these: 1st. That no Christian, though of the meanest condition, is to be contemned. 2dly. That Christianity does not impair the power of masters over their servants. 3dly. That servants ought to make satisfaction for any wrong or injury done to their masters. 4thly. That masters ought to be reconciled to their servants, upon their repentance, and acknowledgement of their faults. And 5thly, That there is, at all times, a love and affection due from a master to a profitable servant. And who then, say the Greek interpreters, would refuse to number an epistle so profitable and instructive with the rest of St Paul's works.—*Chrysost. argum. epist. ad Philem.*—*Calmet's*, *Beausobre's*, and *Whitby's* pref. ad eandem.

^f For the case of servants in those days was very hard. All masters were looked upon, not only by the Roman laws, but by the laws of all nations, as having an unlimited power over them: so that, without asking the magistrate's leave, or any public or formal trial, they might adjudge them to any work or punishment, even to the loss of life itself, if they pleased. The exorbitancy of this power however was, in some measure, curbed by the laws of succeeding emperors, especially after they became Christian, which make better provision for persons in that relation and capacity, and in case of unjust and over-rigorous usage, enable them to appeal to a more righteous tribunal, where master and servant shall both stand upon even ground, ‘where he that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons,’ (Col. iii. 25.)—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles.*

^g St Paul calls him the ‘apostle of the Philippians;’ which some, taking the word apostle in its literal sense, for a messenger only, do suppose that Epaphroditus is so called, because he was appointed by the Philippians to carry money to St Paul, who was then in prison at Rome, and, in their name, to be serviceable to him in his person. But Theodoret, and others of the fathers who have written upon the epistle to the Philippians, tell us, that he was the person *ὃς τῶν ψυχῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιστάτης ἐκείναις*, ‘to whom the care of their souls had been committed,’ and consequently their bishop; for it is more feasible to make him bishop of Philippi, than of any other place, as some have done.—*Whitby's Preface to the epistle to the Philippians*, and *Calmet's Commentary* on chap. ii. 25.

^h Of all the epistles which St Paul wrote, there is none so full of affection and tender sentiments, as this to the Philippians, who it must be owned, upon the account of their constancy in the faith, as well as their zeal for the apostle, and concern for his sufferings, deserved such kind treatment; and therefore, so far is he from censuring or reproving them, as he usually does other churches, that we find him abounding in their praise and commendation: a good argument this, as St Chrysostom remarks, of their virtuous behaviour; that they gave their teacher no cause to complain, but that the whole epistle which he sent

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account of the state of his affairs at Rome : gratefully acknowledges their kindness to him ; warns them against the dangerous opinions which the Judaizing teachers began to vent among them ; and advises them to live in continual obedience to Christ, to avoid disputations, to delight in prayer, to be courageous under afflictions, united in love, and clothed with humility, in imitation of the blessed Jesus, ' who so far humbled himself, as to become obedient to death, even to the death of the cross.'

St Paul had for three years lived at Ephesus, taking great pains in preaching the gospel, and was thoroughly acquainted with the state and condition of the place ; and therefore now taking the opportunity of Tychicus's ^a going thither, he wrote his epistle ^b to the Ephesians ; ' wherein he endeavours to countermine the principles and practices both of the Jews and Gentiles ; to confirm them in the belief and obedience of the Christian doctrine ; and to instruct them fully in the great mysteries of the gospel ; their redemption and justification by the death of Christ ; their gratuitous election ; the calling of the Gentiles ; their union with the Jews in one body, of which Jesus was the head ; and the glorious exaltation of that head above all creatures, both spiritual and temporal ; together with many excellent moral precepts,

them, contains nothing but kind exhortations and encouragements, without the least mixture of sharpness or reproof.—*Beausobre's Preface to Epistle to the Philippians.*

^a Tychicus was of the province of Asia, and a disciple of St Paul, whom he frequently employed to carry his letters to several churches ; as that to the Colossians, written in 61 ; that to the Ephesians, written in 65 ; and the first to Timothy, written in 64. Nor did he employ him merely to carry his letters, but to learn likewise the state of the several churches to which he sent him, and to bring him proper intelligence from thence : and for this reason he calls him his ' dear brother, a faithful minister in the Lord, and his companion in the service of God,' (Eph. vi. 21, 22. and Col. iv. 7, 8.) For this reason he had once thoughts of sending him to Crete, to preside over that church in the absence of Titus, (chap. iii. 12,) as it is probably supposed that when he sent him with his letter to Ephesus, he ordered him to abide there, and to govern that church, while Timothy, their proper bishop, was absent with him at Rome. But when St Paul was restored to his liberty, whether this disciple of his attended him in his travels, or was constituted bishop of Colophon in the province of Asia, as some report, we have no account that may be depended upon.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

^b The heretic Marcion, as Tertullian (adv. Mar. b. 7. c. 17.) informs us, pretended that this epistle was not written to the Ephesians, but to the Laodiceans, for which he produces his own copy, inscribed ' to the saints which were at Laodicea,' and not at Ephesus, as the generality of manuscripts and versions now have it ; and to support this, several passages are cited out of the epistle itself, which seem not so well to agree with the circumstances of St Paul, who had lived and preached for the space of three years at Ephesus, (vide c. i. 15. iii. 1. 4. iv. 21.) But as it would be rash and imprudent upon the account of a few ambiguous texts, to deny the authority of all antiquity, and especially that of St Ignatius, who, in his letter to the Ephesians, (sect. 12,) makes mention of that which St Paul had wrote to them : so if we are minded to compromise the matter we may, with archbishop Usher, say, that this was a circular letter ; and designed for the use of all the churches of Asia, inasmuch that St Paul did not insert the name of any particular church, but sent it with this general title, ' Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, to the saints which are at ———.' But then as Ephesus was the metropolis of the province, the epistle, in most of the copies, went under its name ; though others there might be, even as late as St Basil's days, inscribed to no church at all ; from whence the Laodiceans might pretend, that it belonged originally to them ; and Marcion, who was of the kingdom of Pontus, in the confines of Phrygia, wherein Laodicea was, might accordingly cite it under their name.—*Calmet's* and *Beausobre's Preface to the Epistle to the Ephesians.*

both as to the general duties of religion, and the duties of their particular relations.'

St Paul himself had never been at Colosse ; but Epaphras, ^c who was then at Rome a prisoner with him, had preached the gospel there with good success ; and from him he might learn, that certain false teachers had endeavoured to persuade the people, that they ought not to apply to God by Jesus Christ, who, since his ascension, was so far exalted above them, but by angels, who were now become the proper mediators between God and men ; and therefore, in opposition to this, as well as some other seductions of the like nature, he wrote his epistle to the Colossians : ^d wherein he magnificently sets forth the

^c While St Paul was preaching in Phrygia, whereof Colosse was one of the principal cities, he very likely met with this Epaphras ; but when, where or upon what occasion, he converted him from the heathen to the Christian religion, we no where find. This only we know, that after his own conversion, he contributed very much to that of his fellow-citizens, the inhabitants of Colosse, and that while St Paul was in bonds at Rome, coming very probably to pay him a visit, himself was likewise made prisoner with him for the common cause of Christianity, (Philem. ver. 23.) Understanding, however, that false teachers, taking the advantage of his absence, had sown tares among the wheat, he engaged St Paul, whose name and authority were revered through all Phrygia, to send a letter to the Colossians, in order to set them right in matters wherein they were mistaken, and to give them a true knowledge of their false teachers. This the apostle very readily did ; and the more to recommend the merit and support the authority of Epaphras, styles him ' his dear fellow servant, and faithful minister of Christ.' (Col. i. 7.) being then, as it is said of him, a bishop and, long after, a martyr at Colosse.—*Calmet's Commentary.*

^d The better to understand the chief design of this epistle, we may observe, that the followers of Plato always looked upon angels, whom they honoured with the name of ' demons,' as the great mediators between God and men, who carried up their prayers to him, and re-conveyed his blessings to them. To these they committed, not only the direction of the stars and elements, but the administration likewise of all sublunary things ; and from thence they concluded, that they were to be honoured, for the same reason that we usually do honour the governors or provinces, or the chief ministers of any state. The followers of Simon Magus ascribed the creation of the world even to the meanest kind of angels, but those of a superior order they held in the highest veneration : for their master, who, according to his fancy, had stocked the heavens with these intelligencies, made it one of his principles, that none could be saved without using such and such mysteries, and sacrificing to the God of all things by the mediation of these celestial powers. Nay the Jews themselves, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, began to entertain high conceptions of the angels, inasmuch that in the prophecy of Daniel, and other books written after that captivity, we find the several orders of them ranged under their proper names ; and among them there was a famous sect, called the *Essenes*, who, together with other things, obliged themselves to preserve the books which were peculiar to them, and the names of the angels which they held in great esteem. It is to be observed further, that among the Jews there were several sects very superstitious in their abstinences ; that the *Essenes* denied themselves the use of wine ; the *Nazarenes* held it a crime to eat flesh ; and the *Therapeutæ* would drink nothing but water, and made bread and salt their common food, except some more delicate persons, as they called them, who used honey and hyssop. From all which it seems very probable that the *Essenes*, who were reputed the philosophers of the Jews, or some other sects of the like nature, having embraced the Christian religion, were for engaging others in the worship of angels, the observation of the Jewish ceremonies, and some particular abstinences, wherein they placed a great deal of perfection. For though this doctrine of worshipping angels might originally be derived from the Platonists, yet since they who at this time held it added some Jewish observances, they are rather to be reckoned among the scholars of Simon Magus, or of some opinionated Jews, who were for mixing the law and the gospel together ; and these were the heretics whom St Paul in his epistle, sets himself to oppose.—*Beau-*

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Messiah, and all the benefits flowing from him, as being the image of his Father, the Redeemer of all mankind, the reconciler of all things to God, and the head of the church, which gives life and vigour to all its members; wherein he commends the doctrine preached to them by Epaphras, and exhorts them not to be led away by the reasonings of human philosophy, by the superstitious practices of making differences of meats and drinks, or by a pretended humility, in worshipping angels; and wherein he gives them an abstract of many chief and principal duties of the Christian life, especially such as respect the relations of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants.^a

While St Paul was thus laudably employed in his confinement at Rome, James, the bishop of Jerusalem, was not idle; but thinking it belonged to his apostolical office to take care of all the converted among the twelve tribes of Israel, wherever dispersed, he wrote an epistle to them, which, among those that are called *a Catholic*, is placed first in the sacred canon, and was designed 'to suppress and confute a dangerous error, then growing up in the church, namely, that a bare naked faith was sufficient to secure men's salvation, without any attention to good works; and to comfort Christians under the persecutions which were going to be raised against them ^b by worldly

cobler's Preface to Epistle to the Col. and Echard's Ecclesiastical History, b. ii. c. 6.

^a Ever since the fourth century, this epistle of St James, the two of St Peter, three of St John, and that of St Jude, have obtained the name of *Catholic*, because they are directed to all the faithful, and not to any particular church, as those of St Paul are. And this may suggest a reason why this epistle of St James, in particular, did not at first meet with a general reception. For, being in the nature of a circular letter, and addressed to no one church, who might take care to preserve it, and promote its pretensions, it might be some time before it obtained its place in the canon: and that the rather, because there seemed to be some contradiction between the doctrine advanced in it, namely, 'that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only, (chap. ii. 24.), and that in St Paul's epistle to the Romans, 'that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law, (chap. iii. 28.) which might give some unskillful readers, not sufficiently attentive to the scope of each apostle, some umbrage of suspicion.—*Whitby's and Beausobre's Preface to the Epistle of St James.*

^b From the History of the Acts we learn, that, about the 39th year of Christ, the 'churches had peace throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria,' (chap. ix. 31.), and so they seem to have continued, till after the council of Jerusalem, when they are said to 'be established in faith, and to increase in numbers daily,' (Acts xvi. 5.) Nay, when St Paul was at Rome, 'he received all that came unto him,' for two whole years, 'preaching the kingdom of God, with all confidence, no man forbidding him,' (Acts xxviii. 30, 31.) So that at least, till the 4th or 5th year of Nero, the gospel was freely preached at Rome, without any opposition either from the Romans or the Jews. But then, in the 6th year of this emperor's reign, the Christians were subjected to punishments, (as Suetonius in Neron. c. 16. tells us;) and it seems very probable, says Dr Lightfoot, that even then Nero had, by some public act or edict, suppressed Christianity, not only at Rome, but also in Judea, as he gathers from that passage in Tacitus, 'The destructive superstition having been suppressed for a season, again broke forth, not only throughout Judea, the cradle of the evil, but even throughout the whole city;' which shows, that before the persecution began in the 10th of Nero, of which Tacitus here speaks, Christianity had been by him suppressed, not at Rome only, but in Judea. In the 10th of his reign he renewed his persecution of the Christians; and this he did not only at Rome, but through all the provinces of his empire: which encouraged the Jews every where to show their utmost rage against all those of their religion who had embraced the faith of Christ, and the nearer they drew to their final dissolution, the more did Satan inflame their rage and malice

powers; and to awaken them out of their stupidity, when judgments were ready to overtake them.' To this purpose he inserts in his epistle many excellent exhortations, such as, 'to bear afflictions, to hear the word of God, to mortify their lusts, to bridle their tongues, to avoid cursing and swearing, and to adorn their Christian profession with a good conversation, with meekness, peaceableness, and charity.' But it was not long before a period was put to all his labours; for the governing part of the Jews being highly enraged at the disappointment of their malice against St Paul, by his appealing to Cæsar, were now resolved to revenge it upon St James, and accordingly, taking the opportunity of the death of Festus, before the arrival of his successor Albinus, Annas, or Ananas, the high-priest, summoned James, and some others, before the Sanhedrim, requiring them to renounce the Christian faith. Their desire more especially was, that the apostle should make his renunciation in the most public manner, and therefore they carried him up to the battlements of the temple, and threatened to cast him down thence in case of refusal. But when, instead of gratifying their desires, he began himself to confess, and to exhort others to confess the faith of Christ, in the presence of those who came to hear his recantation, they ordered him to be thrown down headlong from the place where he stood. By this fall he was sadly bruised, though not quite killed; and therefore getting upon his knees, he was praying for his murderers, in the manner of the protomartyr St Stephen, when, as the rabble was loading him with a shower of stones, one of them, more mercifully cruel than the rest, with a fuller's club beat out his brains: a fact altogether so black and barbarous, that even their ^c own historian, Josephus, could not but condemn it, and, as himself testifies, all the honest and conscientious part of the city remonstrated against it, both to their king Agrippa, and to the Roman governor Albinus; insomuch that the high priest, by whose authority it was committed, was in a few months degraded, and another put in his place. But ^d the blessed martyr was

against those Christians, whom he found to be the fatal enemies and overthrowers of his kingdom.—*Whitby's Preface to the Epistle of St James.*

^c The words of Josephus are these:—'This was so surprising a way of proceeding to all the honest and conscientious part of the city, that they presently sent king Agrippa private notice of it, as a very ill thing done, with a request that Ananas might have a check for it, and a caution never to do any such thing for the future; whilst others were sent with an account of it to Albinus, who was then upon his journey to Alexandria, representing it as an usurpation, and encroachment upon his authority; and what ought not to have been done without his consent. Whereupon the governor sent him an angry and menacing letter; and king Agrippa, at the end of three months, removed him from his office of high-priest, and gave it to Jesus the son of Damaeus.'—*Antiquities, b. xx. c. 8.*

^d He was a man of extraordinary piety and devotion, educated under the strictest rules of religion, and a priest, as some imagine, of the order of the Rechabites, or rather, as Epiphanius conjectures, of the most ancient form of priesthood, when the sacerdotal office was the prerogative of the first-born; and therefore it is said, that he wore a plate of gold, or probably a mitre, upon his head, as the ensign of his dignity. Prayer was his daily business and delight; so constant was he at his devotions, that his knees became hard and callous as a camel's, and so prevalent in his petitions to Heaven, that in time of great drought he prayed for rain, and obtained it. Nor was his piety towards God more remarkable than his charity, his humility, his temperance, and universal goodness, which made him the love and

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buried in a tomb of his own building on Mount Olivet, and, by the general voice, his own brother Simon was appointed his successor in the bishopric of Jerusalem.

By what means St Paul was delivered from his imprisonment, and discharged from the accusation which the Jews brought against him, we have no account in history; but may presume, that having not sufficient proof of what they alleged, or being informed, that what they alleged was no violation of any Roman law, they durst not implead him before the emperor, and so permitted him to be discharged in course. But before he left Italy, he wrote his famous and most elaborate ^a epistle to the Hebrews, that is, to the converted Jews dwelling in Jer-

wonder of the age, and gained him the character and title of 'James the Just,' or, as it is in the Syriac, of *Oblias*, that is, 'the defence and fortress of the people,' as if the safety and happiness of the whole nation depended upon his prayers and interest with Heaven. In short, he was the delight of all good men, and so much in the favour and estimation of the people, that they used to flock after him, and strive who should touch, though it were but the hem of his garment. Nor was he only loved and honoured by his friends, but held in great veneration by his enemies, inasmuch that some of the wisest of them looked upon his martyrdom as an inlet to all those miseries and calamities which soon after flowed upon them.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles.*

^a That this epistle was of an ancient date, and written before the destruction of the temple, and abolition of the Jewish worship, is manifest from the author's making no mention of these events, which, had they been passed, he would not have omitted, as being one of the best arguments that could be produced for the support of his main doctrine, the abrogation of the Levitical sacrifices and priesthood; nor could we find it quoted so frequently in St Clement's letter to the Corinthians, which seems to have been wrote before the downfall of Jerusalem, had it not been of a date prior to that time. It is not to be questioned, then, but that this epistle to the Hebrews was extant in the apostolic age. But who its author was, we find both ancient and modern in great dispute. Some ascribe it to St Barnabas, others to Clemens Romanus, others to St Luke, and others again to Apollos, who, in the sacred history, is styled 'an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures,' (Acts xviii. 24.) If, however, we look into the epistle itself, we shall find, that the character can agree with none so well as St Paul: for as it appears that this epistle was in being before the destruction of Jerusalem, and while the Jews had power enough to oppress the Christians in Judea; that the person who wrote it was well versed in the scriptures of the Old Testament, and the most abstruse parts of Jewish theology; that he represents himself as lately in prison, but at that time set at liberty, and hoping speedily to come and see them; that he mentions Timothy, whom he calls his 'brother,' as being likewise released, and ready to accompany him in his journey, (Heb. xiii. 23.) that he commends those to whom he writes, for 'having had compassion of him in his bonds, and taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods,' (chap. x. 34.) that he requests them to pray for him, that he might be restored to them sooner, (chap. xiii. 18, 19.) and, lastly, that this epistle was written from Rome, as some manuscripts have it, or from Italy, as we find it in others; we cannot but allow, that each of these is a strong argument that this epistle was written by St Paul, because they accord so exactly with his circumstances at this time above any one's else. But then, if we add to this the testimony of the ancients, especially of St Peter, who, in his second epistle to the Jewish converts, mentions a certain letter which St Paul had wrote to them, distinct from all his other epistolary writings, (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.) and can be no other than that which bears the name of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we can no longer doubt of its being the composition of St Paul, and an original composition too, since it has in it none of that constraint which is visible in a translation, nor any of those Hebrew phrases which occur so frequently in the version of the Septuagint.—*Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Preface to the Epistle to the Hebrews.*—It is now, by universal consent, attributed to St Paul; for the arguments at length, the inquiring reader may consult Professor Stuart on the Hebrews, Horne's Introduction, Bloomfield's Greek Test., and Macknight on the Epistles.—Ed.

usalem and Judea: 'wherein his main design is, to magnify Christ and the religion of the gospel, above Moses and the Jewish œconomy, that, by this means, he may the better establish the converted Jews in the belief and profession of Christianity: wherein, to this purpose, he represents our Saviour, in his divine nature, far superior to all angels and all created beings; and, in his mediatorial capacity, a greater lawgiver than Moses, a greater priest than Aaron, and a greater king and priest than Melchisedec: wherein he shows, that the ceremonies, the sacrifices, and the observances of the law could have no virtue in themselves, but only as they were types of Jesus Christ; and being now accomplished in his person, and by his ministry, were finally and totally abolished: wherein he insists upon the necessity of faith, and, by the examples of the patriarchs and prophets, proves, that justification is to be had no other way than by the merits of a dying Saviour: and wherein, lastly, he mingles many excellent precepts for the regulation of their lives, exhortations to trust and confidence in Christ in all their sufferings, and strict cautions against apostasy from his religion in the hottest persecutions.'

Having thus discharged his ministry, both by preaching and writing, in Italy, St Paul, in company with Timothy, prosecuted his long-intended journey into Spain, and it is probably thought, that from thence he came over and ^b preached the gospel in Britain. After he had continued about eight or nine months in these western parts, he returned again east-ward, and leaving both Sicily and Greece, arrived at Crete, where he constituted Titus bishop of the island, and then went with Timothy into Judea, to visit the Christians there.

In what manner St Peter employed his time, after his escape out of prison, we have no certain account; but it is generally agreed, that about the second year of the

^b Though we may feel almost certain that Paul would visit Jerusalem, after his release from Rome, we are still at a loss to account for his proceedings during the remainder of his life; and yet this period was, perhaps, as interesting as any part of the former years which he had devoted to the service of the gospel. We have traced his progress through the most civilized portions of the world, and even to the capital of the Roman empire; but he professed himself also under an obligation to preach the gospel to nations that were rude and barbarous. He had ample time for fulfilling this sacred duty; and tradition has pointed out the west of Europe as the scene of these latter actions of his life. Spain and Gaul, and even Britain, have claimed the great apostle as the first founder of their respective churches; but the writer of history is obliged to add, that though such journeys were perfectly possible, and even probable, the actual evidence of their having been undertaken is extremely small. We have the apostle's own testimony for his intending to visit Spain; and Clement, one of his own fellow-labourers, in an epistle which he wrote before the end of the century, speaks of Paul having gone to the extremity of the west. This may, perhaps, give some support to the notion of his visiting Spain; and if he went to that country by land, he must have passed through the south of France. But the churches in France which claim the earliest origin, trace their foundation rather to the companions of Paul than to the apostle himself; and there is nothing unreasonable in supposing that France, as well as Spain, contained converts to Christianity before the end of the first century. The same may, perhaps, be said of our own island, though we need not believe the traditions which have been already mentioned, concerning its first conversion; and it is right to add, that the earliest writer who speaks of Britain as being visited by any of the apostles, is Eusebius, who wrote at the beginning of the fourth century; and the earliest writer who names St Paul, is Theodoret, who lived a century later.—*Burton's History of the Church.*—Ed.

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emperor Claudius, he went to Rome, and there continued, until that emperor, taking the advantage of some seditions and tumults raised by the Jews, or by a public edict, banished them from Rome. Upon this occasion St Peter returned back to Jerusalem, and was present at the great apostolic synod, whereof we have given some account before. How he disposed of himself after this, we are left under great uncertainties, though the current opinion is, that, after he had visited the several churches which he had planted in the east, and carried the glad tidings of the gospel into Africa, Sicily, Italy, and even as far as Britain, making great numbers of converts in all places; towards the latter end of Nero's reign, he returned to Rome, where he found the minds of the people strangely bewitched, and hardened against Christianity, by the subtilities and magical arts of ^a Simon Magus, whom he had formerly defeated at Samaria.

Provoked at this general infatuation, the apostle thought himself concerned to oppose this sorcerer; and having, ^b in some instances, discovered the vanity of his impostures, he wrought him up, at length, to such a pitch of madness and desperation, that to give the people an evident demonstration of his being the 'Son of God,' as he pretended, he promised that on such a day, he would ascend visibly up into heaven. Accordingly at the time appointed, he went up to the mount of the capitol, and, throwing himself from the top of the rock, began his flight, and by the help of some infernal powers, seemed to be posting to heaven; when immediately upon the

apostle's prayer to God, that the people might be undeceived, and the cheat detected, his invisible supports withdrew, and ^c down he came headlong, so miserably bruised and wounded with his fall, that in a short time after he expired.

Nero, the emperor, was a professed patron of magicians, and of all such as maintained a secret commerce with the infernal powers. He had a particular dislike to the doctrine of Christianity likewise, as being so very repugnant to the lusts and passions which he indulged; and was not a little offended at the many conversions which St Peter had made, in persons of some distinction, from a vicious and dissolute course of life, which the emperor admired in any: so that he not only commanded him, and St Paul, who was at this time at Rome, to be apprehended, and cast into prison; but, by a public edict, raised the ^d first general persecution against the church, wherein Christians of all orders and degrees were ^e treated with the utmost contempt and cruelty.

^c It must be owned, that the truth of this whole transaction, between St Peter and Simon Magus, has been greatly suspected, not only upon the account of the small authority of those apocryphal writers from whom it was first taken, but by reason of the great disagreement likewise, which appears in their relation of the several circumstances of it. For whereas some of them say, that Simon Magus made himself wings to fly with; others affirm, that he was invisibly held up by two devils; others, that he made himself a chariot; and others again, that he ascended in a fiery one drawn by four horses, but all done by the art of magic: and whereas some say, that by this fall he crushed his whole body to pieces; and others, that he dashed out his brains; others aver, that he only broke a thigh, a leg, or an arm: and this done in the reign of Claudius, according to some; but in the reign of Nero, according to others; by Peter alone, as some will have it; but by Peter and Paul in conjunction, according to the report of others. Nor is it a small discredit to this story, that the ancients of the three first centuries, who speak much of Simon's being at Rome, and having his statue erected there, should say nothing of his flight, or his fall, though they had just reason to speak of them, had they believed them true: 'Nor is it credible,' saith Hornius, 'that all the Roman writers of those times, Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny, &c. should pass over so memorable a thing in silence;' especially if Simon was so honoured by Claudius, and beloved by Nero, as some authors of this story say he was. This is the substance of what is alleged against it; and yet, according to others, it is fully attested by the Apostolic Constitutions; hinted at in the Recognitions; taken for a known fact by such as lived nearest to Rome, namely, Arnobius, Ambrosius, and St Jerom De Script. Eccles.; fully mentioned by Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, and many others; contradicted by no one ecclesiastical writer; and yet supposed to be alluded to in that passage of Suetonius, where he tells us, that Icarus, or one that flew in the air, in his first attempt, fell down near the emperor's pavilion, and sprinkled his blood upon him.—*Whitby's Preface to the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians and Whiston's Answer to the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion.*—The stories respecting St Peter and Simon Magus should be dismissed as idle legends, utterly unworthy of the attention of any rational and intelligent mind. The authority of the Apostolic Constitutions is not of much weight, when we consider that they are the spurious productions of the fourth century.—En.

^d Before the Roman empire was converted to Christianity, there are commonly reckoned ten general persecutions: the first, in the 10th year of Nero, A. D. 64; the second, in the 14th of Domitian, A. D. 95; the third, in the 3d of Trajan, A. D. 100; the fourth, in the 2d of Antoninus Philosophus, A. D. 165; the fifth in the 4th of Severus, A. D. 197; the sixth, in the 1st of Maximinus, 235; the seventh, in the 1st of Decius, A. D. 249; the eighth, in the 4th of Valerian, A. D. 257; the ninth, in the 4th of Aurelian, A. D. 274; and the tenth, in the 19th of Dioclesian, A. D. 303, till at length Christianity came to be established by human laws, A. D. 313.—*Echard's Ecclesiastical History.*

^e As to the particulars of this persecution, Tacitus tells us,

^a Justin Martyr assures us, that this impostor was honoured as a deity; that a statue was erected to him in the Insula Tyberina, with this inscription, *Simoni Deo sancto*, which is confirmed by the testimony of Irenæus, Tertullian, and several others after them. Whatever therefore may be said to shake the credit of this inscription, it can hardly be thought, that Justin Martyr, who was a person of great learning and gravity, inquisitive about things of this nature, and at this time at Rome, where he might fully satisfy himself of the truth of it, would have inserted any thing in his Apology to the emperor and the senate of Rome, but what he knew would bear the test; and yet he speaks twice of this statue, and desires of them, that if, upon inquiry, they should find what he said to be true, they would abolish it.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles, and Whitby's Preface to the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.*

^b A noble instance of this kind we have in Hegesippus the younger. 'There was at this time,' says he, 'in Rome, a gentleman of some note, a kinsman to the emperor, lately dead. Those who knew St Peter's power in working miracles, advised his friends to send for him, and others likewise prevailed that Simon the magician might be sent for. Glad of this occasion to magnify himself before the people, Simon propounded to Peter, that if he raised the man to life, Peter, who had reviled 'the mighty power of God,' as he styled himself, should lose his life; but that if Peter prevailed, he would submit to the same penalty. Peter accepted the challenge; and, when Simon began his charms and enchantments, the dead body seemed to move his hand. Whereupon the people who stood by, thinking that the person was alive, were going to fall foul upon Peter, for daring to oppose so great a power. But Peter, intreating their patience, desired only that the magician might be removed from the bed-side: which, when they had done, the deception vanished, and the body remained without the least sign of motion. Then Peter, standing at a good distance from the bed, silently made his address to Heaven; and when he had so done, in the presence of them all, commanded the man, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to arise; which he instantly did: so that the people, changing their minds, were going to stone the magician; but that Peter interposed for his life, by telling them, that it would be punishment enough to him, to live and see, that, in despite of all his power and malice, the kingdom of Christ would increase and flourish.'—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles.*

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In this common calamity Andrew, the apostle, and as most think, the younger brother of St Peter, was called to suffer. He, having preached the gospel, wrought many miracles, and suffered many hardships in the wild northern countries of Scythia and Sogdiana, and, after that, in some of the provinces of the lesser Asia, came at length into ^a Epirus and Achaia, ^b two provinces of Greece, where he still added more converts to the Christian faith. At last, in ^c Patræa, a city of Achaia, Ægeas the proconsul, observing the multitudes that by the apostle's preaching had fallen off from paganism and embraced Christianity, and being not a little offended at his opposing his mandates for the re-establishment of idolatry, and undauntedly persisting in his publication of the doc-

trine of a crucified Saviour, condemned him to the death which he so much extolled. After seven lictors therefore had cruelly torn his naked body, he was led out with great cheerfulness and serenity of mind to be crucified. But his cross was not of the usual form: it was made of two pieces of timber, crossing each other in the middle, in the shape of the letter X, which ever since has been known by the name of St Andrew's cross, and to this he was fastened, not with nails, but cords, to make his death more painful and lingering. In this condition he hung for the space of three days, all the while teaching and instructing the people, exhorting them to constancy and perseverance in that religion which he had delivered to them; and, when great intercessions were made to the proconsul for his life, earnestly requesting of our Lord in prayer, that he might on that day, which was the last of November, depart, and seal the truth of his religion ^d with his blood.

that, at first several were seized who made profession of this new religion; and by their confession, infinite numbers of others were detected and executed; and in the manner of their execution, were treated with all the instances of scorn and barbarity. Some of them were wrapt up in the skins of wild beasts, and worried and devoured by dogs; others were crucified; and others burnt alive, in paper coats dipped in pitch, wax, and other combustible matters, that, when day-light failed, they might serve for torches and illuminations in the night. Nero exhibited these spectacles in his own gardens, impiously joining to them the diversions of the Cirque, and appearing himself publicly in the habit of a charioteer, sitting in his chariot, which yet the people entertained more with pity than pleasure, as knowing they were not done for the public benefit, but merely to gratify the tyrant's private rage and malice.—*Echard's Ecclesiastical History*, b. 1. c. 7.

^a This is a province of Greece, in its largest acceptation, lying along the coast of the Ionian sea, and having for its bounds on the north Albania, on the north-east Thessaly, on the south-east Achaia, and on the west the ocean. This country was anciently governed by its own princes, then united to the kingdom of Macedon; after that subjected to the Romans; then restored to its own princes; but is now in the possession of the Turks.—*The Complete Geographer*.

^b The ancient name of this country was Hellas, which the Latins changed into Græcia, and the Turks now call Rumelia. It was used by common writers to denote Macedonia, Epirus, Thessaly, Hellas, or Greece properly so called, and the Peloponnese, now Morea; but the Romans distinguished all these into two provinces only, namely, Macedonia and Achaia, under the former of which they comprehended Epirus and Thessaly, and under the latter, Greece properly so called, and the Peloponnese. The word Greece, in the old Testament, generally occurs in its larger acceptation; and in its less in the New; but as for the country itself, it was anciently the most celebrated region of the universe, surpassing all others in arms, arts, and sciences. For many ages it was divided into small kingdoms or states, till Philip king of Macedon, and after him, Alexander, his son, reduced it all under their subjection, and made it a monarchy. This kingdom was afterwards destroyed by the Romans, and made a province of the empire, in which condition it continued though formerly mangled by the Goths and Huns, till the Turks, who are its present masters, overran it, and have long since effaced all its ancient and magnificent monuments, as well as reduced the people to a state of the utmost slavery and stupidity.—*Wells's Geography of the New Testament and the Complete Geographer*.—Since our author wrote, the Greeks have regained their liberty, and are no longer under the dominion of the Turks.—*Ep*.

^c This city is seated on a hill near the sea, at a little distance from the mountain formerly called Ceryneæ, and not above ten miles from the mouth of the gulf Lepanto. It is a place of good trade, very populous, especially of Jews. It is defended with a strong castle, and has the honour to be an archbishop's see, which has, at present, a thousand churches under its jurisdiction. In ancient times the goddess Diana was worshipped here in a cruel manner, having a most beautiful young man and maid every year sacrificed to her, till by the preaching of St Andrew, Eurypilus was converted to Christianity, and then that horrid superstition was laid aside.—*The Complete Geographer*.

trine of a crucified Saviour, condemned him to the death which he so much extolled. After seven lictors therefore had cruelly torn his naked body, he was led out with great cheerfulness and serenity of mind to be crucified. But his cross was not of the usual form: it was made of two pieces of timber, crossing each other in the middle, in the shape of the letter X, which ever since has been known by the name of St Andrew's cross, and to this he was fastened, not with nails, but cords, to make his death more painful and lingering. In this condition he hung for the space of three days, all the while teaching and instructing the people, exhorting them to constancy and perseverance in that religion which he had delivered to them; and, when great intercessions were made to the proconsul for his life, earnestly requesting of our Lord in prayer, that he might on that day, which was the last of November, depart, and seal the truth of his religion ^d with his blood.

How the two apostles Peter and Paul escaped out of prison, from the rage of this persecution, we have no account: ^e but, from the writings of the latter, some have gathered, that, returning from Rome into Judea, and there continuing a short time, he thence passed into Asia, where Timothy met him at Ephesus; that from thence he made a visit to the Colossians, whom he had never seen before; and, after a considerable stay, returning to Ephesus again; ^f excommunicated Hymeneus ^g and Alex-

1 Tim. i. 20.

^d His body being taken down from the cross, and embalmed, was decently and honourably interred by Maximilla, a lady of great quality and fortune; but afterwards, by Constantine the Great, it was solemnly removed from Patræa to Constantinople, and there buried in a great church which he had built in honour of all the apostles.—*Cave's Lives*.

^e It does not appear to me that St Peter and St Paul were ever prisoners together at Rome but under the reign of Nero, when they both suffered martyrdom. St Paul, indeed, was twice a prisoner there; but that St Peter was twice a prisoner likewise, seems to rest on no other evidence, than that, as his first epistle is dated from Babylon, by which Rome is supposed to be meant, and as a considerable portion of time is supposed to have elapsed between the writing of his first and his second epistle, he must have been in Rome before the reign of Nero. It has been shown, however, by Michaelis, that the Babylon from which he dates his first epistle was certainly either the ancient Babylon on the Euphrates, which was even then a populous city, or Seleucia on the Tigris, sometimes called New Babylon; and it is indeed in the highest degree improbable in itself, that any man would date a serious epistle from any place designed by a mystical name, by which that place is not generally known. It seems therefore little less than certain, that St Peter did not go to Rome till some time after St Paul's liberation from his first imprisonment there, about the year 63 or 64; and that his first epistle was written at least some years before that period.—*Michaelis's Introduction*, vol. iv. and *Lardner's Supplement*.—*Gleig*.

^f This Hymeneus was very probably a citizen of Ephesus, who being converted by some of St Paul's first sermons, fell afterwards into the heresy of those who denied the resurrection of the body, and affirmed, that there was no other resurrection than that of the soul, which, by faith and baptism, is revived from sin to grace. The Alexander who was his colleague in this heresy, was doubtless the copper-smith, whom St Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, loudly complains of, as greatly obstructing the good effect of his preaching, (chap. iv. 14.) but whether he was the same Alexander who would have addressed himself to the multitude which Demetrius the silver-smith of Ephesus had drawn together, (Acts. xix. 24.) is a matter of some doubt. However this be, it is certain, that their notion of no other resurrection than a spiritual one, was destructive of the very foundations of Christianity, which are laid in the hopes of a resurrection from the dead; and therefore the apostle thought it expedient

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ander, for denying the resurrection of the dead, and other articles of faith; that from thence designing to go into Macedonia, he enjoined Timothy, whom, as we said before, he had constituted bishop of Ephesus,¹ to have his residence in that large city, and to take the charge of all the proconsular Asia; that arriving in Macedonia,² he visited Philippi, where he staid a considerable while; and from thence, very probably, sent his first epistle^a to Timothy; ³ 'wherein he lays down the duties and qualifications of a bishop, as well in respect of his ministry, as of his private conversation, and instructs him in the office of a true Christian pastor.'

From Macedonia, St Paul intending to remove to Nicopolis^b in Epirus, then to pass his winter, wrote his epistle^c to Titus, there in Crete, to meet him there;

¹ 1 Tim. i. 3.

² Phil. i. 25, 26.

³ 1 Tim. passim.

to have them excommunicated, that is, separated from the society of the faithful, and deprived of the privileges of being present at religious assemblies, of partaking of the Lord's supper, and joining in such other holy offices as linked Christians together in one and the same society and communion.—*Whitby's Annotations* on 2 Tim. ii. 17. iv. 14.; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

^a Among the learned there is no small disagreement as to the time when this epistle was written. That it was written after St Paul's departure from Ephesus to Macedonia, some have gathered from these words, 'when I went into Macedonia, I besought thee to abide at Ephesus,' (1 Tim. i. 3.) and that it was written when he was in expectation of returning shortly thither, they conclude from these, 'I write to thee, hoping to come to thee quickly,' (1 Tim. iii. 14.) From whence they argue, that it must have been written before he came to Miletus, because there he seems to have laid aside all thoughts of returning any more to Ephesus, as he tells the clergy of that place, 'And I know that all you among whom I have gone, preaching the kingdom of God shall see my face no more,' (Acts xx. 25.) And therefore they conclude, that it was written while he was in Macedonia, that is, in the first of Nero, and in the year of our Lord 55. Others allow indeed, that this epistle was written after that St Paul was gone into Macedonia; but then they contend, that this journey into Macedonia was one of those that are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. In his first journey Timothy went with him, but then the apostle had never seen Ephesus, (Acts xvi. 10, &c.) In his second, though he went from Ephesus, yet so far was he from leaving Timothy there, that he sent him and Erastus before him, (Acts xix. 21, 22.) And in the third, he did not go from Ephesus, but from Greece, into Macedonia, whence Timothy accompanied him, first to Jerusalem, and then to Rome, (Acts xx. 3, 4.) So that there could be no possibility for St Paul to leave Timothy at Ephesus, while himself departed into Macedonia, till after the time of his return from Rome. They therefore suppose, that after he was released from his confinement, he returned into Asia; and having made some stay at Ephesus, went from thence into Macedonia; that this is the time when he besought Timothy to abide still at Ephesus; and, consequently, that this epistle was written to him about the 10th of Nero, and in the year of our Lord 63. For since, in the course of the history of the Acts, (which extends as far as St Paul's imprisonment,) we can find no room to place this epistle, we must necessarily refer it to the time which was subsequent to his release, and when he went to revisit the churches which he had planted in the east.—*Whitby's and Beausobre's Preface to the first Epistle to Timothy*.

^b Nicopolis, by the Turks called Sciltaro, stands on the Danube, at the mouth of the Iatrus, or Ischar, twenty-five miles north from Silistria. It was built by the emperor Trajan, in memory of his victory over king Decebalus; and near this place, Sigismund king of Hungary was unfortunately defeated by Bajazet the Turkish emperor, A. D. 1136, which was owing more to the divisions among the Christians, than the bravery of the Turks; for of the latter there fell sixty thousand, but of the former only twenty, as history relates.—*The Complete Geographer*.

^c There is some dispute among the learned concerning the time when this epistle was written. That it was written after the time that St Paul had left Titus at Crete, (Titus i. 5.) cannot

'wherein he describes to him, as he had done to Timothy, the qualifications which a bishop ought to have, and more especially a bishop of Crete, where some sharpness and severity was necessary, amidst a people of their perverse and obstinate tempers; wherein he admonishes him, not to suffer the flock committed to his charge to be led away by the delusions of Judaizing Christians; and wherein he lays down precepts for people of all conditions of life, even not forgetting servants, because Jesus Christ has poured out his grace upon all men.'

From Nicopolis, as soon as winter was over, St Paul went a third time to Corinth, where⁴ he appointed Erastus to continue. Thence crossing the sea into Asia, he came to Ephesus; where, upon his departure, he left Timothy in tears; and so proceeded to Miletum, where he left Trophimus sick. From Miletum he travelled northward to Troas, and lodged with Carpus,^d one of

⁴ 2 Tim. iv. 20.

be denied; but then the question is, when St Paul was at Crete, since, in all the Acts of the Apostles, we find no footsteps of his being there. In his voyage to Rome, indeed, the vessel in which he sailed, touched at the Fair Havens, belonging to Crete; but as that was no commodious harbour, she soon set sail from thence, in hopes to make Phenice, another port in the same island, but by contrary winds was drove another way. Whether St Paul at this time had Titus in company with him, it no where appears; but the short stay which he made at the Fair Havens, which was only to consult whether they should winter there or not, will not permit us to think—especially considering, that at this time he was a prisoner in bonds—either that he attempted to preach the gospel there, or that he had any occasion to leave Titus in the island, 'to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city.' As therefore we said before, in relation to the epistle to Timothy, namely, that after St Paul was restored to his liberty, he returned into the east to visit the churches which he had planted; in his voyage from Rome to Jerusalem, he might conveniently enough call at Crete; after he had staid, and preached some time there, leave Titus behind him, to regulate such matters as he had not time and opportunity himself to do; and, in a year or two after, that is, in the 12th of Nero, and of our Lord 65, send him this letter to renew his instructions, and to request his company. For, that this epistle was written after the apostle had obtained his discharge, is manifest from his making no mention of his bonds and temptations, as he does in his epistle to the Ephesians, (chap. vi. 20.) to the Philippians, (i. 7.) to the Colossians, (iv. 18.) to Philemon, (ver. 9.) and in his second to Timothy, (chap. i. 8.) and whoever compares this epistle to Titus, with the two to Timothy, will find such an affinity in their subjects, the same sentiments, and the same instructions, occasioned by the same set of men who began now to appear in the east, and spread their fables and impostures every where, as will easily convince him that they were all written much about the same time, though the first to Timothy seems to be of prior date to that to Titus, even as that to Titus may be thought to precede the second to Timothy. In relation to Titus, (for this is the last time we shall meet with him in our history,) after having preached the gospel in Dalmatia, (2 Tim. iv. 10.) he is said to have returned into Crete; to have propagated the Christian religion in the neighbouring islands; and, dying in the ninety-fourth year of his age, and being buried in Crete, to have had the cathedral church of the island dedicated to his name.—*Whitby's and Beausobre's Preface to the Epistle to Titus, and Calmet's Commentary*.

^d We know very little of the life of Carpus, only that he must be a different person from St Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and from that other Carpus whom the false Dionysius, in his letter to Demophilus, makes mention of. The Greeks tell us a great many particulars of him, which are far from being certain. They affirm, that he was one of the seventy disciples; that he propagated the truth in several places; that he wrought abundance of miracles; that he was St Paul's assistant in preaching the gospel, and was employed by him in carrying his epistles. They make him bishop of Berea, and say, that he died in peace.—*Calmet's Commentary, and Dictionary* under the word.

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his disciples, where ¹ he left his cloak,^a some books and parchment-rolls; and, in all probability, about this time it was that he suffered those persecutions and afflictions at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra,² whereof he makes mention to Timothy, and thanks God for his deliverance from them. But though God was pleased to deliver him from these afflictions, yet it was not long before he discovered to him the near approach of his death, and gave him to know particularly, that at Rome he was to suffer martyrdom: which was so far from retarding, that it made him hasten his journey with joy and alacrity to that place.

It was about the twelfth or thirteenth year of Nero's reign when he came to Rome the second time, where meeting and joining with Peter, they both used their utmost endeavours to instruct the Jews in their synagogues, and to convert the Gentiles in all public places and assemblies. This soon raised the malice and indignation of the magistrates, especially of the governor ^b Helius, whom Nero at his departure into Greece, left invested with exorbitant powers, which he exercised after as exorbitant a manner. It was crime enough for these two apostles that they were Christians; but the particular prejudice against Peter is said to have been his defeating Simon Magus, and that against Paul, his converting one of the emperor's concubines. However this be, apprehended they both were, and cast into prison; where they spent their time in the most solemn acts of devotion, and as occasion offered, preached the gospel to their guards and fellow-prisoners, among whom, it is said, that they converted Processus and Martinian, two captains of the guard, with seven and forty others.

During the time of the apostle's confinement, St Peter wrote his second general epistle ^c to the converted Jews who were dispersed in the several provinces of Asia:

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 13.² 2 Tim. iii. 21.

^a What we are to understand by St Paul's cloak, will best be resolved in our answers to the following objections. We have only to observe here, that the time when he left his cloak was not when he went from Troas to Assos, in his journey to Jerusalem; for then, as bishop Pearson says, he could have no cause to leave any thing of moment, having so many to accompany him on his journey, as well as a ship to attend him, (Acts xx. 4, 6, 13,) but it was in his travels after he was set at liberty, and had left Rome, or rather in his return to Rome again, that, in the hurry of his departure, he left some things with Carpus, which he afterwards found he wanted.—*Whitby's Annotations*, and *Cabnet's Commentary*.

^b He is called *Cæsarianus*, as being the emperor's freedman, and by the apostle the *Lion*, (2 Tim. iv. 17,) by reason of his cruelty against Christians.

^c That this epistle was written by St Peter is evident both from the inscription it bears, and the concurrence of circumstances in it relating to that apostle, and none else; and therefore we may suppose, that the true reason of its late reception into the list of the holy scriptures, was not so much its difference of style, as its not being addressed to any particular church that might have taken care to preserve it, and in due time to have entered its claim for a place in the canon. And that it was indited, not after the destruction of Jerusalem, as some will have it, but a little before the author's death, not improbably in the 13th of Nero's reign, A. D. 67, may be justly concluded from this declaration of his, 'I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to put you always in remembrance of these things, knowing that shortly I shall put off this tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shown me,' (2 Pet. i. 12, 13, 14.—*Beausobre's*, *Whitby's*, and *Hammond's Preface to the Second Epistle of St Peter*.—See also *Sherlock's* first dissertation at the end of his *Discourses on Prophecy and Miracles*; *Michaelis*, vol. iv.

wherein he endeavours, by earnest exhortations, to prevail with them to persevere in the doctrine which they had received, and to testify the soundness and sincerity of their faith by a Christian life comporting therewith; wherein he forewarns them of the false teachers ^d that would shortly spring up among them; foretells their sad and miserable destruction; and describes them by their odious characters, that they might avoid them: wherein he vindicates the doctrine of Christ's coming to judgment, which the heretics of those times denied, that thereby they might encourage men the more securely to pursue their lewd courses; and wherein he describes the ^e great and terrible day of the Lord, when the elements shall melt, and the whole frame of nature be dissolved, thereby to excite them to become circumspect and diligent, in order to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.

About the same time St Paul wrote his second epistle ^f to Timothy: wherein he informs him of the near ap-

^d There are three sorts of people which the apostle cautions his converts against in this epistle. 1st. The *Solidians*, who talked of attaining salvation by the strength of their faith, or a right belief of the doctrines of Christianity, without any regard to a virtuous life. 2dly. The *Nicolaitans*, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness; and, upon the presumption of their being spiritual persons, and the seed of election, averred, that they contracted no guilt, and could receive no pollution from any evil action they did. And 3dly. The scoffers at the promise of Christ's coming to judgment, which they looked upon as a thing that could never be verified, and which the continuance of their persecutions gave the Christians small hopes of expecting.—*Whitby's Preface to the second Epistle of St Peter*.

^e It is the opinion of the reverend and judicious Dr Hammond, and Dr Lightfoot, that St Peter, in the 3d chapter of his second epistle, does not discourse of our Lord's coming to the general judgment of all mankind: but only of his coming to execute his judgment on the Jews in the final destruction of their church and nation. But besides that this notion is entirely new, and contrary to the sentiments of all the ancients who have commented upon this epistle, it seems obvious at first sight, 'that the day of the Lord, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up,' can mean no other than the great day of judgment. For, to interpret these words of the destruction of Jerusalem only, is to turn them into a metaphor and allegory; whereas St Peter says plainly, that as the old world was destroyed by water, so shall the world that now is be destroyed by fire, (2 Peter iii. 6, 7.) It is usual indeed with the prophets, to represent God's judgments on the enemies of his church and people, by the tragical expressions, 'of burning up the earth, and dissolving the heavens,' (Isa. xiii. 9, &c. xxxiv. 3, &c.) but this solemn exhortation, 'Seeing then all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening to the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that we may be found of him without spot and blameless?' (2 Pet. iii. 11, 12.) This exhortation, I say, sounds too high for the destruction of Jerusalem, in which they of Pontus and Galatia could not be much concerned; but it is very proper for those who had the lively ideas of the conflagration of the world, and the tremendous judgment and perdition of ungodly men, then set before them.—*Whitby's Preface to the Second Epistle of St Peter*.

^f That at two different times St Paul was a prisoner at Rome, is evident from the circumstances which himself relates. In his first confinement, he was permitted to live in his hired house, and to receive all that came to him, (Acts xxviii. 30, 31.) but in his second, he was so closely shut up, that Onesiphorus was forced to inquire diligently after him, before he found him, (2 Tim. i. 17.) In the first, Timothy and Mark were both with him, and constantly attending him, (Phil. i. 1. and Col. iv. 10.) in the second, they were both absent in Asia, and knew nothing of what passed in Rome, (2 Tim. iv. 11.) In the first, Demas had joined himself to him, and was become a fellow labourer in the gospel: in the second, 'out of love to the things of the world,

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proach of his death; and desires him to come to him before winter, because most of his companions, upon one affair or other, were departed from him: wherein he exhorts him to discharge all the duties of a bishop and pastor, suitable to those excellent gifts he had received, and with a generous contempt of the world, and worldly things: wherein he admonishes him, not to be surprised or disturbed at the apostasy of some from the faith, but to preach the more zealously against such opposers as heaped up to themselves teachers, and left the truth, to turn unto fables; and wherein he acquainted him, how, at his first appearing before Helius, all his companions, for fear of being involved in his punishment, ¹ forsook him; but that the Lord stood by him, and strengthened him, to make his preaching more conspicuous, and effectual to the Gentiles.⁷

How long these two apostles lived under their confinement, we have no certain knowledge; but at last it being determined that they should both die: Peter, as a Jew, and foreigner, was sentenced to be crucified; and Paul, ^a as a Roman citizen, to be beheaded. ^b On the

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 17.

he had forsaken him, and departed to Thessalonica,' (2 Tim. iv. 10.) In the first, 'many of the brethren, waxing confident by his bonds, were much more bold to speak the word without fear,' (Phil. i. 14.) but in the second, they were so intimidated, that 'they all forsook him,' and 'not one man stood with him,' (2 Tim. iv. 16.) And if it thus appears, that St Paul was twice in custody at Rome, himself gives us to understand, that this epistle was written under his latter confinement, and was very probably the last that ever he wrote; for, 'I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have finished my course,' and 'from henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory,' (2 Tim. iv. 6, &c.) are the words of one that is approaching to his latter end. This therefore is a strong indication of the singular affection which St Paul had for Timothy, that he favoured him with one of the last letters that he ever wrote; and if, pursuant to this letter, Timothy went to Rome, (as probably he did,) he must have been there when the apostle was led out to suffer, and finished his course in a glorious martyrdom. After the death of St Paul, the history of Timothy is but short; only we may suppose, that he returned to Ephesus, probably the year following, and there continued to govern that church in the capacity of their bishop, until the Pagans of that city, who were great votaries to the goddess Diana, celebrating a festival called Catagogian, in which they carried about the images of their gods, and by means of their masks and clubs, committed a thousand insolences and outrages, Timothy stood in the streets, to oppose and reprove this execrable custom; which so enraged the people, that falling upon him with stones and clubs, they left him for dead. But some of his disciples, finding him to breathe, took him up, and lodged him without the gates, where in two days he expired, and was afterwards buried on a mountain not far from the city.—*Whitby's* and *Beausobre's* *Preface to the Second Epistle to Timothy*, and *Echard's Ecclesiastical History*.

^a This was accounted a more noble kind of death, not among the Romans only, but among other nations, as being fitter for persons of better quality, and more ingenious education: and, from this instrument of his execution, the custom no doubt first arose, that in all pictures and images of this apostle, he is constantly represented with a sword in his right hand. He is said to have suffered in the sixty-eighth year of his age; to have been buried in the Via Ostiensis, about two miles from Rome; and by Constantine the Great to have had a stately church, in the year 118, built over his grave. It was adorned with an hundred of the best marble columns, and beautified with the most exquisite workmanship. But as it was afterwards thought to be too narrow and little for the honour of so great an apostle, Valentinian, or rather Theodosius, the emperor, the one but finishing what the other began, by a rescript, directed to Salustius, prefect of the city, caused it to be taken down, and a larger and more noble one to be built in its room.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles*.

^b Many of the ancients positively affirm, that both these apos-

29th of June, as it is generally supposed, St Peter, being first scourged, according to the Roman custom, was led to the top of the Vatican mount, near the Tiber, where he desired the favour of the officers, that he might be crucified with his head downwards, as thinking himself unworthy to suffer in the same posture wherein his Lord and Master had suffered before him. In this manner ^c he expired upon the cross; while St Paul, having converted three of the soldiers that were sent to guard him to his execution, and who, within a few days after, died martyrs themselves, when he came to the place called *Aquæ Salvæ*, about three miles out of the city, after some solemn preparations, cheerfully gave up his neck to the fatal stroke.

Thus died ^d the two most eminent apostles of Jesus Christ, after they had, with indefatigable labour, reaped a glorious harvest of infinite numbers of souls, and triumphantly propagated salvation to the most considerable parts of the world; and as they were equally concerned in the foundation of the church of Rome, the one having the Jewish and the other the Gentile converts under his

tles suffered on the same day and year; but others, though allowing the same day, tell us, that St Paul did not suffer till a year after St Peter; and some interpose the distance of several years.—*Ibid*.

^c His body being taken from the cross, was embalmed after the Jewish manner, by Marcellinus the presbyter, and so buried in the Vatican, near the Triumphal way. Over his grave a small church was soon after erected; but when it was destroyed by Heligabalus, his body was removed to the cemetery in the Appian way, two miles distant from Rome. Here it continued till, in the time of pope Cornelius, it was re-conveyed to the Vatican; where it abode in some obscurity, until Constantine the Great, out of the profound reverence he had for the Christian religion, having rebuilt and enlarged the Vatican to the honour of St Peter, enriched it with gifts and ornaments, which in every age, increased in splendour and beauty, till it is become one of the wonders of the world at this day.—*Ibid*.

^d Before we part with these two apostles, it may not be amiss to take a short survey of their persons and tempers. St Peter, (if we may believe the description which Nicephorus gives us of him,) was of a middle size, but somewhat slender, and inclining to tallness: his complexion was very pale, his hair thick and curled, his eyes black, his eye-brows thin, and his nose large, but not sharp. In his natural temper, (as most Galileans were,) he was warm, eager, and enterprising, stout and courageous in the main, though in some cases his fear prevailed, and destroyed the succours which reason offered. His humility and lowliness of mind was singular, his affection and zeal for his Master wonderful, his love for the souls of men ardent, his diligence in his ministerial office indefatigable, and his rule and conduct in his episcopal capacity, highly prudent and engaging. St Paul, (if we may believe the same Nicephorus,) was of a low and small stature, somewhat stooping, his complexion was fair, his countenance grave, his head small, his eyes sparkling, his nose high and bending, and his hair thick and dark, but mixed with grey. His constitution was weak, and often subject to distempers; but his mind was strong, and endued with a solid judgment, quick invention, and prompt memory, which were all improved by art, and the advantages of a liberal education: his humility and self-abasement was wonderful, his sobriety and temperance singularly strict, his contempt of the world great and generous, his charity to the poor extensive, his love for men's souls universal, his labours in the execution of his ministry incessant, his constancy in the profession of religion invincible, and his style and manner of writing to inculcate it, even by the confession of his enemies, weighty and powerful, (2 Cor. x. 10.) Besides the epistles which are owned to be genuine, several other writings are falsely ascribed to him, as an epistle to the Laodiceans, a third to the Thessalonians, a third to the Corinthians, a second to the Ephesians, his Letter to Seneca, his Acts, his Revelation, his voyage to Thracia, and his Sermons: as the like has been done to St Peter, namely, his Acts, Gospel, Revelation, Preaching, Judgment, and Liturgy.—*Ibid*.

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care and government, when both of them were dead, the whole administration of it devolved upon ^a Linus, one of St Paul's disciples, of whom he makes mention in his second epistle to Timothy,¹ and who, after twelve years presiding therein, is said to have suffered martyrdom either in the first or second year of Titus.

One of St Paul's predictions was, that in the Christian church² heresies should arise, for the manifestation of such as were sound in the faith; which prediction began now to be verified: for, besides the immediate followers of Simon Magus^b those of Menander, Ebion, and Cerinthus, as well as others, who are styled ^{3 c} Nico-

¹ Chap. iv. 21.² 1 Cor. xi. 19.³ Rev. ii. 15.

^a Tradition is almost unanimous in asserting that the first bishop of Rome was Linus; by which we are to understand that he was the first person appointed over it, after the apostles had left it, and we may, perhaps, safely consider Linus to have entered upon his office as early as the year 58.—*Burton's History of the Church*.—Ed.

^b Menander was a Samaritan, and, like Simon, a notorious impostor and magician; but abounding with more monstrous illusions than he. He gave it out, that he was a Saviour sent from above for the restoration of mankind; and that whoever was instructed in his occult knowledge, and initiated in his baptism, should enjoy a perpetual immortality, and continue always young and vigorous, even in this world. With these, and several others of his master Simon's opinions, he seduced many in Antioch; and though the extravagancy of his notions made them less infectious, yet they were continued in the second century, particularly by Basilides and Saturninus. Ebion, so called for his affected poverty, was born at Cocaba, a village in Palestine; and spread his heresy in Trachonitis, and among the Christians, who, before the siege of Jerusalem, had retired to Pella. He denied the divinity of our Saviour; and though he acknowledged him for an excellent person, believed him to be no more than the son of Joseph and Mary. He enjoined the observation of the law of Moses as necessary to salvation; received all the writings of the Old Testament, but none of the New, except St Matthew's gospel; and particularly condemned St Paul as an apostate, for proving the dissolution of the Jewish law. Cerinthus spread his heresy in Ephesus, and other parts of Asia Minor; and, in his denial of our Lord's divinity, his acknowledgement of St Matthew's gospel, and asserting the obligation of the Mosaic law, agreed exactly with Ebion; as he did with the Gnostics, in asserting the creation of the world by angels. To insinuate himself with the vulgar, he boasted much of his illuminations and revelations; and, to make the mystery of our Lord's passion more familiar, distinguished between Jesus and Christ, and accordingly taught that Jesus was but a mere man; that Christ descended upon him in the likeness of a dove, and continued with him during the time of his ministry; but that, as Christ was incapable of suffering, he forsook Jesus when he came to be crucified, and left him to die; but his kingdom afterwards, he affirmed, should be terrestrial, in the city of Jerusalem, where men should enjoy all kinds of carnal pleasures for a thousand years.

^c The Nicolaitans are supposed to derive their original from Nicolas, one of the deacons mentioned in the 6th of Acts, and, as Clemens Alexandrinus relates the story, not improbably on this occasion. This Nicolas had a beautiful wife, of whom he was said to be jealous; but to show the apostles how far he was from that, he brought her forth one day, and gave any person leave to marry her. Himself was a sober and temperate man, who never knew any woman but his own wife, by whom he had one son and several daughters, who lived all unmarried, and showed that their father was no encourager of lewdness: but so it was, that being accustomed to make use of an expression, which bore an equivocal meaning, namely, 'That we ought to abuse the flesh,' meaning that we ought to mortify and keep it under, by this saying of his, and what he had done in offering his wife, he unhappily gave an umbrage to his disciples and followers to throw off all restraint, and to give themselves over to the grossest impurities, allowing of the most pernicious mixtures, and making corporeal pleasure the ultimate end of man.—*Echard's* and *Lamy's Ecclesiastical Histories*.

laitans, appearing eager advocates for such principles as sapped the very foundations of the Christian religion, obliged ^d St Jude to write his epistle, in the same manner as St Peter did his, to the Jewish converts, in their several dispersions; 'Wherein he informs them, that his primary intention was, to have wrote to them in general of the common salvation, in order to confirm them in it; yet, seeing the doctrine of Christ attacked on every side by heretics, he thought it more necessary to exhort them to stand up manfully for the defence of the faith once delivered to the saints, and to oppose those false teachers who so earnestly laboured to corrupt them; and that they might know these the better, he describes them in their proper colour, and foretells their future, if not impending destruction: but exhorts them, at the same time, to endeavour by all gentle methods to save them, and to take them out of the fire into which their own folly had cast them.'

It is very observable of this apostle, that the evangelists commonly call him, not Jude, but either ^e Thaddeus, or Lebbaeus, out of a particular dislike, no doubt, to the name of Judas, ever since the treacherous and bloody Iscariot betrayed and sold his master: but then the sacred records are so very short in their accounts of him, as well as of the other remaining apostles, that we must, in this case, be beholden to other ecclesiastical writers;—who tell us of this St Jude, that after our Lord's ascent into heaven, having, for some time, preached about

^d This Jude, who, in the history of the gospel, is styled our Lord's brother, as being the son of Mary, sister to the blessed Virgin, was undoubtedly the brother of James the Less, bishop of Jerusalem, (Mat. xiii. 55), and 'it may be, (as Dr Lightfoot expresses himself,) that St Jude stands up in the charge of his brother James among the circumcision of Judea, and directs his epistle to all such as were sanctified and preserved in those apostatizing times, as his brother had done to all the twelve tribes in general.' Between this and St Peter's second epistle there is certainly a great resemblance. The end aimed at in both, namely, to expose, in their true light, the corrupt principles and practices of the Gnostics, is evidently the same: and the arguments and expressions, in many cases, so much alike, that it has been disputed whether St Jude has here abridged that of St Peter, or St Peter enlarged upon this of St Jude, though most are of the former opinion. And indeed, when we find St Jude quoting expressly this epistle of St Peter, (Jude, ver. 17. compared with 2 Pet. iii. 1, 2.) and alluding to St Paul's second epistle to Timothy, (2 Tim. iii. 1. compared with Jude, ver. 18.) and speaking of the apostles as persons who had been some time dead, we cannot but conclude that this epistle was not written till after the death of the apostles St Peter and St Paul; but how long after we cannot tell.—*Whitby's Preface to the Epistle of Jude*, and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

^e The superstitious veneration which the Jews had for the sacred name of Jehovah, would not suffer them to pronounce it in common conversation; and hence it was, that when any man had a name wherein occurred the major part of this ineffable title, as it did in Jehuda, or Juda, they chose rather to change it in common speech, for another of the like importance but different characters; for which reason, Judas, which denotes 'praise,' was changed into Thaddeus, a word of the same signification. Concerning the other name of Lebbaeus, conjectures have been various. Some deriving it from an Hebrew word, which signifies the heart, will have it to intimate the extraordinary wisdom and courage of this apostle: while others draw it from a root which imports a lion, and think it an allusion to that prophecy of Jacob, which compares his son Judah to an old lion, and a lion's whelp, (Gen. xlix. 9.) though all this etymology might be spared, if we can but with Dr Lightfoot suppose, that his name was taken from Lebba, a town in Galilee, where he conceives that this apostle was born.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles*; and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*.

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Judea and Galilee, next in Samaria and Idumea, and then in Syria and Mesopotamia, he travelled at last into Persia, where at the instigation of the Magi, provoked by his open rebukes of their idolatrous worship of the sun, and other superstitions, he was assaulted by the common people, and, after other previous cruelties, crucified;—who tell us of ^a St Simon, that upon the dispersion of the apostles, having preached in Egypt, Cyrene, Africa, Mauritania, and other remote countries thereunto adjoining, at length bent his course westward, and came into ^b Britain where, after many miracles wrought, and great hardships undergone, he was at last put to death for the testimony of the truth, by the then rude and barbarous inhabitants of that island;—who tell us of ^c St Thomas, that, having preached in Media, Persia, Hyrcania, Bactriana, &c. he was at length encouraged by a divine vision to travel into India, where coming into the country of the Brachmans, by the miracles which he wrought, he converted so many, and among others Sagamo, the prince of the country, that the priests, fearing the downfall of their religion, fell upon him, while he was intent at prayer, with stones and darts, and at last, one of them coming nearer, ran him through with a lance;—who tell us of ^d St Philip, that after having made many converts in the Upper Asia, Colchis, and

some parts of Scythia, he came at length to Hierapolis, a noted city in Phrygia, where the inhabitants at that time paid their adorations to a ^e dragon, which when the apostle, by his prayers and invocation of the name of Christ, either quite destroyed, or caused to disappear, the magistrates of the place were so exasperated against him, that they threw him into prison, and, after a severe scourging, ordered him either to be hanged or crucified;—who tell us of ^f St Bartholomew, generally supposed to be the same with Nathaniel, that having with great success propagated Christianity in the Higher India, whither he carried St Matthew's gospel, he thence removed into Lycaonia, and came at last to Albinople, a city of the greater Armenia, at this time miserably overrun with idolatry; where having converted their king Polymius, and his wife, and by their example prevailed with multitudes to relinquish their idols, he so far enraged the priests against him, that they instigated Astyages the king's brother to get him into their hands, and to have him ^g first flayed, and then either beheaded or crucified;—who tell us of ^h St Matthias, that having, for some

^e This doubtless was done in memory of that infamous act of Jupiter, who, in the shape of a dragon, insinuated himself into the embraces of Proserpine, his own daughter, begot of Ceres, and whom the Phrygians chiefly worshipped, as Clemens of Alexandria informs us.—*Cave's Ibid.*

^f That Nathaniel and Bartholomew were only two names for one and the same person, the one his proper, and the other his relative name, appears from several passages in the gospels compared together: but then the question is, upon what account it was that he had his relative name conferred on him? That several sects in the Jewish church denominated themselves from some famous person of that nation, as the Essenes did from Enosh, and the Sadducees from Sadoch, cannot be denied; and therefore, if we may suppose that there were others who called themselves Tholmæans, from Tholmai, scholar to Heber the ancient master of the Hebrews, who flourished in Debir and Hebron, it will be no hard matter to make Nathaniel of this order and institution, and thereupon to give him the name of Bartholomew, that is, a scholar of the Tholmæans, and so create him, as he is said to have been, a doctor of the Jewish law. But an easier account of this matter is, that as the first syllable of this name signifies a son, the word Bar-tholomew will import no more than the son of Tholomew, or Tholmai, which was no uncommon name among the Jews. And that it was a usual thing among them, for the son thus to derive his name, is evident from the instance of Bar-timæus, which is interpreted the son of Timæus. (Mark x. 46.) and that of Bar-jona, (Mat. xvi. 17.) which St John makes the same with Simon son of Jonas. (John xxi. 25).—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles; and Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels.*

^g That excoriation was a punishment in use not only in Egypt, but among the Persians likewise, is evident from the testimony of Plutarch, who records a particular instance of Mesabates the Persian eunuch's being first flayed alive, and then crucified; in *Vita Artaxerxæ*. And that the Armenians, who were next neighbours to the Persians, might from them borrow this piece of barbarous and inhuman cruelty, is no hard supposition at all.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles.*

^h As this apostle was not one of the first election, immediately called and chosen by our Saviour, we are not to expect any account of him in the history of the gospel; but from the Acts of the Apostles we learn, that being one of our Lord's disciples, and probably one of the seventy, upon the death of Judas he was elected into the apostleship, which he discharged with great efficacy, and a full demonstration of the Spirit and of power. But there are some things in ecclesiastical story related of him, as particularly when he preached the gospel in Macedonia, and the heathens, to make experiment of his faith, gave him a poisonous potion, that he cheerfully drank it up in the name of Christ, and received no harm, which have not met with so ready a credence, though the instance before us be no more than the completion of our Saviour's promise to his apostles, 'They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them;' (Mark xvi. 18.).—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles.*

^a This apostle, to distinguish him, I suppose, from that other Simon surnamed Peter, is styled Simon Zelotes, or Simon the Canaanite; but the latter name, we must observe, does not relate to his country or kindred, but is indeed the same in sense with Zelotes, and derived from an Hebrew, as that is from a Greek word, signifying zeal; but whether this title was given him in regard of any personal warmth or vigour remarkable in him, or whether to denote him one of that sect who were called Zealots among the Jews, we cannot tell; only we may observe, that if it was upon the latter account, his conversion was more signal, since nothing could be more opposite to the meekness and gentleness of Christianity, than the irregularity and fierceness of that spirit by which this sect was actuated.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels.*

^b Others say, that, after his preaching the gospel in Egypt, he came into Mesopotamia, and there meeting with St Jude, went with him into Persia, where they both received the crown of martyrdom; for which reason perhaps it is, that the church commemorates them both together in one festival.—*Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels.*

^c It was customary with the Jews, when travelling into foreign countries, or familiarly conversing with the Greeks and Romans, to assume to themselves a Greek or Latin name, of great affinity, and sometimes of the very same signification with that of their own country; as that of Thomas and Didymus, one in the Syriac, and the other in the Greek, do both signify a twin. He no doubt was a Jew, and in all probability, a Galilean, as well as the other apostles; but the place of his birth, and the nature of his calling, unless we should suppose he was brought up to the trade of fishing, is a thing unknown. It is generally agreed however, that he preached the gospel in the East Indies, by reason of the great numbers of Christians found there in several places, who still go by the name of St Thomas; though there are not wanting some, who ascribe the original of this sect to a person of the same name, who lived many centuries after.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles; and Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels.*

^d This apostle was born at Bethsaida, a town near the sea of Tiberias; but of his parents, and manner of life, the history of the gospel takes no notice, though probably he was a fisherman, the general trade of the place. He is said to have preached in Upper Asia; to have wrought many miracles in Hierapolis, a city of Phrygia, now called by the Turks Pambuek Kulasi, from the rocks about it, which are white like cotton; and there to have suffered martyrdom, by being fastened to a cross, and stoned to death.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles; and Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. 4.

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time, employed himself in the work of the ministry within the confines of Judea, at length he betook himself to other countries, and travelling eastward, came at last to Ethiopia, (or Cappadocia rather,) where, meeting with a people of a fierce and intractable temper, after all his labours and sufferings, and a numerous conversion to the Christian faith, from them he received the crown of martyrdom; but in what manner it was conferred, ^a authors are not agreed; and who tell us of St ^b Barnabas, that, after his separation from St Paul, having preached about Liguria, and settled a church at Milan, (whereof himself was constituted bishop,) he returned at last to Cyprus, his native country, where, by the malice of the Jews, he was tumultuously assaulted, and stoned to death, at Salamis, the principal city of the island. ^c

^a Ancient martyrology reports him to have been seized by the Jews, and, as a blasphemer, to have been first stoned, and then beheaded; but the Greek offices, seconded herein by several ancient breviaries, tell us, that he was crucified; as an hymn cited by Dr Cave out of the Greek offices seems to import. There was a spurious book, called the 'Gospel,' or 'Acts of Matthias;' which, Eusebius tells us, was composed by heretics, and fathered upon him; even as Clemens of Alexandria observes, that Valentinus, Marcion, and Basilides, sheltered their vile tenets under the pretended authority of this apostle.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles*, and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*, vol. iv.

^b In relation to this apostle, we have only to remark, that he hath left us one epistle, reckoned among the apocryphal writings of the first Christians, which may be genuine perhaps, though not canonical. Its principal design is, to prove, that the law is abolished by the gospel; that legal ceremonies are useless; and that the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ was necessary. It is certainly very ancient, full of piety and zeal, frequently quoted by Clemens of Alexandria, and though written in a style very allegorical, by the labours of our late archbishop Wake is made to the English reader both entertaining and profitable.—*Calmet's Dictionary*, and *Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels*.—The epistle of Barnabas was the production of some Jew, who most probably lived in the second century, and whose mean abilities and superstitious attachment to Jewish fables, show, notwithstanding the uprightness of his intentions, that he must have been a very different person from the true Barnabas, who was St Paul's companion.—*Mosheim*.—En.

^c Many of the above particulars respecting the lives, actions, and deaths of the apostles, rest on very doubtful authority, and several of them are so wild and extravagant, as to raise strong suspicions of their fabulous nature. The following judicious remarks on the subject, by Dr Burton, will doubtless be read with satisfaction. 'It has already been observed, that we know very little of the personal history of the twelve apostles; but the remark may be repeated here, that they probably did not begin their distant travels till the time of Paul's first journey in 45; and there is reason to think that very few of them survived the destruction of Jerusalem. We have already mentioned the little that is known concerning Peter. James, the brother of John, was beheaded in the year 44, before his apostolical labours could have begun, though the fact of his death may serve to show that he had been a zealous preacher to his countrymen at Jerusalem. John himself outlived all the other apostles, and did not die till the end of the century; so that we shall have occasion to notice him hereafter. Of the nine other apostles, we have very little authentic information, though there are abundant traditions concerning their preaching in distant countries, and suffering martyrdom. These accounts are not supported by the earlier writers, except with relation to Andrew and Thomas: the former of whom is said, by a writer of the third century, to have preached in Scythia, and the latter in Parthia. The term Scythia might be applied to many countries; but Andrew is said more precisely to have visited the country about the Black Sea; and, ultimately, to have died in the south of Greece. If it be true that the apostle Thomas preached in Parthia, we are to understand this expression of the Persian territories; and he is also said to have travelled as far as India. Some persons have thought to find traces of his apostolical labours in a settlement of Christians lately discovered

Thus were all the apostles and first ministers of Christ appointed by God to lay down their lives, in testimony

on the coast of Malabar; and we are told that these persons lay claim to the apostle Thomas as their founder. But though this interesting church may be of great antiquity, there is good reason to doubt the truth of such a tradition; and part of the country which is now called Arabia, was often spoken of in ancient times as India. It is, therefore, highly probable that Thomas preached the gospel in the central parts of Asia; and the church of Edessa, a city on the east bank of the Euphrates, may have been planted by this apostle. But the story of Abgarus, the king of that people, having written a letter to our Saviour, and being cured of a disorder by a person sent to him from the apostle Thomas, is worthy of little credit, except as it confirms the tradition of Thomas having preached at Edessa. His remains were shown in that city as early as in the fourth century; and there is reason to think that he did not suffer martyrdom. There is the same doubt concerning the proper meaning of the term India, in another tradition, concerning the apostles Matthew and Bartholomew. It was reported, at the end of the second century, that a Hebrew copy of the gospel, composed by Matthew, had been found in India, which had been brought to that country by Bartholomew. It is plain that a Hebrew translation of this gospel could only have been of use to Jews, who are known to have been settled in great numbers in Arabia: so that, if there is any truth in this story, it probably applies to Arabia, and we may conclude that one or both of these apostles visited that country. Matthew is reported upon other, but later, authority, to have preached in Ethiopia, which was another name occasionally used for Arabia. He is also said to have led a life of rigid abstinence, and not to have met his end by martyrdom. Concerning three of the apostles, Simon, surnamed the Zealot, Matthias, and James the son of Alphaeus, we know absolutely nothing; at least if we follow the opinion expressed in this history, that the James now mentioned was a different person from the bishop of Jerusalem. There was, however, a brother of the bishop, named Jude, who was probably the same with the apostle of that name; and since Paul, in a letter which he wrote in the year 52, speaks of 'the brethren of our Lord' travelling about with their wives, and preaching the gospel, we can hardly help referring the expression to Jude, who at that time was pursuing his apostolical labours; but the particular countries in which he travelled are not known. We learn, from other authorities, that he was married, and left descendants. He was also the writer of the epistle which is still extant; and there is reason to think that he survived most of the other apostles. It has been stated that none of them lived to the end of the century, except John; but it is probable that Philip died at an advanced age; and his residence, in the latter part of his life, was at Hierapolis in Phrygia. He also was married, and had daughters, which was perhaps the cause of his being sometimes confounded with the other Philip, who was one of the seven deacons, and lived at Cesarea, whose unmarried daughters are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. This brief sketch of the personal history of the Apostles will be unsatisfactory to those who would wish to be furnished with anecdotes concerning the founders of our faith. Such a wish is perfectly reasonable, if materials could be found for gratifying it; and the historian of the Church could not better discharge his duty, when engaged upon the affairs of the first century, than in relating circumstances connected with the lives and deaths of the apostles. Their history would be that of the first propagation of the gospel. But it has been already stated more than once, that we know very little concerning them; and upon this interesting subject, the Christians of the third and fourth centuries appear to have been almost as much in the dark as ourselves. Traditions must have been extant in the second century, connected with the history of the apostles, and collections of them are stated to have been made by writers of that period; but they have not come down to our day, except, perhaps, amidst a heap of extravagant fictions, which make it impossible for us to ascertain whether any of the stories are genuine. The lives of all the apostles may be read in most minute detail, not only in the compilations of modern writers, but in works or fragments of works, which are probably as old as the second century; and we shall see, when we come to that period, that literary forgeries began then to be common, which pretended to relate the personal adventures of the companions of our Lord. The only inspired work upon the subject, which is entitled the Acts of the Apostles,

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of the truth of the gospel, except the beloved evangelist ^a St John; and yet if we consider his stripes and imprisonment by the council of Jerusalem, his ^b banishment to the isle of Patmos for the word of God, and his being ^c cast into a cauldron of flaming oil by the order of Domitian, we can hardly deny him the honour of being a martyr, since he submitted himself freely to such sufferings as nothing but a miracle could rescue him from.

Of this apostle the same ecclesiastical writers tell us, that ^d after the death of the blessed mother, which happened about fifteen years after our Lord's ascension, by the special conduct of the Holy Ghost, he was carried into Asia, on purpose to oppose the heresies which in those parts began to spread and infest the church: that, as he spared no pains in preaching the gospel where it was wanted, and in confirming it where it had been settled, many churches of note and eminence, besides those mentioned in the beginning of his Revelation, were of his foundation; that in the persecution raised by Domitian, the proconsul of Asia sent him bound to

might, with more propriety, be termed the Acts of Paul; and they do not bring down his history beyond the termination of his first imprisonment at Rome. The account of his second imprisonment, and of his death, might have been related much more minutely, if credit could be given to the statements of later writers; but it is impossible to do so, in the great majority of instances, without laying aside every principle of sound and rational criticism: and the same remark will apply to the voluminous legends which are still extant concerning the rest of the apostles.—*Burton's History of the Church.*—Ed.

^a Theophilact, and others before him, were of opinion, that our apostle died a martyr, upon no other ground than what our Saviour told him and his brother, that they should 'drink of the cup, and be baptized with the baptism wherewith he was baptized,' which St Chrysostom strictly understands of a bloody death. This was indeed literally verified of his brother James; but the general sense of antiquity is, that St John died in his bed.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles.*

^b This punishment, in the Roman law, is called *capitis diminutio*, because the person thus banished was disfranchised, and the city thereby lost an head. It succeeded in the room of that ancient punishment, *Aquæ et ignis interdictio*, whereby it was implied, that the man must, for his own defence, betake himself into banishment, when it became unlawful for any to accommodate him with lodging or diet, or any other necessary of life. But this banishing into islands was properly called *disportatio*, being accounted the worst kind of exile, whereby the criminal forfeited his estate, and being bound and put on shipboard, was, by public officers, transported to some certain island, (which none but the emperor himself might assign,) there to be confined to perpetual banishment. The place to which St John was carried was Patmos, a little island in the Archipelago, now called Palmosa, mountainous, but moderately fruitful, especially in wheat and pulse, though defective in other commodities. The whole circumference of the island is about thirty miles, and on one of the mountains stands a town of the same name, having on the top of it a monastery of Greek monks; and on the north side of the town, the inhabitants, by tradition, show an house in which the Apocalypse was written, and not far off, the cave where it was revealed, both places of great esteem and veneration with the Greeks and Latins.—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles*, and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*

^c This is a point of history that has of late been called in question; but, since it is attested by Tertullian, *De præscript.* c. 36, a most learned and very honest man, and who lived near enough the time to be certified of the truth; since it is contradicted by no ecclesiastical writer that we know of: is as no more incredible than St Paul's taking up a viper unhurt, (Acts xviii. 3, &c.) and is agreeable to the intimation given of St John, that he should not die a martyr, (John xxi. 21, 22.) there can be no reason for cavilling at this in those that admit of the possibility of any miracle.—*Collins's Grounds*, &c., and *Whiston's Answer.*

^d *Cave's Life of St John*, and *Echard's Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii.

Rome, as an asserter of Atheism, and a subverter of the religion of the empire, where he was treated with the utmost barbarity, and at length banished into a desolate island, there to be employed in digging in the mines; that in this desolate place, however, he was entertained with the more immediate converse of heaven, and by frequent visions and prophetic representations, had a clear prospect given him of the state of Christianity in the future periods and ages of the church, ^e which he has transmitted to us; that upon the death of Domitian, when Nerva had rescinded all his odious edicts, our apostle took the opportunity to return to Ephesus, and as Timothy had lately been dead, at the request of the bishops of the province, entered upon the administration of that metropolitan see, and therein continued till the reign of Trajan; that, in the time of his ruling this church, he wrote three several epistles; whereof the first is called Catholic, calculated, as it were, for all times and places: in which he excites his little children, as he calls all Christians, to love and charity, to holiness and purity of manners; cautions them against resting in a naked and empty profession of religion, against being led away by the crafty insinuations of seducers; antidotes them against the poison of the Gnostic principles and practices; and gives them most excellent rules for the conduct of the Christian life. ^f The other two are but short, and

^e The Apocalypse, or book of Revelations, as we call it, was of old, not only condemned by heretics, but controverted by many of the fathers likewise. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, tells us, that for his part, he durst not reject it, being persuaded, that it contained many wise and admirable mysteries, though he could not comprehend them; and that though he owned the author to have been a divinely-inspired person, yet he could not believe it to be St John the apostle and evangelist, because the style, matter, and method of it, did nowise agree with his other writings. The common current of antiquity however runs another way; and, as the diversity of style, &c. is of no moment in this case, because that in subjects which are so vastly different, it is hardly possible for any man to observe the same tenor and way of writing, the book being wrote in the island Patmos, which is a circumstance compatible to none but St John; his name so frequently occurring in it, his styling himself a brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; his writing particular epistles to the seven churches in Asia, all planted, or at least cultivated by him; together with doctrines contained in them, all suitable to the apostolic spirit and temper; these are so many concurring evidences to prove our apostle to have been the author of it, whatever was the occasion of its not being received so readily into the canon of scripture.—*Cave's Life of St John.*

^f The design of this epistle is, 1st. To refute, and to guard the Christians to whom he wrote against erroneous and licentious tenets, principles, and practices: such as the denial of the real deity and proper humanity of Christ, of the reality and efficacy of his sufferings and death as an atoning sacrifice, and the assertion, that believers being saved by grace, were not required to obey the commandments of God. These principles began to appear in the church of Christ even in the apostolic age, and were afterwards maintained by the Cerinthians, and other heretics who sprang up at the close of the first and second century of the Christian æra. 2dly. To stir up all who profess to know God, to have communion with him, and to believe in him, that they walk in the light and not in darkness (i. 5–7.), that is, in holiness and not in sin; that they walk as Christ walked (ii. 6.); and that they keep the commandments, and especially abound in sincere brotherly love towards each other. (ii. 4, 9–11. iii. 10–24. iv. 20, 21. v. 1–3.) This rational and Christian spirit, the apostle enforces, upon the best principles, and with the strongest arguments, derived from the love of God and of Christ; showing the utter insufficiency of faith, and the mere external profession of religion, without the accompanying evidence of a holy life and conduct. 3dly. To help forward and to provoke real Christians to communion with God and the Lord

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directed to particular persons; the one to a lady of honourable quality, encouraging her and her children to charity, to perseverance in good works, and to show no countenance to false teachers and deceivers; the other to the charitable and hospitable Gaius, so kind a friend, so courteous an entertainer of all indigent Christians.

The same authors tell us, that in his archiepiscopal capacity, he took great care of the flock of Christ, and notwithstanding his advanced age, went many journeys into the neighbouring provinces, to ordain bishops, to settle and confirm churches, and was induced at last, by the request and importunity of several of his disciples, even when he was ninety-seven years of age, to compose his gospel,^a for a defence against the heresies then brooding, and for a supply of what the other evangelists had omitted; for, as we cannot but suppose, that in the course of the many years which he lived, he had seen the writings of all the rest of the apostles and evangelists, and signified his approbation of them; so we can hardly imagine any thing more worthy his care, or more necessary in itself, than for him to ascertain the authority of those writings, and to finish and settle the canon of scripture, that it might be the rule of faith and practice, and the church's preservative against^b such heresies as were very numer-

Jesus Christ (i. 3, 4); to constancy in the true faith, against all that seduced them (ii. 24—28.); to purity and holiness of life (ii. 1. iii. 3—13.), and that those who believe on the name of the Son of God, may know that they have eternal life. (v. 13.)—*Horne's Introduction.*

^a The ancients assign two reasons especially for the writing of this gospel. The first is, that he might obviate the early heresies of those times, especially of Ebion and Cerinthus, and the rest of that party, who began openly to deny Christ's divinity, and that he had any existence before his incarnation. The other is, that he might supply those passages of the evangelical history, which the rest of the sacred writers had omitted; and therefore collecting the other three evangelists, he first set to them his seal, ratifying the truth of them with his approbation, and then added his own gospel to the rest; wherein he chiefly insists upon the acts of Christ from the first commencement of his ministry to the death of John the Baptist, in which the others were most defective; and wherein he largely records his discourses, because some of them were passed by, but takes not so much notice of his miracles, because they were sufficiently related by the rest.—*Cave's Life of St John.*

^b The heresies that were then springing up and not long after overspread the church in divers places, were those of Menander, Cerinthus, and Ebion, whereof we shall give our reader this short account.—Menander was a Samaritan, a great disciple of Simon Magus, of whose tenets and doctrines we have spoken before, and a notorious impostor and magician, as well as he. He maintained, that the world was made by angels, denied the reality of Christ's manhood, and affirmed, that himself was the true Saviour of the world, sent from above for the restoration of mankind; that, without being initiated into his magical knowledge, and baptized in his name, none could be saved; that his baptism was the true resurrection, which, to those that were partakers of it, would not fail to convey, even in this life, youth, vigour, and perpetual immortality. These were some of the illusions wherewith he seduced many in Antioch, the place where he chiefly resided; and though their extravagance made them less infectious, yet they were continued in the second century by Basilides and Saturninus.—Cerinthus was a Jew by birth, and spread his notions principally in Ephesus, and other parts of Asia Minor. He maintained, that the world was not made by God, but by a certain power, distinct and very different from the supreme being; that the old law and precepts of Moses were to be observed, in conjunction with those of Jesus Christ; that Jesus was no more than a mere man, born of Joseph and Mary, but that, at his baptism, Christ descended upon him like a dove; that, at his crucifixion, Christ forsook him, and, returning into heaven, left him to suffer alone; and, lastly, that, after the general resurrection, Christ's kingdom

ous even in these days, and very likely to give much trouble and scandal in future ages. This was the last service he had to do for the church of Christ,^c which when he had accomplished, he then finished his course, and, in a^d good old age, dying peaceably at

should be terrestrial, in the city of Jerusalem, where men should enjoy all sorts of carnal pleasures, and pass their time in the celebration of marriage feasts and banquets for a thousand years.—Ebion, so called from his affected poverty, was born in a village of Palestine, and spread his heresy in Trachonitis. He agreed with Cerinthus in denying the divinity of our Saviour, and enjoining the observation of the law of Moses, as necessary to salvation. He asserted, that God had given the dominion of all things to Christ and the devil; and that, as the latter had the ascendancy in this world, so the former should have the greater superiority in the next. All the prophets after the time of Joshua, and all the New Testament, except the gospel of St Matthew, he rejected; and as for the writings of St Paul, these he utterly condemned, as the product of a wicked and vile apostate, because he endeavoured to prove the dissolution of the Mosaic law.—*Fleury's* and *Echard's Ecclesiastical Histories*, and *Tillemont's History of the Emperors*, vid. p. 1109.

^c It has indeed been said by some writers, that what is called the canon of Scripture was settled by the apostle John shortly before his death. But there seems little foundation for such a statement, if it mean that all the books which are now contained in the New Testament were then collected into a volume, and received the authoritative sanction of the last of the apostles. That John had read all the writings of the other apostles and evangelists, can hardly be doubted; for they were composed and published many years before his own death. We may also be certain that he could not be deceived or mistaken as to the real author of any of these writings; so that in this sense he may be said to have settled the canon of Scripture: but there is no evidence of his having left any decision or command upon the subject. But though we may not admit the tradition that John settled the canon of the New Testament by any formal and authoritative act, yet he may be said to have finally closed it by his own writings: for it is certain that no work has been admitted into the canon or list of the New Testament, whose date is subsequent to the death of John. There is no evidence that the canonical books were ever more numerous than they are at present. None have been lost or put out of the canon; and when we think of the vast number of Gospels and Acts which were circulated in the second and third centuries, and which bore the names of apostles and their companions, we may well ascribe it to more than human carefulness that none of these spurious compositions ever found a place among the canonical Scriptures. On the other hand, there is reason to think that a few of the writings which now form part of the New Testament, were not universally received in the first century, and for some time later. The Epistle to the Hebrews, that of Jude, the second Epistle of Peter, and the second and third of John, were among this number; and there were some churches which do not appear to have received them so early as the rest. This, however, only shows the extreme caution which was used in settling questions of this kind. It was very possible for a letter to be preserved and read in Asia Minor, or Palestine, and yet for many years to have elapsed before it became known in other parts of the empire. As Christianity spread, and the intercourse between distant churches became more frequent, the doubts which had been entertained as to the genuineness of any writing were gradually removed; and though some churches were later than others in admitting the whole of the New Testament, there is no evidence that any part of it was composed later than the end of the first century; so that, though we may reject the tradition of the canon of Scripture having been settled by John, we can hardly doubt, as was before observed, that he had seen and read the writings of all the other apostles before his death.—*Burton's History of the Church*.—*Ed.*

^d The general opinion is, that he was ninety-eight or ninety-nine years of age when he died, which was in the third year of Trajan's reign; St Chrysostom however is very positive that he was an hundred years old when he wrote his gospel; and Dorotheus affirms, that in the whole he lived an hundred and twenty. But all this is highly improbable; for, according to this account, he must be fifty years of age when he first became acquainted

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Ephesus,^a was buried in that city, where several of the fathers observe, that his tomb in their time was remaining, in a church, which was built to his honour, and called by his name. Thus we are come to the conclusion of the apostolic age, and so have brought our history to its intended period.

CHAP. II.—*Objections answered, and difficulties obviated.*

THAT the history of the Acts of the Apostles was written by St Luke, who was the author of the gospel that goes under his name, the connection of the matter, the congruity of the style, the identity of the person to whom they are both addressed, and the unanimous consent of all antiquity,^b are a sufficient indication: ¹ that this is an history of thirty years' transactions; whereof the former part principally contains the acts of the two apostles of the circumcision, Peter and John, with their preaching of the gospel to the Jews; and the latter, those of the two apostles of the uncircumcision, Paul and Barnabas, with the plantation and progress of the gospel among the Gentiles, no one can doubt, that casts but an eye into its contents: and that this history obtained the name of the Acts of the Apostles, it is generally thought,² not only because the doctrines which it contains, and the miracles which it relates, are the same throughout with what they all wrought and taught in common, but because sundry transactions that are recorded in the beginning of it, such as the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the election of Matthias, the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the miraculous infusion of languages, which enabled

¹ Echard's Ecclesiastical History, p. 340.

² Beausobre's Preface to the Acts of the Apostles.

with our Lord; a thing directly contrary to the testimony of all antiquity, which makes him very young at the time of his being called to the apostolic office.—*Cave's Life of St John.*

a John has himself told us in his gospel, that a notion had been entertained that he was not to die; and we know from history, that reports were circulated in later times which confirmed such an expectation. There is no need to expose the erroneousness of such a belief. A writer of the second century mentions his tomb as being then to be seen at Ephesus; and there is every reason to think that he died in that city. It has been said that the Virgin Mary accompanied him when he went to settle in that part of Asia; and it is very probable that such was the fact, if she had not died at an earlier period; but unless her life was protracted to an unusual length, she was released from her earthly pilgrimage before the time when John is supposed to have gone to Asia. It is perhaps singular, that no authentic account has been preserved of the latter days of one who had received the high privilege of being called the mother of our Lord; but nothing whatever is known of her from the New Testament, after the time that her Son had ascended into heaven, and she was left with his apostles and followers in Jerusalem. The same spirit of invention which gave rise to so many stories concerning the apostles, has also supplied many marvellous occurrences which befell the Virgin Mary; but they can only be read to be rejected, and claim no place in the authentic annals of the Church.—*Burton's History of the Church.*—Ed.

b Thus we find it cited by St Clemens, St Paul's companion, epist. ad Corinth. : by Papias, who conversed with men of the apostles' times, (apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. b. v. c. 39.); and by Polycarp, who was St John's disciple, (ad Philip. b. iii. c. 13.); Irenæus, who flourished in the second century, in a large chapter of his, has almost epitomized it; nor did we ever read of any Jew or Gentile who excepted against its truth and authority.—*Whitby's Preface to the Acts.*

them to spread the gospel through the universe, were things wherein they were all equally concerned. But then, why the actions of all those who were equally concerned in the propagation of the gospel, were not equally consigned to writing by the penman of the sacred story, this, we must say, entirely depended on the divine pleasure and determination.

³ 'It shall come to pass in the last days,' says the prophet Isaiah, speaking of the times of the gospel, 'that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up into the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem:' so that, in conformity to this prediction, the divine Providence thought fit, that no more account should be given of the first plantation of Christianity in the world, than what concerned Judea, and the neighbouring countries, or, at farthest, the most eminent places of the Roman empire. We perhaps may think, that a more particular relation of all that the apostles did, in the several countries where they travelled, had been more satisfactory to an inquisitive mind; but then we should remember,⁴ that this would have swelled the holy volumes into too great a bulk, and so have rendered them less servicable and accommodated to the ordinary use of Christians. All that was proper to be done upon this occasion therefore was, to single out some few persons who made the most eminent figure in the infancy of the church, and to represent their particular labours and sufferings in the propagation of Christianity, as a specimen of all the rest.

That St Peter and St Paul were characters of this kind, none can deny; and therefore St Luke is not to be blamed in making choice of them. That he pursued the history of St Peter no farther, must be imputed to his adjoining himself to St Paul, whose constant attendant he then became, an eye-witness of the whole carriage of his life, and privy to his most intimate transactions; and therefore we find him more copious upon this subject than any other. But why he did not finish his whole life, an ancient Arabic writer, cited by ⁵ Kirstenius, has given us this reason, that after St Paul's imprisonment, and departure from Rome, St Luke, who was left behind as his deputy to supply his place, was, in a short time, put to death; otherwise, says our author, he would have doubtless continued the history of the apostles' Acts.^c

³ Isa. ii. 2, 3.

⁴ Cave's Life of St Andrew.

⁵ Vit. quat. Evang. p. 15.

c These reasons are by no means satisfactory. They might be very applicable to the case of a profane historian, who is guided by mere human motives, and governed by ordinary events, but they cannot be admitted in the case of the sacred historian, otherwise we shall lower the standard of revelation. If the divine inspiration of the Acts of the Apostles be admitted—and it rests on the same grounds as that of any other portion of Scripture—it follows that this book contains such a history of the apostles, as the Almighty saw to be necessary and sufficient for our instruction and profit; and although it is proper for us to inquire into its scope and design, and in what respects it is calculated to promote our spiritual edification, we must at the same time consider, that we are altogether incompetent judges as to what particulars should have been given, and what withheld. God alone is sufficient for these things.—Ed.

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Without laying any stress then upon the testimony of the *a* Apocryphal Acts of the apostles, which it must be owned are generally full of fable and romance, we may venture to affirm, that this one composition of St Luke is sufficient to answer all the purposes for which we can desire such a history. For what is it that we may reasonably expect in a work of this kind, but that it should, by a plain relation of facts, confirm our faith in the gospel; show the accomplishment of the promises and predictions which Christ, the founder of our religion, has made to his disciples: and give us some competent knowledge of the settlement of that religion, by what methods it grew, and spread to places remote from its first plantation, what was the fate and behaviour of some of its first professors, and what the tenor of their doctrines and discourses: but that St Luke's history, in all these particulars, has sufficiently acquitted itself, none that has read it with the least observation can deny.

St Peter, no doubt, was an eminent apostle, and accordingly makes a distinguished figure in the sacred story; but his being at Rome is a point that we cannot expect from St Luke, because his account of things expires some time before our apostle came thither. Some writers indeed, of the Roman communion, place his first coming to Rome in the year of our Lord 44, which was the second of Claudius: but if we consider, that in the epistle which St Paul, towards the latter end of the reign of Claudius, wrote to the Romans, wherein he spends the greatest part of one chapter in saluting the particular persons that were then at Rome, he never once makes mention of St Peter; and how, in that epistle, he expresses his earnest desire of coming thither, that he might ¹ 'impart unto them some spiritual gifts, to the end that they might be established in the faith,' for which there could be no apparent reason, had St Peter been there so long before him: if we consider, that when St Paul, not many years after, that is, about the second of Nero, was sent prisoner to Rome, among all the brethren ² that came to meet him, as far as Appii-forum and the Three Taverns, we hear not a word of St Peter; and yet we cannot but think, that had he been then at Rome,

he would have come at the head of the company to receive a brother apostle in chains; and that with him St Paul would have chosen rather to sojourn, than ³ to dwell by himself in his own hired house: if we consider, that in the several epistles which St Paul wrote from Rome, there is not the least mention of St Peter; that in that to the Colossians in particular, he tells them plainly, that of all the Jews at Rome, he had no ⁴ fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God which had been a comfort unto him save Aristarchus, Marcus, and Jesus, who was called *Justus*, which evidently excludes St Peter; and, in that to Timothy, complains, that ⁵ at his first answer at Rome, no man stood with him, but all forsook him, which we can hardly believe St Peter would have done, had he then been there: nay, if we consider, that in the same epistle he tells Timothy, that ⁶ Luke was the only person that was with him; that Crescens was gone to one place, Titus to another, and Tychicus to another, we cannot imagine either that St Peter at that time was at Rome, or that he had lately gone from thence; since, had it been so, St Paul, no doubt, would have taken notice of him, as well as of the rest; unless we may suppose, that he was a person so inconsiderable, as not to be worthy the remembering, and his errand of so small importance, as not to deserve a place in St Paul's account, as well as that of Crescens to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

Upon the whole therefore we may conclude, that at the time when St Paul was first at Rome, no footsteps are to be found of St Peter's having been there; and yet, notwithstanding this, to deny that he was ever there at all, is ⁷ to oppose the current of all antiquity, and the unanimous consent of persons of great eminence and authority, who lived near enough the times of the apostles, to know the truth and certainty of what they reported, and who have told us, that Peter baptized in Tiber, as John the Baptist did in the river Jordan; that in the days of Nero he was crucified; that the church of Rome was happy in having its doctrines sealed with apostolic blood; and that the two glorious apostles Peter and Paul, having founded and constituted this church, delivered the care of it over unto Linus: for we must observe, that, whenever the ancients speak of the bishops of Rome, and the first originals of that church, they equally attribute the foundation and government of it to Peter and Paul, making the one as much concerned in it as the other. In short, no one that has any reverence for antiquity can deny that St Peter was at Rome: but then it is highly probable, that he came not thither, till some few years before his death; that there he joined with St Paul in preaching the gospel, and that both there sealed the testimony of it with their blood.

The design of St Stephen's speech to the Jews is apparently this,—to answer the charge of blasphemy against him, for having spoken somewhat slightly of the perpetual duration of their temple, and the obligation of the ceremonial law; and this he does by showing that the law, for which at this time they expressed so fierce a zeal, as if salvation could be attained no other way, could not possibly be of that weighty consequence, and absolute necessity, as they imagined.

1st. ⁸ Because it appears from the history of Abraham,

³ Ver. 30. ⁴ Col. iv. 10, 11. ⁵ 2 Tim. iv. 16. ⁶ Ver. 11, 12.

⁷ Vid. Cave's Life of St Peter.

⁸ Acts vii. 2—37.

¹ Rom. i. 11, 12.

² Acts xxviii. 15.

a The impostor who composed these Acts, which were supposed to have been written by Abdias, gives himself out to have been a bishop, ordained at Babylon by the apostles themselves, when they were upon their journey into Persia. The work is neither ancient nor authentic. It was known neither to Eusebius nor St Jerom, nor any of the fathers that lived before them; and yet, according to the author, who says that he wrote it in Greek, it contains in substance, 1st, The Acts of St Peter, or according to its present title, the Recognitions of St Clement; a work stuffed with such visions and fables, as must come originally from the Ebionites. 2dly, The Acts of St Paul, which pretends to be a continuation of that apostle's history, from the second year of his first voyage to Rome to the end of his life. 3dly, The Acts of St John the Evangelist, which, though mentioned by Epiphanius and St Austin, contains incredible stories of this apostle. 4thly, The Acts of St Andrew, mentioned by St Austin, and received by the Manichees, but different from that which we have at present under the name of 'The Priests of Achaia.' 5thly, The Acts of St Thomas, mentioned by the same father, and received by the same heretics, as containing that apostle's travels into India, and the sufferings which he there underwent. 6thly, The Acts of St Matthias, wrote originally in Hebrew, but what critics will not allow to be genuine. And, 7thly, The Acts of St Philip, which, as well as the gospel that goes under his name, was held in great esteem by the Gnostics.—*Calmet's Dictionary and Preface to the Acts of the Apostles.*

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and the patriarchs, that their ancestors pleased, and continued in the favour of God, for more than four hundred years without it; and therefore, since these were God's peculiar and elect, before the law was given, this law could not be the only covenant and dispensation for the salvation of mankind, exclusive of all others.

2dly. ¹ Because the very prophet, at whose hands they received the law, gave them warning of another eminent prophet, whom God, in ages to come, would raise up from among them, like unto him, that is, a lawgiver too, to whom every soul among them was commanded, upon pain of utter excision, to yield attention and obedience; and that consequently, preaching the faith and obedience of Jesus, who was that very prophet, could not be blasphemy against God, or Moses.

3dly. ² Because the law, for which they now pretended so great a reverence, was plainly insufficient to contain them in their duty, as appeared from their frequent relapses into rebellion and idolatry, which the prophets sharply reproached them with, and threatened with so many severe punishments; and therefore as the ancient prophets thought it no profanation either of the law or the temple, to denounce the abolishing of the one, and the demolishing of the other; so was it none in him to declare the abrogation of the former, and the utter ruin of the latter, to a generation of men now ripe for destruction.

This is the substance of St Stephen's speech; which is far from being incongruous, or immethodical; though, had he been permitted to bring it to a conclusion, as it is plain it was interrupted by the noise and clamour of the rabble, it might have appeared to a better advantage. This however must be said in vindication of what are supposed to be errors in it,—1st, ³ That Terah might die in Charran, before his son Abraham removed into Canaan. For though it is said, that ⁴ at seventy years of age he begat Abraham, Nahor, and Haran, yet it does not therefore follow, that Abraham was the eldest of these. It is not the eldest, but the worthiest, that is frequently first named in holy writ; for, that Haran, who is last named, was considerably older than Abraham, is evident from Abraham's marrying his daughter, who was only ten years younger than himself. And therefore, if we do but suppose, that sixty years after that Terah began to beget children, he begat Abraham, the father will be two hundred and five years old ⁵ at which time he died, when the son was no more than seventy-five, at which time he removed into Canaan.—2dly, ⁶ That though there be a difference between Moses and St Stephen, in the number of those who went down with Jacob into Egypt, yet this only arises from the different designs of the two accountants. For the design of Moses is, to tell us how many Jacob and his offspring amounted to, omitting his sons' wives; that of St Stephen, how many all the kindred were, whom Joseph called into Egypt. In the light that Moses considers them, they were seventy, but then several of these must be left out of St Stephen's number, namely, Joseph and his two sons, who were in Egypt already, Hezron, and Hamul, who were not yet born, and Jacob, whom

he reckons apart. Now take out these six from the seventy, and there will remain sixty-four, which, by adding the eleven wives of Jacob's sons, are just seventy-five. ^a—3dly, That St Stephen no where insinuates, that Jacob was buried in Sychem; for his words are, ⁷ 'so Jacob went down into Egypt, and there died, he, and our fathers, and were carried,' that is, our fathers were carried, over into Sychem: ⁸ For if Joseph desired to have his bones carried into the land of Canaan, there to be interred, there is reason to believe that the other fathers desired the same, as having the same faith in the promises, and the same interest in the land, that Joseph had; and that if they did desire the same, the rest of the tribes, bearing the same honour to their patriarchs that the tribe of Joseph did to him, would think themselves equally concerned to preserve their bones, in order to be carried out of Egypt with them, and to be buried together with Joseph's bones, as not improbably they were, at Sychem, though the remains of Jacob might be laid in another place.^b

It is a deference, I think, which we owe to the Spirit of God, whenever we find an opposition between sacred and profane authors, that cannot be well reconciled, to impute the error or mistake to the latter; now, the Jewish historian Josephus tells us of one Theudas, who, in the fourth year of Claudius, set up for a great prophet and worker of miracles, but was soon routed and destroyed by Caspius Fadus, the Roman governor; and St Luke, as he represents the sentiments of Gamaliel, tells us of one of the same name who arose in the reign of Augustus, and some time before the insurrection of Judas the Gaulonite, which happened upon account of the taxation, when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. But why should we account both these, who were so widely distant in point of time, to be one and the same person? Instead of charging Gamaliel, or rather St Luke, with a lapse of memory in this piece of chronology, it is more reasonable to think, ⁹ that the Theudas of Josephus, and that of Gamaliel, were two men, but not unlikely father and son, or tutor and scholar; and that this name was given to the latter Theudas, even as parents call their own children by their names, or that he himself assumed it, in imitation of the former Theudas, whom he delighted to follow in his appellation, as well as his enthusiastic folly. To this purpose Origen informs us, that, having gathered from the Scriptures, that the time of the Messiah was come, first Theudas, and after him

⁷ Acts vii. 15. 16.⁸ Kidder's Ibid. p. 89. and Whithy's

Annot. in locum.

Commentary in locum.

⁹ Whithy's Annotations, and Calmet's

^a This view of the subject is clearly supported by Dr Hales, Analyses, vol. ii. p. 144, 2d edition, to which the reader is referred. The New Testament has furnished an admirable commentary on the Old.—Ed.

^b What Abraham bought was the cave and field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, and he purchased it from the children of Heth, (Gen. xxiii. 3, 10, 17. l. 13.); but the sepulchre at Sychem, where the bones of Joseph, and as it seems, of the other patriarchs, were laid, was bought by Jacob from the children of Hamor, or Emmor, (Gen. xxxiii. 19.; Josh. xxiv. 32.; John iv. 5.) it is plain, therefore, that Abraham is inserted in the text by some mistake of the copyists, instead of Jacob, and that the true reading is, 'the bones of our fathers were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Jacob bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.—Holden's Expositor.—Ed.

¹ Acts vii. 37, 38.² Ibid. 39.—50.³ Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 2. p. 85.⁴ Gen. xi. 26.⁵ Ibid. ver. 22.⁶ Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 2. p. 86.

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Judas of Galilee, raised tumults in the time of the taxing; and therefore the fathers unanimously say, that those words of our Saviour, 'all that came before me are thieves and robbers,' do relate to these two, Theudas and Judas of Galilee. So extremely evident it is, that the ancient fathers agreed in this, namely, That there was a Theudas, pretending to great matters, even before the coming of our Lord, though his insurrection was so trifling, having but ¹ about four hundred men, who joined him, that the Jewish historian has taken no notice of it.

Another concession, that I think we may fairly claim in behalf of the sacred penmen, is, that the same licence of expression which profane writers make so much use of, may sometimes be allowed them; which will quite destroy the objection against the hyperbolic phrase in St Luke, of ² 'Jews residing at Jerusalem, out of every nation under heaven;' though, upon a short inquiry into the several dispersions of that people, we may be able in some measure to vindicate the truth of it, even in the very letter.

To this purpose we may observe, that before their final dispersion by the Romans, the Jews had suffered two captivities, or great dispersions, besides some smaller scatterings. The first was of the ten tribes of Israel by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who is said to have carried them away, ³ 'and planted them in Halah, and Habor, and in the cities of the Medes;' and as these never returned to dwell in their own country, they are the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, that is, the Persians of the province of Elymais, whom St Luke ⁴ in his subsequent enumeration intends. The second captivity was by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, when he carried away the other two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and ⁵ placed them in Babylon, and other of his territories. Now, though a good part of these, at the end of seventy years, returned from their captivity; yet great numbers of them, finding themselves happily situated under princes who indulged them a free exercise of their religion, never visited their native country, except it was at some of their great annual festivals; and of the number of these we may suppose those to be whom St Luke calls ⁶ 'the dwellers in Mesopotamia.' Besides these two great dispersions, there happened a third in the days of Ptolemy Soter, ⁷ who surprised the city of Jerusalem, and carrying away above an hundred thousand of its inhabitants, placed them in his garrisoned cities, and other places dependent on Alexandria.

Now from these three principal dispersions did proceed those lesser scatterings in all parts of the Roman empire and elsewhere. From that of Babylon and Mesopotamia, sprang those ⁸ of Cappadocia, Pontus, Phrygia, Pamphylia, and other parts of Asia Minor; and from that of Egypt and Alexandria were derived those of Libya, Cyrene, and all other Hellenists whatever, in the several parts of the Roman empire. Add to all this the many natives of Judea itself, who, upon one occasion or other, chose to live among the Gentiles, and more especially at Rome, which was then the metropolis of the whole world; and from hence might proceed ⁹ 'those

strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians,' whom the apostles in like manner enumerate.

Agrippa, we read in his speech to the Jews, dissuading them from rebelling against the Romans, for fear of bringing a sad calamity, not upon themselves only, but upon the whole nation, wherever dispersed among the Gentiles, hesitates not to say, that ¹⁰ there was no people in the world who had not some of their nation dwelling among them; and therefore we need less wonder that we find the sacred history asserting, that Jews of every nation under heaven were at this time met at Jerusalem, when ¹¹ not only a great festival, in which all their males were to appear before God, summoned them thither; but their earnest expectation likewise of the promised Messiah, whose time of coming, according to the prediction of their prophets, was now accomplished, might make them more desirous to return to their native country, there, with an holy impatience, to wait for the consolation of Israel.

¹² What makes it very difficult to give a distinct account of the offices and orders of the Christian ministers in the apostolic age, is the shortness of the historical part of the New Testament, which seldom extends farther than the first plantation of churches; and the design of the epistolary part, which, being written to persons lately converted to Christianity, was to acquaint them with the principles of their religion, and to arm them against false teachers, rather than instruct them in the form of church government. However, by a due attention to what we read, we may observe, That the apostles were the first, and most distinguished of our blessed Lord's disciples, chosen by him to be his more immediate attendants, and, in the course of his ministry, admitted to a greater confidence and familiarity than the rest: that upon his leaving the world, he commanded them to testify the truth of his resurrection and ascension, and to publish the doctrines and mysteries of the gospel in all nations, and at the same time gave them authority to govern the churches which they should establish everywhere: ¹³ that, to enable them to discharge their weighty offices, they were endued with superior courage, and gifts extraordinary, that what they had in their instructions, they might publish and testify to the greatest audience, and in the times of greatest danger: that having by this means spread the Christian religion far and wide, they settled churches in the several places where they had made a sufficient number of converts, with proper ministers to attend the offices of religion, while themselves proceeded in the great affair of propagating the gospel in other countries: ¹⁴ that in the churches which they thus had founded, they retained the chief authority, and had all other ministers, of what quality soever, subject to them; as appears from St Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, indited in a style which sufficiently speaks a superiority over them: and that, in virtue of their commission from Christ, they exercised a power of making such laws and constitutions as were found necessary for the good government of the church; of enforcing these laws with such penalties as the nature of

¹⁰ Joseph. on the Jewish War, b. ii. c. 16.

¹¹ Beausobre's Annotations in locum.

¹² Archbishop Potter's Discourse on church government.

¹³ Miscellanea sacra, Essay ii.

¹⁴ Archbishop Potter on Church Government.

¹ Acts v. 36. ² Acts ii. 5. ³ 2 Kings xvii. 6.

⁴ Acts ii. 9. ⁵ 2 Kings xxiv. 16. ⁶ Acts ii. 19.

⁷ Joseph. Antiq. b. 12. c. 2. ⁸ Acts ii. 9, 10. ⁹ Ibid. ii. 11.

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transgressions required ; of ejecting the incorrigible from the communion of the saints ; of pardoning and receiving the penitent ; of conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost ; of choosing proper persons to administer in holy offices ; and of appointing their successors to rule and preside in the church.

This is the most of what we learn concerning the apostles, and their distinct offices : and in relation to the inferior ministers of the Christian church, we may observe, that upon the departure of the apostles from Jerusalem, if not much sooner, St James, the near relation of our Lord, was made the fixed bishop of that city, and under him had seven deacons, who were solemnly ordained by the apostles : that in the churches of Ephesus and Crete, St Paul gives Timothy and Titus plain rules for their conduct in the ordination of bishops and deacons ; so that Timothy and Titus must have been bishops themselves, otherwise they could not have ordained others to that office : that though the words *bishop* and *elder*^a be used promiscuously, and are sometimes applied to the same persons, as St John calls himself an elder, though at the same time he was sovereign bishop of Asia ; yet this he might do upon different considerations, since an elder he might be with regard to his age, and a bishop with regard to his office : and that bishops were officers in the Christian church, appointed by the apostles to be their successors in the government of it, and, in their absence or upon their demise, to exercise the same functions, as it was in the case of Timothy and Titus : that the elders, supposing them distinct from bishops, were those who had been with Christ from the beginning, and having received the Holy Ghost at the

^a Allowing it to be true, that these names in Scripture are used promiscuously, which yet is by very learned men, and upon very good authority, denied ; yet still this is no proof that presbyters must be advanced to the dignity of bishops or bishops sunk to the level of presbyters. For although the term *presbyter* is at present used to denote the office of those who assist the bishop, and are subject to him in discharging some of the ministerial functions ; yet in the days of the apostles, the bishops might be called presbyters, though they had then other presbyters subject to them. For though all presbyters are not bishops, yet all bishops are presbyters ; although the former may not perform the functions of the latter, the latter may perform the functions of the former ; what offices are incumbent upon a presbyter, those a bishop has a right to perform, and may therefore, upon that account, very justly be called a presbyter. It is allowed on all hands, that under the Jewish dispensation, there were three orders of ecclesiastical persons, the high-priest, the priests, and the Levites ; and yet in the first institution of these orders, the word *priest* is used promiscuously, as well of the high-priest, as of the inferior priests ; so that Aaron himself, the first high-priest, in the book of Moses, is never dignified with any higher character than that of a priest. But who ever, from this promiscuous use of his name, has attempted to prove, that all the priests were equal to the high-priest ? or that the sons of Aaron were of the same dignity and order with Aaron the father ? And yet this is the main argument which the contenders for a parity among the presbyters make use of to prove their assertion, namely, that because in the writings of the apostles, bishops are sometimes, according to the opinion of some interpreters, called presbyters, bishops and presbyters were therefore both of one order. But if being called by the same name makes an equality in ministerial functions, our Saviour, who is termed an apostle, (Heb. iii. 1.) a bishop or pastor, (1 Pet. ii. 25.) a master or doctor, (Mat. xxiii. 10.) a minister or deacon, (Rom. xv. 8.) must, by this form of reasoning, be degraded to an equality with the apostles, with bishops, with masters, nay, even with deacons themselves ; which is not only incongruous but impious to assert. — *Bishop Smallridge's Sermons*, p. 111.

same time that the apostles did, were sometimes chosen into their number, as were Matthias and Barnabas, and, upon account of their extraordinary gifts, though they were not fixed ministers, had a right to officiate wherever they came, a share in the government of the church, and a seat in all their councils and synods : that in the great variety of gifts which Christ bestowed upon his church, some of these elders, very probably, were prophets, whose principal work it was, by expounding the prophecies of the Old Testament, and foretelling future events, to convince the Jews ; and others evangelists, who, by writing the gospel by inspiration, and preaching it to infidels, who never heard of it, made it their business to convert the Gentiles ; that though in some churches, when first established, we find only a bishop and his deacons, without any mention of the intermediate order of presbyters ; yet, when the number of Christians increased, the bishop ordained others to officiate in the congregations, where he could not be present, and to assist him in the other parts of his pastoral charge ; and were, at that time, called ' teachers,' and afterwards ' presbyters,' or priests : that these presbyters were a settled order in the church, superior to deacons, but, in the matter of ordination and confirmation by the imposition of hands, inferior to bishops, though, in all other respects, their equals, and alike empowered to dispense the word, administer the sacraments, and offer up the prayers of the people : that deacons, as their very name imports, were persons appointed to attend on the bishops, and according to the original institution of their order, to take care of the poor, that is, to inquire into the necessities of every one, and to apply a suitable relief to them out of the church's treasure, though from the examples of St Philip and Stephen, we find, that their employment likewise was to baptize converts and children, and to preach the gospel to the adult : and that the brethren were properly what we now call the laity of the church, but then, as the laity at that time were endued with special gifts, by these they were entitled to have some share in the administration of the church ; were present with the apostles and elders at the council of Jerusalem ; and had leave given them to choose proper persons out of their body, and to present these to the apostles, while they were alive, and afterwards to the bishops, but had no power at all of their own accord to ordain or appoint them to any sacred office : we may observe, I say, that such were the several orders of men in the beginning of the Christian church, such the diversities of their gifts, and such the differences of their administrations. But as it must be owned, that several of these were extraordinary persons, and continued no longer than the apostolic age ; so to have a full and distinct account of such standing officers as were to abide for ever, we must have recourse to the testimony of antiquity ; which perfectly agrees in this, — That after the apostles' days, they were no other than bishops, presbyters, and deacons ; and accordingly Ignatius, to mention one evidence for all, after he had been forty years bishop of Antioch, to which dignity he was promoted by the hands of Peter the apostle, and therefore cannot be supposed to be ignorant of the state of the primitive church, in his exhortation to the people to be obedient to the ministers of it, tells us of the bishop presiding in the place of God ; the presbyters as

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the council of the apostles; and the deacons as the ministers of Christ; and therefore, says he, he that is within the altar, is pure; but whoever does any thing without the bishop, the college of presbyters, and the deacons, his conscience is defiled; and therefore, says he again, adhere to the bishop, the college of presbyters, and the deacons? A sufficient attestation that these were the standing ministers of the Christian church in those days.

That Timothy and Titus were bishops of Ephesus and Crete, and both such by the appointment of the apostle St Paul, we have the testimony of all antiquity to convince us; but if by saying that they were bishops, we mean, that they took upon them these churches or dioceses, as their fixed and peculiar charge, in which they were to preside for term of life, we are much mistaken. Upon St Paul's going to Macedonia,¹ he exhorts Timothy to abide at Ephesus, in order to correct several abuses; and yet,² in his second epistle, we find him intreating him to come to Rome, where he continued, as the ancients conjecture, to the time of the apostle's martyrdom. In like manner St Paul³ left Titus in Crete, to ordain elders in every city, and to set in order the things that were wanting; but no sooner had he done this than he sent for him, the very next year, to Nicopolis; and, having sent Artemas to supply his place, took him along with him to Rome, and then sent him into Dalmatia, upon the great affair of propagating the gospel, till at length, after the apostle's death, he returned again to Crete.

The truth is, these two persons were not only bishops, but evangelists likewise, and the work of an evangelist, as Eusebius informs us, was this,—To lay the foundation of the faith in barbarous nations, to constitute in them pastors, and having committed to them the cultivating of these new plantations, to pass on to other countries and nations; so that according to this, these two evangelists were not in a condition to reside in their respective dioceses. But still, if by bishops we only understand persons who had authority to ordain and govern the clergy of their provinces, and to exercise acts of discipline and censure over ecclesiastics, as well as private Christians, we cannot but think, that when we find⁴ Timothy set over the house of God, and in that house empowered⁵ to make rules for the orderly celebration of divine worship; to see that teachers⁶ taught no other doctrine than what they had received from our Lord and his disciples; to commit the doctrine of the gospel⁷ to faithful men, who should be able to teach others; and to ordain those whom he should find to be qualified,⁸ some to be bishops, and others deacons; when we find him authorised⁹ to provide for the competent maintenance, and all due respect of church-officers; to take cognizance of accusations,¹⁰ even against elders; to¹¹ rebuke publicly those that sin; and to inflict censures, proportionable to the crimes that are proved against them; and when we find Titus, in like manner, authorized to teach all degrees of men, and¹² to exhort and rebuke them with all authority; and take cognizance of heretics; and such as did not repent¹³ upon the second

admonition, to reject from the communion of saints;¹⁴ to set in order what St Paul had left unfinished; and to ordain those whom himself should approve, to be bishops and elders; we cannot but think, I say, that, to all intents and purposes, they were bishops, and had the several parts of the apostolic authority committed to them, though in this they differed from such settled diocesan bishops as are among us, that the frequent calls of their evangelical office obliged them to be oftentimes absent from their charge.

St Paul, speaking of himself and his doctrine, has these remarkable words: 'I¹⁵ certify to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, is not of man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.' And therefore he styles himself, 'an¹⁶ apostle, not of men, neither by man.' Let us then observe a little, when it was that Jesus Christ vouchsafed him the revelation which he here speaks of, and then we may possibly find out the time when he first commenced an apostle. At his first conversion near Damascus, he saw a great light, and heard a voice issuing from heaven; but it does not appear, that at this time he had any sight of Christ, or received any revelation from him, except¹⁷ that he should go to Damascus, where it should be told him what was appointed for him to do. In Damascus indeed, Ananias told him, that God had chosen him,¹⁸ 'to know his will, and to see that just One, and to hear the voice of his mouth, and¹⁹ to carry his name to the Gentiles:' but this is rather a declaration of what was revealed to Ananias, than any designation of Saul to the apostleship. Encouraged, however, by this notification from Ananias, and the inspiration which he received by the imposition of his hands, he began to preach in the name of Christ, and continued to do so for full three years with great eloquence and strength of argument; but so far was all this from gaining him the character of an apostle, that, when he came to Jerusalem the first time after his conversion,²⁰ the brethren would not believe that he was so much as a disciple. It is no improbable opinion therefore,²¹ that it was at the second time of his coming up to Jerusalem, when, as himself relates the matter, while he was praying in the temple, he fell into a trance, and saw Jesus Christ saying unto him,²² 'Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me, and therefore depart; for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles:' It was at this time, I say, that he not only received his commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, but the revelation of²³ the gospel, likewise which he was to preach, and the designation of the very person that was to accompany him.

That he received such a revelation,²⁴ wherein God made known unto him the mystery which, in other ages, was not known unto the sons of men, namely, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel, himself testifies; and yet we have no clear account of any other interview between Christ and him, than what

¹ 1 Tim. i. 3. ² 2 Tim. iv. 9. ³ Tit. i. 5.⁴ 1 Tim. iii. 15. ⁵ Ibid. ii. 1. ⁶ Ibid. i. 2. ⁷ 2 Tim. ii. 2.⁸ 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2, &c. ⁹ Ibid. v. 17. ¹⁰ Ibid. ver. 19.¹¹ Ibid. ver. 20. ¹² Tit. ii. 15. ¹³ Ibid. iii. 10.¹⁴ Ibid. i. 5, 6. ¹⁵ Gal. i. 11, 12. ¹⁶ Ibid. i. 1.¹⁷ Acts ix. 6. xxii. 10. ¹⁸ Ibid. xxii. 14. ¹⁹ Ibid. ix. 15.²⁰ Ibid. 26. ²¹ Miscel. Sac. Essay 3. ²² Acts xxii. 18. 21.²³ Philip ii. 2. ²⁴ Ephes. iii. &c.

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happened here in the temple, upon his second coming to Jerusalem. Being thus furnished with a proper revelation, and a fellow-labourer to assist him in the propagation of it, he and Barnabas returned unto Antioch, where the Holy Ghost soon ordered the church¹ to separate them for the work whereunto he had called them, namely, in the vision which he vouchsafed Saul in the temple, when he was last at Jerusalem; and, accordingly, the church² fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, having recommended them to the grace of God, and sent them away; and they, being thus sent forth by the Holy Ghost, proceeded to the work of their ministry with great cheerfulness and unanimity, until, by their second peregrination, a certain disagreement happened, which produced a separation between them.

It may not be amiss however to observe, that the design of the Holy Ghost, in having this their perverseness recorded, was, not only to testify the truth and sincerity of the apostolic history, which is not afraid to relate the faults and failings of its chief personages, whatever construction may be put upon them; but to show us likewise, that the best Christians are subject to the same passions and infirmities with other men; and that therefore none ought to be too much elated with an opinion of their own piety, or to despise others, whom they may imagine their inferiors. Nor must it be forgotten, that this benefit in particular accrued to St Mark, who was the subject of their contention, namely, that the positiveness of St Paul not to take him in company, who, in their former journey, had so shamefully deserted them, made him more constant and resolved in the service of the church for the time to come, and gave the church this advantage, as we hinted before,³ that, by means of the separation of two such eminent apostles, more people were converted, and a greater number of provinces, than otherwise would have been, visited with the glorious light of the gospel.

The like benefit accrued to the church from the divine severity to Ananias, and his wife Sapphira: for it was not any sentence of St Peter that destroyed them, but the righteous judgment of God in punishing the hypocrisy, the covetousness, the sacrilege, and gross impiety, wherewith their crime was aggravated. The custom in those times was,⁴ for as many as were possessors of lands to sell them, and to bring the prices of the things that were sold, and to lay them down at the apostles' feet, that distribution might be made unto every man according as he had need. This charitable disposition among believers Ananias and his wife made use of, to obtain a false reputation, and to pass a cheat upon the apostles if they could. To this purpose, they gave it out that they had devoted all their possessions, which perhaps were very large, to the use of the church, and accordingly sold them. 'This,' say they, 'will gain us the credit of being very charitable and religious persons; will make us be highly respected by the apostles, and in a manner idolized among the brethren. We purpose, however, not to give away our all upon this occasion, though we may pretend we do so; but will reserve a good portion to ourselves; and, if we keep but our own counsel, who will find it out? The apostles indeed are persons endued

with great gifts, but⁵ what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? It is impossible for them to pry into our hearts: and therefore, if we blab it not ourselves, we may, by this means, put out our money to good interest, and, by laying down a part of the price at the apostles' feet, as others have done the whole, be entitled to the same right of relief from the public stock which others who have parted with their all are admitted to, and, at the same time, retain a comfortable subsistence for ourselves. All that we have to do then is, to be steadfast and uniform in our story, and then we may defy the Spirit of God itself, which the apostles make such boast of, to detect us.'

This seems to be a natural comment upon their contrivance and conspiracy; and if so,⁶ the Jews, who are apt to object against Christians the severity of what they suffered, would do well to remember, that the law of Moses allowed of no atonement for wilful sacrilege, but⁷ left the delinquent to be cut off by the hand of heaven, as Ananias here was. Nor should it be forgotten,⁸ that as we find God, under the law, more severe in his punishment of those who first offended in offering strange fire, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, and violated the sabbath, as in the case of the man who gathered sticks on that day, and especially against those who rose up against Moses the prophet, and Aaron the priest of the Lord, as in the case of Korah and his company, there is the like reason, that the first great offence of this kind, under the gospel dispensation, should receive exemplary punishment from the hand of God, that others might stand in more terror of those sins which thus affronted that Holy Ghost by whose power the Christian religion began now to be propagated; for so the text tells us,⁹ 'that great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things, and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.'

St Paul, speaking of his own easy compliance to the several tempers and humours of those with whom he conversed,¹⁰ 'though I be free from all men,' says he, 'yet have I made myself a servant unto all, that I might gain the more. Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without the law, as without the law, that I might gain them that are without the law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake.' And doubtless for the gospel's sake it was, that he appointed Timothy to be circumcised. He knew full well the prejudices which the Jews had conceived against persons who had not submitted to that ordinance; that they would not suffer them to appear, much less to argue and discourse in any of their synagogues: and therefore, being determined to take Timothy for the companion of his travels, to make his access more easy to the Jews, and himself a fitter instrument in their conversion, he thought proper to give him this passport, as it were.¹¹ 'Circumcision,' he knew, 'was nothing, and uncircumcision

¹ Acts xiii. 2. ² Ibid. 3. 4. ³ Vid. p. 1075, in the notes.
⁴ Acts iv. 34, 35.

⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 11. ⁶ Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 2. p. 85. ⁷ Josh. vii. 18. ⁸ Whitty's Annotations on Acts v. 1. ⁹ Whitty's Annotations on Acts v. 11, 14.

¹⁰ 1 Cor. ix. 19, &c.

¹¹ 1 Cor. vii. 19.

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was nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.¹ In its own nature it was a thing indifferent, neither required by the Christian religion, nor inconsistent with it; and under this consideration he was willing it should pass upon Timothy: but when it came to be required as a duty, and a duty necessary to salvation; to be used as the distinguishing mark of a Jew, in opposition to Christians; to be made an obligation to the total observance of the law, and a rock of offence to those of a different persuasion; it then became evil, and inconsistent with the doctrine of the gospel. Under this sense it is, that St Paul so frequently and so loudly declaims against it: and upon these considerations it was, that he would not allow Titus to be circumcised, notwithstanding the earnest importunity of some people of reputation at Jerusalem.

² With what a jealous eye St Paul was looked upon by all Judaizing Christians, as a person averse to the Mosaic institutions, is sufficiently known. These men had been at Antioch, where, having insidiously watched the liberty which he took in omitting all legal observances, they, when he came to Jerusalem, informed the church against him, that he preached to the Gentiles, who were not circumcised; that he conversed freely and familiarly with them; that Titus, who was a Greek, was at that time with him; and therefore, to put the matter upon an issue, they urged, that this intimate friend of his might be circumcised. Their policy in this was visible. Had they carried their point against St Paul, they would soon have informed the church of Antioch, that, by the order of the council at Jerusalem,³ Titus had been obliged to be circumcised; and this, besides the defeat given to the apostle, and baffle to his doctrine of Christian liberty, would have proved a great scandal and discouragement to the heathen converts, and an impediment to the progress of the gospel, which at that time began to be more successful among the Gentiles than the Jews. And therefore St Paul was resolute, and took special care, that Titus should not be circumcised. So that, upon the whole, it appears, that St Paul was no ways inconsistent with himself, though he varied his conduct, according to the different circumstances he found himself under. He ordered Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess, to be circumcised, because his circumcision would be a means to forward his ministry, and to gain him an easier access to the Jews; but he refused to have Titus, who was a Gentile, circumcised, because his circumcision would have been a means to scandalize the brethren, to alienate their minds from the Christian faith, and a great obstruction to the course of the gospel. In short,⁴ Titus he would not suffer to be circumcised, thereby to show, that circumcision was not necessary; but Timothy he allowed to be circumcised, that, by his practise, it might appear, that such ceremonies were not evil in themselves, but might be used without any crime, until by degrees they came to be abolished.

The like may be said of his own compliance with certain ceremonies of purification, at the request of St James, and the other elders at Jerusalem, and for the satisfaction of the Jewish converts there.⁵ 'Thou seest,

brother,' say they, 'how many thousands of Jews there are who believe, and they are all zealous for the observance of the law.' The law of Moses was held in so great veneration, as being the contrivance of God himself,⁶ 'ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator,' ratified by miracles, and entertained by all their forefathers, as the peculiar prerogative of their nation for so many generations, that even those who by the evidence of the gospel were prevailed upon to embrace Christianity, could not overcome the prejudice of education, but still continued their adherence to those legal rites and customs wherein they had been brought up. Some of them indeed were for obtruding them upon the Gentile converts, but the most moderate of them all, even bishops and elders as well as the laity, were for a punctual observation of them among the Jewish: they were convinced, that these institutions were of divine original: they knew of no revelation made by God, that they were to cease after the death of the Messiah: our blessed Saviour, in his gospel, had said little or nothing of them; nay, in saying, 'that he came not to destroy the law and the prophets,' he seems to have given a fresh sanction to them; and because he foreknew, that the destruction of their temple, and their exclusion from their own land, would in a short time make it impossible for them to observe them, he had given none of the apostles, except it was St Paul, any intimations concerning them; and therefore it is not to be wondered, that men, in these circumstances, should advise St Paul, for the good of so many thousand souls as might otherwise take exception at his conduct, to comply with the observance of some things, which as yet they did not think abrogated. So that in the apostles at Jerusalem there was no design of deluding the people into a false belief, by St Paul's conforming himself to some ritual observances, because their present persuasion was, that it was a duty incumbent upon him so to do. St Paul indeed knew very well, that our Saviour, by his death,⁷ 'had abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances;' but since these were observances belonging to the temple, which was yet standing, and God had not, by any express declaration made to the Jews, prohibited the continuance of them, he might lawfully submit to this compliance with them, in order to prevent the scandal of the believing Jews, which might otherwise alienate them from the Christianity they had embraced, and to promote, by his future preaching among them, the conversion and salvation of the unbelieving.

⁸ Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves,' is a lesson which our Saviour gave his disciples, and which St Paul, more especially at this time, when he was every where surrounded by his enemies, had occasion to put in practice. Most casuists are of opinion, that, by all innocent means, it is allowable to sow divisions among the wicked; because the union of the wicked is as prejudicial to the cause of religion, as the disunion of the good is destructive to it. If therefore St Paul, by an innocent address, could set the Pharisees and Sadducees at variance, there is no reason to be given why he should decline it. Had he indeed, in so doing, but

¹ Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 2. p. 93.² Hammond's Annotations on Philip ii. 3. ³ Ibid. on Acts xvi.⁴ Calmet's Commentary on Acts xvi. ⁵ Acts xxi. 20, &c.⁶ Gal. iii. 10.⁷ Ephes. ii. 15.⁸ Mat. x. 16.

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implicitly denied himself to be a Christian, this had been an inexcusable crime; but both the Pharisees and Sadducees were too well acquainted with him, and his conversion, ever to put that construction upon his words. The resurrection of the dead was a principal doctrine of the Christian religion; and as it was coincident with the faith of the Pharisees, I cannot see how he could use a more proper argument to convince them of their fault and folly in persecuting Christians, than to show, that they themselves did hold one of the prime articles of the Christian faith; and if by declaring this doctrine of Christianity before them, he engaged the Pharisees on his side, and thereby declined the malice and rage of his enemies, who can say, but that, in this putting the wisdom of the serpent in execution, he still preserved the harmlessness of the dove?

But this can hardly be said of St Peter's prevarication at Antioch. ¹ He, at his first coming down to that place, made use of the liberty which the gospel had given him: he familiarly eat, and conversed with the Gentile converts, accounting them, now that the partition-wall was broken down, no longer ² strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. This he had been taught by the vision of the sheet let down from heaven; this had been lately decreed, and he himself had promoted, and subscribed it in the synod at Jerusalem; this he had before practised towards Cornelius and his family, and justified the action to the satisfaction of his accusers; and this he had freely and innocently done at Antioch, till some of the Jewish brethren coming thither for fear of offending and displeasing them, he withdrew his converse from the Gentiles, as if it had been unlawful for him to hold communion with uncircumcised persons. In this affair, as he himself acted against the light of his own mind and judgment, condemning what he had approved, and destroying what before he had built up; so hereby he confirmed the Jewish zealots in their inveterate error, cast infinite scruples into the minds of the Gentiles, revived the old feuds and prejudices between them, destroyed that union and harmony which before his coming prevailed in the church at Antioch, and, in short, brought matters to that issue, that the whole number of Jewish converts following his example, separated themselves from the company of Gentile Christians, insomuch that St Paul was forced to interpose his authority with rebukes.

³ 'Mark them who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them,' is the instruction which he gave the Romans; and had he put it in practice upon this occasion, there had been then some grounds to complain of his ^a rudeness

and incivility to St Peter; but in opposing his conduct where it was blameable, and in telling him of his faults when they were notorious, he acted, even in the eye of the Mosaic law, the part of a kind brother; for, ⁴ 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him;' where if not to rebuke a brother, is to hate him, to rebuke him, by consequence, is to love him; and therefore the royal psalmist makes it the matter of his prayer, ⁵ 'Let the righteous smite me friendly, and reprove me, but let not their precious balm break my head.'

But though St Paul might think it his duty, and no unkindness to St Peter, to oppose him in his dissimulation; yet we find him no where disagreeing with St James in any point of Christian doctrine. To silence the clamours of those indeed, who pleaded for the necessity of circumcision, and other Jewish ordinances under the Christian dispensation, and were for imposing them upon the Gentile converts, as things essential to salvation; in several parts of his epistles, but more particularly of those to the Romans and Galatians, he argues, that our acceptance with God here, and admission to happiness hereafter, which he calls by the term of justification, depends upon our sincere belief of the gospel, and our living answerably to such a belief, which are comprehended in the word faith, and not upon any observance of the Jewish rites and ceremonies, which he calls 'the deeds of the law.' This doctrine of justification by faith came, in a short time, to be perverted to very bad purposes; and ⁶ some there were, who from the authority of St Paul, endeavoured to persuade themselves and others, that so long as they did but believe the gospel in the naked notion and speculation of it, it was enough to recommend them to the favour of God, and serve all the purposes of justification and salvation, however they shaped and steered their lives. To countermin the designs of these men, and to beat down this strong hold of libertinism, St James, who wrote his epistle subsequent to these of St Paul, and as a kind of comment upon them, endeavours to show the insufficiency of a naked faith, and empty profession of religion; that it is not enough to recommend us to the divine acceptance, and to justify us in the sight of heaven, barely to believe the gospel, unless we obey and practise it; and that such a belief, destitute of this evangelical obedience, is ⁷ like the body without the spirit, dead, and inavailable to our salvation: and therefore he concludes, that by the practice of the several virtues of the Christian religion, which he terms works, a man is justified, and not by a mere notional belief of the things recorded in the gospel, which he calls faith only.

⁸ Considering then the difference of the adversaries which these two apostles had to contend with; that St Paul was engaged with false brethren, Jewish converts, who were for joining the ceremonial part of the law with the faith of the gospel, and the practice of the Christian religion; and that St James, on the contrary, had to do with libertines and hypocrites, men, who having abused St Paul's doctrine of faith and grace, and wrested it to their own destruction, had thereupon abandoned themselves to all manner of vice, and looked upon good works as things purely indifferent; considering this, I

¹ Lev. xix. 17. ² Eph. ii. 19. ³ Rom. xvi. 17.^a Porphyry, that subtle enemy of the Christian religion, makes use of this reproof which St Paul gave St Peter, as an argument against them both, charging the one with error and falsehood, and the other with rudeness and incivility; and says, that the whole was but a compact of forgery and deceit, while the princes of the church did thus fall out among themselves; and so sensible were some of this, in the primitive ages of Christianity, that rather than such a disgrace, as they accounted it, should be reflected upon St Peter, they pretended, that besides the apostle, there was one of the same name, one of the seventy disciples, and that it was he whom St Paul withstood, and reproved at Antioch, as guilty of this prevarication. But this is a crude and useless evasion.—*Cave's Life of St Peter.*⁴ Lev. xix. 17. ⁵ Psal. cxli. 5. ⁶ Cave's Life of St Paul.⁷ James ii. 26. ⁸ Beausobre's Preface to Epistle of St James.

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say, we shall find the two apostles arguing very properly with the persons whom they had in view, and though they do not advance assertions absolutely the same, are far from opposing or contradicting one another. 'Legal observances will not save us,' says St Paul; 'nor will a bare belief of the gospel save us,' says St James. 'A lively faith, that is fruitful of good works, will save us,' says St Paul; 'and so will the practice of all moral and Christian virtues,' says St James. Thus admirably do the two apostles agree, and conspire to explain each other.

Nay, to clear the character of St Paul still further, we may observe, that, in those very epistles where he seems to extol faith, and debase the efficacy of works most, he nevertheless makes them the indispensable condition of our salvation. For, having laid it down as a certain truth, that 'not the hearers of the law are just before God, but that the doers of the law shall be justified,' he plainly asserts, that our misery or happiness in a future state depends upon our good or ill deportment here; for 'God will render to every man according to his works; tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doth evil; but glory, honour, and peace, upon every soul that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.' In another place, having spoken of the happiness of our redemption from original sin, by the merits and mercies of Jesus Christ, he asks these questions, 'What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' And in like manner, having made this comfortable declaration, 'there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus;' lest we should mistake his meaning, and think that an empty faith, or bare profession of Christianity, was enough to intitle us to this blessedness, he adds, 'who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;' and elsewhere gives us this caution, 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: for he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

There seems, at first view indeed, to be some contrariety between the decree of the council at Jerusalem, and the latitude which St Paul allows in relation to meats offered to idols: but to pass a right judgment concerning these offerings, we must know, 'That besides what was eaten of them in the idol's temple, which eating was an act of religious worship, and communion with the idol, as our eating the bread of the sacrament was a communion with Christ; besides this, I say, there was a certain portion of those sacrifices which fell to the priests, and which they, having no use for, sold to others, who afterwards exposed it to sale, promiscuously among other meat, upon the shambles, where it was bought up, and spent in private families, without any distinction whether it had or had not been offered to idols. Now, as for the former way of eating meats thus offered, namely, in the idol's temple, this the apostle utterly disallows, as absolutely unlawful; but the other only under some circumstances. For he allows, that it might be lawfully bought among other meat in the market;

and being so bought, might be eaten in any private house, without the least sin; only with this caution, that whereas there were some who well understood that meat could have no defiling quality imprinted upon it by its consecration to an idol; and others on the contrary, having not so much knowledge, supposed, that its consecration to an idol left upon it such a polluting quality, and near relation to the idol, as defiled the eater; the former sor might freely and innocently eat such meat in private families, provided it was not before those of the latter sort, who, through weakness, having an opinion of the unlawfulness of such meats, might nevertheless be induced to use the same liberty, though their consciences, in the mean time, having quite another judgment in this matter, esteemed eating them little better than idolatry.

Now, the argument by which the apostle abridges the liberty of the former sort of converts, in condescension to those of the latter sort, proceeds upon the strength of this assertion, that the lawfulness of men's actions depends not solely, either upon the lawfulness of their subject-matter, nor yet upon the conscience of the doers of them, considered in itself, but as considered with reference to the consciences of others, to whom, by the law of charity, they stand bound so to behave themselves, as, by none of their actions, to give them occasion of sin. From which plain state of the case it appears, St Paul is so far from giving the least encouragement to the eating of meats offered unto idols, that, in the first place, he uses the most cogent arguments, namely, the regard we ought to have for our neighbour's soul, and the danger of offending Christ, by wounding and destroying those members of his mystical body, for which he died, to engage us to a total abstinence; and then proposes his own generous resolution to enforce his advice: 'Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh whilst the world stands, least I make my brother to offend.'

7 1 Cor. viii. 13.

a The question respecting the use of meats which had been sacrificed to idols, was one of no small worldly moment to Christians living as a small isolated sect in the midst of a numerous heathen population. The flesh of animals which had been so sacrificed was, as we infer from various passages in the classical writers, after the consumption of certain parts upon the altar in honour of those imaginary deities, either immediately consumed by the assembled votaries in a species of public feast, or, if not so disposed of, was subsequently sold in the open shambles for the emolument of the ministers of religion. The converts to Christianity were thus exposed to a double loss and inconvenience, by their adoption of a new creed; being excluded, by their conscientious scruples, not only from partaking in those festive banquets celebrated within the precincts of the temple, which, from their frequent occurrence, formed no inconsiderable feature in the social habits of that period; but also from the purchase of many of the usual articles of human food, when offered for sale in the common market. The interested sophistry of the Corinthian converts had however, as it appears, invented a convenient argument, calculated to reconcile their personal indulgence with their newly acquired scruples, and to justify their conformity with their pagan neighbours in both these particulars. The argument is a curious specimen of the strange subtleties which worldly men will have recourse to when the observance of the duties of religion involves the relinquishment of some temporal advantage. To participate in the feast upon a sacrifice offered to any 'evil being,' or to purchase for domestic purposes the meat so sacrificed, knowing it to be such, was, they readily admitted, to become partakers in an act of unhallowed worship. But the false deities of the pagans they asserted were not evil beings, inasmuch as they were in fact 'no beings at all;' mere

¹ Rom. ii. 13.

² Ibid. ver. 6, &c.

³ Ibid. vi. 1.

⁴ Ibid. viii. 1.

⁵ Gal. vi. 7.

⁶ South's Sermons, vol. iii.

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¹ 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven;' as in another place,² 'Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained,' are words which are generally supposed to contain the commission which our blessed Lord gave his apostles, to exercise a judicial power over the members of his church, by censuring offenders, and, upon their repentance afterwards, remitting the censures which were passed on them. To this purpose we find St Paul telling the Corinthians, that³ 'though he should boast of the authority which the Lord hath given him, for edification, and not for destruction, he should not be ashamed;' and putting that authority in practice against the person who had committed incest among them; ⁴ 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.'

⁵ Now, in order to know the meaning of this delivering unto Satan, we must observe, that the church, or kingdom of Christ, was erected in opposition to Satan's kingdom; and therefore every Christian, at his baptism, covenants to renounce the devil and all his works, and is thereupon admitted into the church of Christ, and

¹ Mat. xviii. 18.² John xx. 23.³ 2 Cor. x. 8.⁴ 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. ⁵ Potter's Disc. of Church-Government.

non-entities; and as such could not possibly be the object of actual worship, nor entail any real pollution upon the sacrifices offered to them through the ignorance of their votaries. Under the protection of this salvo, they appear to have accommodated themselves to the practices of their pagan neighbours, and, as we infer from the indignant remonstrance of St Paul, to have urged this wretched evasion as an ingenious and satisfactory exculpation of their conduct to the apostle himself. His answer is such as might be expected from a manly understanding, united to a humble and religious mind. He breaks at once through their casuistical cobwebs, by a direct appeal to their own practical good sense, and the unsophisticated character of the religion they professed: proving that, even by their own admissions, as implied by their knowledge of the Levitical sacrifices, and their own habitual celebration of the Eucharist, the participation in the subject matter of a sacrifice was *bona fide* a participation in that peculiar faith and worship to which such sacrifices were annexed. His injunction accordingly on this point is peremptory. 'Where you know the meat which you find served at table, or exposed in the shambles, to have formed part of an idolatrous offering, abstain scrupulously from it.' Yet at the same time, with a beautiful liberality of feeling, which would not strain an inconvenient precept beyond the point actually required by the circumstances of the case, he notwithstanding allows them to eat indiscriminately from the meats set before them, provided they can do so in perfect ignorance of the previous facts, even though they may have purposely abstained from asking questions which might lead to an explanation. Thus far he admits that they may proceed innocently: one step farther would be an act of at least implied idolatry, incompatible with the purity of the Christian profession, and highly dangerous as an example to others. That this apostolical injunction had its effect in deterring professed Christians, at a subsequent period, from such equivocal compliance with pagan usages, may be inferred from that Epistle of Pliny, in which that writer states, that, in consequence of the frequent abjurations of Christianity, produced by the increased severity of the government, the victims in the public markets, which were formerly scarcely salvable, have at length once more found abundant purchasers. 'Certainly it is plain enough, that the temples, which were almost deserted, now began to be thronged; and the solemnities of religion, long neglected, to be again observed; every where victims were sold, whereas formerly scarcely a buyer could be found.'—*Shuttleworth's Paraphrastic Translation of the Epistles*.—Note to 1 Cor. viii. 1.—Ed.

taken under his protection; but when men notoriously break their baptismal covenant, and instead of obeying Christ, openly adhere to the devil, they are then reduced to the state of heathens, who are under the dominion of the prince of this world: and as the Scriptures generally ascribe all sorts of calamities which befall mankind, to the procurement of the devil; so the pains and diseases of the body, which in this first age usually attended the sentence of excommunication, were supposed to proceed from the devil, whose malice the divine wisdom might then employ, as a common serjeant and executioner, to inflict some bodily punishment upon every notorious offender, thereby to deter others from the like provocations, and thereby to bring him to consideration and repentance, and to save his soul at the great day of judgment.

Josephus, in his History of the Jewish Wars,⁶ tells us that the Essenes, one of the strictest sects among them, upon their comprehending any of their society in a notorious wickedness, excluded him from the congregation; and whoever incurred that sentence, generally came to a miserable end; and therefore we need less wonder that God at the first beginning of Christianity,⁷ and when it was wholly destitute of all civil coercive authority, did invest his apostles with a power of inflicting corporeal punishments upon such as either opposed the progress of the gospel, or offended grossly against its rules; since this was an effectual means to keep the wicked in awe, to advance the cause of religion, and to conciliate respect to its ministers; for the proper end of all church censures, according to⁸ Lactantius, is, not for revenge, but to support the honour of Christ's laws, to admonish others to amend, and to warn all not to despise this salutary authority.

St Paul's advice to the governors of the church is far from exciting a spirit of persecution in them: for,⁹ though he arms the temporal magistrate with a sword, not only to be a terror to evil doers, but to cut off and execute notorious offenders; yet to the spiritual magistrate he only gives a pastoral rod and a staff, neither of which are designed to destroy, but only to reform those that go astray. His first prescription is, to try gentle methods; to begin with kind and fatherly admonitions, which from persons in so high a station, may probably have a blessed effect, and restore the offender,¹⁰ with all long-suffering, in the spirit of meekness: but if these prove too weak to awaken a sinner who has fallen into the lethargy of obduration, his next degree of discipline is,¹¹ sharp reproof, and severe threats, and¹² a public exposition of his crime: but, in case he be so far depraved, as to have lost all sense of shame, his last direction is, to eject him out of the church, who, while he continues in it, will be a perpetual scandal to it, and¹³ give the enemies of the Lord an occasion to blaspheme; however, only so to eject him, as that, upon his repentance and reformation, he may be restored again, and not¹⁴ swallowed up, as the apostle tenderly expresses it, 'with overmuch sorrow.'

These are the rules which St Paul has laid down for the governors of the church, with respect to those under

⁶ B. ii. c. 6. ⁷ Cave's Introduction to the Lives of the Apostles.⁸ On the wrath of God, p. 809. ⁹ Comber's Discourse uponOrdination. ¹⁰ 2 Tim. iv. 2. Gal. vi. 1. ¹¹ Tit. ii. 15.¹² 1 Tim. v. 20. ¹³ 2 Sam. xii. 14. ¹⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 7.

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their care, who are either unsound in the faith, or retain the faith in unrighteousness. ¹ This is the discipline which the fathers have given us so fair a character of, as to call it, 'the keeper of hope, the anchor of faith, the guide of our heavenly journey, the food and nourishment of good inclinations, and the mistress of all virtue.' Nor is it to be denied, that ² the church's reputation was never so good as in the primitive times, when this discipline was exercised with vigour. Then her professed enemies admired her; great numbers of proselytes daily flocked into her, and could not be restrained by the utmost torments which either human or diabolical malice could inflict; whereas, since this godly discipline has been relaxed, though the church has been protected by the civil power, and furnished with far more splendour than before, fewer converts have been brought over to her, and too many of her own sons and members have lost their first love and zeal for her. But to proceed:

Upon supposition that Alexander the coppersmith was the same person with that Alexander who was concerned in ³ the tumult raised at Ephesus, we may imagine, that he was a Jewish convert residing in that city; that, when he was seized by the common serjeants, and examined before the Jews, as the word *προβάλλειν* there signifies, in the apology which he would have made to the people, his purpose was, to have averted the danger from him by laying it upon St Paul; and that, from this time, conceiving a hatred against the apostle, and ⁴ having put away a good conscience, he soon began to make shipwreck of his faith, and particularly to call in question the reality of a future resurrection; a doctrine which St Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, had so largely insisted on.

⁵ The philosophers in those days looked upon the body as the prison and sepulchre of the soul, and that her happiness could not commence till after her dissolution from it. Upon which principle they argued, that it was not only an impossible thing, but an unjust and unworthy thing for God to raise the body, in order to unite it to the soul, since the happiness of the soul consisted in being delivered from it, and its punishment in being confined to it. This notion Alexander, among others, having imbibed, began to put a new construction upon the doctrine of the resurrection, as if it imported only a renovation of our manners, and a resurrection from the death of sin unto a life of righteousness, which in all God's elect, as they were sure to rank themselves in that number, ⁶ was already past.

The resurrection of the dead, in its literal sense, was so fundamental a point, that St Paul puts the whole stress of the Christian religion upon it. ⁷ 'If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.' But though the denial of a future resurrection was implicitly a renunciation of the Christian religion, yet we do not find that Alexander had actually apostatized from it; for then the apostle would

not have excommunicated him, because we find him claiming no authority but over such as were within the pale of the church: ⁸ 'for what have I to do,' says he, 'to judge them that are without? Those that are without, God judgeth.'

The judgment however which he gave against Alexander so incensed that heretic, that he pursued him as far as Rome, on purpose to oppose his doctrine, and vilify his person, and perhaps to exhibit some accusations against him; which malicious proceeding might give the apostle occasion enough to say, that the Lord would reward him according to his works; for ⁹ so the king's manuscript reads it, in the future tense, *ἀποδώσει*, and so the current of ancient interpreters do account it, not an imprecation, but a prediction only of what, in the just judgment of God, would befall him: ^a for pious men, say they, do neither wish for, nor rejoice in, nor desire to hasten, the punishments of the wicked, though they sometimes forget them.

St Paul, no doubt, when brought ¹⁰ before powers and magistrates, had a share in the promise of the assistance and direction of God's blessed Spirit, sufficient to enable him to make proper answers, and to secure him against the transgression of any law; and therefore we may presume, that when he treated the high-priest with some severity of speech, he either did not know, or did not acknowledge him to be a person invested with that authority.¹¹ Since the time of his conversion, which was now about five and twenty years, he had been seldom at Jerusalem, and when he came thither, made but a short stay; so that he might very well be unacquainted with the high-priest's person; especially if he had not on at that time the vestments peculiar to his function, and such as distinguished him from ordinary priests. The order of the pontifical succession likewise had been so totally destroyed, and, both by the Jewish kings and Roman governors, the high-priests placed and displaced so frequently, that a stranger, just come to Jerusalem, might not always know who was the present possessor of that dignity.

But even suppose that St Paul had known that Ananias was then in the chair; ¹² yet, as that pontiff is supposed

⁸ Ibid. v. 12, 13. ⁹ Whithy's and Hammond's Annotations on 2 Tim. iv. 14. ¹⁰ Luke xii. 11, 12.

¹¹ Fleury's Ecclesiastical History, b. 1. p. 80.

¹² Grotius, Whithy, and Beausobre's Annot. on Acts xxiii. 5.

^a Instead of *ἀποδόν*, 'may the Lord reward,' *ἀποδώσει*, 'will reward,' is the reading of the Codices Alexandrinus and Ephremi, which are of the best authority, the Codices Claromontanus, San Germanensis, Augiensis, also of those numbered by Griesbach, and of the MS. by Matthæi noted with the letter f.;—of the Coptic, Armenian, and Vulgate versions, and of Chrysostom, Theodoret, Eulogius, as cited by Photius, Johannes Damascenus, Oecumenius, Augustine, and others among the fathers of the Christian church. The reading *ἀποδώσει* makes the sentence declaratory, 'the Lord will reward him according to his works;' and, as it is supported by such satisfactory evidence, Griesbach has inserted it in his inner margin, as being nearly equal, if not preferable, to the common reading. An additional proof that this is the preferable lection is furnished by the fact, that it is in unison with the spirit and temper of the intrepid apostle, St Paul; who, in the sixteenth verse, when speaking of his being deserted by every one, when, during his second imprisonment at Rome, he was first summoned to vindicate himself before the sanguinary emperor Nero, says, 'Let it not be placed to their charge,' that is, let them not have to reckon for it with the Supreme Judge, at the great day.—*Horne's Introduction*.—Ed.

¹ Comber on Ordination. ² Archbishop Potter's Discourse on Church Government. ³ Acts xix. 33. ⁴ 1 Tim. i. 19.

⁵ Whithy's Annotations on 1 Cor. xv.

⁶ 2 Tim. ii. 18.

⁷ 1 Cor. xv. 13, &c.

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to have obtained his office by bribery, the apostle, who had been taught by his master Gamaliel, that whoever did so, was neither a judge, nor deserved to be honoured as such, might demur to his title, and say, 'I know very well, that a ruler of the people is not to be reviled, but that the person you speak of is the high-priest, I know not; that is, I do not own or recognise him to be such, because he obtained that station in the church by very indirect means.' Or suppose the apostle to speak ironically, 'I did not know, that is, I did not apprehend, that a person so far enraged as to order a prisoner at the bar, when going to make his defence, to be smitten on the mouth, could possibly be the high-priest. This was a thing so little becoming his grave and venerable character, that I verily took him for some common man; and accordingly treated him with such language as the rudeness of his insult deserved: but since you now inform me, that he is in reality the high-priest, I beg pardon, because he is what he will, we are not to speak evil of the ruler of the people.' So that in what view soever we take St Paul, there is nothing incongruous in his not knowing the high-priest's person, nothing abject in the retraction of his words to him.

¹ They that wait at the altar in the Jewish church were partakers of the altar; even so hath the Lord ordained in the Christian church, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel; but I have used none of these things says St Paul. And so far were the rest of the apostles from making any property of the money collected and laid at their feet, that we find them instituting the office of deacons, whose appointed business it was, to see the regular distribution of it among the poor; which they never would have done, had they preached the gospel for the sake of the advantage they made of these contributions. The truth is, the ministers of God, in those days, had no respect to the secular emoluments of their vocation. They could show ² hands that had ministered to their necessities, and to them that were with them. They made it their glory, and the chief of their ³ reward, that when they preached the gospel, they made the gospel of Christ without charge; and St Paul, in particular, had it in his power to tell the Corinthians, that ⁴ when he was present with them, he was chargeable to no man. Considering then the narrowness of his circumstances, and the bashfulness of his temper, we may be apt to think, that St Paul might be tempted to leave some small matters at Troas, in order to satisfy his host, rather than be ⁵ burdensome to any; but then the misfortune is, that this *Φελύνης* does not always signify a cloak.⁶ The other things which St Paul desires Timothy to bring with him, are books and parchments. The books are generally supposed to be the sacred scriptures of the Old Testament; but as these were constantly read in all Christian as well as Jewish assemblies, there was no occasion for sending so far as Troas for what might have been had any where; and therefore we rather think, that they were some choice books of human literature, in which we find our apostle a great proficient, and that the parchments were his *adversaria* or common place-books, wherein he wrote down whatever, in the course of his reading, he found worthy his observation.

Now if, ⁷ according to some interpreters, the word *Φελύνης* signifies a 'piece of parchment folded up,' it will be indeed the same thing with the *μεμβράνια* which St Paul afterwards mentions; but then, in this sense, it not only makes his directions to Timothy of a piece, as relating to things all of one kind, but makes the adverb *μάλιστα*, which, without this supposition we could not so well account for, highly pertinent in this place: 'The parchments which I left at Troas, with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments;' where the words 'but especially,' seem naturally to refer to something mentioned before.

But suppose that this *Φελύνης* does properly signify a cloak, yet who can tell but that this was the proper *penula* or cloak which St Paul's father received from the Romans, and transmitted to his son, as a mark and ensign of his being a Roman citizen, and which, now that St Paul was at Rome, he was obliged, upon all occasions, to conciliate the good esteem of the people, to appear in. Nay, suppose that it was a common cloak, or garment made on purpose to defend him from the injuries of the weather; yet now that the winter was approaching, we can see no incongruity in his sending for what he had left behind him in the hot season of the year, to keep him warm in the cold; though we cannot but admire ⁸ the modest poverty of so great an apostle, who, rather than be chargeable to any, orders Timothy to bring him a poor cloak which he could not well want, from so remote a place as Troas.

That which makes it more difficult to resolve what this contest between Michael and the devil, concerning the body of Moses, does properly mean, is, that this piece of history, to which St Jude alludes, is no where recorded in the Old Testament. We read indeed, in the prophet Zechariah, of ⁹ Joshua the high-priest's standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand, which was the place of him that impleaded another, to resist him; and that the matter of controversy between them was the re-edifying the temple, and restoring the service of God among the Jews at Jerusalem, which Satan opposed: and hence ¹⁰ some have argued, that as the Christian church is frequently styled 'the body of Christ,' by parity of reason, the Jewish church might be called 'the body of Moses,' and that this is the whole that St Jude means. But that the Jews and their service should be called 'the body of Moses,' or that the words in St Jude are to be referred to those in Zechariah, seems not very probable, because in that prophet there is no mention of Michael, or of the body or death of Moses.

The death of Moses and his burial are thus related in the book of Deuteronomy.¹¹ 'So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died in the land of Moab; and he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day:' from whence ¹² others have argued, that as Michael was appointed by God to bury the body of Moses in a place so secret, that the Jews should never find it out, the devil opposed the angel in this office, desiring to have his sepulchre known, that in process of time, it might become a snare to the people who were so very

⁷ Hammond's Annotations on 2 Tim. iv. 13.

⁸ Grotius in locum. ⁹ Zech. iii. 1. ¹⁰ Hammond on Jude.

¹¹ Deut. xxiv. 5, 6. ¹² Whithy, Beausobre, Pool, &c. in loc.

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 13. ² Acts xx. 34. ³ 1 Cor. ix. 18. ⁴ 2 Cor. xi. 9.

⁵ Ibid. xii. 14.

⁶ Bishop Bull's Sermons, vol. ii.

prone to idolatry. This is the most obvious, and considering what work the devil has made in the world with the bodies of the saints and martyrs ever since, may well be esteemed the truest sense of the passage.

St Paul's fighting with beasts at Ephesus is a passage likewise which is neither mentioned in the history of the Acts, nor, in ¹ the catalogue of his afflictions; and therefore some have imagined, that this fight of his was nothing else but the scuffle he had with Demetrius the silversmith and his companions, savage men, who might better deserve the name of beasts. But ² what ruins this opinion is, the date of the epistle wherein this transaction is mentioned, which was written a year before the sedition that Demetrius occasioned at Ephesus; and therefore others have taken the words in their literal sense, and so asserted, that St Paul was really exposed to wild beasts at Ephesus, but delivered from them by a miracle. And for the support of this, they relate a story out of an apocryphal book of St Paul's travels, frequently mentioned by the ancients, namely, that when Jerome, governor of Ephesus, had condemned the apostle to the wild beasts, at his coming upon the theatre, a lion was let loose upon him; which came and lay down at his feet, as did several other wild creatures; that at the same time, there fell so violent a storm of hail, as killed many of the spectators; and that, upon the conviction of two such miracles, the governor himself was converted and baptized.

However this be, the silence of the apostolic history can be no just exception to the literal interpretation, since ³ we find our apostle, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, relating certain sufferings, the same in all probability with his fighting with beasts at Ephesus, ⁴ 'wherein he was pressed above measure and strength, despaired of life, and had the sentence of God within him; and yet we meet with nothing of this in the whole compass of the Acts of the Apostles.

The like is to be said of the thorn in the flesh, and the messenger of Satan, to which St Paul, for his greater humiliation was submitted, that we have not the least intimation of them in all the sacred history; this only we may learn from the figurative expression, that, as ⁵ the pricking brier, and grieving thorn, do, in the prophetic style, denote a sore calamity; so may the expression here signify some sharp affliction sent upon St Paul, to keep his mind humble in the midst of the many revelations which God vouchsafed him. But then the question is, of what kind this affliction was?

Some are of opinion, that this thorn in the flesh and messenger of Satan, taking them both for one thing, were ⁶ the motions of concupiscence and suggestions of lust arising frequently in St Paul. But the apostle himself contradicts this interpretation, in telling us, that he had the gift of continence; and that in so high a degree, that he wished all Christians in this respect like himself. He was, at this time, according to the computation of chronologists, about sixty years old; and therefore it would be a foul slur to so great and holy an apostle, to imagine, that he should burn in so frozen an age, which uses to extinguish, or at least to allay those flames in

the most unclean persons. We are told, moreover, that ⁷ 'God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; and therefore, since St Paul acquaints us, that this thorn in the flesh, be it what it will, was ⁸ given him by God, and that it was one of ⁹ those infirmities wherein he took pleasure, and chose to glory; as it would have been the greatest impiety for him to have gloried in his impure motions and desires, so we cannot see how the apostle, by confessing such impure motions, could have defended his reputation against the attacks of his adversaries, which it is his chief design, in the latter part of this epistle, more especially to do.

Others therefore observing, that this infirmity in the flesh happened to St Paul after the visions and revelations whereof he speaks; that it was such an infirmity as obstructed the efficacy of his preaching, and made his ministry less grateful and acceptable to others; and that himself complains of such of the Corinthians, and false apostles among them, as represented his ¹⁰ bodily presence weak and mean, and his ¹¹ speech or utterance contemptible, have supposed, that St Paul had some kind of impediment in his speech, which God, at this time, was pleased to send upon him, and which these false apostles, whom he calls the messengers of Satan, to his great sorrow and disconsolation, made the subject of their scorn and ridicule.

But, after all, the most general, and indeed the most obvious interpretation is, that it was some bodily disease, very grievous and painful to him, which he aptly calls a thorn, for its sharpness and pungency, and a thorn in the flesh, for the seat of it, which was his body; and this, according to scripture phraseology, the apostle calls likewise a messenger of Satan, because all distempers are in scripture supposed to be the punishments of God, which, as it is represented in Job's case, he permits Satan, as the common executioner on these occasions, to inflict.

It may seem a little too nice, perhaps, to define the particular kind of this disorder; whether it was the gout, the stone, a violent head-ache, or the falling-sickness, as several of the ancients have variously conjectured; but this we know, from his own information, that his distemper was visible and manifest to all that conversed with him, such as had an influence over his speech, and was a great disadvantage to him in preaching the gospel; and therefore he tells the Galatians, ¹² 'ye know, how, through infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel to you at first; and my temptation, which was in the flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected; for ¹³ I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling,' as he tells the Corinthians. ¹⁴ From all which it seems to be very plain that St Paul had some notorious visible infirmity in his body, such as might have exposed him to contempt with those who looked no farther than the outward appearance, and such as God designed for a means to keep him humble.

There is but one obscurity more remarked in the writings of St Paul, namely, concerning 'the man of sin, the son of perdition;' and that is a great obscurity indeed. The whole passage runs ¹⁵ thus, 'now I beseech you,

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 23, &c. ² Calmet's Com. on 1 Cor. xv. 32.

³ Whitby's Annotations on 2 Cor. i. 10. ⁴ 2 Cor. i. 8, 9.

⁵ Ezek. xxviii. 24. ⁶ Calmet's Com. on 2 Cor. xii. 7.

⁷ James i. 13. ⁸ 2 Cor. xii. 7. ⁹ Ibid. ver. 9, 10.

¹⁰ 2 Cor. x. 10. ¹¹ Whitby's Annotations on 2 Cor. xii. 7.

¹² Gal. iv. 13, 14.

¹³ 1 Cor. ii. 3.

¹⁴ Bishop Bull's Sermons, vol. 1.

¹⁵ 2 Thess. ii. &c.

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brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means ; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he is as God, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself that he is God.' For the better understanding of which words, we must remember, that St Paul, in his former epistle to the Thessalonians, speaking of the resurrection of the dead, had expressed himself in this manner :—¹ ' This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them who are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we ever be with him. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you ; for yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.' From these words, some false teachers and pretended prophets among them took occasion to infer, that the day of judgment was at hand ; that it would certainly come while the apostles were yet alive, and before that generation was passed ; which was a doctrine of such dangerous consequence to the peace and tranquillity of men's minds, that the apostle, in this part of his second epistle, sets himself solemnly to refute it. ' I beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him : ' where we may observe, that this is the same coming which he had described in his former epistle, by Christ's descending from heaven with a shout, &c., and the same gathering together which he had specified by our being caught up together, with saints newly raised, in the clouds ; and that, consequently, all the pains which some writers have taken to show, that this ' man of sin ' is to be interpreted of Simon Magus and the Gnostics, Mahomet and his followers, or the Pope and his clergy, &c., are to be looked upon as indications of their prejudices, rather than any discoveries of the truth.

Before the coming of Antichrist, we are told that there must be a great falling away ; which, though some interpret it of national revolts from the Roman empire, is more properly to be understood of a general defection from the Christian faith ; but as this defection has not yet prevailed, we may adventure to say, that this son of perdition is not yet come. The true spirit of Christianity indeed, in a great measure, is departed from us ; but we are not come yet to make an open renunciation of our Christian profession, which is the apostasy here spoken of. Mahomet was a great oppressor of the Christians, and his successors compelled vast numbers to abjure the name of Jesus ; but neither is he the man of sin here intended, since it is now above eleven hundred years from the time of his first appear-

ing in the world, and yet ² all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation, notwithstanding the scripture antichrist was to precede, and not at so vast a distance to be sure, the coming of our Lord to judgment.

Without concerning ourselves, then, with the many ^a fabulous accounts which some of the ancients have given us of the origin of antichrist, the nature of his kingdom, or the manner of his extinction ; we may in some measure gather from scripture,—That toward the conclusion of the world, some mighty prince or other will arise, a man monstrous for his wickedness and impiety, who, by the power of his arms, will conquer a great part of the world, and, by the violence of his persecutions, cause great defections from the Christian faith ; that having subdued many kings, and established his religion, which probably will be paganism, in several countries, in time he will come to forget that he is man, and accordingly have his statues erected in places of divine worship, and the prayers of the people addressed to him, as if he were a god : that our blessed Lord, provoked with his pride and arrogance, will at length bring upon him such a remarkable judgment, as will put a quick period to all his pomp and glory, rescue his servants from his tyranny and infatuation ; and then shall the end of all things come.

Thus we have endeavoured to clear the character of the apostles in general, and more especially of the great apostle of the Gentiles, from the cavils of the impious and profane ; and to answer the principal objections which, in the history of their acts, and in the course of their epistles, are commonly advanced by those who delight ³ ' in vain babblings, and opposition of science, falsely so called ; ' and upon a review of the whole, we may take up the words of St Paul, and say, ⁴ ' If our

² 2 Pet. iii. 4.³ 1 Tim. vi. 20.⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

^a To this purpose they tell us, that this man of sin, or antichrist, will be born of a Jewish family, and come out of the tribe of Dan ; which, as they imagine, is still subsisting in Babylonia ; that being born in Babylonia, he will there lay the foundations of his empire ; and the Jews, mistaking him for their Messiah, will be the first who will declare for him, acknowledge his dominion, and enjoy the chief employments in his government ; that as soon as he appears, he will begin with attacking the Roman empire, which at that time will be divided among ten powerful kings ; and having subdued Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya, will then march to Jerusalem, and there fix the seat of his kingdom. That having made himself master of the eastern and western empire, he will turn all his thoughts towards the destruction of Christ's kingdom, and the persecution of good men, by which means great numbers will apostatise from the Christian faith, and pay their adorations to him ; that the righteous, under his persecution, will retire to the mount of Olives, where they will soon be attacked by this enemy of God ; but, upon their earnest application to heaven for help, God will send Jesus Christ to assist them : that Christ will descend from heaven, attended by his angels, and preceded by a flame of fire, which nothing will be able to extinguish. That the angels will give up the army of the wicked into the hands of the righteous, who will make so great a slaughter of them, that their blood shall flow like a torrent in the valley : and, lastly, that antichrist will be put to death in his own tent, and upon his own throne, without receiving the least assistance from any ; for to him they apply these words of Daniel, ' he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountains, yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him, (Dan. xi. 45.) They who would know more particularly what is said of antichrist, may consult *Malvenda on Antichrist*, and *Calmet's Dissertation* upon that subject, placed before the epistle to the Galatians.

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 15, &c.

A. M. 4102. A. D. 98; OR, A. M. 5509. A. D. 98, &c. FROM ACTS i. 10. TO THE END.

gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.^a

CHAP. III.—*Of the Profane History during this period, viz. from the Birth of Christ, to the Completion of the Canon of the New Testament.*

SUCH parts of the Jewish history as had any analogy to the things contained in the New Testament, we have already remarked in the notes annexed to this work; and what we have further to do is,^a to recite some such principal passages in the Roman history, (especially in the lives of the several emperors who lived in the apostolic age,) as have any connection with these sacred writings.

In our last dissertation of this kind, we left Augustus Cæsar in the very zenith of his power and glory; after the defeat of every rival, in full possession of the Roman empire, and, upon the death of Lepidus, created Pontifex Maximus, or the high-priest of Rome. But, toward the conclusion of his reign, he met with great afflictions from his own family, and especially by his daughter Julia, who being married to his wife's son Tiberius, by her nocturnal revels and adulteries, had made herself infamous in the whole city. The emperor, though a Pagan, had so great a sense, not only of the scandal, but of the immorality likewise, of her actions, that he was once resolved to have put her to death; but upon second consideration, he banished her to a desolate island, called Pandataria, where he prohibited her the use of all sorts of delicacies, and permitted none, without his approved knowledge of their lives and morals, to ^b approach her. Not long after, her daughter of the same name, who was married to L. Paulus, being convicted of the same crimes, was banished into an island in the Adriatic sea, called Tremera. And in the space of a few years, young Agrippa, (his only surviving grandson by his daughter Livia, whom he had lately adopted for his own,) by his extravagant life, and irreclaimable vices, became so scandalous to his family, and so odious to the emperor, that he banished him likewise into the island of Planasia; and afterwards, whenever any mention was made of him, or the two Julias, whom he usually called by no

other name, than his 'three biles' or 'imposthumes,' he would often, with a profound sigh, say, 'Would to heaven I had lived without a wife, or died without children!'

This depravation in his own family, it may well be presumed, was one reason for his making such strict laws against all lewdness and adultery, and concerning marriages and divorces. Great numbers of the Equites, more especially, had taken a resolution against marriage; 'not out of any kind of virtue, or abstinence,' as he told them, 'but from a looseness and wantonness, which ought never to be encouraged in any civil government:' and therefore, having highly commended those that were married, and increased the rewards of such as had children, he imposed severe fines upon single persons, in case they did not marry in the space of a year. Yet to show that he would discourage nothing that had the appearance of virtue, he gave considerable rewards to such women as had vowed perpetual virginity. But, that no public promoter of looseness might escape his censure, he soon after this banished his favourite Ovid, the celebrated poet, into Pontus, for his amorous Epistles, and his Art of Love, the softness of which was thought capable of enervating and corrupting a larger empire than that of the Roman.

Augustus, as Pontifex Maximus, had examined into the books of the Sibylline prophecies, as we said before. Those that were genuine he reposit in the capitol, but the spurious he condemned to the flames: and it is generally supposed, that upon his perusal of these prophecies, foretelling the appearance of a greater prince, to whom all the world should pay adoration, he utterly refused the title of Lord, which the people unanimously offered him. And this, by the bye, gave some sanction to the story mentioned by Suidas, namely, That Augustus, sending to the Pythian oracle, to inquire who should succeed him, was answered by the demon, 'that an Hebrew child, Lord of the gods, had commanded him to return to hell, and that no further answer was to be expected.' Whereupon he erected an altar in the capitol, *Primogenito Dei*, to the 'First-born of God.'

However this be, it is generally agreed, that in the same year wherein he refused the title of Lord, he appointed Tiberius for his heir, partly through the prevailing solicitations of his wife Livia, and partly from the hopes he had conceived of his virtues outweighing his vices; but at the same time that he did this, he obliged Tiberius to adopt Germanicus, the son of his brother Drusus, a youth of great virtues and surprising excellencies; which soon raised the envy of Tiberius, and, not long after his accession to the empire, procured the other's ruin.

The last thing which Augustus did, as Pontifex Maximus, was the regulation of the Roman calendar, which with us continues in use to this day; though in some countries, the alteration which Pope Gregory XIII. made in it is observed. At length, being near Capua, where he found himself dangerously ill, he sent for Tiberius, and his most intimate friends and acquaintance, to whom he recommended many wise and useful things; and being minded to leave the world with the triumphs of a Pagan philosopher, he called for a looking-glass, caused his hair to be combed, and his wrinkled cheeks to be smoothed up, and then, as an actor upon the stage, asked his friends whether he had played his part well? And upon their answering, Yes, he cried, *Plaudite!* and so

^a In this whole narrative we follow the account which Dr Ecard in his Roman and Ecclesiastical histories, has given us.

^b Some time after this, the people of Rome, whether out of love to the emperor, or respect to his family, earnestly petitioned him to recal his daughter Julia. But he answered them, that fire and water should sooner meet, than they two. Nay, his concern and resentment in this matter were so great, that when he understood that Phœbe, one of his daughter's confidants, had hanged herself, he protested openly, 'That he had rather have been Phœbe's father than Julia's.' Yet after five years' strict confinement, the people in a manner compelled him to allow of her removal from the island into the continent, where she lived till after the emperor's death. But her husband Tiberius had not long obtained the empire, before her annual pensions were stopped, and she, deprived of all hopes of assistance, died in extreme want and misery: an end not unsuitable to one who had so vilely debased herself, and so publicly scandalized the noblest family in the world.—Ecard's *Roman History*, in the life of Augustus.

A. M. 4018. A. D. 14; OR, A. M. 5425. A. D. 11.

expired in the embraces of his beloved wife Livia, bidding her 'remember their marriage, and farewell.'

Thus died the great Augustus, in the 75th year of his age, and 41st of his reign, to the inexpressible grief of all his subjects. He was a person of the highest learning and eloquence, and the most amazing wisdom and sagacity; one who had conquered greater difficulties, met with greater success, completed greater designs, and established a greater empire, than any prince in the universe; and therefore we may less wonder, that, according to the Pagan superstition of these times, after his death, we find temples erected to him, divine honours decreed him, and a large sum of money given by his wife Livia to Numerius Atticus, a senator, for having sworn, as Proculus had formerly done of Romulus, that he saw him ascending into heaven.

The Romans, during the administration of Augustus, had all the happiness of a people, and were restrained from nothing but those mischiefs which a corrupted liberty produces; but shortly, after his death, they met with great alterations, and a quite different treatment from his successor Tiberius, whose only wisdom consisted in a mysterious slyness and suspicion, and his policy in continued artifices and dissimulation.

In the beginning of his reign, however, he made a great show of modesty and affability, and performed many laudable actions towards the reformation of men's lives and manners. He regulated the licentiousness of the theatre; banished the astrologers and magicians from Rome; restrained the delicacies of eating-houses and taverns; severely punished the looseness of young people of either sex; and administered justice with great exactness and diligence; but afterwards, giving loose to his depraved temper and inclinations, he became guilty of all kinds of enormities and oppressions, and proved one of the most subtle and designing tyrants in nature; so that historians have observed of him, that he never spake as he thought, nor showed any inclination for what he desired; that he looked sullen on his friends, and cheerful on his enemies; was fair to those he designed to punish, and severe to those he proposed to pardon; for his standing maxim was, that 'a prince's mind should be known to no man;' in short, that he was a most exquisite state-juggler, a most jealous and barbarous governor, a debaser of the Roman empire, a corrupter of all that was good, and introducer of all that was bad and abominable in it.

At his first accession to the empire, he ordered young Agrippa, whom Augustus banished, to be murdered, and then published a report, 'That this was done in obedience to the particular order of the late emperor, who had given charge to the centurion that guarded him, to dispatch him upon the first intelligence of his death;' and having, by the assistance of Piso, and his wife Placina, poisoned Germanicus, whose virtues he dreaded, and whose right to the succession, as well as his esteem with the people, might possibly, as he thought, give him some disturbance, he now began to pull off the mask, and to appear more barefaced in his vicious actions, though not so open in his tyrannical designs.

It was a common thing at this time for governors of provinces to make reports to the emperor of all remarkable events that happened in the places under their jurisdiction; and therefore Pontius Pilate, being now

governor of Judea, wrote to Tiberius an account of our blessed Saviour's passion and resurrection, which came to pass in the third year of his government; of the miracles which were performed by him, and by others in his name: of the multitude of his followers, which daily increased: and of the opinion which generally prevailed, that he was a god. Whereupon Tiberius made a report of the whole matter to the senate, and proposed to them, that Christ might be admitted into the number of their gods. But the senate, not liking the motion, and alleging an ancient law, which gave them alone the superintendence in matters of religion, not only refused to canonize him, but, by an edict, commanded, that all Christians should be banished the city; which when the emperor understood, he, by another edict, threatened death to any who dared to accuse the Christians; and, in all his reign, would not permit, at least not promote any persecutions against them; which is so much the more wonderful, considering his natural inclination to cruelty.

For, beginning now to act openly, he treated his subjects as enemies, because the vileness of his conduct had given them sufficient occasion to be so. Many of the principal and noblest persons in Rome he condemned, and confiscated their estates, upon very light and frivolous pretences; nor could any man, however virtuous and cautious, account himself safe; because though he might possibly escape the false reports of spies and informers, yet he had reason, nevertheless, to stand in fear of the very imagination of the emperor. To retain an innocent remembrance of liberty, was interpreted a purpose to re-establish the commonwealth; to testify a concern for the glory of the empire, a secret desire to gain it; to praise Brutus and Cassius was a capital crime; to speak well of Augustus, a dangerous offence; simplicity of discourse was thought an indication of evil design; a discreet silence concealed mischievous intention; joy was the hopes of the prince's death; melancholy an envying his prosperity; and fear, the just apprehensions of a guilty conscience; so that, to speak or to be silent, to be glad or grieved, to be fearful or assured, were all crimes, and very often incurred the most exquisite punishments; for he generally executed his fury with such extreme severity, that he esteemed it a favour, and an act of mercy, to put persons to death in an ordinary way.

Thus miserable were the Romans under the arbitrary government of a most outrageous tyrant, till by his gluttony, drunkenness, and lust, which raged more violently at an age when nature, one would think, should have cured them, finding his strength impaired, he removed from place to place, and at last settled in a promontory of Misenum; where, after several consultations with his favourite Macro, he named Caius Caligula, the only surviving son of Germanicus, together with a young grandson of his called Tiberius, to be his successor; and it is probably conjectured, that he named the former, in hopes that his vices would efface the memory of his own wickedness, and his known cruelty extinguish the whole Roman nobility; for which reason he was frequently heard to say, That in Caligula he had brought up a serpent for the people of Rome, and a Phæton for all the rest of the world.

During his illness, his spirit sensibly declined; but

his dissimulation was as strong as ever in carrying on the humour of his former luxury and debaucheries, and in despising all physic, till his weakness was discovered by Charides, a famous physician, who, under pretence of kissing his hand, felt the defect in his pulse. This the crafty prince immediately perceiving, shortly after dissembled such faintings, as made all the company think him dead, and begin to make their court to the new emperor; but, as he recovered again, to the great surprise, and almost confusion of Caligula and Macro, they soon found means to despatch him, in the 78th year of his age, and the 23d of his reign, either by poison, or smothering him in the bed-clothes, to the no small joy and satisfaction of all the senate and people of Rome.

Caius, who was surnamed Caligula, from his wearing the military buskin called *caliga*, in his youth, began his reign with all the clemency and regularity imaginable. He caused the famous models and institutions of Augustus, which had been disused by Tiberius, to be revived. He began to reform many abuses in the state, and severely punished corrupt governors; of whom he banished Pontius Pilate to Vienne in Gaul, where he afterwards killed himself. He took a strict view of the *equites*, and put all to public shame who were guilty of any infamous crime. He punished with death the *spintrie*, those abominable inventors of unnatural pollutions, whom his predecessor greatly encouraged. He remitted several impositions invented by Tiberius, and was so popular, that he endeavoured to restore the ancient method of electing magistrates by the suffrages of the people.

But, in a short time all these promising qualities vanished; his care for the public was laid aside; and by giving a full loose to his furious passions, he soon became such a monster in all manner of wickedness as the world never heard of before. He was so proud that he impiously assumed divine honours, and had a temple dedicated to his own divinity; so prodigal that he consumed above fifty millions of our money in a few months' time; so brutish, that he committed incest with all his three sisters, and suffered no lady of distinction to escape his lust; and so tyrannical, that he wished the Roman people had but one neck, that he might despatch them all at one blow. In short, he was so superlatively wicked, as to occasion this reflection of Seneca, namely, 'that nature seemed to have brought him forth on purpose to show what was possible to be produced from the greatest viciousness, supported by the greatest authority.'

His assuming the title of Optimus Maximus, with other epithets of honour, which the Romans gave only to their great god Jupiter; and, because he would be reputed a real Jupiter, his inventions to imitate thunder and lightning; and instituting a set of priests to officiate in his temple, who daily sacrificed peacocks, pheasants and the most rare and delicate fowls that could be procured; and what is more, his becoming a priest himself, and admitting his wife and his horse to be fellow-priests with him; his falling in love with the moon, and as if she had been a fine lady, inviting her to his bed, to taste the pleasures of his embraces; and his deifying his sister Drusilla after her death, and making her a goddess, whom, all his life long, he had made his harlot; his barbarous cruelty, as well as impious love, to those of his

own family; his using his grandmother Antonia so inhumanly, that she poisoned herself; murdering his co-heir Tiberius, merely for using a sweet powder; and almost all his own kindred, except his uncle Claudius, whom he preserved only for a laughing-stock; his condemning persons of the best rank and quality to dig in the mines, or to repair the highways; his casting great numbers of old infirm men, and poor decrepid house-keepers, to the wild beasts, to rid the state of such unprofitable members; and his causing all public granaries to be shut up, that such as escaped the wild beasts might perish by famine; his ordering large pillars and towers to be built in the bottom of the sea; mountains to be levelled, plains and vallies to be elevated, a wonderful bridge, of above three miles and a half in length, to be carried from the point of Baïæ to the opposite shore of Puteoli;^a and, above all, his famous expedition into Batavia or Holland, where he enriched his army with the spoils of the conquered ocean, as he called them, that is, with cockle-shells and mussel-shells, which he ordered them to gather in their helmets, and, after having made a pompous oration to them, wherein he extolled their noble achievements upon this occasion, his causing a lofty town to be erected on the sea-side, in memory of this great victory; these, and a thousand more vile extravagancies and monstrous cruelties, recorded at large in the histories of his life, made him so very odious and contemptible to his subjects, that many began to conspire against him, but all ineffectually, until Cassius Chareas, an officer of his guards, resolved upon it; and, having communicated his design to several senators, equites, and others, waited only for a fit opportunity to put it into execution.

^a To show his power and greatness, and that he was able to walk upon the sea as well as the land, he ordered an infinite number of ships to be secured in all parts, and many others to be new-built, and all to be brought into the bays of Baïæ and Puteoli in Campania, about ninety miles from Rome. These ships being placed in two rows, in the form of a crescent, were fastened and moored together with anchors, chains, and cables, to make them firm and secure; and over these were laid vast quantities of large planks and boards covered over with so much earth, as made it look like firm ground, or one of the streets of Rome. For, upon this bridge, he built houses and lodgings, for the reception of himself and his followers, and by pipes conveyed fresh water from the land, to serve the occasions of his revels. When this was done, he and all his court, with prodigious throngs of all sorts of people, repaired thither; where, after some solemn sacrifices to the gods, he, proudly adorned with stately robes of gold and pearl, sitting on horseback, with a civic crown, and Alexander's breast-plate, accompanied with the great officers of his army, and all the nobility and gentry of Rome, entered at one end of the bridge, and, with an awful majesty, rode to the other. After this, lodging all night upon the bridge, he caused such infinite numbers of torches, lanterns, and other lights, to be placed on all parts of the works, as gave him occasion to boast, 'That he had turned the night into day, as well as the sea into land.' The next day, he rode over the bridge in his triumphant chariot, with Darius, an hostage of Parthia, attending, and followed by a mighty train of other chariots, and all his soldiers in bright armour; which when he had done, he ascended a rostrum, and there made a solemn oration in praise of his own great attempt; and, that he might perform something more memorable before he left the bridge, he ordered great numbers of the multitude to be cast into the sea; and when they laid hold on rudders, or any thing that might save their lives, commanded them to be thrust off, so that they all perished without remedy: after which he returned home in a magnificent manner, for having surmounted, as he thought, the very order and laws of nature.—*Echard's Roman History*, in the Life of Caligula.

A. M. 4044. A. D. 40; OR, A. M. 5451. A. D. 40, &c.

Belonging to the palace there was a private gallery, through which the emperor usually passed to some baths, not far distant. Here Chareas, with his associates, met him, and, after some short salutation, gave him a mortal stab, crying out, 'Tyrant, think upon this;' at which instant the rest of the conspirators rushed in, and gave him no less than thirty wounds before they had dispatched him.

Thus died Caius Caligula, in the 29th year of his age, and the fourth of his reign, by his prodigious enormities having justly pulled down the vengeance of heaven upon himself and his family: for (that his whole race might be extinguished) his wife Cæsonia was, at the same time, stabbed by a centurion; and his only daughter, then an infant in the cradle, had her brains dashed out against a wall: and that if possible both his name and features might be forgot in future ages, his money, by a decree of the senate, was melted down.

Upon the death of Caligula, the city was much divided. The nobility were for restoring the Roman liberty, the commons for electing a new emperor, and the army joined with the commons; but whom to nominate to this dignity, they were at a loss, till some of the soldiers, searching about for plunder in the palace, chanced to spy Caligula's uncle Claudius hid in an hole, for fear of his life, whom they brought into the camp, and instantly proclaimed Emperor. The senate, hearing of this, sent a tribune of the people to advise him to submit to their establishment, and not disturb the public peace with his pretensions; but, at the instigation of Herod Agrippa, King of Judea, who was then at Rome, he refused to comply, and, in a few days, by the clamours of the people, and menaces of the soldiers, the senate was so wrought upon, that, considering him as nearer allied to the empire than any other, being both uncle to Caligula, and brother to Germanicus, they agreed to make him Emperor, and shortly after confirmed that title to him.

Claudius was now in the fiftieth year of his age; but either upon account of his bodily distempers, or the natural stupidity of his mind, he was ever, till this time, judged incapable of any public office in the state. However, by the good acts which he did in the beginning of his reign, it seemed as if he had cured the infirmities of his body, and, in some measure, corrected those of his understanding too. He disannulled the cruel edicts made by Caligula, and commanded all who were unjustly confined, either in prison or banishment, to be set at liberty. In his honours and titles he showed himself modest and temperate, and, upon severe penalties, forbade all persons to sacrifice to him, as they had done to Caligula. To his enemies, and the opposers of his election, he showed himself merciful, and passed a general act of indemnity for past crimes; only, for a public example, and to terrify others from the like attempt, he ordered Chareas, and some other conspirators, who died all with great resolution, to be executed. He took more than ordinary care, that the city of Rome should be continually furnished with all sorts of corn and provisions, by securing the merchants against the pirates at sea; and, that it might want no supply of water, he made a famous conduit or aqueduct, called after his own name, which both for stateliness of workmanship, and the plenty of water it conveyed, at forty miles distant, through great

mountains, and over stately arches in vallies, far surpassed any work of that kind in all Italy.

But it was not long before this Emperor began to lessen his care and concern for the public, and to give himself up to his gluttonous disposition, and passive stupidity; so that his freedmen and favourites, together with his libidinous wife Messalina, imposing upon him as they thought fit, became the most intolerable oppressors and tyrants; inflicting innumerable deaths and other cruelties; selling governments and dignities; and issuing out pardons and penalties without his knowledge. The truth is, he was so cowardly and fearful, that, when a rebel, named *Camillus*, commanded him by letter to resign his empire, he was in a disposition to have done it; so blind and incogitant, that his Empress Messalina married herself to another man, in his lifetime, and almost in his presence; so stupid, that when the news of her execution was brought him, he showed not the least token of joy, sorrow, or any other human passion or affection; and so prodigiously forgetful, that he frequently asked and sent for such persons as he had executed the day before.

After the death of the infamous Messalina, the Emperor married his own niece Agrippina, a woman of a vast spirit and unbounded ambition, who soon prevailed with her husband, even to the prejudice of his own son Britannicus, to adopt her son Domitius, under the name of *Claudius Nero*, and to confer on her the title of *Augusta*. Upon her advancement to this dignity, it was not long before she procured the deaths of several ladies of the highest rank, who had been her rivals in marrying the Emperor; and became so very zealous for her son's succeeding in the empire, that, when she was told by some oracle or augur, that her son should be Emperor indeed, but would certainly be the cause of her death, her answer was, let him, so he does but reign.

In a few years, however, the exorbitant power which she assumed, gained her the envy and hatred of the Emperor's favourites, and the disesteem of Claudius himself; who, notwithstanding his strange insensibility, began now to repent of his marriage with her, and the adoption of her son. This Agrippina soon discovered, by his unusual favours to his son Britannicus, and by what accidentally dropt from him when heated with wine, namely, that he had been very unfortunate in his wives, but that none of them had escaped unpunished. Whereupon she determined with herself to procure his death by poison. But what kind of poison to make choice of was the question. A strong poison she thought might make her villany too apparent, and a slow one might give the Emperor opportunity of discovering so much of her practices, as to prevent her son's succession; and therefore she resolved upon such a potion as would distract his senses, and not too soon suddenly end his life. For this she wanted not her assistants, who infused the poison into some mushrooms, a dish which the Emperor loved beyond measure; but, finding that this only made him sick, she sent for her own physician, named Xenophon, who under the pretence of making him vomit, as his custom was to do after his gluttonous debauches, thrust a poisonous feather down his throat, which, in a short time, ended his life, in the 64th year of his age, and the 14th of his reign.

As soon as Claudius was dead, Agrippina, as one over-

A. M. 4158. A. D. 54; OR, A. M. 5465. A. D. 54, &c.

whelmed with extremity of grief, embraced Britannicus in her arms, calling him 'the dear image of his father's face,' and by many artifices, detained him and his two sisters, Antonia and Octavia, in the chamber, placing a strong guard at every door and passage, till all things were made ready for her son's advancement; and then the palace-gates being suddenly set open, Nero, accompanied with Burrhus, prefect of the Prætorian guards, went out to the cohort then in waiting; who, at the command of Burrhus, received him with loud acclamations, though not without some inquiries after Britannicus, and carried him in a chariot to the rest of the troops: and they, upon his promise of a donative, according to the example of his predecessors, saluted him Emperor; which was shortly confirmed by the senate, and acknowledged by the province.

Nero, though but seventeen years of age, began his reign with the general joy and satisfaction of the city. For, promising to govern according to the wise rules and institutions of the great Augustus, he, at first, both in words and actions, showed himself just, liberal, and merciful. He conferred favours, and distributed large sums of money among the people and Prætorian soldiers. He moderated the impositions and tributes of the provinces; assigned pensions to decayed senators; used all men with such humanity and courtesy, and in the execution of justice, showed such clemency and pity, that it seemed as if heaven had sent the Romans such a prince as they desired; as indeed, for the first five years of his government, it was so good in all respects, that the famous Emperor Trajan was afterwards wont to say, that, for that space of time, all governments came short of this. But this, in a great measure, is to be imputed to the wise conduct of Burrhus and Seneca, who were the young Emperor's guides and governors, in equal authority, and bearing equal share in their different faculties; Burrhus, in military discipline, and gravity of manners; and Seneca, in precepts of eloquence, and courteous demeanour.

As Nero increased in years, so his vices and extravagancies became more conspicuous. For having poisoned his ^a predecessor's son Britannicus, taken Poppea Sabina from the bed of her husband Otho, first divorced his wife Octavia, and afterwards put her to death, murdered his ^b mother Agrippina, and, as some imagine,

^a The occasion of Nero's doing this is said to be, some furious menaces his mother Agrippina made him, which put him in great fear of a competitor at least, if not the loss of his empire; and therefore, to free himself from all jealousies, he ordered poison for Britannicus: but this proving ineffectual, he had recourse to a stronger; which was cunningly administered to the young prince in a public banquet, and so suddenly spread through his veins, that, at once, his speech and his spirits forsook him. While the spectators were all amazed, Nero, leaning unconcernedly on the table, assured the company 'That it was usual for him to be seized with such epileptic fits, so that they need not doubt his recovery.' Whereupon the rest, for different ends and purposes, dissembled their griefs, and, after some silence, the mirth of the banquet began again. But Britannicus in the mean time died, and was privately buried that same night.—*Echard's Roman History, in the Life of Nero.*

^b After that Nero was resolved upon his mother's death, he attempted first to poison her; but by reason of the antidotes and preservatives which she took, poison proved ineffectual. Then he endeavoured to drown her; but she having the good luck to escape, even when several of her company perished, he at last caused a report to be spread, that she had conspired to take away his life, and so sent certain tribunes to murder her; and authors generally say, that upon their approaching, and unsheathing their

poisoned his governor Burrhus, he thought himself now free from all restraint. He therefore gave the reins to his brutal appetites and abandoned himself to all kinds of extravagancies and vices, such as were never practised by a prince, and scarce conceived by any man. His running about the city by night, disguised in the habit of a slave, with his lewd companions, entering taverns and infamous houses, and their committing what outrages he thought fit; his debasing himself so far, as to become a common singer, musician, and a stage-player, frequently acting a part before the whole city, and procuring great numbers of noblemen and ladies to be present when he acted; his professing the art of a charioteer, taking a journey as far as Peloponnesus, on purpose to run in the Olympic games, and, at his return to Rome, entering the city in triumph, surrounded with musicians and players, brought from all parts of the world: these were excusable follies, in comparison to the monstrous extravagancies which he afterwards fell into, when, having attired himself in the habit of a woman and a bride, he first wedded to one of his abominable companions, named Pythagoras; and after that, became an husband to a boy called Sporus, whom he first emasculated, and then clothing him with all the ornaments of an empress, accompanied him in all the most public places.

Nor was his cruelty less exorbitant than his lust. For, upon the discovery of a conspiracy which Caius Piso, and some other great men, had formed against him, he put vast numbers to death, noble and ignoble, guilty and innocent, among whom, besides Piso, the head of the conspiracy, died Lucan, the famous poet, who hated Nero, for his forbidding him to publish his verses; ^c Seneca the philosopher, and tutor to the tyrant, who, though not convicted of any treason, was commanded to die; and the polite, but ^d impure Petronius, who had been a great assistant to Nero in his extravagant pleasures. Nay, so sanguinary was he in his temper, that, without any manner of provocation, he put many eminent persons to death; as Rubellius Plautus, only for being of the Julian family; and another named Pallas, merely for being rich: a crime for which many suffered in those days; and to complete all his wickedness, having set the city of Rome on fire, which with infinite satisfaction he beheld, and sung all the while the destruction of Troy in derision, he nevertheless, out of hatred to the Christians, accused them of the fact, and

swords, she showed them her belly, crying, 'Strike me here, since this part hath deserved it, for having conceived and brought forth such a monster as Nero;' and immediately expired with the wounds she received.—*Ibid.*

^c He being commanded to die, cheerfully undertook it; but was obliged to seek death several ways; for he had so macerated himself with abstinence, that he could not bleed, and poison would have no operation upon him: but at length, entering a bath, he was stifled with the fumes, discoursing even to the last, according to his usual eloquence, of the most excellent things, which being taken from his mouth, were afterwards published. Such was the death of the great philosopher Seneca, which some have thought a just judgment upon him, for living so contrary to his writings, and for educating his pupil no better.—*Echard's Roman History, in the life of Nero.*

^d His death was the most remarkable in the world, and most resembling the whole course of his life. In it he proceeded with all imaginable unconcern, opening his veins, and closing them, as he thought fit; discoursing with his friends, not of serious matters, or the immortality of the soul, but of light and pleasant things; and all the time attending to soft verses, and delicate love songs.—*Ibid.*

A. M. 4072. A. D. 68; OR, A. M. 5479. A. D. 68, &c.

thereupon proceeded against them as incendiaries, raised the first general persecution, and put great numbers of them to the most exquisitely cruel and ignominious deaths.

These, and many more bloody and tyrannical proceedings, had, by this time, worn out the patience of the Romans, and made all men press for a revolution. Vindex, commander of the legions in Gaul, was the first who began the revolt. He publicly protested against the government of Nero, and proclaimed Sergius Galba, who at that time was governor of part of Spain, emperor. ^a Galba joining in the enterprise, and taking the empire upon him, procured the revolt, not only of the armies in Spain, but of the legions in Germany, and several other places, who unanimously declared against the present emperor.

These proceedings drove Nero into the utmost rage and despair, and put him upon a design, the blackest and most barbarous that ever man imagined. He resolved to massacre all the governors of provinces, and commanders of armies, under the pretence of conspiracies; to destroy all exiled persons, lest they should join with the revolvers; to murder all the Gauls in Rome, as favourers of their countrymen; to poison the whole senate at an entertainment; to burn the city again, and to turn out wild beasts among the people, to prevent their extinguishing the flames. But he found himself unable to effect these designs. All mankind fell from him and forsook him; which made him become as servile as before he was tyrannical. Nay, the senate having met together, pronounced him a mortal enemy to the state, and solemnly condemned him to die *more majorem*; which was to have his body stripped naked, his head made fast in a pillory, and so to be scourged to death. When Nero understood this, he snatched up two daggers, and after many inglorious sighs and tears, and some whining complaints, 'what a rare artist the world in him would lose,' by the assistance of Epaphroditus, his secretary, he wounded himself so, that he died shortly after, in the thirty-second year of his age, and fourteenth of his reign.

The death of Nero occasioned an universal joy and satisfaction in Rome; and as Galba was esteemed a person of great wisdom and valour, and had been elected by the two armies in Gaul and Spain, the people unanimously agreed, and the senate in a short time consented to create him emperor, though he had no affinity or alliance with the family of the Cæsars, either by blood or adoption.

Galba was seventy-two years old when he first undertook the government, under the name of the 'Lieutenant

of the senate and people of Rome.' But when he received advice that Nero was dead, and the people had sworn allegiance to him, he laid aside the name of Lieutenant, and assuming the title of Cæsar, put himself upon his way to Rome. In the mean time, several rumours were spread abroad, both of his avarice and cruelty; of his severely treating the cities of Spain and Gaul which scrupled at first to declare for him; of his oppressing them with excessive tributes, demolishing their fortifications, executing their governors, and even not sparing their wives and children; which made the people to begin to show less satisfaction for his arrival, than they did for his election.

At his first coming to Rome, his severity to those seamen and mariners whom Nero had listed among his legionary soldiers; his discharging the Roman cohorts, which had been established by former emperors; his refusing to pay the donative, that in his absence was promised to the Prætorian bands; and, shortly after, cashiering several of them, upon a bare suspicion of correspondence and confederacy with Nymphidius, captain of the guards; these, and several other arbitrary proceedings, procured him many enemies, especially among the military people. Though his rescinding the odious acts of Nero, recalling those whom he had unjustly banished, and executing several of the wicked instruments of his cruelty, were very grateful actions to the Romans in general, had he not spared some of the most notorious offenders for the sake of money.

The love of money indeed was his governing passion, and had got so absolute a possession of him, that he was often observed to sigh and weep, when he saw his table a little better furnished than ordinary. But that which made this emperor most generally detested, was his suffering himself to be entirely managed by three favourites, who, having their lodgings with him in the palace, and being perpetually in his presence, were commonly styled his 'three pedagogues.' They were persons of as different humours and vices as possible; and accordingly, by the abuse of his authority, made him appear, in the inequality of his conduct, both odious and despicable: so that sometimes he showed himself severe and rigorous, at other times remiss and negligent, condemning some illustrious persons unheard, pardoning others without reason, and permitting every thing either to be purchased by money, or granted for favour, just as he was guided by these men.

During this misconduct at Rome, affairs in the provinces were in a worse condition. For, since the army in Spain had presumed to choose an Emperor without any other authority, many mutinies were raised, and factions sprang up, in most parts of the empire, through envy, discontent, or a desire of alteration; so that the Emperor, perceiving that, besides his unwieldy old age, which made him contemptible, he was less respected by many for want of an heir, was resolved to adopt some person, of such an age and authority, as in his life-time might be able to protect him, and, after his decease, succeed him in the empire. Upon his declaring this his intent, his three favourites were very busy in recommending persons to him; but Otho having gained the chief favourite Vanius, together with the Urban and Prætorian cohorts, assured himself of success. Galba, however, resolving to consider the public good, and disliking

^a There is something so lively in some parts of the speech which Galba made to his army upon this occasion, that it is well worthy our observation.—It grieves me to say, but it hinders not every man from seeing, that no slave, under the severest master, ever endured a year of harder service, than we have so many under Nero. What kind of exaction has he not used, to supply with extortion what he hath spent with shame? What kind of cruelty has he not practised? How has he wallowed in the blood of his father, his brother, his mother, his wife, his master, and all who are valiant and virtuous in the senate, city, or provinces, without any distinction of age or sex! All which cry for vengeance upon such a prince; a prince! no, an incendiary, a singer, a fiddler, a player, a carter, a crier; no prince, nay, no man, having a man to his husband, and a man to his wife, but a monster of mankind.—*Ibid.*

A. M. 4073. A. D. 69 : OR, A. M. 5480. A. D. 69, &c.

Otho's irregular life, as too much resembling that of his master Nero, rejected him, and made choice of a young man, called *Piso*, in whom was an happy concurrence of all the good qualities that were necessary in a Prince and Emperor.

Otho, finding the hopes of his adoption thus blasted, immediately applied himself to the soldiers, with whom he had a powerful interest, and by his plausible speeches, and large promises, engaged them to proclaim him Emperor, in opposition to Galba's choice; which when Galba understood, he was both disheartened and confounded. Some were of opinion that he ought to have put himself in arms, and appear in public, that his presence might stem the torrent of this dangerous faction; others, that his greatest security would be to fortify himself in the Capitol, and there to attend the result of the disorder. But while he continued thus wavering and irresolute, a false report was brought him, that Otho was slain; whereupon he rode armed out of his palace, with his guards and many followers, into the Forum; and at the same time there entered at the other side, a strong body of horse from the camp, sent by Otho to dispatch him. Upon their nearer approach, for a considerable while they stood amazed, and in a dubious posture, as apprehending the consequence of their fatal commission; so that Galba had time enough to make his escape, but by his irresolution lost his opportunity. For while he was considering with himself whither to return to the palace, or retire to the Capitol, he was suddenly abandoned by the chief of his followers; insomuch that when the soldiers sent by Otho came up to him, he stretched out his neck, and bade them 'strike it off, if it were for the good of the commonwealth, and the Roman people;' which accordingly was done, in the 73d year of his age, after a short reign of seven months; and after him were executed his three favourites, and his adopted son *Piso*.

On the same day that Galba was murdered in the Forum, the senate, and the people of Rome, all acknowledged Otho for his successor; a person valiant and witty, of an ancient and honourable family, and a great favourite to Nero; but more for the conformity of his humours and vices, and the beauty of his wife *Poppæa*, than any worthy execution of the many considerable offices wherewith he was intrusted. However, when he came to the government, he ordered all things agreeably to the honour of the empire; which together with his pardoning *Marius Celsus*, who had been advanced by Galba, and strenuously opposed his succession; his punishing of *Tigellinus*, who had been Nero's chief instrument in impurity; and his generously restoring the goods and estates of such as had been exiled by that tyrant, gained him the love and affection of the people of Rome.

Vitellius at this time commanded the legions in the Lower Germany. He was a person of great reputation and authority, by reason of the several offices and magistracies which he had held in Rome, and elsewhere, under the three Emperors, *Caligula*, *Claudius*, and *Nero*; with each of whom he had been very intimate; but more for his excessive vices, and some personal abilities, than any virtues or excellencies in him. He was in favour with *Claudius*, for his gaming at dice; with *Caligula*, for his dexterity in managing a chariot; and with *Nero*, for the same skill, and some other such-like qualities; but notwithstanding this, being a man of subtlety and in-

trigue, he had, by large gifts and specious promises, procured the army to create him Emperor, without attending the will and pleasure of the senate, about thirteen days before *Galba's* death.

When the news of this came to Rome, it put Otho into a great consternation, and the city into no small concern, as well knowing, that nothing but the sword, and the blood of many thousand Romans, could determine the contest. The fears and cares of the city were farther augmented by the great preparations they saw Otho making, and the known disabilities of the nobility and gentry in martial affairs. The chief of the senate were grown old and impotent, wanting both the power and vigour of soldiers. The nobility were slothful, covered with the rust of a long peace, and unaccustomed to the fatigues of a camp. The Equites were dissolved in ease and luxury, and ignorant in military service, which the more they endeavoured to conceal, the more they betrayed their fears. The wiser sort began to show great concern at the miseries and perturbations of the commonwealth; but the inconsiderate were swelled with vain hopes, and extravagant opinions; and many persons, bankrupts in peace, in these troublesome times began to make the greatest appearance, as being themselves most in safety when the state was in greatest danger.

While things were in this situation at Rome, Otho received advice, that *Vitellius's* forces were upon their march towards Italy, under the conduct of two commanders *Valens* and *Cæcina*; whereupon he departed from Rome with a fair army, consisting of the Roman nobility, the *Prætorian* cohorts, the legions out of the fleets upon the Italian coast, and such others as he could levy in that time. Upon the approach of the two parties, both armies proceeded with such haste and precipitation, that besides skirmishes, and other encounters, three considerable battles were fought; one at *Placentia*, another at *Cremona*, and a third at a place called *Castor*; in all which Otho and the senate had the advantage, though the word on both sides was, 'Rome and the Empire!'

Valens and *Cæcina* hitherto acted separately, but, joining now all their forces together, they came to a general battle near *Bebriacum*, a village between *Cremona* and *Verona*, and after a sharp engagement, the *Prætorian* cohorts giving way, the *Vitellians* obtained a victory, which at once decided the contest. For Otho, though he had sufficient encouragement to continue the war, being reduced to a sort of desperation, resolved upon an attempt, contrary to his soft and effeminate temper; which was, ^a 'to die himself, in order to spare the

^a His speech to his soldiers upon this occasion is very remarkable:—'I esteem this day as far more happy and glorious than that whereon you made me Emperor, since it has manifested such sensible tokens of your love and affection, and incontestible proofs of your duty and loyalty; therefore I beseech you, not to deny me this favour, which is, to suffer me to die justly and honourably, for the safety of so many brave soldiers, and worthy citizens, as you are. There can be no occasion for any legions and forces coming to my assistance, since the enemy is neither *Hannibal* nor *Pyrrhus*; therefore to hazard your virtue and valour in dangers wholly needless, is too dear a purchase of life; and the greater hopes you have of success, the more honourable will be my death, as being voluntary. Assure yourselves, I had rather die than reign Emperor, since I can never so far advance the Roman state by wars and bloodshed, as by sacrificing myself for the peace of it; and whereas others have purchased fame and glory by their well governing and supporting the empire,

blood of his countrymen. No arguments or entreaties could move or divert him from this resolution, which he carried on and effected, with all imaginable calmness and serenity of mind.

For the night before he died, having chosen out a sharp dagger, and laid it under his pillow, he took a draught of cold water, and so went to bed, and fell into a profound sleep ; but, awaking about break of day, and seeing one of his servants in the chamber, he commanded him to retire, and then taking the dagger, gave himself a mortal stab on the left side, and, with a single groan ended his life, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and after a very short and troublesome reign of only twelve weeks and six days.

Soon after the death of Otho, Vitellius, being still in Gaul, was, both by the army and senate, acknowledged as emperor. In his journey towards Rome, arriving at Bebricum, where the last battle was fought, he was extremely delighted with the sight of the putrified bodies, and the limbs of men and horses mangled, and scattered abroad ; and when several of his train complained of the noisome smells, he impiously replied, that a dead enemy smelt well, but a dead citizen better. Nor did he give greater satisfaction at his arrival in Rome ; for, he entered the city, like a conqueror, mounted upon a noble steed, and adorned with all his military habiliments ; encouraged his soldiers to all kinds of insolence and outrage : and abandoned himself to the most extravagant degrees of luxury, gluttony, and cruelty, inasmuch that, in four months' time, he wasted above seven millions of our money ; nor would the revenues of the whole empire, had he reigned long, been sufficient to maintain his expences. His using all manner of fraud and hypocrisy to destroy such persons of quality as had formerly been his associates and school-fellows : his going to visit one of them in a fever, and, upon his desiring to drink, mingling poison with the water, and delivering it to him with his own hand ; his causing all persons to be put to death that came to demand the payment of his former debts, and one of them to be slain in his very presence, that he might feed his eyes with the spectacle, as he called it ; his ordering two sons to be executed with their father, for no other crime, than merely presuming to intercede for his life ; and his having several of the meaner sort slaughtered, only for deriding the colours of some charioteers whom he pretended to favour ; these, and many more sanguinary acts, mentioned by the historians who have recorded his life, are a sufficient indication, that in his government he designed to follow the example of Nero, to whose manes he publicly sacrificed in a general assembly of the priests in the Campus Martius. All this while he gave himself up to such a strange carelessness and stupidity, that nothing but his horrid cruelties could put him in mind of his exalted state ; and fortifying himself with confused mirth and sottishness against all dangers and exigencies, he almost lost the remembrance of things past, and the thoughts of things to come.

I may reasonably expect a name for leaving it, rather than permit my ambition to weaken and destroy it. I therefore desire that you would take this as an undoubted proof of my courage and resolution, that I make no complaints of hard fortune, or ill success ; for to blame either gods or men, implies a mean and indirect desire of living.—*Eclard's Roman History* in the life of Otho.

Having thus, by this abominable life, made himself odious to the city, and by the daily insolences and cruelties of his soldiers, insupportable to the country, the legions in the east, though, in the beginning of his reign, they submitted to his authority, began now to revolt, and fixing their eyes upon Vespasian, as a person most worthy of the highest authority, and most able to put an end to the miseries of his country, resolved to create him emperor against Vitellius. Vespasian at this time was engaged in a war against the Jews, and, with great bravery and renown, had reduced most of their country, except Jerusalem ; but when his army proclaimed him emperor, and he absolutely refused that dignity, the soldiers, with their drawn swords, and many menaces against his life, compelled him to take the honour upon him ; whereupon all the armies of the east came to his service and obedience, and in a general council it was determined that Titus should continue the war against the Jews, Mutianus enter Italy with the greatest part of the legions, and Vespasian himself go to Alexandria, to make provision from all parts, and thence pass over into Italy, to join Mutianus, as occasion should require it.

In the mean time, Antonius Primus, an excellent soldier, who had been banished by Nero, but restored by Galba, a friend to Vespasian, and privy to his design, immediately marched at the head of the Mæsin legions into Italy ; and before Mutianus could arrive, having entirely defeated Vitellius's army, was proceeding directly towards Rome. This so startled and confounded Vitellius, that he became perfectly ridiculous and despicable, sometimes proposing terms of accommodation, and offering to lay down his authority, and then re-assuming it again, till he occasioned a faction and civil war even in Rome, during which the capitol was besieged, taken, and laid in ashes, and Sabinus, the governor of the city, was slain. After this, Antonius would hearken to no more treaties or accommodations, but continued his march even to the walls of Rome ; where a furious battle of almost a day's continuance ensued, until Vitellius's army were driven into the city, and, through the Campus Martius, and all the streets, pursued with a most terrible slaughter.

In the midst of these devastations, the people, who were then celebrating their Saturnalia, rather than not enjoy the pleasures of the festival, converted the common calamity into mirth and jollity : so that through the whole city, there was both a barbarous and a shameful spectacle, and a scandalous mixture of cruelty and lewdness in one place, wounding and slaying ; in another, tippling and bathing : here, streams of blood, and heaps of mangled bodies ; and, hard by, lewd debauchees, and shameless prostitutes : in short, all the abominable licentiousness of a most dissolute and riotous peace, and all the deplorable miseries of a most dreadful and cruel war.

Thus was this mighty city, the head and empress of the world, taken and ravaged by her own natural subjects ; and, as it was fatal to many thousands, so it was no less to Vitellius himself ; whom the soldiers dragged out of his palace, and without hearkening to any intreaties, binding his hands behind him, threw an halter about his neck, and, tearing his very clothes from his back, drew him half-naked into the public forum, through the main street, called *Via Sacra* ; all the while as he went along,

A. M. 4074. A. D. 70; OR, A. M. 5481. A. D. 70, &c.

treating him with the utmost indignities, and most opprobrious language; tying his hair backwards, as it was wont to be done to the most execrable malefactors; pelting him with dung and filth, and holding the point of a sword under his chin, to prevent his concealing his face; till at length they brought him to the common place of execution for the most notorious criminals, and, having there, with many blows and wounds, despatched him, in the fifty-sixth year of his age, and after a short reign of eight months, they thence dragged him with an hook, and, having thrown him into the Tiber, made afterwards, not only his brother and only son, but all whom they met with of his party, victims to their fury.

After these murders and ravages were abated, the Roman senate assembled, and, with an unanimous consent, not only declared Vespasian Emperor, but conferred the title of Cæsar upon his two sons, Titus and Domitian; nominated the former to be consul, with his father, for the year ensuing; and the latter to be prætor, with consular power; rewarded Mutianus, Antonius, and several others, with great revenues and dignities, for contributing to this happy revolution; and despatched couriers to Vespasian at Alexandria, to tender him their homage and obedience, and to desire his speedy return to Rome; but, as the winter was not so commodious for sailing, he deferred his going to a more convenient season.

Vespasian, as we said, before he left Judea, committed the management of the war against the Jews to his son Titus, as well knowing his extraordinary valour and skill for such an undertaking. Himself had reduced most of the country, except Jerusalem; but Jerusalem was the capital city, fortified with three walls on every side, except where it was fenced with deep vallies, having the castle of Antonia, the temple; the palace of Aera, the towers on mount Sion, and several other places, almost impregnable; so that great consultation, and a preparation of many materials, were required to carry on such a siege. But what facilitated its reduction, were the several parties and factions which had possession of different parts of the city, and were not only murdering and massacring one another, but, in their rage and madness, had destroyed the provisions likewise, which might have served the city for many years. Jerusalem was involved in these sad circumstances, when Titus, with a powerful army, and all kinds of warlike engines, approached, and sat down within six or seven furlongs of the city, a little before the feast of the passover, by which means he shut up an infinite number of people come from all parts to that solemnity, which in a short time occasioned a great consumption of their provisions.

Upon the sight of so numerous an army, the several factions unanimously agreed to oppose it; and sallying out, with great resolution and fury, put the Romans to disorder, and obliged them to abandon their camp, and fly to the mountains: but the Jews were at last repulsed, and driven into the city by the extraordinary skill and valour of Titus; who, in this and all other actions during this siege, greatly signalized himself.

When Titus had placed his engines, which was not done without great opposition, he battered the outward wall, and, on the third day of May, making a breach, entered and took possession of the north quarter of the city, as far as the castle of Antonia, and the valley of

Kedron; which when he had done, he gave the besieged all possible assurances of pardon and civil treatment, if they would but submit. But they judging his humanity to be the effect of cowardice, refused all terms and conditions. Five days after this, Titus broke through the second wall: and though the besieged made several sallies, and drove him out again; yet on the fourth day he recovered the place, and possessed himself of the new lower city; which when he had done, being still desirous to show them mercy, he sent ^a Josephus to his countrymen, to exhort them to yield. But though he used all the powerful and pathetic persuasions imaginable, he was entertained with nothing but scoffs and reproaches; so that Titus was now resolved to proceed with more severity against a people who had been perfidious to the highest degree, and stubborn beyond all example; and accordingly, whenever they escaped out of the city, as the famine compelled many to make their escape, they were no sooner taken by Titus, than he caused them to be scourged and crucified; and that in such numbers, that room was wanting for crosses, and crosses for persons, though, by the cruelty of this spectacle, he only designed to terrify the city, and hasten its surrender.

On the 12th of May, Titus began four mounts for his battering rams; two near the castle of Antonia, where he was in hopes of taking the temple; and two near the monument of John the high-priest, where he supposed he might break into the upper city with the greatest facility. But in two bold sallies, the besieged ruined and destroyed the mounts and having burnt several battering rams, and other engines, pressed forward, and broke into the very camp of the Romans; though at length they were valiantly

^a How Josephus came to be at Jerusalem, and in the camp of Titus, while he besieged it, himself tells us in his History of the Jewish Wars, namely, that after the reduction of Jotapata, which he gallantly defended, he became a prisoner to Vespasian; but, having foretold his advancement to the empire, which accordingly came to pass, he was not only set at liberty, but received into great confidence, and attended his son at the siege of Jerusalem, where he made a long speech to his countrymen, by all the arguments he could invent, persuading them to surrender; but all in vain; although his discourse drew tears from his own eyes, as himself tells us, (b. vi. c. 9.) the factions were not in the least softened by it. After the destruction of Jerusalem, he went with his conqueror to Rome, where Vespasian showed him great respect, and, as himself tells in his life, lodged him in his own house, made him a free citizen of Rome, assigned him a pension, gave him lands in Judea, and, above all, ordered him a public statue. These favours Titus, when he came to the empire, increased, and in honour of him, had his History of the Wars of the Jews, which was now finished, deposited in the public library. This history is a continued account of the Jewish affairs, from the taking of Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes, down to the utter ruin of it by Titus, consisting in all of 242 years; but the most considerable and valuable part of it is that of the six last years, where he describes the last Jewish wars, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the miseries of his countrymen, in the most lively and affecting manner. Besides this, Josephus wrote another history, intitled, 'The Antiquities of the Jews,' which was finished in the thirteenth year of Domitian. One half of this history is taken from the books of the Old Testament; but he has ventured to add several facts that are not to be found in these writings, and to those which he has wholly taken from them, he has given such an artificial turn, as shows, that his intention was to accommodate the most surprising passages in holy scripture to the humour and opinions of the persons to whom he wrote. Besides these two histories, he wrote an account of his own life, two treatises against Apion, and one concerning the martyrdom of the Maccabees, which Erasmus justly styles 'a masterpiece of eloquence.'—*Echard's Ecclesiastical History*.

A. M. 4074. A. D. 70; OR, A. M. 5482. A. D. 71, &c.

repulsed by Titus; who in a council of war now resolved to surround the whole city with a wall or entrenchment, to hinder the flight of the besieged, and to prevent all relief from coming into the city: thereby verifying our blessed Lord's predictions to a tittle: 'The days shall come upon thee, that thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee around, and keep thee in on every side.'

This work, though nearly five miles in compass, was, with incredible celerity, finished in three days. But it made no impression upon the besieged, though the famine began to rage violently, and such a mortality ensued, that, from the 14th of April to the 1st of July, 115,080 carcases of the poorer sort were carried out to be buried at the public charge, 600,000 were cast out of the gates, and when the number of the dead bodies increased so that they had no place to dispose of them, they gathered them together into the largest houses adjoining, and there shut them up. All this while the famine increased to such a degree, that a bushel of corn was sold for 600 crowns; that wives took the meat out of their husbands' mouths, children from their parents, and mothers from their infants; that old men were driven from their meat, as persons of no use, and young men tortured to confess where their provisions lay; that sinks and holes were continually raked, to find the old dung of oxen for food; that the very soldiers who were the last that would want, began to eat girdles, shoes, sticks, and hay; and that a woman of quality even boiled her own child, with an intent to eat it; an act so detestible, that Titus, after he had insisted upon his frequent offers of peace and pardon to the Jews, declared publicly, that he would bury the abominable crime in the ruins of their country, and not suffer the sun to shine upon that city where mothers ate their own children, and where fathers, no less culpable, reduced them to that extremity by their obstinacy,

With this resolution, he cut down all the groves within a considerable distance of the city, and causing more mounts to be raised, on the 1st of July he began to batter the wall of Antonia, and on the 5th, entered the castle by force, and pursued the flying Jews even to the temple; which when he had done, both he and Josephus again exhorted them to surrender: but all to no purpose; they obstinately refused all accommodation, and made it their boast, that they had rather endure the worst of miseries. Titus hearing this, in order to make an easy ascent to the temple, overturned the foundation of Antonia; and having seized the north and west porticos or cloisters of the outward range of the temple, he set them on fire; as the Jews did other porticos, to hinder the Romans from making their approaches. On the 8th day of August Titus, perceiving that the walls of the inner temple were too strong for the battering rams, and that the foundation of the gates could not be undermined, was obliged to set fire to them; yet still with an intent, if possible, to save the temple itself: but it so fell out, that, on the 10th, a certain soldier, contrary to the command of the general, excited by a kind of divine impulse, cast a flaming firebrand through the golden window into the chambers and buildings on the north side, which immediately set them on fire; and, notwithstanding the utmost endeavours to the contrary, spread throughout the whole fabric, and consumed the most glorious and

beautiful structure that the world ever saw; whilst the Roman soldiers, pursuing their victory with all imaginable fury and revenge, cut in pieces all they found about the temple, and set fire to the rest of the buildings.

In all these confusions, those who were the chiefs in this sedition found means to retire to the upper and strongest part of the city, called Sion, situated upon a steep rock, where they threatened to defend themselves to the last, and there tyrannized with more cruelty than ever; till Titus having raised his batteries, and made a breach in the wall, they lost all their courage, and, in great consternation, abandoned the towers, which were their only strength, and in vain sought to escape, by hiding themselves in vaults and privies, from whence both John^a and Simon, two principal ringleaders of their different factions, were dragged out, and the former condemned to perpetual imprisonment, while the latter was appointed to grace the general's triumph.

The Romans, having now gained the walls, and, with shouts of joy placed their colours upon the towers, broke loose all over the city, and ranged up and down in the streets, killing all that fell in their way, without distinction, till the passages and alleys were choked up with carcases, and the kennels of the city ran with blood, as if it had been to quench the fire, which was now become one general conflagration.

To this fatal end was the famous city of Jerusalem, after a siege of above five months, reduced, in the second year of Vespasian's reign, and thirty-eight years after our Lord's crucifixion; in which siege there perished no less than 1,100,000, and no fewer than 97,000 were taken captives, besides the 237,490 more, according to Josephus, who fell in the wars which preceded it. At last, when the soldiers had neither rapine nor bloodshed left for their rage and indignation to work upon, Titus ordered them to lay the city and the temple level with the ground, or, in the words of our Saviour's prediction, 'not to leave one stone upon another;' which order was so punctually executed, that except three towers, which, for their strength and beauty, were left as monuments of the city's stateliness to posterity, the whole was laid so flat, that the place looked as if it never had been inhabited.

While these things were transacting at Jerusalem, Vespasian, who entered upon the government in the fiftieth year of his age, having been received at Rome with all imaginable testimonies of joy and triumph, as the only person whose virtues and excellencies could recover the languishing state of the empire, began im-

^a This John was the son of one Levi, born at Gaschala, and one of the principal men of the place. When Titus came before it, under a pretence of surrendering it, he made his escape, and came, with a party of men, to Jerusalem, where, joining with the Zealots, and being naturally a crafty man, eloquent in his speech, and ambitious beyond measure, he soon began to affect a sovereign power over the rest, and became the commander of one faction; as Simon, the son of Gioras, did of another. For he, gathering together great multitudes of robbers and murderers, who got into the mountainous parts, reduced all Idumea, wasted Judea, encamped himself before Jerusalem, and was at length let in by the citizens to defend them against John, who, at the head of the Zealots, did many cruel and tyrannical actions. So that Simon and his army were in the city, while John and his adherents were in the temple fighting and destroying one another, even while the enemy was at the walls.—*Edvard's Ecclesiastical History.*

A. M. 4083. A. D. 79; OR, A. M. 5490. A. D. 79, &c.

mediately to act conformably to the hopes which all men had conceived of him, in administering justice, and in reforming the laws and customs of Rome; honourably rewarding those who had served him, and pardoning his adversaries with singular clemency.

Mean time, the conclusion of the Jewish war occasioned great rejoicings at Rome, where all men's mouths were filled with the praises of Titus, who had shown himself so expert a soldier and commander; and accordingly a triumph was decreed by the senate, both for him and his father, who had so bravely managed the beginning of the war. When Titus returned to Rome, he was received with the universal applauses of the whole city, and within a few days after, both the father and the son entered upon their triumph, which was as solemn and magnificent as Rome ever saw; wherein, among other rich and glorious spoils, vast quantities of gold, taken out of the temple, and the body of the Jewish law, the last, and not the least remarkable of all these spoils, were exhibited to the view of the people. This was the first time that Rome ever saw the father and son triumph together: and, as Vespasian built a new temple to Peace, wherein he deposited most of the Jewish spoils; so Titus had a triumphal arch of great beauty and magnificence erected to his honour, whereon are inscribed all his noble exploits against the Jews, and which, as a lasting monument against that impious and perverse nation, remains almost entire to this very day.

After this happy peace, Vespasian proceeded to the regulation of the several abuses and corruptions, which, in the late reigns, and the civil confusions, had crept into the state. He restrained the luxury and licentiousness of his officers and soldiers, not sparing those who had been assistants to him, and partners with him in his victories. He reformed the two principal orders among the Romans, the senators and the equites, degrading all those he found unworthy of their dignities, and supplying their places with the most deserving persons he could procure, either in Italy or other provinces. He examined into all courts of judicature; and where he found law-suits multiplied to a prodigious number, or extended to an unreasonable length, he appointed proper persons to determine them, and made many excellent laws, to digest and reduce such matters into a far less compass; and to reform the corruption of usurers, as well as the looseness of youth, he ordained, that no person should recover any money of young heirs, if it was lent to be repaid with interest upon the decease of their fathers.

And as he was severe in punishing vice, so he was no less remarkable for rewarding all kinds of merit, though his more particular bounty was extended to the learned professors of arts and sciences. He settled a constant salary of an hundred thousand sesterces upon the teachers of rhetoric, to be paid yearly out of the exchequer. He entertained Josephus, the famous writer of the Jewish wars and antiquities, with great civility, and honoured him with a statue. Pliny the elder, an eminent natural historian, Quintilian the renowned orator, and many other persons of great learning, flourished in his reign, and were highly esteemed by him; as the greatest masters of all other arts and sciences were invited to Rome, from all parts of the world, by his generous allowances. To all which we may add, that his courtesy and clemency appeared constantly, both in

public and private, so that scarce one innocent person was punished through his whole reign; and so contrary was his temper to that of most of his predecessors, that he could not so much as look upon the sufferings of a criminal, without signifying his compassion by his sighs and tears.

But though he was thus mild and merciful, brave and generous, yet he did not preserve himself from the scandal of avarice and rapaciousness; which was grounded upon his selling all the lands in Judea, and appropriating the money to himself; upon his obliging all the Jews in the Roman empire to pay yearly two drachmas to the capitol, as they formerly had done to the temple at Jerusalem; and upon his laying heavy tributes upon several provinces, and particularly a scandalous excise upon urine. But for this, and all his other severe impositions, authors do much excuse him, upon the account of the great necessities of the state, and the emptiness of the exchequer, when he came first to the government; reminding us withal, that his public works and edifices were highly chargeable and expensive; his presents and pensions were numerous and large; his feasts and entertainments frequent and magnificent; and that, though his revenue, by those exactions, was augmented, yet he always employed it to noble purposes, and laid it out with great wisdom and liberality.

By this wise administration of public affairs, he increased the love and respect of the whole senate and people, the nearer he approached to the end of his days; and when he had finished his course, which was in the sixty-ninth year of his age and tenth of his reign, his death was greatly lamented, and his memory gratefully preserved, as being a prince of great wisdom, moderation, and modesty, next to Julius Cæsar in war, and Augustus in peace; and 'in whom,' as Pliny expresses it, 'greatness and majesty had changed nothing, but only to make his power of doing good answerable to his will.'

Upon the death of the great Vespasian, his eldest son Titus, both by the general consent, and his father's last will and testament, succeeded to the empire, though not without some obstructions from his ambitious brother Domitian. Titus had served in many wars with great honour, and discharged many civil offices with no less wisdom during his father's reign, he had given too many occasions of prejudice and aspersion, upon account of his severity and voluptuous life; his extravagant passion for Bernice, King Agrippa's sister; and his promoting his father's impositions and extortions; insomuch that he was generally looked upon as a second Nero; and scarce any man ever arrived at the empire with a more sullied reputation, and a greater repugnancy of the people. But in a short time these accusations and aversions turned all to his advantage, and his virtues gained him a reputation, under the burden of an empire, which he could not attain under the freedom of a private person. For, from his first accession, such was his skill and address, as well as good fortune, in gaining upon the hearts and affections of all people, that he was generally styled, 'the love and delight of mankind.' His notion was, that 'no man ought to depart sorrowful from the presence of a prince,' and therefore he never sent any away with an unpleasant answer. And so strong a propensity to do good, that being told one night by

A. M. 4089. A. D. 85; OR, A. M. 5496. A. D. 85, &c.

those about him, that he had done nothing for any person that day, with a sorrowful countenance he replied, 'O my friends, I have lost a day!' A sentence worthy of an emperor, and fit to be retained in the memory of all princes.

His first step towards gaining the hearts of his subjects, and his happy government of the empire, was his moderating his passions, and bridling his strong inclinations; particularly by withdrawing himself from the beautiful Berenice, and sending her away, notwithstanding their mutual loves; and by dismissing several persons who had formerly been the chief instruments of his pleasures, rightly judging them unbecoming the dignity and majesty of his present office.

After this he proceeded with a better grace and authority in the great affairs of the state, and particularly in regulating and reforming several mischiefs, which had not been perfectly removed in his father's reign. All informers, promoters, and pettifoggers, the bane of society, and the pests of the city, he took care to exterminate, by causing some to be sold as slaves, and others to be transported to uninhabited islands; and to put a farther stop to the corruption and tediousness of law-suits, he prohibited, among other things, that the same case should be tried by several laws, or that the estate of any dead person should be claimed after such a precise number of years.

The same activity in repairing ancient buildings, and erecting new ones, the same freedom of conversation, magnificence of living, generosity to friends, clemency to enemies,^a encouragement to men of learning, and courtesy to all, that his father had shown, Titus was not forgetful to imitate; so that if ever a people may be said to be happy under any prince, the Romans were certainly so under him. And yet in his short reign there happened some misfortunes and calamities, no less astonishing than deplorable; namely, a most dreadful eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which being accompanied with violent earthquakes, ruined many cities, and even threw its ashes into distant countries and to Rome, in such quantities, that the sun was darkened for many days together; in the year following a prodigious fire in Rome, which lasted three days and nights incessantly, consumed the capitol, the pantheon, and several other temples, the library of Augustus, and many more noble buildings; and this followed by a dangerous pestilence, supposed to be occasioned by the ashes of Mount Vesuvius, in which there commonly died ten thousand every day. In all which miseries Titus behaved himself, not only

with the care and regard of a prince, but also with the tenderness and compassion of a father.

But Heaven had determined that so good an emperor should not long bless so corrupt an age, and a people so flagitious, as the Romans were then become; for after a lingering illness, he died, in the forty-first year of his age, and the third of his reign, not without suspicion of poison from his brother Domitian; and as soon as his death was known, a general grief and sadness appeared in all the city, which in a short time spread itself over every province, to the utmost bounds of the empire, and made him in all parts lamented, as though the world had been deprived of a perpetual protector.

The great respect which all had for Titus and his father, caused his brother Domitian to succeed him in the empire without any opposition, notwithstanding the ill opinion which many had justly conceived of him. In the beginning of his reign, however, he behaved with great moderation, concealed his vicious inclinations, and did several commendable things, to gain the goodwill and affections of the people. So far was he from showing any tendency to cruelty and bloodshed, that he was determined, by a public edict, to forbid the sacrificing of oxen; and so far from any signs of avarice or parsimony, that he acted very generously upon all occasions, and made it the chief topic of his advice to those that were about him, to avoid rapine and sordidness.

In rebuilding several stately and noble fabrics, which had been destroyed by the fire in his brother's reign; in exhibiting a sea-fight on a vast lake, dug for that purpose, and by great numbers of ships, almost amounting to complete fleets; in celebrating the great games and feasts called Secular, of all others the most magnificent, as happening but once in an hundred years; in representing all those shows and spectacles that had ever been known; in Rome, besides many more, that were newly invented, in the many sumptuous banquets and entertainments that he made, the large donatives which he distributed, and the valuable things which he threw among the common people by way of *missilia*; in these, and such like things, as he knew would captivate the esteem of the vulgar, he was expensive and ambitious, as any of his predecessors; nor was he defective in some other things, which justly deserve the commendations of all men.

He was diligent for a while in the administration of justice, and would many times sit himself, in an extraordinary manner, in the courts of judicature. He severely punished all such judges and counsellors as were corrupt, and acted for bribes; and with this regard, kept so watchful an eye upon the city-magistrates, and governors of provinces, that there was never known more equity and modesty among the great officers, than in his reign. He suppressed such libels and defamatory writings, as any ways reflected upon persons of quality of either sex; but then he expected that persons of quality should comport according to their character, and for this reason turned a senator out of the house, purely for his immoderate delight in buffoonery and dancing, judging that those things were below the dignity of that venerable order. From such women of distinction as were scandalous in their lives, he took away the privilege of litters, and their capacities of legacies and inheritance; and struck a Roman knight out of the list of the judges, for

^a Of his great clemency we have these remarkable instances. Two of the Patrician degree being convicted of treason, for aspiring to the empire, he inflicted no punishment upon them, but only privately admonished them to desist, mildly telling them, 'That the empire was given by providence; and that it was in vain for them to commit a villany in hopes of obtaining it.' The same night he entertained them at supper; and the next day, at a spectacle of gladiators, and placed them by himself, and when the combatants' weapons, according to custom, were presented to him, he publicly desired their judgment and approbation.—In the like manner, though his brother Domitian was continually conspiring, and exciting the legions against him; yet so far was he from punishing him for it, that he comforted himself towards him as he had always done, giving him the title of Associate and Successor, and with tears privately intreating him, 'not to attempt that by treason and fratricide, which in a short time he would obtain freely, and in course.—Eckard's *Roman History*, in the life of Titus.

A. M. 4189. A. D. 85; OR, A. M. 5496. A. D. 85, &c.

receiving his wife, after she had been repudiated for adultery. The castration of children he utterly prohibited, and moderated the prices of eunuchs; but the whoredoms of the vestal virgins he punished without mercy. Such as were convicted but once, suffered death, as ordinary malefactors; but others were buried alive, according to the ancient custom, and their associate male criminals scourged to death. These, and the like memorable acts of justice have been highly applauded by many, but in most of them he used such pride and elation, and showed himself so excessively vain-glorious, as gave almost evident tokens of his future enormities.

After the many conquests which his great ^a general Agricola obtained for him over the Britons, and the reduction of the Samaritans, Dacians, and the Catii, a people in Germany, for which he vainly assumed the surname of Germanicus, his pride and impiety, as well as cruelty and brutishness, became insufferable. He not only caused his statues in the capitol to be made of pure gold and silver, to which the people in great crowds came to sacrifice continually; but his ambition carried him so far as to assume divine honours; for as he styled himself the son of Pallas, or Minerva, so he decreed, that no man should presume to call him, either in writing or discourse, by any other title than that of our Lord, or our God.

This monstrous arrogance brought him into all kinds of enormities, and was the fatal forerunner of many excessive cruelties, whereby he destroyed great numbers of all sorts, without mercy or consideration. Many illustrious senators, who had some of them been consuls, under pretence of practising against the state, he put to death; some of them in their banishments, and all without the privilege of making their defence. Multitudes of others he ordered to be executed upon very slight and trifling occasions; Ælius Lamia, for his making use of jests, though they were old and innocent; Salvus Coceanus, for celebrating the nativity of Otho the emperor; Sallustius Lucullus, for suffering a new sort of lances to be called Lucullus, after his own name; and Junius Rusticus, for publishing a writing in commendation of Petus Thrasea, and Helvidius Priscus, two philosophers; upon which occasion he banished all the philosophers and mathematicians out of Rome and Italy, and among these the celebrated stoic Epictetus.

The cruelty of these proceedings, and some personal affronts received from Domitian, made Lucius Antonius, governor of the upper Germany, raise a dangerous rebellion in those parts; and being commander of a numerous army, usurp the title of emperor. The success of

this insurrection remained a long while doubtful, and became daily more formidable to Domitian, who had so much lost the love of his people; till at length his general Normandus dexterously surprised Antonius, just when a sudden overflowing of the Rhine had stopped the arrival of his German auxiliaries, and destroyed both him and his army. After this victory and success, Domitian's cruelty increased, showing no kind of mercy to those who had been of the adverse party. Nay, that he might thoroughly revenge himself, and discover all their accomplices, he invented new kinds of tortures; and in this particular, exceeded Nero himself, that whereas Nero was satisfied in commanding executions to be done at a distance, he took pleasure in beholding his cruelties exercised before his eyes, which at length indeed became his only diversion.

It can scarce be thought that a prince, who in some respects surpassed even Nero himself in his vices and cruelties, should in the least come behind him in his hatred of the church of God; and therefore we need less wonder, that in the fourteenth year of his reign we find him raising the second general persecution of the Christians; in which, by his letters and bloody edicts, he caused the death and banishment of infinite numbers, both in Rome and other places; in which, among other eminent Christians, St John, after his miraculous escape out of the cauldron of flaming oil, was banished to the island Patmos, Antipas was put to death at Pergamus, Timothy at Ephesus, and Dionysius the Areopagite, at Athens; in which he not only destroyed the heads of the church, but proceeded to the execution of his own relations, inasmuch that he put to death his cousin-german Flavius Clemens in the very year that he was consul, banished the consul's wife, Domitilla, to Pandataria, and a niece of the same name to Pontia, for no other crime but their embracing Christianity.

By these cruel and bloody practices, Domitian became odious to the greatest part of his subjects, and exceeding terrible to the ^b senate and nobility, inasmuch that some of the chief of them, merely for the preservation of their own lives, were forced into designs against his. For, when his wife Domitia, in searching into his black table-book, which he kept purposely for cruel and bloody designs, found her own name there, with many of the chief officers of his household; to them she showed the book, thereby to excite them to concert measures for his despatch. A conspiracy was accordingly formed,

^a This Agricola, having first conquered Galgacus, the great commander of the Britons, went as far as the Orcades, and subdued them. He was the first who discovered Britain to be an island, and in the fourth year of Domitian, reduced it into an entire and civilized province. Of all which he wrote a plain account to the emperor, without any amplifying terms. But as the emperor was uneasy to see his own glory eclipsed by a private person, his letters were received with a show of great joy, but in reality with no small concern. In a short time after this, Domitian recalled him from Britain, under pretence of giving him the lieutenantancy of Syria; but when Agricola perceived with what coldness he was received, to prevent further inconveniences, he retired from court, and for ever after gave himself up to an inactive course of life; though his death, which happened in a few years, was not without suspicion of poison, by Domitian's procurement.—*Eckhard's Roman History* in the life of Domitian.

^b One evening having made a kind and solemn invitation of the greatest part of the senate to a public entertainment, at the entrance of his palace he ordered them to be solemnly received, and ceremoniously conducted, and locked up in a spacious hall hung round with black, and illuminated by a few melancholy lamps, which were only sufficient to show the horror of the place, and to discover several coffins, upon which were fairly written the names of the senators that were invited. The senators were filled with strange fears and apprehensions at the appearance of this dismal scene, and the prospect of death so solemnly carved out for them; when in the height of their frightful imaginations, after some time waiting, their fears were increased by an entertainment of many naked persons with their bodies all over blackened, who entered the hall, with drawn swords in one hand, and flaming torches in the other. The guests, at this dreadful appearance, expected nothing but immediate death; when suddenly the naked persons, after they had danced some time about them, set open the doors, and told them, that the emperor gave all the company leave to withdraw.—*Ibid.*

A. M. 4100. A. D. 96; OR, A. M. 5507. A. D. 96.

in which the principals were Parthenius his chamberlain, and Stephanus his steward, who, for several days, wore a dagger wrapt up in wool in his left arm, pretending an accidental hurt in that place. As therefore the Emperor was going to his bath, Parthenius, pretending that there was in his chamber a person who had a matter to impart to him of too great importance to be safely deferred, drew him aside thither, where Stephanus, under pretence of discovering a conspiracy to him, presenting him with a list of several names; which while the Emperor was reading with horror and astonishment, he struck the dagger into his groin; but before he could give him a second wound, the Emperor closed with him, and with great violence threw him to the ground, where, while they were struggling together, Parthenius, Maximus, Clodianus, and other conspirators, who were of his own household, came furiously upon him, and, in the forty-fifth year of his age, and fifteenth of his reign, with several wounds dispatched him.

Upon the death of Domitian, the Roman senate, after some small consultation, made choice of Cocceius Nerva to succeed him. He was born in Crete, and was the first Emperor who was neither of a Roman nor Italian family; but was, at this time, for his many virtues, experience, and age, a person of the greatest reputation and esteem in Rome. At his accession to the empire, he took care to rescind the odious acts and decrees of his predecessor. He recalled the Christians, who, from Rome and other cities, were banished in the late reign, and permitted them a free exercise of their religion. He showed the same kindness and humanity to all others who had been unjustly treated by his predecessor, and restored whatever of their goods could be found about the imperial palaces. He released and discharged all the cities of the empire from the severe taxes and impositions which Vespasian and Domitian had laid upon them. He made a distribution among all the people of Rome, much larger than any of his predecessors had done. He purchased estates to be divided among decayed citizens, and had the sons of the poorer sort brought up at his own charges; and above all, he conferred great favours, and bestowed large gifts, upon his friends and relations, upon men of learning and liberal sciences, whereof he was a great encourager.

Nor was the clemency of this prince any ways inferior to his kindness and liberality. For, at his first accession to the government, he solemnly swore, that no senator of Rome should, by his command, be put to death; which oath he so religiously observed, that when two of that order had conspired against his life, he used no kind of severity against them; but first sending for them, to let them see that he was not ignorant of their traitorous designs, he carried them with him to the public theatre, placed them on each side of him, and presenting each with a sword, told them, before all the people, that they might experience the goodness of the weapons upon his body; for so confident was he of his own innocence, that he often said, that though he should quit the empire and return to a private life, he had done nothing that could cause him to fear any man.

But, notwithstanding all this, he had not sitten long upon the throne, before the soldiers, who, in the late reign had been indulged in all manner of licentiousness, began to be mutinous upon the account of Domitian's

murder, resolved to fall upon and destroy all those who had any concern in his assassination; so that the Emperor, finding himself insufficient to withstand their fury, and perceiving that his age and infirmities had impaired his authority over them, was resolved to adopt some worthy person for his successor, who should be able both to support him while he lived, and govern the empire after his decease. Though he had many considerable friends and relations of his own who hoped for this high promotion, yet, like a just and generous prince, he sought only the public good, and wisely made choice of Ulpian Trajanus, an utter stranger to his family, but the greatest and most deserving person of his age.

This determination he accordingly put in execution; and having, with the useful solemnities, adopted him in the capitol, and made him Cæsar in the senate, immediately sent ambassadors to him at Cologne, for at that time he was governor of the Lower Germany, with the ensigns and arms of the empire. This proved so great a curb to the licentiousness and mutinies of the soldiers, that from thenceforward they continued in a perfect quietness and obedience. But Nerva lived not long to enjoy the benefits of this happy choice; for about three months after, falling into a violent passion against a senator name Regulus, he put himself into such disorder, that, by reason of the feebleness of his body, and lowness of his spirits, he fell into a fever, which, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and the second of his reign, carried him off.

Upon the death of Nerva, Trajan was joyful received as Emperor at Rome, both by the senate and people. He was a Spaniard by birth, of an illustrious family, born in a town called *Italica*, not far from the city of Seville; and being now above two and forty years of age, of a strong body, and a vigorous mind, happily tempered between the warmth of youth and the experience of old age, he was in all respects qualified for the greatest attempts, and the noblest enterprises. In the beginning of his reign, he was blessed with the happiness of having the greatest master of his age, that admirable philosopher and biographer, Plutarch, by whose wise instructions, added to his own abilities, he pursued the administration of his government, with that moderation and justice, and that wisdom and magnanimity, as raised both the love and admiration of all men.

At his first entering into the senate, he declared publicly, 'That no good man, by his command, should ever suffer death or disgrace;' which he confirmed by a solemn oath, and inviolably observed it through his whole reign. His first step was, to reform the laws that were defective, and to put in execution those that were good; to take care that equity and justice were strictly and faithfully administered in all cases; to advance the most worthy and virtuous men to the highest posts, and to reclaim such as were otherwise, with gentleness and clemency. But as mutiny in the army was a matter of dangerous consequence, the Prætorian cohorts, and their commanders, who had raised the sedition against Nerva, he sent for, and disbanded; without any further punishment, as some say, though others affirm that he put several of them to death.

The informers, promoters, and pettifoggers, who had done great mischiefs in former reigns, he utterly exterminated; and put down the pantomimes, farce-players,

A. M. 4108. A. D. 104; OR, A. M. 5519. A. D. 108, &c.

and buffoons, as effeminate diversions, and unbecoming the Roman gravity. But he rebuilt the grand cirque, wherein more manly exercises were performed, much larger and more beautiful than it was before, with an inscription, signifying, 'That it was to make it worthy to receive the people of Rome.' The truth is, his love to the people of Rome, as well as all his other subjects, was visible in his relief of the poor, and education of their children; in his behaving to all men with courtesy and affability, without disguise or dissimulation; in entertaining persons of merit, though of no high degree, with a most open familiarity; bestowing upon such, honours and wealth, though he had but a small acquaintance with them; and in short, in 'treating all his subjects,' as himself expresses the matter, 'with the same usage as he himself would have desired of his prince, had he been a private person.' For these, and many more instances of his goodness, and paternal care to his people, he not only obtained the title of *Pater Patriæ*, but the senate likewise conferred on him that of *Optimus*, as the best of all princes, which he esteemed more than all the glories of his victories and conquests, because it related not so much to his courage and conduct, as to his morality and piety.

His mistaken piety indeed, or zeal for the religion established in the empire, confirmed his prejudices against Christianity, and made him look upon the professors of it with a jealous eye, not only as subverters of the national faith, and enemies to the gods of the Romans, but, as their adversaries were pleased to represent them, establishers likewise of some illegal societies, that were the nurseries of faction and sedition. Under this plausible pretence, the third general persecution of the church, in the third year of this Emperor's reign, commenced; wherein, among an infinite number of others, St Clement, bishop of Rome, being thrown into the sea, with an anchor about his neck; St Simon, bishop of Jerusalem, being first scourged, and then crucified; and St Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, being condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts, obtained the glorious crown of martyrdom. This persecution, for some time, went on, though with different degrees of severity, in several parts of the empire, and was so much the more afflicting to the Christians, because they generally suffered under the notion of malefactors and traitors, and under an Emperor, famed throughout the world for his singular justice and moderation: but it had not continued long before this prince, upon his reception of a letter from Pliny, the proconsul in Bithynia, wherein he represents 'the

innocency and simplicity of the Christians; that they were an harmless and inoffensive sort of people, who only worshipped Christ as God, and bound themselves by oath to abstain from all wickedness,' abated the rigour of it, so that the fire, which had hitherto raged with great fury, began now to be extinguished, and only crept up and down in private corners.

In the mean time, the Christian religion, notwithstanding all opposition to the contrary, was spread through the greatest part of Europe, Asia, and Africa, extended from the British islands to the farthest Indies, and was established, not only in cities, and populous places, but in towns and country villages, as Pliny, in the above cited letter, testifies. The metropolitian cities were all under bishops of the greatest eminency and piety. The four great cities of the Roman empire, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, usually styled 'apostolical churches,' were governed by apostolical men. Publius was at Athens; Polycarp at Smyrna; Onesimus at Ephesus; and Papias at Hierapolis; with many others of primitive integrity in different places.

Such was the state of the Christian church, in the beginning of the second century, increasing and flourishing after a marvellous manner; and though it wanted all human helps, though it had all the force and policy of the world bent against it, growing by opposition and oppression, and overbearing all the powers of earth and hell. ¹ 'Whereunto then shall we liken the kingdom of God,' and its wonderful increase; or 'with what comparison shall we compare it?' There is indeed some resemblance of it in the prodigious fecundity of seeds, which accordingly our blessed Saviour frequently makes use of to illustrate it; but there is nothing parallel to it in the history of all the religions which have obtained among men, from the beginning of the world to this day. And therefore, as this shows that the original of it was from heaven, and that the hand of Omnipotence has all along guided and preserved it; so it gives us a full assurance of hope, that the same divine providence will continue to protect and defend it;² 'until we come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; to God, the judge of all; to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant; and to the spirits of just men made perfect.' Amen, Amen.

¹ Luke iv. 30.² Heb. xii. 22. &c.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

OF

THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

PERIOD I.

From the Creation to the Deluge, 1656; according to Dr Hales, 2256 years.

Ann. Mun.	Hales.		Ann. Chr.	Hales.
1 or 3	1	The creation of the world and our first parents	4004 or 4001	5411
4	100	The birth of Cain, Adam's eldest son	4001	5311
128	101	The birth of Abel	4000	5510
130	201	Cain kills his brother Abel	3876	5210
235	230	The birth of Seth, son of Adam and Eve	3874	5181
325	435	The birth of Enos, son of Seth	3769	4976
395	625	The birth of Cainan, son of Enos	3679	4786
460	795	The birth of Mahalaleel son of Cainan	3609	4616
622	960	The birth of Jared, son of Mahalaleel	3544	4451
657	1122	The birth of Enoch, son of Jared	3382	4289
874	1287	The birth of Methuselah, son of Enoch	3317	4124
930	1474	The birth of Lamech, son of Methuselah	3130	3937
987	930	The death of Adam, aged 930 years	3074	4481
1042	1487	The translation of Enoch, aged 365 years	3017	3914
1056	1142	The death of Seth, aged 912 years	2962	4269
1140	1656	The birth of Noah, son of Lamech	2948	3755
1235	1340	The death of Enos, aged 905 years	2864	4071
1290	1544	The death of Cainan, aged 910 years	2769	3877
1422	1690	The death of Mahalaleel, aged 895 years	2714	3721
1536	1922	The death of Jared, aged 962 years	2582	3489
1651	2135	Noah warned by God of the future deluge	2468	3275
1656	2227	The death of Lamech, aged 777 years	2353	3184
	2256	The death of Methuselah, the longest liver of all men	2348	3155

The same year Noah, being 600 years old, by God's command enters the ark.

PERIOD II.

From the Deluge to the Calling of Abraham, 426 years and 6 months; according to Dr Hales, 1077 years.

Ann. Mun.	Hales.		Ann. Chr.	Hales.
1657 or 1658	2257	NOAH, with his family and three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, leave the ark	2347 or 2346	3154
		The Rainbow, the pledge of security from inundation		
1658	2258	The birth of Arphaxad, son of Shem	2346	3153
1663	2263	Noah plants a vineyard, &c.	2341	3148
1693	2393	The birth of Salah, son of Arphaxad	2311	3018
1723	2523	The birth of Heber, son of Salah	2281	2888
1757	2657	The birth of Peleg, son of Heber	2247	2754
1770	2797	The building of the tower of Babel, the confusion of languages, and dispersion of nations	2234	2614
1771	2857	The beginning of the Babylonian or Assyrian monarchy,—and of the Egyptian monarchy	2233	2554
1787	2787	The birth of Serug, son of Peleg	2217	2624
1819	2919	The birth of Reu, son of Serug	2185	2492
1849	3049	The birth of Nahor, son of Serug	2155	2362
1878	3128	The birth of Terah, son of Nahor	2126	2283
1943	2955	The death of Nimrod, succeeded by Belus	2061	2456
1948	3198	The birth of Haran, son of Terah	2056	2213
1969	2969	The death of Belus, succeeded by Ninus	2035	3442
2006	2606	The death of Noah, aged 950 years, and the beginning of postdiluvian idolatry	1998	2805
2008	3258	The birth of Abram, son of Terah	1996	2153
2017	3318	The death of Ninus, succeeded by his wife Semiramis	1987	2093
2018	3268	The birth of Sarai, Abram's wife	1986	2143
2059	3318	The death of Semiramis, succeeded by her son Niuvus	1945	2093
2093	3318	The call of Abram, from Ur to Haran in Mesopotamia where his father died, aged 205 years	1917	2023

PERIOD III.

From the calling of Abraham to the Israelites' departure out of Egypt, in all 430 years.

Ann. Mun.	Hales.		Ann. Chr.	Hales.
2093 or 2094	3333	ABRAHAM'S second call, &c.	1921 or 1920	2078
2084	3334	Returns from Egypt to Canaan, &c.	1920	2077
2091	3341	His victory over the five kings, &c.	1913	2070
2094	3344	Has a son named Ishmael, &c.	1910	2067
2107	3357	Intercedes for Sodom, &c.,—their destruction	1897	2054
2108	3358	Removes to Mamre. Isaac born	1896	2053
2133	3383	Offers up Isaac in sacrifice, &c. Sarah dies	1871	2028
2146	3398	Sends his servant to procure a wife for Isaac	1858	2013
2148	3398	Isaac marries Rebecca	1856	2013
2186	3438	Abraham dies	1818	1973
2168	3418	Jacob and Esau born	1836	1993
2245	3495	Isaac blesses Jacob, who departs to Haran, marries first Leah, and then Rachel, &c.	1759	1916
2276	3526	Jacob makes Joseph his favourite; his dreams, &c.; he is sold into Egypt	1728	1885
2289	3539	Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams, &c.	1715	1872
2298	3548	Jacob goes down to Egypt, &c.	1706	1863
2433	3683	Revolution in Egypt; the sufferings of the Israelites; Moses born, &c.	1571	1728
2473	3723	Moses flies to Midian; marries Jethro's daughter; the vision of the bush, &c.	1531	1688
2513	3763	Moses, commissioned by God, goes to Pharaoh; the plagues of Egypt; the deliverance of the Israelites, &c.	1491	1648

PERIOD IV.

From the Israelites' departure out of Egypt to their entrance into the land of Canaan, in all 40 years.

Ann. Mun.	Hales.		Ann. Chr.	Hales.
2513 or 2515	3763	THE Israelites rendezvous at Rameses; cross the Red Sea, &c.	1491 or 1490	1618
2514	3764	The law delivered from Sinai, &c.	1490	1647
2515	3765	The Israelites approach Canaan; the priesthood established, &c.	1489	1646
2553	3803	The Israelites enter Canaan, and possess it	1451	1608

PERIOD V.

From the Israelites' entering into Canaan to the building of Solomon's temple, in all 447 years; according to Dr Hales, 581 years.

Ann. Mun.	Hales.		Ann. Chr.	Hales.
2553 or 2556	3803	JOSHUA succeeds Moses as the leader of Israel	1451 or 1443	1608
2561	3829	The Israelites conquer Canaan, &c.	1443	1582
2599	3849	The war of the Benjamites	1405	1561
2469	3985	The judges, Deborah, Ehud, &c.	1535	1426
2519	4045	Gideon, the Israelitish general	1485	1366
2632	4158	Jephtha's exploits and vow	1372	1253
2653	4189	Samson's miraculous acts	1341	1222
2723	4259	The birth of Samuel	1271	1152
2745	4301	Saul elected king of Israel	1259	1110
2785	4341	David succeeds to Saul	1219	1079
2819	4375	His restoration after Absalom's rebellion. Solomon proclaimed king.	1155	1055

PERIOD VI.

From the Building of the Temple to the Babylonish Captivity, 400 years ; according to Dr Hales, 414 years and 6 months.

Ann. Mun.	Hales.		Ant. Chr.	Hales.	Ann. Mun.	Hales.		Ant. Chr.	Hales.
3001 or 3029	4391	The dedication of the temple							1003 or 1020
3029	4421	The death of Solomon, succession of Rehoboam, and revolt of the ten tribes.							971 991
KINGS OF JUDAH FOR 388 YEARS.					KINGS OF ISRAEL FOR 264 YEARS.				
Ann. Mun.	Hales.		Ant. Chr.	Hales.	Ann. Mun.	Hales.		Ant. Chr.	Hales.
3029 or 3032	4421	Rehoboam, intending to make war with the tribes, is diverted from it by a prophet	971 or 990		3030 or 3047	4421	Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, abolishes the worship of the Lord, and sets up the worship of golden calves	970 or 990	
3032	4424	He gives himself up to impiety	970	987	3047	4439	Jeroboam is overcome by Abijah, with the loss of 500,000 of his men	953	972
3046	4438	Dies; and is succeeded by his son Abijah	954	973	3050	4443	The death of Jeroboam, and succession of his son Nadab	950	968
3047	4439	Abijah's victory over Jeroboam	953	972	3054	4445	The death of Nadab, and succession of Baasha, who builds Ramah, to hinder the Israelites from going to Jerusalem	946	966
3049	4441	He dies; and is succeeded by his son Asa, who suppresses the idolatry that had been introduced into the kingdom of Judah	951	970	3074	4468	The death of Baasha, and succession of his son Elah	926	943
3064	4471	He engages Benhadad, king of Syria, to invade the territories of Baasha, king of Israel, in order to make him quit his undertaking at Ramah	936	940	3075	4469	Zimri kills Elah, and usurps the kingdom of Israel; but Omri soon besieges him, and forces him to burn himself in his own palace	925	942
3090	4482	The death of Asa, and succession of his son Jehoshaphat, who expels all sorts of superstitious worship out of his dominions	910	929	3079	4473	Omri, when seated on the throne, builds Samaria, and makes it the seat of his empire	921	938
3107	4514	Jehoshaphat accompanies Ahab in his expedition against Ramoth-Gilead, and is in danger of being slain	893	897	3086	4480	His death; and the succession of his son Ahab	914	931
3108	4515	He equips a fleet for Ophir, but miscarries in the voyage	892	896	3096	4503	Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, causes the false prophets of Baal to be slain, and appoints Elisha to be his successor in the prophetic office	904	908
3115	4507	The death of Jehoshaphat; and his son Jehoram's succession to the crown	885	904	3103	4514	Ahab defeats Ben-hadad, king of Syria, who laid siege to Samaria, and afterwards in a pitched battle	897	897
3116	4515	Jehoram introduces idolatry into Judah; is smitten with an incurable disease; dies; and is succeeded by his son Ahaziah	884	896	3107	4502	He makes war against Ramoth-Gilead, and there being slain in disguise, is succeeded by his son Ahaziah	893	909
3119	4515	Homer about this time flourished	881	896	3108	4504	Ahaziah, by a fall, is dangerously wounded; he dies; and is succeeded by his brother Jehoram	892	907
3120	4516	Ahaziah accompanies Jehoram, king of Israel, to the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, and being afterwards put to death, by the order of Jehu, his kingdom is usurped by his mother Athaliah, who destroys all the royal family, except young Joash	880	895	3109	4520	Elisha foretels the victory of the army of the Israelites, and procures plenty of water for them	891	891
3147	4522	Athaliah is put to death, and Joash, being seated on the throne, repairs the ruins of the temple	853	889	3119	4526	The siege of Samaria by Benhadad, wherein he and his army are seized with a panic fear, and break up in confusion at night	881	885
3164	4562	Joash orders the high priest Zechariah to be slain in the temple; wages war with Hazael, king of Syria; is forced to give him large sums of money; is murdered by his servants, and is succeeded by his son Amaziah	836	849	3120	4516	Jehoram is wounded at Ramoth-Gilead, and after that slain by Jehu, who usurps the crown	880	885
3178	4591	Amaziah declares war against Joash, king of Israel, and is defeated; he dies; (interregnum here of eleven years); and is succeeded by his son Uzziah, otherwise called Azariah, in whose reign the prophets Isaiah and Amos arise in the kingdom of Judah	822	820	3148	4544	The death of Jehu, and succession of his son Jehoahaz	852	867
3189	4602		810	809	3165	4561	The death of Jehoahaz, and succession of his son Joash	835	850
3246	4654	The death of Uzziah, and succession of his son Jotham in whose reign Isaiah and Hosea prophesied	754	757	3168	4579	The death of Hazael, king of Syria, and succession of his son Benhadad, who wars against Joash	822	832
3262	4670	The death of Jotham, and succession of his son Ahaz, who is invaded by Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, and at length invites to his assistance Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, submitting to pay him tribute	738	741	3178	4576	Joash obtains a great victory over Amaziah king of Judah	812	835
3278	4686	Ahaz dies; and is succeeded by his son Hezekiah, who restores the true worship of God (which Ahaz had almost quite subverted) in Judah and Jerusalem	722	725	3179	4577	He dies; and is succeeded by his son Jeroboam II, in whose reign the prophets Jonah, Hosea, and Amos, prophesied in Israel	821	834
					3225	4618	The Olympic games were instituted this year	775	793
					3232	4640	The death of Jeroboam II, and a long interregnum of twenty-two years	768	771
					3233	4641	Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam, at length obtains the kingdom, but, after a reign of six months, is killed by Shallum, who, after a reign of one month, is killed by Menahem, who dies and is succeeded by his son Pekahiah	767	770
					3242	4651		757	760
					3245	4653	Pekahiah is assassinated by Pekah, who succeeds him	755	758
					3249	4660	The city of Rome began to be built	751	751
					3254	4665	Artaxerxes, governor of Media (who in Scripture is called Tiglath-Pileser), and Belesis (otherwise called Nabonassar) conspire against Sardanapalus, king of Assyria, and having besieged him in Nineveh for three years, compels him at last to burn himself and all his riches in his own palace; whereupon Tiglath-Pileser is acknowledged king of Assyria, and Nabonassar lays the foundation of the Babylonish empire	746	756
					3264	4673	Tiglath-Pileser overcomes Rezin, king of Syria, and puts him to death; then enters the land of Israel; takes many cities, and carries away a great number of captives	736	738
					3265	4683	Hosea, the son of Elah, puts Pekah, king of Israel to death, and usurps the throne	735	728
					3276	4687	Tiglath-Pileser dies; and is succeeded by Salmaneser, who invades the kingdom of Israel, and makes Hosea tributary to him	724	724
					3279	4692	Hoshea, king of Israel, thinking to shake off the yoke of Salmaneser, makes an alliance with So, or Sabacon, king of Egypt; whereupon Salmaneser besieges Samaria, and, after three years, takes it, and carries away the people captive, and so extinguishes the kingdom of Israel, after it had subsisted from the separation 264 years	721	719

AN ACCOUNT OF THE YEARS, MONTHS, AND CALENDAR OF THE JEWS;

TOGETHER WITH

A REDUCTION OF THE MONEY, WEIGHTS, AND MEASURES

TO THE

PRESENT STANDARD AND MANNER OF COMPUTATION,

TO WHICH THE READER IN THE COURSE OF THE HISTORY WILL HAVE FREQUENT OCCASION TO REFER.

THE JEWISH YEARS.

THE Hebrews did originally, even as the Syrians and Phœnicians, begin their year from the autumnal equinox: but, upon their coming up out of the land of Egypt, which happened in the month Nisan, they, in commemoration of that deliverance, made their year commence at the beginning of that month, which usually happened about the time of the vernal equinox.¹ This form they ever after made use of in the calculation of the times of their feasts, festivals, and all other ecclesiastical concerns; but in all civil matters, as contracts, obligations, and all other affairs that were of a secular nature, they still made use of the old form, and began their year as formerly, from the first of Tisri, which happened about the time of the autumnal equinox: so that the Jews had two ways of beginning their year—their sacred year, as they called it, with the month Nisan, and the civil year, with the month Tisri.

The form of the year which they anciently made use of, was wholly inartificial: for it was not settled by any astronomical rules or calculations, but was made of lunar months set out by the *phasis* or appearance of the moon. When they saw the new moon, they began their months, which sometimes consisted of 29, and sometimes of 30 days, according as the new moon did sooner or later appear. The reason of this was, because the synodical course of the moon, that is, from new moon to new moon, being twenty-nine days and a half, the half day, which a month of twenty-nine days fell short of, was made up, by adding it to the next month, which made it consist of thirty days: so that their months were made up of twenty-nine days, or thirty days, successively and alternately; with this certain rule, that the first or initial month, whether of their sacred or civil year, always

consisted of thirty days, and the first day of each month was called the new moon. Of twelve of these months did their common year consist: but as twelve lunar months fell eleven days short of a solar year, so every one of these common years begin eleven days sooner, which, in thirty years' time, would carry back the beginning of the year through all the four seasons, to the same point again, and get a whole year from the solar reckoning. To remedy therefore the confusion that might from hence arise, their custom was, sometimes in the third year, and sometimes in the second, to cast in another month which they called *Veader*, or the second *Adar*, and make their years then consist of thirteen months; so that by the help of this intercalation, they reduce their lunar year in some measure to that of the sun, and never suffered the one, for any more than a month at any time, to vary from the other.

This intercalation of a month, however, every second or third year, makes it impracticable to fix the beginnings of the Jewish months to any certain day in the Julian calendar; but they therein always fell within the compass of thirty days, sooner or later. I have given the reader the best view I could of their coincidence and correspondence, in the following scheme, wherein the first column gives the several names and order of the Jewish months, and the second of the Julian, within the compass of which the said Jewish months have always, sooner or later, their beginning and ending.

JEWISH MONTHS.

1 Nisan	{ March and April,	7 Tisri	{ September and October,
2 Jyar	{ April and May,	8 Machesvan	{ October and November,
3 Sivan	{ May and June,	9 Cisleu	{ November and December,
4 Tamuz	{ June and July,	10 Tebeth	{ December and January,
5 Ab	{ July and August,	11 Shebat	{ January and February,
6 Elul	{ August and September,	12 Adar	{ February and March.

¹ Prideaux's Connexion, in the preface.

The thirteenth month (*Veader*) is then only intercalated, or cast in, when the beginning of Nisan would otherwise be carried back into the end of February.

The Jews of old had very exact calendars, wherein were set down their several fasts and festivals, and all those days wherein they celebrated the memory of any great event that had happened in their nation; but these are no longer extant. All they have that favours of any antiquity, is their *Megillah Thaanith* or *Volume of affliction*, which contains the days of fasting and feasting that were heretofore in use among them, but are now laid aside; and therefore no longer to be found in their common calendars. Out of this volume, however, as well as some of their other calendars, I thought it not improper to set down some of their historical events, in order to let the reader see on what particular day of each month their memorial, whether by fasting or feasting, was observed.

THE JEWISH CALENDAR.

1. NISAN OR ABIB.

Days.

- I. New moon. Beginning of the sacred or ecclesiastical year, a fast for the death of the children of Aaron, Lev. x. 1, 2.
- X. A fast for the death of Miriam, the sister of Moses, Numb. xx. 1.
- XIV. The paschal lamb slain on the evening of this day.
- XV. The great and solemn feast of the passover.
- XVI. The oblation of the first fruits of the harvest.
- XXI. The conclusion of the passover, or end of unleavened bread.
- XXIV. A fast for the death of Joshua.

2. JYAR OR JIAR.

- VII. The dedication of the temple, when the Asmoneans consecrated it again after the persecutions of the Greeks.
- X. A fast for the death of the high-priest Eli, and for the taking of the ark by the Philistines.
- XXIII. A feast for the taking of the city of Gaza by Simon Maccabeus, 1 Mac. xiii. 43, 44.
- XXVIII. A fast for the death of the prophet Samuel, 1 Sam. xxv. 1.

3. SIVAN.

- VI. *Pentecost*, or the fiftieth day after the passover, called likewise the *feast of weeks*, because it happened seven weeks after the passover.
- XV. A feast for the victory of the Maccabees over the people of Bethsam, 1 Mac. v. 52.
- XVII. A feast for the taking of Cæsarea by the Asmoneans.
- XXVII. A fast in remembrance of Jeroboam's forbidding his subjects to carry their first fruits to Jerusalem, 1 Kings xii. 27.
- XXX. A feast in memory of the solemn judgment given by Alexander the Great, in favour of the Jews, against the Ishmaelites and Egyptians.

4. TAMUZ OR THAMMUZ.

- IX. A fast for the taking of Jerusalem on that day, but whether by Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes, or the Romans, it is not said.
- XVII. A fast in memory of the tables of the law that were broken by Moses, Exod. xxxii. 15.

5. AB.

- IX. A fast in memory of God's declaring to Moses, as on this day, that none of the murmuring Israelites should enter into the land of Canaan, Numb. xiv. 29, 31.

Days.

- X. A fast, because on this same day the city and temple were taken and burnt, first by the Chaldeans, and afterwards by the Romans.
- XXVIII. A fast, because that, in the time of Ahab, the evening lamp went out.

6. ELUL.

- VII. A feast in memory of the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah, Ezra vi. 16.
- XXVII. A fast for the death of the spies, who brought an ill report of the land of promise, Numb. xiv. 36, 37.

7. TISRI.

- I. The feast of trumpets, Lev. xxiii. 34. Numb. xxix. 1, 2.
- III. A fast for the death of Gedaliah, whereupon the expulsion of the people, and the utter destruction of the land ensued, Jer. xli. 2.
- VII. A fast for the Israelites worshipping the golden calf, and the sentence which God pronounced against them in consequence of that crime, Exod. xxxii. 6, &c.
- X. The fast of expiation, as some think, in memory of man's fall, and expulsion out of paradise, Lev. xxiii. 19.
- XV. The feast of tabernacles, in memory of their dwelling in tents, in their passage through the wilderness, Lev. xxiii. 34.
- XXIII. The rejoicing for the law; or a feast instituted in memory of the law, which God gave them by the hand of Moses.

8. MARCHESVAN.

- VI. A fast upon the occasion of Nebuchadnezzar's putting out Zedekiah's eyes, after that he had slain his children in his sight, 2 Kings xxv. 7. Jer. lii. 11.

9. CISLEV.

- VI. A fast in memory of the book of Jeremiah torn and burnt by king Jehoiachin, Jer. xxxvi. 23.
- VII. A feast in memory of the death of Herod the Great, a bitter enemy to the sages.
- XXI. The feast of Mount Gerizim, upon their obtaining leave of Alexander the Great to destroy the temple of Samaria, which was situated there.
- XXV. The feast of dedication, namely of the temple, profaned by the order of Antiochus Epiphanes, and repaired and beautified by the care of Judas Maccabeus. This festival Christ honoured with his presence at Jerusalem. It is likewise called the *feast of lights*, because, during the time of its celebration, the people were used to illuminate their houses, by setting up candles at every one's door. See 1 Mac. iv. 52.; 2 Mac. ii. 16.; John x. 22.

10. TEBETH.

- X. A fast in memory of the siege of Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings xxv. 1.
- XXVIII. A feast for the exclusion of the Sadducees out of the Sanhedrim, where they had once all the power.

11. SHEBETH.

- IV. A fast in memory of the death of the elders who succeeded Joshua, Judg. ii. 10.
- XV. The *beginning of the years of trees*, when they were first allowed to eat the fruit thereof, after they were four years planted, Lev. xix. 23, &c.
- XXIII. A fast for the war of the ten tribes against that of Benjamin, for the outrage committed upon the body of the Levite's wife, Judg. xx.
- XXIX. A memorial of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, a cruel enemy to the Jews, 1 Mac. vi.

12. ADAR.

Days.

- VII. A fast in remembrance of the death of Moses, Deut. xxxiv. 5.
- XIII. Esther's fast, probably in memory of that which is mentioned in Esther iv. 16.
- XV. A feast in memory of the death of Nicanor, a bitter enemy to the Jews, 1 Mac. xv. 30.
- The feast of *Purim* or *Lots*; because, when Haman purposed to destroy all the Jews that were in Persia, according to the superstition of the country, he first drew lots, to know on what day of the year it would be best to put his design in execution, from whence the feast in commemoration of their escape, took its name.
- XIII. The dedication of the temple of Zerubbabel, Ezra vi. 16.
- XXVIII. A feast in commemoration of the repeal of the decree whereby the kings of Greece had forbidden the Jews to circumcise their children, to observe the Sabbath, and to reject foreign worship.

When the year consists of thirteen months, here is the place where the second month of *Adar*, or *Veadar*, by way of intercalation, comes in.

JEWISH MONEY.

The custom of making money, of such a form, such an alloy, and such a determinate value, is not so ancient as some may imagine. ¹ The original way of commerce was certainly by way of barter, or exchanging one kind of merchandise for another, as it is the custom, in some places, even to this day. In process of time, such metals as were generally esteemed to be most valuable, were received into traffic, but then the custom was to weigh them out to one another, till, finding the delays and other inconveniences of this method, they agreed to give each metal a certain mark, a certain weight, and a certain degree of alloy, in order to fix its value; but it was a long while before men came into this agreement. The coinage of money among the Persians, Greeks, and Romans, was but of late date; among the Persians, no older than the times of Darius, son of Hystaspes; and among the Grecians, from whom the Romans very probably took it, of the same date with Alexander. We have no traces of this practice among the ancient Egyptians, before the time of the Ptolemies; nor had the Hebrews this custom among them, ² until the government of Simon Maccabeus, to whom Antiochus Sidetes, king of Syria, granted the privilege of coining his own money in Judea.

Before that time, they made all their payments by weight: and therefore the reader need less wonder, that one and the same word should denote both a certain

weight of any commodity, and such a ³ determinate sum of money; what he has to remark is this—⁴ That among the ancients, the proportion of gold to silver was most commonly as ten to one; sometimes it arose to be as eleven to one, sometimes as twelve, and sometimes as thirteen: that though, in the time of king Edward I., it was here in England at so low an estimate as ten to one; yet it is now advanced to the value of sixteen to one, and in all the reductions of this kind that we make, is to be so computed.

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>q.</i>
The Gerah,	000	00	01	3
The Hebrew Drachm,	000	00	09	
Two Drachms made a Bekah,	000	01	06	
Two Bekahs made a Shekel,	000	03	00	
Sixty Shekels made a Mina,	009	00	00	
Fifty Minas made a Talent,	450	00	00	
A Talent of gold, sixteen to one,	7200	00	00	

JEWISH WEIGHTS

	<i>lb.</i>	<i>oz.</i>	<i>gr.</i>	<i>dec.</i>
The Gerah,	000	00	10	95
The Hebrew Drachm or Zuz,	000	00	54	75
Two Zuzs made a Bekah,	000	00	109	$\frac{1}{2}$
Two Bekahs made a Shekel,	000	00	219	
An hundred Shekels made a Mineth,	050	00	00	
Thirty Mineths made a Talent,	1500	00	00	

MEASURES OF LENGTH.

	<i>Eng.</i>	<i>feet.</i>	<i>inch.</i>
The Hebrew Cubit, somewhat more than	0	21	
The Zerith, or Span, a little more than	0	10	
The Span of a Cubit, a little above	0	7	
The Palm, or hand's breadth, somewhat above	0	3	
The Fathom, which makes 4 Cubits above.	7	0	
Ezekiel's Reed, which was 6 Cubits, above	10	0	
The ancient Measuring-line, or Chain, which was 80 Cubits above	145	0	
A Sabbath's day's journey, 2000 Cubits,	3648	0	
<i>Miles. Paces. Feet.</i>			
An Eastern mile, 4000 Cubits,	1	10	0
A day's journey, generally computed much about 33	0	0	0

MEASURES OF CAPACITY.

<i>Dry Measures.</i>	<i>Liquid Measures.</i>
The Cab contained a quarter of a peck.	The Log came near to our pint.
The Omer or Gnomer in the Hebrew, was the tenth part of an Ephah.	12 Logs made an Hin, which answered our gallon.
The Ephah is computed to be about our Bushel; and the Homer is supposed to be ten.	6 Hins made a Bath, which was about six gallons; and 10 Baths made an Homer, which was 60.

The reader will be pleased to observe, that in the valuation of money, I have chiefly followed Dean Prideaux, in his preface to the first part of his Connection of Sacred and Profane History, and in the reduction of weights and measures, our learned Cumberland: but whoever desires a fuller account of these matters, may consult the said Bishop Cumberland, of the Jewish weights measures, and monies; Mr Brerewood, *De ponderibus et pretiis veterum nummorum*; Dr Bernard, *De mensuris et ponderibus antiquis*; and others that have written on this argument, which is not a little difficult and perplexing.

³ For so the word *shakel* comes from שָׁקַל *to weigh*; and may properly be interpreted *the weight*.—*Lewis's Antiq.* Heb. b. vi.

⁴ Prideaux's Connection, in the preface.

¹ Calmet's Dissertation, vol. 1.

² And yet the Jews have a tradition, that not only Joshua, David, and Mordecai, but even Abraham himself, had found out the way of coining. It is said of Abraham indeed, that 'he was very rich in silver and gold, (Gen. xiii. 2.) But we no where read that this money was stamped with any impression; and yet the Jewish tradition runs thus, namely, 'That on Abraham's money were stamped on one side an old man and an old woman, on the other, a young man and a young maid; on Joshua's money, on one side an ox, on the other a monoceros: on David's money, on one side a staff and a scrip, on the other a tower; and on Mordecai's money, on one side sackcloth and ashes, on the other a crown.' But this seems to have the air of a Rabbinical fiction.—*Lewis's Antiq. Heb.* b. vi.

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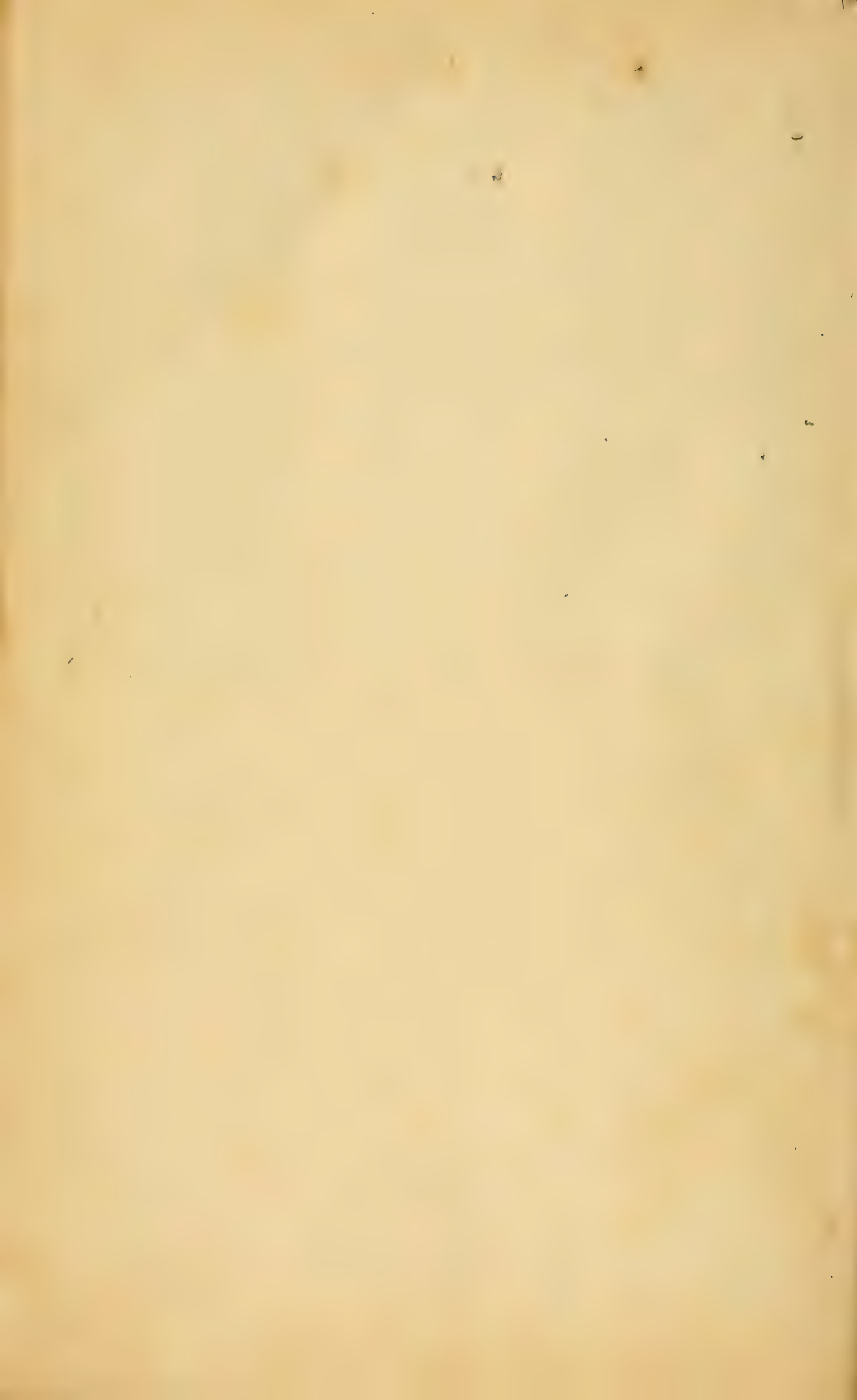
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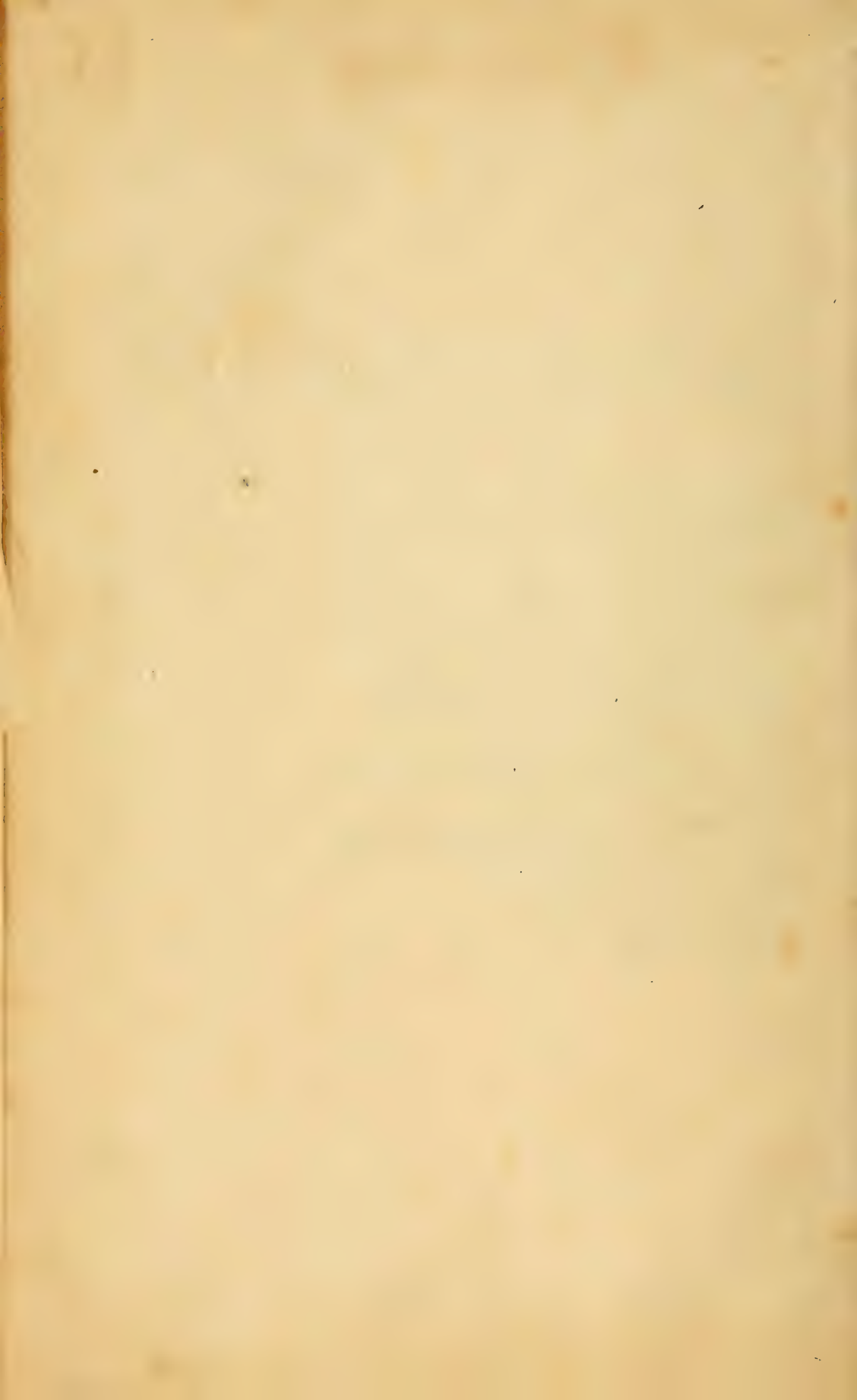
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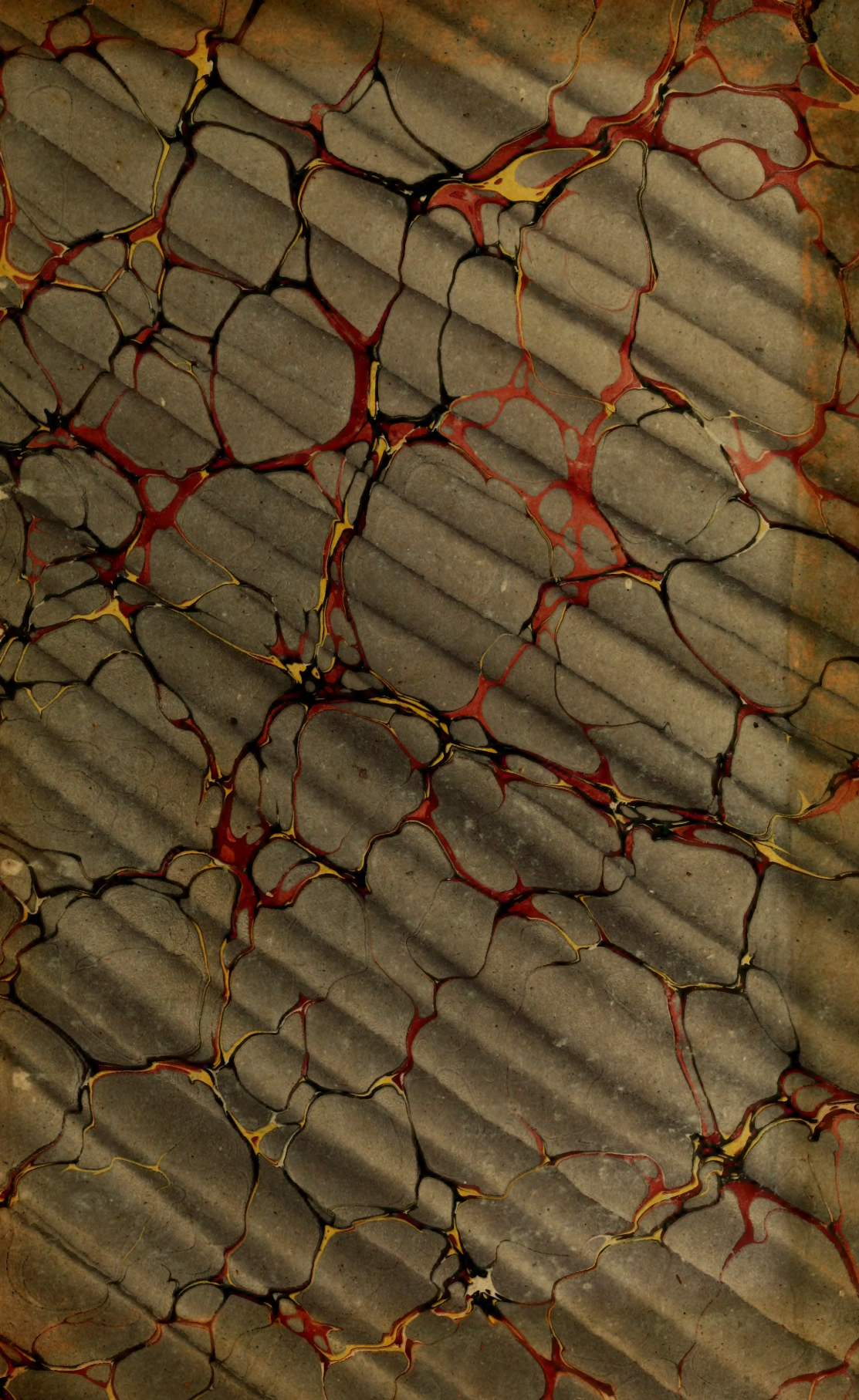
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